

# GOVERNMENT FOR THE CHRISTIAN

SAMUEL SMITH

*We the People*

*insure domestic Tranquility, secure the Blessings of Liberty, and our Posterity, do hereby constitute and establish this Constitution*  
Article I



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FOR THE  
CHRISTIAN

SAMUEL SMITH

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WITH GRATITUDE TO MY LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST  
FOR REVEALING HIS WISDOM TO US, SO THAT WE MAY  
WALK IN HIS WAYS IN EVERY AREA OF LIFE; TO MY PARENTS  
FOR INSTILLING IN ME A LOVE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING  
ME TO STUDY THE SCRIPTURES FOR MYSELF; TO ALL WHO  
PRAYED FOR AND PROVIDED FEEDBACK ON THIS PROJECT;  
AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE MARTIN FAMILY FOR MAKING  
THIS BOOKLET POSSIBLE THROUGH THEIR KIND AND SELFLESS  
DONATION OF COUNTLESS HOURS OF EFFORT.



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## FOREWORD

Lawmaking is a religious exercise, and government is a God-ordained institution. Yes, I know Jefferson wrote a letter to the Danbury Baptists and referred to separation of church and state. And properly understood, I agree; I certainly don't want this government or any other government running the church. But laws are rooted in morality, and moral convictions are based on religious beliefs.

Believing that God created man in His image and endowed him with infinite value, we have enacted laws that protect the sanctity of human life, and we prohibit murder and punish murderers. Believing that God gave man dominion over the earth, we have enacted laws that protect property rights, and we punish those who steal, defraud, extort, or embezzle. Even tax laws involve moral considerations about who should pay taxes and how much they should pay, and who should receive financial assistance and how much they should receive. And believing that human nature is corrupted by the Fall, we understand that God has established civil government to curb the exercise of sin, and we know that government has to have enough power to preserve law and order. But we also know that those who run the government have the same sinful nature as everyone else, so we carefully check and limit government power. "Power tends to corrupt," Lord Acton said, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men.... There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it." It follows, then, that as people's religious beliefs change, their laws change with them. And beliefs are changing rapidly today. The early explorers, settlers, and colonists who established this nation held to a Judeo-Christian consensus, but that consensus is rapidly eroding. A growing portion of the American people is unchurched, indifferent, and often hostile to traditional Christianity. And a growing portion of professing Christians are Biblically and doctrinally uninformed. It is no wonder, then, that they fail to see the relationship between God and His Law as revealed in Scripture and in nature, and civil society and civil government.

Thanks be to God, in this hour of need Samuel Smith has come forward with an antidote to ignorance and naiveté. His book, *Government for the Christian*, is a concise, common-sense



manifesto setting forth a distinctively Biblical concept of law and government. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, Smith gives us a very readable analysis of basic questions we face today. On issue after issue, he shows us what God says in His Word, and then what man says, and then he analyzes the issue in light of the Word of God and the word of man.

In his 1796 Farewell Address that summarizes what Americans believe about law and government, our first President George Washington declared,

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism who should labor to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness - these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in the Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the opposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

The time has come for Christians to rise up and demand that government adhere to the limitations imposed upon it by the American people when their delegates drafted the United States Constitution. And in *Government for the Christian*, Samuel Smith has shown us how to think, speak, and act Biblically on behalf of our nation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Bible was the most frequently cited source in the writings of the United States' Founding Fathers,<sup>1</sup> yet today the Word of God is scarcely referenced in political writings, speeches, or debates. This sad reality was made clear to me in October 2011 when I attended the Values Voters Summit in Washington, D.C. The Republican presidential primary season was just getting under way, and the candidates were giving speeches at this event, along with several other prominent figures from politically active Judeo-Christian circles. The focus of the speeches and the numerous booths representing various political action groups and other activists was to appeal to the Judeo-Christian religious values of the attendees. However, from what I observed, only one of the speeches mentioned the Scriptures, and none of the booths had any Scriptural references at all. It seemed evident that the Christian community had largely discarded the authority of Scripture and was clinging *solely* to the appeal of human reason for promoting its political agenda. The disturbing conclusion that I carried with me from that weekend was, "No wonder we are experiencing defeat in the political arena and are suffering from so many national problems—even Christian political gatherings have forsaken the Bible!"

Ephesians 6:10–12, 17 says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places... and take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." This passage makes clear that we, as Christians, are to take a stand against the "wiles of the devil" by using the Scriptures as one of our primary weapons. We are to expose and oppose evil with the truth because God Himself hates evil (Genesis 6:5–7; Proverbs 8:13; Psalm 97:10; Romans 12:9). Some argue that in order to

make an impact we must modify our methods and promote the principles of Scripture without referencing the Bible, but these people fail to recognize that Christ set an example for us when He stated that He did not come the first time to establish an earthly kingdom but to bear witness to the truth (John 18:36–37). His message was met with public mocking and led to His eventual crucifixion. The prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus’ disciples, and many other Christians through the centuries have suffered similar fates. Yet it is important to remember that our mandate is not results-oriented but process-oriented; we are to preach the truth in love for the glory of God and leave the results up to Him. Even when the final political victory is won at the triumphant return of Christ to Earth, He will use the sharp sword of His Word (Hebrews 4:12) to smite the nations (Revelation 19:15). Secure in His power, we should boldly obey God in using the Scriptures to expose and oppose the lies of Satan and promote God’s original design for civil government.

Though it is certainly not a thorough commentary on political philosophy, history, or issues, the intent of this booklet is to equip and encourage fellow Christians to bring the Bible back into our political conversation so that God’s glory may be made manifest through His people in this needy arena. By restoring the Word of God to the political discussion, we confront others with the all-important question “Who determines truth: God or man?” My earnest prayer is that in the midst of a culture full of political deception and wickedness, “the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many” even if “they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days” (Daniel 11:32–33). As we faithfully bear witness to the truth, we must not become discouraged by the results. Instead, we should keep in mind the advice of John Quincy Adams: “Duty is ours; results are God’s,” and trust the promise of Proverbs 24:24–25: “He that saith unto the wicked, Thou are righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him: But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.”

# PART ONE: THE BIBLICAL PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT



## *Chapter 1*

### FOUNDATIONS OF LAW

#### FOUNDATIONAL QUESTIONS

We begin our discussion of the Biblical principles of civil government by asking three questions that will guide our quest to determine the foundations of law: (1) What is law? (2) Who determines law? and (3) Why do we have civil law?

#### WHAT IS LAW?

Sir William Blackstone, one of the great legal commentators of English history, defined law as “a rule of action dictated by some superior being.”<sup>22</sup> These “rules of action” appear in two domains within our universe—those rules that pertain to our physical world, such as gravity and thermodynamics, and those that pertain to our spiritual and emotional world, such as consciousness, and our sense of purpose. In this discussion, those rules of action that apply to the physical world will be referred to as the “laws of science.” The spiritual/emotional rules of action will be called the “laws of humanity” since these are unique to our race, distinguishing us from the rest of creation.

It would seem that the presence of the laws of humanity in a universe otherwise governed by the laws of science would lead to a certain tension. How can two different categories of laws coexist, particularly when science is seemingly predictable and guided by the principle of the survival of the fittest, while humanity is unpredictable and often influenced by motives

entirely unrelated to survival? Blackstone's definition above requires that these rules of action come from a "superior being." Blackstone's rules of action need a law giver and that provides a leeway into our second foundational question, which resolves the dichotomy.

### WHO DETERMINES LAW?

The process of elimination can be helpful in discovering the determiner of law. Below we will examine the impact of individually or corporately rejecting the laws of science and humanity, and how the best solution to the stated question is accepting both laws based on a unifying source external to our observed universe.

First of all, the laws of science cannot be rejected. Rejecting the laws of science leads to the adoption of mysticism as a worldview because it rejects the realities of the physical world and reason as delusional, thereby rendering our intellect, bodies, and surrounding natural world as obstacles that must be minimized in order for us to experience the ultimate reality. Without reason, there is no basis for determining laws, which in turn leads to confusion and self-destruction. This option has no place for consideration in our discussion because it rejects reason, which in turn renders proof impossible.

The laws of humanity cannot be rejected either. This option leads to naturalism. Naturalism rejects the reality of the emotional and spiritual aspects of our being, and therefore denies that we are unique from the rest of the universe. In this worldview, man has no purpose or meaning—he is simply a machine, and his emotional and spiritual dimensions are nothing more than illusory weaknesses that must be pacified and suppressed in order to minimize their interference with his physical dimension. Law is therefore determined by what man, through his own reasoning, perceives as best contributing to material prosperity. This idea is captured and promoted by the philosophies of Darwinism/social Darwinism ("survival of the fittest") and nihilism



("might makes right"). Those who reject any kind of divine revelation fall into this group. Though accepted by many due to the seeming consistency, simplicity, and assurance that come with accepting only those things that are observed with the five senses, naturalism ultimately fails to unify all of reality.

To reject all laws is to deny reality itself and thus defeats the purpose of this discussion. Therefore, this option will receive no more consideration.

The last option requires a force external to our observed universe that is able to both reveal itself and resolve the tension between the laws of science and humanity. In order to do so, this revealed law must be the ultimate truth and reality of what is, and therefore the dominant force that governs action. In this worldview, law is determined by examining both the laws of science and humanity, using reasoning that is based on the unifying presuppositions of the revealed law. The source of the revealed law is therefore the highest law of the universe and the determiner of law. Those who accept divine revelation fall into this category. Those who accept the Bible as the only truly sovereign and infallible unifying law have a source of law that unifies all of reality.

Also in this group are those who believe in other forms of revelation (the Koran, the Book of Mormon, etc.), and those who have an unorthodox method of interpreting the Bible or accept the sovereignty of the Bible but not its infallibility. However, their revealed law does not accurately reflect the truth of what is and is therefore not truly unifying. Though they may live in and support a society whose laws agree with the teachings of Biblical Christianity, there is no secure basis for their laws.

Blackstone goes on to say that "Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws ..." According to God's revelation, the Bible, God is the source of all that is good, perfect, and true (James 1:17-18), including law. God communicates His law to us through the laws of nature (laws of humanity and science) and the law of revelation (the Bible). The laws of humanity exist because man was created in God's image with a spirit and emotions, just as God is a Spirit and has emotions. Therefore, we can have unique fellowship with a personal God and a deeper appreciation of His universe and its purpose (Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Psalm 139:13-14; Isaiah 46:9-10). Regarding the laws of science, we

are equally bound to these with the rest of creation (Job 42:1–6; Psalm 139:6; 145:3; Romans 11:33–36), for, in the physical dimension, man is no closer to being God than the rest of nature since he is finite and God is infinite. However, humans are the masters of the physical dimension of creation because God created us to have dominion as the first fruits of His creation (Genesis 1:28). This explains our superior reasoning ability over the rest of creation.<sup>3</sup>

### WHY DO WE HAVE CIVIL LAW?

God's power does not necessitate an internal obligation to submit to Him. Rather, it is His power in conjunction with His wisdom and goodness that create an obligation to submit to His authority (2 Chronicles 7:3; Psalm 84:11; Ecclesiastes 2:26). God ordains civil law to serve His purpose of goodness (just like His creation) for His glory and for mankind's benefit (Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–17). This contrasts with those who reject the notion of revealed law—their only incentive to obey the state is because it can force them to.

### SUMMARY

In this chapter we learned that (1) law is a rule of action dictated by a superior being or force; (2) only two types of laws are observed in the universe, but a third type of law is necessary; (3) without revealed law, we have a choice between mysticism, naturalism, or a complete rejection of all forms of reality; but with the Word of God, we can have reality.

## Chapter 2

### CIVIL GOVERNMENT—GOD'S ORDINANCE

#### ORIGIN

Before man fell into sin, he had complete liberty within the confines of obedience to God and His wisdom (Genesis 2:16–17; Proverbs 3:19). After Adam and Eve sinned, their newborn sinful nature threatened to destroy the liberty they enjoyed under God; so He established the laws of responsibility and coercive justice (Genesis 3:16–24) in order to preserve the system of

rights and responsibilities that He had given to them (Genesis 1:26–27).

The law of responsibility consists of the natural consequences of our thoughts and actions, both positive and negative, which work together with our God-given reasoning ability and self-interest to shape our actions. For example, you touch a hot stove for the first time and get burned, so you refrain from doing so in the future in order to avoid repeating the painful experience. Conversely, you find that your health improves by eating certain types of food and exercising regularly, so you develop a routine of eating these foods and exercising in order to continue experiencing the benefits of good health. This can apply to our spiritual lives as well; the more of God’s Word we receive, the more we grow spiritually and are able to “walk in the Spirit” and thus “not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). This discipline-reward dynamic is a testament to the goodness of our Creator, who has carefully designed His universe in such a manner that much of our activity is influenced to conform to His design without the need for divine or human regulation.

Unfortunately, due to the sinful corruption of both reason and self-interest, man devised ways to circumvent the law of responsibility (Ecclesiastes 7:29), moving God to establish the law of coercive justice. This law



consists of the willful (as opposed to natural) application of force, either divine or human, to shape behavior in order to preserve God’s standard of justice. Most often this law is seen as a check against aggressive violent crimes, such as a policeman arresting a thief or a military establishment defending its nation against invaders. However, it can also be implemented to encourage certain activity that is beneficial to the

general welfare of society (e.g., paying a reward to someone who provides information leading to the capture of a criminal) or compensate people for an injustice suffered (e.g., forcing a thief to return stolen goods). For further examples and discussion of these two laws, read Romans 1 and the book of Proverbs.



Though the law of coercive justice was initially limited to individuals and families (Adam and Eve in Genesis 3; Cain in Genesis 4; Noah and his family versus the world in Genesis 6), man's social rebellion against God (Genesis 6:3–7) and the resulting anarchical chaos caused God to both implement divine coercive justice in the form of a worldwide flood (Genesis 6:11–7:24) and establish a system of human coercive justice in the form of a covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:6–9). This covenant laid the



foundation for what we today call civil government. Predictably, it didn't take long for man to pervert this covenant with God by establishing a global tyranny under the rule of Nimrod, symbolized by the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–4). Once again, God implemented divine coercive justice by confusing the language of the people and established a

system of human coercive justice by scattering them throughout the world into individual nations as a check against a return to global tyranny (Genesis 11:5–9). He has provided us through His Word specific guidance for the ordination, organization, and operation of these institutions.

## ORDINATION

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” Romans 13:1 makes it clear that God gives civil government its authority (“power”) and design (“ordained”—literally, arranged in an orderly manner) and therefore implies a specific order that mandates conformity. When Jesus told Pilate, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above” (John 19:10–11), He established that civil government's power is not principal in nature but secondary. Psalm 2 and the book of Daniel further confirm that civil governments are accountable to God and are under His authority. All civil governments are accountable to God and are under His sovereign rule because they are His ministers and receive their power and authority from Him (Psalm 2:10–12; see also Daniel 2:21; 4:25; 5:21; Isaiah 13–23; Jeremiah 46–51; Ezekiel 25–32; Amos 1–2; Obadiah; Jonah; Nahum; Habakkuk 2; Zephaniah 2).

Since God is the source of governmental authority and design, a nation legitimizes its civil government by placing it under His sovereignty (Psalm 2:10–12; Exodus 19:5–8; Daniel 4:34–37). Therefore, in God’s eyes a civil government is not simply a person or group that has the power to impose its will on a society. Rather, it must be capable of, and faithful in, upholding the law of coercive justice in a society in such a manner that it serves the good of those who live according to God’s laws. Accordingly, Christians are commanded to submit to the authority of civil government since it is a gift from God for our good (Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–17; 1 Timothy 2:1–4; James 1:17–18; 2 Chronicles 7:3).

### ORGANIZATION

The Bible gives several examples of different forms of government such as the following: theocracy (history began with Adam and Eve’s family answering to God—Genesis 1–11; Eli and Samuel ruled as God’s spokesmen); absolute monarchy<sup>4</sup> (Luke 2:1; Mark 12:17; Exodus 1–14); monarchy (limited/constitutional: Deuteronomy 17:14–20; 2 Samuel 5:3; 2 Kings 11:17); autocracy (God chose and allowed Moses to be the one-man authority over the Israelites; this worked well because Moses was a humble man [Numbers 12:3] and a “friend of God” [James 2:23]. Had he not been humble or have a personal relationship with a God who guided him, this form of government could have dissolved into a dictatorship); constitutional republic (Exodus 18:21; Deuteronomy 1:15–16; 16:18); and oligarchy (Sanhedrin—Luke 22:66). It should be noted that anarchy and revolution (Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6; 21:25) show the condition of the denigration of governments.

