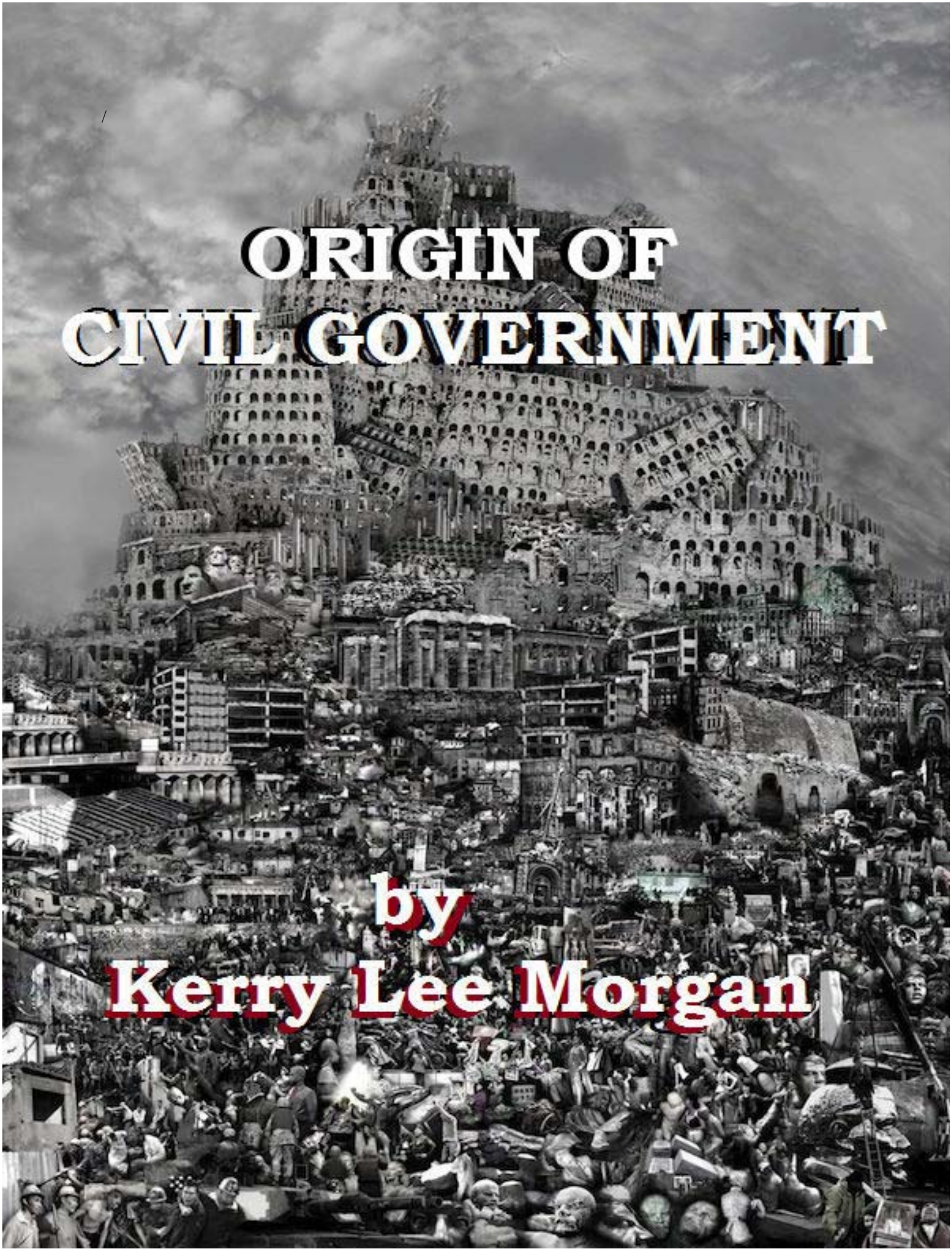
ORIGIN OF
CIVIL GOVERNMENT
by
Kerry Lee Morgan

ORIGIN OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT:

Its True Human Origin, Limited Jurisdiction And Application To American Government According To The Bible, The Declaration Of Independence And the Constitution

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Foreword by Thomas Jefferson

I have read many books and treatises on the laws of nature and of nature's God both before and after my death in 1826. My current situation has afforded me true perspective on all that was done at the revolution but especially concerning the founding legal principles that established the states and eventually the united States. As the reader may recall, when I drafted the Declaration of Independence, I turned to the laws of nature and of nature's God. I recognized that any civil government established by mankind must be grounded upon that law. This grounding also mandates the people "chain down" their governments to the law so that they can remain free to exercise their God-given liberties. That is why the Declaration of Independence was written—to reaffirm this simple truth or as I then said—"the common sense of the subject."

After reviewing Mr. Morgan's work, I rank it among only a few modern writings of its type expositing the Almighty's views on the subject. I am pleased to find such insight coming from an American lawyer, despite his early legal education based on a humanist and evolutionary understanding of law. It seems like an impossible feat to grasp what God has said about law, government and rights having been educated in the constitutional slop of modern judicial opinions. Nor is he trained theologically but this is no shortcoming. The clergy of my day fixated on their state establishments and tiny theological disputes. So too today, neither lawyer nor clergy show interest in God's law.

Yet, Mr. Morgan manages to see through the shadows. Human government is created by human beings and not God. The natural tendency of all such governments is to take our property, make war, and enslave us. He affirms that humans are made for freedom and not slavery by the will of God. Only by severely limiting civil government can we hope to live full lives as God intended. He connects these ideas to the Declaration for which I am grateful and the Constitution as well. All these he understands and articulates for your benefit. Such insight is surprising as he reads neither Greek, Latin, French or Italian, and his Spanish is very poor.

Nevertheless I appreciate his discussion of the simple but effective limitations on civil power brought to light from the Scriptures. He also shows us the way to understand other difficult Scriptural passages. Here, he has done his best as is humanly possible. Unfortunately, additional truths I learned from the Supreme Judge since my death, I am not at liberty to divulge. This, however, does not prevent me from giving his book my endorsement. It is needed now more than ever.

Is this Book Written for You?

This book is written for people of good will who want to be free and live free lives without the civil government abusing their freedom. It is written for those who have been told they are free but know something is very wrong and are searching to understand the times and know what must be done. It is also written for those who believe in God and have some familiarity with the Bible, but have no practical understanding of His laws or views about civil government or nations. This book is written for persons committed to their political party but realize they are too often led astray. It is written for those who want to recover their authority to govern their family as a husband or wife, or a father or mother, free from governmental interference, regulation and control. It is written for students of the American founding and those who appreciate the truths in the Declaration of Independence.

This book is also written for Christians who struggle with Romans 13, or believe our "home is not of this world", or that God is only interested in discipleship and evangelism. This book is written for those who want an understanding of the origins and jurisdiction of civil government according to the Almighty Judge, Lawgiver and King of the Universe, so they can live as free men and women as God intended. This book is written for those who want to go back to square one, day one, principle one, and understand the origin and jurisdiction of civil government. Obtaining such an understanding or a way of seeing, is a necessary foundational prerequisite in planning how to limit, alter or abolish our civil slave-masters so we may live free and productive lives. It is written for those who believe we should "speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty." James 2:12.

Finally, this book is written for Thomas Jefferson who was so kind as to write a thoughtful forward.

PART 1:
CIVIL GOVERNMENT:
A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF ITS TRUE HUMAN ORIGIN AND LIMITED JURISDICTION

Chapter 1. What Is The True Origin And Jurisdiction Of Civil Government?

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." Romans 13:1.

"They made kings, but not through Me. They set up princes, but I knew it not." Hosea 8:4

"[Y]ou shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day." 1 Samuel 8:17-18

The Place To Start

Where do we begin to think about the origin of civil government? Where do we look for guidance on what civil government is supposed to do and what it should never do? Where does it come from and what is its lawful jurisdiction? Is it established by God or is it merely the creation of the People or will of despots? Does God's law limit its jurisdiction or can civil government regulate everything it controls based on its reason, lust or raw power?

To set the stage, we have selected three quotations stated above. Many believe the first quote from the Book of Romans means God institutes governing authorities such as kings and by implication presidents. The second quote from Hosea hardly ever referenced, seems to mean the opposite, that God did not put civil authorities or kings in power. The third quote from 1 Samuel 8 suggests not only that kings are not chosen by God, but are chosen by the people, but also that such kings will make the people their slaves. How do you read them? You never even thought about it. Why is that?

While trying to figure that out, let us mention what we are *not* talking about. When we speak of civil government we do not mean individual self-government. Self-government is the authority of every person to govern themselves. It exists because God made every person in His Image and has charged mankind with certain duties and responsibilities. Nor are we referring to family government with its distinct authority given to the husband and wife, and the father and mother regarding their children, as defined by God from the beginning of human history. Genesis 1:27-31. God also established the nations of the earth after the time of Noah. The worldwide Church of Jesus Christ established by God four thousand years after creation, was also instituted by God, without the permission of any nation or civil government.

When we speak of civil government we mean none of these governmental structures or of nations. We mean that civil structure of organized government using force and coercion through its various branches to accomplish control and regulation, all undertaken

in the name of securing public safety and public morals. These structures are generally called the "State" or the "government." John Locke described the purpose of civil government and its exercise of political power declaring that "[p]olitical power, then, I take to be a right of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the common-wealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good" John Locke, Second Treatise of Civil Government, Ch.1, sec. 3 (1690).

None of these are perfect definitions. The point is simply to show that civil government is not individual, family, or ecclesiastical government. Nor is civil government the same thing as a nation. The nation is a people group defined by geographical boundaries. God, however, is very practical in describing the civil governments of the nations of the earth. He told His Prophet Samuel to tell all the words of the Lord to the people asking for a king. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out *because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves*, but the Lord will not answer you in that day." 1 Samuel 8:10-18 (emphasis added).

While God created mankind, male and female, the family, nations and the universal worldwide church, are we also to conclude that God created the kingdoms of the earth, *i.e.*, its civil governments? Did He "establish" the civil governments of the nations of the earth? If so, when, how, and by what human agency if any, and for what purpose did He create civil government? Or is civil government merely the creation of humans? If so, is it destined to make just laws "for the regulating and preserving of property?" Or is it destined to "take" the fit among us and send them down to war while confiscating "the best of your fields and vineyards" and flocks for itself and its war machine?

To answer these questions we will examine what God has actually written. We will examine what He has written about the Creation of the world using the *chronological method* of inquiry and try to make sense of it. This makes sense since the Bible is written mostly chronologically. We will also avoid as best we can examining what others have written about what God has written. We can read the Bible directly and consider what He has said ourselves.

The Place Not To Start

Considering what God says about the origin of civil government and its jurisdiction is not an easy or natural starting point. Our minds do not normally jump to it. Job once observed: “He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of the earth and makes them wander in a trackless waste.” Will he also deny us understanding? He might if we insist on trying to fit His understanding within the confines of our own.

Unfortunately, most people have absorbed a way of thinking about civil government that is a diversion from the truth. One such starting point is to think about civil government from the view point of a political party. Thus, the first question you are likely asked in America is: “Are you a Republican or a Democrat?” In other countries the question is similar: “What party do you support?” Once this choice is made the way we think about government is somewhat predictable. It is chosen for us and defined by our specific party affiliation. But is this how God would think about civil government, deciding first if He was a Republican or a Democrat, a supporter of this party or the other party? Yet, if you listen to Christian talk radio around election time that is what you will be told. Perhaps God would be a Libertarian since He created mankind with free will. Or perhaps He would be a member of the Green party since He created the earth. Do we want to “wander in a trackless waste” as this?

Another popular choice about thinking about civil government is to determine first off whether you are a liberal or a conservative. Alas, these descriptions likewise lead to certain rote conclusions about how civil government is formed and what it ought to do and avoid doing. Does God think about civil government using this framework? Is God a liberal? Is He a conservative? Is this how He defines Himself using these politically pliable terms?

If being a Republican or Democrat, or a conservative or liberal is not the place to begin thinking about civil government are there other more suitable approaches? Perhaps a more broad approach—are you politically left or politically right? This approach views civil government and policy through political eyes. It is driven by issues and the politics of this issue versus that issue. Or perhaps you are politically neutral or simply apolitical? Civil government? Who cares.

In this left-right approach, our thinking about civil government is shaped on how and to what degree the civil government promotes “our issues” or how the civil government stays away from “our issues.” Thus, a civil government or political candidate who is a “good choice”, is one that agrees with our views on a specific issue. The point is that we begin to think about government based on how it squares with our individual view on specific issues.

Perhaps our views are driven by our understanding of the Bible, while the more likely scenario is that they are defined for us politically and someone told us this or that view was also “Biblical.” Don’t get the cart before the horse. Our views on most issues are driven by

whether we see ourselves as politically left, neutral or politically right.

Religious conservatives and evangelicals are primarily issue driven in their thinking about civil government these days. This explains why they are unmotivated to think about civil government itself, from God's viewpoint. They are generally satisfied with declaring themselves to be Republicans. If they translate Biblical admonitions about voluntary compassion into governmental programs of mandatory forced welfare, they declare themselves to be Democrats or socialist. There is often little thought given to acceptance of the parties underlying intellectual frameworks and assumptions. Often political affiliation is something you inherit from your parents like grandma's rocking chair. Beyond this, scant thought is usually given to God's view of civil government and no thought is given to how we should think about civil government from God's viewpoint, let alone its American governmental and federal version. That is the lay of the land.

Even now you are probably hoping this book will eventually affirm your preexisting ideas about God and government. You have read Romans 13. What more is there? Did you also read I Samuel 8 or Hosea 8 referenced in the beginning of this chapter? Do they seem to conflict? Do you have it all figured out? Don't be naïve. If you want to look afresh, it means you must temporarily suspend your conscientious desire to judge each chapter on how it shall square with your own left-right thinking. You can always go back to those warm thoughts when you stop reading. Can you set aside your party views and read this book to actually see what it has to say?

There are also those who simply declare that thinking about political things like civil government is not worthy of their time or energy. They assume that God would not concern Himself with "secular" or "worldly" matters as politics and government. They pursue matters they believe to be more spiritual and thinking about civil government is not one of these things. But our concern is with inquiring what God has to say, if anything, about the origin and jurisdiction of civil government and in particular about American Civil Government. To understand His views, we look not to religious treatises, Church teaching or religious advocacy. We look rather to the Bible and what it has to say about these purportedly secular and worldly matters. Let us hope we are not so spiritual, that consideration of the whole word of God is beneath us.

Chapter 2. What Was The First Government God Instituted?

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:28.

Looking Back To Creation

Having run a quick race through contemporary yet inadequate starting points for thinking about civil government, how then should we think about this matter? Call us old-fashioned, but the best place to begin thinking about civil government is to determine right off the bat whether God has anything to say about it and when He said it in human history. Human history starts in the Garden of Eden in year one, not in 1776 AD. Subsequent history after the Garden and then after the worldwide Flood about 1650 years after creation, is filled with claims by many kings and queens, that God has many things to say about civil government and in particular about the power and authority of *their kingdom* and the duty of their subjects to submit to their rule.

History also confirms that civil governments are staffed by people just like you and me. As such when power is placed within their hands, they turn civil government into a mechanism to enrich themselves and their friends and to punish their political enemies. When they are not busy doing these things they default to the standard behavior of civil government—making war, taking things and accumulating wealth. The Scripture teaches early on this is the way of kings.

This is a hard truth to bear this early in our discussion. The first mention of great men, pharaohs, and kings in Scripture describes their conduct principally in terms of empire building (Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, Genesis 10:8-12), personal enrichment, covetousness and murder (pharaoh's conduct toward Abram and Sarai, Genesis 12:10-13), and waging war, confiscating booty and enslavement of human captives (the nine kings' regional war sweeping up Lot as a captive, Genesis 14:1-12). They say the past is prologue. Perhaps this paragraph deserves a yellow highlight?

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. The question here before us is how do we think about civil government. We can't think about civil government with self-identification as a Republican or as a Democrat or as a Libertarian or as a member of any political party. Nor with self-identification as a liberal or a conservative, or as someone who believes civil government is there to promote their special interests or particular issues. The reason we have such confusion particularly among professing Christians in the world and especially in the United States and the West, is that we have difficulty getting beyond these superficial and ultimately imprisoning self-identification labels.

Do we open the Scripture and read from the beginning about God's views and

statements about civil government? It's easier to skip ahead to the New Testament and Romans 13 and conclude that God must have rolled out of bed 4000 years into human history and discussed civil government with Paul, having neglected to mention the subject prior thereto. We simply assume that God must have established civil government in the Garden of Eden and made Adam a king, and the rest is history. Being a simpleton is easy here.

You Never Read Pre-Flood Genesis This Way—1656 Years, 3.8 Billion People

But let us back up even further than Nimrod, pharaoh and the nine kings of Genesis. If we read just the first eight chapters of Genesis, right away we have to decide whether we believe what God has said, and not fill in the blanks about what God does not say. We have to decide to not fill in the gaps, make assumptions, or read our own ideas back into the first 1656 years of human history. Remember, we are talking about real people. We are talking about real events. We are talking about people in real time. We are talking about lots of people and lots of time.

If we calculate the date between the creation of the world and the beginning of the flood, scholars estimate this was approximately 1,656 years. For comparison, since the flood to 2018 AD for instance, there have been 4,365 years. That is about 6,020 years of total human history. The pre-flood world would by this calculation, constitute 27.5% of all human history thus far. By the year 2,600 AD, the duration of the pre-flood world would still be about 25% of all human history. Don't you think over 25% of human history deserves a few minutes of our time? Does it deserve some study? Not just study but an examination of what God tells us about the origin of civil government.

Another interesting point about these chapters in Genesis not stated, but which we may legitimately speculate about, is exactly how many people were alive at the time of the flood. The Bible does not reveal the population of the pre-flood world, but we may still attempt to glean an understanding of the population. Commentators observe that if the growth rate in the pre-flood world was equal to the growth rate of today, that the pre-flood population would have been around 750 million people. However, if the lengthy lifespans identified in the Bible before the flood are computed and the growth rate is increased by just 0.001%, this would put the population at close to 3.8 to 4 billion people at the time of the flood.

It is estimated that the 2018 AD population of the world is 7.594 billion. The Earth's population has now grown to over 7 billion in 4,368 years with shorter life times. Is it plausible that the Earth's population in the first 1,656 years could grow to 4 billion given extended lifetimes? Think about it. Whatever you conclude, don't be so naïve as to think there was Adam and Eve and a few of their children and cousins frolicking around outside the Garden of Eden, then Cain killed Able and Noah showed up in the "Arkey, Arkye, Arkey" and things went from bad to worse, and well, here we are. We left kindergarten

years ago.

Read It Like It's Written

Our government approved thinking implanted within us through our government approved educational system doesn't present it that way. Nor does Hollywood. If you want the Hollywood version of early mankind we recommend seeing the 1966 movie starring Racquel Welch in *One Million Years B.C.* Or check out *2001: A Space Odyssey* which has predictable opening scenes about early ape-man and the formation of primitive civil governments based on force and violence. Some things never change. There is also a 2014 Hollywood production of *Noah* starring Russell Crowe as savior turned crazed grandfather. Talk about moral confusion on the big screen. These films and generally living in the American culture have probably shaped you more than you know.

Now why is it important to understand the number of years and number of people that existed in the days of Noah? What does this have to do with thinking about civil government? A review of the Genesis chapters indicates startling omissions on God's part. He never ever mentions nations. He does not mention civil government. He does not discuss kings. He never mentions kingdoms. He never says "king so-and-so lived in those days and ruled the people" or anything like that. He never indicates that he wrote a Constitution or gave it to the people. He did not write the Declaration of Independence or give it to Seth. Let us read these chapters like they are written.

What is written is that God created individual human beings of two types—male and female. He then describes marriage and the family. He articulates with clarity the authority of a man and a woman. He describes the authority of a husband and wife. He describes the duties of parents to their children. He describes that children are born in a family to their parents. He does not say that children shall be considered truant if not receiving an education mandated by local or State government, or by a national king, or that children are citizens in a civil kingdom. These entities simply did not exist. But more important, none of them or their conceptual equals were created or established by God based on early Genesis records. Not one.

God also goes to a great deal of trouble to describe what mankind should be doing. Evangelism is not yet mentioned. Sorry to disappoint you. God said to Adam and Eve they should have children. God said that they should have many children. God said that they should fill the earth. God said that their children should fill the earth and subdue the earth. So Adam and Eve and their children could subdue the earth, He gave to them seed bearing plants. He gave them fruit trees for food. He gave them the animals of the earth, though not to eat. He gave them every bird in the air and all the creatures of the earth. He gave them every green plant for food.

What then did Adam do? Did Adam announce that he was the king and that all the

peoples of the earth that came from him should be governed by him? Did he declare that everyone was subject to him and his wife because he was the first man and she the first woman? Did he declare a divine right to rule the human race for his lifetime which he could pass to his children in lineal secession because he had personally talked to God? Did he set up a judicial system? Did he set up a national legislature? Did he set up the Environmental Protection Agency to keep the earth safe from future human polluters numbering between 750 million to 4 billion people? Did he have elections so that the people could be governed by their own consent? Did he establish a system of compulsory education?

Scripture says Adam did none of these things. It says that Adam instead planted a vineyard, had relations with his wife who bore children. He did what he was told. Nothing in the account of the fall or of sin in the Garden of Eden changed this obligation. Nothing about the account of how sin entered the world somehow transformed Adam into a king or the Garden into a kingdom.

Adam Was A Husband And Father, Not A King

I know what you are thinking. You will say that Adam was authorized by God to rule over his wife and children. Does this mean God authorized Adam to set up a jail and incarcerate his wife and arrest his son for murder? Does this mean Adam could announce laws, rules, ordinances, and Commandments that would govern them in all matters? No. But whatever this authority actually means, God did not say to Adam that because you obeyed your wife and ate from the tree which you were prohibited from eating, that therefore you may now rule over all peoples that come after you. God said nothing of the sort.

If you think this is an academic debate for finer minds, perhaps you should familiarize yourself with the arguments advanced by Sir Robert Fillmore in Patriarcha (1680), and John Locke's response in Two Treatises of Government (1689). You could also read Samuel Rutherford's 1644 edition of Lex Rex. It could be something to discuss at the dinner table instead of sporting events or a pandemic.

Thus, we have a situation where the Scripture chronicles the first 1,656 years of human history which encompassed approximately 750 million to perhaps 4 billion people without the slightest mention, guidance, rule or examples of civil government, kings or kingdoms or even the existence of Nations. This pre-flood period presently accounts for 27.5% of all human history. Yet, God does not mention civil government. You say, "Well ya, but that does not mean humans beings did not set some government up?" I say, "Well ya, but so what? What does God have to do with that?" I'd also ask, "How do you conclude that humans set up a government, since the Scripture never says anything of the sort?" But perhaps you have had a private revelation? Perhaps your pastor told you? Perhaps the people of Noah's day were more virtuous and just all around better people? Really? Are

you serious?

Nor is there any statement that God authorized Adam to rule over any person as a king either with or without their consent. Instead of any focus on civil government, we have God describing the authority of a man and a woman, a husband and a wife and a father and mother in relation to their children. It's basically the first thing God clarifies after he creates mankind in His image, male and female. The first government God established was self-government and then family government. He does not mention establishing civil government.

We must presume God knew there would be people numbering in the population figures we've described since He commanded people to be fruitful and multiply. It would seem strange for God to command human beings to reproduce but then be unprepared to deal with the consequences numerically. It's not like God said, "Oh my goodness where did all these people come from. I should've set up civil government to govern them. My bad. I missed that one." Nor did God say, "Boy who would have guessed that 1656 years would go by before I got to establishing civil government on my to do list." We are not persuaded that God just didn't know what He was doing. We are not persuaded that God discussed this topic. He had no private conversations with certain persons claiming He individually appointed them as kings and rulers or generally commanded all people to submit unto them, but Moses just forgot to mention that when he wrote it all up.

Nor is there any evidence that what God later said to the Nations of Israel and Judah in terms of civil government, were known by anyone before the flood. God did not channel Abraham, Moses or David back into Noah's world. If God did secretly tell Adam and his kin about the Levitical system or the judicial case law of Israel, neither Adam nor Noah, who actually talked to God, indicated they either knew, followed it, or even cared.

So how do we think about civil government, let alone American government? We begin by demonstrating to ourselves from the Scripture that God thought it was unimportant to set up any system of civil government Himself for the first 1656 years of history with a few billion people, give or take. Instead, the first government He established was the individual and family, and its form of government was organized according to the institution of marriage.

So when you hear others make statements about what God thinks about civil government, whether he favors this or favors that one, or that He's on our side and wants us to kill the enemy in war, it might be important to remember this beginning and the absence of any record of God authorizing or establishing civil government during this period. He never even authorized any person to punish murder. He alone was the king. He alone judged mankind. He sought no man's aid or assistance. What was important was the Family, its authority and structure. The civil government did not invent the family, nor may it redefine what God has created, without incurring God's disapproval and eventual wrath.

Finally, ask yourself or your parents or spiritual leaders their thoughts on God's exclusive focus on family authority, structure and government, and the absence of any thought given to civil government for the first 1656 years of human history involving billions of people. Perhaps it is not a very spiritual inquiry? Or perhaps the discussion will be a short one, once they ask you if you are a Democrat or Republican, a conservative or liberal, or how you stand on certain political issues of the day. Yet, such an inquiry will provide an opportunity to tear down arguments and every arrogant obstacle standing against the knowledge of God, if only you have first thought about it before then.

Chapter 3. Did Family Government Fail to Govern Mankind Before the Flood?

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2:23-24.

The ancient origins of marriage confirm its centrality, but it has not stood in isolation from developments in law and society. The history of marriage is one of both continuity and change. That institution—even as confined to opposite-sex relations—has evolved over time. United States Supreme Court, Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015).

Family Yes, Civil Government No

In the preceding chapter we learned that the world God created which was populated by his command consisted of between 750 million to possibly 4 billion people spanning approximately 1,656 years or 27.5% of human history. We have no instance of any civil government being established or authorized to act by God. We have no indication that God established nations. We have no indication that God established offices, agencies, or departments. There was no Garden of Eden Heights Police Department and Adam ruled no one, except his own family over whom he only governed as a husband and father, not as a king. Can we honestly absorb the implications of this?

Such a review should lay to rest any claim that God created civil government at the beginning, or that civil government arises from the laws of nature or will of God from the beginning. What we do find instead, is that God created the family, defined its members and authorized it to govern itself. We do not find that God authorized "Family A," to govern "Family B." We do not read that God authorized any person to govern any other person without his consent other than within that person's family. God took care to define how a family was created, with the authority to create it and that He charged it with specific functions and duties -- have children, multiply, take authority over the earth, maintain it and use it for food and for the advancement of familial society. Nowhere within this mandate is the authority granted to any person to wage war, enslave others, or take prisoners of war. No person may impose any tax, impose zoning requirements, compel public school attendance, impose legal tender or establish a global empire. Nor does this mandate authorize the use of force or violence, except in a purely defensive posture.

Adam never said to Eve: "As the first man and women, we are a natural king and queen—let's take booty, pillage and plunder in God's name." And when their children were married, they created their own separate families and became accountable only to God and not their parents. They left their mother and father's authority as a parent to a child. This was the way of all family government.

Consent—The Cornerstone Of Marriage

Let us pause here to clearly recognize that when Adam and Eve became husband and wife, that it was by their mutual consent. They both agreed to the proposition. Well you say, "There was no one else, so what else could they do?" Yes, they were the only people, but their consent to the arrangement was necessary. Adam sought a woman by asking God. Genesis 2:18 & 20. God delivered. It's the same today for those who ask. When a man and woman are united in marriage, they do so by their common consent. Genesis 2:24. Marriage was not founded on coercion. Consent is a necessary element for entering into the preexisting institution of marriage and enjoying its benefits and performing its duties. As we will see, the authority of a human being to consent or withhold consent embedded into each of us by God, is the cornerstone of individual self-government and marriage.

Murder Without Capital Punishment By Man

We also read that God entrusted no family member or any person with the authority to punish murderers. God reserved that power to Himself alone. For whatever reason, it does not appear to have been immediately exercised by God. Thus, when Adam's son Cain murdered his brother Abel, Adam was without jurisdiction to punish Cain by putting him to death. Adam could not establish the Garden of Eden Heights Police Force and arrest Cain. Adam could discipline his son as a father, but could impose no death sentence, physical pains or penalties as Cain's king, because Adam was no king at all. Nor could Cain's mother impose any penalties as a queen, because she was no queen herself.

God was content with this situation at least for the time being. His justice and punishment of Cain after His investigation and trial involved exile and dispossession from the land itself. Cain was adjudged a fugitive. He was under God's protection and curse simultaneously. What mercy was shown by God! Cain's situation prevented him from fulfilling that aspect of the mandate to take dominion over the earth. If he worked the soil to feed himself, it would not produce food easily. He thus was condemned to wander from place to place dependent on others for survival as his just punishment. He was a wanderer without dominion—the exact opposite of Adam's charge.

God's judgment, however, did not pass to Cain's children. They were under no such legal disability. There was no "corruption of blood." God clarified that no person had the right to take Cain's life under any theory of right or wrong, guilt or innocence. Thus, Cain could fulfill the command to marry and produce children. No human authority could ever interfere with that liberty, because that liberty was not within any human jurisdiction to compel or forbid, to authorize or license, or to regulate or control. Nor is it today.

Polygamy Without Civil Punishment By Man

As we have seen, Marriage was not created by mankind. It was created by God as

recorded in Genesis 2:23-24. As such it is set in stone for all human history. It cannot be redefined by any person, priest or judge. The Supreme Court's declaration to the contrary in Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S.644 (2015), is not merely unconstitutional; it is an arrogant declaration that God's statement in Genesis 2:23-24, is false. The legal issue before the Court was whether a state could constitutionally declare that "the union of one man and one woman in marriage shall be the only agreement recognized as a marriage or similar union for any purpose." Mich. Const., Art. I, sec. 25. This definition affirmed the Genesis account. The Court rejected that account. Its statement that the marriage "institution—even as confined to opposite-sex relations—has evolved over time" is pure drivel. Why have our representative in Congress not rejected the Court's decision through impeachment of these Justices? Perhaps nothing in our left-right thinking has told us to tell them to do so?

The Supreme Court is not the first to say God is a liar about marriage. In a different context we read that the murderer Lamech took two wives. See Genesis 4:19-24. Taking two wives is against the law of marriage which God had clearly laid down when He declared that the "two shall be one flesh" as stated in Genesis 2:23-24. Lamech thus acted lawlessly. Who did God appoint to punish Lamech for this lawless act? Nobody. The Old Testament is filled with examples of "saints of old" taking more than one wife simultaneously. God did not punish them either. Such conduct was lawless but there was no civil government to punish it. The only government was the family. The only government with authority to punish was God's direct government of every man and woman.

Some have speculated that polygamy must have been acceptable and that only later in history did God come out against it. What nonsense. Polygamy was never acceptable by God. It violates God's law of marriage. Yet, for whatever reason, God Himself did not punish polygamy since creation. Or perhaps the better way of saying it, is a man with multiple wives punishment enough? Is that not judgment enough? See Genesis 16:1-6; 30:1-13. So here we have cases of murder and polygamy documented. Yet, God gives no human authority any right to do anything about it.

Make Noah King?

What to do? Wouldn't this be the perfect time for God to Institute civil government? It could then punish those murderers and polygamists? I hear the demand even now. Who should God appoint as king? We read that Noah was the only person on the entire planet to find favor with God. Assume the population was 2.5 to 3 billion persons at that time and Noah was the only one who found favor with God. Wouldn't Noah be the best choice for God to appoint as ruler, king, prime minister or president? Even a dictator would do. Desperate times call for desperate measures we are lectured. Emergency creates necessity we are told. We are lectured and told these things by those who want power—the lusty stallions of the state. God could have established the government of

"United Eden" and Noah could rule it and as a matter of efficiency, also judicially try the accused and punish them too.

God, however, did not appoint Noah to rule, or judge 1 to 3 billion persons. The extent of Noah's rule did not differ from the head of any other household. That authority extended only to his immediate family as a father.

Did God miss an opportunity? Many today conjecture the earth was corrupt in the days of Noah because there was no civil government to restrain evil and lawlessness. They argue that had a civil government been instituted, the corruption of the world would have been restrained and this is why God changed the rules of the game after the flood. The change we are told was the implementation of civil government with the *exclusive* power to punish wrongdoing including murderers by capital punishment. There is no support for this speculation. Where do people come up with this stuff?

God's One Regret Was Not About The Lack Of Civil Government

This populist blather does not square with what God says. They say these things because they do not know the Scriptures. Genesis 6:5 states that: "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." We also learn that "the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart."

But what did He regret? God did not say, "I regret I made the family as it obviously did not work out." He did not say, "I regret that I did not create civil government to punish wrongdoers and evil." He did not say, "You know, the one thing I regret is that I did not kill Cain right off the bat. That would have sent a message." God regretted none of these. He regretted He made mankind. That is a deep and profound regret. He said nothing about the family or civil government. God was thinking, "You know, I could just kill everybody and be within my rights." He had no regrets about the family or civil government and why should He. He is king of the entire earth.

What remedy did God proposed for this situation that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually? He actually reaffirmed the family. He instituted no civil government. What would you have done? Do you have a better plan to judge a few billion people for a thousand years of evildoing?

But God has standards. He said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." The remedy was that: "everything that is on the earth shall die." But God said to Noah, "I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you." God also has mercy for

those who seek Him.

God Is The Exclusive King, Lawgiver And Judge

If you are looking for punishment by death for wickedness and evil—this is it. If you are looking for justice, the flood is it. If you think God should dispense His justice on your timetable, think again. If you think God was sorry He did not punish evil sooner, then you do not understand God's mercy and grace. Psalm 145:9. Adam as king could not have been this perfect. Noah as king could not have struck the right balance between justice, mercy and good faith. God was a better King than any man ever could be or has been. Jeremiah 10:7 states: "Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your due; for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like you." God will bring every deed into judgment in His time. Every secret thing, whether good or evil will be revealed and judged. Ecclesiastics 12:13. The pretended glories and shining justice of a government of men are dim lights by comparison.

John Locke recognized this situation—where God alone is the judge and no human judge on earth is present to resolve disputes. He goes on further, however, to conclude that such a situation must render the world to exist in a state of war. "To avoid this state of war (wherein there is no appeal but to heaven, and wherein every the least difference is apt to end, where there is no authority to decide between the contenders) is one great reason of men's putting themselves into society, and quitting the state of nature: for where there is an authority, a power on earth, from which relief can be had by appeal, there the continuance of the state of war is excluded, and the controversy is decided by that power." John Locke, Second Treatise of Civil Government, Ch. 3, sec. 21 (1690). (Yet now we have thousands of governments and war aplenty. We have civil governments warring against their own people's freedoms. People have placed themselves into a state of society but it has not worked out the way they thought.)

At least when considering the period from creation to the flood there was an appeal to God to judge human conduct on earth. He did so with Cain. He did not do so with others. During this time people began to call upon the name of the Lord. Genesis 4:26. But near the end the water rose. God finally judged all flesh with death except Noah and his family. Locke's "state of nature" existed here, between the creation and the flood. But God does not say that man lived in a state of war. He merely says in Genesis 6:5 that "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Perhaps this means families were continually at war with one another. Perhaps not.

Let us not also forget that after death, there is another judgment by the Supreme Judge. Revelation 20:12 tells us what it looks like when God judges all mankind. "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was

written in the books, according to what they had done."

God knows how to govern and judge. You bet He knows. He did not forget to institute civil government at creation. It was neither necessary, nor desirable. He was the civil government. He was and is the king. No need for Adam, no need for Enoch or Noah to stand in His shoes. "For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations." Psalm 22:28. Let us hear no more of the inherent glory of man to rule. Let us hear no more of the divine right to rule according to nature. Let us hear no more of rule by a favored enlighten few as something God Himself originated.

Family Authority After The Flood

Return to the chronology. The flood has come and gone. It was not only a worldwide event. It was a worldwide judgment. The judgment of God for evildoing has come and gone. The flood is not a story about the environment only. It is not only an account of God destroying what He has made. It is a story of God as the Supreme and Great Judge taking his seat and executing Justice in His own time. Saying it that way "in his own time," is really for our benefit as we live in time and He does not.

After this judgment, some things remained the same, but a few things were changed. God did not change the family. He reiterated the same authority of the family as He had before the flood with two exceptions. Adam's Covenant was restated to Noah. Two things in Noah's covenant changed, however, which were different after the flood. First, the fear and dread of humans came upon animals. People could eat animals for food, provided the blood was first drained from the carcass.

Second, after restating the authority of the family, God expanded its authority. This is critical. God is not laying down a new rule for the nations as nations did not then even exist. He is laying down a new authority for the family. This context is ignored by cheerleaders for civil government as an exclusive monopoly on force. They do not talk about what God actually said and did here. In Genesis 9:6 God says specifically to Noah and his sons that: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image."

Here God calls man "mankind," of which there are two types equally made in his image, male and female. God's use of the word "man" is not a reference to gender. It is a reference to the authority of a human being. You won't hear that in your diversity classes. What is critical to note is that this authorization, indeed this mandate, authorized a person to take the life of a murderer. But what person? Any person? Just Noah? Just his sons?

The authority in Genesis 9:6 comes after and as part of the Noahic covenant regarding the purpose of the individual and family. God is not so naïve to believe that a single entity in future nations and peoples called "civil government" can be trusted with the

exclusive use of force to execute punishment. He knows what men are made of. He just annihilated the population of the earth. Do you remember that? He regretted he made mankind. Do you remember that? Do you think after annihilation and regret, God is going to actually give humans a divine right to rule the rest of us? Don't confuse His mercy with sharing His power. He empowered no one to rule by divine right –neither civil government nor His church composed of the body of believers. This can't be good news for those civil officials or clergy under the opposite impression. God may have called you to serve, but He did not call you absent the consent of the people or a body of believers.

Does it make sense to you for Him to vest in an exclusive set of human beings the sole power to rule all others and put to death murderers? Or does it make sense to decentralize the power to punish murders among offended families and next of kin?

Nevertheless, nothing in the text regarding the post-flood authorization in Genesis 9:6, authorized or created civil government. Not a syllable exists to that effect. He did not create kings or kingdoms. He did not yet create nations. Genesis 9:6 serves as no basis for an entire system of civil government that may self-declare any exclusive power to punish murderers. The authorization was given to Noah and his sons as part of God's covenant with mankind, not just Noah's family. It was not given to Noah and his sons as kings. It was not given to Noah and his sons as rulers of all men upon the face of the earth that should follow. It was given to them as family members.

