

"What's a Government for?"

Romans 13.1-7

1. God's Civil Authority

- a. Order v. 6 1 Corinthians 14.33
- b. Delegated vs. 1,4 Isaiah 24.21
- c. General vs. 1,3,5 1 Peter 2.13,14
- d. Temporal 13.11,12 1 Corinthians 7.31

2. Servant for "Good"

- a. Peace v. 4 1 Timothy 2.1,2
- b. Proclamation 1.8 15.19 Acts 28.31
- c. Paradox 1 Cor 2.8 Eph 6.12 Rev 13.4-8

3. Servant for "Wrath"

- a. Consequences v. 2 Galat 6.7 Hebrews 4.13
- b. Terror v. 3 1 Peter 3.13,14
- c. Punishment v. 4 1 Peter 2.14

4. Submission not Obedience vs. 1,5

- a. Priority v. 7 Matthew 22.21 Acts 5.29
- b. Sacrifice v. 8 12.1,2,21 1 Peter 2.13,21-23
- c. Conscience v. 5 Acts 24.16 1 Cor 4.4,8.12
1 Tim 4.2 Titus 1.15 Heb 10.22 13.18
- d. Triumph vs. 11,12 Coloss 2.15 Revel 6.15-17

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"What's a Government for?"
Romans 13.1-7

CONTEXT - Believer's Relation to those OUTSIDE fellowship 12.17

POSITION OF JEWISH COMMUNITY UNDER ROMAN LAW
STATUS "collegia licita" (permitted associations)

ROMAN RESPECT FOR: 1) Sabbath 2) Dietary Regulations 3) Images

EARLY CHRISTIANS WERE CONSIDERED A SUB-GROUP OF JEWS

APOSTLE PAUL - happy experience with Roman Law - PROTECTION

IRONY - Jesus Himself "crucified under Pontius Pilate"

Paul's opponents at Thessalonica

Acts 17.6,7

"These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here...they are defying Caesar's decrees, saying there is another king, one called Jesus."

QUESTION OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM - free in Christ, free from state?

1 Pet 2.16 "Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil, live as servants of God."

SERVANTS OF GOD NOT EXEMPT FROM SERVICE TO STATE

1. God's Civil Authority

GOD IS THE FOUNT OF ALL AUTHORITY

a. Order

1 Cor 14.33 God is not a God of disorder but a God of peace.

HUMAN NEED - MANY PEOPLE - ORDER IS NECESSARY
INSTITUTION OF GOV'T - GOD'S RESPONSE TO MAN'S NEED

MAN CANNOT DEAL WITH CHAOS

2
GOV'T NOT THE RESULT OF THE FALL

EX: Holy Nation of Israel needed ^{Civil + Moral} LAW & Judges, Church Leaders

BELIEVE IN RULE OF LAW NOT MORAL RELATIVISM

SIN HAS CORRUPTED GOV'T - NOT CREATED IT

^{Ex} UGANDA - 300 miles of bad roads - over 100 ROADBLOCKS
MANNED BY CHILDREN - DIFFERENT ARMIES - NO PLAN BUT STEAL

WORSE - BAD GOV'T THAT WORKS? OR NO GOV'T AT ALL?

CHAOS TODAY IN NORTHERN IRELAND, SOMALIA, (former) YUGOSLAVIA

v. 1 "Everyone" NO EXCEPTIONS

v. 6 "this is why you pay taxes" STATEMENT NOT A COMMAND

THIS WORLD - INCLUDING GOVERNMENT - NEEDS MONEY TO WORK

John Calvin warned the magistrates "all that you receive from the people is public property, and not a means of satisfying private lust and luxury"

b. Delegated AUTHORITY FROM GOD

v. 1 "authorities that exist have been established by God"

v. 4 "God's servant" - DEACON OR MINISTER

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS - boy shared about driving Daddy's pickup
SAT IN DAD'S LAP AND DADDY HELD STEERING WHEEL WHILE BOY STEERED
Later the little driver was asked to pray:
"Dear Lord, will you please put your hands over the hands of our
President, so he will know how to turn the wheel for our country"