The most important concepts to gather from studying the different forms of government in the Bible is that secure and successful (i.e. functioning according to God’s ideals) government systems will include these wise organizational concepts: (1) God should be the one to choose leaders. Thus Christians should be in consistent prayer that He would make it clear whom His choice is and direct Christian voters clearly toward His choice. (2) That qualified leaders must be chosen (not just those who hold a political agenda). God directed the leaders He chose for the nation of Israel to lead *according to His law* (Exodus 18:21); today, we must choose leaders who will lead according to Biblical principles. (3) As He allowed even His chosen people to modify their form of government as they saw

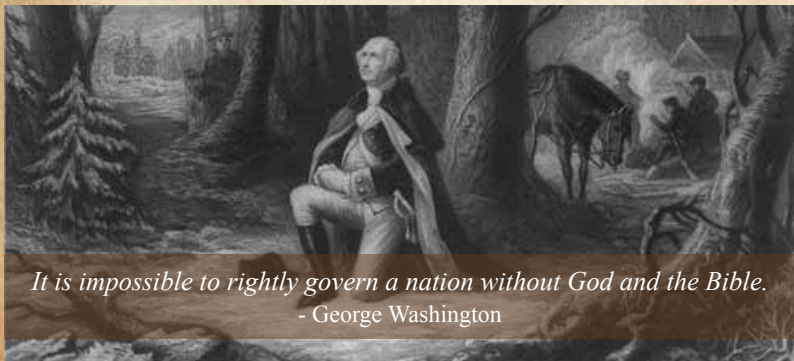
fit (“Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them,” 1 Samuel 8:7–9), that His people also will exercise their God-given right to determine the administration of their government—particularly since they are responsible to God for how they govern themselves. This is why God instructed Samuel to grant the people their desire for a king while also warning them of the consequences that this form of government would bring.

## OPERATION

Because He is good, God has ordained civil government to be a minister of His justice for three purposes: (1) to facilitate the peace and quiet of society; (2) to secure the rights and rewards of those who follow His laws; and (3) to punish evil.

The first purpose is clearly laid out in 1 Timothy 2:1–4:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.



*It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible.*  
- George Washington

This passage states that we are to ask God to provide us with and give thanks for governing authorities that enable us to “lead a quiet and peaceable life” while living according to His Word. Under these conditions, the gospel is able to spread unhindered, leading men to be “saved, and to come unto the

knowledge of the truth.” Simply put, God established government so that it would enable men to live godly lives without unnatural disturbances, resulting in the ideal conditions for the spreading of His gospel and truth.

Civil government receives its mandate to secure the rights and rewards of those who follow God’s laws from several passages of Scripture. Romans 13:3–4 points out that “rulers are not a terror to good works. . . do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good.” First Peter 2:13–17 says that government exists “for the praise of them that do well” and so that “with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.” It also indicates that government exists to secure our freedom to serve God rather than sin: “As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” The Ten Commandments passage (Exodus 20) further supports the notion that God gives us freedom in order to serve Him. Verse 2 says, “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” This freedom from “the house of bondage” enabled the Israelites to fulfill the list of commands given in the verses immediately following this statement (vv. 3–17).

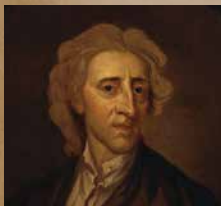


These passages bring to light an important principle—the Biblical concept of rights. According to the Bible, rights and responsibilities are inseparable. That is, we only have rights because we have corresponding responsibilities to God our Creator. Since He made us, we are accountable to Him for how we live (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Therefore, we require certain rights to secure our ability to fulfill that responsibility. These rights are unalienable because they come from God, and our duty to Him supersedes that of any other authority (Acts 5:29). God created man for three basic purposes, as stated in His covenant with Adam (Genesis 1:28) and then repeated in His covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:6–7): (1) “be fruitful and multiply”; (2) “replenish the earth”; and (3) “subdue it; and have dominion.” Each of these responsibilities implies/requires a corresponding right: (1) life; (2) liberty; and (3) property. Since the Adamic covenant was pre-Fall, it did not require governmental protection of these rights. However, the Noahic covenant was preceded by the statement “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man,” establishing civil government as a means of securing man’s God-given rights. The remainder of God’s law further

supports and protects these rights and responsibilities and serves as the basis for establishing the laws by which civil governments operate.

As discussed in chapter 1, God's law is found both in the natural laws (science and humanity, Proverbs 3:19; 8:31) and in His revealed law (the Bible, 2 Timothy 3:16–17). In Proverbs 8:14–16, wisdom (God's law) says, "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." Thus, we see that by beginning with the revealed law and applying reason to the natural laws, we can discover the laws of God and His design for civil government.

This concept of discovering the established civil laws of God in accordance with the natural and revealed laws (as opposed to man inventing his own laws based on reason alone) was adopted by several legal philosophers known as the "Constitutional Scholars" (including John Milton, Edward Coke, Hugo Grotius, John Locke, Montesquieu, and William Blackstone).<sup>5</sup> John Locke (1632–1704) elaborated on this approach as seen in his writings when he says:



*The law of nature stands as an eternal rule to all men, legislator as well as others. The rules that they make for other men's actions must . . . be conformable to the law of nature, i.e., to the will of God. . . . Laws human must be made according to the general laws of nature and without contradiction to any positive law of Scripture, otherwise they are ill made.<sup>6</sup>*

William Blackstone offered his supporting insights by writing:

*Man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator; for he is entirely a dependent being. . . . And consequently, as man depends absolutely upon his Maker for everything, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his Maker's will. This will of his Maker is called the law of nature. . . . It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this. . . . The doctrines thus delivered we call the revealed or Divine law and they are to be found only in the Holy Scriptures. . . . Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws.<sup>7</sup>*



In order to avoid confusion and contradiction when using the Bible as a source book for civil law, it is important to identify the different forms of Biblical law and determine which are relevant to civil government. David Barton elaborates on this in an article titled, “The Ten Commandments: the Moral Law for Nations” where he states that there are four types of Biblical law: ceremonial law, moral law, judicial law, and social compact law. Ceremonial laws are unique to Israel as types and shadows of Christ’s future death on the cross. Noah Webster described these laws as “the Mosaic institutions which prescribe the external rites and ceremonies to be observed by the Jews.” For Christians, these laws have been fulfilled by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and are therefore no longer binding on us (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 10:4–14). Moral laws are God’s declaration of what is morally acceptable to Him. Since God’s character is unchanging (Hebrews 13:8) and Christ did not abolish the Law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17), God’s moral law does not change. Therefore, moral law is just as applicable to New Testament Christians as it was when it was first delivered over 3,500 years ago (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). Judicial laws are the civil and statutory laws that take the moral law and assign penalties for its violation. They are distinct from the moral law, as evidenced by the fact that the Ten Commandments attach no judicial penalty to any of its commands. These laws apply only to civil government and can and do change. For example, in John 8:1–11 the scribes and Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus and demand that she be stoned according to the Old Testament law. Christ, however, gave no death sentence, though He still viewed it as sin. However, it is important to note that moral law and judicial law overlap in that the penalties for a violation of moral law should be moral (i.e., the punishment should fit the crime - Exodus 21:22-25; Leviticus 24:19-20; Deuteronomy 19:15-21). Unlike moral law (absolute rights and wrongs), social compact law involves relative rights and wrongs based on society’s agreement (e.g., speed limits, parking regulations, municipal ordinances, etc.). This is law enacted “by the consent of the governed” and can only regulate things not covered by moral law. An example of this type of law is seen in Boaz’s approach to marrying Ruth (Ruth 4:7). Thus, when establishing law, legislators should look to the unchanging moral laws of God as their basis while viewing the judicial and social compact laws as non-binding examples of law in their respective cultural and historical settings.<sup>8</sup>

The third God-ordained purpose of civil government—punishing evil—is an implied necessity for accomplishing the first two purposes. Romans 13:3–4 says, “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. . . if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” Proverbs 24:25 says, “But to them that rebuke him [the wicked] shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them.” Just as the government is to look to the moral law of God when determining what is to be protected as a God-given right, so it must also do when determining what is to be punished as a threat to God-given rights (i.e., evil).

### SUMMARY

In this chapter we learned that civil government is (1) a consequence of the Fall; (2) God’s idea—it is accountable to and derives its authority from Him; (3) a positive force in a fallen world—we are commanded to submit to it; and (4) a minister of God’s law of coercive justice to protect our ability to serve Him and enjoy the resulting blessings.

## Chapter 3

### CIVIL RULERS—GOD’S MINISTERS

#### GOD’S IDEAS ABOUT WHO SHOULD RULE

Since civil government is God’s idea and its leaders are accountable to Him, it is vital that a nation’s civil rulers are able to fulfill the responsibilities that God has placed on civil government. Based on the example of Scripture, rulers are established according to the consent of the people (Deuteronomy 1:13–15; 17:14–15; Judges 8:22; 9:6; 11:8, 11; 1 Samuel 8:5; 10:20–24; 11:15; 12:1, 12–14; 2 Samuel 26:18; 1 Kings 1; 12:16–24; 2 Kings 14:21; 1 Chronicles 12:38; 2 Chronicles 23:3). The people are granted this right in order to meet their responsibility to God for the conduct of their government. Just as God directs the hearts of kings (Proverbs 21:1), He also directs the heart of the people to select their rulers according to His plan for judging or blessing a nation. To assist men in choosing their civil

rulers, God’s Word lists several qualities that indicate godly leadership with the potential to fulfill civil government’s God-given responsibilities.

### CHARACTER

In Exodus 18:21–22, Moses’s father-in-law gave him the following godly advice from which we can derive several principles for selecting our own rulers today: “Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.” Here we see that it is advisable to “provide [as rulers] out of all the people able men”; that is, select a leader from among the citizenry based on an evaluation of his fitness to rule. The term “able men” refers to adult males. God’s design is that adult males lead a society (Isaiah 3:12). These men are to be natural leaders based on their distinguished reputation for valor, wealth, skill, etc. These men must also “fear God” (believe in their accountability to God for their actions), be “of truth” (marked by stability, certainty, trustworthiness), and “hate dishonest gain” (personally hate plunder).

Moses, speaking on behalf of God, instructed the Israelites in Deuteronomy 1:13–15: “Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do. So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you.” These men were to be selected based on their wisdom (intelligence, prudence, cleverness, and skill), understanding (ability to distinguish between good and evil), and experience (“known among your tribes”—i.e., familiarity with matters relevant to the position).

Proverbs 31:3–5 says, “Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.” We see here two additional qualifications for civil rulers: being a one-woman man and refusing alcohol.

### CONDUCT

Just as God gives us guidelines in His Word about *who* should rule, He also



instructs us *how* they should rule. By examining the differences between the Hebrew words used for “rule” in Genesis, we can gain significant insight into the responsibilities of a civil ruler. In Genesis 1:28 the word for rule means literally to tread down, to subjugate, and in Genesis 3:16 it means to govern, to manage, to rule. The former refers to mankind being greater than and superior to the rest of creation, and therefore it exists for man’s benefit. This word means to consume and take from. It has the idea of taking bread out of an oven. Mankind is the dictator of creation (though God is still ultimately in control) in that non-mankind creation has no “rights.”

The latter word for rule refers to the accountability of a husband for his wife before God (see earlier in Genesis 3), and he is therefore granted authority over her. However, this authority is delegated as a managerial authority, not as a dominating, consuming authority. The implication is love and caretaking, not selfish exploitation—seeking the good of the subject. This word is also used to describe the sun regulating the daytime and the moon regulating the night, as well as Cain mastering his sin, the management of goods (Genesis 24:2), political rule (Genesis 37:8; Exodus 21:8; Deuteronomy 15:6; Isaiah 19:4; 1 Kings 4:4–21), and self-rule (Proverbs 16:32). It has the idea of effectively managing what you were entrusted with in order to accomplish the will of your higher authority.

In addition to governing for the good of the governed, the civil ruler who would serve as God’s minister must govern in a manner that reflects His nature. Specifically, he must rule according to God’s knowledge and wisdom (Ephesians 1:17; Psalm 19:7–11), righteousness (Psalm 11:7; Proverbs 29:2), justice (Romans 2:6–8; 13:3–4), goodness (Psalm 34:8; Romans 13:4), impartiality (Deuteronomy 10:17; 1 Peter 1:17), and sovereignty (John 19:10–11; Luke 20:25). He rules according to God’s knowledge and wisdom by applying the laws of nature and revelation effectively to civil government (Proverbs 8:15–16; Deuteronomy 17:18–20; King Solomon); according to God’s righteousness by conducting his personal life and making decisions according to God’s standard of holiness (Proverbs 16:12; 31:3–5; Ecclesiastes 10:17; Deuteronomy 17:17); according to God’s justice by executing justice and defending the weak (Psalm 82:2–4; Proverbs 31:9), as well as by swiftly enforcing punishment as a deterrent to crime (Ecclesiastes 8:11); according to God’s goodness by serving the people and seeking their welfare rather than his own power and prestige at the people’s expense (Luke 22:25–26; 1 Samuel 8:11–17; Deuteronomy

17:16–17); according to God’s impartiality by not engaging in corruption or allowing external forces to shape his judgment (Deuteronomy 16:19); and according to God’s sovereignty by acknowledging the authority of God (Psalm 2:11–12) and his accountability to Him (2 Samuel 23:3–4) while governing only in the areas delegated to him (2 Chronicles 26).

A part of ruling according to God’s sovereignty is recognizing that there is a covenantal mutual obligation between the ruler and the people in the sight of God (2 Samuel 5:3; 1 Chronicles 11:3; 2 Chronicles 23:2–3; 2 Kings 11:17; Ecclesiastes 8:2). The people are held accountable by God for their leaders’ failures to fulfill their responsibilities (Deuteronomy 1:16; 16:19; 2 Chronicles 1:2; Ecclesiastes 5:8; Habakkuk 1:4; Micah 3:9–12; Zechariah 7:9; Hosea 5:10–11; Jeremiah 15:4), and the ruler also bears part of the punishment for the wickedness of the people (1 Samuel 12:24–25), necessitating a system of proactive mutual accountability. One or two isolated acts of violating his responsibilities do not strip a ruler of the sovereign powers given by God and the people. In order to annul the covenant with the people, a ruler has to willingly commit such a breach of the covenant that if the people had known about it beforehand, they would have never given him the power in the first place. An example of the differences between the two can be seen by contrasting David (killed Uriah) with Saul (did not destroy the Amalekites, botched the offering, killed the priests of the Lord, and persecuted David).

What about lower-level government officials? Are lower magistrates stewards of God or merely deputies of the higher levels of government? The Scriptures make clear that they represent God, not their superior ruler, and are therefore ultimately accountable to Him. The Lord rebukes lower judges throughout the Bible (Isaiah 1:17, 21; 5:7; 10:2; 59:14; Ezekiel 18:8; Amos 5:7; Micah 3:9; Habakkuk 1:4; Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:17; 17:11; Exodus 23:2; Psalm 82). Christ acknowledged the divine source of Pilate’s authority, even though he was a “deputy” ruler of Caesar.

### EXAMPLES

Two passages of Scripture that describe the ideal Biblical ruler are Isaiah 11:1–5 and Proverbs 29. In Isaiah 11 the ideal godly ruler described is Christ, who fulfills all six responsibilities:

The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom

and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge [knowledge and wisdom] and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD [sovereignty]: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears [justice and impartiality]: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor [righteousness and goodness], and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth [justice and impartiality]: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked [justice]. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins [righteousness].

Proverbs 29 compares and contrasts the type of men who make good and evil rulers, and the qualities they exhibit. The good ruler is said to exhibit the six responsibilities: wisdom (vv. 3, 8–9, 11, 18); righteousness (vv. 1–3, 6–7, 10, 14, 16, 22–23); justice (vv. 4, 26, 27); goodness (vv. 2, 18, 26–27); impartiality (vv. 4, 12, 24); and sovereignty (v. 25).

### SUMMARY

Since the people are given the responsibility of establishing their own rulers, God has laid out requirements for those who would lead: citizenship, a distinguished reputation, an adult male, a sense of accountability to God, consistent and trustworthy, hates corruption, intelligent, skilled, experienced, able to distinguish between right and wrong, a one-woman man, and a non-alcoholic. All civil rulers are responsible to govern in a manner that reflects God's nature.

## Chapter 4

### TYRANNY—SATAN'S PERVERSION

#### SATAN'S LIES ABOUT CIVIL GOVERNMENT

In John 8:31–59 Jesus states that His Word enables men to “know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Those of God accept and speak His truth

(v. 40) and rule according to His will (v. 42); those of Satan accept and speak his lies (v. 44) while rejecting those who rule according to God's will (vv. 40–44). As the father of lies (v. 44), Satan perverts God's truth in every way he can, including in civil government. This satanic perversion of God's design for civil government will be referred to as tyranny throughout



this discussion and is defined as organized force posing as civil government that seeks its own will in rebellion against God (Psalm 2:1–3). It is based on the lies that sovereign law originates from the government and governing authority is derived from might alone (Daniel 4:30).

## ORIGIN

The seeds of tyranny were sown in Satan's first lie (Genesis 3:1–5): "Ye shall not surely die." By rejecting God's law of liberty (rights-responsibilities), he claimed that man can "be as gods, knowing good and evil." This is why a fundamental belief in God is the leading idea that permeates the entire philosophy of Biblical civil government and is what makes its cause so sacred. It originated from God's desire to protect liberty from the destructiveness of Satan's lie. On the other hand, as explained by C. F. Bastiat, proponents of tyranny say: "We have but little faith in Providence, for we see that the natural laws lead to an abyss . . . We pretend to believe in God, but in reality we believe only in ourselves . . . we hold our social plans as infinitely superior to the plans of Providence."<sup>9</sup>

They believe that by rejecting the authority and wisdom of God's design, they can create a paradise of their own that is better than what God has created. John Lennon popularized Satan's lie through his song "Imagine," which dreams of a future Godless utopia: "Imagine there's no heaven; it's easy if you try. No hell below us, above us only sky. Imagine all the people living for today. Imagine there's no countries; it isn't hard to do—nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too." John Lennon later said his song was "virtually the Communist Manifesto."<sup>10</sup> William Penn observed the

inescapable choice that all men have faced since the fall: “Those who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants.”<sup>11</sup>



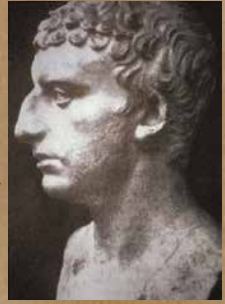
*The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of Tyranny. - James Madison (Federalist 47)*

The 1599 edition of the Geneva Bible commentary notes (King James replaced this version with his 1611 Authorized Version because its wording was critical of tyrannical kings and threatened his belief in the “divine right of kings” theory) offer some interesting insights that expose the earliest appearances of tyranny in history. In regard to the pre-Flood world (Genesis 6:4) the Geneva Bible reads, “There were giants [or tyrants] in the earth in those days...these were mighty men, which in old time were men of renown [which usurped authority over others, and did degenerate from that simplicity, wherein their fathers lived].” The rise of the first great tyrant, Nimrod, is described in Genesis 10:8–9: “And Cush begat Nimrod, who began to be mighty in the earth [meaning, a cruel oppressor and tyrant]. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, wherefore it is said, as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. [His tyranny came into a proverb as hated both of God and man: for he passed not to commit cruelty even in God’s presence].” The Geneva Bible goes on to explain that the builders of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:4) “were moved with pride and ambition, thinking to prefer their own glory to God’s honor.”<sup>12</sup>

The name Nimrod comes from the Hebrew verb *marad* meaning “to rebel” or “we will revolt.” This may not be his actual name but a derisive term, since some scholars believe he may have been the king of Uruk, Gilgamesh. The tyrannical and rebellious nature of his empire is indicated by the phrase describing him as a “mighty hunter before the Lord” (Genesis 10:9), which means “in opposition or defiance of the Lord.” Ancient writers said that Nimrod used his tyrannical power to institute pagan worship, idolatry, and the worship of fire.<sup>13</sup>

First-century historian Titus Flavius Josephus writes of Nimrod's reign in his *Antiquities of the Jews*:

*Now the plain in which they first dwelt was called Shinar. God also commanded them to send colonies abroad, for the thorough peopling of the earth, that they might not raise seditions among themselves, but might cultivate a great part of the earth, and enjoy its fruits after a plentiful manner. . . but they, imagining the prosperity they enjoyed was not derived from the favor of God, but supposing that their own power was the proper cause of the plentiful condition they were in, did not obey him. . . . Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence upon his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if He should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! And that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers!*



According to Josephus' account, Nimrod not only acted according to Satan's first lie, but also led his people into believing it to the point where they attempted to overthrow God's power of coercive justice.

## ORDINATION

Jesus warned of the tares (the children of the wicked one) that the devil plants in order to destroy and corrupt the harvest of the children of the kingdom of God (Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43). One of the types of tares he uses is tyrannical government. Satan tries to deceive rulers into thinking that he, not God, is the source of all political power and can give it to whomever he wishes (Luke 4:5–7). This lie then gives tyrants the confidence to claim that civil government is by the king and for the king with no accountability to God (Exodus 5–12, Daniel 4:30). Governments that rebel against the sovereignty of God are established through the authority of idols and other idolatrous governments (Hosea 8:1–4).

## OPERATION

Because he is evil (John 8:44), Satan has “ordained” tyranny to be his “minister” for three perversions: (1) to facilitate the destruction of society in order to establish a “new” society; (2) to secure the freedom and prosperity of those who live according to his lies; (3) and to punish good.

Two Biblical examples of tyrannies facilitating the destruction of the existing social order in order to establish a new society are the “kings of the Gentiles”—described in Luke 22:25 as manipulating society in order to set

up a system where they are viewed as the providers of the people’s needs—and the beast from the earth (Revelation 13:16–17), who destroys the old economic system in order to establish one in which only those bearing the “mark of the beast” will be able to buy or sell. C. F. Bastiat observed that the efforts of tyrants to regulate and reshape society are often an act of war on God’s design: “The Socialists have set out in quest of an artificial organization only because they judge the natural organization of society bad or insufficient,” and “if



mankind is indeed urged on by the laws of value toward injustice; by the laws of rent toward inequality; by the laws of population toward poverty; by the laws of inheritance toward sterility—we can no longer affirm that God has made the moral as He has made the natural world—a harmonious work; we must bow the head, and confess that it has pleased Him to base it on revolting and irremediable dissonance.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau pointed out that such planners are not only rebelling against God, they are in fact seeking to become gods themselves: “Gods would be necessary in order to give laws to men. . . . He who dares to found a nation must feel himself in a condition to change human nature. . . to alter the constitution of man in order to strengthen it.” Karl Marx wrote of his desire to destroy the existing social order and then “stride through the wreckage a creator.” Plato captured the social planner’s utopian city in his work *The Republic* (380 B.C.), in which all human ills are disposed of by proper management.

An example of tyrannical government securing the freedom and prosperity of those who live wickedly is seen in the release of Barabbas, the murderer, while Christ was chosen for crucifixion (Mark 15:6–15). Proverbs 24:24

speaks of the negative impact that justifying wickedness has on a nation. The New Testament is full of examples of governments punishing good, beginning with the unjust sentencing of Christ to the cross (Mark 15:14–15) and continuing with the repeated persecutions of the early Christians (see the book of Acts and the epistles) who declared: “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).



### SUMMARY

In this chapter we learned that tyranny is (1) a consequence of the fall; (2) Satan’s lie—it rejects accountability and submission to God (Psalm 2); (3) a negative force in a fallen world (Psalm 94:16–20; Proverbs 8:13; Proverbs 24:24–25); and (4) a minister of Satan’s lies in order to glorify himself and destroy our ability to serve God and enjoy His blessings.

Tyranny claims that God’s design is flawed and needs correction. However, the Bible teaches that in His social laws of responsibility and coercive justice God has displayed goodness, simplicity, and splendor just as amazing as the harmonies observed in the laws of science. Since the Fall has marred God’s creation, He has provided the perfect remedy in the King of kings—Jesus Christ. All civil governments receive their sovereignty from Him, and to the extent that they rule according to His nature, they act as His ministers in restoring God’s order to society.



# Chapter 5

## TYRANTS—GOD’S ENEMIES

Just as tyrannical governments operate according to Satan’s lies in opposition to God’s design for civil government, so rulers of these governments—tyrants—act in enmity against God and incur His wrath upon both themselves and the people that support their rebellious leadership (2 Chronicles 19:2). They operate on the belief that man, through the shaping power of the state alone, can be perfected, and wickedness, evils, and sufferings (as defined by the state) can be purged from society and a utopia created. This is in defiance of the gospel message. If creation indeed exhibits God’s glory and wisdom, then the social order, like everything else, attests to the existence of divinely placed, harmonious laws that vindicate the ways of God to man.

God’s Word uses strong language to describe His opinion of such rulers. Psalm 109:8 says, “Let his days be few; and let another take his office.” Proverbs 16:12 states that “it is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness.” Proverbs 17:15 (“He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD”) and Isaiah 1:23–24 (“Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them. Therefore saith the LORD, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies”) further assert the principle that “I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery” (Isaiah 61:8). In order to warn nations about the consequences of following tyrants, the Scriptures list the character qualities and conduct by which they are identified.

### CHARACTER

Isaiah 1:21–31 labels tyrants as “rebellious,” “companions of thieves,” those who “loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards,” as well as the Lord’s “adversaries” and enemies,” “transgressors,” “sinners,” and “they that forsake the LORD.” According to Isaiah 5:20–24, tyrants “are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight,” “are mighty to drink wine, and

men of strength to mingle strong drink,” and “have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.” Isaiah 13:11 says, “And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.” Here “terrible” could also be translated as “tyrants” or “despots”; tyrants are marked by haughtiness.

Job 34:27–30 says that tyrants are those that have “turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways” and are marked by hypocrisy. Proverbs 28:16 describes tyrants as lacking understanding: “The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor.” Ecclesiastes 10:16 teaches that immaturity and valuing pleasure before work are also marks of tyrants: “Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning!” Micah 2:1 adds that they obsessively plan to accomplish wicked schemes because they believe that “might makes right.” “Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand.”

Christ also mentioned some of the qualities of tyrants. In Luke 22:25–26 He said that “the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.” Jesus tells a parable in Luke 18:1–5 in which He described a judge who “feared not God, neither regarded man” and whose only motive for enforcing coercive justice was personal welfare.

## CONDUCT

At God’s direction, the prophet Samuel warned the people of Israel of the “manner” of a tyrannical king (1 Samuel 8:11–17):

He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself...he will take your daughters... he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

Job 34:27–30 states that tyrants: “cause the cry of the poor to come unto

[God]” and ensnare the people over whom they rule. Psalm 58:2 says to the tyrant: “Ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.” A tyrant is also said to be “he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just” (Proverbs 17:15).

The prophet Isaiah said that tyrants: “judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them” (Isaiah 1:23); “call evil good, and good evil,” and “justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him” (Isaiah 5:20, 23); “decree unrighteous decrees,” “write grievousness which they have prescribed,” “turn aside the needy from judgment,” “take away the right from the poor,” “prey on widows,” “rob the fatherless” (Isaiah 10:1–2); smite “the people in wrath with a continual stroke,” and rule “the nations in anger” with unhindered persecution (Isaiah 14:6).



*“It is when people  
forget God that  
tyrants forge  
their chains.”*

*-Patrick Henry*

Jeremiah also described the conduct of tyrannous rulers: They do not “execute judgment between a man and his neighbor,” they oppress “the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,” shed “innocent blood,” “walk after other gods,” “steal,” “murder,” “commit adultery,” and “swear falsely” (Jeremiah 7:5–9); a tyrant “buildeth his house by unrighteousness,” “useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work,” builds himself a large and expensive house, and his eyes and heart “are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it” (Jeremiah 22:13–14, 17). Finally, in Micah 2:2, the tyrants are described as those who “covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.”

## EXAMPLES

Throughout Scripture, the wicked kings of the earth consistently advanced and promoted themselves to the point of demanding to be worshipped as gods. This started with the first human king, Nimrod (Genesis 10). He built the ancient cities of Babel and Nineveh (10:8–12), among others, and became a deity in the Babylonian religion. There is a traceable progression of human god-kings straight through both testaments of the Bible: Moses confronted Pharaoh, and all the kings in that Egyptian line were considered gods; Babylonian, Persian, and Greco-Macedonian kings demanded worship; Ezekiel rebuked the ancient king of Tyre for desiring to set his throne above God's; Roman Caesars were worshipped as divine beings, and Nero considered himself to be the incarnation of Apollo the sun god; and Daniel prophesied of a future king—the “little horn”—who would exalt himself above God.



## SUMMARY

In this chapter we learned that (1) God has warned us of the specific traits that mark a tyrant and (2) the Scriptures are filled with examples of tyrants ruling in rebellion against God.

# PART TWO: THE BIBLICAL PRACTICE OF GOVERNMENT



## Chapter 6

### BIBLICALLY ASSESSING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

A well-known pastor and theologian once said:

Over the past several centuries, people have mistakenly linked democracy and political freedom to Christianity. That's why many contemporary evangelicals believe the American Revolution was completely justified, both politically and scripturally. They follow the arguments of the Declaration of Independence, which declares that life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are Divinely endowed rights. Therefore those believers say such rights are part of a Christian worldview, worth attaining and defending at all cost including military insurrection at times. But such a position is contrary to the clear teachings and commands of Romans 13:1–7. So the United States was actually born out of a violation of New Testament principles, and any blessings God has bestowed on America have come in spite of that disobedience by the Founding Fathers.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast, many of our nation's early leaders claimed that the American Revolution was entirely consistent with Biblical principles: "We have this day restored the Sovereignty to Whom all men ought to be obedient. He reigns in heaven and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come"<sup>15</sup> (Samuel Adams said this as the Declaration of Independence was being signed).

*The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence, were...the general principles of Christianity... Now I will avow, that I then believed and now believe that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God; and that those principles of liberty are as unalterable as human nature and our terrestrial, mundane system.*<sup>16</sup> -John Adams



“The highest glory of the American Revolution was that it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity”<sup>17</sup> (John Quincy Adams). In fact, the motto of the American Revolution was “No king but King Jesus!”<sup>18</sup>



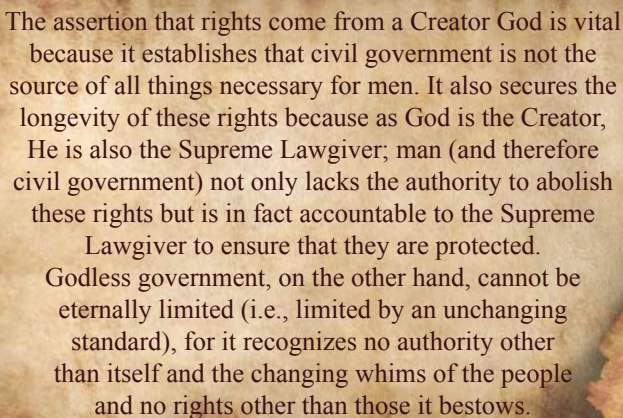
Was the American Revolution Biblically justified? We will assess the Declaration of Independence (the philosophical and theological foundation of the American Revolution), in order to determine if it is, in fact, consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

### UNALIENABLE RIGHTS

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.*

As discussed in the first chapter, both divine revelation and the natural universe inform mankind of God's law and therefore leave every person without excuse (Romans 1:20). That is why these truths are "self-evident." The phrase "all men are created equal" stems from traditional American philosophy's fundamental belief that man is created by God, and his spiritual nature is of supreme value and importance compared with the material world. This philosophy teaches that belief in God as our Creator is the fundamental link that unites individuals as equals into a society and means equal responsibility to God and His law, rather than equal possessions or abilities.

Therefore, in order to fulfill this responsibility to God, men have been "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" (see chapter two).



The assertion that rights come from a Creator God is vital because it establishes that civil government is not the source of all things necessary for men. It also secures the longevity of these rights because as God is the Creator, He is also the Supreme Lawgiver; man (and therefore civil government) not only lacks the authority to abolish these rights but is in fact accountable to the Supreme Lawgiver to ensure that they are protected. Godless government, on the other hand, cannot be eternally limited (i.e., limited by an unchanging standard), for it recognizes no authority other than itself and the changing whims of the people and no rights other than those it bestows.

This understanding of the source of our rights is reflected in the writings of several of the Founding Fathers. John Dickinson (Constitution signer) defined an unalienable right as one "which God gave to you and which no inferior power has a right to take away."<sup>19</sup> John Adams said that unalienable rights are "rights...antecedent to all earthly government; rights that cannot be repealed or restrained by human laws; rights derived from the Great Legislator of the Universe."<sup>20</sup>

Alexander Hamilton wrote:

*The Sacred Rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the Hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.*<sup>21</sup>



The Report of Conventions of Towns, Essex County, Massachusetts 1778 said, “Those rights which are unalienable, and of that importance, are called the rights of conscience. We have duties, for the discharge of which we are accountable to our Creator and benefactor, which no human power can cancel.” Thomas Jefferson, the man who penned the Declaration of Independence, said, “The God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time; the hand of force may destroy, but cannot disjoin them.”<sup>22</sup>

The three unalienable rights listed in the Declaration are specifically mentioned in Scripture: life (Genesis 2:7; 9:6); liberty (Galatians 5:1, 13; 1 Peter 2:16; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Genesis 1:26–30); and the pursuit of happiness (Ecclesiastes 3:12–13). Note that the pursuit of happiness is not a condition; it is an ideal of self-development and growth. The pursuit of happiness involves the freedom of each and every individual to respond voluntarily in any associative or cooperative activity socially, economically, religiously, or politically. Each individual has the right, from their Creator, to live life and “pursue happiness” (i.e., have the freedom of opportunity to strive to realize to the full his own highest potential with regard to all aspects of life) from the beginning of life to its end.