Don't be among those that simply jump from the passage in Genesis regarding capital punishment to the proud boast that any and every civil government today has by the will of God Almighty, the sole monopoly to take life for murder, and any other crime it wants to add to the capital list. For example, the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 stated that: "The right to exercise capital punishment is reserved for the state, not the individual. There is no place for personal revenge in the administration of this punishment (Rom. 12:19). It is the state's responsibility, as God's civil servant on earth, to protect its citizens and to punish those who harm them (Rom. 13:4, 6). Capital punishment provides the state the means to apply the appropriate punishment to the crime (Deuteronomy 19:21)."

The SBC cannot conceive of God actually establishing a system of punishing murders by offended family members which He actually did establish in Genesis 9:6. That would be un-American! The SBC does not pause to inquire how murders were punished before nations or civil government even existed. Likewise, the true admonition by God against revenge is noted, but unto whom is it applied? It is applied exclusively to individuals and families on the assumption that only they would punish murderers motivated solely by blood-lust or revenge. This assertion assumes that Noah and his family and all human families that followed at least till the days of the early Hebrew Republic must have been motivated by vengeance. The family feud is a departure from God's authorization, not its fulfillment.

Are you fearful of the family feud-of the Hatfield's and the McCoy's? Good, but do you also fear the local, county and state police unto whom the law has given absolute and qualified immunity for the death of others? Are you aware of covert operations doing the same thing worldwide? Only the naïve assume civil government never punishes from ill motives! Did you ever hear of police brutality, false flag operations or governmental cover-ups?

Thus, at the beginning of the second life of mankind upon the earth after the flood, we find no evidence God instituted any civil government. We only find He reauthorized the family to continue its purpose. He also added to their authority the punishment of a murderer, and perhaps only by the family of the victim. Our search for the origins of civil government must go further if we are to think about where civil government comes from, how it is formed or may be formed and what is the legitimate scope of its authority. But we have managed along the way to affirm the importance and centrality of family government. We have also identified the cornerstone of modern idolatry which says that when God imposed the duty to punish murders, He did so through the exclusive agency of the civil government.

Family government alone was a good and sufficient means to organize society during 1,656 years or for over 27% of all the years of human history, affecting between 750 million to 4 billion people. During this time we have no record of any civil government. God did not originate it, institute it or create it. If there was judging to be done or crime to be punished, God handled it His own way directly, sooner sometimes, sometimes later.

Chapter 4. What Is Right And Wrong? Who Has God Given Enforcement Authority?

"Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" Luke 12:13-14

"An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?" Jeremiah 5:30-31.

"We are under a Constitution, but the Constitution is what the judges say it is, and the judiciary is the safeguard of our liberty and of our property under the Constitution." Speech before the Chamber of Commerce, Elmira, New York (3 May 1907); published in Addresses and Papers of Charles Evans Hughes, Governor of New York, 1906–1908 (1908), p. 139

Two Critical Questions To Always Ask

We are told to be ready to defend our faith and views and "know what you believe." This is good, but this is hardly enough. The first matter of importance is do you know how to ask questions—the right questions? Before moving into a further discussion of civil government, pause and understand two critical questions that should be on your mind, day and night.

First, can you discern what is right and wrong, true and false, good and bad, or to use Biblical terms, what is righteous and what is evil? When you talk to others, ask what they think. Ask them these questions: "Is that right? Is that wrong? Why?" The wise man or woman can see in the heat of the moment, in any context or set of facts-- what is actually right and wrong. Why only defend your faith? Ask others to explain and justify their doubt. Yet, "it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish *good from evil*." Hebrews 5:11-14.

The second challenge is much less discussed today and this is unfortunate. When we only discuss what is right and wrong, we ignore the more significant question: **Has God given any person authority to do anything about what is wrong or wrongdoing?** Or did God keep that authority for Himself to reward or punish in His good time and course. By asking this question, we are going over old ground. We are back to the lesson we thought we learned in prior chapters—that God is the King, he knows evil when he sees it and He will and has punished evildoers according to His standard of justice and His timetables.

As an example of this two pronged matrix applied, recall that Cain killed Abel and this was wrong according to the law of God. Recall that God gave no one the authority to do anything about it. God kept that authority himself. Likewise it was wrong for Lamech to murder and engage in polygamy. Yet, God gave no one the right or authority to do anything about it. He authorized no one to punish either wrongdoing. God authorized no one to "do anything about it." God severely threatened those who would presume to do anything about it. "Anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Genesis 4:15.

God retained jurisdiction. He retained the right to speak the law and punishment associated with its breach. Had you been living in those days, might you have said: "These men are murderers? We should set up a legal system to punish them." We would feel that God was on our side in so saying. But the fact is God would have been against us. For God said that He will avenge anyone who takes Cain's life sevenfold. We know that murder was wrong, but we would lack jurisdiction to impose punishment.

So this is our analytical model. This is how we approach legal issues and develop our understanding of civil government. What is right and wrong? Who has the authority to punish? God decides if He will share any part of his civil authority with human beings. He decides if He will authorize mankind to use force in any instance. To simply assume the power to punish is dangerous and unwarranted.

Lawless Use Of Law

1 Timothy 1:8 observes that "the law is good, if one uses it lawfully." This suggests that law may not only be used lawfully, but may also be used unlawfully. We may be certain that some act or conduct is wrong, but it may also be wrong for any person, power or civil government to punish that act or conduct. We may know the law of right and wrong, but shall we act lawlessly in connection with the law of jurisdiction (who may speak the law and enforce a punishment)?

Now having this framework, let us ask difficult questions. Suppose the people *before the flood* got together and held an election. In that election they nominated and voted that Noah should be king of the World. They further authorized Noah by a sizable majority vote to punish murderers, something God had not extended to Noah or any man. The question is: Does the vote of the people bind God? Does the vote of the people empower Noah? The answer is "no" on both counts.

God cannot be bound by a vote of the people which contradicts his reservation of authority to punish murderers unto Him alone. Noah cannot be vested with authority by the people, when the people did not first possess any power to set aside the commands of God regarding murder and its punishment. Even if the election was fair and honest, it would have no legal effect because the people voting as a people cannot by their collective voice set aside either the law or the commands of God.

Consider another case. Noah lived for 350 years *after the flood*. Let's say that in the 300th year when the earth was more populated, the people then living got together and elected Noah as king of the World. The people gave Noah the power to punish any murderer. The people also said in a duly passed initiative that only Noah and his appointed agents could punish murderers and that if anyone other than his appointed agents punished a murderer that they could be charged with murder themselves. Now, is such a declaration of the people lawful? Is God bound by such a declaration and vote? Does the vote of the People require all persons in the world to submit to Noah? The answer is "No" again on all three counts.

Is the voice of the people expanding on God's authorization in Genesis 9:6 lawful, or is it a usurpation or modification of the authority and/or duty which God granted to mankind or the family of the murdered victim? Is this electoral authorization vesting exclusive punishment of murderers in Noah and his agents a disregard of the post-flood authorization which God extended to "man" regarding the punishment of murderers? Such a vote narrows the authority of mankind to punish murders by restricting that authority to Noah and his agents only.

We opened the chapter with a quotation from Jesus to the effect he had no authority to divide an earthly inheritance. This should seem odd as he also claimed to be God in the flesh and King of Kings. Though he undoubtedly had the power to divide an inheritance, he did not have that human authority. The point is that even Jesus understood that his then earthly authority was limited. He obviously knew what was right and wrong and could have easily divided the inheritance according to law and equity. Yet, he declined to do so because he had no such authority. He knew the extent of his jurisdiction. He had authority to heal the sick and cast out demons, but not to divide an inheritance. *Just because he knew what was right, did not mean he was also authorized to intervene and solve the dispute*. What a great lesson is observed here.

Just knowing what is right and wrong *does not by itself* authorize us to do anything about it. If you are an advocate for social justice, if you think you actually know what is right and wrong from God's point of view as clearly stated in His writings, then you should likewise stop and ask yourself: "Who has the authority, if anyone on earth, to do anything about this injustice?" Can you conceive of a world in which God has not delegated all his power to punish wrongdoers to you, to your family, to your church, to your business, school or political party, or to civil government? Well that is the world God created and He did not share all or most of his powers with human beings.

The other two quotations at the chapter's beginning illustrate that some things never change. Prophets, priests, and judges do what they want. They think if they know what is right and wrong, they are also empowered by that knowledge to "rule at their discretion." God promises harsh judgment for all such imposters at the end. Let us not be counted among them. If you are a judge, pay double attention. Let us do justice, but let us be

certain we have the authority from God to do so, not merely the clamor of men who demand it. Let us not be like those who Cain feared would take his life and upon whom God promised His seven-fold vengeance. Genesis 4:15.

Chapter 5. What Do Languages And Nations Have To Do With Family?

"These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood." Genesis 10:32.

"Historical migration of human populations begins with the movement of *Homo erectus* out of Africa across Eurasia about 1.75 million years ago. *Homo sapiens* appear to have occupied all of Africa about 150,000 years ago, moved out of Africa 70,000 years ago, and had spread across Australia, Asia and Europe by 40,000 years BCE. Migration to the Americas took place 20,000 to 15,000 years ago, and by 2,000 years ago, most of the Pacific Islands were colonized." History of Human Migration, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_human_migration

Dominion Travel, Inc.

Our exploration of God's view of civil government in the first 1,656 years of history thus far has turned up nothing. Yet, we press on as history moves forward. We are at that time after the flood with the same rules as before regarding family and some new modifications regarding eating meat and punishing murderers. We are after the world-wide judgment by God, not by man, of humanity's evil. Yet, we are again looking to see if a human based system of civil government will be set up by God to punish evildoing. Perhaps His approach will be to do nothing different than He did before the flood? Will He wait and judge mankind at the end of the age?

We have seen that God's pre-flood regret was not over the family government He created, the absence of civil government or His own timing of judgment. Yet, here we are trying to find some rationale for civil government. We are searching for the elusive passage that says: "See here, God established civil government and we must obey." But we have not yet found it. It was not at creation. It was not at the flood. It was not in the days of Noah after the flood or upon Noah's death some 350 years later. So we are already 2000+ years into human history and have no word from God about civil government. Can you believe that?

You could argue from silence, "Well God set up civil governments and pharaohs and kings, He just didn't tell us." Sure you could say that. But claims from silence are not very convincing. Nor are they very informative. But what does He say about the time after the flood?

This period includes the first part of the life of Abraham. Abraham was 58 years old when Noah died. Perhaps Abraham spent time with Noah or Noah's son Shem and learned all the details about the pre-flood world and the flood itself. Abraham lived in Ur down the Euphrates River from Mount Ararat. After the flood, Noah and his family came out of the

Ark in the mountains of Ararat and eventually settled on a plain in Shinar. This makes sense. God told him to use the land and work it for food. He planted a vineyard. It makes perfect sense to relocate to a fertile plain from a mountain top full of rocks to fulfill this task. Yet, we can understand that some doubted the promise of God in the rainbow to never destroy the earth by water again. To these people, keeping the Ark close by would make sense too. It was a good backup plan. Scattering out across the face of the earth and leaving the Ark behind was the last thing on their mind.

Scholars believe that a great migration developed upon the "Fertile Crescent," which was like a great arc of cultivable land that extended from the Persian Gulf, up and around Mesopotamia and back down to what would become Israel and Egypt. Genesis also refers to the plain of Shinar as the place where the Tower of Babel was eventually built. This fertile area was the center of everything--agriculture, commerce, all the great families of the earth, and the Ark nearby. It was the greatest metropolis on earth featuring the accomplishments of modern architecture—a tower that reached to the heavens and perhaps to God himself. Noah and his sons were in the middle of it all. He is the guy who talked to God and whom God spared. You would like to live near him just in case God shared other big plans.

We know Abraham left his home in Ur and traveled north as far as Haran, right up the Euphrates River. Some scholars place this city in the Shinar region. It is not implausible to believe that Shem (Noah's son) and Abraham may have met and talked. Think about that? That makes a lot more sense than *Homo erectus* migrated from Africa 1.75 million years ago.

Who Created Nations With The Same Language?

Meanwhile, we see the rise of nations. Did God create nations? Yes and no. God divided the people into language groups. Division into language groups was God's means to accomplish two objects. First, He divided people into language groups to induced mankind to inhabit the whole earth, not just one place. Second, he confused the language so mankind would again search for God Himself. The natural and predictable result of being separated by language and fanning out over the face of the entire earth was the creation of nations. The Lord dispersed them from this one place over the face of all the earth. Genesis 11:8.

Nations arose from the original act of God confusing human language. God created languages and as a result humanity scattered into language groups, each occupying different geographical regions. These regions developed borders and assumed the particulars of nationality built on their unique language first and fraternal identity second. It seems only natural that nations would serve as the geographical boundary and physical limitation of any civil government that might subsequently be instituted. God's institution of nations based on families who spoke the same language had the practical effect of

preventing the various nations of the earth from joining together simply because they could not understand one another.

Before Babel, all the families of the earth were gathered in one physical location on the plains of Shinar. They erected a tower to "make a name for themselves." This suggests that the goal of Babel was to declare the independence of mankind from God. The message of Babel is clear, "We the families of the earth are great without God." God's response is equally clear "We will limit God-less families by dividing them into nations according to language."

We are now over four millennia later in time since Babel, and mankind through its nations have done their best to overcome the language barrier. All these years the nations have pressed toward returning to the singular worldwide cooperation and control of Babel by moving closer to overcoming the language barrier. The cover of this book illustrates the confusion of the ages continues.

In addition to 1) God instituting nations to induce mankind to spread out over the face of the earth as originally commanded, and 2) to retard the tendency of mankind to declare that their collective greatness does not depend on God, God also 3) used the institution of nations to force mankind back to looking for Himself since they could no longer immediately turn to their neighbor for support as they now spoke a different language. Paul observes this phenomenon. "From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." Acts 17:26-27. He did this by confusing our then common language at Babel. Genesis 11:1-9. This passage about nations makes no reference, however, to civil government.

Countries and nations are the byproduct of language division. The object was to disperse the people over the face of the earth so they would fulfill the covenant regarding family, land and property. God directed the people to do this earlier in Genesis 9, but they refused. They built a mighty tower for the purpose of all dwelling together in one location and refused to scatter out across the face of the earth. This is critical to understand—nations came about to help families facilitate their dominion purpose and to remind people that God was there if we would only reach out to contact Him. Nations are a means unto an end—to encourage family purpose and knowledge of God.

So God employed a new means to effect His purposes of scattering the people by familial clans across the globe and slowing down their tendency to advance themselves without Him. The new means he employed was to confuse their language. He did not do this to create nations, per se, but to facilitate his command that the people exercise dominion through their families. Genesis 10:32 sums it up this way: "These are the clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the

nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood." Babel is simply another part of God's history of the family. Nations arose from extended families based on a common language.

What does language, family, and migration mean for nations? God established them and nations were the result. God established them to help families do what he first commanded Adam then Noah. God also established nations to impede for the time being, people from rejecting Him, and thus to help people find Him again. A single tower as a testament to man's greatness would just not do. No word yet, however, about civil government. Why? It is because family government was still intact and more than sufficient, as it was from the beginning. God was still God and He retained all his authority.

Where Did These Kingdom, Pharaohs And Kings Come From?

This is the way family based same language nations came into being. But nations are not civil governments. Nations are not kings. The first actual mention of some type of civil government is found in Genesis 11. Jesus and his Father went down to the plain of Shinar from Heaven to see what was going on. They went down to earth to see the construction of a great city and its high tower with its top reaching toward the heavens. This was the first "kingdom" of mankind ever described in the Bible. It was the first kingdom of men and a man named Nimrod was its master builder. Nimrod was the first man on earth to be described as "a mighty man" and a great hunter. Whatever he was or was doing, it was interesting enough for God and Jesus to visit and inspect.

Recall the fate of that first kingdom of the earth. You remember what happened. God said there is no stopping them from congregating in one place on the earth. God previously told Adam and then Noah to go out into the earth, but instead the people remained all together in one place—Nimrod's city. So as an inducement to obey Him, God confused the language of all the people. It was all babel. They could not understand each other. As a result, the construction of the tower and city ceased. The great unified city of mankind was abandoned. The Kingdom of Nimrod was no more.

What's the point? The point is that God went to see the kingdom men were building. This seems like odd behavior if God establishes kingdoms. God did not likely establish the kingdom and then forgot about it so He had to go visit it. Instead God caused it to be abandoned and cease its existence. Again this is strange conduct for those maintaining that God establishes the kingdoms of the earth. For Romans 13 fans, was Nimrod and this kingdom one of the "authorities established by God"? No evidence in the text suggests so. The text indicates just the opposite; God put an end to this kingdom.

Fast forward to Genesis 12:15. Here Abram and his wife were in Egypt and Abram feared that his beautiful wife would be taken by the pharaoh who in turn would kill Abram, ostensibly to free her from their marriage bonds so pharaoh could lawfully have her all to himself. Here is how pharaoh and his princes are presented. "And when the princes of

pharaoh saw her, they praised her to pharaoh. And the woman was taken into pharaoh's house." Since Abram, however, lied and told pharaoh that his wife was his sister, Abram remained alive.

Let us stop here. What do you see happening in chapter 12? We see there was a man called pharaoh and there were others called princes who seemed his subordinate officials. Pharaoh is a title for an Egyptian king. Perhaps the term means the "sun" or "sun-god," or "the great house." We know nothing about how this man came to be pharaoh. Was he elected? Was he appointed by the Sun itself? Was he simply the strongest family in the region and declared him in charge? Perhaps he took the kingdom by force, by fraud, by blood or a combination thereof. We do not know. The Bible does not say. Perhaps he controlled land and agriculture and made others dependent on him for food and survival? It would be difficult to migrate away from the Nile area which he controlled and harder still to find land to work and produce food in a desert environment. Perhaps pharaoh controlled regional food production. Recall the reason Abram went to Egypt in the first place. There was a famine in his land. He went to Egypt for its food.

This is all very interesting. We cannot say that God placed pharaoh on the throne. We cannot say that the Egyptians placed pharaoh on the throne. The scripture does not say how he came into this power. We know that pharaoh was the king and he had a reputation for killing the husbands of beautiful women. We know he took women and made them his wives without their consent. We know pharaoh gave orders and others obeyed and that he controlled his borders and deported those whom he desired to deport eventually including Abram and his wife. Genesis 12:20.

We know pharaoh knew something of the law of marriage even if he ignored its formation by mutual consent. We know he took wives by force. Perhaps that is also how he took his kingdom, by force, not consent? Finally, God told pharaoh to give Abram's wife back or else he would continue to be afflicted with "great plagues." We know pharaoh listened to God. Infamously pharaoh may have said to God: "I did not have sex with that woman." Abimelech, King of Gerar said about the same thing. Genesis 20:4. President William Clinton said the same thing many centuries later. Apparently this is a popular line. God did not say to either: "You are no longer pharaoh or king." God only said you better give her back or else.

This is the glorious introduction to the first pharaoh referenced in Genesis: He was a man inclined to murder; a man who takes what he wants by force; a man who controls land and agriculture, a man who determines who can reside in his kingdom; a man who can order others to do his will; and a man who God punished for defiling the marriage covenant of Abram and Sarai. Here is a man who believes he is the law. This is not a good start for civil government. Is this the pattern for all dictators, kings, prime ministers, and presidents to follow? Is this what God instituted?

Alas let us continue our search. The next mention of kings after a discussion of pharaoh and Abram in the Biblical record comes in Genesis 14. This describes a period between approximately 2,075 to 2,275 years into human history from creation. That is a long time before God bothers to mention kings. In this chapter, four kings from outside of Palestine invade and fight against five Canaanite kings. Ah ha—kings by country or nation at last! So is God in the business of setting up these kings in these nations (which nations He created to encourage families and the knowledge of God)? Not so fast. Notice that the text merely describes the existence of these kings. It never says or implies God set any king on any throne for any nation. It never says or implies God set any sword in a king's hand or commanded submission to a king. These nine kings have no different pedigree than pharaoh, except we are not told if pharaoh went to war.

What is the first contribution of these nine kings to a better society that the Bible notes? Is it to do justice? No. Is it to punish murders? No. Is it education or social welfare? No. Is it the administration of justice or the protection of religious liberty? No. Are the people paying taxes to these kings as a minister of God? God never says that.

The first thing we see about these kings is that they made war. Genesis 14:2. War is the way of kings from the beginning. Remember that when the next war comes around. Nothing new to see here. What acts of Justice did they further? The kings in war "took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way." In other words, they made war, killed their enemy, took booty, and prisoners as slaves. Genesis 14:11. It's a bad start for kings. Can you claim God is the author of this warmongering arrangement? Perhaps our response to all this is to at least declare in nationalistic prose, we "Support the troops?"

God had previously declared the men of Sodom were wicked and "great sinners against the Lord." Genesis 13:13. This situation 500 years after the flood is looking like the situation 500 years before the flood. Now, it is wicked sinners. Then, it was wickedness and evil continually. And what is God doing about it? Is He having a *déjà vu?* Maybe it is time for Abram to be king of the world? Perhaps some of the nine kings went to war to punish Sodom and Gomorrah? But does God need then to do that? Surely He can execute justice against Sodom? Why is it we are always rooting for more human power and can't wait for God? Yet, we know the story. God eventually judges these cities with fire. He does not need Abram's help. He does not need warmongering kings to do the job.

Abraham Is No King, But Nations And Kings Shall Come From Him

As for Abram, eventually changed to Abraham, far from establishing an earthy kingdom to judge Sodom, God proposes something infinitely better. He says that "Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." He affirms that "I have chosen him that he may command his children and

his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." Genesis 17:18-19.

Isn't that interesting? God's purpose is that Abraham should command his children. God talks to Abraham about his family and his responsibilities. He says nations will come from him, but he is not made a king. He does not say that Abraham should be a king and wage war. He does not say that Abraham should punish murderers. God stays on point with nations and using nations to further his will to encourage families and advance the knowledge of Him. It's the same theme from the beginning. The fact that these kings arise doesn't change anything. And when they hinder his plan for Abram, they get cursed.

He does not say to Abraham, "Sodom is evil. I want you to go over there and kill them all there before they kill you here." Instead, God says He will take care of the situation. God says, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know." You bet God will know. God will go down. This is God's business. In fact, Abraham says to God: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" See what is happening? God is the judge of all the earth. Sodom is just one city. God is the judge of that too. God retained his authority to judge mankind and put to death the lawless.

Abraham did not have that authority from God. Abraham knew what was right and wrong, but this did not mean he was clothed with the authority to do anything he wanted. He had the authority to take back his nephew and his possessions because of his familial authority. But he did not have the authority to wage a general war against other nations or cities for the "children's sake" or because it was in his "national interest" or because of "national security." Such a claim would be seen for what it is—an arrogant usurpation of authority not granted. It is the claim of tyrants promising freedom.

Abraham knows his place—to fulfill his duties to his own children. Command your children, not the People or kings of Sodom. God is acting the same as before the flood. He will judge when he is good and ready. He does judge the City when his criminal investigation reveals there are not even five righteous persons left. Would God destroy the righteous with the wicked? No. God directed his angels to escort the simpleton Lot and his stiff necked wife and 2 daughters out of the City before its destruction. This was 4 people. When God destroyed the human race the first time at the flood, he preserved 8 people in Noah's family and destroyed the rest. God has a lot of patience, knows how to save and knows how to judge.

Thus, approximately 2,075 to 2,275 years into human history from Creation, our brief introduction to pharaohs and kings is marked by murder, use of force, defilement of marriage, deportation, enslavement, theft of property and war.

Again we may ask, what does language, family, migration and nations have in common? Each preceded and stands independent by the will of God from any civil government which may arise by the will of human beings. Nations are a means unto an end—encourage family and knowledge of God.

Chapter 6. Why Is Abraham's Covenant Of Nations, Kings And Specific Land Not A Model For The Nations?

"I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God." Genesis 17:6-8.

"But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you." Leviticus 18:26-28.

Abraham's Covenant

We have ventured 2,275 years into human history. The covenant regarding marriage and family God made with Adam and repeated in a modified format to Noah and his offspring remains in effect and continue to this day. Nothing has changed there. Likewise, God has been and remains the King and Judge of the earth, its people and nations. Nothing has changed there. But something new is now introduced. God makes a promise to Abraham saying "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations." He said "I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you." God will give him and his offspring all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. Genesis 17:6-8.

The sign of this covenant is male circumcision. Genesis 17:11. Any male of Abraham's seed not circumcised is cut off from the covenant and significantly from the right to possess the specific tracts of land promised by God. Genesis 10 tells us that nations shall come from families other than from Abraham. Nations have arisen from non-Abrahamic clans, so Abraham is not granted a monopoly on Nations. Nations are a byproduct of Noah's covenant to take dominion over the earth. Yet, there is something new here. God did not need to covenant with Abraham to do what every other family was doing. God goes beyond Noah's covenant and adds additional terms and benefits to a new covenant he is making with Abraham and his heirs.

Let's be clear what we are talking about. God's covenant with Abraham to make nations from him is not new. What is new is God promising that kings shall come from Abraham's offspring and his offspring shall receive a grant of specific land. God said to Noah and his offspring, marry, have children and spread out among the earth which is yours for food, labor and enjoyment. Abraham was subject to that covenant. Now God is

adding that kings will arise from Abraham's offspring and his offspring will be given specific tracts of land which God will later define. This is something different. Another covenant is agreed upon. It is not Adam's covenant. It is not Noah's covenant. A new covenant with Abraham and his offspring is proposed which Abraham accepts by faith and verifies by circumcision. Let us explore what is and is not being planned.

The Covenant—People And Nations, Kings And Land

The covenant God made with Abraham has three major legal dimensions. It also has a spiritual meaning. God's covenant with Abraham established faith as the key to redemption from sin and death. This aspect is important but does not concern us here as we are examining the legally enforceable terms of the covenant. First, Abraham's descendants are to be numerous and form many nations. Second, kings shall come from these nations. Third, these nations and kings shall occupy the land of Canaan forever. Nations, kings and specific land. It is not our purpose here to explore these three in-depth but to simply observe some general principles that we can hang on to in our search for how to think about civil government from God's point of view.

First, Abraham's descendants will form many nations. We've already seen that God created different languages so that the people should spread out over the face of the earth and exercise the authority they were given as family members. The Earth's families separated by language, spread out by their clans across the Fertile Crescent in Mesopotamia after Babel failed. Nations resulted from this language-based clan migration. Genesis 10:32 says the "clans of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood."

So when God specifically promises to Abraham that his descendants would form many nations, it is not a new concept. In the past Noah's sons in their nations spread out across the face of the earth and created nations. Now God has promised to make nations specifically from Abraham's descendants including both Isaac and Ismael. But there is a further distinction. God says of Ismael: "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year." Genesis 17:20-21. The covenant is with Isaac: "I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him." Genesis 17:19. The promise of nations to Abraham's descendant Isaac is part of a covenant. It is part of a promise God has made. The earth shall have nations formed from all of its peoples. Abraham's descendants through Isaac do not have an exclusive part in that process, but they shall have a significant place in that process.

Thus, the covenant with Abraham regarding the promise of nations is not something new, though the means by which a "multitude" of nations are to be populated is now Abraham specific, though not exclusively. In other words, this is not an exclusive grant that

only Abraham's descendants shall become nations. God is not saying only Abraham's descendants shall become nations.

Turning then to the second major aspect of this covenant which is the promise that kings shall come from these nations. Is this a statement that God will make kings? Is this a statement that God will finally establish kings and kingdoms that can then rule on his behalf and execute judgment? Is God saying to Abraham, "Look, I don't think my approach to punishing evildoers has worked too well before or after the flood." Is He saying, "Let's change that arrangement worldwide. I will make kings from your offspring that can punish the people the right way when their evil acts occur, and not wait till only four righteous people are left in a wicked city or eight righteous people are left upon the face of an evil earth before I save only them and put the rest to death." Is that what God is contemplating here?

Is that what God is saying when he says to Abraham: "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you." Genesis 17:6. Is that what the text says? No, God is not saying any of these things. Don't read what is not stated. God is stating a fact -- kings will come, nothing more. God is describing, rather than proposing a fundamental change. God is not saying "I will make these kings." God is not declaring these future kings have any inherent authority. He is not saying these kings have a right to rule, or their commands automatically oblige deference just because they come from Abraham's lineal descendants. He is not dictating how a man may become a king or a woman a queen. Nor is He saying that all such kings will act lawfully.

God's promise about kings is not these kings will act lawfully or obey His law. They may, but they may not. God does not say. God is not stepping off the throne and elevating Abraham's future kings to a position of perfect kingship. That is not what is being promised. That is not what is proposed. No speculations are part of the covenant. We shall see this in greater relief when we examine the history of Israel and Judah and their foolish request for a human king in 1 Samuel 8.

As to the third aspect of the covenant, God grants specific land to a specific people and nation. This makes perfect sense as a nation without land is not much of a nation. We see God is very thoughtful in this covenant with Abraham. He covers all the bases: nations, kings, and specific land. But also recall that all mankind was previously directed to scatter over the face of the earth and occupy and work their land into which they migrated. So nothing in this third aspect is different on that score. What is different is that God is saying He will now give specific real estate to a specific nation, as contrasted to His prior general direction that families should hold and enjoy real property.

Now let's see how God fulfills this covenant. Perhaps we can understand better what God has in mind with kings and kingdoms and civil government. At this point, however, we ought to resist the urge to jump to the conclusion that because God said to Abraham that

kings shall come from you, that ergo all of the world's leaders, presidents and civil governments now in existence or arguably traceable to Abraham are put there, authorized or appointed by God himself to rule over their peoples by a divine right or otherwise. That is far from the truth. Don't be a simpleton or drink the political Kool-Aid about this, or conclude that civil government is therefore "from God."

God still has his rules for the nations in place. He is still the judge of the nations. He has not delegated that away. Any nation that commits abominations, so the land becomes unclean will be judged by God. Leviticus 18:26-28. His covenant with Abraham does not leave God with nothing to do except figure out how to save the human race. He is still God and His government of the nations and enforcing the peace is without end. Isaiah 9:7. We must understand this as a day to day reality, not as some pie-in-the-sky future spiritualized judgment. There is a future war against the kings of the nations (Rev. 19:14-19) and a final judgment of every man and women ever alive (Rev. 20:11-13), but what we are referring to in this chapter is God's ever-present authority and power over the nations of the earth to this very day. Duet. 8:20. "O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you." 2 Chronicle 20:6.

God has authority over all the nations of the earth, but for Abraham and later for Israel and then Judah he offered something more. His promise of specific land to Abraham was only fulfilled in the time when Israel left Egypt. At that time God will offer to be that nation's King in residence, live among them, make specific laws for them as a legislative body, implement and enforce those laws as a King, and judge the people by those law as a Judge. Granting of land to Abraham is the forerunner of a civil government yet to come that the world has never seen.

As to the other nations, they are bound to what they have been given. They have not been given a civil government by God. They have (like Abraham) been given family, its own authority structure of husband and wife, parents and children. They have been given purpose in life. Exercise dominion over their own land according to their clans and nations, and use and replenish the earth to sustain them.

Why did God set up all the nations in this way? He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Acts 17-26-27. That is the purpose of nations—that they should seek God and find Him.

A nation which fails this purpose is unworthy of the designation. Do you know of a nation that now seeks after finding God? Or do they rage against Him through their schools and government officials? Do they plot in vain in their Congresses and legislatures? Do they take counsel with their judiciary against the Lord and against his

Anointed? Psalm 2: 1-3; Psalm 102:18-22; 148:11? Ponder these questions the next time your church mechanically prays that God would bless our governmental leaders and give them "wisdom." Read Psalm 109 for something different.

As for the covenant God made with Abraham, it was basically a modified family covenant. It involved making many more nations, and one nation with offspring through one specific family line with specific land for a special purpose beyond that previously given to all families from Adam and Noah. God was setting the stage through Abraham about His forthcoming offer to this family line in the course of time, to live in a specific land for a specific purpose—to be the earthy King, Legislature and Judge of the one nation set aside for the special purpose of being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. See Exodus 19:4-5. That is the legal core of Abraham's covenant, not that kings or civil government come from God. God is carrying on the family theme. And don't let some theologian tell you that the covenant is merely spiritual.

Chapter 7. Why Was Moses Not A King Or Supreme Judge, But A Ruler And Redeemer By God's Design?

"Because the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws." Exodus 18:15-16.

"This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush." Acts 7:35-36.

"At the same time the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the government, upon vital questions, affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation between parties, in personal actions, the people will have ceased, to be their own rulers, having, to that extent, practically resigned their government, into the hands of that eminent tribunal." Pres. Abraham Lincoln, *First Inaugural Address,* March 4, 1861.

Pharaohs: The Good, Bad And Ugly

Let us fast-forward from Abraham to the time of Moses. Moses will receive the law about 2,513 *Anno Mundi*, or years since creation. Recall that Abraham had many sons. Each son of Abraham in their generations became nations. They also were geographically defined in specific parcels of land. But Abraham's son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob and Jacob's twelve sons named in Genesis, are significant in terms of our search for how God thinks about civil government. Jacob's sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. If you know anything about the Bible and the history of these twelve men whose families grew into the twelve tribes of Israel, you'll know that they relocated to Egypt and initially lived under very favorable conditions. You will also know that at a certain point in time a new pharaoh of Egypt came to power and reduced the free people of Israel to servitude and hard labor. We now come to the point in our chronology where we must ask a few more questions related to civil government and kings.

First, who was pharaoh and did he rule by a grant of authority from God? Did he force Israel into hard labor because pharaoh was "God's servant" just doing God's will? Was pharaoh God's minister to do good, as enslavement was beneficial to the Egyptians? We are first introduced to pharaohs back in Genesis 12:15 and sketched something of that pharaoh's character. Recall that pharaoh saw Abram's wife Sarai and took Abram's wife into his household. There is no description here that pharaoh was placed on his throne by God. The Bible simply states pharaoh was supreme over other pharaohs and this is how the Egyptians ran their country. We noted that approximately 2,075 to 2,275 years into

human history from Creation, our brief introduction to pharaohs and kings was marked by murder, use of force, defilement of marriage, deportation, enslavement, theft of property and war.

Abraham also told Abimelech, King of Gerar that Sarah was his sister because he feared his own death and that king took her into the king's household. God declared he would kill Abimelech and his family and household if he did not return her. This defiling violence seemed widely practiced. Genesis 20.

Are subsequent pharaoh's or kings any different? The next major pharaoh we encounter elevates one of Jacob's sons Joseph, from slavery to second in command of all of Egypt. Genesis 41:41. Slavery seems an ever preset feature of Egyptian society and government. God never gave Adam or Noah the right to enslave anyone. Kings just did what seemed expedient. Nor does this pharaoh respect the command of God to Adam, and then to Noah and all men and women thereafter to spread out over the earth and subdue it, to work the soil and raise a family for their own purpose. He forced Hebrews to work the soil and improve the land of Egyptians. He relieved Egyptians of the commands of God to take care of their own families.

Nor does pharaoh's conduct establish a basis for "Biblical taxation." The story of Joseph's rise to power and his subsequent control of the Egyptian government is a favorite for those who see within it some universal principle of taxation and government's right to confiscate the increase of a person's property. Genesis 47:24-26. They claim that since Joseph was appointed by pharaoh, and Joseph made a law that government take one fifth of the harvest every year, this somehow establishes a worldwide universal precedent reflecting the legitimate authority of civil governments everywhere to follow. The argument is that because Joseph did it, it must have been consistent with God's will and then established a rule for nations today.

Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. The scripture is clear that pharaoh appointed Joseph, not God. It is also clear that while God used the event to save Israel from famine, this in no way set a precedent for governmental ownership of all land, or confiscation of one fifth of the fruit of the land or labor. It sets no rule for any nation that its government shall receive, or that by God's will we must pay Caesar, twenty percent of our increase, income or property, no more, no less. Again, we see the Bible describing what is happening, rather than establishing as a rule of general applicability either pharaoh's or Joseph's organized theft and enslavement.

It should also be noted that while God gave Joseph the true interpretations of pharaoh's dreams, nothing in those dreams or God-inspired interpretations also included the solution Joseph suggested. That solution of organization confiscation of private property was completely suggested by Joseph, not God. That solution was contrary to God's prior command that families should work their land and enjoy its produce to sustain

them.

Finally, we get to the particular pharaoh whom Moses met. The new things we see regarding this pharaoh is that God hardened his heart (Exodus 7:3), he increase the severity of slavery (Exodus 1:11-14), he tried to kill Moses (Exodus 2:15), and he ordered the nationwide murder of Hebrew males after birth by "casting into the Nile." Exodus 1:22. Moses' mother eventually obeyed only the letter of this lawless decree, by placing Moses as a baby in the Nile, albeit in a basket. Exodus 2:3.

Hebrew midwives and parents were not obligated by God to obey pharaoh's tyrannical decree or submit to his rule as a matter of divine obligation. Many did not. This refusal was not an act of defying God's will, but an act of obeying the will of God. It is God's will that we assist others to bear children, rather than assist others in killing children, born or unborn. Is this the conviction of midwives today? Regretfully, infertility is no longer considered a curse, children are the curse. Good thing Moses' mother did not seek or receive the help of Planned Parenthood on the one hand, or wait for the law to be changed on the other.

Moses: Not A Supreme Judge By God's Design

How far into human history are we from creation? Moses was born in Egypt about 2,300 years from creation. Moses was eighty years old when he spoke to pharaoh and Israel left Egypt. Perhaps now it is time to make Moses king? Perhaps he should be made supreme judge? Let's see what God did. God said to Moses: "Come, I will send you to pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." Exodus 3:10. That is principally what Moses was first asked to do and Moses did that.

Later on we see that Moses also sat as a judge of the people. He was not however, a supreme judge. He was a circuit court judge and perhaps an intermediate appellate judge. The people stood around Moses from morning till evening waiting for their case to be called. Exodus 18:13-6. Some things about the judicial system never seem to change. But Moses was not the final or supreme judge of Israel. No, as we will see God never relinquished that authority and position. God was the supreme judge, the Supreme Court.

There is a deeper lesson to be learned in this arrangement. Moses did not claim his judicial opinions were supreme. He did not even claim that his opinions were binding or enforceable by his own will or orders. He did not say that his opinions were equal to or superior to the law of God.

Is this example of Moses' approach and humility to the act of judging cases and controversies a rule or guide for judges to follow today? Is it a "best practice?" Or is it outdated or simply not applicable? It is certainly different, indeed contrary to the modern American approach to judging and the doctrine of judicial supremacy. In a nutshell, judicial supremacy is the view that federal courts and the United States Supreme Court in

particular, are "supreme" over the other two branches of government. We are told they are supreme over the Constitution too. A federal judge's opinion is regarded as the Constitution's exclusive meaning. That opinion is the law of the land without regard to what the other branches of government have to say. The doctrine maintains that the opinions of the Supreme Court Justices *are* the law of the land.

