

Politics, Law and Government
Christian Worldview Class #1
April 3, 2016

Does the Bible teach about Law and Government?

If so, what does it teach?

Are all governments instituted by God and to be deferred to without exception?

Are all laws worthy of obedience?

If not, when should we disobey the government or the law?

These are **some** of the **Questions I hope** we can **address** over the coming months as we explore the next section of a Comparative Worldviews **Sunday School: Law and Government – Christian, Islam, Secularism, Marxism, Cosmic Humanism and Postmodernism.**

Some Stories

My upbringing in public schools: primary and secondary education 1980-1992

- **Pledged allegiance** to the flag with the whole ‘**one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all**’
- I was very quickly **instructed** by my **History teachers** that **America** was **not a Christian** nation, **nor** was it ever **founded upon Christian principles.**
- Seemed like **Ben Franklin** and **Thomas Jefferson** and his Jeffersonian Bible were always the **poster children** of this kind of ‘knowledge’.
- I **believed them.** Didn’t have a reason not to.
- Lest you think I just had a crazy teacher, this **story** was **repeated** to me all **across the country.** I was in public schools in **OH, WA, KS, CA, Italy, ME.**
- **I was indoctrinated** into the idea that separation of church and state was legal, constitutional and the only way enlightened people thought.

Argentina and my interactions with a “Christian Communist?”

- 7 weeks in **slums BsAs**
- Introduced to the **first** ever, **card carrying**, real honest to goodness **Communist** and he claimed to be a Christian.
- The language barrier made it hard for me to talk with him in depth about his faith and politics but it caused me to think “**Either Faith and Politics can mix, or they are so separate that a Christian can hold any political positions.**”
- During this time I **read** immensely in **Liberation Theology**, a form of Marxist-Christian theology calling for societal and church transformation to aid the poor.
- I did a brief **stint** with the **Green party**, voting for them in one of the Presidential elections.

A few years ago, I decided to seriously study the question of America’s Christian heritage

- I went back to the **Primary Source Documents** of the Nation and her early colonies
- Bruce **Frohnen’s** **The American Republic: Primary Sources**, 743p of 8 ½ x 11 documents published by the Liberty Fund
- What I found, **shocked** me. Nearly **everything** I was **taught** was **wrong.**
- America was **founded** by **Christian men**, upon **Christian principles** and with a desire to be a ‘**city on a hill**’ and a ‘**light to the nations**’
- So I started **studying worldviews**, trying to **understand** what I had been **taught** in **contrast** to what **God wanted** to teach me.
- You have been getting the result of that.

My experience isn't unique. I recently read about¹

a young Christian man who said: "**I don't find an instance where Christ ever alluded to politics.**"

Evidently, **this conclusion** furnished for him **the excuse** for feeling no responsibility concerning anything which he regards as "political." However, his **statement ignores some basic principles**, causing him to arrive at a false conclusion.

What is "politics"? The word simply **means involvement in government**. Is involvement in government right or wrong? Biblical or anti-Biblical?

...

What the young man **was advocating** was that **Christians** should **bear the yoke** but have **nothing to say** about who places it around their necks or the direction it will lead them. This philosophy believes in **praying** for rulers but **not in picking** them. To pray for rulers and **not** do anything to **influence** them is simply a case of faith without works, which falls under a very specific rebuke in the Bible (James 2:14-26).

Charles **Hodge** states in volume 3 of his **Systematic Theology**, (page 346), "**If, therefore, any man wishes to antedate perdition; he has nothing to do but become a freethinker, (one whose understanding is emancipated from his conscience) and join in the shout, "Civil government has nothing to do with religion; and religion has nothing to do with civil government."**

The Proper Question to ask of any and all Government and Law

"To what extent does the operation of any given human institution conform to God's standards at any point in history?"²

Why do we ask this question? Because we believe as Christians that God is Sovereign!

"What do we mean by [the sovereignty of God]?"

We mean the **supremacy** of God, the **kingship** of God, the **god-hood** of God. To say that God is Sovereign is to **declare that God is God**. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that **He is the Most High, doing** according to **His will in the army of Heaven**, and **among the inhabitants of the earth**, so that **none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest Thou?** (Dan. 4:35). To say that God is Sovereign is to **declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power** in Heaven and earth, so that **none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will** (Psa. 115:3). To say that God is Sovereign is to **declare that He is "The Governor among the nations"** (Psa. 22:28), **setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties** as pleaseth Him best. To say that God is Sovereign is to **declare that He is the "Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords"** (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible."³

God's Sovereign Rule: A Biblical Perusal

Gen 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

¹ Adapted from PRO FAMILY ALERT, Vol. 13, No. 3. Write P. O. Box 8907 Fort Worth, TX U.S.A. 76124.

² Gary North in his introduction to Gary Demar's Ruler of the Nations:

Biblical Blueprints for Government (Dominion Press: Ft. Worth, TX, ©1987), p.ix.

Gen 1:3ff “God said...”

and things happened, just like when a King speaks and the pages jump

Gen 1:26 “God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over the livestock of the each and over all the creatures that move along the ground”

He has rule and authority and delegates it

Gen 2:15-17 “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

He sets out the rules for obedience, for life and death

Psa 47:7 For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.

Psa 2 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.

3 “Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.”

4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

5 Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

6 “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Verses 1-7 set up unmistakably the reign of God over heaven and earth. They speak of the human condition and its constant desire to be free from God, which is really to be ‘their own gods’.

8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

9 You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.”

Verses 8-9 speak of the reign of Christ over the nations.