## SLAVERY

Many who criticize the claim that our nation was founded on Biblical principles point to the existence and legal protection of the practice of slavery as being inconsistent with the Scriptures and the idea of being created equal (e.g., Exodus 21:16). However, if we look at the writings and lives of the Founders, we discover that many were actually quite opposed to the institution of slavery. For example, John Adams wrote, “I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence for the illumination



of the ignorant, and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth.”<sup>23</sup> George Washington said, “I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it [slavery].”<sup>24</sup> Many colonies passed antislavery laws in the early 1770s, but King George III and his British governors vetoed them. Because of this, many anti-slavery Founders viewed independence as the best hope for fighting and abolishing slavery. Benjamin Franklin called slavery “an atrocious debasement of human nature” and “a source of serious evils.”<sup>25</sup> He and Benjamin Rush founded the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery in 1774. John Jay, who was the president of a similar society in New York, believed that “the honour of the states, as well as justice and humanity, in my opinion, loudly call upon them to emancipate these unhappy people. To contend for our own liberty, and to deny that blessing to others, involves an inconsistency not to be excused.”<sup>26</sup> John Adams called slavery a “foul contagion in the human character” and “an evil of colossal magnitude.”<sup>27</sup> James Madison called it “the most oppressive dominion ever exercised by man over man.”<sup>28</sup>

Thomas Jefferson initially composed a paragraph for the Declaration of Independence in which he condemned the British crown for protecting the slave trade. Unfortunately, it was deleted due to objections from South Carolina and Georgia. It stated:



*He [the king of Britain] has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the CHRISTIAN king of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where MEN should be bought & sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce: and that this assemblage of horrors*

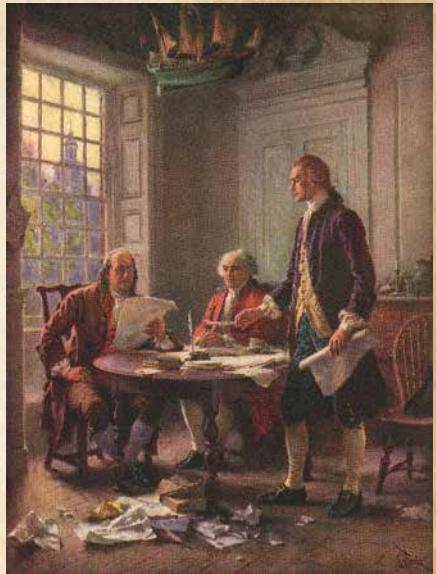
*might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people [the slaves living in the South] to rise in arms among us, and to purchase that liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people upon whom he also obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people, with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.*<sup>29</sup>

Regardless of the obvious inconsistency, the Declaration's claim that all men are created equal remained a clear rebuke to slavery. The calls for independence were understood to have clear implications for slavery; though it failed to go far enough in clearly condemning and abolishing slavery, its intent and result were antislavery. James Otis wrote in 1761, "The colonists are by the law of nature free born, as indeed all men are, white and black, does it follow that it is the right to enslave a man because he is black?"<sup>30</sup> Following independence, many states passed legislation restricting or banning the institution.<sup>31</sup>

## CIVIL GOVERNMENT

*That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...*

As discussed in chapter 2, the purpose of civil government is to protect the God-given rights of the people who have entrusted their leaders with that responsibility. The idea of "just powers" implies that the Founders believed that God designed government to be limited in order to preserve liberty. This is affirmed in 1 Samuel 8:10–18, where the nation of Israel is warned of the dangers to liberty posed by expanding the powers of government. The reference to "just powers" are those that the people grant to their government that they deem necessary to secure their unalienable rights. The concept of "the consent of the governed" mentioned here refers to the fact that nations are responsible to God for the governing authorities that they support and therefore have the right to establish their own system of government and rulers. As Patrick Henry put it, "Rulers are the servants and agents of the people; the people are their



masters.”<sup>32</sup> This principle is consistent with Jesus’ words in Luke 22:25–26 in which he says that “he that is chief, as he that doth serve.”

## TYRANNY

*That whenever any Form of Government  
becomes destructive of these ends...*

In chapter 4 we discussed the concept of tyranny—there are instances when civil government becomes corrupted by Satan’s lies to the point where it is actually operating in opposition to its divinely appointed purpose. In his interactions with the American colonies, King George III repeatedly violated the Charter of 1606, which guaranteed the colonists their rights as Englishmen and also declared them outside of his sphere of protection, effectively kicking them out of the British Empire. His blatant and repeated violation of his oath before God made him a tyrant in the colonists’ eyes rather than a king.

While appealing to 1 Samuel 15:23 as his authority, the influential minister Jonathan Mayhew said of King George III’s Stamp Act:



*The king is as much bound by his oath not to infringe the legal rights of the people, as the people are bound to yield subjection to him. From whence it follows that as soon as the prince sets himself above the law, he loses the king in the tyrant. He does, to all intents and purposes, un-king himself.*<sup>33</sup>

Samuel Adams concurred with Minister Mayhew in his statement “I scruple not to affirm it as my opinion that his [King George III’s] heart is more obdurate [stubborn], and his disposition towards the people of America is more unrelenting and malignant than was that of Pharaoh towards the Israelites in Egypt.”<sup>34</sup>

## REVOLUTION

*...it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government...Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for*

*light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States... In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them... We have reminded them... We have appealed... we have conjured them... They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and to consanguinity. We must, therefore... hold them... Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.*

In light of the claims by some that the American Revolution was in violation of Romans 13:1–7, was the Declaration of Independence a document condoning a rebellion against God-ordained authority, or was it a rightful overthrow of tyrannical government? The answer depends on which of the two approaches to the meaning of “ordained of God” in Romans 13 is accepted. Timothy and Chuck Baldwin in their book *Romans 13: The True Meaning of Submission* present a logical argument, explained in this way: (1) God’s ordination of government is limited and conditional, and therefore the citizen has an inherent duty to engage and correct government to ensure that it operates within its covenant limitations; or (2) God’s ordination of government is unlimited and unconditional, and therefore the citizen should willingly submit to whatever the government does. The key to determining which approach is correct lies in the answer to the question “Is someone superior to government?” As discussed in chapter 2, God is (Psalm 22:28). Government is therefore limited, and obedience and

submission to it is conditional—the government must be promoting righteousness and justice (Romans 13; Proverbs 16:12). If God says that He loathes unjust governments and will judge them, how can they be His ordained ministers? True, they were granted that position, but once they have proven to fail at it, they must be replaced or incur God’s judgment on the nation. To support the second approach is to (1) ignore the conditions and purposes God placed on government; (2) accept the fact that no person living on this earth has any absolute, secured rights, as given by God; (3) accept that no one has any right to resist, change, petition, or participate in governmental change or action; (4) accept that might makes right—whoever wins power obtains the ordination of God; and (5) voluntarily put oneself into slavery.<sup>35</sup>



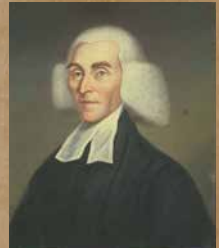
As discussed in chapter 2, Christians are forbidden to overthrow the institution of government and live in anarchy, but they are not required to blindly submit to every human claim to sovereignty. The institution of government is ordained by God, but this does not mean that God has approved every specific organization/person claiming to be a civil government/ruler. God is disgusted by and will judge oppressive rulers (Isaiah 10:1–4; 14:5–6). Likewise, God has also ordained church and family governments, but not everything that men call a “church” or “family” is approved by Him. Only if an institution meets His definition does it have His authority. Since good government is to safeguard the unalienable rights of the people, if it fails to do so the people have a right to modify the government and, if necessary, replace it. In so doing, they must never be without government and must work through their lower-level leaders. (John Calvin, Martin Luther, and

John Knox promoted this idea, and this is the course that the American colonists took.)

Public officials who exceed the limits of the powers delegated to them by the law violate the people's God-given, unalienable rights and make themselves defaulting trustees, usurpers, oppressors, and tyrants. They replace Rule-by-Law (God) with Rule-by-Man. By acting lawlessly, they free the people from any duty of submission to them because legally and morally, under Rule-by-Law, submission by the people is required only to law and not to law-defying public servants (Proverbs 16:12) who are a snare to the people (Job 34:24–30). The people are therefore obligated to oppose all violators of these rights, and to fail to do so is to defy duty to God as the giver of these rights and invites His judgment upon the nation (Micah 3:9–12; 2 Kings 24:3–4; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Jeremiah 25:12–32; Isaiah 3:1-3, 6, 7, 11; 13:11; 14:21–25). Since they operate in opposition to the God-ordained purpose for civil government, tyrannical governments are actually the violators of Romans 13, and those who resist them in a lawful manner are actually supporting God's ordination.

Reverend Jacob Duché (first chaplain of the Continental Congress) argued in favor of the American position, explaining:

*Inasmuch as all rulers are in fact the servants of the public and appointed for no other purpose than to be "a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well" (c.f., Rom. 13:3), whenever this Divine order is inverted—whenever these rulers abuse their sacred trust by unrighteous attempts to injure, oppress, and enslave those very persons from whom alone, under God, their power is derived—does not humanity, does not reason, does not Scripture, call upon the man, the citizen, the Christian of such a community to "stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free" (Galatians 5:1). The Apostle enjoins us to "submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake," but surely a submission to the unrighteous ordinances of unrighteous men, cannot be "for the Lord's sake," for "He loveth righteousness and His countenance beholds the things that are just."<sup>36</sup>*



The Scriptures provide several examples of leaders who rebelled against tyranny in obedience to God: Moses, Gideon, Ehud, Jephthah, David (against Absalom), Jehoiada the priest (against

Athaliah, 2 Kings 11), Samson, and Deborah (praised in Hebrews 11). The familiarity of the Founding Fathers with this Scriptural precedent is evidenced by Benjamin Franklin's proposal for the Seal of the United States of America: "Moses lifting up his wand and dividing the Red Sea, and Pharaoh in his chariot overwhelmed with the waters. This motto: 'Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God.'" Thomas Jefferson proposed: "The children of Israel in the wilderness, led by a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night." The seal as finally approved by the committee was:

Pharaoh sitting in an open chariot, a crown on his head and a sword in his hand, passing through the divided waters of the Red Sea in pursuit of the Israelites; rays from a Pillar of Fire in the cloud, expressive of the Divine presence and command, beaming on Moses, who stands on the shore and extending his hand over the sea, causes it to overwhelm Pharaoh.<sup>37</sup>

As referenced in the Declaration, the American colonists diligently pursued reconciliation from 1765 to 1776 in an attempt to restore their current governing authorities to fulfilling their God-ordained role (Appeal of 1775, May 1776 "Olive Branch Petition"—each submitted in a submissive, conciliatory tone). John Witherspoon (a theologian and signer of the Declaration of Independence) testified to this desire for restoration:



*On the part of America, there was not the most distant thought of subverting the government or of hurting the interest of the people of Great Britain, but of defending their own privileges from unjust encroachment; there was not the least desire of withdrawing their allegiance from the common sovereign [King George III] till it became absolutely necessary—and indeed, it was his own choice.<sup>38</sup>*

William Pitt (in the House of Lords, 1775) admitted:

*When your lordships look at the papers transmitted us from America, when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own...all attempts to impose servitude on such men, to establish despotism over such a mighty continental nation—must be vain—must be futile.<sup>39</sup>*



Sadly, the British Crown responded to these appeals with military actions, and the Americans took up arms in self-defense. In the minds of the Colonies, Great Britain was seen as a foreign power invading America. David Barton suggests that the colonists defended their homeland, making their cause a conservative counterrevolution against the British Crown's attempt to overthrow the legitimate colonial governments. In that sense, then, it is more accurate to name the conflict that gave birth to the United States of America the "American War for Independence" rather than the "American Revolution."<sup>40</sup>

*We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to...do all...Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do...*

Because the colonists were resisting tyranny under the authority of their governing representatives in an attempt to restore their government to God's ordained design, they believed that their actions were justified before God. They also believed that though God would not bless an offensive war, He would bless the efforts of self-defense (2 Samuel 10:12; Nehemiah 4:13–14, 20–21; Zechariah 9:8): "'Tis immortality to sacrifice ourselves for the salvation of our country. We fear not death"<sup>41</sup> (John Hancock). The Founders rated their economic interests and security as secondary to liberty and independence. The sacrifices of the Continental troops at Valley Forge and throughout the war further evidenced this conviction. William Pitt observed of the colonists: "[They] prefer poverty with liberty, to golden chains and sordid affluence.... It is the alliance of God and nature—immutable, eternal, fixed as the firmament of Heaven!"<sup>42</sup>

## SUMMARY

In this chapter we learned (1) The two "revolutions" of 1776 were



for individual liberty and for independence from foreign rule. Many Americans tried to secure the former under British rule, but realizing it to be futile, resorted to the latter after exhausting alternatives. (2) For the anti-slavery majority of the Founders, ending slavery and/or the slave trade was an additional motivation for independence. (3) The American War for Independence was based on the idea that God is the source of all law, and fulfilling our responsibilities to Him necessitates certain unalienable rights. God has instituted civil government to safeguard those rights. When men pervert civil government by turning it into a tool to serve themselves instead of God, thereby destroying our God-given rights, it becomes tyranny and must be either altered or abolished by those who have the authority and ability to do so (i.e., the lower magistrates/elders of the people). Failure to take corrective action amounts to tacit support for the tyranny's rebellion against God and invites the judgment of God upon the nation. (4) Therefore, the colonists were not engaged in a lawless revolution against God and His standards of law and justice. It was a lawful (declared and conducted in submission to a civil government of chosen representatives and God's authority) defense of God-given rights and the God-ordained institution of civil government against a king-turned-tyrant who had clearly and repeatedly violated his responsibilities to the people.

## Chapter 7

### BIBLICALLY ASSESSING THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Psalm 33:12 begins, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD." Is our nation's government based on Biblical principles? President Truman believed so when he said, "The fundamental basis of this Nation's law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings which we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul."<sup>43</sup> In this chapter we will discuss the ways in which the U.S. Constitution provides the structural framework for and guards the Biblical foundation of God-given unalienable rights found in the Declaration of Independence.

## PROTECTS OUR GOD-GIVEN RIGHTS AGAINST TYRANNY

The Founders believed that human nature is a mixture of good and evil and is not perfectible during life on Earth, as evidenced by this statement in *Federalist 55*: “There is a degree of depravity in mankind which requires a certain degree of circumspection and distrust.” Therefore, they held that a written constitution was necessary to protect our God-given rights from the potentially destructive fallen state of man (Jeremiah 17:9). As Thomas Jefferson said, “In questions of power, then, let no more be heard of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.”<sup>44</sup>



The U.S. Constitution specifically protects our unalienable rights by (1) diluting/dividing and defining/limiting government power (all powers are enumerated; divided into three separate branches, each with checks and balances against the others; system of federalism further divides/decentralizes power); (2) establishing a democratic constitutional republic<sup>45</sup>—everyone gets an equal voice with equal rights and no special privileges (system of electing leaders is established); (3) securing unalienable rights against encroachment by both the government and the majority (enumerated powers and Bill of Rights). The Preamble of the Constitution describes its purpose: “Secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.” Founding Fathers James Madison and John Adams warned of the dangers of a system in which the majority was allowed to infringe upon the rights of the minority: “The invasion of private rights is chiefly to be apprehended, not from acts of Government contrary to the sense of its constituents, but from acts in which the Government is the mere instrument of the major number of the Constituents”<sup>46</sup> and “that the desires of the majority of the people are often for injustice and inhumanity

against the minority, is demonstrated by every page of the history of the whole world”<sup>47</sup>; (4) requiring all federal and state officials—both civil and military—to take an oath to support the Constitution only. (Military officers, ultimately controlled by the Constitution, must be obedient to the president only as his orders do not violate the Constitution. Any orders by government officials that contradict the Constitution are automatically null and void from the start and are to be resisted by the other officials, federal and state, civilian and military.) Any violation of the oath of office is “treasonable usurpation upon the power and majesty of the people”<sup>48</sup> (Alexander Hamilton). Morality does not permit violating your oath of office to accomplish some good because the end does not justify the means. Usurpation by an oath-breaking public official is therefore immoral, unconstitutional, lawless, anti-republic, anti-liberty, and anti-American. Oath-breaking officers are hostile to the security of the God-given rights of every individual, the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and everything that America stands for.

### REFLECTS A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

Man was created to be motivated to action by self-interest (i.e., he has reason). However, due to the Fall, man is by nature sinful and unable to please God (Romans 7:18), leading to a corruption of some of his reasoning ability. The only way to salvation and the eventual restoration of perfect reasoning is through the Word of God (John 1; 3:16). Since man is incapable of completely conforming to the law of God in this life, civil rulers and their subjects must check each other’s power. James Madison acknowledged this in *Federalist 51*: “But what is government itself, but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.”

When the power of the government is weak relative to that of the people, the evils of anarchy result (Articles of Confederation). When the government becomes too strong, tyranny results (British Crown). The U.S.

Constitution provides a more balanced system in which the government and the people can pursue their interests while checking each other's corrupting tendencies. This is in contrast to tyrannical political systems (such as socialism and communism) that are based on the lie that man's motivation to pursue his own interests is a defect of human nature and must be corrected by governmental force.

The Constitution also follows the Biblical concept of covenant. Samuel Rutherford in *Lex Rex* stressed that governments derive authority from God (Romans 13:1–4) and that the details and administrators of that government are established by the people. (They are accountable to God for their government, as evidenced by the fact that God will judge a nation for the actions of its government.) The people make a covenant with God when they establish their government and rulers, and their rulers in turn make a covenant with the people and God to serve as God's servants within the bounds of the law the people have made in covenant with God. The American covenant between the people and God is found in the Declaration of Independence (see chapter 6), and the covenant between the federal government and the people is found in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution: "We the people of the United States... do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." The covenant between the people and their rulers takes place when leaders take their oath of office.

Biblical teachings on caring for the poor are also reflected in the Constitution. The Founders recognized that God wants us to help the poor and underprivileged. However, they also firmly believed in the teachings of 1 Thessalonians 4:9–12 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6–10. Benjamin Franklin wrote:



*To relieve the misfortunes of our fellow creatures is concurring with the Deity; it is godlike; but, if we provide encouragement for laziness, and supports for folly, may we not be found fighting against the order of God and Nature, which perhaps has appointed want and misery as the proper punishments for, and cautions against, as well as necessary consequences of, idleness and extravagance? Whenever we attempt to amend the scheme of Providence, and to interfere with the government of the world, we had need be very circumspect, lest we do more harm than good.<sup>49</sup>*

The Founders believed very strongly that under no circumstances is the federal government to become involved in public welfare. (James Madison: “Charity is no part of the legislative duty of the government.”) They felt it would corrupt the government and also the poor. No constitutional authority exists for the federal government to participate in charity or welfare. Franklin said:

*I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion of the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is not making them easy in poverty, but leading or driving them out of it. In my youth I travelled much, and I observed in different countries, that the more public provisions were made for the poor, the less they provided for themselves, and of course became poorer. And, on the contrary, the less was done for them, the more they did for themselves, and became richer.<sup>50</sup>*

Finally, the Constitution reflects the Biblical “Newtonian” worldview of the Founding Fathers. They believed in a God who created the heavens and the earth and established fixed laws that govern both the physical world and humanity. These laws don’t change; therefore, the Constitution is valid for all ages. Col. John Eidsmoe discusses this in his book *Christianity and the Constitution* basically saying that modern men are Darwinians—they believe that life evolves, men evolve, society evolves, and therefore laws and constitutions evolve. Newtonians recognize change within cycles (cycles are due to natural laws). Darwinians hail change as the driver of perpetual change outside of the constraints of laws and cycles, leading to eventual perfection and utopia.<sup>51</sup>

The Constitution is a charter adopted by the people for defining the framework of the federated system of government composed of the national and state governments. The charter, in and of itself, is not religious; though it is true that our nation’s founding philosophy is basically religious (see chapter 6), and the Constitution was designed to protect that philosophy. This is why it can be accurately stated that the United States of America is founded upon the Bible. Though it is not expressly a “Christian” nation, it is in effect a Christian nation by virtue of its founding principles.

President John Quincy Adams pointed this out when he said:

*The self-evident truths of the natural and unalienable rights of man...and the sovereignty of the people, always subordinate to the rule of right and wrong, and always responsible to the Supreme Ruler of the universe for the rightful exercise of that power. This was the platform upon which the Constitution of the United States has been erected.<sup>52</sup>*



Not only did the nation see God and His Word as the foundation of the Constitution, they also saw Him as its Provider. The U.S. House of Representatives adopted a resolution on September 25, 1789, recommending that the president proclaim a day of Thanksgiving to God and prayer by the people of the entire nation, “acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a Constitution of government for their safety and happiness.”

### SUMMARY

In this chapter we saw that the U.S. Constitution, though not expressly a Christian document, protects the Biblical truths of the Declaration of Independence from tyrannical government and reflects a Biblical worldview in how it governs the relationship between man and government.

## Chapter 8

### BIBLICALLY ASSESSING ECONOMIC ISSUES

In determining the Biblical role of a civil government in economic affairs, it is useful to begin with the Biblical purposes of civil government in general: (1) to facilitate the peace and quiet of society; (2) to secure the rights and rewards of those who follow God’s laws; and (3) to punish evil. Focusing these purposes on economic issues, a government’s policies should be such as to maximize the well-being of its people (Romans 13:4) through the prospering of those who do “good work” and the punishment of those who

commit evil. This creates the optimal conditions for man to fulfill his God-given responsibilities (Genesis 1:28; Genesis 9:6–7).

## PRIVATE PROPERTY

**God's Ideas.** Psalm 24:1 makes it clear that all property ultimately belongs to God: “The earth is the LORD’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” However, He gave man dominion over His creation so that he could fulfill his divinely given responsibilities (Genesis 1:26–30). This was not merely dominion in a general sense but included legally protected private property ownership (Exodus 20:15, 17). The Scriptures make clear that God’s design for civil government is to protect property rights, not infringe upon them in order to accomplish its own devices (1 Samuel 8; 1 Kings 21:1–29). Some claim that, due to the example set by the early Christians (Acts 4:32–37), there is no longer Scriptural support for private property rights and that God’s new design is for society to live communally. However, this passage makes it clear that they still possessed their private property and voluntarily gave as they were able to meet the needs of others in their community of believers. There was no force and therefore no socialism. God’s design is that individuals possess and manage their own property responsibly—part of which includes giving of it generously to meet the needs of others.



**Satan's Perversions.** Satan seeks to destroy private property rights through tyrannical governments. Karl Marx wrote in his *Communist Manifesto* that “the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: abolition of private property.”<sup>53</sup> Political philosopher Ayn Rand wrote, “Socialism is the doctrine that man has no right to exist for his own sake, that his life and his work do not belong to him, but belong to society, that the only justification of his existence is his service to society, and that society may dispose of him in any way it pleases for the sake of whatever it deems to be its own tribal, collective good.”<sup>54</sup> If Satan can force man to live and work solely for the sake of the

tyrannical state, he can therefore destroy man's ability to fully follow Christ's commands and purpose.

**Why It Matters.** Private property rights are necessary for us to be able to serve God to the full extent that He intended for us (Genesis 1:26–30). Without them, the rest of our God-given rights are threatened. John Adams observed this when he said, “Property must be secured, or liberty cannot exist.”<sup>55</sup> Reverend John Witherspoon made the connection between economic freedom and spiritual freedom when he commented, “There is not a single instance in history in which civil liberty was lost, and religious liberty preserved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the same time deliver the conscience into bondage.”<sup>56</sup>

## MONEY

**God's Ideas.** The Bible makes it clear that deceptively manipulating/changing the value of an item of trade (including money) is abominable to God (Leviticus 19:35–36; Proverbs 20:10, 23). It also likens diluting the value of money (silver) to the diluting of a society's morality (Isaiah 1:22). From these passages we can conclude that God's design is that governments refrain from inflating their currencies as a short-term remedy for deficits since this practice defrauds the citizens by paying them for their goods and services with money that is actually worth less than advertised. It is a lie enforced as if it were truth.

**Satan's Perversions.** In today's economy, the most prevalent methods of enforcing this lie are through quantitative easing and fractional reserve banking. Quantitative easing is the practice central banks often use to lower interest rates and increase the money supply by providing financial institutions with large amounts of additional capital in an attempt to increase economic activity. Fractional reserve banking is a banking system in which a bank keeps only a fraction of its deposits backed by cash-on-hand and loans out the rest. This system effectively creates new



money because the money that is loaned out is not directly tied to a corresponding amount of deposited money. When these two practices are combined, the money supply rapidly increases, leading to inflation. Though this practice is heralded by many economists today as fostering economic growth, especially during periods of recession, it actually makes our problems worse by rewarding poor banking practices. This leads to malinvestment and misallocation of capital, resulting in economic bubbles and the boom-bust cycle.<sup>57</sup> More importantly, these practices are immoral because they result in a dishonest inflationary tax, are a form of counterfeiting, unjustly favor a few at the expense of the many, are done in secrecy and by force, violate our right to property (inflation reduces the value of our savings), promote the philosophy of instant gratification (easy credit and low interest rates encourage spending rather than saving), encourage corruption in politics (the ability of a government's central bank to give money away to specific organizations encourages the practice of bribing politicians), hurt savers and those on fixed incomes (including retirees), and violate the Constitution (which gives no authority for the creation of a central bank, much less the creation of fiat currency).

## THE BASIC FRACTIONAL RESERVE BANKING CYCLE

### 1. DEPOSIT

### 2. LOAN

### 3. SPEND



**AT THIS POINT:**

THERE IS \$1,900  
IN THE SYSTEM.  
THE BANK HAS \$100.

RINSE & REPEAT  
FROM STEP 1...



THERE IS \$2,710  
IN THE SYSTEM.  
THE BANK HAS \$190.

RINSE & REPEAT  
FROM STEP 1...

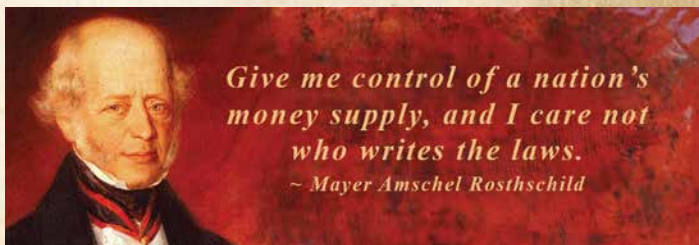


THERE IS \$3,439  
IN THE SYSTEM.  
THE BANK HAS \$271.

**Why It Matters.** The Founding Fathers realized that the issue of money is extremely important to the well-being of any society. John Quincy Adams stated:

*All the perplexities, confusions, and distresses in America arise, not from defects in the Constitution or confederation, not from want of honor or virtue, as much as from downright ignorance of the nature of coin, credit, and circulation*<sup>58</sup>

George Washington advised, “We should avoid...the depreciation of our currency; but I conceive this end would be answered, as far as might be necessary, by stipulating that all money payments should be made in gold and silver, being the common medium of commerce among nations.”<sup>59</sup> German banker Mayer Rothschild succinctly stated the incredible power of money over society when he announced, “Permit me to issue and control the money of a nation and I care not who makes its laws.”<sup>60</sup>



Lenin, always looking for methods to advance communism, observed that the best way to destroy the capitalist system is to debauch the currency. By a continuing process of inflation, governments can confiscate, secretly and unobserved, an important part of the wealth of their citizens. There is no subtler, no surer means of overturning the existing basis of society than to debauch the currency.

## DEBT

**God's Ideas.** “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.” (Romans 13:8). God's Word makes it clear that debt is something that is to be avoided because it can lead to bondage (Proverbs 22:7) and excessive debt is a mark of wickedness (Psalm 37:21). National debt is also a sign of a nation that is suffering and experiencing God's judgment (Deuteronomy 28:43–44).

*There are  
two ways to  
conquer and  
enslave a  
country.  
One is by  
the sword.  
The other  
is by debt.*


- John Adams


**Satan's Perversions.** Many politicians today claim that government deficit spending is an effective and necessary means of stimulating the economy during periods of recession and high unemployment. They point to the thousands of jobs “created” by civil works projects, expanding the size of the military, or adding a new federal department or agency funded by deficit spending. When pressed to cut spending in order to balance the budget, they claim that unemployment would soar and a recession would set in as a result of all of those government employees being laid off. However, what they fail to realize is that economic growth financed by deficit spending is unsustainable since the debt accrued will only grow with time and the interest rates will increase, forcing the government to either cut spending by an even greater amount in the future or raise taxes. Furthermore, they fail to consider Bastiat's principle of “what is seen and what is not seen”—that government spending is always going to be less efficient and productive than if it is done by private actors who are driven by the profit motive, so the economy would be better off if governments simply lowered taxes rather than spending more money on stimulus projects.<sup>61</sup>


**Why It Matters.** Just as the Scriptures say, accruing large public debts can enslave a nation to foreigners and force us to do their bidding. Additionally, making large interest payments can lead to higher taxes, which drag down the economy. Benjamin Franklin wrote, “Think what you do when you run in debt; you give to

another the power over your liberty”<sup>62</sup>; and Thomas Jefferson asserted, “I, however, place economy among the first and most important of republican virtues, and public debt as the greatest of the dangers to be feared.”<sup>63</sup>

## SOCIAL PROGRAMS

 **God’s Ideas.** God created man to work (Genesis 2:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10). However, He also wants Christians to be marked by compassion and generosity toward others in need (1 John 3:17; Acts 4:32–37). This charity is to be voluntary as a true expression of the love of Christ. God never intended for anyone to seize one person’s property by force and give it to another person, regardless of their wealth disparity, for that would be stealing (Exodus 20:15).

 **Satan’s Perversions.** Tyrannical governments and rulers appeal to our God-given sense of compassion for the poor in order to infringe upon property rights and enforce a system of legalized plundering in the name of helping the poor. Then-presidential candidate Barack Obama identified with this philosophy when he said in defense of social programs: “I think when you spread the wealth around, it is good for everybody.”<sup>64</sup> Today the United States has a large and burdensome network of social welfare programs that, through taxation, diminish individuals’ ability to fulfill their God-given duty to voluntarily help the poor. Instead, these government agencies foster dependency among those they assist rather than providing permanent solutions, while inefficiently wasting billions of taxpayer dollars on bureaucratic inefficiencies and fraud. Social programs are a sincere attempt to realize a good by the perpetual violation of what is right.

 **Why It Matters.** Government-sponsored social programs are a perversion of God’s design for civil government because (1) we are to trust in God to meet our needs, not government, and control inevitably accompanies subsidy; (2) the proper role of government is to protect equal rights, not provide equal things;

(3) self-sufficiency is a mandate from God—earn your bread by the sweat of your face, support your dependents, give generously to the poor and needy, support the work of the gospel; (4) whoever claims the “right” to redistribute wealth produced by others is claiming the “right” to treat human beings as property; and (5) social programs abolish justice and minimize private charity in order to establish public charity.

## TAXES

**God’s Ideas.** God’s Word grants civil governments the authority to tax citizens their due for the services rendered to the people (Matthew 22:15–21; Romans 13:6–7). However, Scripture also places restrictions on the type of taxes that can be levied; there is to be no inheritance tax (Ezekiel 46:18) and no church tax (Ezra 7:24). Additionally, property taxes (1 Samuel 8), income taxes (1 Timothy 5:18), and taxes that punish prosperity due to wise and righteous living (Proverbs 17:26) are not good.

**Satan’s Perversions.** Tyrannical governments and leaders appeal to jealousy and social “justice” (see discussion on social programs) in order to justify taxing the very areas that Scripture declares immune. An example of this is Hillary Clinton’s recent claim that “the rich are not paying their fair share”<sup>65</sup> in an attempt to justify raising taxes on income.


**Why It Matters.** The Founding Fathers all agreed that excessive taxation was dangerous, not only to economic prosperity but to liberty itself. After all, unjust taxes were one of the motivations for their war for independence in the first place. Thomas Jefferson argued that:


*to take from one, because it is thought that his own industry and that of his fathers has acquired too much, in order to spare to others, who, or whose fathers have not exercised equal industry and skill, is to violate arbitrarily the first principle of association, the guarantee to every one of a free exercise of his industry, and the fruits acquired by it.<sup>66</sup>*

John Dickinson cautioned, “If they have a right to levy a tax of one penny upon us, they have a right to levy a million upon us, for where does their right stop?... If they have any right to tax us, then whether our own money shall continue in our own pockets or not depends no longer on us, but on them.”<sup>67</sup> Alexander Hamilton suggested the consumption tax as a good form of taxation for government:

*It is a signal advantage of taxes on articles of consumption, that they contain in their own nature a security against excess.... If duties are too high they lessen the consumption—the collection is eluded; and the product to the treasury is not so great as when they are confined within proper and moderate bounds. This forms a complete barrier against any material oppression of the citizens, by taxes of this class, and is itself a natural limitation of the power of imposing them.*<sup>68</sup>

## FREE MARKETS AND REGULATIONS

 **God’s Ideas.** The natural human desire to act in self-interest is God-given (Genesis 1:28–30). Matthew 20:1–15 provides a good illustration of the principles of a free market economy in which each party acts in self-interest: (1) The employer and employee make a contract without interference from others; (2) the agreement with each employee is independent from what any other employee is being paid; (3) the employer has the lawful right “to do what I wish with what is my own” regarding the wages he pays—so long as he keeps his side of the agreement; (4) the fact that the eleventh-hour workers are paid a full day’s wage is a result of the employer’s freedom to be generous, not a right of entitlement to the workers; and (5) the worker has a right to reject the job offer—he has a right to sell his skills/labor to the highest bidder.

 **Satan’s Perversions.** The lie that central planners have bought into is that the self-interest instinct is not from God and must be corrected. Through their use of government force they attempt to implement a new system, substituting man’s inventions for the work of God (Psalm 2:1-3; Genesis 11:4; Daniel 7:25). This mindset views men as the materials of an economic machine that the state sets in motion, since they cannot be trusted to act on their own (Revelation 13:16–17). Political economist C. F. Bastiat

indicated how ingrained this philosophy has become in the minds of the proponents of tyranny when he wrote, “Socialism, like the old policy from which it emanates, confounds Government and society. And so, every time we object to a thing being done by Government, it concludes that we object to its being done at all.”<sup>69</sup> Some challenge this criticism of central planning by claiming that the Bible actually supports this practice, pointing to the example of Joseph’s central planning of the Egyptian economy (Genesis 41–47). While the point is valid, the claim is not valid because it overlooks the fact that the centralized planning was divinely inspired as a special intervention by God during a time of crisis (i.e., it was not the norm for the Egyptian economy). If anything, this example shows how concentrating wealth and resources in government enslaves a people.