A high watermark of this approach was announced in Cooper v. Aaron, 358 U.S. 1 (1958). This famous case dealt with a plan of gradual desegregation of the races in the public schools of Little Rock, Arkansas. In its opinion, the court remarked that Article VI of the Constitution makes the Constitution the "supreme Law of the Land." So far, so good. In 1803, Chief Justice Marshall, speaking for a unanimous Court, calling the Constitution "the fundamental and paramount law of the nation," declared in Marbury v. Madison, 1 Cranch 137 (1803) that "It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is." This is the legitimate power of *judicial review* found in Article III, Section 2. From this legitimate recognition of the power of judicial review, the Cooper v. Aaron Court took a demagogic step further.

The Court first deceitfully expanded its own opinion in Marbury asserting that Marbury actually "declared the basic principle that the federal judiciary is supreme in the exposition of the law of the Constitution." 358 U.S. at 18 (emphasis added). Recall that Chief Justice Marshall said the judiciary has a duty to say what the law is. He said nothing, however, about the Court's opinions as "supreme." *Cooper* added the "supreme" element.

The Constitution, however, grants no "supreme" expository power to the Court. Read Articles III and VI and you will not find it. What will be found in Article VI is the truth that the Constitution, laws and treaties "shall be the supreme law of the land." Nothing is said about Supreme Court opinions being supreme law, let alone being law at all. Nothing, not one iota. The Constitution extends no power to the Court to claim that even its legitimate constitutionally based opinions, are the sole and exclusive meaning of the Constitution itself.

The prophet Jeremiah described this deceit. He saw it at work in his own day. God told him to write about this way: "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?" Jeremiah 5:30-32.

Moses: A Judge Under Law

Is that what Moses did? Did he rule at his discretion? Did he act like our Supreme Court today? No he did not. Sorry to disappoint you. Divorced from its mythical characterization as the cornerstone of our Constitutional democracy, judicial supremacy as currently practiced is simply a declaration by the Supreme Court that they have an extra-constitutional right to rule at their discretion. This appalling and horrible thing is not new.

But it is still appalling and horrible even today. Nor is their appalling handwork limited to Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973) and Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S.644 (2015). We should not look here to validate the true nature of judicial power, but rather to witness the claim that the laws of God laid down from the beginning of time regarding human life and marriage are subject to fake judicial revision.

We should rather look to a different text. Moses said that "the people come to me to inquire of God; when they have a dispute, they come to me and I decide between one person and another, and I make them know the statutes of God and his laws." Notice that Moses did not claim that God made him a judge. What is happening here is that the people asked Moses to judge their disputes. Moses didn't say all cases must come to him. He did not assert any authority to resolve any dispute. Nor did he declare he had the power to enforce any judgment he rendered. He decided the dispute and made the law known to the people. Moses knew how to write a good judicial opinion applying the law to the facts. He knew the "statutes of God and his laws" and judged by them.

When hard cases came along, they were referred to others. God, however, demanded Moses ensure compliance with the decisions of these judges. He said to Moses: "Be careful to do everything they [other judges in hard cases] instruct you to do. Act according to whatever they teach you and the decisions they give you. Do not turn aside from what they tell you, to the right or to the left." Deuteronomy 17: 8-13. Moses describes judging where the people come to him and he makes known the law of God. He decides the case.

Moses had no monopoly on judging. Moses doesn't say, "I am the only one that can judge." Later on after listening to his father-in-law, Moses establishes a judicial system calling for one judge for every ten persons. Moses established a system of appellate courts. But even here, there is no Scripture to support the argument that these courts were either exclusive or compulsory. People came to these courts voluntarily to resolve civil disputes.

Remember Moses was first rejected by the Israelites saying, "Who made you a ruler and a judge?" God rather sent him as a ruler and redeemer by the hand of an angel who appeared to him in the bush. Acts 7:35-36. Judging was part of that task and assignment but it was not based on force or violence employed by Moses to enforce his own judgments. In the next few chapters we will see that Moses was also made a ruler. But what does that mean? A king? A pharaoh? A god?

Looking Ahead Beyond The First 2,400 Years Of History

We are between 2,400 and 2,500 years into human history. We have seen examples of kings and pharaohs, rulers and judges. We have seen no evidence, however, that God established any of these civil rulers or empowered them to rule over others, or placed in *their hand* any right to enforce their will or decisions upon anyone. Enforcement of the

decisions of other judge's orders fell to Moses as an executive function—to follow the decisions and law of God carefully. Moses was appointed as a ruler and redeemer for Israel for their emancipation, and to judge and to enforce the decisions of other judges. God has certainly not declared that judges, however, enjoy any power to make law or ever judge with deceit in their mouth. "The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit; he has ceased to act wisely and do good." Psalm 36:3. The best that can be deduced here is that their authority is to declare what law then in existence applies to the facts before them.

The absence of a mighty civil government or supreme lawmaking court existing by the command or will of Almighty God at this time in history must seem preposterous and unbelievable to the average person today. How could 2,500 years of human history pass without at least God establishing a civil government, king or judge to enforce His law, put people to death, or at least jail or fine them? Could we at least expect a zoning administrator, truant officer or dog catcher? Our search must just seem wrongheaded, especially to those who have never been asked to even contemplate the matters heretofore discussed. The only authority structures God actually established are marriage and family. These institutions are far more important to God in terms of social stability, labor and education than any civil government, program or school. A yellow highlighter moment?

Although kings and pharaohs used their power to enforce their own laws or used law lawlessly, punishing those who they deemed guilty, invading other nations and killing whosoever got in the way, these and other deeds cannot be equated with God's authorization, will or blessing. Perhaps the texts we have examined do not fit your theology? If you try to nuance them with arguments about "God's permissive will" or that "God let this happen" so your view of God's Sovereignty or predestination etc., can preempt the actual text, you are doing a disservice to the Word of God, and to your mind's God-given curiosity.

We are not saying that history thus far was a lovefest, free from wrongdoing. Quite the contrary. We have every reason to believe that the post-flood world was much like the pre-flood world as it was inhabited by the same race—the human race. How could it be otherwise? Yet, we likewise have every reason to believe that God's response to evildoing in the pre-flood world did not change in the post-flood world either in terms of the importance of the family or its authority. Why was Moses not a king or supreme judge, but rather a ruler and redeemer? It was by God's design so the people themselves may be free to follow God, rather than be bound to serve yet another king or pharaoh--titles and kingdoms established by human beings, not God.

Chapter 8. Was God The King Of Israel By His Command Or The People's Consent?

"Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. So Moses came and summoned the elders of Israel. He set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him, and all the people answered together, 'All that the Lord has commanded we will do!' So Moses brought the words of the people back to the Lord." Exodus 19:4-8.

A Treasured Possession, A Kingdom Of Priests And A Holy Nation

Is God ready to do something different after all these years? Yes and no. Is He ready to make another covenant? That would seem to be the approach. He has already made a covenant with Adam, with Noah, and of course with Abraham. Now He is preparing to make another covenant with the people of Israel after their Exodus from Egypt by Moses as their redeemer and judge. God said to Moses: "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel, 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." Exodus 19:4-6.

Here God is saying, "The earth is mine." It is His possession. God does not say the earth is the Devil's property. He does not say Satan owns it. He does not say that the earth is possessed by the nations of the earth who claim it. Since God owns it, he has authority to govern it. King Jehoshaphat said, "Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you." 2 Chronicles 20:6. No man can withstand God. No king can withstand God.

God does not say that the earth is the exclusive property of mankind or any nation to govern it as it pleases. American Foreign policy experts should reevaluate their claim to govern the nations of the earth in the national interest. Indeed, "let the nations know they are only mortal." Psalm 9:20. "Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing." Isaiah 40:17.

So God is reaffirming that while nations originated after the Tower of Babel and spread out over the face of the earth as recorded in Genesis 10, yet He has not instituted their civil governments, selected their rulers, appointed their judges or empowered their legislatures. He is now proposing to Israel something new--that He will make them more than just one of these nations. He is proposing to establish the people as a kingdom of

priests and a holy nation. That is a different proposal than anything He has ever done with any nation.

He is also proposing it, not imposing it. That is important. Arguably the people of Israel could say, “No thanks, we appreciate all you’ve done in Egypt, but we want to be a nation just like all the other nations.” Though they don’t say it at this point in time, this is exactly what they foolishly say later in I Samuel 8 when they renege on their promise. It is hard to imagine that a nation once offered the opportunity to be a holy nation governed by God directly, should later say they only want a king like all the other nations. They would exchange God as their King, for a man to wage their wars. I Samuel 18:19-20. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. The point is that God is proposing something new to Israel and the people have to decide to accept or reject this proposal.

What do the people say in response to this proposal? All the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” The people agreed. The People consented. This is the first Biblical instance of a nation being governed directly by God with its consent. The people consented freely to make God their national King, Supreme Judge and Legislative body. Don’t let any theologian diminish this free choice by claiming that Israel was predestined to accept God’s offer, or that Israel was unable to accept because God caused them to accept. What nonsense. God’s offer was genuine as was the People’s acceptance. They freely consented to abide by His enacted laws that they had not yet heard. They simply trusted that God would govern them lawfully.

The question now becomes how did God implement this particular relationship accepted by the People. How does He achieve His proposal to make the people His treasured possession among all the peoples of the earth and to make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation?

The answer to that question could fill volumes. Let’s try to summarize. After the people consented *en masse* to God’s proposal, God enacts ten commandments. He then enacts and informs the people through Moses, various laws about altars, slaves, restitution, sacrifices, the Sabbath, and war. You might think after hearing all these laws and rules and regulations the people would have second thoughts. Did they say, “Boy this is more than we bargained for?” Perhaps God was thinking the same thing? Yet, after God states all these laws about the foregoing matters, He again asks the people to ratify everything. He wants to be sure. The people answered with one voice and again said, “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.” Exodus 24:3-4.

This is not like Congress that adopts bills no one has read and leaves it to Agency bureaucrats to implement and judge to defer. Why should you expect that you will have an opportunity to read it if Congress does not? If only Congress (and state legislatures) could be as transparent and open as God Almighty. God seeks national approval by the

people of his laws *after he enacts them*. Can you imagine Congress proposing a referendum of its Public Acts by asking the American people to approve or reject what it has enacted? But God is more open-minded about consent of the People than Congress.

The next morning after this referendum, Moses "took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.'" Exodus 24:7. So the law was written down in a book, read back to the people who for the third time consented to obey the law. The law was written down. There were no surprises here. Nor is there room for judicial modification of the law either. No phony substantive due process posing as Constitutionalism.

God has a greater interest in making sure the people know the law, than our politicians who manipulate their voting patterns to hide what they are doing. God drafts laws with precision. The "Torah" consisting of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible contains 79,976 words. The entire King James Authorized Bible has 783,137 words. There are approximately 11,588,500 words in the final regulations implementing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act (HCERA). That is just two laws of Congress. Let us hear no more complaints about the number or complexity of God's laws.

State and congressional laws take up volumes of shelf space. God on the other hand, is to the point. In fact, God is clearer when writing the law and explaining it to the people than your state legislature or the United States Congress. You don't need a gaggle of lawyers and judges to explain the law of God as compared to the law of your state or United States. God is simply more concise and the model of legal brevity compared to the laws of men. God also respects the liberty he has entrusted to humans eliminating the need for endless regulations.

Remember these points the next time someone complains about how God's laws are difficult to understand or don't make sense. At least the people consented to the law after it was read to them on two or three occasions. Can you say the same for yourself with regard to your local, county, state or national governments? If you want to see what tyrannical laws look like, try deciphering your local US attorney's indictments or simply read Title 18 of the United States Code which comprises the Penal Code of the United States. You would live in Israel with Moses any day of the week.

So here is the situation. We have the people of Israel, a nation among the nations of the earth agreeing to be a nation unlike the rest. We have a description of God's proposal to initiate the transformation of that single nation into a treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. We do not find that God has made this offer to any other nation, before or since. When we think about American government, let us not forget this. America never was nor is a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. It was founded on the

laws of nature and of nature's God as articulated in the Declaration of Independence which is a magnificent human achievement and recognition of God's authority over nations, but that is not the same foundation as Israel. Still have that yellow marker with you?

Let us not fall into the deception of believing that God came to the Pilgrims in 1620 up in Massachusetts, and offered the same deal to them as He did to Israel. God did not. They were founded by men and woman who sought religious freedom from a tyrannical government.

We must appreciate the unique contribution each settlement made in shaping America. This included Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Richard Hakluyt's Colony at Roanoke Island in the 1580's, and especially the Ancient Planters and Adventurers with the Virginia Company of London founding Henricus and settling in Jamestown in 1607.

These settlements were founded by those who sought to be masters of their own land and labor, just as God had directed Adam and Noah. They all sought to adopt theistic and Christian ideas and make them the cornerstone of their colonies and the nation that would be later birthed. But we ought not confuse these wonderful contributions with what God proposed to Israel in Exodus or with the Puritan's hyper- spiritual characterization of their own endeavors as a "New Israel." They were not a new Israel because they were never Israel to begin with.

Returning to our examination of God making Israel a treasured possession, what made the difference? What could begin to make them a treasured nation and not just another nation over which God has authority? Did they get a unique civil government? Did they get a king? What about a national legislature? What about judges? Did they get special or unique laws which applied wherever they geographically wandered? Did they get a set of laws that were the law of the land? What about that?

What is the path for a people to become a treasured possession out of all the nations? What does it take to be a kingdom of priests? How do a people become a holy nation? These purposes are Israel-specific. God does not make this particular offer to any other nation, people or priests. He never made this offer to Christians either. The way God initiated these special and unique purposes for this nation and to transform them as a nation into a kingdom of priests and a holy nation is through giving the people a special set of laws and establish those laws in a special system of government. God set Israel apart from all other nations as His most favored nation. Exodus 19:6. But Israel did not fully become either a kingdom of priests or a holy nation. The process was just started. Those descriptions also look forward to the day when the Millennium begins. Then will the nation truly be holy and every member thereof stand as a priest before God. In the meantime, God acting as the legislature will give Israel His laws to begin the process of become priests and holy.

God is The Legislature

With Israel, we see that the law which God gave Moses for the People is truly from God and not from Moses. The most obvious case is God enacting ten commands and writing them on stone Himself twice. It means that God Himself is the lawgiver. He is the legislature for Israel. He sets the rules. He does not set up any legislative body with authority to make, modify or repeal His laws. Ancient Israel did not draft laws or statutes for legislative purposes. There was no man-made legislature. There were no elections. There were no gerrymandered districts. Thank God there were no political parties bent on corrupting the people with campaign promises.

Broadly speaking, God himself enacted laws for the entire Nation. The "Ultimate Bible Summary Collection" gives a good and concise overview. We reference and quote liberally. See http://biblehub.com/summary/exodus/1.htm

In chapters 18-24 of Exodus, Moses presents the Laws including the Ten Commandments to all the people at Mt. Sinai as God has commanded. In chapters 25-40, Moses gives the Israelites the tabernacle, priest and worship instructions. These commands are how God will guide Israel into becoming a holy nation and kingdom of priests. Leviticus was written to draw the Israelites to an understanding of the holiness of God, and that He desires them to act in a holy manner toward Himself. In doing this, God gives them many instructions to carry out. It describes Moses giving procedural instructions for the Israelites, especially to the Levitical priests, about how they are to carry out offerings, ceremonies, and celebrations. The word *"Holy"* is mentioned more times in Leviticus, than any other book in the Bible. How does God desire to make Israel into a holy nation? He gives the rules for holiness. How does He make a kingdom of priests? He gives rules and instructions for priests.

Sacrifice and Offerings are laid out for priests and individuals. These passages also describe how to use the altar for the sacrifices and the offerings to God. In chapters 8-10, Moses describes the instructions for the Levitical priesthood as a start. Since Israel is to be *"a kingdom of priests"* (Exodus. 19:6) we may assume that the Levitical priesthood was just the beginning. One day all Israel will become this kingdom. 1 Peter 2:9. The Levitical priesthood did not make Israel a kingdom of priests. Under that system, only a small number of persons were priests - the rest of the nation, even the rest of the Levites, were not. The concept behind a kingdom of priests is that every single member of the kingdom will be a priest, not just some. But it was a start.

Moses teaches the importance and procedures for things that are unclean. These holiness requirements include food, diseases, animals, insects, dead bodies, birth, cleaning and many others. Moses gives instruction about the Day of Atonement. The High Priest enters into the Holy of Holies and offers a sacrifice to God for sins on behalf of the entire

nation of Israel. He describes laws that apply generally for living a holy life. There are many laws covering sexual immorality, idolatry, land laws, more priestly laws, religious festivals and celebrations, the Sabbath year and the year of Jubilee. A holy nation is one that has consented to follow these laws.

Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy approximately 1407-1406 B.C. That would be about 2,597 years into human history. The name literally means *"Second Law."* Moses gives *"the Law*" for the second time. In chapters 1-4, Moses reviews details of the history of Israel such as the Exodus and the wandering in the wilderness. Then, in chapters 5-28 Moses restates the Ten Commandments to the Israelites. Moses explains the principles and instructions for living a godly life as God's chosen nation. These include how to love the Lord, laws of worship, laws regarding relationships (and divorce), and also the consequences and penalties if these laws are broken. In chapters 29-30 there is a move to commit to them as a nation, and to stand apart unto God. This consists of not only knowing the laws that God has commanded, but also obeying them as a People.

See the structure? God sets two purposes for the nation—a kingdom of priests and a holy nations. As the legislature, He then enacts specific laws that regulate ancient Israelite conduct to serve these purposes.

Thus, our superficial and brief tour of the law shows it is given for the very purpose of initiating God's proposal to Israel to make them into his treasured possession. The people agreed to these terms and obedience to these laws on several occasions. This is the way the nation of Israel was to take the fledging steps toward a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. It never then achieved that goal. Though God, by making a covenant will fulfil that purpose in the Millennial Kingdom one day. Jeremiah 33:17-21.

Israel Had No Lawmaking Body

God did not commit the law giving or lawmaking function to any man or ruler. He kept it himself and He exercised it exclusively. History teaches what happens when men establish rules for holy living. Liberty is lost. Tyranny follows. Thus, in our search for civil government from God's point of view, we can draw no universal rule about the legislative power. Consider if you will that God has not proposed to make any other nation his treasured possession before or after Israel in human history. He has not proposed that America become His treasured possession. Adoption of the specific laws of Israel given for that purpose is no rule of conduct or guide for any other civil government or nation.

We should not take away from this examination of the legislative power and law in Israel, the idea that, "Well, since Israel had no legislature, then neither should any other nation." Nor should we conclude that, "Well, God gave his laws for Israel pursuant to a covenant with Abraham and then the people, then those exact same laws should apply to

all other nations." We should not conclude these things because they are not supported by what God declares to be His unique purpose for Israel -- to be his treasured possession out of all of the earth. Nor are they supported by what He declares to be His unique means by which that purpose is to be obtained -- the giving of law intended to show this people how to live a holy and priestly life in the physical presence or manifestation of God as their King, Judge and Lawgiver.

We are sorry to disappoint you if you were thinking that we had finally reached the promised land of civil government. We have not. These early beginnings for Israel do not establish a rule for all nations. What we can take away, however, is what we previously learned about God and government; God is the King of all nations. "Who would not fear you, O King of the nations? For this is your due; for among all the wise ones of the nations and in all their kingdoms there is none like you." Jeremiah 10:7. God is also the great judge of all the earth. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" Genesis 18:25.

The Law Was "The Law Of The Land"

Let us not lose track of the fact that all of these holiness and priestly laws were also given in a specific context. Leviticus 14 is one of the earliest indications about applying certain laws that will apply when the people actually come into the land God has promised them. God thereafter states on several occasions that this law or that law will apply when the people come into the land. These particular rules may be justly called the law of the land.

These are laws which principally and perhaps exclusively applied in the land to which they were given to dwell. This means if you lived within the specific geographical boundaries of Israel these laws would apply to you even though you were not an Israelite. See Leviticus 24:22 "You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am the Lord your God." The law given to Israel was the law of their land in the land they were given. It was not the law of the land for Israel's neighbors.

The Law Was Necessary For God To Live In The Land

Let us also not forget the ultimate reason God provided his laws about priests and holiness to the nation. It was so that a holy God could live among His sinful people. It is amazing that God would want to actually live among the people of the nation for He says after describing the laws on atonement and holiness that "I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God."

When Moses repeated God's laws for Israel he made a point of observing that obedience to these laws would permit them to take possession of the land promised to Abraham. God also commanded that if Israel would keep these laws, especially those that

allowed the people to be considered holy in the sight of God thereby permitting them to be in God's presence and talk to God, albeit through their high priest, then the people of other nations would marvel at such a God.

Moses explains to the people in Deuteronomy 4:6-8 that Israel's wisdom and understanding in the sight of other nations will be a source of envy. Other nations will say when they hear the statutes of God and in particular those holiness laws which allow God and his people to be near to each other. "What great nation is there that has a God so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?"

Moses states this to show the people of Israel they have something no other nation has. Israel has a God near them and who will speak with them provided they obey his laws. No other nation has such a God. Israel has laws given by God *so He may* be permitted to be approached by his people, even though they are sinful and God is holy. Some teachers simply claim this passage means God's laws for Israel are a model for the laws of all nations, but the context says that other nations will envy these laws *because* they permit God to be near His people.

Moses is not declaring that the laws of Israel which allow them this privilege are a rule of conduct for all nations. This is not the context. The Laws given to Israel are great and righteous. But they are great and righteous for a purpose. They are great and righteous so that the people of Israel may be and become a treasured possession, kingdom of priests and a holy nation. They are great and righteous so that the people of Israel may have their God live within their presence. They are great and righteous laws so that the people of Israel may inherit and dwell in the specific land which was promised to Abraham. They are not great and righteous laws so that the peoples of the earth and its nations which follow may copy them down verbatim and apply them in their own nations. We are instead required to discern which have universal application and which are specific to Israel's purpose.

John Locke (1632-1704) in A Letter Concerning Toleration originally published in 1689 summarized it this way, "Nobody pretends that everything generally enjoined by the law of Moses ought to be practiced by Christians; but there is nothing more frivolous than that common distinction of moral, judicial, and ceremonial law, which men ordinarily make use of. For no positive law whatsoever can oblige any people but those to whom it is given. 'Hear, O Israel,' [Deuteronomy 6:4] sufficiently restrains the obligations of the law of Moses only to that people."

God Is The King

We have extensively examined how Israel became a treasured possession of God

by examining God as the legislative branch. Now we shall turn our attention to how God proposed that Israel should be a treasured possession by God being the King of that nation. We are thus switching gears from the legislature to the executive branch. The nation becomes a treasured one by God Himself serving as its King. As its King, He appoints persons such as Moses and Joshua to serve under Him and in His administration. Moses is not the king. Joshua is not the king. They are subordinate executive officials under God as the Supreme King of the Nation.

The Scripture refers to the 70 elders of Israel. Who are these men? Did they rule the nation as an oligarchy? No, not even close. After Moses complained about how hard it was to carry the burdens of the people and asked God to kill himself because life was just too hard to go on, the Lord said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.” Numbers 11:16-17.

So here we have God providing Moses with 70 men to help Moses share the administrative burden of overseeing and guiding the executive branch of the government. Nothing in this account, however, establishes some universal rule that 70 is a magic number for an executive branch. Nothing herein provides a general rule that the executive branch officials should be appointed by the supreme leader, chancellor, king, president or prime minister.

They may appoint, however, executive officials on the principle that the burden they must carry is too heavy for one man. That seems to be a better rule to deduce rather than any rule of general applicability that wise elders are entitled to govern or that oligarchy is the best form of civil government. Of course the problem is when appointees don’t help to rule under law, but rule in their own name with their own agenda. This well describes the American administrative state, judicial deference and Congressional abuse of the Constitution’s commerce power. Indeed, “The prophets prophesy falsely, the priests rule by their own authority, and my people love it this way. But what will you do in the end?” Jeremiah 5:31.

God Is The Great Judge

We have examined the beginnings of the nation of Israel, its special purpose among all the nations and its unique laws serving as the means by which God chose it to become a treasured possession thereby permitting God to entertain the real possibility He could actually live in the land among his own people. We have also seen how that covenant played out in connection with God as the sole and supreme legislature and God as the only

King using Moses and 70 elders to serve in his administration. Let us now complete the analysis with an examination of God as judge.

We have already seen that Noah acknowledged properly that God Himself is the Great Judge of mankind and of nations. Now here in Israel, we see that God will use the preexisting judicial system Moses established on advice of his father-in-law with its recognition that ultimately God is the final and supreme Court. All the hard appeals come to God through his Appellate courts and his Circuit Judge Moses. God is the final and highest judicial authority. While there are subordinate human judges for 1 of every 10 people in Israel, they all judge cases according to God's law.

What law is this? Jethro gave his advice before God gave his laws including the Ten Commandments to Moses. Moses set up this judicial system before he received the Law at Mount Sinai. Even Jethro recognize there was a law that preceded the law of Israel for he says to Moses that, "You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do." Exodus 18:19-20.

Nor do Israel's judges make up law or are they empowered to override the law after "a quite extensive discussion." like the Obergefell v. Hodges United States Supreme Court majority did. Perhaps the reason Israel's judges did not habitually go their own way during the early years was because their selection was not a function of political favor, as is the selection of our federal judiciary. Moses looked "for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe." Absent from this list is political party affiliation, prior employment in the Justice Department, or graduation from Harvard or Yale Law schools.

If a rule of universal applicability relates to judges, it is Jethro's pre-covenant advice to look for local people who fear God who are trustworthy and hate a bribe. While the list is short, perhaps that is the best that can be hoped for. Beyond that, one judge for every 10 people is a pragmatic decision. Given this plethora of judges, however, it's easy to see how the nation was bound to the law by judges acting *under the law.* Judges merely decided disputes between parties that came before them. They did not draft laws of general applicability binding the people at large. For the hard cases, Moses would bring them "before the Lord" (Numbers 27:5) and wait until "the decision of the Lord should be declared" (Leviticus 24:12), or before others as directed by the Lord. Deuteronomy 17:9-12. Moses himself did not decide all the cases.

There were no police or public prosecutors. All prosecution and punishment had to be carried out by the injured party and his family. The family was still the only real government in town. Judges judged disputes between parties, but the judges themselves were heads of families which served to ensure that familial structure remained intact.

Simply put, God is and has always been the king, the judge, and the lawgiver of every nation. The law that applied to the nations was that law which He laid down at creation. We do not refer here to the specific laws of Israel just discussed, but the laws of God which he has written into the creation and nature. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world.” Romans 1:18-20.

He has also written his universal law into the hearts and conscience of every man and woman. “For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness . . .” Romans 2:14-15. It is God who has written that law in his created work--nature. It is mankind, not just Israel that knows “God's righteous decree.” Romans 1:32.

What changed was that God now became the immediate King of Israel in residence, the supreme judge of that land’s disputes, and the exclusive lawgiver for this one nation out of all the nations. He gave Israel His special laws on priests and holiness so that God might, if the people were obedient, fulfill His desire to live among His people on the face of the earth in the specific parcel of land He had promised. That should be highlighted in yellow.

God did not establish His government of Israel by conquest or violence, or because He was God the Creator. It was established by consent offered on at least three occasions. If God will not use force, if He would seek consent, how much more is the actual or proposed civil government of any other nation obliged to follow suit?

Our search to determine if God establishes civil governments for the nations has found no such example. Moses received the law 2,513 year into human history when God proposed a specific government for only one nation, established only by their consent. That is the sum of the matter. The other civil governments of pharaohs, kings and victorious warlords are the creation of humans, not God.

Chapter 9. Why Did God Send Judges To Israel?

"Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them." Judges 2:18

"Today's decree says that my Ruler, and the Ruler of 320 million Americans coast-to-coast, is a majority of the nine lawyers on the Supreme Court." United States Supreme Court, Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015) (Scalia J., dissenting).

God's Exclusive Jurisdiction To Judge Under The Law Of Nature

Let us recap. Moses received the law about 2,513 years after creation and the Garden of Eden. God has established human beings, male and female, marriage and families and defined their purposes. He destroyed the world once, restated His purposes for marriage and family, and instituted languages and nations to incentivize families to achieve their purposes. Remember God did not spare the ancient world, "but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly." 2 Peter 2:5. God established no civil government in any nation, except in Israel which was only established by the consent of that people for a purpose distinct from all the nations. The nation of Israel failed to obey the laws of God and has now fallen on hard times. We now come to the period of the judges in Israel which will last until the beginning of the rule of human kings in Israel starting about 2,900 years after creation.

Recall we have been reviewing the Scripture chronologically to understand what God has said about civil government including its authority and jurisdiction. We have seen that God established nations, not for their own purposes, but rather so the language divided Peoples of the earth may seek Him and perhaps find Him. He also established nations so they would expand out over the entire face of the earth as He originally mandated. The only human government in existence originated by God, if it could be called that, is through the family, with humans authorized to punish murderers by death since the time of Noah. In all other respects, this familial authority was extant from the beginning of time.

A new type of judge appears on the scene in Israel. They do not judge disputes in the conventional way of Moses. The period of these particular judges excluding Moses and Joshua lasted about 325 years. This period of judges in Israel occurred about 2,575 to 2,900 years into human history from creation.

Why Judges? Why not a successor to Joshua?

Why did God wait approximately 2,575 years into human history to appoint these special judges and then only in Israel? Why didn't God just appoint a successor to Joshua in the way Joshua was a successor of sorts to Moses? Why not appoint a series of Administrators in the shadow of Moses and Joshua, rather than deal with judges?

The answer lies in examining the purpose of God in sending Moses and then Joshua. God sent Moses as a deliverer—to deliver the people out of Egypt. Acts 7:35. He also sent Moses to teach the people the laws of God. Exodus 24:12. Later on when Moses was near death, God commissioned Joshua saying, "Be strong and courageous, for you will take the Israelites to the land I have promised them, and I will be with you." Deuteronomy 31:23. God later said to Joshua, "This very day I will begin to honor you before all Israel so they will know that I am with you just as I was with Moses." Joshua 3:7. Moses was to deliver Israel from Egypt and teach them God's laws. Joshua was to take the nation into their land. Though the people did not immediately enter the land God promised, they eventually did near the end of Joshua's life. In Joshua's farewell address he warns the people to "put aside the foreign gods that are among you and submit to the Lord God of Israel." The people pledge fidelity to this obligation. Joshua 24:23-28. After that the people went to their allotted portions of land. Judges 2:6-10.

We have every reason to believe they governed themselves as families and according to the clans and tribes in their allotted land based on the law that Moses had taught. Their system of judging that Moses established continued to operate, and the people by tribes continued the fight to take control of their land by war against occupying nations. Judges 1. Thus, the purposes of Moses and Joshua had been essentially fulfilled. There was no need to appoint a successor. Neither Moses nor Joshua were kings. They served their purpose and when that purpose was complete, there was no longer a need for another to arise in their particular place, nature or stead. The judges and kings that followed commanded armies and executed law but their purpose was not principally to introduce the law or settle the people by tribes in the land.

In a nutshell after the death of Joshua, Israel was then a nation without any human executive leadership except the priests. Each tribe had their own land. Each family governed their own households. A volitional judicial system and elders administered the laws of God in specific instances. A system of priests and sacrifices also continued. All of these were subject to a consensual covenant with God who gave laws to the people on how to live as a holy nation and kingdom of priests. No human supreme judges, human legislatures nor human kings played any part in this equation after the death of Joshua.

This was the high point of Israel's national existence. They were a People, with their God, settled in their own land, according to family and tribe, with God as King, Lawgiver

and Judge. They were governed by their families, subject to their fathers and mothers according to the pattern first given to Adam and then repeated to Noah. They were masters of their own land and labor according to their own choice and will, not that of a civil master. They had their own system of courts and priests, holy days, sacrifices and atonements.

Perhaps you think that this period simply marked the start of the nation and they would soon evolve into greater national existence under King David and then King Solomon? You may have an evolutionary view of developing nations and their civil governments as marching forward to perpetual greatness. With Israel, the days after Joshua were the high point of the nation's existence. The coming of the judges as national deliverers from the bondage of other nations brought about by popular idolatry began the downward path of the nation. The demand for a king like all the other nations accelerated that downward national trajectory. The divided kingdom further accelerated its collapse till captivity and the loss of national independence inevitably followed.

Let us look more closely at the judges following soon after Joshua. The many judges of Israel sent by God were a response to the wayward nation, not a predetermined plan in the evolution of the nation. God established judges as a remedial measure; as an act of pity and grace, rather than as the next step of how a nation's civil government should progress and develop. Judges were not an improvement to the nation. They were a response to national evildoing by the people themselves. God is using judges, not to aid the people in becoming holy, but rather to redeem them from their rejection of being holy.

How does a nation choose to reject holiness? They reject God and become idolaters. Can you think of any idolatry we love to practice today? The people voluntarily chose to reject God who required holiness. They desired to embrace idols and practice evil. Think about this for a moment. The two core purposes God proposed for the nation was to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. If the people say, "We don't want to worship God anymore and thus don't need the Levitical priests to intercede for us," this is a declaration of treason. Don't think of it as just another type of sin. "Oh, that's idolatry, that's a sin." Yes it is a sin but in the existence and purpose of the nation idolatry is a revolutionary act. It is an effort to tear down the entire government God has established. In the American experience, it's like tearing up the Declaration of Independence and the State and federal Constitutions and then adopting the laws of North Korea and pledging loyalty to its supreme leader Kim Jong-Un. You have to grasp the utter catastrophe idolatry is for the nation. If you hear a sermon about idolatry, remember it is not just a sin. It's the sin of treason.

What does God do about this? Judges were not in the plan. They were not the next step of God's plan. They were an act of mercy God established because God pitied His idolatrous people. If you stood up today and renounced your government, would it show

mercy? But God is merciful where men and their justice departments are not.

God provided judges for about 350 years. The period of the Judges continued until Saul was made king, which ended the line of judges. Perhaps an examination of what the judges actually did and why they were abolished or superseded would help us to understand God's mercy and patience. The Bible describes fifteen key judges during this time period. These judges were the supreme judges in the nation. They were also military commanders. They are Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah/Barak, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson (perhaps the most famous), Eli and Samuel. All of these judges are found in the book of Judges except for Eli and Samuel, who are found in the book of first Samuel. Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and Samuel are also mentioned in Hebrews 11:32 as "Heroes of the Faith." But from a governmental point of view, Israel did not need them if they only had stayed the course after Joshua.

Cyclical Evil, Cyclical Repentance, Cyclical War

Beginning with the first judge a pattern develops. Recall that the people had not yet fully taken possession of the land which God had promised them because of their habitual and cyclical disobedience. In addition, God was testing them to determine whether they would actually obey Him so he didn't give them everything all at once. He made them fight for the Promised Land, partially as a test and partially for the purpose to teach them the consequence of their faithlessness in refusing to fully enter into the promised law under Moses. Recall also that the covenant was conditional "If-- then" meaning that the people had to obey God in order to inherit the land fully and that God was not just going to give them the land if they disobeyed Him. Sorry, it does not work like that. It never has worked like that. We hope you don't think God will bless you when you are disobedient.

The pattern goes like this. First, Israel does what is evil in the sight of God. Israel typically worships false gods including the gods of the nations in which they reside. They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Asheroth. They also inter-married with those nations, contrary to God's commands for Israel. Second, the people are then oppressed by foreign nations and kings because they are delivered by God into the hands of their enemies with the hope and expectation they will come to their senses and remember God, His covenant and laws. God is banking on them to remember Him in their misery. Third, the people of Israel eventually come to their senses as it dawns on them that they had a good thing under God and threw it away on false gods and defiled living. Fourth, in order to deliver the now repentant people from this foreign train of abuse, oppression and slavery, God raises up a deliverer and gives him the Holy Spirit to judge the people and to save them. Saving the people usually means war, but first it means national judgment upon the people. The judge actually judges the people for their wrongdoing, idolatry and treason. Fifth, the deliverer then goes to war and defeats Israel's oppressors in war and the people turn back to God at least during the good times. The pattern then repeats itself with Israel

doing what is evil in the sight of God. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

This is the pattern. It repeats itself over and over and over again. This is the pattern that repeats itself throughout the entire period of judges. This is the pattern that will repeat itself throughout the entire period of kings too. Don't be too quick to judge the people for their cyclical disobedience and repentance. Is this not the way of each of our lives on an individual scale? Is this not the way of all nations in God's eyes? Samuel says that "Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways." Judges 2:18-20. More idolatry, more treason.

So for instance, looking at Israel's first judge Othniel we see the following is recorded in Judges 3:7-11. "And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. They forgot the Lord their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth. Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim King of Mesopotamia. And the people of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years. But when the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the Lord gave Cushan-rishathaim King of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim. So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died."

Judges As Instruments Of Grace, Not An Improved System Of Government

And so it goes repeatedly for about 350 years. You would think that people would figure it out but they don't. The reason God sent the people these particular national judges was not to rule them at all. It was not to hold court and decide this dispute or that case, as there were already judges for that purpose. It seems rather that God established these judges as a remedial measure out of pity and as an act of grace. They were national deliverers. They judged the nation en masse for their national sin of idolatry. Then they went to war to deliver the people. God is using them to free the people after a change of their collective hearts, to free them from their bondage originally brought about by their rejection of God and desire to embrace idols and evil.

What this means is that God's use of these judges establishes no universal pattern regarding judging itself. Yet, if there is a universal rule that we can deduce here it is that God shows grace to those that turn from their evil ways. Don't confuse the motive of your federal masters in Washington DC when they go to war, with what God does here. God is full of grace and pity. The wars of our modern American presidents are full hubris and the

desire for worldwide domination. Don't confuse or equate their demonic motives with God's motives.

Recall the quotations stated at the beginning of this chapter. "Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them." Judges 2:18. Contrast this exercise of judicial power to restore family government and God as their King, with the Supreme Court's use of its power to commandeer the power of government unto itself. "Today's decree says that my Ruler, and the Ruler of 320 million Americans coast-to-coast, is a majority of the nine lawyers on the Supreme Court." Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015) (Scalia J., dissenting).

Here, God showed grace to His treasured possession by empowering specific judges as national delivers to deliver the people from oppressive foreign control and rule. Israel's judges were not part of the "government" of Israel. This is not a situation where civil rulers passed a resolution and then dispatched deliverers to fight national wars. Nor were these wars of conquest, or to deter other nations from military greatness or stockpiling weapons.