10 Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Verses 10-12 speak of the need for every king, ruler and by extension, government and law, to be under the willing service of God. For apart from willing service is punishment and judgment.

Psa. 72:8 He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Psa. 76:12 He breaks the spirit of rulers; he is feared by the kings of the earth.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever...

Isaiah 37:16 “O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.”

This is Hezekiah’s prayer as part of Sennacherib’s invasion and his request for deliverance.

Col. 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Implications of God’s Sovereign Rule

1. All other powers find their origin in God, the only source of power.
 - a. **Samuel Rutherford**, in his seminal volume *Lex, Rex (Law, King)*⁴
 - i. “**Scottish Presbyterian minister Samuel Rutherford** (1600?–61).
 - ii. Written in English, published in **1644** with the subtitle "The Law and the Prince".
 - iii. Published in **response to Bishop John Maxwell's** "Sacro-Sancta Regum Majestas" [The sacred and the Royal prerogative of Christian Kings], it was intended to be a **comprehensive defence of the Scottish Presbyterian ideal in politics**.
 - iv. The book **defends the rule of law** and the **lawfulness of defensive wars** (including **pre-emptive wars**) and advocates **limited government** and **constitutionalism** in politics and the "Two Kingdoms" theory of Church-State relations (which advocated distinct realms of church and state but opposed religious toleration).”
 - v. **Series of Catechism like Questions**.
 - vi. Question 1: Whether Government be warranted by a Divine Law⁵
 - vii. Answer 1: That power of government in general must be from God, I make good,
 1. 1st, Because (Rom. 13:1) “there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.”
 2. 2nd, God commands obedience, and so subjection of conscience to powers; Rom. 13:5, “Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, (or civil punishment) but also for conscience sake;” 1 Pet. 2:13, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme,” etc. Now God only by a divine law can lay a band of subjection on the conscience, tying men to guilt and punishment if they transgress.
 3. *Conclus.* All civil power is immediately from God in its root;
2. All Law originates in God’s Law
 - a. “**Every human law** - every expectation or condition that **demands performance in exchange for blessings** - either **distorts** or **derives** from the **perfect law** that God entwined in the tapestry of creation and etched on the stone tablets of Mount Sinai (Psalm 19:7-14; Romans 2:15; 7:7-12). The **world's adaptations of these laws are far from perfect**. Yet even the most imperfect human statute hints at humanity's universal awareness that there is a higher and more perfect law, the law of God.”⁶

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lex,_Rex

⁵ <http://lonang.com/library/reference/rutherford-lex-rex/ruth-01/>

- i. **Psa. 19:7-14** The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then will I be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.
 - b. “What the all-encompassing voice of the law declares is that **if you perfectly perform all the right deeds, you can be accepted**, blessed, and made right. This is, of course, true. The law of God is "holy, righteous and good" (Romans 7:12)."⁷
 - c. **Gal 3:24** Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.
- 3. Delegated authority is preferred
 - a. Just as God **delegated to Adam/Eve** so also
 - b. **Moses delegates** to “men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens...” Exo 18:21f
 - c. **Acts 6** – Deacons are appointed over Grecian widows to serve them.
 - d. **Deut. 16:18-20** Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.
 - e. **Proverbs 11:14** For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.
- 4. Civil Government is answerable to God
 - a. “Contrary to Thomas Hobbe’s view in Leviathan that the origin of the law is the state, the state owes both its own origin and the law’s origin to God.”⁸
 - b. **Genesis 11:1-9** The Story of Babel
 - i. This is a story about a collection of people, seeking to cooperate in a political process. **Politics** is nothing more than a **collection of people** with an **agreed upon purpose**.
 - ii. **1828 Webster Dictionary**, defines “politic” in 3rd entry as “**3. Ingenious in devising and pursuing any scheme of personal or national aggrandizement, without regard to the morality of the measure; cunning; artful; sagacious in adapting means to the end, whether good or evil.**”⁹
 - iii. **God judges** the civil politic **in real time** by scattering the languages, and confusing the plans.

⁷ Proof, Daniel Montgomery and Timothy Paul Jones (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI ©2014) p.78.

⁸ C. Ben Mitchell, Ethics and Moral Reasoning: A students guide (Crossway: Wheaton, IL, ©2013), p. 39.

- iv. Civil Govt. is **answerable** to God **in this world**, not in the next. Individuals are judged in the next.
- c. **Lev. 26:14-17** (through 46) **“But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will bring upon you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and drain away your life. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies; those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.”**
 - i. These are all **plural you’s**
- 5. All men are under the rule of God.
 - a. **“Men will be ruled by God, or else they will be ruled by men who imitate God. There is no escape from the rule of other men; the question is: By what standard will rulers rule, and also be governed?”**¹⁰
 - b. **Types of government**¹¹
 - i. **Theocracy – rule of God**
 - ii. **Ecclesiocracy – rule of the Church**
 - iii. **Homocracy – rule of men**

A Summary¹²

Law: God created, Not man invented
 Law: God revealed, not man reasoned
 Law: God imposed, not man adopted

¹⁰ Gary North in his introduction to Gary Demar’s Ruler of the Nations, p.xviii.

¹¹ Gary North, Introduction to Demar’s Ruler of the Nations, p.x.

¹² Herbert Titus. Biblical Principles of Law, Chapter 1 – Law and Justice. Section 1 “God’s Law Order”. Published 1987. <http://lonang.com/commentaries/curriculum/biblical-principles-of-law/s01/#1>. More about