

1 Peter 2:13-3:7 *Haustafel* – Household duty code November 5, 2007

This next section of 1 Peter deals with a group of laws and regulations for orderly conduct of society. Similar rules were present throughout Roman society. Here they are specifically prepared for the believers living in exile within the pagan society. Similar rules are found in Col 3:18-4:1, and Eph 5:21-6:9. These set forth three relationships:

- Wives and husbands
- Children and parents
- Slaves and masters

Peter adds the relationship to the state and leaves out children.

Jesus and Paul address the relationship to the state in Matt 22:21 and Romans 13:1-14.

The believer has universal obligations to society in general as well as obligations within the church community.

: 13 *Be subject ...to every human institution...* This suggest deference and respect, not total submission.

...whether it be to the emperor as supreme... Nero was the emperor at the time (54-68 AD). Pliny was the governor, and we know he was imprisoning and punishing Christians just for being believers. But Rom 13:1 says that there is no authority except those ordained by God. Good conduct in God's eyes is also beneficial for the whole society.

: 15 *for it is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.* The pagans around the Christians have no theological basis for their choices, and therefore, count the goodness of the believers as evil.

: 16 *not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil.* You are free from the darkness of paganism. Do not slip back into that darkness. Do not cover-up your sin by acting pious. Let your piety be real.

: 17 Note the four imperatives:

- Honor everyone
- Love the brotherhood
- Fear God
- Honor the emperor

Jesus says to love even your enemies (Matt 5:44).

Luke 6:27-36 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either.

Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.

And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you?

Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

: 18-25 Servants (slaves) are to show respect and deference to their masters, even when the masters are unfair or unjust. The motivation is mindfulness of God. God calls for patient endurance. *It is a gracious thing in the sight of God.*

Christ set the proper example by his suffering on our account, *so that you might follow in his steps*. He left the adjudication of his suffering to God who judges justly (Isa 53:7).

Self-defense does not work in a society that does not understand the basic rules of Christian living.

The condition and treatment of the Christian slaves must have been quite uncomfortable because Peter reaches to Christ's crucifixion to try to encourage them in the face of their suffering. He also points out the redemptive quality of their suffering, even as Christ's suffering was redemptive for them.

The resolution will be in the coming eschatological kingdom where all wrongs will be righted.