Sorry, but there is no basis in the history or the purpose of these judges that justifies America's modern wars or our policy of global nuclear extortion. These judges were just ordinary men and women who God raised up for a specific purpose. God was still the King and he appointed judges to bring the people back to Him. These judges did not supplant the standing judicial system already in place. These judges did not usurp God's jurisdiction to punish idolatry or any other sin that God reserved to himself to judge. Nor did they alienate God's prior command to Moses and his successors to "drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you and destroy all their figured stones and destroy all their metal images and demolish all their high places." Num. 33:52. These judges were God's judgment on the people to restore them back to obedience to the law. Can the same be said of the Supreme Court with its judicial activism?

The period of judges was not an improvement in the art or evolution of governing the people. These judges were not the "next step" in the evolution of civil government. The national "governmental" structure of Israel present at the death of Joshua with God as the King, Lawgiver, and Supreme Judge was plenty sufficient, with no so-called "improvements" by adding either judges or later on with kings.

That structure showed the world that Israel was then a nation without a human civil government like other nations, each tribe in their own land, with each family governing their own households, a volitional judicial system and elders serving to administer the laws of God in specific instances, all subject to a consensual covenant with God who gave laws to the people on how to live as a holy nation and kingdom of priests in the land he gave

them with his promise to physically live among them. From the days of Moses to Othniel the judge (2,513 to 2,575 years from creation) and thereafter to Samuel (about 2,900 years from creation) was a great time to be alive for those who love freedom. Every man returned to his tribe and family, and his inheritance. There was no king in Israel to interfere with them and everyone did what was right according to their own familial and individual judgment. Judges 21:24-25.

Chapter 10. What Advice Does God Give To Limit Our Civil Governments?

"There shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." 1 Samuel 8:19-20.

"These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons . . . . He will take your daughters . . . . He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards . . . . He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards . . . . He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys . . . . He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves." 1 Samuel 8:10-18.

How Did Israel Get Its First King?

We have sojourned through the judges of Israel sent by God out of pity upon a wayward nation. Now comes along Samuel, the last real judge of Israel. He had two sons and both were rotten to the core. They took bribes and perverted justice. God could hardly raise them up to save the people as they were just as crooked as the people were. Perhaps you know rotten judges that took bribes? Perhaps you've read about justices who perverted justice? Bribes and perversion in the judicial system are nothing new, though today's bribes are often simply flattery. At this point all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations." 1 Samuel 8:4-5.

What? What was that request? What is going on here? This was the beginning of something new. But was it the beginning of something good? God had been the King of Israel up to this time. He was the King because the people had accepted God's proposal to "diligently listen to me and keep my covenant." Exodus 19:5. Indeed, "the Lord their God is with them; his acclamation as king is among them." Number 23:21. But God was not a king like the man made kings of the other nations. God was King pursuant to a covenant by the consent of the people. He was King by their free and voluntary consent.

Crafty Lying Politicians

The elders of the nation knew this. But rather than saying "we don't want God as our King anymore" they told Samuel that since "your sons do not walk in your ways" that a king would now be appropriate. "Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations." See that? A king to judge. A king to go to war. They did not ask for a better judge to judge. They asked for a king and to make it sound more plausible they added "to judge." This political approach was partly a sham and partly true. Samuel was old and his sons did not walk in his ways, but that is not the real reason the elders wanted a king like all the other

nations.

The prior cycle of judges for the last 350 years showed that the people had to repent first before a judge would deliver them. The cycle was that the people sinned against God and the covenant. The people were captive to foreign control and lost freedom. The people lived in misery. The people eventually repented. God had pity and sent a judge and redeemer to fight and make war against their oppressors. The judge prevailed in war. The people lived in peace with God and the covenant. Then they chose idolatry and rebelled against God. That is the cycle which repeated itself.

But rather than continue that cycle with the inefficiency of the nation first being attacked and subjugated, perhaps the elders thought, "Idols are not all that bad. Why wait for another foreign king to attack us, be captive and then having to repent? Why keep going through cycle this over and over again? If we had a king now we could go to war right away and frankly not wait for God." They sought a political solution that did not recognize what God had said about obedience to His law or repentance being required. Thus, no repentance, no need for pity, and no need to wait to go to war after being occupied was necessary to secure national independence. This approach seems no different than what might be proposed today by our elected officials or military. Why get God involved?

Who are these elders anyway? Weren't these elders originally the wise men who were supposed to help with the administration of the covenant and God's law under Moses, then Aaron, and now Samuel? These are the successors of those elders who 400 years earlier had assisted Moses and Aaron and had confronted pharaoh leading to the Exodus. Exodus 3:16-18. These are the elders whose predecessors were present when Moses caused water to come from rocks in the desert, who were later charged with the covenant and were present when the covenant was ratified with great power. Exodus 17:6; 19:7 & 24:1. You would think these elders would remember their history and be faithful. But what can we expect? Do you know what happened 400 years ago in the 1620s?

But despite this, these modern elders are fools for tyranny. They are basically throwing down God's law and saying it doesn't really matter. Repentance? That doesn't matter. What matters is having a war machine like the other nations and a king that can make war. Let's beat those terrorists ruining our nation. Of course these elder-statesman will need money and slaves to finance their military industrial security state. But that will come in time. At least then the nation will be respected. Get with it—it's the 2900s not the 2450s. That covenant business was 400 years ago! We are a modern society.

Judges lasted about 325-350 years. Now we are 2,850-2,900 years into human history from the creation of the world and nearly 400 from the giving of the law. Other nations have set up their own kings and we have a record of some of them after the flood. Recall that these kings and pharaohs were known for making war among their other

passions. This is the prize sought by the "wise men" of Samuel's day. Yet, what they are proposing is treason. They were appointed for one purpose and now they're acting for a radically different purpose. That is human nature.

Perhaps you know politicians elected for one purpose -- to preserve and protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, but once elected they work day and night to undermine that document? Treason and guile are nothing new. Nor was Samuel tricked by these men. Samuel knew about the judges of Israel. He understood the history. He knew the people did evil, that God delivered them into the hands of their enemies, that the people suffered, and that when the people repented God sent judges to deliver them by war. Samuel knew all of this.

What these elders are actually saying is this, "Samuel, you're too old to go to war and your sons are unreliable." Recall, the elders basically don't want to go to the trouble of having the people first repent for their evildoing before God sends a judge to free them from their oppressors. What's going on here is the elders are trying to circumvent the whole system of judges. They don't want to wait for a judge to free them. They don't want to wait for God to send a judge to free them. They want to be free without having to first obey the law. They want to be free from foreign rule and domination without having to obey God's law and without having to honor the covenant they made. They want to be free from God. Do you see that? Their demand is not like a choice between this policy or that policy. It's a demand that rejects the covenant and resumes their prior status as a nation among the other nations. It's a rejection of their special purpose.

Being the pragmatists they are, they are proposing and attempting to persuade Samuel to go along with the scam. They know Samuel is close to God. They want to manipulate Samuel into a de facto rejection of God's use of judges as deliverers by throwing guilt on Samuel as a failed parent. They want to get a king who will go to war whenever they want without the need for the people to embrace the covenant, follow the law or repent, then they can have their cake and eat it too.

Where did this idea come from that Samuel could appoint judges? The judges we've previously discussed were all chosen by God and called for a specific purpose. There is really no precedent for a judge choosing his son as a successor. Samuel could have said: "Look, the history of judges as deliverers always shows that when the judge dies the people become more corrupt than their fathers and then God delivers them into the hands of their enemies." That's what Samuel could have said. He could have also said to these elders: "Sure I'm old and going to die. But it's your job to help the people obey the law and honor the covenant." If the people do that then they will not be handed over to foreign dictators to be ruled. He could have said, "What you are proposing is treason. God should put you all to death for treason." But Samuel talked to God first rather than shooting from the hip. He knew this was serious enough that he should go straight to the King.

Why Repent First And Wait For God To Get Around To Saving Us?

Now where are the people in the cycle? Are they at the point in the cycle where they are holy and free from foreign rule? Are they at the point in the cycle where they are being controlled by a foreign oppressor and not yet repentant? Are they in the cycle at the point where they have repented and seek deliverance? As it turns out the exact moment in history in the cycle is where they've sinned and done evil and are about to be delivered into the hands of a foreign dictator. Any fool can see what's going to happen. God will deliver them into the hand of this dictator and it will go very badly for them.

Who was this foreign ruler? Who was this evil oppressor? He was a king named Nahash. When the people of Israel saw Nahash the king of the Ammonites, they feared him greatly. Why? Because his habit after conquest was to pluck out the right eye of every enemy soldier he caught. As you can imagine this makes depth perception difficult when fighting a battle. It's hard to judge how far away the enemy is if you're going to throw a spear at him. It's hard to also see when the enemy comes from your blind side to strike you down. Soldiers with one eye make poor soldiers. However, a man can still work with one eye making him a better slave than a soldier. Israel feared this king and rightly so. Nahash had already demanded Israel enter into a treaty containing the right eye forfeiture requirement. 1 Samuel 11:2 & 12.

Samuel knew the elders feared the Ammonite king more than they feared God. Rather than saying to Samuel, "This fellow Nahash has got to be the most evil king to try and rule over us, so therefore we repent of all the evil we've done and ask God to save us." That would've been the smart thing to do. That would have been the right thing to do. That is not what they did. Rather than return to first principles, they went down the slippery slope. They tried to con Samuel into agreeing to give them a king and not a judge. They tried to con Samuel into agreeing to give them a king like the kings who ruled all the other rotten nations around them. I can hear them brag, can't you, "You think your king Nahash is bad, wait until you see our king! He will kick your army all the way back to Ammoniteville or even blow your country off the face of the earth." They must have been pretty desperate to make such a request and probably had little confidence that their repentance could be seen as genuine rather than the opportunistic blather and political chicanery it really was.

They certainly did not want a king like all the other nations because they were actually concerned about the corruption of the judiciary. Remember, they originally said we want a king like the other nations "to judge us." But when push came to legal shove they demanded a king that "shall reign over us." They demanded this even though they knew the Lord was their King. They eventually consolidated their appeal and demanded a king for both reasons saying, "there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." 1 Samuel 8:19-20. Why not cover all the political bases?

They wanted a king like all the other nations to fight their battles. They wanted a king that would make war like the other nations. They wanted a king that would fight Nahash. Friend, they wanted a king because they didn't want to be under the covenant anymore. They wanted a king because they didn't want to be judged by God. Isn't that the way of things? Isn't that the way of kings? The way of these elder politicians is to throw off the law and make their own rules. Does that sound like any Congressman or Senator you know? The way of kings is war. Does that sound like your favorite president of the United States? War making was exactly how the first kings ever recorded in the history of mankind in Genesis 14 acted-- they went to war. Is it any different today?

God Was Displeased By The People's Rejection Of Himself As King

Now don't think God was surprised at this demand. God didn't say, "Oh my goodness who would've thought they would ever reject me as King?" God didn't say, "I'm shocked they don't want to first repent before I bring them fully into the land I promised Abraham." God knew from the beginning this was a likely scenario. But simply because He knew it was going to happen, did not make it happen. Simply because He knew it was going to happen did not make it His will that it should happen.

God said back in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 that, "When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me, you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel." God knew.

Judgment And Mercy

What is going on here? What is going on is that God knows his people will be disobedient. What is going on is that God knows that his people will demand a king. What is going on is that God knows his people will reject Him as their King. What is God doing about it? God is showing pity *again*. God is showing mercy *again*. God is saying, "All right you can have a king but you've made a bad choice. You made an evil choice." Yet, God

is also saying, “I’m going to help you build in some protection against a completely tyrannical king.” God gives some good advice about who the people could choose as a king and that person’s obligations to read and obey the law as written down in the book of law. Maybe they will do better than the rotten elders? He also warns the king that he ought not be arrogant, make entangling treaties, buildup a war machine or make himself rich on the backs of the people. In other words, God says your king should not act like the kings of the other nations.

Are these kings of Israel a model for how God wants presidents, prime ministers, kings and monarchs of all nations to act? Not at all. What madness is that! God is laying out these rules to restrain the natural tyranny of mankind. He is not laying down a universal rule saying, “It is OK to have a tyrannical government as long as these few limitations are in place or at least you have religious freedom.” So even before the people decide to reject God, God is showing them some mercy in muting or attempting to mute the full effect of their terrible decision to have a military king during periods in which they remain unrighteous, lawless and covenant breakers. Does that sound familiar? Isn’t that how we act? Don’t we want to go to war without first examining our own conduct? You bet. So don’t be hard on Israel. Don’t say, “Boy, these people were stupid to throw God’s offer away.” Better to ask, “How often have we been stupid?” Don’t say, “God is too hard on these poor people. He should love them more.” Better to ask, “Will God show me the same grace and take pity on this Country as he showed to Israel?”

So God is not surprised at what is going on here. Yet, that doesn’t make Israel’s rejection of God any easier to bear. It doesn’t make Israel’s rejection of the need to repent and stop their evil ways any easier for God to reckon with. Even God has limits. His anger was kindled against Israel, and He said, “Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their fathers did, or not.” Judges 2:20-22. He also says that a day will come when the kings you have asked for will oppress you and “in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.” I Samuel 8:18. What? God won’t bail them out again? God won’t listen?

If your nation cries out in that day to come, will God answer either? A day of financial ruination, of lawlessness, of domestic tyranny and foreign domination, of the failure of families and when the love of many grows cold, will He answer in that day? The next fundraising letter you receive may neglect to mention these things about God.

God also recognizes that the people want a king so they can eventually worship foreign gods and not the one true God. God is not deceived. God is not mocked. God let Samuel know in no uncertain terms just what the people can expect from the kings of Israel

that are just like the kings of the other nations. Remember God hasn't set up these other kings or authorized them to be rotten. They just are. That is the way of kings. That will be the way of the kings of Israel, so says God. And just in case you missed how rotten life will be under these kings, God spells it out with perfect clarity. It's not a garden party.

The people of Israel came to Samuel and demanded this type of king. The Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." 1 Samuel 8:7-9.

The King Will Take It All And Will Take It Now

So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you, he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day." 1 Samuel 8:10-18.

Take, take, take, and take. That's what these kings will do. They will take. Today the televised Ministry of Propaganda for the federal government would have us believe that it doesn't take anything. They would have us believe it gives us everything. Don't be naïve. Governments don't give unless they first take. If there is a rule of general applicability present in this discussion it is that civil governments take. That is what governments do. In so doing, let us remember also that taking is not a good thing. It is a bad thing. God is describing bad conduct. He is describing the bad conduct of government. He is describing the bad conduct of the kings of the nations of this earth. He is describing theft and covetousness. Don't try to twist this evil into some type of positive tax payment obligation.

Perhaps you have heard silly persons turn this around and make this bad conduct and use of force a positive rule. They say this description of kings is normative. They say this description of a king's power and use of force to take that which is not earned is a model

for all nations. Indeed, "Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish." Psalm 49:20. Stay away from these teachers of a false civil gospel. These confidence hucksters "maintain the outward appearance of religion but will have repudiated its power." 2 Timothy 3:5.

Yet, incredibly the people of Israel agreed to all this. The people said, "Sure, take our children. Make them do whatever you need." They said, "Take our land and our crops and give them to your political cronies. Take our property. Take our possessions. Take us as slaves. What's not to like?" Here's the deal. *They thought being a slave of their own king was a better choice than being a slave of Nahash*. Better to be a slave with two eyes, than one eye. I suppose you could say they voted for the lesser of two evils. That seems to be a popular way of thinking these days. Rather than choosing that which is right, we choose the lesser of two evils and justify it on multiple absurd grounds including our idolatrous fixation on political party affiliation.

Here the people should have done what was right, repented and called upon God to send them a deliverer. Or better yet, the people could have actually returned to the original covenant where God was their King. Go back to the founding? No, they couldn't do that. Their society was evolving. It was getting better, right? Believe that fiction if you want. Instead, they chose the lesser of two evils, a king of their own to enslave them rather than a king of their neighbors to enslave and blind them. They were foolish and did not know their own history.

But do we do what is right? Do we support candidates for office that promise to keep taking our children, possessions, land, income, and labor? H.L. Mencken said, "Every election is a sort of advance auction of stolen goods." Friends; the spirit of covetousness is a strong evil in this day and age and stronger during elections. Where is the voter who does not serve this spirit of the age and its desire to take from others to ease his own way through the ballot box?

What else is going on here? A foreign nation threatens terrorism against Israel. The people of Israel under the judges were no slaves. They enjoyed a great deal of freedom. But now they think being a slave of their own king is a better choice than being a slave of Nahash, a foreign king. The people are willing to be governed by a king who will take, take, take and when done taking, make the people his slaves. Now I know what you're thinking. You're thinking that this makes no sense and you're right. But does this senseless submission to slavery ring a modern bell? You think you are free?

Unless you've been living under a rock in the United States, you probably know we have been fighting a so-called war against foreign terrorists at least since the conclusion of the Cold War (which the deep state has reignited). We are told by our serial warmongering presidents and Congress, and by our Central Intelligence Agency,

warmongering Generals and Joint Chiefs of Staff, police and media, that terrorists are trying to kill us because of our way of life and our love of freedom. Do you really believe that? Could retaliation have something to do with the fact that we have adopted a foreign policy of worldwide global intervention and control, placed troops in foreign countries, and bribed, threatened and assassinated foreign leaders through our covert operatives?

In any event, the people have continued to elect presidents and members of Congress who have not only taken money, confiscated things, and crushed our rights, but have done worse. They have listened in on our phone conversations. They have hacked into our emails and private communications. They have sent forth an army of drones to monitor and record our every movement. They have destroyed the fourth amendment with impunity. They have suppressed, demonized and prosecuted whistleblowers. We have rendition and torture. We have the Patriot Act. We have vaccine and mask mandates.

So be careful how you judge Israel. Be careful when you say how crazy they were to voluntarily become slaves of their own government when threatened by a foreign king. Have we not also given up our liberty for a little false security from our own government? At least Nahash had an army that was capable of attacking Israel in their own land. But modern terrorists have no such ability on any widespread scale. At least Nahsah never said: “I am here to help.” Who are the real fools?

What Rules Of General Application Can We Identify?

In Samuel's last days, he called upon the Lord to make it rain and thunder and the people feared Samuel because they saw that God listened to Samuel. At least the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king." I Samuel 12:19.

Friend, what leader has come to this revelation in our day? Who has said we are fools to elect any government, especially one proficient in taking? We are just told "to vote." But when the choice is between a liberal taker versus a conservative taker, is voting for either any different than Israel demanding a king to rule over them and take it all? Indeed, is there any voice warning us to never support, and indeed oppose, a government of near unlimited power, or to never vote for a candidate who will expand federal or state power? Who is standing in the gap and cautioning us to reject a judiciary unlimited by the rule of law? The willful sound of silence in our religious assemblies is deafening.

Summary, *So Far*

We should be very sobered by this passage in 1 Samuel 8:10-18. A general and universal rule is present. That rule is this, that civil government is dangerous. Civil government takes. It takes by force and violence. It takes our property, labor, income,

increase and freedom. It takes our children and families and converts us to its will. It takes by force and kills with violence. The way of kings is war. Thus, severe limitations on civil government are needed to curb these evil inclinations if we are to bear with a civil government of our own making.

By the same token, God has given us some insight into how to control such a civil government should we ourselves replicate Israel's choice of a civil government of men. God is showing them grace. He is also showing the future peoples and nations of the earth the same measure of grace. He has said that it is important that your civil government be limited. It is important that government be limited by law. The government should be required to read the law and to obey it. The government should not be exempt from law. The government should not have a set of laws that apply to you and me, but not to the government. The government should not enjoy exemption, immunity or freedom from prosecution. There should be one law and it should govern the people and the government.

Simply put, the universal principles of limited civil government found in Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Samuel 8 are this, that civil government should be forced under the law. Government should be limited by law. The law is above the king. Lex, Rex (1644). Moreover, government should avoid entangling alliances with other nations. The government should avoid enriching itself at the expense of the people. That government should keep its military small and not build up a war machine or seek worldwide global hegemony. These are the minimum limitations.

If we examine a candidate for public office, might it be important to inquire about his or her recognition of such limitations? If we examine our constitution, state or federal, might we consider how its terms and language shall square with or depart from these non-exclusive fundamentally wise limits on the civil power we may impose upon a civil government of our own making?

Is the civil government we are creating or have created, or which has been forced upon us, a government which is or can be held in check by law? Can it be forced under the law and not let it escape? Note the term "forced." Government must be forced under the law. Does the constitution have a reliable mechanism to accomplish that? Impeachment is not enough. If the laws exempt public officials and judges from prosecution, or provide them essentially unlimited governmental immunity, the civil government can never be forced to obey the law. All such promises of a government are illusory.

Other questions come to mind. Do they come to yours? Is this a civil government limited by law? What are these limits? Where are they written? How are they enforced? Does the constitution have one law for the governed as well as those who govern? Has this government been prohibited from entering into entangling alliances with other nations? Does the constitution and law prevent the government and its friends from enriching

themselves at the expense of the people? Does the constitution and law require that its military be small and prevent the buildup of a war machine that seeks worldwide global hegemony? These are salient inquiries. This is how you can judge your laws and the "law of the land" in determining if they take seriously God's warning about the human rottenness and criminal conspiracies of kings and civil officials. None of this involves waiving a flag or singing the National Anthem or pledging allegiance to the flag. These are diversions from fascism for the gullible.

The principle stated above is not that the people should actually adopt a civil government. The principle is not that the people should seek a king like all the other nations. The principle is not that the people should have or must have any particular civil government whatsoever. Get your yellow marker ready. The principle is rather that if the people decide to create a civil government, that it should be one limited and restrained as much as humanly possible. It should be a government under many laws and limitations. If there are some basic principles of civil government to be identified here that would apply to all nations, all over the globe, at all times, under all circumstances, it would begin with these.

Chapter 11. Do We Love Kings That Love War?

The nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy. The government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations, has been the victim.
President George Washington, Farewell Address, 1796.

The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction -- and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively.
President George W. Bush, September 20, 2002.

In the last chapter, the people of Israel rejected God as their King and instead demanded to be ruled by a king that would make them his slaves. Not just any king, but a king like all the other nations. What kind of king is that? The Prince of Peace? Isaiah 9:6. No. A king with the Spirit of the Lord to go to war as in the days of the judges? Judges 3:10? No. Or perhaps King Jesus who with justice "judges and wages war?" Revelation 19:11. No, not a king like these. Perhaps Israel's distinguished politicians are asking for a king like the Apostle Paul will describe in Romans 13? "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad . . . For he is God's servant for your good." Is that the King God himself described in 1 Samuel 8:17-18, when he said this king would make you his slaves? No, they are not seeking a mythical king. Do you see the conflict between "Make you his slave" and "for your good?" You should. God describes a civil government of the nations much differently that you may understand (or misunderstand) the way Paul describes civil government. We will get to this matter in the chapters to come.

The kind of king the leaders and people demanded was a king "to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." 1 Samuel 8:20. They want a military hero to be their king. Is it the glory of war they seek? More glory than Israel enjoyed under God when he annihilated the Egyptian army? Is it to be a great empire they seek, one greater than the empire of God almighty after Joshua settled them in their land? The king will make the people slaves to achieve the victory of war. War makes the people poor. That is a universal rule of economics.

Our purpose here is not to explicate the history of the kings of Israel or examine each

of them in great detail. We will not find that God established any civil governments for any nation either. It is rather to observe some key aspects about God's view of civil government in Israel and the executive branch in particular. As such we will examine the power and purpose of the first three kings, Saul, David and Solomon. Perhaps there is a principle or two we can identify and then apply to our civil government? Do not assume, "Well these are God's choice so all is well." No, God is trying to find a man or woman who can control him or herself. He is doing this because he is showing grace and mercy to His people to help them keep their end of the covenant.

The context of Israel's kings shows God acting to accommodate and defer to His People's sinful desire to have kings the same as everybody else. There is no suggestion that God wanted either judges or kings in the first place for Israel or that these kings are normative for Israel. God did not get up one morning and say "I think I will improve the civil government of Israel by no longer being their king or deliver. Instead, I will appoint a series of judges and kings to do the job. That will be a great improvement in civil government." No, He never said such nonsense.

On the one hand we have seen the terrible price that the people would pay to have a king to lead them in battle like all the other nations as described by Samuel in 1 Samuel 8. On the other hand, we have God in His mercy anticipating that His Kingship agreed to by the people in Exodus 19:8, may eventually be rejected by His own people. Thus, as an act of grace, God described criteria that would help to mitigate the seriously shortsighted demand for a war-making king by wrongfully demanding a king in the first place. This wise counsel and gracious help was stated in Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

It is no exaggeration to declare this Divine counsel restates a universal principle. It is a principle found in the laws "of Nature's God" as that term is used in the American Declaration of Independence. It is found in the laws of Nature's God because it is given by God well after creation to Israel. The warnings against unlimited civil government and criteria for limiting Israel's civil government, however, are also of value to the modern nations of the earth to the extent they too adopt civil government. God has not mandated the nations of the earth adopt or establish any civil government. But He has recognized that if a People desire to do so, that the People should limit that government if they are wise. God then details a few limitations of what to Him, are the critical limits on civil power to which a wise people should have recourse. Yet, peoples and nations who ignore or reject this counsel can expect to be ruled as Samuel foresaw, by a civil government that takes what the People have, enriches the rulers, and ultimately reduces the People to slavery.

These concepts will be further addressed when we review the Declaration of Independence which recognized the nature of civil government and likewise sought to establish a benchmark for subsequent alteration or abolition of any civil government that

should follow. The Declaration is built largely in recognition of this principle that limiting civil government is necessary and prudent. While Samuel's warning in 1 Samuel 8, against the slavery a People could expect from a civil government dominated by a warring king, God's counsel in Deuteronomy 17 provides some relief from such a foolish and shortsighted demand for an unlimited civil government. That wise counsel is available to all nations who desire a civil government that will not reduce them to slavery, economic, intellectual or physical. Don't skip over the quotation below. God states,

> "When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. "And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel."

Thus, God offers His insight to the nations. His point is that a nation which establishes a civil government does best to limit its power. Here are some of the key concerns that are important. 1) Prohibit foreign born rulers from holding office; 2) Prohibit standing armies and maintenance of excessively large military forces; 3) Avoid excessive entanglements with other nations by treaty and trade agreements; 4) prohibit exceptions and preferences regarding application of the law of the land—one law applied equally to all, the People as well as civil officials; 5) mandate civil government and its officials be under law, not above it, and 6) select civil officials that fear God, avoid bribes, and respect the laws of God for the nation, especially His jurisdiction.

How did Saul, David and Solomon stack up against these criteria stated in Deuteronomy 17? Forget what you learned or didn't learn in Sunday school. That won't suffice here.

Saul And National Security

Let us look at Saul. The first point to note is that Samuel anointed Saul as Israel's first

king. Samuel charged Saul, "And you shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies." Saul was instructed to save the nation from foreign enemies. 1 Samuel 10:1. God gave Saul a new heart and sent His Spirit upon Saul. This is a good start. Samuel told Saul to go to Gilgal and wait for seven days for Samuel to come and offer sacrifices before Saul went to war. Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the Lord. So far, so good.

Yet, Saul did not wait seven days for Samuel to come and offer sacrifices. Being impatient Saul offered the sacrifices himself before Samuel arrived. This was folly. When Samuel did show up, he upbraided Saul. Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you." 1 Samuel 13:13-14.

Let's get this straight. Saul is king. He is told to wait for Samuel. He fails to do so. He is told Samuel will offer the sacrifice before Saul goes to war. Saul does not wait and offers the sacrifice himself. Samuel comes and says to Saul, "You're fired. You disobeyed God." Saul did not last a week in office before he broke the law. Do you think your favorite elected official you voted for is more law abiding than Saul whom God appointed?

So Saul disobeyed the commands of God in the first week of his office. What was his crime? Saul exercised power not given. He had no power to offer sacrifices, yet he did so because he reasoned it was in the national interest. He said, "I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the Lord's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering." 1 Samuel 13:12. In other words, the enemy was set to attack so he took things into his own hands regardless of the law.

It would not be the last time in human history that "national security" was used to justify the exercise of power without legal authority. It was another bad start for kings and God's remedy was to tear the kingdom away from Saul. It is too tempting to not remark that the government often claims that "national security" gives it the power to do whatever it wants. This is standard operating procedure for the federal government, Department of Defense, Central Intelligence Agency and Armed Forces committees in Congress. State Governors citing the COVID 19 pandemic as a basis to suspend freedoms and treat the people like slaves confined to their homes are late to the game. The phrases "national security" and "public safety" roll off the tongue so easily and justifies every governmental aggression.

How did Saul deal with the army? Recall that the Philistines dominated the People.

The Philistines garrisoned troops in Israel. 1 Samuel 10:5; 13:3. They prohibited the Israelites from possessing weapons such as swords and their farming tools only could be sharpened under civil government oversight. Today we would call this disarmament, a massive scheme to confiscate, regulate and control personal weapons, *i.e.* what the media call "reasonable common sense gun regulations." 1 Samuel 13:19-23. Yet, faced with this tyranny, Saul sent home about 330,000 army troops, and chose only 3,000 men to stay and fight.

What is interesting here is that God permitted Saul to remain in the office of king of Israel for forty two years before David was anointed king and he reigned for forty years. Not only did Saul exceed his authority, but God eventually removed his spirit from Saul and sent an evil spirit to vex him. Saul would later even consult mediums for advice on how to conduct his foreign-policy and military battles. Saul started out seeking the voice of God and ended his rule seeking the words of a medium-a woman who consulted the dead. 1 Samuel 28-7. What a tragic fall. Is this what happens when "good people" go to Washington D.C.?

It is also clear that Saul refused to follow God or keep His commandments during his reign. God told Saul that he should attack and destroy the Amalekites and their King Agag, but Saul decided to spare the king. This decision was directly contrary to the commandment of God. Saul argued that it was okay because it was what the people wanted. Sound familiar? Saul wanted to please the people more than he wanted to obey God. Isn't that the way of kings? Do you know any elected officials like that?

The point is that Samuel wrote down the law in a book and told Saul he had to obey the law. Saul said he didn't have to obey the law. Saul said that he was special and could disobey the law in cases of national security and to please the people. Where have you heard that before? Saul was the king. The law was beneath him. This argument is a popular pattern for many civil rulers to copy in centuries and millennia to come. "When the President does it, that means it is not illegal." President Richard Nixon, May 19, 1977. Nothing new with Saul.

Our interest here is in noting that there was a law and that it was written down. But merely having the law written down in a book saying that the civil government should obey the law, is not enough to prevent the government from disobeying the law. Likewise when Samuel confronted Saul about his disobedience, Saul's response was to maintain a public persona of God's approval without genuine obedience to the law. Who among us is like a Samuel? Who among us will confront the local, state and federal civil government and say "You are acting lawlessly." John the Baptist publically ridiculed Herod for living with his brother's wife saying, "It is not lawful for you to have her." Matthew 14:1-5. This might be a good woke sermon topic on how John could have been more loving.

Yet, reviewing the minimum elements of a limited government we see Saul was an Israelite, not a foreigner. He also relied on God, at least for the first two years of his reign in connection with the military. Rather than retaining a massive standing army, he dismissed the army and retained only 3,000 troops. Likewise, the Biblical record shows Saul made no treaties with other nations, at least not formal ones. It is more difficult to say if Saul was equally subject to the law of the land or acted under the law. He was not consistent. His secret meeting and consultation with the medium of Endor was a capital offense. This act alone merited God's death sentence which was executed the very next day in battle.

This review strongly suggests that Saul's invocation of "national security" to usurp the priest's authority was the beginning of the end. Saul at the end of his life simply did not fear God or respect the laws of nature regarding the duty of human communication with God and not mediums. Nor did he respect the laws of nature's God respecting God's counsel that kings should be under the law and not excuse himself or his co-conspirators from punishment as did Saul when he "swore to her by the Lord, 'As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.'" 1 Samuel 28:10. What insanity. Yet, Saul is not much different than our modern politicians?

David And Centralization Of His Military

After Saul's death, the elders of Israel came to David and made a covenant at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. 2 Samuel 5:3. This is a good start. The people recognized that God had already chosen David to be king but now the people made that choice their own. Isn't that interesting? God recognizes that people are enabled to choose their own governors and civil officials.

Moreover, a compact is struck. What were its terms? God said that David should be a prince over Israel. God refers to the times of judges and announces that Israel should live in peace and not be afflicted by their enemies. God also promises David a lineal secession of kings and that David's own son would build God's house, *provided* his heirs would continue their faithfulness to God. 2 Samuel 7:8-17.

There are other theological statements associated with David and his kingdom, of whom Jesus was genealogically descended from, which though important, do not directly implicate our inquiry here. To accomplish this God appointed David as king of Israel, but this is no rule for the nations. God appoints neither presidents nor dog catchers. Our interest in David is tied to his being made a prince through the grace of God and the consent of the people and that his authority was limited by a covenant. David would continue to serve as a national deliverer of the people from foreign domination, and there was light at the end of the tunnel that Israel would come into a time wherein it would be at peace with its enemies. To do this David centralized the military under his rule.

David was not perfect. No civil ruler is perfect. Nor should we expect any civil ruler to be perfect. David was ultimately charged and convicted of murder and adultery by the testimony of God's prophet. 2 Samuel 12. Among God's punishments was the death of his first child with Bathsheba. David also was punished for his actions when he ordered a military census of Israel's fighting men sometime between 2,890-2,930 years into human history from Adam. In Israel there were 800,000 men who drew the sword, and of the men of Judah were 500,000. 2 Samuel 24:9. David had an army of 1.3 million fighting men. This dwarfed Saul's standing army. By comparison, it is estimated that the total military personnel of the U.S. Army for fiscal year 2016 was about 500,356 persons.

When judged in light of Deuteronomy 17, David appeared to otherwise keep within his limited authority and not disobey the commands of God. He was not a foreigner, but he amassed rather than restricted a standing army and excessive military forces. Verse 11 of 2 Samuel 5 suggests that David may have made a treaty with Hiram, king of Tyre. Hiram sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house. He also supplied building materials which David amassed for the future when Solomon would build God a temple. But this arrangement does not appear to have any direct military significance. It was commercial in nature.

It is also interesting to note though not widely known that David had many wives. Eight wives are mentioned by name in the Bible. They are Michal, Abigail, Bathsheba, Ahinoam, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah. 2 Samuel 3:2–5; 1 Chronicles 3:1–3. According to 2 Samuel 5:13, David also married more wives in Jerusalem, but how many is not stated. It simply says that he took "concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born" to him. 2 Samuel 5:13. Maacah was the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur. Perhaps some of these marriages were *de facto* treaties of non-aggression in disguise. What David did in comparatively small measure, however, his son Solomon would do in excess. Of course, God had laid down the law of nature regarding marriage—that it should exist only between one man and one woman during the lifetime of both. Genesis 2:24. David ignored this law. David's rule also trampled down a few other limitations that God advised Israel to put in place in Deuteronomy 17.

Solomon: Military Strength, Foreign Wives, And Billions For Global Hegemony

Solomon followed David as the king of Israel. Though much is touted of Solomon's wisdom, few study Solomon as a king. Fewer still pause to ask, "Did Solomon limit his authority within the wise limitations on civil power God set forth in Deuteronomy 17:14-20?" Don't forget, that God had wisely provided that if the people made the shortsighted (indeed treasonous) choice to have a king like all the other nations, that at the least they should limit the king's power in mitigation of their foolishness.

God cautioned that the king "must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses." Did Solomon acquire many horses for himself? You bet he did. Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his 1400 chariots, and 12,000 horsemen. 1 Kings 4:26. Solomon imported horses from Egypt and Kue, 1 Kings 10:26-28. By comparison the greatest number of chariots recorded were owned by King Sisera and were 900 in number. When the Egyptians pursued Moses and the people after they left Egypt, they employed 600 chariots. In other words, Solomon had the greatest "mechanized" infantry and cavalry in the world, more than double the size of pharaoh at the height of Egypt's glory. Solomon, therefore, did not observe the limitations on his military that God laid down in Deuteronomy 17.

God also cautioned that the king, "shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away." Did Solomon acquire many wives or his heart turn away from God's? Solomon is the world champion of wives. Though God had said to not enter into marriage with women from the nations around him, Solomon nevertheless had 700 wives who were princesses, and 300 concubines. 1 Kings 11:3. When Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. 1 Kings 11:4. So Solomon ignored these limits also.

God further cautioned that Israel's king should not "acquire for himself excessive silver and gold." Yet, God had also promised that Solomon would have wealth and honor, more than that of any other king. 1 Kings 3:10-13. The weight of gold that came into Solomon's treasury every year was 666 talents of gold. 1 Kings 10:14. A talent weighs roughly 75 U.S. pounds (34.3 kilograms), which is equal to 1,094 troy ounces. At $1,500 per troy ounce, a talent of gold is worth $1,641,000. At $1,600 per troy ounce, a talent is worth $1,750,400. Solomon received 666 talents each year and reigned 40 years. Thus, he annually received between $1.092 billion to $1.165 billion if measured in 2018 United States dollars. The fiscal year 2020 Department of Defense's budget authority was approximately $721.5 billion dollars. Russia's military spending/defense budget for 2019 was $65.10 billion dollars. Iran's military spending/defense budget for 2019 was $12 billion dollars. North Korea's military spending/defense budget for 2018 was $1.60 billion dollars. Cuba's military spending/defense budget for 2018 was $0.13 billion dollars. Who is excessive? You judge for yourself whether Solomon's revenue is "excessive" or simply the result of God's promise he would have more wealth than other kings.

God also commanded that the king should be bound by the written law and read that "all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them." It is clear from the days of Moses that the law prohibited the worship of foreign gods. God had explicitly said that, "You shall have no other gods before me." He made it clear that, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them."

Exodus 20:3-5

Yet, Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. Solomon also built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. He did this for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods. God said don't, but Solomon said the more, the merrier.

As a result the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him about this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded. Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen." 1 Kings 11.

Think about that. Don't gloss over that. God is tearing the kingdom from Solomon because Solomon has committed treason against the very nation he serves. Impeachment was avoided. Removal from office was avoided. But shame and humiliation were not avoided. He had become an idol worshipper just like the people under the judges. He was judged for his idolatrous treason.

Finally, God warned that the king should not "be lifted up above his brothers." We have evidence that Solomon thought he was above the people, at least to the extent he felt he could worship Ashtoreth, Milcom and Chemosh with impunity.

Solomon also established a system of forced labor in Israel to build "the house of the Lord and his own house, the Millo and the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer." 1 Kings 9:15. At first, forced labor was only imposed on the remnant of the Canaanites, "All the people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites could not exterminate–these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day." 1 Kings 9:20-21. David had also relied on forced labor of this same group. 2 Samuel 20:24. "Solomon had seventy thousand laborers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hill country." 1 Kings 5:15. But Solomon made no slaves from among his brother Israelites. Instead of making them his slaves, he became the tyrant Samuel warned about in 1 Samuel 8 and conscripted his Israelite brothers into his military as "his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers."1 Kings 9:22.

Samuel had warned that, "these will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots." As noted, Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his 1,400 chariots, and 12,000 horsemen. This was a bigger army and military force than any recorded government which preceded it. It was manned by Israel's sons. It was not a volunteer army. It was based on forced conscription. Solomon took these men and made them military personnel. 1 Kings 9:20-22.

Samuel also cautioned that a king would "take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers." Some Bible commentators observe that the daily food and drink ration described in 1 Kings 4:22-23 as enough to easily feed about 30,000 persons. Obviously somebody had to bake the bread and cook the meat for this large administrative bureaucracy. Samuel warned that the bakers and cooks would be Israel's daughters.

Solomon had to get bread, meat, and drink from somewhere. Samuel recognized that kings will take bread, meat and drink and will take these staples from the people. He warns that the king "will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants." Solomon did precisely that. Solomon made their lives hard and they were taxed heavily.

Solomon's life is an enigma. God gave him wisdom and riches and in return Solomon disobeyed God's commandments regarding intermarriage and was an idolater. God made the world to be at peace with Israel during his reign, but Solomon made the people to serve in the military and foreigners to serve at forced labor. Solomon was fabulously wealthy, though God warned he should not be. Taxes and conscription made a very hard life for the Israelites. Don't forget that Samuel had described how hard life would be under a king and that the above limitations in Deuteronomy were merely basic protections designed to lessen the servitude.

Yet, Solomon was precisely the type of threatening king that Samuel foretold and his reign continued the downward path of the nation away from the original covenant struck in Exodus 19:5. Rather than progressing to becoming a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, they continued their rearward trajectory back to the status of a nation like all the other nations of the earth—a nation that loves war and idols. The introduction of kings continued this decline. It is no model for the nations. Yet, in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 God shows grace to Israel and by reasonable implication the modern nations of the earth by advising Israel of the importance of limited civil government for those foolish enough to establish a strong civil government or a strong executive power in the first instance. The wise may learn by this example. Solomon was not wise in this regard. Neither are a People when they demand an essentially unlimited executive, President or King.

The quotations from President Washington and Bush at the beginning of the chapter illustrate how a commitment to war deforms liberty and ultimately renders the people less free and a servant of the nation. But it also reflects that over time, the United States government and its people have chosen to also become like all the other nations, losing their way by moving away from its founding principles of limited government, a distaste for non-defensive wars of foreign aggression, rejecting standing armies, a commitment to sound money retained by the people, and avoiding entangling alliances and wars of Europe and the world.

Chapter 12. The End Of Kings, But Not Lawless Kingdoms?

And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king." 1 Samuel 12:19

"The [People] did not listen, and Manasseh led them astray to do more evil than the nations had done whom the Lord destroyed before the people of Israel." 2 Kings 21:9

Limited Government By Consent

We have seen that God established His government in Israel by the consent of the people repeatedly obtained from the very beginning. This principle of government by consent is universal. Not even God will force His government on any people, nor even at the second coming of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings. We may therefore understand that our civil governments (should we establish one in the first place), exist and govern only by our consent, not by its own will through political decree, force of arms, military action, or threats of violence by local police, homeland security or covert operatives.

Solomon was wise, but he did not practice wisdom regarding limiting his kingly authority as God admonished in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. He became the very king which God warned the people through Samuel that would oppress them. He was a king that took from the people that to which the king was not entitled. He took Israel's sons. He took Israel's daughters. He took Israel's property. He took Israel's crops. He took Israel's land. He took Israel's freedom and made the people his servants. He took foreigners and made them to work in forced labor.

Samuel's description of a king in 1 Samuel 8 as one whom takes by force, is not a model for either nations or civil governments. It is a description of what a nation and people can expect of their civil government if not restrained by law and those restraints not observed by the legislative and executive branches nor observed and enforced by courts. The wise reservations or limitations on such a government's power admonished in Deuteronomy 17 are a sober reminder to us that civil government, even a civil government established by our consent, should be very limited in its power.

Deuteronomy 17 is not an exhaustive list of possible limitations but it is a list of essential limitations. There should be limits on the military power of the government. For instance, a nation should not declare itself as the policeman of the world. There should be limits on the ability of government officials to enrich themselves and the nation at the expense of its people. There should be limits on entanglements with foreign governments through treaties and conventions. There should be one law that governs the governed and

civil officials and courts. Government officials are to be our servants, not our masters.

Can God Find An Obedient King?

After the death of Solomon, God divided the kingdom. He divided it because Solomon was unfaithful to God. Solomon married foreign wives contrary to the direct command of God. Solomon worshiped idols and the gods of foreign nations, contrary to the direct command and multiple warnings of God. Because of it, God stripped Solomon's heirs of the kingdom and divided the kingdom. God promised Solomon's son *Rehoboam* that he could rule all Israel if he would just obey God's commands, statutes and laws. Yet God had promised *Jeroboam* He would tear the kingdom away from Solomon and his son Rehoboam. Jeroboam was in charge over all the forced labor under Solomon. He was Solomon's servant. The Lord said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice [the worship of other gods] and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen."

So because Solomon was guilty of public corruption and idolatry, God permitted his son Rehoboam to govern one tribe while Solomon's servant Jeroboam would govern all the other tribes of Israel. How did the consent of the people play into all this?

Since Rehoboam was the son of Solomon and then reigning, and the people remembered the conditional promise that God made to David, the people and Jeroboam then came to Rehoboam to ask him if he would limit his power and relieve them of conscription and heavy oppressive taxes. Jeroboam and the and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him, "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you." 1 Kings 12:3-4.

But Rehoboam said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." The king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam about dividing the kingdom because of Solomon's corrupt practices. The book of Kings then describes what happened after Rehoboam sought and followed the advice of his political advisors who themselves were already corrupt with dreams of rising to power on Rehoboam's coattails in an Administration designed to be even more corrupt and tyrannical than his father's.

A Declaration Of Separation

So when all Israel saw that King Rehoboam refused to listen to them, they answered the king:
"What share do we have in David,
what part in Jesse's son?
To your tents, Israel!
Look after your own house, David!" 1 Kings 12:16.

What is going on here? What does this declaration mean? God is giving ten tribes to Jeroboam to rule over. God is asking Jeroboam to obey him and his laws. This should seem familiar. God has asked every king to do the same thing. God has asked every Israelite to do the same thing. God has also, for the sake of David, given Rehoboam the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin including any Israelites who lived within the towns of Judah. I Kings 12:14-17. God also asked Rehoboam to obey his statutes and commandments. But of course neither king did.

God cannot find a king that will actually obey Him or limit the use of his kingly power once he becomes king. God had hopes for Rehoboam. But during his 17 years in office, the people of Judah did "according to all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel." Rehoboam did not control the situation or enforce the laws of God regarding such matters. 1 Kings 14:22-24. How could it have come to this?

God also had hopes for Jeroboam, that if he obeyed God, that God would bless him, his household and heirs. 1 Kings 11:37-38. Jeroboam, however, later created two golden calves, commanded their worship, appointed his own priests and established places of worship God did not approve. This was sheer madness. God's prophet said that Jeroboam did "evil above all who were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods and metal images, provoking me to anger, and have cast me behind your back." 1 Kings 14:9. Thus, God cut off and destroyed his house "from the face of the earth." 1 Kings 13:33.

The historic demand of the people to have a civil government like all the other nations continued to be met with kings devoted to war, public corruption and evildoing, despite God's efforts to mitigate Israel's bad decisions by promising these kings God's blessing upon them and their sons. This should be a familiar scene. Civil governments created by humans even with their consent tend toward lawlessness. God has given people directions about the wisdom of placing strict limits on their civil governments and their chosen or elected officials. But if that wise counsel is ignored, then that is the people's fault, not God's plan or will. Nor is it God's will there should be any specific civil government, but rather that if a nation desires a civil government, that God has counseled it be established by consent, and organized and limited in such a way to restrain its tendency toward

institutionalizing evil by force.

In Israel the people took government by consent seriously. They said that they no longer would be governed by King Rehoboam and his oppressive use of law to work the people and tax them into poverty. To implement that choice the people of Israel declared the causes that impelled them to separate themselves from the house of David. The people still wanted a king. They did not say, "Let us return to the days before the kings, or the days before the judges when our King and Supreme Judge was God." No. We are far from their founding. They had lost the vision of their founding form of government. Does that sound familiar today?

Instead of going back to their founding and asking God to be their King again, they simply would settle for someone else other than the son of Solomon as their king. The people did not object to being the servants of a king. They did not set their sights on freedom. They only objected to being the servant of a king that was not as harsh as Solomon. The sought a lesser servitude. This was the pattern to come. So much was lost and forgotten.

A Strictly Limited Government, Not A Better King Is The Answer

We could now launch into a discussion of each of the kings that follows. We do not need, however, to go through the history of all the kings of Israel or all the kings of Judah. Their works are written in the book of Kings and in the Chronicles. The story is repetitive and familiar. A new king arises. The king does evil. God judges the people and the king. The people are oppressed by foreign nations. Their king either dies, is assassinated or God kills him. A new king comes in and does evil. The kings of Israel fight the kings of Judah. The kings of Judah fight the kings of Israel. The kings of Israel and Judah fight against foreign governments. On and on it goes--war, conscription and taking of property.

In all, there were 42 kings (and one queen). Saul was the first king, and he ruled over the 12 tribes of Israel for 40 years. After Saul's death, the kingdom became temporarily divided, with Saul's son Ishbosheth ruling 11 of the tribes for two years, while David ruled Judah. After Ishbosheth was assassinated, David became king over all 12 tribes. His son Solomon followed him as king. He ruled over a unified kingdom of 12 tribes. Both David and Solomon ruled for 40 years each.

After Solomon's reign ended, the kingdom divided into what is known as the southern kingdom (Judah and Benjamin, simply called Judah) and the northern kingdom (the remaining 10 tribes simply called Israel). This resulted in a string of 19 kings ruling over Israel and 19 kings (plus one queen) ruling over Judah.

The Bible describes every king of Israel as an evildoer. Every single king did evil. That

is how God described them. They did evil. Their politics or party affiliation if any meant nothing on God's scale. Their public professions meant nothing. Among the kings of Judah they were not all evil. Only twelve were evil. Eight kings were described as good (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah). They were good because they tried to obey God's commandments and statutes.

In Israel the chance of getting a good king was zero. The chance of getting a bad king was 100%. In Judah, the chance of getting a good king was 42%. The chance of getting a bad king was 58%. Of all the 42 kings, 15 were killed or assassinated by others, God killed 3, and 2 killed themselves. Of the 19 kings of Israel, 7 were killed by individuals who killed the king in a coup and then assumed power. However, this happened to none of the kings of Judah, except queen Athaliah who first assumed power in a coup was deposed and killed in a subsequent coup. All combined, Saul, David, and Solomon ruled from 1025-945 BC. The kings of Israel ruled from 945 to 721 BC and the kings of Judah ruled from 925 to 586 BC.

This means we are almost 3,500 years from the beginning of human history and mankind's experiment with kings appears to be an ever present remarkable failure even with God's grace in counseling Israel and by implication the nations of the earth that pay attention, about the importance of establishing a civil government by consent and ensuring that it operates strictly under the rule of law itself. The rock band "The Who," got it right when they declared "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss." *Won't Get Fooled Again* from Who's Next, 1971. That is a great song. If you need a break, listen to it now and think about our last several presidents.

What Do We Know After 3,500 Years Of History?

It is curious how anyone can assert that the kings and queen during this period were "governing authorities . . . instituted by God" or that any of these kings were "God's servant" for their good. Romans 13:1-4. If so, don't you think it is strange that God killed a few along the way? How can it be said these kings were "authorities." If so, they were not very good authorities. They were not to be obeyed in their evildoing. How can these evil kings even be considered "God's servant?" If they were His servant, they were not very good servants. They should be fired by their masters.

What is the take away from our analysis of God's perspective on civil government approximately 3,500 years from the beginning of human existence? Get that yellow marker out again. We must dispense with the notion that God has established civil government. The only government established and its authority and purpose described by God is the family government with its authority over the earth, land, seeds and animals. Neither a husband nor his wife are given any right to rule over any other person, or any other family. Neither person had any authority to exercise capital punishment for murder until after Noah.

A mother and father have exclusive authority over their own children, and no authority over their neighbor's children. Even after the flood none of this changed except God gave mankind the authority to punish murderers. He did not give it to nations or governments since none then existed. It is arguable that He gave the power of capital punishment for murder exclusively to the family that was offended and not to all mankind to vindicate every murder, but this is merely arguable and not a hard and fast rule. It is common to say that the family is the primary unit of government. It is more accurate, however, to say that the family is the only unit of government established by God.

After the flood God merely describes kings and what they do. They make war, use women for pleasure by force if needed, financially enrich themselves, take what is not theirs, control territory, put men to forced labor and slavery, and promote nationalistic idolatry. This is the real face of civil government. We have seen God promised Abraham, who was not a king that many nations and kings would come from him. We have seen how this promise was fulfilled in part through both Ismael and Isaac, and also through Jacob, Israel and Judah. (We should also note that this was not a nationalist promise only, but a declaration that Abraham's faith in God established a precedent that God would regard human faith positively in all ages without regard to being Jewish. Galatians 3:5-9). But this does not mean God created kings or instituted human kingdoms.

We also saw that the governmental establishment and law of the nation of Israel were no model or rule for other nations. The judges and kings of Israel were not an improvement of Israel's founding Theistic government, but rather a departure from the original intention of God. It is true that God will use King David and the throne of David as the forerunner of the messianic Kingdom of Christ in the Millennial period to come, but this is what God redeemed from the People's evil decision to ask for kings, rather than God's plan that Israel should have kings so that prophecy could be fulfilled.

Our inquiry into civil government was rewarded when God did us a favor in 1 Samuel 8 by describing the actual way of the kings of the nations of the earth. The operative conduct of these kings was to take that which was not theirs. The way of kings is to take things to which they have no rightful claim. The way of kings is to take our children. The way of kings is to take property. The way of kings is to take our freedom and the control we enjoy over our minds and bodies. The way of kings is war, personal enrichment, and slavery. That is the terrible way of civil government as described by God. Is this what you see when you think of Congress, your state legislature or county government? Or perhaps it is God who is out of touch? How do you see it?

God also shows us grace, though not unlimited, to mitigate the effects of our shortsighted choices regarding civil government and civil officials. God does not require civil government. The failure or refusal to establish a civil government is not a sin. But if a nation or people do establish a civil government, the Scriptures provide us an insight. It helps us

to see that a civil government which we establish by our consent ought to be limited. The more it is limited, the less likely we shall be its slaves. The less it is limited, the more likely we shall be its slaves. When God promised Israel to be their King, it was not to make them His slaves. Have we have been deceived to accept unlimited civil government to our own foolish detriment?

Chapter 13. What Evils Plague The Nations?

“They bend their tongue like a bow; falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the land; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, declares the Lord.” Jeremiah 9:3

The Ten Commandments

We are told about the importance of the Ten Commandments generally and their application to us as individuals. But we do not understand that God also prohibited coveting, theft and murder to benefit people in connection with civil government. He did so because the way of kings and the way of civil government is to covet that which is ours. It is to take that which does not belong to it. The way of civil government is to take by force -- to take our things by tax levies and civil forfeitures, to take our property by zoning, to take our income by taxation, to take control of our children and their minds by government schools, to take control of our health and our children's health by mandatory medical vaccinations, to take our freedom by endless occupational licenses, and to take what is left of our liberty and life by administrative regulations drafted by experts and enforced by low level bureaucrats. Taking is stealing. It is not a loan, a bailment, or a financing arrangement. It is not compassionate conservatism or the great society. It is theft.

God is not saying good government does this—take, take, and take. God is saying our man made civil governments *will do this*, so be ready for it and try to limit civil government's ability to crush you or force you under its control or interfere with the authority of your family—an authority directly from God. Don't blame God for your civil government. Don't credit God for your civil government. If God is to praised or thanked concerning this man made institution, let it be that He has warned us that civil government should be limited. Let us thank Him for each limitation He has suggested, and any other we have imposed, and pray further He will grant us understanding to impose additional limitations on civil power. Let us stop praying that God would grant public officials "wisdom" in connection with their decision-making to take more of our liberty.

If we establish a civil government and empower it to take our things, property, money, freedom, labor and life, do we nullify God's prohibition on coveting, theft and murder? When we examine our civil governments, it is good and right that the powers which it may want to exercise are specifically limited or prohibited. At the end of the day the core powers which any civil government will want to exercises are to covet, take, and kill. Thus, when we examine our civil governments we should hope to find strict and severe limitations or prohibitions on its power to do so. If they are not present, *we have ignored God's warnings and thrown his cautions to the wind*.

The next time you hear a sermon or read an article on the Ten Commandments, ask

yourself why the speaker or author does not apply it to the most obvious takers in human history—your local Township, City and school district. How could the speaker or author be so blind to application of the commandment's prohibition to the civil government? Perhaps he or she has never read 1 Samuel 8 or Deuteronomy 17. These failures can be forgiven, but the Ten Commandments, that is basic.

Or perhaps they believe that Caesar is God's agent thereby transforming all coveting, theft and killing into a lawful conduct? Or perhaps their friends are employed by the civil government or government schools and to speak against any limitation on their taxing power would be perceived as a breach of friendship? Why not ask your pastor or author why he or she does not preach or write about these Biblical chapters and their application to any civil government? They may have never thought about it. They may mechanically quote you Romans 13. That is the very limit of their knowledge. They may be unaware of the rest of the Bible we have discussed. They may dismiss it as unspiritual to discuss civil government. What to do?

Nothing we say here can prevent God from using civil governments in any way He chooses. He may use them to punish us for our evildoing, but this does not excuse us or authorize us to empower government to do evil and certainly not to equate its tyranny as the will of God. God can fully use any government or nation to punish an evil nation. God used wicked kings to punish the people of Israel and good kings to bless them. But this should not distract us from our inquiry. Are these civil governments limited? Or are they empowered to steal? Are they limited? Or are they empowered to enslave? Are they limited? Or are they empowered to search our property, educate our minds, control our bodies, or take our life with impunity? We hold the choice and power in our own hands as a people. It is not God's will that we should be a slave of our civil masters or go quietly into its subsidized darkness.

Other Old Testament Insights

There are other developments in the Old Testament which we could address. God's refinement of the degrees of murder and the manner in which murderers or those alleged to have murdered are to be treated is important. Affirmation of the authority of a family member of the murdered victim to act as the Avenger of Blood originally contemplated after the flood and extended to mankind could also be discussed in detail. Likewise trial by the elders of a designated city of refuge and introduction of procedural and substantive rights of the accused identified in Numbers 35 including the right to trial, sanctuary or asylum, and the requirement of multiple witnesses are important. But these developments are more akin to developing law rather than providing insights into God's view of civil government.

We could also discuss other kings such as Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon which God describes as "my servant." Jeremiah 25:9. Likewise we could examine Cyrus,

king of Persia who says in 2 Chronicles 36:23 "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the Lord their God be with them." God calls Cyrus "his shepherd" and "my anointed." Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1. But an examination of these two great kings does not add to our understanding of civil government. It would merely further illustrate that God can use any nation or king for any of his purposes. This is but a truism—He can use you or me too. In this context the purpose of God is to either build up and restore a people, or to tear down and destroy a people. God is not arbitrary in this. The building up and tearing down is for all nations as it was for Israel-- a system of rewards and punishments in this world for obedience to or rejection of God's universal law for the nations. Deuteronomy 27.

We could also examine other governments that God has warned of judgment. The city of Nineveh comes to mind. Nineveh was an ancient Assyrian city of Upper Mesopotamia, located in modern-day northern Iraq. It was located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River and was the capital and largest city of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, as well as the largest city in the world for several decades. God warned the people of that City to turn from their evil ways. He sent Jonah to warn them which he eventually did. God saw that the king and people repented and how they turned from their evil ways. God relented and did not bring on that city, in excess of 120,000 people and many animals, the destruction he had threatened. Jonah 3:10.

But even that repentance did not last. "Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims!" Nahum 3:1 "He will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, leaving Nineveh utterly desolate and dry as the desert." Zephaniah 2:13. Note the crimes—murder, deceit, and taking of property. We should not be surprised. Unrestrained d governments do this. Can you get that into your thinking even as you are trying to argue the government is doing a good thing? But this inquiry does not aid in our understanding of kings. It merely illustrates again that non-Jewish nations were judged by God according to His standard of righteousness. No country is exempt, now or then. None.

National Punishments For National Lawlessness

Ezekiel 14:13-20 also deserves our attention. Here God establishes another universal rule in how he deals with civil governments and the peoples of any nation. Ezekiel reports that the word of the Lord came to him saying:

> Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its people and their animals, even if these three men—Noah, Daniel and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign Lord. Or if I send wild beasts through that country and

> they leave it childless and it becomes desolate so that no one can pass through it because of the beasts, as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved, but the land would be desolate. Or if I bring a sword against that country and say, 'Let the sword pass throughout the land,' and I kill its people and their animals, as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved. Or if I send a plague into that land and pour out my wrath on it through bloodshed, killing its people and their animals, as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could save neither son nor daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness.

Note the language. It is not limited or Israel specific. It covers any nation. It covers every nation. How can a country be unfaithful to God? We know that a country can be unfaithful to God by engaging in sexual perversion. A complete listing of these acts which bring judgment upon a country or nation can be found in Leviticus 18. While the prohibitions are specifically directed against Israel, God notes in Leviticus 18:24 that these prohibitions are universal and binding on all nations. He states, "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled." He goes on to state that the land itself became polluted because of these acts. This is one way a country can be unfaithful to God. There are others that pertain to idolatry and the shedding of innocent blood.

The point here is that God judges nations and He does so based on objective standards. Our interest here is civil government. God is saying that the civil governments of men cannot save them from the judgment of God. God's judgment is righteous. If he brings the sword, famine, wild beasts, or plague, no government of men can stop it by force or law, or bipartisan policy. Only repentance and humility have the hope of staving off disaster, judgment, pain and suffering, and a welcomed death. This rule of national repentance was born out in the book of the Judges and Kings in Israel. We should be praying that God would show us those matters requiring national repentance, rather than for an old time revival limited to personal faith questions.

Israel relied on judges rather than repentance. Israel asked for kings rather than asking for God's favor based on their repentance. This is a universal rule, God judges nations, civil governments and their populations and the only means by which this judgment can possibly be prevented is by its people turning from their evil ways and their unfaithfulness. Nineveh is an example for our benefit. They repented of their evildoing and avoided judgment. Years later they resumed their evildoing and as a result God left "Nineveh utterly desolate and dry as the desert." You think your nation, state or city is exempt? None are exempt. All are subject to His rule.

If My People Called By My Name

In 2 Chronicle 7:13-14 God says to Solomon, "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

The foregoing scripture is an occasional topic for sermons. It is preached when the civil government perpetuates some great calamity or the national state of affairs is on a serious downward trend. The usual protocol is for the people to repent of their individual sins against their neighbors. While identification of specific individual sins are left to the imagination of the listener, sometimes specific sins such as abortion, the sexual revolution or drug abuse are identified. The idea is that if we are just be a little bit better and maybe even stop the sins we believe our neighbors commit, God will bless us, forgive our sins and heal our land—the United States of America.

If we will be serious about this Scripture, then read what it actually says. First it deals with calamities exclusively within the authority of God to bring about. It deals with drought caused by God. Not just drought that is in the absence of rain, but the effect of rainless days is the calamity. These effects are that all the crops die and national agricultural output is destroyed. You can't plant new crops because the ground is too dry. Your cattle all die because there's not enough water. Your trees die. Everything that owes its life from the earth is in jeopardy. God had also made it clear to Israel that one of the punishments which he imposed for the sins of that nation was to cut off rain.

The verses also deal with locusts and pestilence sent by God. You may recall that God's eighth plague against Egypt in Exodus 10:12, was to send locust to "come upon the land of Egypt and eat every plant in the land." There is a suddenness of this judgment. You may think, "Well it hasn't rained in a while I better get in my crops while there's still something left." Then one day before you know it the locust come and eat everything you have nothing left for yourself.

The people of Israel also knew what pestilence was. Recall that the king prior to Solomon, King David chose pestilence over every other judgment as a punishment for his Satanic inspired act of numbering the people and taking a military census. 2 Samuel 24:15 reminds us what was involved when God sends pestilence. "So the Lord sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men." Pestilence is not just something bad. It is a direct punishment of God where people die. It may be a great disease. It may be an epidemic. It may be a contagion or pandemic. Its origins and source are from God directly. The sword, famine and pestilence are the big three judgments directly imposed by the hand of God.

So when Solomon hears these words from God, he knows what's going on and so do the people of Israel. They don't need to read about it in the newspaper. They know there is little food, much pestilence and the drums of foreign war and invasion are advancing against the people. This is the context of the above Scripture. The context is that God is actively destroying the food supply by drought and insects, and destroying the people by disease and pestilence and destroying the nation by invasion by foreign nations. A yellow marker would come in handy here.

Now this is a far different context than the occasions in which the Scripture is generally invoked in a religious assembly. We are not saying that a people cannot call upon God or repent unless things get really bad. No, we are saying that things will get really bad if the people do not repent.

But let us move on to the remedy. The Scripture says that when God does these things, then if the people will humble themselves, and pray and seek God and turn from their wicked ways, then He will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. So what must the people do to be forgiven and have their land healed?

First, they have to show humility. What kind of humility? Individual humility? National humility? People have to show humility that would cause them to pray to God and seek God. And what is the endgame of humility and praying to God and seeking God? The endgame is that the people actually turn from their wicked ways. Now we come to it. What wicked ways could these possibly be?

Prior chapters have identified many evils. We can think of the evil in the beginning where one man murdered another and one man took two wives. We can think of the evil committed by mankind up to the flood where their thoughts were continually evil and violent. We can think of the evil that kings did by waging war. We can think of the evil done by the people of the nations which God was going to dispossess which included all the sexual sins and perversions which destroyed the land and caused the land to reject the people attempting to live on the land.

We can think of the sin practiced by a man and woman who live together without marriage, or a family who refuses to adhere to the commands of God regarding children and dominion and labor. Do the people refuse to work? It is easier to get paid by the government to not work. Will we repent of that evil? Or will we see it as a financial blessing from God rather than slothfulness? We can think of the evil of innocent blood being shed and how it affects the land and needs to be satisfied by the punishment of murderers. There is taking, coveting and murder. There is forced labor and slavery. These are not merely individual evils. We are concerned with the evils done nationwide by the people and by their civil governments and officials. There is the evil that the civil government destroys freedom and makes the people its financial slaves.

All the kings of Israel and most of the kings of Judah did evil. If we read the history of each king we could identify the specific evils they committed. Samuel has given us a summary of what we can expect from these kings. He states that these kings will take everything and make us their slaves. They will take our children, take our money, and take our property. The government will take our land, take our increase, and make you and me its slaves. These are all evils. Are these the evils of which we are to repent of on Sunday mornings in our pews during the sermon on 2 Chronicles 7? The evils of civil government will probably not be mentioned since we elected "good people" to office who perpetuate these policies.

On top of this we also know these evil kings worship the Baals, Ashertoh, Chemosh, and Milcom. These are all the false gods of the foreign governments that lived around them. Idolatry is a tremendously significant sin committed by the rulers and practiced with vigor by the people. We know in particular that King Manasseh shed innocent blood by offering children to these false gods, a sin God said he would never forgive.

Perhaps a good sermon might identify these sins and even contemplate them for modern America. How might this play out at election time? Just about every one encourages their neighbor to "Vote." But voting is simply choosing. It is choosing this candidate over that candidate. But where the candidates promise to take your children, money, property, things and freedom, do we not also do evil by choosing one who promises to take less?

In summary, 2 Chronicles 7 doesn't apply where general economic, social, or moral decline is present though repentance is always in order. It applies where God sends drought, destroys the food supply, and sends pestilence and disease upon the people. But if you still believe that a nation can call upon God and turn from its wicked ways, then let us be clear about what wicked ways we are talking about.

The people should turn from the wicked way of selecting public officials who as a basis for election, promise to do things which the law (including the law of God), does not permit. This means they will take authority or civil power which is given to another branch of government or not given to any civil government. This includes a civil government that will take or usurp or regulate the authority of the family or church. It is evil to vote away liberty for security. It is evil to choose slavery under Caesar, when God made us free under Him. Are the people ready to repent of voting for this type of candidate from their favorite party? Sorry to tell you, there appears no evidence in modern elections that the people are ready to repent of their electoral empowerment of lawbreakers and usurpers. As a matter of fact, they promote the election of such as these under the spirit of party because the other candidate is more evil.

The people must turn from their wickedness and selecting leaders who will take their

children to be educated in a manner contrary to the will of their parents. Are Christian public school teachers and administrators sitting in the pews ready to repent of their complicity in a system of education that takes children and educates them contrary to the will of their parents? Are they willing to repent of their employment in a system which uses criminal law, misdemeanor charges, and fines and imprisonment against parents who fail to compel their children to attend a state approved school? God gave the authority to educate to parents, but the state has empowered teachers to do that job in defiance of that God given authority. Is that fine with you?

The people must turn from their wickedness in selecting leaders who will take their money in a tax structure and give it to their neighbor, or their neighbor's money and give it to you. It is evil to vote covetousness into office. It is evil to vote for a candidate that promises to wage non-defensive wars of foreign aggression. It is evil to vote for a candidate that promises to take your neighbors land by condemnation or by regulation for a public purpose.

It is evil to vote for a candidate that guarantees the shedding of innocent blood will remain unpunished, or who misrepresents the morally damaging nature of sexual perversion and idolatry. It is evil to vote for a candidate that will perpetuate or expand the government's control of your land by zoning and regulations, of your vocation by occupational licensing and permits, and of your freedoms by governmental regulations. It is evil to vote for a candidate that will perpetuate or expand the government's control of your body thought mandatory vaccinations and masking and whatever evil is yet to come. It is evil to vote for a candidate that will limit your right of self-defense including the right to acquire, make, bear and use self-defense items, machine guns, firearms and edged weapons of any length or design. There are other evils to repent of but these are a good start.

What do you say? Do you think this list will be referenced in the next sermon? Will any of these make it to the list of national evils of which to repent? Is it evil to ask for a government that will legalize covetousness, theft and murder? Is it evil to ask for a government that will promote sexual perversion and idolatry? So, if people are to turn *from their wicked way*s with the hope of God healing their land, then they must ask forgiveness for their love of their civil government and the evil it does on their behalf. Until the people are ready to do that, invocation of 2 Chronicles 7 will be unavailing and hypocritical.

Chapter 14. Are Civil Governments Of Human Or Divine Origin?

"Thus, upon a careful review of the apostle's reasoning in this passage, it appears that his arguments to enforce submission, are of such a nature, as to conclude only in favor of submission to *such rulers as he himself describes*; *i.e.*, such as rule for the good of society, which is the only end of their institution. Common tyrants, and public oppressors, are not entitled to obedience from their subjects, by virtue of anything here laid down by the inspired apostle." Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers, January 30, 1750

"How do we know that a given government is ordained of God and that He has given it authority? A government's existence is proof that it is ordained of God and that it possesses divinely delegated authority . . . . Whether democratic or autocratic, heathen or God-fearing, every government which has the power to rule over its people has been granted that power and authority by God. Submission to government then is an expression of our submission to God. God has instituted human government to exercise divinely delegated authority over men. We should be subject to human governments for this reason alone." Rev. Robert L. Deffinbaugh, The Christian and Civil Government, August 18, 2004.

"But so that we don't offend them, go to the lake and throw out a hook. Take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a four drachma coin. Take that and give it to them for me and you." Matthew 17:24-27

Romans 13, 1 Samuel 8 And Deuteronomy 17

We now come to the trifecta--Romans 13, 1 Samuel 8 and Deuteronomy 17. We have concluded our review of the Old Testament with our inquiry regarding what God has to say about the origin and jurisdiction of civil government. We are 4,000 years into human history. The conclusion is that God ordained no civil government except his own and then only by consent in Israel. God established no civil government for any nation. Every civil government of every nation was and is the creation of human beings. Every judge and king of Israel was sent by God as an act of pity and grace, and was a departure from the original plan of government by God himself in Israel.

We now turn to the New Testament with the same question in mind. Such an inquiry invariably leads to Romans 13 which we will now examine. See also 1 Peter 2:13-16 where Peter admonishes us to, "Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God." Is Paul or Peter introducing anything new about God and civil government? Re-read Jonathan Mayhew's explanation at the beginning of this chapter. He says Paul is describing a very specific type of civil

government that alone deserves our submission. Perhaps it is a mythical government because it has never existed in its true limited form. The other quotation by Robert L. Deffinbaugh says Paul is mandating submission to every civil government regardless of its character, just because it exists. Deffinbaugh is quoted because he well articulates what many think.

Or is there yet another view of this scripture? Let us first look at 1 Peter 2:13-14. It states, "submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." Note that Peter describes kings and governors as "human institutions." He does not say God established a civil government with kings or governors. Human institutions are not created by God. Human institutions are institutions created by humans. Humans create all kinds of institutions. Humans create local fellowships and local churches. God did not create the Frist Baptist church of your city. It was created by human beings. Its articles of incorporated are signed by humans and filed in a government computer. God created his church and body of believers but that exists irrespective of any man-made church structure, hierarchical or congregational, messianic, catholic, orthodox or protestant.

The same goes for your political parties, car clubs, gun clubs, golf leagues, bowling leagues, sports leagues, homeschool cooperatives, dining clubs, Greek organizations or membership societies and organizations in general. These are all human institutions. God did not establish them and He is not a charter member. So too is the case with civil government. It is a human institution. Peter is advising us to submit to this organization at its national and local levels because it ought to be in the business of punishing wrongdoers and praising those who do what is right. Peter is not giving an order. Peter has no authority to give an order of conduct to you or me. Peter is not a legislator nor does his Apostleship carry with it the authority to make new laws of conduct for believers.

Peter is trying to communicate what to him is the common sense of the subject—if you want to stay out of trouble then do what the government requires of you. But it is not an order. Peter can't bind our conscience to say when or under what circumstance we may ignore the civil government or simply declare "I will not comply." Those decisions remain with each human being and nothing Peter is advising changes that. Let us stop trying to make Peter a lawgiver or someone who can bind our conscience or a shill for unlimited submission to civil tyrants.

Now we turn to Paul. Peter and Paul are on the same page here. Could Paul also be saying obey the government *as a practical matter* so as to not give them cause to interfere with you? That is, lest they should think that we despise the civil government and thus provoke needless opposition, though we are under no obligation to submit, yet it is best to do so in general terms so that we can continue to follow God in our conscience,

family and religion without interference from civil officials. We submit not because God commands it, but because submission denies the civil government occasion to say we are lawbreakers thereby justifying its ill treatment and evil doing tendency. Remember what civil government does by natural inclination: take, covet, kill and make war. Is Paul saying the wise keep out of the grip of that machine, that Leviathan? We submit so that we may not give the civil government occasion to accuse us or to misjudge us. Is this what is being said?

Before we look at the text of Romans 13, however, we must understand it in the context and flow of history we have taken thirteen chapters to understand. Adam was no king. He had no governmental authority over the people. Civil government is never mentioned for the first 27.5% of human history. Noah was not a king. Abraham was not a king. Moses was not a king. The first kingdom was Babel. It was made by mankind and God rendered it abandoned.

Pharaohs and kings are mentioned next as murderers, adulterers and lovers of war with its resulting taking of life, liberty and property. God neither instituted nor established these civil governments. We discussed the kings of Israel and later of Judah. The existence of these kings itself was a result of the evil choice of the people first rejecting God as their King. Saul, David and Solomon were progressively worse as kings when compared to the limitations of civil power stated in Deuteronomy 17. Most of subsequent kings did evil and God killed a few kings Himself.

The only government God ever created was self-government and the family through marriage, childbearing and rearing, and dominion. The history of civil government is punctuated by the description of the evils described in 1 Samuel 8 and the need for limits on civil power referenced in Deuteronomy 17. We discussed how civil government, specifically led by pharaohs and kings, would take from the people by force, their labor, property, increase and children and as a result, "you shall be his slaves." 1 Samuel 8:17. This is God's view of the civil governments of all the nations of that day. Little has changed.

God advised that the people should limit their selection of leaders to natural born persons. He advised that the people should limit the power of the civil government regarding offensive wars, resist the accumulation of massive wealth taken from the people, avoid entangling foreign alliances and treaties, and ensure that the law governed both the people and governmental officials equally. All were under the law of God and law of the land. Law was not to be used lawlessly. See also 1 Timothy 1:8, "We know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully."

So with this background in mind and understanding what God has said about civil governments in the past we come to Romans 13. Is Paul, the author of Romans laying

down a new doctrine of civil government, never before heard of by mankind? Is he rejecting what God has said about civil government and kings of the nations as recorded in 1 Samuel 8? What is Paul actually saying? Is he trying to reconcile what God said way back then, with the modern Roman civil government and its Caesar?

When looking at Romans 13, understand that few people have any meaningful understanding of what you have read from previous chapters regarding I Samuel 8 or Deuteronomy 17. They have never put 1 and 1 together—the old and new covenants and testaments. They have never heard anything substantial about civil government as covered in prior chapters. Regretfully, they do not even know they should be asking what God thinks about civil government. Do you? Did you? No, they come to Romans 13 like sheep to the slaughter, ready to conclude that unlimited submission is God's will and the order of the day.

Romans 13

Romans 13:1-7 states:

> Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Who Are The Authorities: Not Pharaohs And Kings

Let us break this down. Romans 13 first says, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities." Stop. Who are these governing authorities? Don't jump to any conclusions. Reason it out from what the Bible says. So far we have seen that the "authorities" include first God as the supreme and highest authority.

We also know that human beings were created by God to exercise authority over themselves, their physical bodies, their health, their mind and hearts. We know that human beings are of two types, male and female. To them are given the authority to exercise

dominion over the earth, to possess and own property and to labor and enter into marriage and voluntary associations. To them as husband and wife, are also given the authority to be fruitful and multiply, and to oversee and direct the education and upbringing of their own children. Thus, mankind is an authority established by God. A husband and wife are authorities established by God. A father and mother are authorities established by God. So this is clearly what Paul is talking about thus far.

