

“BIBLICAL GOVERNMENT” SERIES

#1: “Biblical Government 101”

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 33:12a

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord...”

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 33:22

“For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us.”

INTRO:

It is not my intention to preach politics. I have been called to *“Preach the word”* (2 Timothy 4:2). This is my aim in this series, and I believe that is what I have prepared to do.

My intention in this series of messages is to call your attention to what the Bible says about human government. I have been motivated to prepare and preach this series for a number of reasons, the main one being that our society and our civil governments have moved away from the Christian principles that provided the godly “root system” of our nation. I believe a return to that biblical foundation of American government is essential to our being the nation our forefathers intended us to be and the nation God has blessed so much in the past.

Francis Schaeffer wrote in 1976:

“To whatever degree a society allows the teaching of the Bible to bring forth its natural conclusions, it is able to have form and freedom in society and government” (How Should We Then Live).

He goes on to note that with the loss of biblical absolutes in American culture, American society has become ripe for those who want her to become an authoritarian or socialistic state.

John W. Whitehead, constitutional attorney and founder of the Rutherford Institute, has written:

“Americans must again study the nature of their civil government. They must know why our society remains today the freest on the earth. Simply put, we must learn the lessons of history, or we are bound to repeat its failures” (God and Government, Vol. 1, Gary DeMar, Foreword, American Vision Press).

In his series, *God and Government*, Gary DeMar wrote:

“The battle today is over Lordship. The issue of politics today is the issue of sovereignty. Who is the Lord of all life to whom man must give his total allegiance, Christ or Caesar? The answer to this question is the difference between liberty and slavery, justice and tyranny.

“The critical issue of our day is the relationship of Christ and His Word to our political and legal system in the United States. Who has jurisdiction over every aspect of American society, Jesus Christ or the state? Is this to be a Christian nation or a humanistic nation?” (*God and Government, Vol. 1*, page viii).

Today, I am asking you to join with me in saying with Isaiah, ***“For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us.”***

In this message, I want to call your attention to what government is and the first forms of government among us, the origin and purpose of civil government, and how we’ve messed up the biblical plan.

First,

WHAT IS GOVERNMENT?

The answers most people would give to this question reveal a general misunderstanding of what “government” really is. Most people today think of “government” as some centralized governing system, like “state government” or “federal government.” We commonly refer to “the government.”

“Government” is actually a very broad term, encompassing four distinct governing bodies or entities, each with biblical areas of responsibilities and jurisdiction. All of them are intended to function under the Lordship and auspices of God. In other words, He sets their areas of responsibility and authority, and they are to answer to Him. The first governing entity is:

- 1. Self** – This is where government must begin. You and I have specific responsibilities and are to function as free moral agents as we live as God has willed that we live.

The second government entity is:

- 2. The Family** – God has set up human society to be based on nuclear family units. He ordained specific functions and areas of

responsibility and authority for fathers, mothers, children, and even grandparents. While the grandparents are teachers, the children are responsible to the parents, the mother is responsible to the father, and the father is responsible to God. In fact, the whole family unit is to be in submission to God. The family government did not usurp the authority of the “of age” individual.

The third governing entity is:

3. *The Church* – The church consists of self-governed individuals, some with families and some with no families, who have committed themselves to Christ and to each other under the pastoral leadership and authority of pastor/elders, who answer to God. The church, as such, has a biblically prescribed purpose and function and such authority as is needed to accomplish that purpose. It does not usurp the authority of the individual or that of the family.

The fourth governing entity is:

4. *Civil Government* – Civil governments evolved as groups of families formed treaties and alliances, villages, towns, and cities, and states, provinces, and countries. God reluctantly approved the first civil government for the Israelites under King Saul. All such “civil” governments were to be under the auspices and authority of God and were to be answerable to Him. They were not to usurp the authority of the other “governments,” such as the individual, the family and the church. The purpose of civil government is fourfold:

1. Uphold the laws and standards of God;
2. Keep order;
3. Maintain the peace, which includes protection from enemies; and
4. Tax only as needed to accomplish the previous three.

Some would include schools as one of the governing entities, but, as Henry M. Morris has written: “It is significant that there is no reference in the Scriptures to the school as a separate institution established by God. In spite of the great importance of the teaching ministry, God has not seen fit to ordain schools as such. Even the implications of the cultural mandate (Genesis 1:26-28) and the Noahic covenant (Genesis 9:1-7), with the establishment of the institution of human government, do not suggest the parallel establishment of schools as instrument of such human governments. As far as the Bible is concerned, the function of transmitting truth and educating the young belongs to the home and the

church” (*Education for the Real World*, pp. 36-37). Schools should not usurp the authority of the individual or the family.

Of course, not all individuals govern themselves as God intended. Not every family is God-ordered and functions as He intended. The church doesn’t measure up to what it’s supposed to be. Civil governments, especially in these modern times, are often anything but godly. The education of our youth has been severely lacking and misguided.

SO, GOVERNMENT IS NO LONGER WHAT IT WAS INTENDED TO BE...

“Why? “we ask. Maybe the answer is in the words of our founding fathers and early leaders...

George Washington once said:

“It is impossible to govern the world without God and the Bible. Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Of all the dispositions and habits that lead to political prosperity, our religion and morality are the indispensable supporters. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that our national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

John Adams, our second president, said:

“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and true religion. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

John Jay, our first Supreme Court justice, stated that when we select national leaders, if we are to preserve our nation, we must select Christians. He said:

“Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians.”

John Quincy Adams, our sixth president, said on July 4, 1821:

“The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: It connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”

Calvin Coolidge, our thirtieth president, reaffirmed this when he wrote:

“The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country.”

The American Bible Society was founded in 1816 by people who were committed to the Bible. The first president was Elias Boudinot, who had been President of the Continental Congress from 1782 to 1783. John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, was named president in 1821. Francis Scott Key, the writer of the United States' national anthem, was a vice president of the organization from 1817 until his death in 1843.

The Declaration of Independence declared:

“... 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...”

Does this give us any indication as to the reasons our country is in the shape it's in? We have not only evicted God from our society, but we have denied any place to His inspired word. We have spurned Him, His laws and His moral standards. We have chosen *humanism over godliness* – chosen self as the highest authority and made up our own laws and moral standards. For all practical purposes, we have become godless.

As godless individuals, we have created godless families that little resemble the nuclear family God ordained.

This has led to ineffective and overwhelmed churches led by pastors from relatively godless families and godless government educational systems that churn out ungodly or ineffective youth that become adults that perpetuate ungodly families and elect ungodly and ineffective people to political offices.

Our civil governments are then, by and large, run by ungodly politicians, who are products of ungodly homes, unbiblical churches, and godless educational systems, and who don't really understand the connection between biblical principles and the founding of this country and the connection between Christianity and our government. No wonder they live such immoral lives! No wonder they say things like, “This is not a Christian nation.” No wonder they interpret “the separation of church and state” the way they do!

The blame for our nation's problems today – our high crime rate, our immorality, our economic woes, etc. – has to begin with individuals like you and me. Like Israel of old, we want to be our own god. During the period of the judges the Bible says, ***“Every man did what was right in his own eyes”*** (Judges 17:6). The beginning of Israel's rebellion against God was with the individual. This is the theme of the book of Judges. All subsequent rebellion in the area of government was the result of individual rebellion. The generation which arose after Joshua's death did not know the Lord who delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage. Judges 2:10 says, ***“And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.”***

The unfaithfulness of Israel led to their oppression at the hands of other nations and to their desire for a king, so they could be like the other nations. Instead of repenting of their sin and turning back to God as their true LORD and King, they demanded an earthly king. In other words, they turned to some *human being* as their savior, instead of turning to the LORD!

People, do you hear the message? Do you get it? Now do you understand the implications of 2nd Chronicles 7:14, in which God says, ***“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land”?***

What has happened in America is the result of a domino effect that began with its individual citizens! And if America gets turned around, it will have to start with us as individuals.

CONCLUSION:

I will close this morning with an admission. When I think of the spiritual condition of America and all of our problems, I'm overwhelmed. I don't know if it will ever be fixed. I know *how* it can be fixed, but I am not very confident that we will do what is required.

However, the bottom line is this: We must do what we should and what we can, not necessarily to save America, but to save ourselves and as many others as we can.

America has been blessed, and God has used America to facilitate the preaching of the gospel of Christ, but America is not the Promised Land. It's just a stop on the way. I have citizenship somewhere else that trumps my American citizenship. Do you?

My motivation to be what I've been created to be is not just to get America turned back to God, and not to gain God's blessings for America. I'm motivated to be what God wants me to be because I've got a date with eternity just around the corner, and I want to live it with the Lord in heaven! How about you?