**Why It Matters.** The issue of whether a government should have the power to impose regulations and dictate human economic activity is an extremely important one. Hilaire Belloc, an Anglo-French writer and political activist observed: “The control of the production of wealth is the control of human life itself.”<sup>70</sup> Indeed, when man seeks to replace the divinely appointed order for society with his own imaginations, God is deprived of the glory He alone deserves, and society suffers from chaos and poverty. French politician and historian F. R. de Chateaubriand observed in his *Posthumous Memoirs* that God’s laws rather than man’s plans are always the best foundation for society:



*There are two consequences in history; an immediate one, which is instantly recognized, and one in the distance, which is not at first perceived. These consequences often contradict each other; the former are the results of our own limited wisdom, the latter, those of that wisdom which endures. The providential event appears after the human event. God arises up behind men. Deny, if you will, the supreme counsel; disown its action; dispute about words; designate, by the term, force of circumstances, or reason, what the vulgar call Providence; but look to the end of an accomplished fact, and you will see that it has always produced the contrary of what was expected from it, if it was not established at first upon morality and justice.*<sup>71</sup>

## SUMMARY

In this chapter we discussed how a Biblical role of civil government is to protect men's economic rights in order to secure their ability to fulfill their responsibilities to God. It accomplishes this by (1) protecting property rights; (2) enforcing honest/sound money; (3) practicing fiscal responsibility; (4) refraining from social welfare responsibilities; (5) taxing only what it is allowed by Scripture in order to perform its God-ordained purposes; and (6) refraining from seeking to reshape the divinely-established laws of economics to suit its own ends.

# Chapter 2

## BIBLICALLY ASSESSING FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES

Just as we did in the previous chapter with economic issues, to determine the Biblical role of a civil government in relating to foreign nations it is useful to begin with the general Biblical purposes of civil government: (1) to facilitate the peace and quiet of society; (2) to secure the rights and rewards of those who follow God's laws; and (3) to punish evil. Focusing these purposes on interactions with foreign nations, a government's Biblically defined role is to use coercive justice to protect its citizens' ability to live a peaceful and quiet life while exercising their God-given rights from foreign individuals and nations that would seek to infringe upon them.

### IMMIGRATION



**God's Ideas.** God commanded the nation of Israel to treat foreigners with the same respect for their rights as if they were one of their own (Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:33–34; Deuteronomy 10:19). However, we also know that civil government's purpose is to serve those paying it taxes (Romans 13:6–7). Therefore, we may conclude that a nation should respect and refrain from oppressing law-abiding foreigners; however, in so doing it should never infringe on the rights of its citizens.



**Satan's Perversions.** Today the United States is challenged with the problem of figuring out how to deal with the millions of illegal immigrants who are currently residing here. This problem is encouraged by two policies that violate the rights of U.S. citizens by helping illegal immigrants at the expense of the taxpayers—social benefits (including education and healthcare subsidies) and birthright citizenship (any person born in the U.S., regardless of how they got here and where their parents are from, has a right to be a U.S. citizen). Many political groups and leaders are calling for amnesty as a solution to the problem. However, this would be in effect “justifying the wicked” and punishing those who went to the trouble and expense of immigrating legally.

**Why It Matters.** Though it is certainly a difficult problem that may require a complex solution, illegal immigrants should face some form of punishment for breaking the law, and illegal immigration and birthright citizenship must be stopped because they violate the economic, religious, and political rights of U.S. citizens. However, as a nation, we should be welcoming and respectful to lawful immigrants and visitors.

## DIPLOMACY

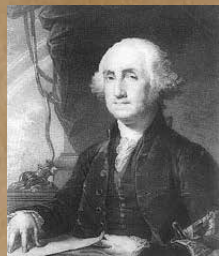
**God's Ideas.** Governments should seek to promote and secure peace and stability for their citizens (1 Timothy 2:1–2). This includes seeking to establish peaceful relationships with foreign nations. On the other hand, it is prudent for a nation to avoid binding political alliances and treaties with other nations as much as possible—especially with those governments that are not acting in subjection to the sovereignty of God and His law (James 4:4; 2 Chronicles 18:3; 19:2; Exodus 23:31–33).

**Satan's Perversions.** Sadly, across the globe today rulers and even entire governments have banded together into international political, economic, and military alliances and organizations that

often embody the spirit of Psalm 2:1–3: “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”

**Why It Matters.** The Founding Fathers advocated for a foreign policy of peace, trade, and friendship (i.e., they were *not* isolationists). George Washington said:

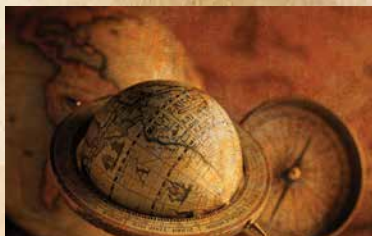
*Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all. Religion and morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it? It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence.<sup>72</sup>*



However, they warned against entangling alliances (“Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none.” Thomas Jefferson) because they believed that such binding agreements would force the nation to choose between keeping their word and following their God-ordained mandate to enforce justice and protect the rights and peace of their citizens.

## FOREIGN AID

**God’s Ideas.** There are no specific Scriptural references to foreign aid other than when it was given as a form of tribute by a conquered/weaker nation to the conquering/stronger nation as a means of appeasement.



**Satan’s Perversions.** Foreign aid often involves the forcible

transfer of wealth and blessings from individuals who are living according to the laws of God to those who are living contrary to His laws. In short, it is an attempt to bring the material blessings of righteousness without the Source (God) of that righteousness, presenting human government as the hope and healer of nations rather than Jesus Christ.

**Why It Matters.** Foreign aid is a perversion of God's design for civil government and should be abolished because it (1) subsidizes evil, thereby increasing dependency and oppression; (2) creates hostility toward the nation that is propping up the pagan dictator; (3) weakens missionaries and businesses through taxation to pay for the foreign aid; and (4) is often funded with borrowed money.

## WAR

**God's Ideas.** Scripture condemns killing as sin (Exodus 20:13), and in fact points to sin as the source of all forms of "wars and fightings" (James 4:1). However, God's Word allows for the ministers of His coercive justice to kill if necessary (Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:4), including going to war as a nation against foreign aggressors (Genesis 14; Nehemiah 4:7–14), though not all wars are justified (Isaiah 10:12–14). God also does not condemn killing that results from self/family defense (Nehemiah 4:14; 1 Timothy 5:8; Genesis 14) and accidents (Numbers 35:11; Deuteronomy 19:4–5).

**Just War Theory.** In order to assist in evaluating whether a government was Biblically justified in going to war with another nation, a system of criteria was developed over the years that today is known as Just War Theory. This system is a synthesis of Greco-Roman and Christian values and was developed primarily by Aristotle, Cicero, and Augustine. The criteria are (1) Just cause—only in order to protect citizens' rights (i.e., in response to aggressive force that involves seizing/harming land, resources, and/or people from that state). It is also justified to assist a nation that is being exploited by an invading enemy, provided the other

conditions are met and the help is requested (Revelation 19:11). (2) Proper authority—proper legal authority authorizing the action. According to the United States Constitution, only Congress has the authority to declare war; the United Nations merely provides an additional source for “justifying” non-defensive wars (i.e., interventions in other nations’ affairs), making it a pro-interventionist organization (Romans 13:1–7). (3) Comparative justice—is the enemy morally wrong/are we morally right (Romans 13:3)? (4) Right intention—our cited reason is in line with the just cause; our interest is justice alone (Psalm 68:30; Proverbs 21:2). (5) Last resort—all other means have been exhausted. Winston Churchill said that it is far better to “jaw jaw” than to “war war.”



However, sometimes it is better to strike quickly before the aggressor has time to entrench himself and consolidate his gains (e.g., Persian Gulf War). Also, sanctions often fail and only cause unnecessary human suffering (e.g., Iraq sanctions until the March 2003 invasion). It is better to say that states should have a strong presumption against the resort to force and should consider (not necessarily try) all other options before deciding in favor of force. Always ask, “Is the proposed use of force reasonable, given the situation and the nature of the aggression?” (1 Timothy 2:1–2; Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18). (6) Probability of success—aims to prevent lethal violence that is known in advance to be futile. A nation always has the right to attempt self-defense—no matter

how long the odds. However, prudence and respect for the well-being of its citizens dictate that in certain circumstances the government not attempt resistance (“live to fight another day”), such as Czechoslovakia during the Nazi invasion (Proverbs 20:18; 24:6; Luke 14:31). (7) Proportionality—the use of force must not be excessive in rectifying the situation. Also, the benefit of the justice from the war must exceed its costs (will the pros of the outcome outweigh the cons?—Proverbs 20:18; 24:6; Luke 14:31; Romans 13:4).

**Just Conduct in War.** It is possible for a war to be fought for the right reasons but in the wrong way and vice versa. Therefore, it is important that the principles of just conduct in war are also met: (1) Proportionality of force—no greater destruction than is necessary



to ensure accomplishment of the mission (Deuteronomy 20:10–20); (2) Discrimination between combatants/noncombatants (Deuteronomy 20:13–14, 19–20); (3) Avoidance of evil means—captured/defeated enemies treated with justice and compassion (Romans 12:20–21; Proverbs 25:21; Matthew 5:7); and (4) Good faith—desire to restore peace with the enemy (1 Timothy 2:1–2; Matthew 5:43–44; Romans 12:18).

**Conquest.** Is conquest a legitimate means of acquiring a nation? Though God directs the hearts of kings to accomplish His will, He still judges them for their wickedness (Exodus 7–12; Isaiah 10:5–19; Jeremiah 51:35). In Isaiah 10:5–19 God condemns the nation of Assyria for its proud and arrogant foreign policy of conquering nations for its own glorification. Therefore, we can conclude that any nation that invades other countries for its own promotion is acting in conflict with God’s design for civil governments since it is the equivalent of stealing (which is condemned in the Ten Commandments). What about Israel conquering the nations of Canaan? Deuteronomy 9:4–6 tells us that God used Israel to drive

out the Canaanites from the land not because Israel was righteous and deserving of the conquest, but because the Canaanites were wicked and worthy of destruction. God owns the earth and gives it to whomever He wishes. He promised this land to Abraham and his descendants and commanded them to use war as a means of taking possession of it (also as a judgment on the wickedness of Canaan) and placed clear restrictions on where they were to conquer (e.g., no conquest of Edom). As King of kings, He gave the Israelites the authority to conquer these lands.

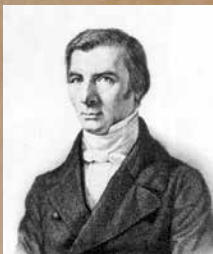


**Satan's Perversions.** Throughout history Satan has managed to get nations to buy into his lie that conquest of other nations is justified because it leads to national glorification, while at the same time those same societies punish individuals for using force to take what is not theirs from others. In the United States today, public opinion, including among Christians, has established “supporting the troops” and the wars they are sent to fight as one of the highest patriotic virtues. However, when one evaluates the current activities of our federal government, particularly the wars that they are sending our military personnel to fight, the question must be asked: Are we supporting our troops in the sense of wishing them well (good health, a safe return, our gratitude for their toils), or supporting them in the sense that we desire that they come home victors in conquest? The former would support the Biblical attitudes of gratitude and love (concern) for others, but the latter perspective presents an unbiblical motive in supporting the troops. We need to be sure that we have not unwittingly made war an idol as Caesar (tyrannical government) and Mars (the god of war and conquest) were to their eras. Congressman Ron Paul put it well when he said, “The true nature of war must be laid bare, and the glorification must end.”<sup>73</sup>

C. F. Bastiat exposed this tragic deception when he stated:

*The country, which has enemies and dangers, needs to stimulate the courage of its children. To the most daring, to those who have enlarged the frontiers, and gathered the spoils of war, are given honors, reputation, and glory. Poets sing their exploits. Fair women weave garlands for them. Such is the power of public opinion that it separates the idea of*

*injustice from spoliation, and even rids the despoiler of the consciousness of his wrong-doing. There is only one remedy—time. You say there is another restraint—moral influences. But moral influences have for their object the increase of virtuous actions. How can they restrain these acts of spoliation when these very acts are raised by public opinion to the level of the highest virtues? Is there a more potent moral influence than religion? Has there ever been a religion more favorable to peace or more universally received than Christianity? And yet what has been witnessed during eighteen centuries? Men have gone out to battle, not merely in spite of religion, but in the very name of religion. . . at such a time war assumes a character of sanctity and grandeur. . . warlike virtues are exalted above all others.<sup>74</sup>*



**Why It Matters.** It is vital that our nation start viewing war for what it truly is—the result of sin and at best a necessary evil that produces poverty, suffering, and death. Once this idea is established in the arena of public opinion, it will make the issue of disciplining our leaders to discriminate between just and unjust wars much easier to resolve. SGT Jared Brownlow, a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, said:

*By nearly every measure, America is far less free than we ever were before we went to war. We did, however, fight for you. We fought because, for whatever reasons you, as collective members of our republic, chose for us to be there. Let us memorialize those Americans who fought and died fighting our nation's wars. But, let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that every American soldier died fighting for our freedom. We, as a nation, need to come to terms with the fact that not every war is worth sending our men and women to fight and die for.<sup>75</sup>*



Those who defend our invasions of foreign countries with the argument that they help open doors to spread the Gospel would do well to hear the words of Charles Spurgeon:

*The church, we affirm, can neither be preserved nor can its interests be promoted by human armies ... the progress of the arms of a Christian nation is not the progress of Christianity, and that the spread of our empire, so far from being advantageous to the Gospel, I will hold, and this day proclaim, hath been hostile to it," and "When an enterprise begins in martyrdom, it is none the less likely to succeed, but when conquerors begin to preach the gospel to those they have conquered, it will not succeed ... Mahommedans' religion might be sustained by scimitars, but Christians' religion must be sustained by love. The great crime of war can never promote the religion of peace. ... 'It is not by armies, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.'"*<sup>76</sup>



## MILITARIES



**God's Ideas.** Militaries are necessary because a government is responsible to defend its nation against attacks (Judges 2:16–18; 1 Samuel 17; 2 Samuel 5:17–25). As part of civil government, the military is a minister of God for the good of those they defend (Romans 13:3–4; 1 Peter 2:14). God's Word makes it clear that militaries will be necessary until Christ establishes His millennial kingdom on Earth because even when a nation is acting according to God's law and receiving His blessings, it will still have enemies (Deuteronomy 28:1–2, 7; Isaiah 2:4). Since God is ultimately sovereign in the affairs of men, militaries must honor Him and trust in Him for victory, not their weaponry (Psalm 20:7; Daniel 11:38; 1 Chronicles 5:18–22). Israel's "national anthem" served to remind the people of their need to trust in God for military victory (Numbers 10:8–9), much as the fourth and final verse of America's national anthem, "The Star Spangled Banner" was written to do:



*Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand  
Between their loved home and the war's desolation!  
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n rescued land  
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.  
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,  
And this be our motto: "In God is our trust."  
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!*



**Satan's Perversions.** Today the United States military is being used increasingly as a “global force for good” (a current U.S. Navy slogan) rather than as an organized force whose primary purpose is national defense (e.g., “humanitarian” deployments to countries like Liberia, Indonesia, and Honduras). Additionally, disarmament efforts are accelerating<sup>77</sup> in the name of global peace without the necessary foundation of the Gospel of peace or national submission to the Prince of peace. Rather than honoring God, the U.S. military is blaspheming Him and His design: mandatory Department of Defense (DoD) briefings target Biblical values and groups as being problematic;<sup>78</sup> references to Jesus Christ and the Creator are viewed as offensive and are no longer welcome in invocations/benedictions at many military functions.<sup>79</sup>

The military currently has robust affirmative action and equal opportunity programs designed to ensure that a certain percentage of the military is composed of women and various racial minority

groups, regardless of whether those individuals are the ones most qualified for those positions. The current push to increase the percentage of women in the military and open up all Military Occupational Specialties (including combat roles) to women rejects God's design for women (Titus 2:4-5; Nehemiah 4:13-14; Deuteronomy 22:5) and weakens the military's effectiveness (Nahum 3:13; Jeremiah 50:37). The Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Services stated in the November 15, 1992 Executive Summary Conclusion in the Report to the President:

*The case for assigning women to combat fails for the very basic reason that it is grounded principally in the concept of equal opportunity. When national security is at stake, however, the need to maintain a strong military must take precedence over concerns about equal opportunity ... mixed-gender units, particularly as [they] get closer to the combat area, have lower deployment rates, higher attrition, less physical strength, more sexual activity, higher costs, et cetera, et cetera.*

The DoD is now not only allowing homosexual soldiers to serve openly in the military ("Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy repeal), but it is actually promoting and celebrating the LGBT (lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender) community through its mandatory Equal Opportunity briefings and by making the month of June "LGBT Pride" month for all DoD personnel. This month-long celebration includes holding large military-sponsored LGBT Pride events on military posts, posting LGBT Pride month promotional posters and other material throughout DoD offices and training areas, and even sending uniformed representatives of the military to march in LGBT rally parades. It has also begun to recognize same-sex marriages, granting these couples marriage benefits on par with heterosexual married couples. This type of activity is calling evil good and prevents some Christians from being able to serve with a clear conscience before the Lord, since many officers are required to promote the Pride month to their units and sign paperwork granting marriage benefits to homosexual couples who get married. All of these initiatives are not only in direct contradiction to God's design, they also distract time, attention, and resources from achieving mission readiness.

As then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney said:

*It's important for us to remember that what we are asked to do here in the Department of Defense is to defend the nation. The only reason we exist is to be prepared to fight and win wars. We are not a social welfare agency... it is not a jobs program, we aren't there to run social experiments.<sup>80</sup>*



**Why It Matters.** The moral decline and increasing godlessness of our military should be alarming and move us to our knees in prayer. David Horowitz, a former Communist radical, warned:

*I was dedicated to the subversion and overturning of every American institution.... We were successful in subverting and overturning every American institution but one—it was the military institution.... Why don't you wake up? Women in combat and homosexuals in the military is to finish the job on the only institution that survived the '60s and '70s revolution intact.<sup>81</sup>*

Benjamin Franklin emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong and ready military when he said:

*The very fame of our strength and readiness would be a means of discouraging our enemies; for 'tis a wise and true saying, that "One sword often keeps another in the scabbard." The way to secure peace is to be prepared for war: They that are on their guard, and appear ready to receive their adversaries, are in much less danger of being attacked than the supine, secure and negligent.<sup>82</sup>*

## SUMMARY

In this chapter we discussed that the Biblical role of a civil government in relating to foreign nations is to protect its citizens' God-given rights from foreign individuals and nations that would seek to infringe upon them. It accomplishes this specifically by:

~ Immigration: Treat legal visitors with kindness, respect, and dignity while still protecting the taxpayers'/citizens' rights. End illegal immigration by securing the border and removing the incentives (birthright citizenship and social welfare benefits),

and seek a solution that balances justice with practicality for the millions of illegal immigrants currently residing in the U.S.

~ Diplomacy: “Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none.”



~ Foreign Aid: Not a part of the Divinely-ordained role for government—abolish it.

~ War: Follow the Biblical Just War principles.

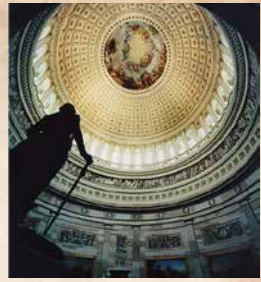
~ Defense: Trust in God, not in weapons; select personnel, equipment, and training in order to maximize effectiveness according to God’s design. Cease activities that promote evil practices, and restore God and His Word to their proper place of honor in the military.

## Chapter 10

### BIBLICALLY ASSESSING MORAL ISSUES

Just as we did in the previous chapters with economic and foreign policy issues, in determining the Biblical role of a civil government in moral issues, it is useful to begin with the Biblical purposes of civil government

in general: (1) to facilitate the peace and quiet of society; (2) to secure the rights and rewards of those who follow God's Laws; and (3) to punish evil. Focusing these purposes on moral/social issues, a government's Biblically defined role is to use coercive justice to protect its citizens' ability to live a peaceful and quiet life while exercising their God-given rights within society, and in so doing punish evil and praise good.



### WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL ROLE OF A CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN LEGISLATING MORALITY?

Is the fact that certain conduct is immoral sufficient to justify making that conduct punishable by law? No, morality should be regulated by civil law only if an immoral act infringes on another person's rights/ability to fulfill their God-given responsibilities as defined by the Scriptures. Otherwise, such legislation destroys the God-ordained role of liberty-responsibility in society. (People are required to pay extra taxes in order to protect people from themselves even though their mistakes hurt no one but themselves. This is penalizing those who do right to help those who do wrong.) Furthermore, it takes resources away from accomplishing justice. It also is spending resources on something that nature has been designed to regulate.

As per our discussion in chapter 2, the state's Biblical function is to protect the individual's right to life, liberty, and property. Any further extension of the sphere of government activity outside of its spiritual mandate would in effect reduce its ability to protect the right to life and would abolish liberty-responsibility and private property. If the government is not bound to merely protecting life, liberty, and property against violent attacks, it ends up regulating down to the smallest detail. The individual loses his freedom and becomes a slave of the community, bound to obey the dictates of the majority. This inhibits innovation and destroys religious liberty:




*All mankind's progress has been achieved as a result of the initiative of a small minority that began to deviate from the ideas and customs of the majority until their example finally moved others to accept the innovation themselves. To give the majority the right to dictate to the minority what it is to think, to read, and to do is to put a stop to progress once and for all.<sup>83</sup> -Ludwig von Mises*

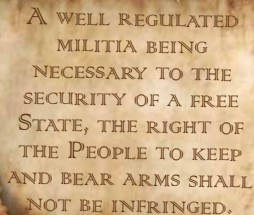
To be spiritual and moral, social cooperation (private individuals and/or groups caring for the needy) should be wholly free from any element of interference or coercion, direct or indirect. If involuntary, it amounts to seeking a false goal such as “forced brotherly love”—a concept that is self-contradictory—and can have no relationship to truly moral and spiritual values underlying the principle of man’s concern for the well-being of his fellow man. True unity is only possible among the genuinely free. How to best enjoy the benefits of the rights to “life” and “the pursuit of happiness” is a strictly personal matter in which each individual is accountable to God as a free man (1 Peter 2:16).

While not every issue of morality is to be regulated by the government, some do in fact affect the rights-responsibilities of others and are to be regulated by the government. In this chapter we will discuss some of the issues in which the role of the government is most commonly and heatedly debated in American society today.

## SELF DEFENSE

 **God’s Ideas.** In His covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:6–7), God allowed for the use of forceful defense against violent aggression because it is necessary to protect our God-given rights. This right to defense clearly applies to defending one’s own family (Genesis 14:14; Nehemiah 4:14), property (Exodus 22:2; Nehemiah 4:14; Luke 11:21), and person (Luke 22:36–38). A common misunderstanding is

that Jesus commanded His disciples to not defend themselves in Matthew 5:38–39 but to instead “turn the other cheek.” However, the Greek word used here for “smite” refers to a sharp slap given in insult, not a violent attack. Therefore, this passage is referring to accepting defaming persecution with grace and humility rather than returning evil for evil; it is not condemning the use of just force to check/deter violent acts of aggression.



A WELL REGULATED  
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AND BEAR ARMS SHALL  
NOT BE INFRINGED.

**Satan's Perversions.** A growing number of people today are lobbying the government to issue controls/bans on the right of individuals to possess firearms, arguing that this will reduce the number of violent crimes committed (e.g., school shootings). However, not only would such legislation directly violate the United States Constitution's Second Amendment, it would also encroach on the peoples' rights to defend themselves, their families, and their property as given in Scripture.

**Why It Matters.** It is critical that Christians take a stand against gun control legislation because it (1) violates an unalienable right given in Scripture and puts the others at risk by reducing our ability to defend them; (2) violates the Constitution; (3) is based on a lie that guns kill people, when in reality it is people who kill other people; (4) creates overdependence on government to protect and provide for us; and (5) paves the way for tyranny because it reduces the people's ability to check oppressive governmental force.

## ABORTION

**God's Ideas.** Life begins at the moment of conception (Genesis 25:22–23; Job 31:15; Psalm 22:9–10; 51:5; 139:13; Isaiah 44:2; 49:5; Jeremiah 1:4–5; Luke 1:15). In fact, in Luke 1:41–44 the same Greek word is used for the child in the womb as for after it is born (Luke 2:16). Therefore, abortion is murder, and Scripture clearly affirms that idea (Exodus 21:22–25; Deuteronomy 24:16). The belief that the unborn baby is a living being is supported within the legal tradition of our nation's founding, as seen in William Blackstone's words:

*Life is the immediate gift of God—a right inherent by nature in every individual; and it begins in contemplation of law as soon as an infant is able to stir in the mother's womb. For if a woman is quick with child, and by a potion or otherwise kills it in her womb; or if any one beat her whereby the child dies in her body and she is delivered of a dead child, this...was by the ancient law homicide, or manslaughter.<sup>84</sup>*

**Satan's Perversions.** In modern America our Supreme Court has decided that women have a “right to choose” whether or not an infant in their womb is to be born (see *Roe v. Wade* 1973 Supreme Court Case). However, this “right” is supported nowhere in Scripture and ultimately takes the sovereignty over life from God and gives it to man. Abortion rights are based on three lies of Satan: (1) Man has the right to choose who will live and who will not; (2) man has the right to live however he wants without having to deal with the consequences; and (3) children are not always a gift from the Lord.

**Why It Matters.** The tragic consequence of our nation accepting these lies is the legalized murder of over 56 million children since 1973. This is a blatant violation of our unalienable right to life and a complete perversion of justice. The idea that man has the right to take the life of an innocent and defenseless person without even a trial undermines our entire system of rights and laws. Congressman and OB/GYN Dr. Ron Paul summed up the grave threat that legalized abortion poses when he said,



*If you can't protect life, you can't protect liberty.<sup>85</sup>*

## EUTHANASIA

**God's Ideas.** Under some circumstances, this can be a very complicated and difficult issue. However, the Scriptures do provide us with some clear guidelines. The intentional taking of any human life outside of the realm of Biblically defined coercive justice/self defense (see chapter 9, section on war) is murder and therefore morally wrong (Exodus 20:13; Romans 13:9), even when an individual is apparently dying and asks us to kill them (2 Samuel 1:1–16). We should always intervene to prevent death when we are able to (Matthew 22:39; Matthew 7:12; Luke 10:30–37).



## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

**God's Ideas.** The government has the God-given authority to take human life as a punishment for murder (Genesis 9:5–6; Old Testament laws; Romans 13:4).

## EDUCATION

**God's Ideas.** Parents have the God-given responsibility, and therefore the right, to train and educate their children (Deuteronomy 6:4–7; Proverbs 1:8; 4:1; 6:20; 10:1; 13:1; 15:20; 23:22; 31:1; Ephesians 6:1–4; Colossians 3:20–21). Accordingly, parents should have 100% authority over their children's education and ensure that it is based on the Scriptures and the fear of God (Proverbs 9:10). The U.S. Constitution gives no authority to the federal government to get involved in education.



**Satan's Perversions.** Today the federal government is wresting control of education from parents and is forcibly removing the Bible and prayer from schools while promoting a worldview that is contrary to the teachings of Scripture (e.g., evolution is taught while creation is either not presented at all or ridiculed, and homosexuality is presented as a respectable “lifestyle”).

**Why It Matters.** Martin Luther warned of the social and spiritual crisis that would come upon a nation that removed God, His Word, and His designed system of authority (parents) from the education system:



*I am much afraid that schools will prove to be great gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt.<sup>86</sup>*

**God's Ideas.** God established marriage at the beginning of the human race to be a lifelong union between one man and one woman (Genesis 1:27–28; 2:25; Matthew 19:3–6). God judged the Gentiles for violating the laws of marriage (Genesis 12:17–20; 19:1–28; Jude 7; Mark 6:17–18; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Corinthians 5:9–13; 6:9; 1 Peter 4:3–5; Revelation 18:3, 9; 21:8; Leviticus 18:6–27). Incest, adultery, and homosexuality are prohibited by the Bible (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:1–18, 22; 20:11–20; Deuteronomy 22:30; 1 Corinthians 5:1–2; 6:9–11; Romans 1:26–27; 1 Timothy 1:9–10). Polygamy is not directly denounced in Scripture, though it is never expressly allowed for either and is not included in God's original design for marriage. Many passages allude to the negative consequences that result from this practice (Genesis 16; 29–31; 1 Samuel 1; 1 Kings 11; Deuteronomy 17:17). Marriage is the means by which mankind fulfills his God-given



responsibility to “be fruitful and multiply” and is also the core unit that gives strength and stability to a society. Therefore, the right to marriage is unalienable and must be protected by the government.

**Satan's Perversions.** The most prevalent perversion of marriage in American society today is the sin of homosexuality and the recognition of civil unions between homosexual couples as marriage. Homosexuals argue that it is simply another “lifestyle” and is “genetic” (and therefore from God—if they acknowledge that He exists), entitling them to receive governmental marriage recognition and rights. Sodomy was a criminal offense under common law and was forbidden by the laws of the original 13 states when they ratified the Bill of Rights; until 1961, all 50 states outlawed sodomy. How, then, should the government deal with homosexuals? At a minimum, it should not grant them marriage recognition/benefits (because that is rewarding evil and calling it good).

**Why It Matters.** In 1913 the Texas Supreme Court emphasized the sanctity of marriage and its immunity to redefinition by civil government in its statement:

*Marriage was not originated by human law. When God created Eve, she was a wife to Adam; they then and there occupied the status of husband to wife and wife to husband.... The truth is that civil government has grown out of marriage.... It would be sacrilegious to apply the designation "a civil contract" to such a marriage. It is that and more—a status ordained by God.<sup>87</sup>*

God has established and defined marriage; it is His institution, not the state's. Civil government is therefore not free to remake something outside of its God-ordained domain. When a government redefines marriage, it is in a sense setting itself up as a counterfeit and alternative to God. Granting equal rights to same-sex couples actually destroys the right to marriage because there is no longer a closed definition of marriage.

## THE ENVIRONMENT

**God's Ideas.** The original, pre-Fall creation was "very good" (Genesis 1:31), and man was charged by God to work it, keep it (Genesis 2:15), fill it, subdue it, and have dominion over its living creatures (Psalm 8:4–8; Genesis 1:28). The natural world is cursed because of sin (Genesis 3:17–19), and though it now contains "thorns and thistles," it is still "good" in many ways: "Thou shalt eat the herb of the field" (Genesis 3:18). Human beings should feel free to use the earth's resources with joy and thanksgiving to God (1 Timothy 4:4–5; 6:17). Though humans are more valuable in God's sight than the rest of nature is (Matthew 6:26; 10:31; 12:12), we are to care for it and treat it with respect as God's creation (Proverbs 12:10; Deuteronomy 20:19–20). God created a resilient universe that He will sustain until the end of time (Genesis 8:22; 9:11, 15; Psalm 104:9; Jeremiah 5:22) and therefore did not design the earth so that we would destroy it by obeying His commands (Genesis 1:28).

• **Satan's Perversions.** The Scriptures point out that man in rebellion has a tendency to worship the creature rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25), leading him to accept the lie that our responsibilities to “Mother Nature” are more important than our responsibilities to God.

• **Why It Matters.** Since our responsibilities to God are no longer paramount under this view, our rights are no longer unalienable. As a result, the United States government routinely infringes upon the God-given and constitutionally secured rights of its citizens in the name of “saving the environment.” This philosophy has also fueled efforts to lobby Congress to approve international environmental treaties that would greatly reduce our national sovereignty and significantly encroach upon our God-given rights. We need to restore the Biblical and balanced view of environmentalism, which teaches that God, as the Creator, made and sustains His universe. We, as the stewards of His creation, are to treat it with dignity and respect while at the same time fulfilling our responsibilities to Him by using the rights He has given us.

### SUMMARY

In this chapter we discussed how civil government is to balance protecting the rights of its citizens by punishing evil in society while not infringing upon other rights in the process: self defense—a God-given right that is necessary for the protection of all other rights; abortion, euthanasia—murder; capital punishment—part of the original Biblical mandate for government in response to murder; education—parents are to have 100% control over it and have an obligation to base it on the Word and fear of God; marriage—one man and one woman for a lifetime (to grant same-sex marriage equal rights is to reward evil and destroy marriage rights altogether); the environment—as the stewards of God’s creation, we are to treat it with dignity and respect; however, God did not create the world so that we would destroy it by obeying His commands. To worship the creation instead of the Creator is to render our God-given rights alienable.



# PART THREE: THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF GOVERNMENT



## *Chapter 11*

### END TIMES GOVERNMENTS

The Bible describes two global empires that will rise during the end times. One will be ruled by the “Antichrist” during the seven-year tribulation period, and the other will be ruled by Jesus Christ during the millennium period that follows the tribulation. The Antichrist rules through the power of Satan and will be the ultimate tyrant of history, while Christ will reign as the perfect civil ruler through the authority that He has been given by God the Father. In this brief study we will focus our attention on the ways in which these two rulers match the traits of tyrants and civil rulers discussed in chapters 3 and 5.



## ANTICHRIST

The Antichrist's tyrannical government will be based on the lie that man can become a god and thereby determine his own law (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13). It receives its authority and power from Satan (Revelation 13) while claiming to be the source of its own power (Revelation 13:4-5; 12-14). Its primary purpose is to carry out Satan's war against God, His Messiah, and His people (Revelation 12:17; 13:6-7; 19:19). It accomplishes this by destroying the existing social order in order to establish a new social system (Revelation 13:15-17; Daniel 7:25), securing the freedom and prosperity of those who live according to his lies (Revelation 13:16-17; Daniel 11:30), and punishing good (Revelation 13:7).

ANTICHRIST'S TYRANNICAL CONDUCT/CHARACTERISTICS	PASSAGE
Rebel	Daniel 7:24
Wise in his own eyes	Daniel 7:25
Rejects God's law	Daniel 11:30-33
Godless	Daniel 11:32
Transgressor and sinner	Daniel 11:32
Adversary and foe of God	Daniel 11:36
Exceedingly proud	Daniel 11:36-37
Forsakes the Lord	Daniel 11:37
Loves rewards	Daniel 11:38, 43
Loves a bribe	Daniel 11:39
Thief	Daniel 11:41-43
Lacks understanding	Daniel 11:44-45; Revelation 17:11
Immature	Revelation 13:3-4, 11-15
Does not fear God	Revelation 13:6
Serves self before justice	Revelation 13:5
Does not respect man	Revelation 13:15-17
Alcoholic	Revelation 17:2, 6; 18:3
Values pleasure over productivity	Revelation 17-18
Heavily taxes his subjects	Revelation 13:15-17
Makes his subjects his servants	Revelation 13:15-17
Enacts evil statutes	Daniel 11:30-35
Unjust in judgment	Daniel 11:30-35
Robbs the poor and righteous of justice/rights	Daniel 11:33-35; Revelation 13:15-17
Murders	Daniel 11:33-35; Revelation 13:15
Uses his power to glorify himself and accomplish evil	Revelation 13:5, 11-17
Steals	Daniel 11:41-43
Commits adultery	Revelation 17-18

Swears falsely	Daniel 9:27
Worships false gods	Daniel 11:37–38
Practices a reign of violent terror	Daniel 11:33–35; Revelation 13:15
The end justifies the means	Daniel 9:27
Defaults on debts	Daniel 9:27
Conquers other nations in anger and cruelty	Daniel 11:40–44
Seeks pleasure	Revelation 17–18
Oppresses his subjects for personal gain	Revelation 13:15–17
Hinders his subjects' prosperity	Revelation 13:15–17
Calls evil good and good evil	Daniel 11:30–35
Justifies the wicked for a bribe	Daniel 11:39

### CHRIST

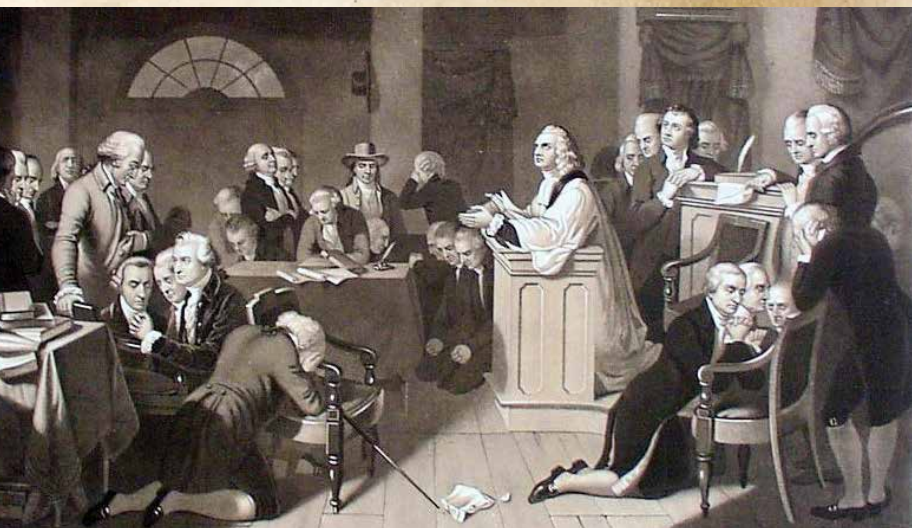
Christ's millennial kingdom will be based on the truth that civil government comes from God and that only He is worthy to make law and receive worship (Revelation 11:15–17). Accordingly, His kingdom receives its authority from God (Revelation 22:3) and operates according to the purpose of Biblical government: facilitating the peace and quiet of society (Revelation 21:4), securing the rights and rewards of those who follow God's laws (Revelation 11:18; 21:6–7), and punishing evil (Revelation 11:18; 21:8).

CHRIST'S KINGLY CONDUCT/CHARACTERISTICS	PASSAGE
Accountable to God for His actions	John 8:42, 49–50
Citizen	Revelation 12:5
Male	Revelation 12:5
Rejects wine	Revelation 18:8; 19:15
One-woman man	Revelation 19:7–8
Consistent and trustworthy <sup>a</sup>	Revelation 19:11
Righteous	Revelation 19:11
Hates corrupt gain	Revelation 19:11; 21:27
Intelligent, skilled and experienced	Revelation 19:11–15
Distinguishes between right and wrong	Revelation 19:11–15
Distinguished leader	Revelation 19:16
Recognizes God's Sovereignty	Revelation 19:16
Good	Revelation 21:4–5
Impartial	Revelation 21:6
Just	Revelation 21:7–8
Wise	Revelation 22:1–5

# Chapter 12

## RESTORING GOD'S DESIGN

Though not everyone is called to devote their lives to political activism and/or campaigning, there are certain things that all of us as Christians and Americans have a responsibility to God, our fellow man, and our posterity to ensure that our churches, our families, and we as individuals do to help restore God's design to our civil government.



The church, in concurrence with 1 Timothy 2:2, must take the lead in praying for our government. It is essential that regular prayers are offered by the body of Christ for governing officials and on special occasions (i.e., a national crisis, important vote in Congress or Supreme Court ruling, election, etc.) it may even be fitting for a period of prayer and fasting to be observed. Furthermore, as the pillar of the truth, a church body should ensure that its leadership understands and unwaveringly stands for the Biblical principles of civil government. This will enable churches to fulfill their other two responsibilities of equipping Christians with these



principles and bearing witness of these principles to the society at large. Educating the members of a church body can be accomplished through formal teaching in sermons, classes, discipleship groups, Bible studies, seminars, and conferences, as well as through the distribution of literature. Some ways that a church can speak out to society at large are by contacting and meeting with civil leaders, sending representatives to address political bodies, facilitating the distribution of materials that present the Biblical position on civil government to people outside the church, and supporting individuals and organizations that have committed themselves full time to returning our society and government to its Biblical foundations. It is important that in their interactions with society, a church uses the Scriptures to both reprove legislation/rulings that violate Biblical principles and support legislation/rulings that are consistent with Biblical principles.

Fathers and mothers need to take extra care to ensure that their children are educated in what the Bible teaches concerning civil government, because most political science textbooks and teachers today will teach them just about everything except what the Scriptures teach. Even the books and teachers that do promote “conservative Christian values” will often neglect to support the teachings with the Word of God. As part of this education, parents should use family devotions as an opportunity to model for their children the importance of praying for leaders. They should also foster discussions with their older children about political issues and events to emphasize their importance and to help them sift through the deceptions of modern media and continue to see life through the lens of God’s Word.

Every Christian should answer the call of 1 Timothy 2:2 to pray for our leaders and ask God to raise up godly men to guide our nation’s future. Additionally, we should educate ourselves in the Biblical principles of government and seek to share our knowledge with others. Of course, this knowledge is useless if we let it lie idle in our minds, so we must vote in order to elect godly leaders. As we evaluate candidates, it is important that we look at their records and words in light of Scripture rather than basing our opinion of a candidate on a political analyst’s description of him, regardless of how much we may like or respect that analyst. It is also essential that we take the extra effort to vote in the primary elections in an attempt to help the most biblically qualified candidates secure their party’s nomination for the general election. Otherwise, we will be left with the difficult choice of having to either choose between the lesser-of-two-evils

or voting for a third-party candidate who has little chance of winning. Another great way to help restore God's design for our government is to get involved directly in a campaign in order to offer additional support to a Biblically qualified candidate. However, this undertaking will require a considerable commitment of resources, so it is important that we pray about and assess such an opportunity in light of our life purpose and priorities in order to discern if it is God's will for us or not. Finally, a way that we all can make an impact is by contacting our elected officials to encourage them in serving the Lord and communicate to them the truth of God's Word as it speaks to specific political issues.



## CONCLUSION

In our study we have examined three aspects of Biblical civil government: purpose, practice, and perspective. In the first chapter we examined the foundations of law and answered the three fundamental questions of what is law, who makes law, and why we have civil law. In the next two chapters we examined the Biblical principles of civil government (its origin, ordination, and operational purpose) and civil rulers (their requirements and responsibilities). We examined Satan's perversion of God's ordination

in chapters four and five as we looked at the Bible’s warnings concerning tyranny and tyrants. In the next section we looked at the practice of Biblical civil government by assessing our nation’s founding documents in light of Scripture, and then followed with a three-chapter sequence in which we Biblically assessed the role of civil government in economic, foreign policy, and moral issues. In the final section of this booklet we discussed the Biblical perspective on the future of civil government. We began by contrasting the tyranny of the Antichrist with the millennial kingdom of Christ that will rule the earth during the end times, and concluded with an overview of ways in which we can restore God’s design to our current civil government.

Five “big idea” takeaways that we gleaned from the Scriptures during this study are that:

- 1 God is the source of all law—the Bible is necessary to have a coherent, consistent system of law;
- 2 government is God’s idea—nations are accountable to Him for how they govern;
- 3 Satan has perverted God’s ideas about government;
- 4 rights and responsibilities are inseparable; and
- 5 government was ordained to protect our rights in order to punish evil and reward good.

Clearly, God has provided us with an abundance of wisdom on the subject of civil government. May we not reject wisdom’s call and suffer the resulting consequences (Proverbs 1:20–32) but instead listen and enjoy the security and prosperity that God’s natural law and divine blessing bring to those who honor Him and His ways (Proverbs 1:33). Let us not rely solely on the human arguments of reason that appeal to the practicality and effectiveness of certain policies, but rather let us restore the authority of the Scriptures to our political conversation and convictions so that God may be glorified.



## THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE

This booklet presents the truth that God's Word provides the foundation for civil government as it speaks to all other areas of life. When evaluating the credibility and merit of the Bible it is significant to note that history, archaeology, and science have consistently proven the remarkable preservation of the text and the accuracy of the accounts, claims, and prophecies of the Bible, and not a single portion of Scripture has been shown to be false or inaccurate. Additionally, as this booklet has presented, the Bible provided the foundational principles upon which the most effective governmental system in the world—the American Constitutional Republic—has rested. While the Christian takes God's Word to be infallible by faith, the above points should provide significant reason for anyone to seriously consider the words of this all-time best selling Book.

In addition to its messages on government and living, God's Word contains the most important message of all time—that there is hope for eternal life and a relationship with the One True God and Creator of the universe. He judges with justice, righteousness, mercy, and compassion. The Scriptures rightfully name Him the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). His Name is Jesus Christ and Acts 4:12 tells us that there is salvation in no one else. Jesus Christ is not only the giver of eternal life (Romans 6:23b), but He is the provider of lasting peace, joy, and hope. He is the One Who said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). His loving-kindness and faithfulness are everlasting (Psalm 100:5). If you do not know with absolute certainty that you have eternal life through Jesus Christ, this final message is specifically for you.

Hebrews 9:27 tells us that "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Judgment implies that there is a judge and one to be judged—just as civil government provides a system for punishment for criminals, God's word provides a system of judgment for sinners. The Bible explains in Romans 3:23 that we (mankind) are all sinners: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The Scriptures further explain that the punishment for sin is death (Romans 6:23). The good news is that the Creator of the world (Jesus Christ is the Creator according to John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:16; and Hebrews 1:2) is a God of mercy and compassion and His Word states that He is not willing that ANY should perish, but

that ALL should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Therefore, God (who is three persons in One—1 John 5:7) stepped into the universe and took on the form of a man—Jesus Christ—to provide a way for mankind to escape eternal damnation. [Death came into the world as a result of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden (Romans 5:12).]

How did Jesus provide this escape for sinners from eternal damnation—the way of salvation? He left Heaven to walk upon the earth with mankind over 2000 years ago, performing all manner of kind, compassionate, and loving acts, including countless healings and raising people from the dead. As God in the form of man, He was sinless, and therefore was the only one to have both the right (as our Creator) and the ability (as a sinless being) to solve our sin problem. He chose to take the sins of the world upon Himself and therefore our punishment as well: “For He [God] hath made Him [Jesus] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him [Jesus]. He died in our place—the horrendous death of crucifixion. The death He chose was one of the most brutal of all. He was beaten and treated mercilessly. Yet as Isaiah 53:2 explains, He willingly did this for us: “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was



bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.” The Biblical account of Jesus’ crucifixion describes that as the Lord Jesus was hanging on the cross, darkness fell on the earth, even though it was only mid-afternoon. This symbolized God’s punishment on the sins that Jesus was taking upon Himself. As a final picture of Jesus’ unconditional love for mankind, He cried out to His Father in Heaven for the forgiveness of His persecutors (Luke 23:34) before He—as God Himself—gave up His own Spirit (Luke 23:46).

Since no unrighteousness (sin) is allowed into Heaven, Jesus had to take this step for us to free us from the chains of sin’s bondage. But He did not stay dead. As proof of His deity, death was not able to hold Jesus captive—He is the only One Who has power over death. On the third day He arose from the dead—conquering death! His tomb was found empty and as proof of his true resurrection, He appeared to over 500 people (1 Corinthians 15:6). Romans 8:38 and John 3:16 describe the extent of God’s great love and infinite mercy for us: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Christians are given everlasting life and have the joy of knowing that they will spend eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ and fellow Christians in the pure, perfect, and sinless home of Heaven. Jesus Himself is preparing our eternal home for us: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3). The amazing blessing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is that it is completely free—there are no works needed to obtain salvation according to Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

If, at hearing this good news, you find yourself joining millions of others in asking, “What must I do to be saved?” The answer is made clear in Romans 10:9: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” This invitation is open to all: “For whosoever shall call upon the

name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). If you desire a personal relationship with the God of the Bible and believe that you are a sinner in need of a Savior, then believe that Jesus came to earth as a man, suffered for the sins of the world by dying in our place, and raised Himself from the dead. As you call upon His Name for the forgiveness of your sins and confess that Jesus is Lord, His promise is that you will be His child and enter into His eternal rest in Heaven. While you remain on earth as His child, you can be assured of His unconditional love promised in Romans 8:38-39 by the Apostle Paul: “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”



ONCE TO EVERY MAN AND NATION  
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, 1819-1891

*Once to every man and nation, comes the moment to decide,  
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side;  
Some great cause, some great decision, offering each the bloom or blight,  
And the choice goes by forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light.*

*Then to side with truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust,  
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;  
Then it is the brave man chooses while the coward stands aside,  
Till the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied.*

*By the light of burning martyrs, Christ, Thy bleeding feet we track,  
Toiling up new Calv'ries ever with the cross that turns not back;  
New occasions teach new duties, time makes ancient good uncouth,  
They must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.*

*Though the cause of evil prosper, yet the truth alone is strong;  
Though her portion be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong;  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.*





# End Notes

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2. William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, [http://www.laits.utexas.edu/pol theory/blackstone/cle.int.s02.html](http://www.laits.utexas.edu/pol%20theory/blackstone/cle.int.s02.html).
3. The general ideas for this section came from *The God Who is There* by Francis Schaeffer and *The Divine Challenge* by John Byl.
4. Today, the term *totalitarian* could be used to describe an absolute monarchy. Totalitarian, however, is a modern term and so would not have been a named form of government in Bible times. A totalitarian state can possess a monarchy, but an absolute monarchy is not a totalitarian state by definition. Louis the XIV, the English Tudors of the past, and King Abdullah were all absolute rulers, but their states are not totalitarian.
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9. C. F. Bastiat, *The Bastiat Collection*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Auburn, Alabama: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2011), 961.
10. Lisa Fabrizio, “Imagine That,” *The American Spectator*, September 19, 2007, <http://spectator.org>.
11. This quotation has been attributed to William Penn, although not found in any of his writings.

12. Scriptures in this paragraph are quoted from the 1599 Geneva Bible. Phrases in brackets within the verses are from the Geneva Bible commentary/study notes.
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21. “The Bill of Rights – The First Ten Amendments to the Constitution,” *The Charters of Freedom*, [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/charters\\_of\\_freedom\\_7.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/charters_of_freedom_7.html).
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## About the Author

Samuel Smith was born in Dallas, Texas, but grew up primarily in Cairo, Egypt where his father taught at the American University in Cairo. He was educated at home. At age 9, he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. After receiving his salvation, Samuel grew in his personal relationship with God which included diligent study of the Word of God. He also cultivated a keen interest in U.S. history, alongside an affinity for mathematics, music, and athletics. Opportunities for teaching and leadership in these areas of interest, including helping other young men to study the Scriptures and follow Christ in discipleship, heightened Samuel's love for God, for people, and for his country. This led him to attend the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating with a bachelors degree in Civil Engineering and Mathematics.

After his graduation, Samuel began investigating the teaching of the Scriptures on civil government, while simultaneously studying works by experts in law, government, and the Constitution; including the writings of our Founding Fathers and others who framed the Constitution and formed America's initial government. As his study progressed, Samuel's goal began to reach beyond his own learning to a desire that others understand and appreciate the Biblical heritage and foundation of our country and its contribution to the growth and greatness of the United States of America. Samuel's desire is to provide a concise guide (a pocket-guide) for understanding the formation of America's constitutional government together with its historical, Christian foundation, as well as provide possible action steps by which Christians can Biblically engage the current culture. The prayer is that this booklet will be a starting resource whereby Christians are re-educated and re-challenged to obey God's Word in this critical area. To God be the glory!

Samuel is a civil engineer in Dallas, Texas, where he lives with his wife Lydia and son Marcus. They are members of Rockwall Bible Church where his father pastors.





Today many American citizens, including Christians, have little idea of the connection between our nation's unique success and its Biblical foundation. This is one reason our nation continues to depart from Christian principles and values in the public as well as the private spheres. Equally tragic is the fact that many Christians do not have the Biblical framework by which to evaluate and respond to laws and policies being advanced at all levels of civil government; nor do they understand how those laws and policies impact and shape the cultural and moral trajectory of the nation. Though this booklet is not a thorough commentary on political philosophy, history, or issues, it was written to encourage Christians to bring the Bible back into the political conversation so that God's glory may be made manifest through His people in this needy arena as we confront others with the all-important question: "Who determines truth: God or man?" In the midst of a culture full of political deception and wickedness *may the people that do know their God . . . be strong, and do exploits* (Daniel 11:32). As Christians are re-educated and re-challenged to obey God's Word in this critical area, may He grant our nation His favor and blessing for the ultimate glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, my brethren, *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Ephesians 6:10.

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