We also know the universal church was established by Jesus when he instituted his church and gave its members authority in Matthew 28:18-20. He stated, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age." Note Jesus references His "authority." Paul says be subject to the "governing authorities." Jesus is certainly a governing authority.

Of course, God did not create your local church down the street. It is not an authority God established despite its claims to the contrary. It has no inherited or delegated authority to govern any person. Your local "church" is established as a non-profit corporation under state law with its internal structure of control dictated by law. That structure has nothing to do with the church Jesus established of which He is the head and all believers stand equally under Him. His church has no new rules or ordinances. It requires only what has always been required--that we should love God and our neighbor as ourselves. His church therefore differs radically from the local assembly down the street with its rules and traditions of men and its man-made authority structure or hierarchy.

As noted a husband and wife have authority to govern their household. Parents are governing authorities. They have authority to govern their children. Therefore, according to Paul, whoever resists these authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. Isn't it good to know that if you resist the petty tyranny of your local church, you will not incur the judgment of God for it?

Pause to ask, "Do the civil authorities resist what God has appointed?" God appointed the father and mother to educate their children. The civil government resists that authority by compulsory school attendance and curriculum requirements. God says that such resistance will incur His judgment. This is an easy one to see. We could provide more examples but you get the point.

Are you ready to add civil government to the list of governing authorities? Not so fast. Where does God establish civil authority? What chapter or verse? Let's go back to the first pharaoh in Genesis 12. He was a man inclined to murder; a man who took what he wanted by force, a man who controlled land and agriculture, a man who determined who can reside in his kingdom, a man who ordered others to do his will; and a man who God punished for

defiling the marriage covenant of Abram and Sarai. Here is a man who believes he is the law. Is this what God instituted? Is this an authority unto whom Abraham must submit? What say you? Do you think this is what Paul is commanding, that Abraham should have obeyed pharaoh as an act of obedience to God in letting him take his wife as his own? If that is what you think (that God commanded this), then why did God threaten to harm or kill pharaoh for that conduct?

And what about the first reference to kingdoms at Babel in Genesis 11, or kings in Genesis 14? You remember the ones? They are remembered for their conduct principally in terms of waging war, confiscating booty and enslaving human captives. They abducted Abram's nephew Lot and took all his possession in their war. Did Paul say, "Submit to such as these?" Is this an authority unto whom Abram was required to submit? Apparently Abram did not think so. "When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he mobilized his 318 trained men who had been born in his household, and he pursued the invaders as far as Dan. Then, during the night, Abram divided his forces against them and defeated them. He chased them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. He retrieved all the stolen property. He also brought back his nephew Lot and his possessions, as well as the women and the rest of the people." Genesis 14:14-16. Are you ready to tell Abraham that he should have submitted to these kings as the minister of God? Are you ready to tell Abraham that he should turn the other cheek and just let the kings keep his nephew?

Look at the words God uses to describe the conduct of the kings—they took captives, they were invaders, they stole property. Are you ready to tell Abram that submission to this government is mandated by God? Speak up. And let's look back at the Egyptians. "They put foremen over the Israelites to oppress them with hard labor." Exodus 1:11. And when Moses said let the people go and pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him by releasing Israel? I do not know the Lord, and I will not release Israel." Would you advise Moses to respond, "Well that settles that, we will obey." Would you remind Moses that "whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed?" Would you remind Moses that he should "have no fear of the one who is in authority?" Exodus 5:2. Or is God just giving conflicting advice here, telling Moses one thing and Paul another? How do you see it? Is God confused or are you?

What about Nahash the Ammonite who said that the only way he would make a treaty with Israel was to allow him to gouge out the right eye of every male? 1 Samuel 11:2. If he had defeated Israel in war, would you remind Samuel to command all the people to line up like sheep to have their eye gouged out because Paul will say one day "For he (Nahash) is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer?"

What of the 42 kings of Israel and Judah and one queen? Of the 42 kings, 15 were killed or assassinated by others, God killed 3, and 2 killed themselves. Of the 19 kings of Israel, 7 were killed by individuals who killed the king in a coup and then assumed power.

All 19 kings of Israel are described as evil doers. Every single king did evil. Among the kings of Judah twelve were described by God as evildoers. Eight kings were described as good.

Are any or all of these pharaohs and kings "governing authorities" referenced by Paul unto who God commands submission? No. We know what you are thinking. You are thinking, "Well Paul said we should submit to the government as a minister of God for our good." So does that mean you would advise the people of Israel?--"Sure every one of your kings was an evildoer, but you have to submit anyway and for your own good, be impoverished, enslaved or murdered?" Friend, have you lost perspective? Do we have to single out all the kings and civil governments on the earth and illustrate their evil course of conduct and against this weight of evidence you maintain unlimited submission is mandated? Is there is no reasoning left? God did not make us to enjoy liberty to obey Him and then throw it all away for obedience to civil government. He did not make individuals and the family to govern themselves and then tell Paul to write they should throw it all away in preaching submission to civil government.

Romans 13 says the authority must be established by God. Human beings have authority as individuals, husbands, wives, and parents. Human beings have authority as believers to render to their creator those obligations required by Him. (This liberty was recognized in the 1776 Virginia Bill of Rights). Kings and civil officials do not have authority in this way. They are not established by God. True it is that "David realized that the Lord had established him as king over Israel and that he had elevated his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel." 1 Chronicles 14:2. But this was by the consent of the people in first demanding a king and pursuant to God's authority as their King previously agreed upon 300 years prior thereto. It is no rule for any other king or nation.

So Paul says "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." Recall what Peter said, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to *every human institution*, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." 1 Peter 2:13-14. A king and a kingdom is a "human institution." A human instruction is not an authority established by God. It is established by human beings. How many times do we have to go over this? Peter and Paul say in effect: The authorities that exist have been instituted by God, and civil government is not one of them.

Paul then writes, "[t]herefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment." In other words, the authorities that exist that are instituted by God are the husband and wife, mother and father, and His son Jesus. If you resist their limited and lawful authority, you incur God's judgment. But since civil government is a human institution, it is not an authority and if you resist this human

institution, you will not incur God's judgment. You may incur the judgment of the human institution, but not God's judgment.

Rulers Are Not To Be Wicked Tyrants

Next Paul adds, "For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain." What does this mean? Paul is speaking of a civil government that acts lawfully. When it acts lawfully it is a terror to bad conduct. He is also saying God uses civil government to punish wrongdoing. God uses civil governments when the people consent to establish those civil governments and the civil official exercises that authority lawfully given. God uses any civil government how He wants just like he will use you or me how he wants. But this does not mean civil governments are created by God or that their command and punishments are automatically just. A civil government not established by the people but rather established over the people by force of arms or conquest or some other tyrannical way is not God's recognized way of establishing a civil government but it can be used by God nonetheless.

What does Paul say about the authority of Nero, Herod or of Agrippa? What does he say about the authority of Caesar? Are these rulers a terror to bad conduct? Are these rulers God's servant for the good of Romans? Are these rulers the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer? No. They are none of these things. Paul cannot mean that these people are to be obeyed when they themselves do not submit to God. He cannot mean that we are to obey our civil officials when they do not submit to God. Paul is not sanctioning the abuse of power by wicked men.

And what authority would God have them exercise? There is only one type of authority and it is lawful authority. We know the authority *God would not have* them exercise. He has told us in 1 Samuel 8 and Deuteronomy 17. He would not have them exercise the lawless authority of the kings of the nations of the earth. He would not have them exercise the lawless authority He cautions Israel to specifically limit and prohibit. He would not have them exercise the powers which God warned against in 1 Samuel 8.

He would not have them exercise lawless authority to take, take, and take. He would not have them exercise lawless authority to take our children or take our land and property. He would not have them exercise lawless authority to take our freedom, control our medical choices, make us slaves or increase their wealth through governing and taxes. He would not have them exercise lawless authority to establish a large standing army, militarize law enforcement or erect a military empire. He would not have them exercise lawless authority to lord their power over us or to exempt them from the law which applies to everyone else. He would not have them exercise the lawless authority to entangle the nation in

non-defensive wars of foreign aggression or establish worldwide global hegemony over all nations. He would not have them exercise the lawless authority to practice rendition, torture or incite nuclear Armageddon.

Paul Is Not Instructing Us To Obey Tyrants

Paul is speaking of lawful purposes which citizens have the authority to and actually choose to voluntarily extend to their civil governments. He is not referring to the abuse of power by wicked men holding an office, position or title. The mere possession of a title or office is no guarantee of the lawfulness of its authority. Simply because a person is the president and claims to exercise presidential authority, does not mean that all acts done in the name of the president or in the office of the man or woman are lawful. Simply because a person is a Congressional Representative or a Senator, or a Justice of the Supreme Court, does not mean when they act or speak, that it is presumed lawful.

If there is a presumption to be attached to the acts of the legislature and of the conduct of the executive branch, is that they are lawless and unconstitutional when judicially challenged and that the burden is on the government to establish their lawfulness and constitutionality. Modern judicial decisions, however, adopt the opposite presumption. They presume the lawfulness and constitutionally of legislative acts and of executive decisions. The kings of Israel, all of which God declared did evil would have enjoyed such a presumption.

How different is this repeated misunderstanding of judicial responsibility when compared to his warnings about the inherent disposition of the legislative branch to fly off into orbit claiming any power they choose as elaborated upon by Thomas Jefferson. He wrote that "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." In the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 he noted that judicial review is not worthy of the name where the presumption of constitutionality is accorded to the acts of the legislature. Indeed Paul is not naïve as our modern jurists. Though he lays out the best case for obeying civil government, he does not presume that its acts are inherently good or lawful or constitutional. When civil rulers act lawfully they should be obeyed as a practical matter, and when they act unlawfully or lawlessly, we have no obligation to obey them.

Judicially created canons of presuming constitutionality and avoiding constitutional questions are ill-suited to a constitution designed to limit civil government precisely because an expansive civil power is a dangerous thing. These canons of construction assume what they should reject. Power is dangerous and should be checked at every step, not given a free pass.

In its most common articulation, the presumption of constitutionality deters the court

from striking down an Act of Congress except upon a clear showing of unconstitutionality. Similarly, the canon of "constitutional avoidance" provides that where an otherwise acceptable construction of a statute would raise serious constitutional problems, the Court will construe the statute to avoid such problems unless such construction is plainly contrary to the intent of Congress. Ashwander v. Tennessee Valley Authority, 297 U.S. 288, 341 (1936) (Brandeis, J., joined by Stone, Roberts, and Cardozo, JJ., concurring). These extra-constitutional canons should be rejected. The civil government deserves only the presumption that its actions are lawless and it must bear and carry the burden of proving otherwise.

The Key Concepts: Authorities, Conscience, And Servant Explained

Paul next asserts, "For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed." God is against the wrongdoer. If the people establish a civil government and clothe it with lawful authority by a non-exclusive delegation of their authority to punish crimes against persons and property, then in that sense a civil government is an avenger of God's wrath on the wrongdoer. If the people however, do not establish such a civil government but it arises by force or fraud over the people, or becomes a civil government over the people and subjugates them, then its mere power to punish crimes against persons and property may still serve the purpose of executing God's wrath against the wrongdoer, but the legitimacy of such a civil government is not automatically established.

Recall Hosea 8:4, "They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not." Recall Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon which God describes as "my servant." Jeremiah 25:9. There was also Cyrus, king of Persia whom God calls "his shepherd" and "my anointed." Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1. These kingdoms were not instituted by the consent of the people, but God used them anyway. They were nothing more, however, than human institutions.

The point is that Paul is describing the best of civil governments when created by human beings with their consent. Thus, at the end of the day, Paul is still describing a "human institution" at its best. The fact that God uses good and bad human institutions is rather unremarkable. He uses us doesn't He, even though we are sinful? He uses the church doesn't He, even though it is weighed down with myopic pastors, weak leadership and milk-fed members?

Let us turn to the above statements about conscience. Paul refers to obedience for

conscience sake. What is this? He is talking about our conscience. He is indicating that we can choose to obey for the sake of our conscience when the civil government acts lawlessly. We obey them in order to avoid their immediate lawless wrath.

We may be wise and not throw ourselves before the civil governmental juggernaut. We may elect to obey a lawless government so that we may continue to do that which God has called us to do without the interference or the punishment of an evil ruler. This is a pragmatic consideration. This is a practical consideration. Do you want to stay out of jail? Do you want to avoid your assets being levied by the Internal Revenue Service? Do you want to avoid serving a prison sentence? Do you want to avoid the police kicking in your door and taking your property?

Let us assume each thing when done are wrongly done in your case and that they are done lawlessly by the civil ruler. Nevertheless, Paul is saying that you may want to submit anyway because the evil you submit to is less invidious than being denied the freedom to do what is right with the money you have left, or the freedom you have when not incarcerated.

Paul is giving advice. He is not, however, laying down a rule of conduct for every person. We may observe it to our benefit or ignore it at our peril. It is up to each person to decide to obey a lawless civil government, judge, police officer or federal agent based on pragmatic considerations. The choice to disobey is not a sin which God will punish, though Caesar will look upon it as contempt or a crime. But what did you expect—that Caesar's lawless command would not be followed by a lawless punishment? So we have to be prudent. Paul is giving us practical advice, not the immutable law of God.

Paul also says: "Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are servants of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed." This is the practice that applies when the civil government acts lawfully, not in all cases. Paul is switching gears. He is focusing on those times when the civil government does what the people have lawfully entrusted it to do.

Why would God be angry if we failed to pay taxes to support good government? His wrath would arise because the government established by the people to do what is lawful costs money to operate. But He is not angry when we refuse to pay taxes when that government is lawless. He may also be wrathful because "the will of God, [is] that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people." 1 Peter 2:15. Non-payment of taxes provides an easy target for the government to attack His people. Perhaps God is in effect saying, "Pay your taxes so as not to offend the government." Or as Matthew wrote

down what Jesus said, "But so that we don't offend them, go to the lake and throw out a hook. Take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a four drachma coin. Take that and give it to them for me and you." Matthew 17:24-27.

This puts the idea of tax exemption in a whole new light. If your church is tax exempt and then chastises you to pay taxes because of Romans 13, ask why it does not pay taxes. The only answer is that found in Matthew 17:25. The kings of the earth do not tax their own sons, *i.e.*, your ministers and church!

In further regard to the payment of taxes, it follows that governmental officials who are occupied in such affairs, most easily take offense when money is in question. Therefore, we pay taxes as our conscience dictates so that we may avoid the wrath of an evil government or interference of a good one. But at some point we must say no more. Remember that the people and Jeroboam came to Rehoboam to ask him if he would limit his power and relieve them of conscription and heavy oppressive taxes. Jeroboam and the and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you." 1 Kings 12:3-4. Rehoboam said "no" and threatened to increase their taxes even more. As a result the People declared their separation from his rule. When all Israel saw that King Rehoboam refused to listen to them, they answered the king: "What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son? To your tents, Israel! Look after your own house, David!" 1 Kings 12:16. A misreading of Paul's statement makes no provision for this tax revolt or declaration of the causes that impelled them to separation. Yet, it had God's blessing.

We have addressed the concept of "authorities" instituted by God and the idea of conscience. Let us turn to the last key concept in Romans 13—what is meant by saying he is "God's servant for your good" and that "the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing." As we noted, this "very thing" is punishing wrongdoing, not punishing doing right or interfering with the authorities God established (self-government, husband, wife, father, and mother.) We also noted that when civil government acts it often is a very incompetent or an evil minister. Just being called a "minister of God," however, does not clothe the civil government with God's authority. It simply means that when the people have established a civil government by their consent, and clothed its officials with *limited authority* to punish specific wrongdoing, then that official acts as God's minister (through the people's consent.)

Israel's evil kings and queen were not "governing authorities . . . instituted by God" nor were they "God's servant" for good. Romans 13:1-4. Didn't God kill a few along the way? They are not "authorities" either. Though Paul calls them "ministers of God" they were not good ministers worthy of any obedience. Impeachment, not obedience, is their lot.

Thus we cannot take Paul's admonition as a universal rule of conduct. Nor is Paul the lord of any man's conscience. He may appeal to our conscience and advocate that it should dictate the payment of taxes or submission to civil officers. But it is my conscience and your conscience that is to be exercised and is only accountable to God for the exercise thereof. Paul's admonition cannot bind anyone's conscience in these matters except his own. Nor did he intend to do so. If you remember nothing about this chapter, remember that. Yes, the civil government will take note of your conscience. It will create a list with you on it. It will mark you as someone to watch and perhaps prosecute at some point in time. But this does not mean it acts lawfully.

4,000 Years And What Do We Know?

The sum of the matter so far is this: God does not institute or establish civil government. The kings of the earth arise by force, conquest or the consent of human beings, but not by divine will. Remember also that: "The Lord has established his throne in heaven; his kingdom extends over everything." Psalm 103:19. All nations and kingdoms are subordinate to Him.

If the people choose to establish a civil government, wisdom dictates it should be one of very limited power. It must be limited to those lawful objects which the people themselves have the authority in the first place to extend to a civil government. When that government acts lawlessly or goes beyond the limited authority lawfully given to it, then the people have no need to obey it. God does not require it. Paul does not advise it. Yet, every person may submit as a pragmatic matter so that they may continue to enjoy their life though diminished, their families though regulated, their religion though confined, their employment though subject to control, their wealth though partially taken, and their freedom though systematically denied or disparaged on a relative scale.

But we do not see in Romans 13 the announcement of a never before heard doctrine of civil government. We do not see God declaring that civil governments are "authorities" He has instituted. We do not see God waking up after 4,000 years of human history and saying, "Well I guess now that the Romans are the world's superpower, I better share with Paul some insights about civil government that I never bothered to communicate before." We do not see the doctrine of unlimited submission to civil magistrates. We do not see the nonsense that every civil official, from the president down to the dog-catcher is God's agent no matter what.

Paul says that civil officials are ministers of God. But their office is a human institution. It is created by humans. But ministers sent by God are not "authorities" instituted by God. God did not clothe them with civil power. Only people can do that. Nor does it mean that civil officials are automatically good ministers. The presumption should be to the contrary. Read the books of God's own kings whom He Himself calls evil.

In a nutshell Romans 13 essentially offers nothing new after 4,000 years of human history. It offers only the pragmatic observation that obedience to civil government ought to be guided by our individual conscience. Submission may cost us less in the short term, than disobedience in the long term. It also reaffirms that the "authorities" set up by God are the individual, the family and later on the church of Christ which has but one head—Jesus Christ. Your favorite religious corporation down the street you call the "church" shares no power from Jesus to dictate submission, mandate belief or command your conscience. Don't you give it to them either. The Creator gave it to you to exercise in self-government.

Finally, the scripture affirms that when established by the people, a civil government might act as a minister or servant of God, but this is no guarantee that it will act lawfully, or as a good servant or an obedient minister. Nor is it a declaration that any civil office is an "authority" or established by God. Indeed, "They made kings, but not through Me. They set up princes, but I knew it not." Hosea 8:4. If you have that yellow marker handy, this would be a good paragraph to highlight.

Chapter 15. Is Every Government Under God, In A Jurisdictional Sense?

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,
"Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."
He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.
Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,
"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." Psalm 2:1-6

God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. Psalm 47:8

The Law Of Nature Denies Civil Government Unlimited Jurisdiction, Even by Consent

We have completed our chronological survey of the Bible and concluded that civil government and civil officials are purely the creation of human decisions. God does not make them. He does not establish them. He does not institute them. He does, however, use them for his purposes. He also rules over the nations. He is the King of the nations and their governments. What does this mean in practice when the people establish a civil government or a dictator comes to rule by force and violence?

Recall that civil government when established cannot impair the jurisdiction, prerogatives or purpose of any preexisting authority. The people cannot, if they establish a civil government, give it just any old power they please even by free consent. The people cannot violate the law of nature. The people cannot lawfully declare that God shall have no say in what powers they may extend to their civil government. If they do, they do so in defiance of God, the Creator. The civil government cannot lawfully violate the law of nature and any attempts to do so though they may be "successful" are lawless and not the will of God. God laughs at such presumption. He holds such governments and nations in derision.

The people cannot lawfully give civil government any authority which God has given to another authority. God established at the creation one kind of authority--mankind. He gave man–male and female–governing authority over the earth, but not over other persons. Man has no implied authority over another man. No man has a right to govern another without his free consent. Mankind is capable of self-government with no civil government ever existing or brought into existence by consent or otherwise. But if the people do establish a civil government, they have no right or authority to set aside what God has created and say to the civil government they create: "Here government, you exercise jurisdiction that God retained for Himself, or gave exclusively to men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children, or the church."

God has established the authority of a Husband and Wife. How? He did this by

defining marriage and then empowering a man and woman to mutually consent to be husband and wife in marriage. He established the authority of the family and charged it with continually governing their part of the earth with their own labor, property and land. God also added duties pertaining to bearing, rearing and the education of children to the family's charge. The family does not need or require any civil government to fulfill its familial purposes.

If the people establish a civil government, they cannot by their consent declare that the authority which God gave to the family shall no longer be exercised by the family or this authority shall be regulated, diminished or impaired. The people in making Constitutions or their agents in the legislature making subordinate laws have no jurisdiction, right or authority to set aside what God has created and say in the law or constitution, "Here civil government, you exercise a jurisdiction that God gave exclusively to the individual and the family."

This is a hard fact to accept in a day and age where the government claims to help build strong families and politicians solicit votes on that basis. But the civil government does no such thing as build strong families and the sooner we see this, the better off we will be. The people cannot violate the law of nature of family. The government cannot violate the law of nature of family. Attempts to empower the civil government to substitute its judgment and will for that of the family as given by God trigger His fury. We may have to obey these lawless acts as a practical matter, but any obedience we show is not because God requires us to do so. It is because we wish to enjoy what liberty is left rather than challenge the entire system of lawlessness.

So these are the authorities that exist: man, male and female, husbands and wives, and fathers and mothers. They govern themselves, their families, their households and rear their own children. Civil government is unnecessary to their existence or purpose. What other authorities has God instituted? For Christians, Jesus established his church of which he is the head. (Colossians 1:18.) It is a voluntary society based on faith, reason and persuasion with its own internal structure and purposes, lacking the power of force or coercion. (I Corinthians 12:28.)

How about civil government? Did God establish civil government? The answer is "No." God did not establish civil government. That nations exist and civil governments eventually arose either by consent or by force of arms, from the original act of God confusing human language, is not to say God created civil governments. God created languages and as a result humanity scatted into language groups, each occupying different geographical regions. These regions developed borders and assumed the particulars of nationality built on their unique language and fraternal identity. "From one man he made every nation of the human race to inhabit the entire earth, determining their set times and the fixed limits of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope around for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." (Acts 17:26-27.) He

did this by confusing human language at Babel. (Genesis 11:1-9).

Only in this context is civil government even to be discussed. It is not discussed as a "divine right" emanating directly from God to a ruler. While God created Man and established marriage and the family, there is no comparable creation of civil government by God Himself. A civil government exists by the consent of the people or by the declaration of a despot backed by the sword and violence. It does not exist because God said "Let there be civil government." He never said this in any general way for the nations.

Some argue that the inherent authority of civil rulers is to punish murders. (Genesis 9:4-6). But when God extended such a power to mankind, there were no civil governments in existence. Some argue that God established a civil government in ancient Israel. They ignore that its origins were by consent of the people and later that He objected to their demand for a king as a rejection of Himself. Yet, he allowed the people to make their foolish choice and they readily agreed to be the slaves of their human kings. Exodus 19:7-9, I Samuel 8.

What Is The Lawful Authority A People May Delegate To Their Civil Government?

Recall we have been reviewing the Scripture chronologically to understand what God has said about civil government including its authority and jurisdiction. We have seen that God established nations, not for their own purposes, but rather so the language divided Peoples of the earth should be prevented from greatness without God, and so that the people may seek Him and perhaps find Him. He also established nations so they would expand out over the entire face of the earth as He originally mandated. The only human government in existence originated by God, if it could be called that, is through the family, with humans authorized to punish murderers by death since the time of Noah. In all other respects, this familial authority was extant from the beginning of time.

While there is no evidence that God authorized individual human beings to punish crimes other than murder, we note that murder is a crime against persons. One might conclude that the authority to punish murderers includes by implication the authority to punish other lesser offenses against the person. Such offenses generally speaking would include all of the degrees of homicide, assaults and battery against a person, branding, maiming, disfigurement and torture of all types, kidnapping, false imprisonment or confinement, illegal arrest and searches, molestation, rape and criminal sexual conduct, coerced medical procedures including treatment, vaccination and sterilization, feticide and enslavement. Such an analysis would conclude that the victim’s family has authority from God to effect its own remedy short of death for these offenses.

We have an example of how one does not avenge rape. Recall that Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and killed all the males of the Canaanites as retaliation for one man’s defilement of Dinah. Genesis 34:25. This is an example of excess. Their

father upon learning of it declared, “You have brought trouble on me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My numbers are few, and if they gather themselves against me and attack me, I shall be destroyed, both I and my household.” Genesis 34:30. He later described his sons and such lawless measures as “weapons of violence.” Genesis 49:5.

If this same logic is applied to offenses against property, it would be reasonable that God gave dominion to the family over the animals, food, things and property both real and personal in Genesis 2. As such the family has authority to secure its own property from interference or alienation by others. The family enjoys authority to use force to prevent its property from being stolen. It has authority to recover by force if needed, its own stolen property. An example of this authority to recover persons and property in action can be found in Abram’s use of armed force to rescue his nephew Lot, his family and all his property from Lot’s kidnapping or enslavement and theft of all his property recorded in Genesis 14:12-16.

Recall that Genesis 9:6 says, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.” If you are looking for the property delegation equivalent authority of Genesis 9:6 such as something like, “Whoever steals the property of man, by man shall his property be recovered,” you will not find it in the scripture. The authority to recovery property is part of the family authority and it may be derivative from the family to be exercised by the civil government through express delegation.

From the foregoing it may thus be reasoned that familial persons may undertake a non-exclusive delegation of their authority to remedy injury to persons and recovery of property to a civil government, should that human institution be voluntarily established by the people. 1 Peter 2:13-14. Such a civil government may be delegated by corporate familial consent authority to remedy injury to property for offenses such as arson, theft, larceny, burglary and robbery, property damage and vandalism, all types of fraud and deceit, and extortion. We do not generally consider examples arising in the context of Israel’s ancient government under God’s specific laws for that people to learn of examples of how to remedy injury to persons or property, as that government by God as King, Legislator and Supreme Judge is of singular historic jurisdiction.

Yet, we also see that God has never relinquished much of his authority to judge humans by his laws He laid down contemporaneously with the creation of the heavens and earth. This is the “law of nature.” By this law God’s decree and punishments for a variety of offenses has been reserved only to Himself. He has not shared that jurisdiction with any human government. For instance, no human court has any lawful authority or jurisdiction to judge or punish unnatural sexual relations, greed, depravity, envy, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, God-hate, insolence, arrogance, boastfulness, disobedience to parents, a lack of understanding, fidelity, love, or mercy. Punishment of grumblers, malcontents, and loud-mouthed boasters are likewise beyond civil power. Jude 16. The civil punishment

of hate crimes and misinformation do not make the list. Only the punishment of murder as an overt act was specifically modified to come within the power of humans to judge since Noah. Romans 1:26-32.

As we have also observed familial authority to punish crimes against property and persons may also be arguably delegated to civil governments established and limited by the people. God alone judges these other matters. For those who maintain the civil government must have the authority to punish unnatural sexual relations, we note that "the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the Day of Judgment." 2 Peter 2:9, God's direct punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire serves as an example of His retained jurisdiction to punish such conduct. Jude 7. See also Romans 1:17 wherein God and no man, imposes "the due penalty for their error."

Such conduct will be also judged by God in this world through corrupting the land in which it occurs. Leviticus 18:24-28 is directed to Israel but it has implications for any and every nation. Moses writes, "Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you."

This "judgment of vomit" is really a direct way of saying the land was depopulated by war. This depopulation affects every person in the land including those who commit such acts as well as those who will not declare the true standard of conduct or speak out against sexual perversion. But this is God's judgment, not that of any civil government. Even though God ordered civil punishment of persons in ancient Israel who engaged in specifically enumerated sexual misconduct (See Leviticus 18:16-22), this example of civil punishment for these crimes is not rule of general applicability for other nations. The crimes are wrong no matter the nation in which they are committed, but the punishments of Israel are limited to the law of that land and no other nation.

We may also mention that what a person eats or drinks is not given over to the authority of any person, let alone civil government to judge under law. This is bad news for the Food and Drug Administration, food police and other government regulators. Likewise how or when a person celebrates or declines to celebrate certain days or how or when they celebrate or observe the Sabbath also falls outside of any human authority to judge civilly. Religious leaders failed to grasp this principle when their state governors used the Covid-19 virus to subvert the rights of the people to worship. Likewise, enactment or enforcement of Sunday Blue Laws were never extended by the law of nature to any human authority.

Colossians 2:16.

Only God has authority over the human heart and human mind as referred to above in Romans 1. God alone searches and probes the "the heart and mind." Jeremiah 17:10, 20:12; Romans 8:27. It is the peace and knowledge of God, not government control of education or public schools which guards the heart and mind. Philippians 4:7.

Yet, God has given parents the authority to direct, teach and guide their children, but not to compel belief. They are not free to delegate away the educational duty a parent owes to God, to any other person and never to the civil government, though parents are free to retain others to assist them in performing this duty. Parents cannot delegate the duty to educate their children to the civil government like they may be free to delegate their right to recover injury to their person and property. God requires parents to account to Him concerning the education and upbringing of their own children including the voluntary retention of agents and tutors to assist them. Civil governmental control of education fails the test of volition. It is built on the law of force and coercion. Failure to attend school is a crime.

This is unlike a delegation to the civil government of the authority to remedy injury to persons and property, which a family member may elect to forego. That choice is no violation of any duty owed to God. In any event, God has not given authority over the heart or mind to any nation or civil government and God continues to exclusively judge the content and motive of such heart and head matters to this very hour.

Understanding the jurisdiction God has reserved to Himself as a judge will help us to better understand the very limited nature of civil jurisdiction. If you have never conceived of the civil government's jurisdiction as limited, you are missing out on the freedom God has extended to you to govern yourself, your family and those voluntary organizations you create.

When Civil Government Is The "Wrongdoer"

The legitimate purpose of civil government when established by consent or wrongfully established otherwise, is to secure the rights of individuals arising from their duties to God, and of the family arising out of its duties owed to God. This involves the protection of persons and property. The individual and family member are free to exercise their rights without interference, regulation, or control by others, and not by the civil government, its officials, police, prosecutors, judges, zoning administrators, truant officers or the dog catcher.

Unfortunately, we have Romans 13 all turned around. We have been wrongly taught that God has authorized Caesar to play mini-God. We have been taught these verses justify every civil ruler's authority to punish anyone and everyone in connection with an undefined and unlimited number of civil and criminal offenses. Perhaps we have been

taught that one exception exists—preaching the message of Jesus Christ, but of course that wrongly assumes Caesar is otherwise unlimited by the will of God. We have been taught that the president down to the dog catcher is God's divine representative. We have been taught this idolatry in our churches.

But accepting that whatever the state says is a crime and can be punished, is the wrong way to think about it. The problem is that the civil government, state governments and the federal government have criminalized and will punish, control, regulate and interfere with a man or woman when they try to exercise their own authority – authority they enjoy as members of the human race and not as gifts from any civil government. These civil governments also pass laws that interfere and punish the exercise of that authority which God has given to husbands and wives and fathers and mothers in marriage and family. This is a complete perversion. It is a construction that emasculates the clear and obvious authority of humans and families.

The wrongdoer is the one who interferes with you and me when we undertake those responsibilities we all enjoy as members of the human race and as families summarily stated in Genesis 1:28: "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.'" The civil ruler's authority to punish wrongdoers exists only where the people consent to extend that authority. If that limited power is simply assumed by a despot or oligarch, the resulting use of that limited power may be the same, though the basis upon which such a despot comes to power is lawless. If a civil official enjoys the authority to punish those who interfere with our responsibilities either by our consent or without our consent by usurpation, the end result in protecting our freedom is the same. But the lawful approach is that no civil official ever act by his or her own claim to rule.

Caesar's power, where given by the people, is limited to punish those who interfere either by regulation, subsidy, taxation or legal prohibition, with the individual authority of each man and woman to govern their own person and property. It is limited to punish those who interfere with our authority to enter into and enforce contracts and join or associate with others including the pursuit of voluntary societies and commercial and business relations by consent (to name a few). It is limited to the punishment of those who interfere with husbands and wives and fathers and mothers with the exercise of their authority about their land, labor, children, conceived or born (including their education and upbringing) and their estates.

Unfortunately, the reality is that Caesar is not consistently the protector of these responsibilities. Caesar has instead, become more often than not a wicked transgressor of these responsibilities through decrees, statutes and orders, ordinances, codes, property regulations, compulsory education laws and zoning laws to name a few.

Civil government never made a man, husband or father, wife or mother by a legislative declaration. These authorities all preceded civil government in time and history and are superior to civil government in exercising their *respective authority*. Without this understanding, personal freedom is impossible. Caesar will play God by default. We cannot remain ignorant of those duties we owe to our Creator and the manner of discharge and still be free. We cannot yield the existence of those duties to any force except our own reason and persuasion. The civil government and church may not use law or exercise force, coercion or violence against those duties. The Virginia Bill of Rights, observes this concept: "That religion or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence." Because God is the King of the nations, He authorizes no civil government or official to interfere with any duty He requires.

PART 2:
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE CONSTITUTION

Chapter 16. Does The Declaration Of Independence Respect God's Authority Over Nations?

"O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you." 2 Chronicle 20:6.

"When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation." Declaration of Independence, 1776.

The Laws Of Nature: An Articulation Of The Laws Of God Written In Creation And Revelation

Let us transition from our examination of the Scripture to the American experience with civil government. The forgoing chapters are universal for all nations so the principles can be applied to any constitution or civil government or form of government. But our immediate focus is on tracing our understanding of God's view of civil government, when instituted by the consent of the people, in the American experience. Did the ideas identified in the first 4,000 years of human history about the creation, equality, the family and marriage find their way into American law. How about the predisposition of mankind to violence, murder, polygamy practiced in the pre-flood world? Or did the limitations on human punishment of murder, the lawless rule of pharaohs, judges, and kings influence the founders or framers in limiting the national government? Did the principles of freedom enjoyed by human beings under the law of nature, or the doctrines of practical submission to, or resistance of tyrants, or the grace of God throughout it all, find their way into the Declaration of Independence? How about the constitutions of the states and of the subsequent national government?

Let us first examine what the Declaration of Independence actually says. After that we can determine if any of its propositions or ideas have Biblical roots. The first and foremost place to understand the Declaration is with an examination of what it claims to be its foundation. Does it say that "We the people have power" to make a government? Does it say that government is divine and comes from God? Does it say that since government is a man-made institution, we can make any government we want with or without limits?

No, it says none of these things. The Declaration of Independence creates no civil government at all. Instead, it declares the principles by which every civil government can be judged according to law. It declares the reasons which justify a People in separating from a civil government. It declares the principles upon which every new civil government

is to be bound. It says that Americans are justified in separating from their government under an English king.

The framers tell us they are claiming that a specific law articulates all these principles. They call it the "laws of nature and of nature's God." They wrote: "When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which *the laws of nature and of nature's God* entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

The Laws Of Nature

What are the laws of nature? The laws of nature are those laws laid down by God at the creation of the world. They are the laws He embedded in His creation. His creation consists of the natural and physical world. It consists of the environment. It consists of human beings. It consists of the plant and animal world. It consists of the oceans and the heavens. It consists of all that He has made. He also established rules concerning their purpose and use. He established His expectations concerning each and all of these matters and the rules or standards by which they should be governed.

We have examined key aspects of the law of nature in prior chapters. We have seen that God has never relinquished His authority to govern humans by His laws He laid down contemporaneously with the creation of the heavens and earth. The "law of nature" declared God's decree and punishment for a variety of offenses that no human court has authority or jurisdiction to judge or punish: unnatural sexual relations, greed, depravity, envy, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slanderer, God-hating, insolence, arrogance and boastfulness, disobedience to parents; a lack of understanding, fidelity, love, or mercy. Romans 1:26-32. Murder was also stated as a matter which God retained the authority to judge, but he later authorized human beings to punish murders. See Genesis 9:6.

Likewise the law of nature affirms that what a person chooses to eat or drink is between that person and the Creator. The same applies to the choice to accept or refuse medical care or treatment including vaccinations. These things God has never surrendered to any person except the one exercising the choice, and no civil government. That decision or choice is not given to any other person, employer or civil government. The decision as to what a person shall eat or drink or the choice to accept or reject drugs and medical care including masking and vaccinations lies solely between the individual's own conscience and God. It is to God alone that the individual must account, not the civil government, employer or any brother, sister or church. Parents are empowered to decide these matters for their children during their season of infancy and youth. The authority to judge how or when a person celebrates or declines to celebrate certain days or how or when they celebrate or observe the Sabbath is reserved exclusively to God. Any human being or government

which claims such an authority is usurping God's authority and that usurpation is lawless and need not be obeyed. The same rule governs a persons decision to use or decline drugs or medical treatment. This authority is by the law of nature retained exclusively by God and is not within any human authority to decree, impair or punish. Colossians 2:16.

God declared that the seventh day was a holy day because on that day he rested. "Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done." Genesis 2:2. As a consequence God expects mankind will also rest on the seventh day and observe it as a holy day. This principle of one day of rest in seven is part of the law of nature. It was established at the creation of the world by the Creator and it is the Creator which has the exclusive jurisdiction to enforce it according to His will as He and He alone, shall see fit. Civil government lacks the jurisdiction under the laws of nature to dictate what commercial activity anyone may or may not do on any specific day. So-called "blue laws" are contrary to the law of nature.

Moreover, only God has authority over the human heart and human mind as referred to in Romans 1. This too is part of the law of nature. God alone has authority to search and probe the "the heart and mind." Jeremiah 17:10, 20:12; Romans 8:27. It is the peace of God, not government control of education or public schools which guards the heart and mind. Philippians 4:7. These are the laws of nature of which God has never relinquished enforcement to any human government to judge. He has not given them to any other nation or government and God continues to exclusively judge all these to this very hour. Compulsory attendance and education laws are an example of how this law of nature is offended. Compulsory diversity and inclusion training likewise offends the law of nature.