GOVERNMENT IS NOT DETERMINED BY THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

HUMAN GOVERNMENT IS A DIVINE ORDINANCE

CHURCH AND STATE ARE BOTH UNDER GOD'S SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY
BOTH ULTIMATELY ACCOUNTABLE TO HIM

GOVERNMENT STATUS IS OF NO STATUS IN THE CHURCH

1 Cor 6.4 "men of little account in the church"

11.29 "God's gifts and his call are irrevocable"

WHETHER ACKNOWLEDGED OR NOT - GOVERNOR IS GOD'S SERVANT

c. General Not Specific INSTITUTION NOT INDIVIDUAL

v. 1 "the governing authorities"

v. 3 "rulers"

v. 5 "the authorities"

Writing: UNDER A DICTATORSHIP - CAESAR CALLED HIMSELF "GOD"
CORRUPT - DESPOTIC - DECADENT - NEAR COLLAPSE

NO MENTION OF CHANGING GOV'TS - NO METHOD ENDORSED

PAX ROMANA - the stable peace of Rome

ENDORSEMENT OF HITLER, IDI AMIN, SADAM HUSSEIN?

ORDAINED NOT A PARTICULAR GOV'T BUT THE CONCEPT OF PROPER GOV'T

During the Civil War a MINISTER said to PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN
"I surely hope the Lord is on our side"

LINCOLN: "I am not at all concerned about that, for I know the Lord is always on the side of the right; but it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

d. Temporal ESTABLISHED FOR LIMITED TIME, ONLY ON EARTH

13.11 "understand the present time"

13.12 "the night is nearly over; the day is almost here"

GOVERNMENT IS IN THE REALM OF NIGHT

THE DAY COMING- NEW GOVERNMENTAL ORDER -SAINTS WILL JUDGE WORLD

"the state withers away, but the city of God remains"

12.1 "in view of God's mercy" - NEW DAY OF SALVATION IN CHRIST

1 Cor 7.31 "For the world in its present form is passing away"

2. Servant for "Good"

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WE MAY WONDER WHAT GOOD OUR GOVERNMENT IS DOING?
GOOD?? - NATIONAL DEBT, MEDICAL SAVIOR, EDUCATOR, LEGAL LOOPHOLES

French SOCIAL SCIENTIST - ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE
STUDIED AMERICA IN 1831 TO FIND WHAT MADE AMERICA GREAT
returned to France and wrote classic "Democracy in America"
"I sought for the greatness of America in her harbors and rivers
and fertile fields, and her mines and commerce. It was not there.
Not until I went into the churches and heard her pulpits aflame
with righteousness did I understand the greatness of her power.
America is great because she is good; and if America ever ceases
to be good, America will cease to be great."

a. Peace RESPONSIBLE TO MAINTAIN PEACE

v. 4 "he is God's servant to do you good"

1 Tim 2.1,2 Paul urged prayers "for kings and all those in
authority THAT WE MAY LIVE PEACEFUL AND QUIET LIVES IN ALL
GODLINESS AND HOLINESS"

John Calvin "(government exists) for the establishment of civil
justice and outward morality"

b. Proclamation "open door" FOR THE GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED

PAUL BENEFITED FROM THE PEACE OF ROME

1.8 "your faith in God is being reported all over the world"

15.19 "from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, (present
day Yugoslavia) I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ"

END OF ACTS - FROM PRISON IN ROME

Acts 28.31 "Boldly and without hinderance he preached the kingdom
of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ"

END OF WW 2 - September 2, 1945 - FORMAL SURRENDER CEREMONY
ABOARD USS MISSOURI IN TOKYO BAY - ALLIED AND AXIS LEADERS
GEN. DOUGLASS MAC ARTHUR LEADER OF ALLIED FORCES

"Men since the beginning of time have sought peace, (but)
military alliances, balance of power, leagues of nations, all in
turn failed, leaving the only path to be by way of the crucible
of war. We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some
greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our
door. THE PROBLEM IS BASICALLY THEOLOGICAL AND INVOLVES A
SPIRITUAL DISEASE AND IMPROVEMENT OF HUMAN CHARACTER. IT MUST BE
OF THE SPIRIT IF WE ARE TO SAVE THE FLESH."