God has also laid down the law of nature regarding marriage—that it should exist only between one man and one woman during the lifetime of both. Genesis 2:24. He established the law of nature regarding the authority of the family, of husbands and wives and of mothers and fathers. This includes their duties to each other regarding their children, principally including the exclusive jurisdiction of the family to direct the education and upbringing of their own children, leaving their neighbors' children to their own parents.

The Supreme Court's vain effort to redefine marriage rejects the law of nature. Its claim that same-sex marriage is a constitutional right is a rabid departure from the Constitution's 14th Amendment and antithetical to the Constitution's legal foundation, — the Declarations of Independence's explicit grounding in the law of nature. Matthew 7:15-20 states, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits." In other words, the judicial wolves have borne their redefinition of marriage from an unhealthy tree being their own evolutionary understanding

of law. God says the thing to do is cut that tree down.

Finally, for our purposes here, God also expressed the law of nature regarding the authority of a man and woman. God said to Adam and Eve that they should have children. God said that they should have many children. God said that they should fill the earth. God said that their children should fill the earth and subdue the earth. In order that Adam and Eve and their children could subdue the earth, He gave to them seed bearing plants. He gave them fruit trees for food. He gave them the animals of the earth, though not to eat at first. He gave them every bird in the air and all the creatures of the earth. He gave them every green plant for food. Though after the flood, He gave them animals for food though this grant of authority was not part of the original law of nature. Whether man and woman obey this law of nature is for God to judge, not any other person or civil government.

When we examine the several principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence in the next chapter found in the law of nature, we will provide an explanation the Biblical support for those principles.

The point of classifying rules or conduct as part of the law of nature is to declare their universal application to all peoples, and all nations, over the globe, at all times, under all circumstances, in all ages. But more important, it is to declare God's exclusive jurisdiction to punish or discipline people for violating these rules or laws of creation. The reason we take care in identifying the laws of nature is so we can see what power ought not be entrusted to civil government. If a civil government is to be established it must observe the laws of nature. If it fails to observe the laws of nature it is not a lawful civil government. It is a civil government usurping that which God has not actually given to any human institution. It is a civil government purporting to set aside the laws of nature, indeed of creation itself.

Any civil government to be established must observe the limitations imposed by the laws of nature if it is to be considered a lawful government. A lawful civil government may not exercise jurisdiction over any of these objects, nor may it regulate how these objects are effectuated. The law of nature issues a universal decree commanding civil government: "Do Not Enter." Thus, any civil government established on the basis of and in recognition of the laws of nature ought to not embrace any purpose or jurisdiction retained solely by God. Nor can the people give such an object or purpose to their civil government by consent because the people themselves do not have the authority to declare God's laws of nature void or inapplicable. The law of nature is by definition universal and applies without regard to the approval or consent of any human being.

Thus, we are free to examine the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation or the National Constitution which followed, or the acts of congress or decisions of the supreme court, or orders of the president. We are free to hold each of these documents, decisions and orders them up to the harsh and searching light of the law

of nature. We are free to examine each act undertaken by the government and evaluate whether or not they respect or usurp any authority of God. We can also judge the official conduct of our elected officials in the same harsh light. We can and must shine the spotlight of reproach on their behavior.

Are we saying that each of Declaration of Independence signer's contemplated the foregoing essence of the law of nature when they wrote this document and invoked the laws of nature as the basis upon which their actions in separating with England were justified? At this point we are simply saying they referenced the law of nature as the foundational law of the nation. The meaning of the law of nature cannot be rationally ignored.

It is indisputable that Sir William Blackstone, an English contemporary of the framers had written in volume 1, page 41 of his Commentaries on the Laws of England in 1765 about the laws of nature and of nature's God and defined those terms for English law. He observed that the *laws of nature* were those laws God had written at the creation of the world and were now reflected in nature, God's creation. Likewise he addressed the *laws of nature's God*, asserting these laws consisted of those laws God had written through his prophets and recorded in the Scripture throughout history after creation was completed.

The Laws Of Nature's God

The Declaration of Independence not only refers to the *laws of nature*, but it refers to the *laws of nature's God*. What is the difference, if any? Blackstone says that upon reflection they are both one and the same. This is true in the sense that they have the same author, the Creator. But the laws of nature's God refer to the laws of God that He laid down after creation at various times throughout human history and that are recorded in the Bible.

These laws may or may not be universal depending on the context of their declaration, and an examination of what Peoples or Nations to whom they were given, and under what conditions or qualifications if any that applied. To discover the laws of nature's God that are universal requires an examination of the Bible with all these particulars in mind. What is to be avoided is the conclusion that simply because God laid down some rule at some point in history after creation for Israel, that it automatically constitutes a universal rule or universal prohibition.

Genesis 9:6 is an example of the law of nature's God that is universal. It is a rule which authorized mankind to punish murderers. It was given about 1,650 years after creation and so it is not a law of nature. But a review of the context and wording of Genesis 9:6 indicates that it is of universal application and not limited to merely Noah and his sons.

The specific laws, however, given by God to Moses for the people of Israel under a

covenant by which God would govern Israel and by which Israel would be God's treasured possession as His people, do not by their context and wording apply to all peoples and all nations throughout all time as a matter of law. Many are conditional because they only apply to the Israeli people who actually enter into or resided "in the land" God granted to Abraham. The Sabbath Year and Year of Jubilee are of this nature.

God's grace in Deuteronomy 17 that civil government should be limited could be a law of nature's God. It certainly is wise counsel knowing what lies in the heart of human beings and the fact that human beings, as James Madison famously observed, are not angels. He said, "If Men were angels, no government would be necessary."

Natural Law

In order that our review can be complete we must also discuss natural law. Biblically speaking, Romans 1:18 discusses natural law. It states, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

Paul is stating that people know about God from the creation of the world based on what has been made by God. He is saying you and I know about God's eternal power and divine nature. He is saying that all mankind knows this. He is not saying we know this because it is written in the Scripture. He is not saying we know this because someone told us about God in a conversation. He is saying we know this because the heavens and the earth declare it—the heavens and earth God made. We can use our reason and see that God made the heavens and the earth and we can deduce the existence of a great Creator with power and divinity.

According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the natural law is "nothing else than the rational creature's participation of the eternal law." (Summa Theologica, I-II.91.2). The eternal law is God's wisdom, because it is the directive norm of all movement and action.

The Greeks and Stoics also articulated their understanding of natural law. Aristotle (BC 384—322) is considered by many to be the father of "natural law." In Rhetoric, he argues that aside from "particular" laws that each people have set up for themselves, there is a "common law" or "higher law" that is according to nature (Rhetoric 1373b2–8). Natural law is "discovered" by humans through reason and choosing between good and evil. Therefore, natural law seeks to discover certain universal standards in morality and ethics. The Stoics which followed adopted a similar method of discovery but saw no need for higher law.

What each of these have in common is there is a belief that certain laws transcend time, culture, and civil institutions. The concept of natural law indicates there are universal standards that apply to all mankind throughout all time. These universal moral standards are inherent in and discoverable by the use of reason and may be established to form a just society and a lawful civil government. The law of nature and of nature's God, however, differs from natural law in the sense that under the former, God himself is the Creator and thereby holds the prominent place of the lawgiver rather than an indistinct concept of nature or use of reason alone. But more importantly since God is a personal God, He continues to exercise His authority which He has not given to any other to perform. By this rule, people and the civil governments they establish lack jurisdiction to impair His laws. He remains the King and will judge nations in the here and now and in the age to come.

All we have said has nothing to do with establishing a national or state church, or legislating doctrinal propositions. It is simply the defaulting legal paradigm that universally applies to all nations on the earth. It is also the actual legal foundation articulated by the Declaration of Independence and our governments have no choice but to follow it.

Chapter 17. Does The Declaration Express The Law Of Nature Of Equality?

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27.

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal. . . ." Declaration of Independence (1776).

Created Equal

Having surveyed the laws of nature and of nature's God, and natural law, we see that the framers referenced this law as the basis for what they were then about to assert. They declared this law justified separation from an existing civil government. They declared certain universal principles that revealed whether a civil government was lawful or lawless.

The Declaration of Independence reflects only a finite articulation of that law. The Declaration outlines and explains only a few of the most important principles embodied in the law of God. The Declaration was not meant to define and enumerate every legal idea God has ever expressed. The Declaration simply provides us with the essential legal principles.

The Declaration articulated several derivative principles of the laws of nature and of nature's God. First, that people are created by God, and that by this circumstance therefore are to be treated equally before the law. Second, all people are endowed by God with certain unalienable rights. Third, that people are also endowed with the right to civilly govern themselves according to their written consent. This means that they can extend their governments power, but only lawful or "just power." Fourth, the people retain the right to alter or abolish an unlawful form of government as exercising self-government. Fifth, the people may organize the civil government's powers in such a way as to secure their happiness. Let us examine each of these in turn starting with equality.

The first principle articulated in the Declaration of Independence grounded in law declares that "all men are created equal . . ." The Bible indicates that men and women are created in God's image, that they are equally human before God. Genesis 1:26-27 notes that God "created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." The rule of equality is tied to the creation of mankind in God's image. The term "men" is a reference to the authority of human beings, male and female, not a gender reference to males.

The law of nature is the law which God declared at the creation of mankind. That is a simple proposition. God created mankind and said they were male and female and both were in His image. This is the law regarding human beings, that male and female are equally human. All human beings regardless of race, color or nationality are equally human.

The framers said this law of equality laid down at creation by God pertains to how we may eventually set up a civil government, though it is the case that slavery rather than the civil equality of the sexes was their immediate concern.

Equality In The Original Constitution

The principle of equality was reflected in the national Constitution. For instance, Article I, Section 9, Clauses 4, 5 and 6 reflect the principle of equality with respect to taxation. These clauses stress proportionality and permit no preferences in regulating commerce. Article IV, Section 2, Clause 1 asserts "the Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States." The equal application of the law to all citizens can only be rightly understood and practiced in light of the principle of equality.

The prohibitions against titles of nobility found in Article I, Section 9 and Article I, Section 10 also stem from the equality principle. These Constitutional provisions were instrumental in eradicating both emoluments and hereditary succession of power. "[A]nother great advantage, sir, in the Constitution before us, is its excluding all titles of nobility . . . which hath been a main engine of tyranny in foreign countries. But the American Revolution was built upon the principle that all men are born with an equal right to liberty and property. . . ." Isaac Backus, quoted in Jonathan Elliot, ed., The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1888), 2:150.

The principle of equality is importantly articulated in Article I, Section 2 which provides for popular election of representatives to the House of Representatives. The Fourteenth Amendment subsequently expanded that provision to require that representatives "be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers . . . ." This change, accompanied by the Fifteenth [voting without regard to race], Seventeenth [direct election of Senators], Nineteenth [voting without regard to sex], Twenty-Fourth [no poll tax] and Twenty-Sixth [18 year old vote] Amendments, provides all adult citizens (excepting those in the District of Columbia) with the equal opportunity to participate in selecting Representatives and Senators.

With respect to equality between the states represented in the Senate, Article V asserts that "no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate."

Slavery And Involuntary Servitude

Many founders recognized that slavery, as practiced in the United States at the time of independence, was an affront to the principles acknowledged in the Declaration. During the Constitutional Convention, the delegates could not arrive at a consensus conforming

the new Constitution to the principle of equality in this context. Abraham Lincoln later noted that the spirit of the founders toward slavery, "was hostility to the principle, and toleration, only by necessity." Abraham Lincoln, Speech on the Kansas Nebraska Act at Peoria, Illinois, October 16, 1854.

Article I, Section 9, Clause 1 contemplated a move toward conformity to the Declaration principle, by permitting Congress to impose taxes upon the slave trade and to abolish the trade altogether after 1808. But it did not open the door to the abolition of slavery itself.

Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration consistently opposed slavery. He labeled it a "moral depravity" and a "hideous blot." He also regarded slavery as contrary to the laws of nature and of nature's God. Jefferson advocated legislation to abolish slavery, and in 1778 he drafted a bill in Virginia that prohibited the importation of enslaved African persons. Yet his view did not carry the day. The strength of slavery was still on the increase. The Declaration articulated the true principle of equality according to the law of nature, but the Constitution was only able to plant the seeds of equality in its generation.

The Constitution did so at least in three ways. As noted by scholar Thomas G. West in Vindicating the Framers, pp. 16-17 (1997), the Constitution counted 3/5 of slaves toward representation in Congress and toward the Electoral College. The Southern states advocated that slaves count on a one to one basis, thereby increasing the number of possible representatives those states would send to the House of Representatives. The northern states, however, opposed this and the 3/5 counting compromise was struck.

Another constitutional step toward fulfillment of the equality principle was in empowering Congress to ban the migration and importation of slaves after 25 years, or after 1808. Thus, the trade in human beings was guaranteed at each state's discretion for 25 years, but became subject to Congressional authority thereafter. The slave trade was abolished in 1808 by Congress on the strength of this clause. Yet, the institution itself remained.

Finally, the Constitution provided that runaway slaves would be returned to their owners. The Constitutional language employed, however, did not refer to slaves, but rather to persons. Article IV, Section 2, Clause 3, stated that "No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due." This clause at least refers to persons held to labor, rather than constitutionalizing the concept of slaves held to servitude.

While the Constitution gave protection to slavery, within it were the seeds of change. But those seeds could not and still cannot be realized if the concept of equality as a

principle derived from the laws of nature as God laid down from His creation of human beings in His image from the beginning, is continually rejected or denied. We may take issue with the Constitution's framers for not adequately applying the principle of equality. We may criticize them. But those today who would reject the foundation of equality itself—mankind made by God equally in His image as a universal legal proposition, are guilty of the greater sin. We may rightly judge them more severely than the framers are judged. The framers fell short of applying the principle, but modern critics reject the very foundation itself. The principle of equality they restated from the law of nature as established by God the Creator while universally true, is like many things in life, for future generation to flesh out in practice each in their own generation.

Jesus reminds us about what is lesser and what is greater. He says: "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple is bound by nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple is bound by the oath.' Blind fools! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred? And, 'Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing. But if anyone swears by the gift on it he is bound by the oath.' You are blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?" Matthew 23:16-23. Which is greater, the law of nature and principle of equality, or a consistent application of that principle in the same generation? This is a question to be posed to the naysayers.

In the period preceding the Civil War, led by orators such as Steven Douglas and jurists such as Chief Justice Roger Taney, some separated the interpretation and implementation of the Constitution regarding slavery from the equality principles of the Declaration of Independence. By making this separation, these men attempted to transform a tolerated evil soon to expire, into a positive right. This is the essence of the Supreme Court's holding in the Supreme Court's decision in Dred Scott v. Sandford, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 393 (1857). Chief Justice Taney's majority opinion relied on an historical analysis to support the Court's decision that Scott was not an American citizen and these historical practices, rather than the standard of equality, should control the outcome. While it is always proper to consider the factual situation existing at the founding, it is the immutable rule of the law of nature and its derivative principle of equality which controls, not the inconsistent practices of men.

Amendments to Implement the Principle Of Equality

The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, however, changed this practice. The Thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery, finds its justification in the Declaration's principle "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."

The Fourteenth Amendment, Section 1 further reflects the principles of equality and unalienable rights by acknowledging that men, created equal, may enjoy the equal

protection of the law and share equally in the privileges and duties of citizenship. In addition, state governments were barred as a matter of constitutional law from denying procedural due process of law to their citizens. The Supreme Court's transformation of that clause into a substantive one opening the door to judicially created rights, is a perversion of the law of nature and the Constitution itself.

The Fifteenth Amendment, which extended the vote to non-whites and former slaves, drew its justification from the principles of government by consent. This Amendment assured that African-Americans could also share in making the laws by which all would be equally judged.

Chapter 18. Does The Declaration Express The Law Of Nature Of Unalienable Rights?

"The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13

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. Declaration of Independence (1776).

Unalienable Rights

We have examined equality. Let us now turn to unalienable rights. The Declaration of Independence states that all men are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness . . ."

The concept of a Creator endowing human beings is not enlightenment thinking. Nor do atheists talk about a Creator. It has Biblical origins from the beginning. Genesis describes the creation of human beings and how God gave both men and women on equal terms the same responsibilities and duties. Here is every seed bearing plant for food. Here is the land, work it and till it to feed and sustain you. Bear children and sustain and enlarge your family. After the flood God said here are the animals and birds and fish for food and clothing and to domesticate. We have covered these grants of authority in prior chapters.

The Declaration recognizes this existing order. It recognizes the way of things according to the Creator and the importance of mankind, male and female. But the Declaration goes further and states a legal proposition from this order of things. It says mankind has certain rights. It says these rights are unalienable. It says these rights come from the endowment or grant of the Creator. What does all this mean? How do we get from here, from land and seed and food and children to unalienable rights?

God created human beings and gave them specific authority and responsibility. God created and described marriage and the family. Polygamy was wrong, monogamy was right. He articulated the authority of a man and a woman. He described the authority of a husband and wife. He described the duties of parents in connection with their children. He describes the fact that children are born in a family to their parents.

God also went to a great deal of trouble to describe what mankind should be doing. God said to Adam and Eve they should have children. God said that they should have many children. God said that they should fill the earth. God said that their children should fill the earth and subdue the earth. He entrusted parents with the education and upbringing of their own children. So that Adam and Eve and their children could subdue the earth, He gave to them seed bearing plants. He gave them fruit trees for food. He gave them the

animals of the earth, though only after the flood for food to eat. He gave them every bird in the air and all the creatures of the earth. He gave them every green plant for food.

After the flood, He extended the authority to mankind to take the life of a murderer and subsequently identified certain protections and principles of due process associated with that deprivation. There was no civil government in existence to interfere with, regulate, compel or usurp these individual and familial tasks, functions, duties and responsibilities.

We also learned that the civil government's lawful purpose if established by the consent of the people is to protect and secure the free exercise of each of the forgoing duties and obligations. It is not for the civil government to compel or regulate them, but rather to restrain and enjoin others including itself from impairing or interfering with such duties and obligations. These are examples of the duties which individuals and family members owe to God. They owe it to God because God set the tasks before them by His word and will. The record is not unclear on this point. This brings us to the link with unalienable rights.

A Duty To God Is An Unalienable Right To Be Free From Interference by Others

What is the bridge between the duties owed to God that He laid down at the creation of the world and the idea of unalienable rights? It is straightforward and logical. It begins with an understanding of responsibilities. It progresses from responsibilities to a duty to God. It then moves from the duty we owe to God, as a right against human wrongdoers with their interference with those duties.

The responsibilities God entrusts to every man and women by His creation of them, and of husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, marriage and family, are also duties which each owe back to God. For instance, God said that mankind should exercise authority over the land. This responsibility in turn is a duty men and women individually owe to God. When a man or woman exercises that duty, they should not be interfered with by other persons or civil government. Thus, we say that human beings have a right from God to perform that duty. It is an unalienable right because it cannot be impaired by any person and not by the civil ruler who enjoys no authority or immunity to act as a wrongdoer itself.

When we refer to unalienable rights, we mean that human beings by their being created in the image of God and by virtue of them being asked by God to perform certain universal responsibilities, have an unalienable right to be free from the interference, regulation or control of other persons (including local, state and federal civil governments) in exercising those preexisting responsibilities and duties to God, who requested them in the first place. Those who interfere with exercising those duties are the wrongdoers identified in Romans 13. Civil government, as instituted by a specific people living within a predefined geographical boundary, is entrusted to secure the free exercise of such duties.

It is wholly unsatisfactory to talk about such "duties" without also acknowledging their correlative, "rights." There is no "duty" that does not necessarily or logically imply a corresponding "right." Thus, a God-given responsibility entrusted to human beings, and other responsibilities entrusted to married persons and to families by God, are duties which preexist even the existence of civil government in time and in history from creation. As such, a human being has a "right" as against all others to exercise that duty free from interference, regulation and control. That "duty" is unalienable in the sense of being absolute, so that the individual on whom God imposes it cannot free himself from it. In such instances, that duty's corresponding right must also be likewise "unalienable." As such, the person to whom it attaches cannot be lawfully deprived of its exercise by any other person or official and clearly not by any civil government.

Rights Versus Rights

The legal definitions of "unalienable" and "rights" are worth reviewing. By definition, unalienable means incapable of transfer. In other words an unalienable right cannot be given away. More importantly, however, that which is unalienable cannot be taken away, especially by the civil government. Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines unalienable as that which "cannot be legally or justly alienated or transferred to another." The concept of inalienability (assuming due process), however, does not preclude civil government from alienating human life in punishment for murder, from alienating a man's liberty through imprisonment upon conviction of crimes, or alienating a man's property through levy and execution for payment of legal judgments. The concept of unalienable rights does, however, preclude civil government from balancing rights against governmental interests, whether such interests are compelling, rational or just made up by some bureaucrat.

The idea of rights as unalienable, indefeasible, indubitable or inherent was part and parcel of the framers' worldview. Though these different words may not have precisely the same meaning, they carry the same essence – that people have certain rights from their Creator which civil government may not deny or disparage. The Virginia 1776 Constitution declared that "all men are by nature free and independent, and have certain inherent rights . . . ." Pennsylvania's 1776 Constitution stated that "all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and inalienable rights . . . ." Delaware and North Carolina's 1776 Declaration of Rights proclaimed that "all men have a natural and unalienable right to worship Almighty God . . . ."

The idea of inalienability is easier to grasp than the idea of rights. This condition is owing to the deterioration of the definition of rights. The definition of rights has been alloyed through impure construction. Inalienability on the other hand, has simply been ignored and thus has not suffered definitional corrosion of its meaning. To the modern jurist, a right is considered as such simply because it is asserted as a right. For instance, Black's Law Dictionary declares that a right is "a power, privilege, faculty, or demand, inherent in one person and incident upon another." Black's Law Dictionary (5th ed. 1979).

We note that "the primal rights pertaining to men are enjoyed by human beings purely as such, being grounded in personality, and existing antecedently to their recognition by positive law." The source of rights identified here is the "primal" aspect of man *qua* man. This approach reflects a humanistic jurisprudence and is an absolute *non sequitur* from the laws of nature and of nature's God. The humanistic approach is the antithesis of the Declaration's observation that people are "endowed" with unalienable rights by their Creator.

Compare the humanist view with Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary definition. Webster did not declare that rights are primal or grounded in personality. He declared that a right is: "conformity to the will of God, or to his law, the perfect standard of truth and justice. In the literal sense, right is a straight line of conduct, and wrong a crooked one. Right therefore is rectitude or straightness, and perfect rectitude is found only in an infinite being and his will."

Webster defines a right as conformity to the law of God – to rectitude. Humanist jurisprudence founded upon evolution and mere positivism, however, discards the need for rectitude. It envisions a system of justice animated by a jurisprudence in which rights may be wrongs. See Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), (The right to privacy under the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment extended to a woman's decision to have an abortion). Lawrence v. Texas, 539 U.S. 558 (2003) (Intimate consensual sexual conduct was part of the liberty protected by substantive due process under the 14th Amendment). Obergefell v. Hodges, 576 U.S. 644 (2015) (The fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples by both the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution). This vision of justice, however, is also contrary to the established rule that *jus ex injuria non oritur*. A right does (or can) not rise out of a wrong. See LONANG Amicus Brief in Mississippi v. Jackson Women's Health filed July 27, 2021 at https://lonang.com/amicus-briefs/

George Mason drafted the Virginia Declaration of Rights in 1776 which declared: "That all men are by nature equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety." The Virginia Declaration also affirmed that "all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates are their trustees and servants and at all times amenable to them." In other words, God does not make civil governments, only the people do.

Rights In The Constitution's Text

Unalienable rights animate both the text and the amendments to the national Constitution. When James Madison introduced the proposed amendments on June 8, 1789, he moved to insert them between the third and fourth paragraphs of Article I, Section

9. That Article and Section placed express limitations on the power of Congress.

Examples of enumerated unalienable rights are found in the text of Article I, Sections 9 and 10 and include prohibitions against Bills of Attainder and *ex post facto* laws. Such prohibitions secure the right to procedural due process and freedom from the legislature exercising non-legislative power. Likewise the prohibition of laws impairing contractual obligations secures the right to contract. In order to ensure the unalienable right of government by the consent of the people, the United States is barred from granting titles of nobility in Clause 8. Certain officeholders are also strictly regulated in receiving such titles or their advantages from any foreign power by that same clause. Treasury appropriation can only be made pursuant to the consent of the people's representatives by laws according to Clause 7.

Congressional control of migration subsequent to 1808 found in Article I, Clause 1 secures the right of the people to self-defense, property and security of their borders. The import of that clause was also designed to eventually secure equality, the unalienable right of life, and due process against the countervailing interests of the slave trade. The habeas corpus provision of Clause 2 is also tied to these rights and due process requirements. And lastly, the rights incidental to equality are reflected in Clauses 4, 5 and 6 as they relate to proportionality of direct taxes, equal advantages of tax free exports, and the prohibition of preferences among ports from one state over those of another. Many of these rights and principles are also reflected in Article I, Section 10.

Rights In The Amendments

An example of an enumerated unalienable right found in the First Amendment prohibits Congress, *inter alia*, from making any law prohibiting the free exercise of religion. This provision has its roots in Thomas Jefferson's "Virginia Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom," as well as the Declaration's unalienable right of liberty. See An Act for Religious Freedom, adopted by the Virginia Assembly on January 16, 1786, recited in Code of Virginia, Sec. 57-1 (1950). One of the controlling premises of this statute, like that of the First Amendment, is that "Almighty God hath created the mind free." Jefferson asserted that freedom of the mind was "of the natural rights of mankind," and therefore beyond the scope of civil jurisdiction. Other freedoms, such as speech, press, assembly and petition, are also found in the First Amendment. These freedoms are also based in part on the fact that "Almighty God created the mind free."

In addition, the Second Amendment prohibits Congress from infringing upon the right "to keep and bear arms" which is immediately derived from the unalienable right to self-defense, life and that of individual and family self-government. The Third and Fourth Amendments protect the sanctity of the home and property from government invasion and taking. The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments assure that neither the Congress nor the States have power to deprive a person of "life, liberty or property, without due process of

law.” Not all constitutional provisions, however, deal with unalienable rights, such as the twenty dollar prerequisite to jury trials in the Seventh Amendment. There are others in the Amendments but these are key.

Chapter 19. Does The Declaration Express The Law Of Nature Of Consent?

"So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. All the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do.'" Exodus 19:7-8.

"And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, 'What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.' So Israel went to their tents." I Kings 12:16.

"That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." Declaration of Independence (1776).

Government Established By Mankind Or A Government Instituted By God?

Let us turn from an examination of duty and unalienable right and the wrongdoer being the one who impairs their exercise, to another proposition stated in the Declaration. The Declaration asserts that, "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed."

"Just Power" v. Raw Power

Note that the framers did not declare that God instituted the national government of the United States or that it may naturally exist or exercise just any power it desires. Nor does it say this or that civil government may enjoy any power the People see fit to Constitutionally extend to it, as if the People *en masse* could lawfully strip human beings and families of those responsibilities God originally decreed. How absurd. The People have no lawfully authority even by their consent to create a tyrannical government, make themselves its slaves, declare anyone they please to be a wrongdoer, or collectively abridge the rights of their neighbor. The fact that people have done so does not make it right.

The Declaration of Independence recognizes this limitation on the power of the people to establish governments by their consent when it says: "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their *just powers* from the consent of the governed." It does not say "deriving any powers" the people are inclined or agree to give it. It says "just powers." What are just powers? Is it some amorphous term that we must leave to judges to define? No. Just powers are by definition limited by the law of nature—

that law which God laid down at or about the time of creation.

That law states the first and foremost authority is the individual human being, male and female. No civil power is a just power if it impairs the individual self-governing authority of any human being. This includes the realm of belief and ideas, of the mind and reason, of faith and opinion, of speech, expression, writing, association and religion. It includes the authority to govern one's own body, including food and drink, medical treatment, drugs and alcohol, choice of employment, and free will. In short, self-government includes the means and ends of obeying God with your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself including charity at the individual's sole discretion. God later also authorized human beings to punish murderers by death.

That law of nature also stated that families are the second perpetual form of earthly government. The just powers of any civil government must never impair the family's authority over the land, its dwelling and property, its self-defense and the means thereof, its food, drink, health and medical care and treatment, its children and their diet, health, medical care, education and upbringing, or the institution and definition of marriage as pertaining to a man and woman.

Impairment of these, regulation of these, and punishment of these are not "a just power" and no person or group of persons have any authority to extend these objects to any civil government. This is not a comprehensive list but it is a good start.

The Declaration begins with the assertion that its propositions are grounded upon the laws of nature and of nature's God. We ought not be surprised, therefore, to find reliance thereupon throughout the document. What is a just power is a civil power consistent with the law of nature. Remember the just powers of a civil government are not a list of powers that exist from creation. They are only those powers which are delegated to a civil government which itself is a creation of the people according to their respective nations. Civil government is something created by human beings, not something preexisting or of divine origin. So too civil power is that power which the people agree upon extending to their government so created, but limited by the law of nature of individual self-government and of marriage and family authority, the only perpetual earthy authorities God created.

As discussed in previous chapters, including chapter 9, "just powers" do not include those powers reserved by God to Himself by His universal law of nature and which He never extended to any human being. This is another way of saying what we have just said, except from God's point of view. These include God's exclusive authority over the human heart and human mind or what we call freedom of the mind or intellectual freedom. It also includes freedom from compulsory association and God's exclusive jurisdiction to punish the offenses listed in Romans 1:26-32 (excluding murder). Nor do "just powers" include jurisdiction over what we shall eat or drink. Just powers are not by definition powers granted to and exercised by the family as defined and empowered by God in Genesis,

discussed in detail in prior chapters 2, 12, 15 and 17. Just powers do not include the power to interfere with the voluntary self-government associated with voluntary organizations, churches or ecclesiastical societies.

An example of a people exceeding their authority in extending unjust power to a civil government is found in Israel. When Israel declared that a king should rule them in I Samuel 8, they were exercising their authority to be governed by their own consent. While they lawfully but foolishly established a monarchy by their consent, when they granted their new king the power to make them his slave, they acted lawlessly. The choice of slavery was not a "just power." They had authority to change their form of government even if it was an evil or foolish choice, but they had no authority to grant the king power to make them his slaves. 1 Samuel 8:10-20, esp. 17. Samuel outlined the power given to the king by the People's consent in versus 10-20. This is a classic laundry list of powers that fail the Declaration's "just powers" test. That God let the people give their civil government unjust powers, does not establish their authority to do so, or ratify the king's power as just. It is simply to observe that God recognized that the people could consent to alter their form of civil government, even if it excluded Him.

Ancient Israel made the classic false bargain, slavery for security. They gave up freedom for illusory governmental security and they became slaves. This is a common failing among the peoples and nations of the earth throughout all periods of history. We have seen it in our own day especially after September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center in New York was attacked. The Congress and President amassed tremendous power thereafter, essentially institutionalizing the surveillance state and destroying the remnant of privacy. God made mankind to be free but losing privacy is a form of slavery with your civil master knowing your every movement, statements and opinions. All that is missing are the physical shackles. When will people ever learn?

It is popular today in some circles to remark that, "God establishes civil authority." After all, it is written in Psalm 47:8 that "God reigns over the nations! God sits on his holy throne!" And Psalm 82:8 says: "Rise up, O God, and execute judgment on the earth! For you own all the nations." God has jurisdiction over the nations because he created them. Acts 17:26. But this does not mean He has established any particular civil government.

We have also discussed Romans 13 as making a like assertion. Our study thus far, however, has not shown that God has instituted or established any human civil government. The only civil government He established on this earth so far in human history is His own civil government of Israel. But that was instituted by their own consent, and then later of Judah, not unilaterally by God.

Attorney Gerald R. Thompson has underscored this idea that God is neither a civil government nor king maker. He observes: "But when it is said that God sets up and removes rulers, or gives kingdoms to whomever He chooses, it does not mean that He: 1)

bypasses the consent of the people; 2) uses coercion; 3) violates anyone's free will; or 4) overturns, overrules, or sidesteps the laws of that nation. In other words, when it is said that God raises up or tears down individual rulers, it does not mean that God is instituting a new form of government in any nation, nor that He is altering or abolishing any form of government. Promoting or demoting individuals with respect to positions of power does not put God in the government formation business. His intervention in the life of individuals is perfectly consistent with the principle that governments are instituted by men." https://lonang.com/commentaries/foundation/right-to-alter-or-abolish-government/

Even the most charitable reading of Romans 13 does not mean that civil officials are thereby unlimited in their power. It does not mean that civil authority can be made unlimited in power even by the People. It cannot mean that any form of civil government subsequently established has a perpetual existence. Nor can it mean any civil government enjoys continued existence by God's will. It certainly does not mean that the People must obey a tyrannical government, or a government which claims unlimited power, or a government whose power is not just power, or whose acts are not constitutionally authorized, or even a civil government whose acts serve any purpose beyond the equal security of our unalienable rights.

Instead, even when it is loosely said that "God establishes civil authority" this should mean only that He empowers a People in a nation to organize a civil government if they so choose by their consent, for the purpose of better securing their unalienable rights than might be accomplished without civil government. He empowers a People to apply to that civil government so organized, the purpose of securing their pre-existing rights and to extend to it those just powers designed to accomplish that end and no other.

Such a civil government will have but one central purpose. Its organizational form serves that purpose. That purpose is to secure our rights. Our rights are secured by punishment of murder and by proportionate punitive responses according to the law of *lex talionis*. When the civil government no longer serves that purpose, or fails to serve that purpose, or undermines that purpose, or turns against that purpose, or itself becomes lawless or a lawbreaker, then that government has outlived its usefulness. We do not need it. We are better off without it. Let the people propose its alteration or abolition when this is the case.

God did not make the human race for patriotic or nationalistic slavery. He made us for freedom. God is reasonable with the exercise of His power, the security of our rights and the Administration of Justice. He believes in the power of self-government, volition and love of one's neighbor. He shows mercy. In this respect, God is no Caesar. The untethered state, however, believes in the lawless use of law, punishes the people without cause in kangaroo judicial proceedings, and enjoys the pleasure of armed force and physical violence at its beck and call. In this respect, Caesar is no god.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in The Gulag Archipelago declared it well when exposing the corrupt Soviet judicial system under Joseph Stalin. Referring to the OSO -- the Special Council of the State Security Ministry which convicted arrestees charged with committing political crimes, he stated, "The OSO enjoyed another important advantage in that its penalty could not be appealed. There was nowhere to appeal to. There was no appeals jurisdiction above it, and no jurisdiction beneath it. It was subordinate only to the Minister of Internal Affairs, to Stalin, and to Satan." Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956, Vol. 1, Harper & Row, p. 295.

Limited And Defined Constitutional Power

This principle of "just powers" further requires that every civil government exercise only those powers specifically granted and in America, are found in our constitutions. The preamble to the federal constitution asserts that "We the People, of the United States . . . do ordain and establish this Constitution . . ." The whole notion of constitutional government is predicated upon the requirement that people consent together to establish the form of civil government, and that limited political sovereignty is delegated directly to that government. Article I, Section 1 reinforces this proposition. It notes that only the legislative powers specifically "granted" by the people of the United States may be exercised by the Congress. Congress may only legislate with respect to those objects the people constitutionally extended to Congress in writing. Government by consent is also reflected in Article I, Section 9, Clauses 7 and 8, and Article I, Section 10 as noted earlier. At no time may a judicial body exercise legislative power whatsoever.

Article IV, Section 4 indicates that "the United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government . . ." Both the national and state governments are republican in nature. Republican means that the people's representatives govern according to a written delegation of authority. This is in contrast to a democratic system in which the representatives govern according to the popular consent of the people, whether that consent is written or unwritten.

"If the people desire any branch of the national government to engage in an activity which would require the exercise of a power not enumerated or extended, or with respect to Congress, necessary and proper to carry such a power into execution, then the people need to amend the Constitution. This will ensure that there is no mistake as to the nature, extent and type of power given, or the proper scope of its exercise, including the branch to which it has been entrusted." James Monroe, "First Annual Message," quoted in Richardson, Messages, 2:181. The Supreme Court, however, has rejected this principle.

The jury trial provisions of the Sixth and Seventh Amendments reflect government by consent in the context of a judicial case or controversy. The jury literally must consent to the state proceeding against a peer, or in civil suits, by determining liability and assessing damages, if any.

Article VII provided the specific means by which the people originally consented to be governed by the Constitution. It declares that the "Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same."

There are many other constitutional provisions which reflect a version of government by consent, not to form a government, but to elect its officers. They include Article I, Sections 2 and 4 (congressional elections); Article II, Section 1 (Presidential elections); the Twelfth Amendment (regarding the election of the President and Vice-President); the Fifteenth Amendment (prohibiting abridgement of the vote because of race or color, etc.); the Seventeenth Amendment (regarding popular election of Senators); the Nineteenth Amendment (regarding abridgement of the vote because of sex); the Twenty-Second Amendment (limiting to two the terms of the President); the Twenty-Fourth Amendment (prohibiting a poll or other tax on voting); and the Twenty-Sixth Amendment (granting eighteen-year olds the right to vote). All these concerns protect the process by which the consent of the governed is made manifest. Finally, Article V, which outlines the amendment process is also built upon this principle.

Chapter 20. Does The Declaration Express The Law Of Nature Of Altering Or Abolishing A Civil Government?

"Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah 5 and said to him, 'Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.' 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed to the Lord. 7 And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.'" 1 Samuel 8: 4-7.

"And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, 'What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.' So Israel went to their tents." I Kings 12:16.

"That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness" Declaration of Independence (1776).

We have so far examined the laws of nature, equality, unalienable rights, and government by consent including its "just powers." Let us now turn to a very specific unalienable right asserted in the Declaration of Independence--the right to alter or abolish any form of government. The Declaration states: "that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The phrase "destructive of these Ends" refers to the unalienable rights which civil government is instituted to preserve. It was the right to alter or abolish the form of government which the people exercised when Independence was declared. The framers did not abolish the Monarchy of Great Britain. They did, however, alter and abolish the king's jurisdiction over the American Colonies. The nature of this right presumes that it is not to be exercised lightly. If wrongly employed today, it may constitute treason, defined by Article III, Section 3.

President George Washington declared that, "The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government." George Washington, "Farewell Address," quoted in James D. Richardson, ed., Messages and

Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1896), 1:217. Abraham Lincoln called this "the leading principle – the sheet anchor of American republicanism." Roy P. Basler, ed., The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 2:266.

The framers declared that the people could organize the powers of government in whatever form they considered would secure their liberty. Accordingly, the people took steps to exercise their right and abolished the monarchial form of government because it was destroying their liberty. The framers recognized in the Declaration that "such has been the patient Sufferance of these Colonies." They noted that in "every stage of these Oppressions we have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble Terms."

Petitioning alone, however, was an insufficient remedy for the people, for "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." In other words, the people will right the wrongs of their civil government themselves, but not for light and transient reasons.

Article V of the Constitution is an excellent example of the rule regarding alteration or abolition of the national form of government. Through amendments, the people can establish a more perfect civil government of the United States, that is, render it better able to accomplish its purposes. They can also abolish it, if they so desire.

Recall chapter 12 discussed various declarations of independence from Israel. See also chapter 22. These declarations in one way or another altered the form of civil government. We have seen in Exodus 19 that the people adopted a form of government where in God was the King, supreme Legislative branch and Supreme Judge. That was a good choice for that people and nation.

However, in 1 Samuel 8 that the people altered their form of government by rejecting God as their King and substitution of a military commander in His stead. That is a perfect example of a bad choice. The people altered their government to make themselves slaves. Don't be naïve to think the same bad choice isn't happening today. The People love war and a President that will go to war. The irrational fear and aggression shown by the Presidents, Congress and media against Russia for example, is setting the people up for a further exchange of their government under law for a government of war-making men. Moreover, we are even now trading our freedom for medical security through mandatory masking and vaccination, which leads to our slavery in the end. The President, Congress and Supreme Court all exceed their power, yet we love to have its so. "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes?" Jeremiah 5:30-31.

Yet, though God judged Israel for their bad choice, He still let them choose. He honored their foolish consent. He will let us all be fools.

A movement in Israel also sought to alter their form of government when David was king. This event was recorded in 2 Samuel 20:20. We learn there of a man named Sheba who declared independence from the king of Israel and Judah. Samuel records that: "Now there happened to be there a worthless man, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew the trumpet and said, "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!" In other words, "We will not be governed any more by King David."

So the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba but the men of Judah followed King David. We are later informed that Sheba took shelter in a fortified city. The people of that city killed him, cut off his head and threw it over the wall to David's general waiting below. Sheba's declaration of independence from King David's monarchy was crushed with his assassination. His revolution had some support but was not widespread or unified. Nor was it based on any particular grievance, abuse or usurpation. Let us not follow his example.

Compare this to a subsequent example of the people altering their government after David and his son Solomon's death. The Book of 1 Kings 12:16 records this account. It was a declaration of independence with very similar wording as Sheba's declaration, yet with a very different outcome. As if speaking with one voice, the People declared: "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David." Regarding this declaration of independence, God said it was from Him and that King Rehoboam and his nation Judah, should not fight with the new King Jeroboam and his nation Israel.

This revolution was favored by God. Perhaps this difference is attributable to the people's enumeration of legitimate grievances regarding abuses by former King Solomon—his system of taxation was too heavy to bear. It was a taxation-based alteration of the government. God thought this change perfectly acceptable. God has sympathy with tax revolts. Don't let the moneychangers tell you differently. They only care to ensure their feedbags are always full while you starve.

Finally we must not forget 1 Samuel 8's discussion of the people altering the form of government to which they previously consented. See chapters 10 and 13. As previously noted, God had been the King of Israel because the people had accepted God's proposal to "diligently listen to me and keep my covenant." Exodus 19:5. But God was not a king like the man-made kings of the other nations. God was King pursuant to a covenant. He was King by the free and voluntary consent of the people. Yet, years after Moses and Joshua and after the period of the judges, the people demanded a king like all the other nations to fight their wars—wars occasioned by their disobedience to God and his laws to which they

has previously agreed.

The people of Israel came to Samuel and demanded this type of king. The Lord said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.” 1 Samuel 8:7-9.

Here the people proposed to alter their form of government. They rejected God as their national king. They appear to have retained him at least as their lawgiver and judge, but not as their king. They proposed to alter their form of government. It was not wise to do so and God warned them of their folly, yet He let them do so. As an act of grace God said that the people might want to seriously consider limiting their folly by restraining the powers of their king as described in Deuteronomy 17. But as described in chapter 11, King Solomon trampled down almost all of those limitations.

The point is that while the people have a right to alter or abolish their civil governments according to the laws of nature, doing so is no guarantee that a better government is inevitable. It is no guarantee that altering a civil government may succeed. It is simply to observe that the people have just as much a right to institute a new government, as they have to alter it or abolish it.

As Attorney Gerald Thompson has observed: “Every nation of course has a right to preserve its government against foreign threats and from the lawless actions of persons within its borders. However, no government has the right of self-preservation as against the will of its own people. The people who have the right to form a government have the inherent right to re-form it (alter) or un-form it (abolish). This right is an inalienable (God-given) right which can never under any circumstances be denied.” https://lonang.com/commentaries/foundation/right-to-alter-or-abolish-government/

The right to alter or abolish is also articulated in the Virginia Declaration of Rights which states: “[t]hat government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety and is most effectually secured against the danger of mal-administration. And that, when any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community has an indubitable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.”

In other words, our benefit, protection and security may be ensured by civil

government. The means by which our security is exercised is diverse. It may include admonishment. It may be accomplished by injunction. Fines may serve the end of non-interference. Civil proceedings and the awarding of money damages in a court of law may be employed where make-whole remedies are appropriate for past deprivations. Deprivation of a wrongdoer's liberty may sometimes be necessary to achieve non-interference or even deprivation of life where the life of another by murder has occurred.

We are not born, by either nature or God, for slavery. We have rights. Slaves do not. As Thomas Jefferson has observed, the "mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God." God cannot mean we were born for civil slavery. He means that the legitimate delegated power of any civil government is limited to the power to enjoin interference with exercising our rights or award damages or punishment in a legal proceeding after the fact of deprivation or interference is duly established and the matter fully heard. Civil government may be instituted to punish murders. It is not instituted to plan, institutionalize and itself commit murder or genocide on a national or worldwide scale.

In each case the law of *lex talionis* serves as a rule of limitation on punishment, not as a rule of minimum mandatory punishment. It is the brutal ceiling, not the floor. It is the maximum, not the minimum. The law of proportionate remedies cannot justify revenge, cruel or unusual punishment or exemplary pains and penalties. It cannot justify rendition, beatings, deprivations, water boarding or torture. It does not sanction mutilation, amputation, electrocution or drugging. It does not permit the image of God to be degraded in any human being. It keeps men out of the business of revenge. (Deuteronomy 25:3.)

Chapter 21. Does The Declaration Express The Law Of Nature Regarding Organization Of Governmental Powers?

"So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And they judged the people at all times. Any hard case they brought to Moses, but any small matter they decided themselves." Exodus 18: 24-26.

"That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such Form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." Declaration of Independence (1776).

Completing our review of the key principles of the Declaration derived or deduced from the law of nature, we find the assertion that the people, not the government itself, are responsible for instituting new government, "laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." "As to them" means as to the people, not as to their representatives in congress, the president or supreme or subordinate judicial officers. As noted in the quotation above, Moses adopted a judicial branch subordinate to God as part of the administration of justice in Israel. God did not command such a system but He acknowledged its usefulness. "You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it." Deuteronomy 1:17.

The representatives in the First Continental Congress organized the powers of a new national government in 1774 under the "Articles of Association." *The Association of the Continental Congress,* October 20, 1774, as printed in Documents of American History, vol. I, Henry Steele Commanger, ed., (Englewood, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), p. 84. Just three years later in 1777, this organization of the national government took on a different character. Drafted by John Dickinson, then a delegate from Pennsylvania who voted against the Declaration of Independence, the "Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union" were put forward.

According to President John Quincy Adams, however, "there was no congeniality of principle between the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation." The Jubilee of the Constitution: *A Discourse Delivered at the Request of the New York Historical Society, in the City of New York, on Tuesday, the 30th of April, 1839; Being the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Inauguration of George Washington as President of the United States,*

on Thursday, the 30th of April, 1789., by John Quincy Adams. Adams argued that the new confederation's powers were organized in such a way as to undermine, rather than "to provide new Guards for their future Security." Adams declared that the "fabric of the Declaration and that of the Confederation . . . were the products of different minds and adverse passions." In an effort to revise the Articles of Confederation, a convention was called. More than revision, however, took place. Within four months the framers had written a national Constitution asserting that it would better secure the safety and virtue of the people in a more perfect union than did the Articles of Confederation. The framers were following through on the Declaration's claim that the people, this time in convention, were free to alter their form of government and reorganize it in such a way so as to better secure their rights. At least that is what was claimed.

The framers had already abolished the monarchial form of government under a king in the colonies at the time of the 1776 revolution. In 1787, they specifically instituted in its place a government republican in form. Reflecting on a republican form, James Madison wrote: "It is evident that no other form would be reconcilable with the genius of the people of America; with the fundamental principles of the Revolution; or with that honorable determination which animates every votary of freedom to rest all our political experiments on the capacity of mankind for self-government." James Madison, The Federalist Papers, No. 39. (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1961), p. 240.

Beyond this, the 1787 framers subsequently set out to alter their system of government in two ways. First, with respect to the national government, they separated its power into executive, legislative and judicial branches. Noting that "The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands . . . may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny," the founders made each branch separate and distinct, with few exceptions. James Madison, Federalist No. 47, at p. 301. Only a few powers remained combined in one or another branch. For instance, the president's veto power noted in Article I, Section 7 extends to the Executive a check on legislative authority. The Senate, as a check on the other branches, is granted authority to try impeachments according to Article I, Section 3. This includes impeachment of judicial officers as noted by Alexander Hamilton in Federalist No. 81.

The three separate branches are also independent of one another. Madison said: "If it be a fundamental principle of free Government that the Legislative, Executive & Judiciary powers should be separately exercised, it is equally so that they be independently exercised." James Madison, Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787 (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1966), p. 326. If one national branch did exercise another's power, it would not be according to the Constitution, but by usurpation.

The framers also divided civil power between the states and the national government. The jurisdiction of the national component of the federal system "extends to certain enumerated objects only, and leaves to the several States a residuary and inviolable

sovereignty over all other objects." James Madison, Federalist No. 39. The states do not exercise national power, and the national government does not exercise state power. Each government exercises only those powers granted in their respective constitutions.

Article I, Section 8 lists the powers granted to the national legislature. Article 2 defines the president's power and Article 3, that of the judiciary. Article 4 addresses State governmental issues. Article 5 concentrates on how to amend the Constitution. Article 6 lays out rules on debts, the supremacy of the Constitution as written (not as interpreted) and oaths. Article 7 focuses on adoption of the Constitution making it valid. Multiple amendments changed some of these particulars while also enumerating rights of the people not to be impaired or abridged.

The Tenth Amendment affirms the division of powers between the states and national government by declaring, "the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibiting it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." This division reflects an underlying commitment to self-government as well as reaffirming that the national government has only a few powers. The vast bulk of civil power rests constitutionally with the people acting through state and local governments according to state constitutions, and in their capacity as individual citizens.

The Constitution of 1787 was the practical expression of the people altering the form of their national government from its 1784 version. In so doing, they followed the Declaration's guarantee that the people may alter their governments when they so choose. The wisdom of doing so by "laying its Foundation on such Principles, and organizing its Powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness" sets the standard, but whether the people have chosen wisely or not, can only be determined by their experience with that new form over the passage of time. Does it tend to freedom or does it tend to slavery? That is the prescient question.

Chapter 22. How Are Declarations Of Independence Viewed By God?

"Now there happened to be there a worthless man, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew the trumpet and said, 'We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!'" 2 Samuel 20:1.

"And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, 'What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.' So Israel went to their tents." I Kings 12:16.

Having surveyed the law of nature and of nature's God and several of its key expressions in the Bible and reflected in the Declaration of Independence, let us ask if the concept of declaring independence from one's current civil government is consistent with or contrary to what God has said on the subject. Recall that the signers of the Declaration of Independence declared Great Britain would not be their country and King George III would not be their sovereign king. Instead, they declared that the former colonies were now free and independent from Great Britain, that they would have no king at all, and only be governed and taxed by their own consent. Great Britain and the king called this rebellion. The framers called this the exercise of a God-given unalienable right of revolution. Which was it-- a lawless rebellion or a lawful revolution? The framers asserted that their right to revolution lay in the laws of nature and the laws of God. This law they said justified their actions, and this law's author Almighty God, would protect them regarding the outcome of the pending war.

Sir William Blackstone in his Commentaries on The Laws of England, declared that the laws of nature and of nature's God were one and the same law. He observed that the laws of nature were those laws of God written by Himself into the creation of the world and now reflected in nature, God's creation. Likewise the laws of nature's God, were those laws God had written Himself through his prophets, and recorded in the Scripture. Much has been written about the first, but little about the second.

Modern religious writers look at the Declaration of Independence judging its consistency with God's laws on the basis of whether it preserves religious freedom or simply on the basis that such declarations refer to or invoke God Himself. This is short sighted. Our examination, however, is much broader because God's views are much more comprehensive than just religious freedom or ceremonially referencing His name.

Declarations, Past And Present

While we have alluded to some of these ideas in prior chapters, we shall look more closely in this chapter to declarations of independence in the Scripture itself. There are

three key such declarations. The first is the declaration of independence made by Israel rejecting God as their King and seeking a human king to replace God. This declaration was asserted as necessary to win the war then being waged against Israel. Only a human king could do it reasoned the people. So the people hoped this change in the form of their government would better guarantee their freedom from foreign invasions.

Yet, the change in their form of government from God as their King, to Saul as their king, only set the stage for losing their freedom. Samuel describes the condition of servitude such a new form of government would bring in 1 Samuel 8:10-20. The new form of government would take from the people their sons, daughters, the best of their seeds, produce, servants, and livestock. He ends the list of cruel oppression with the promise that "you yourselves will be his servants. In that day you will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord won't answer you in that day." The people did not really assert that God had failed them or that God's protection of them had fallen short justifying their change. They articulated no train of abuses or usurpations. How could they tell God He let them down?

Thus, not every change in the form of government is for the better, even if the old form is altered or abolished. God allowed the people to make foolish choices, even though He Himself was deposed as king. The American people may alter their form of government. If they do so foolishly or well, God will not interfere. If they do so foolishly, however, He may not answer Americans in that day, either. Let us not drag God into the matter, except to say that He may give us a spirt of wisdom to understand the times and know what must be done. 1 Chronicles 12:32.

The second declaration is presented in 2 Samuel 20:20. It describes a man who declared independence from the kings of Israel and Judah. How did that turn out? Samuel records that: "Now there happened to be there a worthless man, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew the trumpet and said, "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!" So the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba and the men of Judah followed King David.

We are later informed that Sheba took shelter in a fortified city. The people of that city killed him, cut off his head and threw it over the wall to David's general waiting below. If you are thinking along the same lines as Sheba, it will be better to present more persuasive arguments than, "I just don't like our civil leaders." That sort of thinking will get you killed.

Sheba's declaration of independence from King David's monarchy was crushed. It amounted to nothing. We do not see God as declaring an opinion on the declaration, one way or the other. Sheba did not appear to have popular support, though he did garner some followers. He did not appear, however, to assert any grievance or oppressive conduct by David as king.

The general rule from these examples is that we should closely examine the basis of any declaration to see what grievances may be accurately lodged against the current government. Light and transient causes will not suffice. Personality differences are insufficient criteria upon which to base a revolution. Those who blow the loudest trumpet for change should be held up to the harsh light of the law of nature and examined carefully as to what they are actually proposing and for whose benefit. So too should those who protest any change.

Third, after King David's death and the death of his son King Solomon, a new king arose named Rehoboam. A man with a very similar sounding name, Jeroboam and all the people of Israel, came to Rehoboam at his inauguration and petitioned him saying that Solomon had made their life very difficult and inflicted hard service upon them. Will King Rehoboam govern more justly? Will King Rehoboam lighten their load? Rehoboam's response was something on the order of "if you think Solomon made your life hard, you ain't seen nothing yet." The Book of 1 Kings 12:16 records Israel's response. It was a declaration of independence with very similar wording as Sheba's declaration, yet with a very different outcome. In Israel's declaration of independence from King Rehoboam, speaking with one voice, the People declared: "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David."

Regarding this declaration of independence, God himself said it was from Him and therefore King Rehoboam and his nation Judah, should not fight with the new King Jeroboam and his nation, Israel. We are not undertaking this review to criticize the framers for failure to keep their Declaration to four sentences in length, but one must marvel at the economy of language employed by the Israelites. Nor are we interested in a superficial analysis which rejects Israel's declaration on the basis that it has no preamble appealing to God and is therefore humanistic! What nonsense. We are rather concerned to inquire why one revolution was a failure and the other a success, at least from God's point of view.

Perhaps Sheba's rebellion was a failure because he never petitioned the existing government to redress his grievances. He did not follow the doctrine of lesser magistrates. Rather, he attempted to capitalize on a dispute between Israel and Judah over who was the more patriotic servant of the king. The basis for his declaration of independence lay in personality and political intrigue. It was an argument about who would be the greatest servant of David. There was no great principle, no great purpose, no great truth sought to be vindicated.

There was no long train of abuses and usurpations which invariably would reduce one or the other to an absolute state of slavery. Moreover, Sheba simply declared independence on his own authority. Though some of the people of Israel followed him, it was a mistake. He declared he would be king and demanded the people follow him. In short, Sheba's declaration was nothing like that of the framers and certainly nothing like

that of the people.

In the case of Jeroboam, however, the people of Israel declared independence only after first petitioning their current King Rehoboam with their grievances. That “olive branch” petition was completely and irrevocably rejected. It was accompanied with promises of even greater despotism and tyrannical rule. The people sought to lessen the hard service they had lived under and no doubt the accompanying abuses and usurpations of their rights and freedoms. We are not told if they appealed to the king’s native justice or magnanimity, or referred to their ties of common kinship. We do know, however, that the king was deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. He preferred to heed the tyrannical advice of his trusted political cronies. The result was plain and obvious -- a revolution of the people, by the people and for the people against the king’s past abuse and his promise of their future slavery.

The American Declaration of Independence adhered more closely to the example of the people of Israel and King Jeroboam, than to the example of Sheba. The Declaration itself is a petition to the king of Great Britain enumerating their grievances. The Declaration describes how King George made the life of the colonials hard. The Declaration describes a hard way of living, made hard by a king who refused to govern through adoption of good laws. It asserted that the king was a king who refused to recognize that people should only be governed and taxed by their own consent and that the people ought to have a say in choosing those who govern and tax them. The Declaration also asserted that the king of Great Britain was a king who was a usurper himself. He was a man who sought to control the executive, legislative as well as the judicial branches of the colonial governments and bring them all under himself in one supreme office.

As for God, He lets people do what they will in establishing their forms of civil government, in altering them or abolishing them. He will not interfere if people enslave themselves by their own consent. 1 Samuel 8:7. He will not interfere if people free themselves by their own consent. 1 Kings 12:16. He favors any old or new form of civil government that will respect his universal legal code, that refuses to usurp His jurisdiction and will better secure the unalienable rights of the people, but He will not impose such a civil government against the will of the people. King David, chosen by the people, who loved God’s law is an example of this. Psalm 119. God asks and expects people to govern themselves and be wise about it. If they refuse, He lets them go their own way unto their destruction. Genesis 19:24. Romans 8. The Book of Judges testifies to this. God is liberal in giving multiple chances to get civil government right. That is His gracious nature. He is interested to see what we make of it. The Books of the Kings testifies to this.

God looks to the ends of the earth and observes everything under the heavens. Job 28:24. From the place where He lives he looks carefully at all the earth’s inhabitants. Psalm 33:14. The actions of civil government and its leaders do not escape His notice. Certainly the Lord watches the whole earth carefully and is ready to strengthen those who

are devoted to him. 2 Chronicles 16:9. To be strengthened, however, those devoted to God must also be devoted to first understanding how God thinks about the authority of people to institute and abolish their civil governments. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer. But the Lord's face is against those who do evil. 1 Peter 3:12. It makes no difference if the evildoer is elected or appointed, or the People themselves, he or she is still an evildoer and God is against them.

Chapter 23. What Actions Of Civil Government Are Predictable According To The Laws Of Nature's God?

Turning from our discussion of these Biblical examples of declarations of independence, let us examine other Scriptures to gain a better understanding of how God describes the behavior of civil governments and what cautions and warnings he gives to people to restrain and limit those governments by their consent. The Biblical accounts of civil government and kings from the beginning of time, and the kings of Israel and Judah, reflect a pattern expected from civil government. Perhaps we may also see this pattern is a standard feature of civil governments in world history and that all civil governments whether monarchies, democracies, republics, aristocracies or oligarchies are simply variations of the same themes throughout human history. How does God describe or predict the behavior of civil governments and kings, and what can we expect from them?

The Way Of Kings Is War

If we just started reading the Bible from the beginning, it would not be too many chapters until we stumbled upon the first mention of kings, about two millennia after creation. Right away we would see that the existence and conduct of kings are described not prescribed. What are these kings noted for? The first thing we would learn is that the way of kings is to make a name for themselves and to wage war. It is what kings do. It is what civil governments do. War is the business of civil government. We do not here judge the rightness or wrongness of this or that particular war in any given or specific context. We simply observe that war is what governments do, enjoy doing, and have done the longest. Genesis 14 is the first mention of kings in Scripture, though the kingdom of Babel is discussed earlier. In Genesis 11:4, we are told that the goal of that kingdom among others was to "make a name for ourselves." All governments want to make a name for themselves. Vanity and war go hand in hand along with the largesse of war --- confiscating booty, enlarging territory and enslaving human captives.

They say the past is prologue. Why do we care? It might be important to know this if the founders are going to draft a Declaration of Independence criticizing the king of Great Britain for being a warmonger and making war upon the colonies. It might be an important point to know if we are going to appeal to the law of God claiming that the king's war against the colonies is wrong. It might be important to know if we are claiming the American Revolution is a defensive war based on the laws of nature and of nature's God.

The Way Of Civil Government Is To Take By Force

If the original recorded conduct of civil government is make war, to what other evils are they also prone? Perhaps a second insight into God's view of civil governments universally comes from His statements about the predictable practices of civil governments already existing on the earth. What can be expected is that a civil government is prone to

take, take, and take. Here is how God put it after the people demanded a civil government just like all the other nations. God describes the state of the world's civil governments 2,850 years after creation (~1100 BC). He tells us what to expect based on what was then in existence.

He says: "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day." 1 Samuel 8:10-18.

Here God describes the conduct of civil government. He uses the word "take" six times. He neglects to say that civil government "gives." He doesn't qualify it or say "Well, you know some of this taking is okay under the following terms and conditions." He says this is what you can expect from civil government, it will take the best of what you have including your children, property and freedom, and make you its slave. He is saying you are demonstrably stupid to even ask for such a government. He is saying be careful what you wish for. God is not saying this type of civil government is a good thing. He is saying this type of civil government is a bad thing. He is not saying He has instituted or established any such civil governments.

What did the king of Great Britain take? What have your state and local governments taken? What has the United States government taken? Could God just as well have been describing all civil governments, even those approximately 5,950 years later? You bet He has.

God is not saying taking is normative. He is saying this is what covetousness and theft looks like on a grand scale. God does not desire that civil government exercise lawless authority to take, take, and take. He would not have civil government take our children. He would not have civil government take our income, land and property in whole or part. He would not have civil government take our freedom and make us slaves. He would not have us make stupid choices in selecting a tyrannical government. But, He would not prevent us from doing so if we were hell-bent upon our own destruction parading as security. He says if we tax ourselves, then pay that tax so as not to give offense. But Jesus never says that taxation is a positive virtue or right. Matthew 17:27.

Civil Government Should Be Limited If Freedom Is To Be Preserved

In addition to war, taking and slavery, several additional attributes of civil government are identified in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. It states that: "When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,' you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, 'You shall never return that way again.' And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this 5 law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel."

What does this mean? Simply put, God is warning Israel and the peoples of the nations of the earth at the same time, that civil governments should be limited if freedom is to remain alive. These universal principles of limited civil government are found in Deuteronomy 17 for those who care to look and understand. Absent severe limitations, civil governments are primarily inclined to making war, taking things and persons, and creating a society of slaves, economic or otherwise. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn stated this tendency in blunt terms, "The state of our society can be well described in terms of an electromagnetic field. All the lines of force in it point away from freedom and toward tyranny. These lines are very stable, they have etched their way in and set hard in the grooves; it is almost impossible to perturb them, deflect them, twist them about. Any charge, any mass introduced into the field is blown effortlessly in the direction of tyranny, and can never break through toward freedom. For that ten thousand oxen must be yoked." Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956, Vol. 3, Harper & Roe, p. 479.

The principles of limited civil government on the other hand, are that: 1) civil government should be forced under the law; 2) That civil government should be limited by law; 3) that nations should avoid entangling alliances with other nations; 4) that public officials should avoid personal enrichment at the expense of the people; 5) that civil government should keep its military small and not build up a war machine or seek worldwide global hegemony. These are the minimum limitations a wise people must impose upon their civil governments, should they choose to establish one or many.

Again, God is not saying these limitations on power will happen automatically. He is saying that if people do not limit their civil governments by law and by force of law, then

they will know war and poverty, slavery and murder on a grand scale. To call such a civil government an "authority" established by God is far from the truth. To command obedience to such a civil government is to advocate slavery. God would not have civil government increase its wealth through governing. He would not have civil government establish a military empire. He would not have civil government lord its superiority over each of us or any of us. He would not have civil government exempt its officials from the laws which apply to everyone else. He would not have civil government entangle the nation in non-defensive wars of foreign aggression or establish worldwide global hegemony over all nations.

A declaration of independence worthy of the Almighty's attention should at least address His concerns about such aggression. A declaration should carefully review the conduct of the king or government and look to see if it has thrown off restraint, enriched itself, contracted foreign alliances or amassed a military to oppress the people. We likewise may weigh our current state and federal governments in the same scale of justice. God's warnings about the wisdom of imposing and maintaining limits on civil power were true for Israel. They are no less equally true and applicable to the nations of the earth today. Careful and constant evaluation and scrutiny of the day to day conduct of civil government through the lens of this Biblical matrix of limited power, is among the chief duties of every man and woman who love freedom. Praise of those who throw off these restraints and who openly brag of these excesses, is the praise of evildoers, usually by those who financially benefit from such evildoing.

The People May Choose Their Government As Well As Their Leaders

How should such a government as described in Genesis 14 and 1 Samuel 8, be limited as described in Deuteronomy 17? Perhaps the answer lies in the consent of those who must live under that government. An example of consent, indeed of government by consent in its most basic and simple form is found in Deuteronomy 1:13. Here, Moses recounts how he proposed to the people of Israel that they should choose their own leaders and judges. He said to the people: "'Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced men, and I will appoint them as your heads.' And you answered me, 'The thing that you have spoken is good for us to do.'" Here we have the idea that the people should choose their leaders. We also have the idea that those who are chosen ought to at least be wise, understanding and experienced.

Thus, our simple and brief survey has indicated three basic principles. First, that civil government left to its own devices and sense of justice will make war, take, take, take on the grand scale described in 1 Samuel 8, and servitude of the people is the result. The people serve their governments. Second, God being practical and wise has suggested that if people create a civil government they should aggressively limit its power. After that the people should limit its power even further. And if that does not work, then abolish that government and start again. Deuteronomy 17 describes five situations in which power

should be limited. Third, the people should choose those persons among them who are wise, understanding and experienced and then place limits upon their offices so they too will avoid war, taking and enslavement of the people.

Remarkably, we may observe that the Declaration of Independence describes a civil government in Great Britain then waging war against the colonies, eating out the substance of the people and depriving the people of their free consent in the organization of their colonial governments including dishonoring their choice of representatives. It describes a civil government in Great Britain that took from the people and taxed them without consent. It described a civil government that pretended to aggregate all power in the office of the king. It described a civil government that dissolved their colonial legislatures and therefore denied them the right to choose any wise leaders among them. This is the only way to read the grievances of the colonists against the king—in the bright light of these three basic principles made known and deduced from the laws of Nature's God as reflected in the Scripture. It is what gives their grievances power and universal appeal, precisely because they were shown to the nations by the God of nations Himself.

Support For The Declaration's Grievances

We will shortly compare each of the allegations against the king stated in the Declaration of Independence against the foregoing Scriptural litmus tests. Hopefully this chapter has helped us first see the big picture. The king acted in a way that the colonists thought was wrong. He acted within the stream of history as Genesis 11 & 14 and as Samuel recognized kings would act. He acted to make his dominion the world and built up his military and wealth to see that vision through. The colonies were part of his dominion, his worldwide global Empire. The colonists said "We have petitioned you to restrain yourself" and these petitions stand in the historical stream of those like petitions that went before as in the case of Rehoboam.

The framers also recognized that civil government should be limited as conceptualized in Deuteronomy 17, which is an historical waypoint. It should be limited because absent limits, God has shown us the default conduct of civil governments in 1 Samuel 8. He has also shown us worthless revolutions in 2 Samuel 20 under Sheba, and successful ones in 1 Kings 12 under Jeroboam. These too stand in the stream of history. The framers of the Declaration of Independence and the people of that day who supported independence put the pieces of the puzzle together in a cogent way: civil government tends toward tyranny, limits on its power must be imposed, the consent and participation of the people in their government and the choice of their officers is wise and good. This is the teaching of the law of Nature's God as revealed. This is worthy of marking in yellow highlighter.

Finally, we do not intend to diminish the ancient philosophers or the Greeks in what they also observed and advised with regard to civil government. They recognized what they

did because they used right reason or they were inspired by God or they learned by experience. But we do add here that the Scriptures itself contains the seeds by which lawful revolutions may be known, understood and undertaken including the American one, though not perfectly formed. Therein we have revealed practical observations of the nature of unrestrained civil power and its predisposition to make war, take, covet, steal, enslave and murder. The Scripture also describes how the people have a power within their hand to limit civil government and to provide practical limits which ought never be ignored in the framing, alteration, or abolition of any civil government.

Chapter 24. Are The Declaration's Grievances Found In The Laws Of Nature's God?

Kings That Love War – Genesis 14

We have observed in Genesis 14 that the way of kings is to make war. Did the king of Great Britain fit this profile? Was he a king like other kings of history? Was it predictable he would be a man of war? The framers of the Declaration of Independence thought so. Whether they consciously read Genesis 14 and said to themselves "Oh my goodness, this passage perfectly describes George III" may be an interesting question from a historical scholarship point of view. But whether or not they listed the war waged by the king as a conscious Biblical indictment, or from a practical dislike of being invaded and enslaved, the point is that they appealed to the law of nature and of nature's God and concluded that from such a legal premise, the king's war upon his own people was wrong.

There is no dispute that the very first kings of the world identified only after the flood were known for war. Thus, the framer's articulation of the king of Great Britain's war making tendencies has palpable support in the laws of nature's God. Their invocation of this law is not some linguistic pablum, con job or public relations scam. The framers accused the king of making war upon them saying:

- He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.
- He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.
- He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.
- He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.
- He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

Kings That Love Wealth and Slavery - 1 Samuel 8

We have also observed that the tendency of civil government is to take the children, property and freedom itself from the people as expressed in 1 Samuel 8. Did the king of Great Britain fit this profile? Did he take by force the children, family, property and freedom of the people of the colonies? The framers thought so, in at least five instances. The king severely limited immigration into the colonies which denied the colonists the ability to be united with their family and friends. The king taxed the people without their consent and

deprived them of the right to a trial by a jury of their peers. He also burdened the people with bureaucratic regulations enforced by homeland security goons, all designed to take and control their ability to live as free men and women.

Whether the framers conscientiously said: "Wow, Samuel was absolutely right about the kings of the earth and King George is no different than the kings of the earth in times past" is not the immediate question. But the framers did assert that the revolution was grounded on the laws of nature and nature's God. By invoking the laws of nature and of nature's God, the framers at least asserted that the tendency of kings to take that which is not theirs and to reduce people to a state of servitude or slavery was not unusual. It should not surprise us, therefore, to see that several of the complaints against the king coincided with the declaration of God Himself regarding what could be expected from a king with power "like all the other nations." 1 Samuel 8:5 & 20.

Thus, when the framers articulated how and what the king had taken from the colonists and why this was a basis for independence grounded in that law, they did so consistent with their premise that the law of nature and of nature's God plainly established the wrongfulness of the king's taking and justified the legality of independence. The framers stated grievances which showed that the king treated the people as if they had limited rights. God had granted dominion to the individual and family, but the king had interfered with migration, trade, and commerce through his royal bureaucracy. God had recognized that people may be governed with their own consent, but the king declared their consent was unnecessary regarding taxes and contrary to their consent regarding criminal prosecutions and trials.

- He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.
- For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:
- For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury:
- For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences
- For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:
- He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

Kings Above The Law - Deuteronomy 17

The framers also listed grievances against the king of Great Britain identified in Deuteronomy 17. Recall that God had advised the people that if they were going to consensually establish a civil government that they would do well to limit its power. God identified five limitations which He thought were especially important. We have previously summarized them but let us restate them again. The universal principles of limited civil

government found in Deuteronomy 17 are that: 1) civil government should be forced under the law (or as Thomas Jefferson later observed: “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.”); 2) civil government should be limited by law; 3) civil government should avoid entangling alliances with other nations; 4) public officials should avoid personal enrichment at the expense of the people; and 5) civil government should keep its military small, not create a massive war machine or seek worldwide global hegemony.

We do not here undertake to determine whether the people of the colonies or of England themselves previously imposed these specific limits on the king of Great Britain. Rather, our focus here is to identify whether the framers thought the king violated these limitations in regard to his colonial government. Indeed, the framers had a great deal to say about the king of Great Britain and his serial disregard for the law. Grievances that relate to the king’s rejection of the idea that the law should govern him or that the law should limit his government, are readily identified.

While it is important to understand these grievances, our point here is to better understand that the framers, should they have explicitly desired to do so, had a legitimate basis for deriving or deducing these grievances from their stated premise that the laws of nature and of nature’s God established standards for the conduct of nations and civil governments which when transgressed, warranted the alteration or abolition of that government.

They were free to hold up their king’s conduct to the light of the Biblical standard. We too are free to do so in our day and age. Do not look to lawyers or clergy to help you since nothing in their education or faith if any, has prepared them to do so. It is the same law which binds all nations and governments without regard to time and ages. Wise limitations on civil government identified in Deuteronomy 17 are universally wise. Every wise People should impose them and other absolute limits of a similar import and effect, upon their civil governments, if human freedom is to have any hope of survival, let alone of free exercise. The framers observed:

- He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.
- He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.
- He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.
- For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighboring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute

rule into these Colonies.
- For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments.

Kings And Entangling Alliances Destructive Of Freedom - Deuteronomy 17

The framers also articulated another grievance against the king which has its origins in Deuteronomy 17. They asserted that the king had allowed entangling alliances with foreign nations to oppress the people themselves, declaring:

- He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation.

Kings With The Power To Make, Enforce And Judge Law

Though not specifically identified in Deuteronomy 17 as a mechanism by which civil government could be limited and restrained by law, it nevertheless follows that additional mechanisms to limit civil government should be sought. Thus, the idea of separating civil power and not aggregating all power within one branch of government has become an important element of limited government itself. Though not specifically declared in Deuteronomy, it may be reasonably inferred that complaints against the king to the effect that he has aggregated executive, legislative, and judicial power solely within his hand, is a hallmark of trampling down the idea that government should be limited by law itself. That the power of civil government should be further limited by dividing it among the executive, legislative and judicial can be reasonably deduced from the propositions contained in Deuteronomy 17 concerning the importance of limiting government.

Of course in the nation of Israel, God himself held all three branches of civil government within his person. “For the Lord is our judge; the Lord is our lawgiver; the Lord is our king; he will save us.” Isaiah 33:22. God still retained control of the legislative and supreme judicial branches of the government, after the executive branch was taken from Him and given to human kings beginning with Saul. While God can be certainly trusted to avoid misusing such aggregated power, our faith in mankind to follow His suit would be severely misplaced. We must be soberly tempered by God’s warning in 1 Samuel 8 describing what can realistically be expected from the civil governments of the earth if not restrained by law: theft, slavery and death. What then did the framers say about the king of England’s efforts to bring all civil power into his hand?

Control Of The Executive Branch

Regarding his attack upon the colonial executives or governors, the framers stated:

- He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

Control Of The Legislative Branch

Regarding his attack upon the Legislature the framers stated:

- He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.
- He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.
- He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected, whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.
- For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

Control Of The Judicial Branch

Regarding the kings attack upon the judicial branch, the framers stated:

- He has obstructed the Administration of Justice by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.
- He has made judges dependent on his Will alone for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

Kings With Powerful Military Forces - Deuteronomy 17

Deuteronomy 17 also warns about the dangers of a standing Army. The framers clearly declared that the king was likewise guilty of transgressing this Biblical admonition. This is also tied to the disposition to make war discussed earlier. The framers stated that:

- He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.
- He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.
- For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
- For protecting them, by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of 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.

Conclusion

This completes our review of the grievances articulated by the framers against the king of Great Britain. We have sought to identify specific Biblical passages wherein God describes civil government itself, specific limitations upon civil government's power and the importance of government by consent in both creating a civil government, and limiting and dividing its powers. These concepts are well grounded in the Scripture directly or by implication. But what is even more important in understanding the Declaration of Independence, is that the laws of nature and of nature's God itself reflects these particulars and this law was the explicit basis of the legal justification for American independence. The revolution was not a Christian idea. It was an idea based on the universal laws of God as applied to the conduct of man-made civil governments.

Whether the framers sat down and read the Scripture and came away with these ideas, or deduced the Declaration's standards which the king failed to meet by application of pure reason or through metaphysical disquisitions, poses an interesting question which we leave to others to investigate. Our point here is to simply observe that most if not all of the grievances alleged against the king in the Declaration of Independence are logically traceable back to several key passages in the Bible for those who are disposed to look. Such inquiry is not dependent on the faith of the inquirer, but rather on his or her willingness to read what is plainly written and let it guide us as we evaluate the future of our civil governments. Do these governments need alteration? God provides us guidance. Do they need abolition? God again can help us to understand because He has shown us what abuses to look for.

Friend, let us stop being naïve about civil government. Let us try to see it from God's viewpoint as a creation of humans. That creation should be limited, restrained, and disobeyed when appropriate. It is not an institution created by God to be venerated, obeyed without question, or as a means to ensure our success or salvation. Left unrestrained its natural and inevitable power always tends toward taking our property, theft of our wealth, controlling our personal and medical decisions, subjugating our labor, and commandeering our children's education. Its suppression of these freedoms are but degrees of slavery. God has shown us that government must be limited—chained down to law. Let us also recall that individual self-government, marriage and family governance are the perpetual governments God actually created and established from the beginning and continue unto this very hour. No human civil government may interfere with these pre-existing governments when discharging those duties, both religious and secular, which God has requested of them or charged them to perform.

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