MISSIONARIES WERE INVITED BY THE GOV'T INTO JAPAN

NO STATE GRANTS FREEDOM OF RELIGION - JESUS IS SOVEREIGN LORD
WE ARE COMMANDED TO OBEY HIM WHETHER IT IS LEGAL OR NOT
THANKFUL WHEN WE CAN WORSHIP IN FREEDOM AND SECURITY

John Murray on "Relation of Church and State"

"Government is to guard, maintain, and promote justice, order,
and peace..on the other hand the church is committed to the task
of proclaiming the whole counsel of God...when the civil
magistrate trespasses the limits of his authority, it is
incumbent on the church to expose and condemn such a violation of
his authority"

c. Paradox - Good out of Evil

BIBLICAL PASSAGES - SECULAR GOVERNMENT IS THE REALM OF SATAN

TEMPTATION OF JESUS - Satan "worship me and gain the world"
REAL TEMPT - HE CANNOT TEMPTINGLY OFFER WHAT HE DOES NOT HAVE

v. 3 "he will commend you" EVEN IF HE KILLS YOU FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

JESUS ON CROSS - PUNISHMENT TURNED TO PRAISE
PILATE CONFESSED "THIS MAN HAS DONE NOTHING TO DESERVE DEATH"
ROMAN EXECUTIONER "SURELY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD"

1 Cor 2.8

"the rulers of this age...have crucified the Lord of glory"

Eph 6.12 "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but
against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers
of this dark world"

(6)

3. Servant for "Wrath"

"SWORD" - symbol of Roman magistrate's IMPERIUM

// KAHILI of the Hawaiian Kings

a. Consequences OF DISOBEDIENCE

v. 2 "those who rebel...will bring judgment on themselves"

Gal 6.7 "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows"

Hebrews 4.13 "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

THIS BRINGS A FEELING OF

b. Terror v. 3 "rulers hold terror for those who do wrong"

1 Pet 3.13 who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?"

OPPOSITE IS ANARCHY -EX. THE LA RIOTS- BRAZEN LOOTING BY FAMILIES

c. Punishment

v. 4 "an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the evil doer"

1 Pet 2.14 Authority "sent by God to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right"

STATE CAN DO WHAT INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN CANNOT

12.17 "do not repay anyone evil for evil"

12.19 "leave room for God's wrath.."it is mine to avenge; I will repay" says the Lord

One theologian calls it "Christ's Strange Work"

PRESERVATION OF WORLD - "law brings wrath" Romans 4.15

SALVATION OF WORLD - "faith expressing itself by love" Gal 5.6

4. Submission not Obedience

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NOT ALWAYS THE SAME THING

vs. 1 "SUBMIT to the governing authorities"

a. Priority GOD DEMAND OUR ABSOLUTE LOYALTY

v. 7 ECHOS THE WORDS OF JESUS

"Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's"
Matt 22.21

WHEN FACED WITH THE ULTIMATUM THE APOSTLES SAID
Acts 5.29 "We must obey God rather than men"

WHAT IF CAESAR LAYS CLAIM TO - "the things that are Gods?"

"Christians will voice their "No" to Caesar's unauthorized demands the more effectively if they have shown themselves ready to say "Yes" to his authorized demands."

CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE TO THE STATE IS NEVER ABSOLUTE
PARTIAL, CONTINGENT ON GOD'S HIGHER AUTHORITY

Justice takes Priority over Law

ST. AUGUSTINE "without justice what are kingdoms but great gangs
of bandits"

TO MAKE SUCH A STAND DEMANDS

b. Sacrifice

v. 10 CALL TO LOVE

"Love your neighbor as you love yourself" Love does no harm to
its neighbor.

12.2 CALL TO NON-CONFORMITY

"do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be
transformed by the renewing of your mind"

12.21 CALL TO SUPERNATURAL GOODNESS

"do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good"

SACRIFICE BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

1 Peter 2.13,21-23

"Submit yourself for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men...To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps..when they hurled their insults at him he did not retaliate; when he suffered he made no threats. INSTEAD, HE ENTRUSTED HIMSELF TO HIM WHO JUDGES JUSTLY"

Russian author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn SEEN GREAT SUFFERING PRISONER IN SOVIET UNION'S NOTORIOUS SYSTEM - 11 YEARS described in "The Gulag Archipelago"

DEHUMANIZING PRACTICES OF SOVIET GUARDS AND SOVIET PRISONERS
SOME BROKE DOWN OTHERS GREW STRONGER

"So what is the answer? How can you stand your ground when you are weak and sensitive to pain, when people you love are still alive and you are unprepared? What do you need to make you stronger than the interrogator and the whole trap? From the moment you go to prison you must put your cozy past firmly behind you. At the very threshold, you must say to yourself: "My life is over, a little early to be sure, but there is nothing to be done about it. I shall never return to freedom. I am condemned to die - now or a little later. But later on, in truth it will be even harder, and so the sooner the better. I no longer have any property whatsoever. For me those I love have died, and for them I have died. From today on, my body is useless and alien to me. Only my spirit and my conscience remain precious to me." Confronted by such a prisoner, the interrogation will tremble. Only the man who has renounced everything will win the victory."

JESUS CALLS HIS DISCIPLES TO COME AND DIE
INCREASINGLY LIKELY IN POST-CHRISTIAN AMERICA

c. Conscience v. 5 KNOWLEDGE SHARED WITH ONESELF

Acts 24.16 "I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man"

1 Cor 4.4 "my conscience is clear"

WRITES ABOUT THOSE

1 Tim 4.2 "hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron"

Tit 1.15 "consciences are corrupted"

RESULT OF HABITUAL LAW-BREAKING - GOD'S AND MAN'S - NO SHAME 9

IGNORING THE PROMPTING OF GOD HARDENS YOUR CONSCIENCE

STEALING FROM YOUR EMPLOYER - WASTE TIME - CHEAT ON TAXES, SPOUSE

Heb 10.22 "let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience"

Heb 13.18 "Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way"

SUCH A PERSON DOES NOT NEED THE LAWS OF GOV'T - LAW ON HEART

d. Triumph OF GOD'S GOV'T - HIS KINGDOM

v. 11 "The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when you first believed"

TRUE FOR PAUL - HOW MUCH MORE FOR US

MAY APPEAR THAT THE DEATH-RESURREC-ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST
MAKES NO DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD OF GOVERNMENT

Coloss 2.15 CHRIST "disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross"

ARREST WARRANT HAS BEEN ISSUED - GOD'S ENEMIES WILL BE CAPTURED

SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU

"it cost God the death of his Son to effect reconcilliation; the cross of Jesus was to expose the sinfulness of sin when He took on the powers of evil and routed them comprehensively"

EASY TO BE CYNICAL ABOUT GOV'T - SCANDALS, BROKEN PROMISES
THROUGH THE YEARS MILLIONS KILLED BY THEIR OWN LEADERS
FAITH IN GOD AS THE JUST JUDGE

Revel 6.15-17 "the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty...hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

THE GREAT DAY OF GOD WILL COME - HAS BEGUN ALREADY

Rev 11.15 "the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ"