



REDEMPTION CITY CHURCH

God, the Gospel, and Culture

Why Theology Matters for Today's World

Civil Government

**Authority | Law | Liberty | Justice | Crime | Restitution |
Restoration | Penal Sanctions**

Kevin Amundson – May 15, 2022

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

Romans 13:1–10 (ESV)

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

Romans 13:1–10 (ESV)

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

Romans 13:1–10 (ESV)

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.

Romans 13:1–10 (ESV)

CIVIL GOVERNMENT

Civil Government

“The rule and authority related to public life”

- **Rulership & Authority**
- **Government in the Bible**
 - **Civil Government**
- **Law | Liberty | Justice**
- **Crime | Restitution | Restoration | Penal Sanctions**
- **Federal Headship**
- **Punitive Responsibility**

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. ... Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love.

Baptist Faith and Message 2000, XV. The Christian and the Social Order

Rulership & Authority

Rulership & Authority

“and in him all things hold together.” – Col 1:17

- God’s government or rule over creation is called “Sovereignty”
- Mankind is made in God’s Image.
- God has created his image for the purpose and function of taking dominion.
- Federal or Covenantal headship is integral to Biblical authority.

Government in the Bible

Government in the Bible

“the Lord of all the earth” – Psalm 97:5

- God’s Preeminent Sovereignty
- The Individual
- The Family
- The Church
- The Civil Magistrate.

Civil Government

**But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.
[5] And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.**

**“Whoever sheds the blood of man,
by man shall his blood be shed,
for God made man in his own image.**

Genesis 9:4–7 (ESV)

Civil Government

It's establishment and function.

- Established by God to deal with crimes. These are sins that are committed against another's person, property, and promise.
 - Person – Injury or Death
 - Property – Theft or Confiscation
 - Promise – Contracts, Oaths, and Treaties
- Providing protection and defense for those who do good.
- Execute wrath on those who do evil.

PROTECT & DEFEND

Law | Liberty | Justice

Law

“Do what is good and you will have his approval”

- *regula fidei* – Rule of Faith
- Moral Conduct is determined and defined by law
- Positive = “Thou Shall”
- Negative = “Thou Shalt Not”
- Laws, voice, word, precepts, commandments, charges, stipulations, ordinances, regulations, statutes, rules, etc.

Liberty

“For rulers are not a terror to good conduct”

[25] But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. —James 1:25

- Freedom to practice righteousness
- Not License for sin.
- Establishes the space for growth and prosperity.
- Minister “for your good”.

Justice

“An avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer”

- The enforcement of what is right or the practicing of righteousness.
- Judging or ruling in a court.
- You shall show no partiality.
- The upright character of those who do what is right.
- Minister as God’s vessel of wrath to do what is right.

EXECUTE GOD'S WRATH

**Crime | Restitution |
Restoration | Penal Sanctions**

Crime

All crimes are sins, but not all sins are crimes.

- Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.
- A Crime is any sin that has a civil penalty or sanction attributed.
- The civil governments basic means of dealing with crime is to ensure restitution and restoration.

Restitution

Paying back what is owed.

But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. —Exodus 21:23–25 (ESV)

- The principle of restitution is to make the victim whole again.
- The convicted perpetrator is compelled to restore proportionate to his/her theft.
- No payment for a prison burden is placed on the victim or the innocent in society.

Restoration

Mediating between man and man.

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. —Leviticus 19:15–18 (ESV)

- The purpose of justice is to bring about restoration between the parties.
- Both the victim and the perpetrator (as far as legally permissible) are restored when the judgment is complete.

Penal Sanctions

The Death Penalty

And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot. —Deut. 19:20–21 (ESV)

If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. —Acts 25:11 (ESV)

- There are some crimes that justice requires the death penalty to satisfy.
- Even the apostle Paul attests to this truth.

GOOD CIVIL GOVERNMENT

“The civil government of the ancient Hebrews was the government of a free people; it was a government of laws; it was a system of self-government.”

Enoch C. Wines, *Commentary on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews*

Government as a Reflection of Trinitarianism

The One and the Many

- Proper and good civil government recognizes how to balance each of the following aspects of unity and diversity. To heavily weighted on one side produces bad civil government.

| One ————— Many |

| Unity ————— Diversity |

| Totalitarianism ————— Anarchy |

| Despotism ————— Chaos |

[13] ...Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood around Moses from morning till evening. [14] When Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this that you are doing for the people? Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand around you from morning till evening?" [15] And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God; [16] 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 18:13–24

[17] Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. [18] You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. [19] Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, [20] 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 18:13–24

[21] Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. [22] And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. [23] If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace. [24] So Moses listened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

Exodus 18:13–24

Federal Headship

Federal Headship

Covenantal Representation

[3] But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

— 1 Corinthians 11:3

- Every person is under a head.
- Everybody is represented by another.
- God Calls his civil officers “Ministers”

**and on the first day of the second month,
they assembled the whole congregation
together, who registered themselves by
clans, by fathers' houses, according to
the number of names from twenty years
old and upward, head by head,**

Numbers 1:18

Hebrew Commonwealth

Functioned under a number of various political structures.

- Tribal Chiefdom
 - 430 years from Abraham to the Exodus
- Constitutional Representative Republic
 - 396 years from the Exodus until the Reign of Saul.
- Constitutional Representative Monarchy
 - 379 years for Northern Israel
 - 515 years for Judah

Hebrew Commonwealth

Functioned under a number of various political structures.

- Political units of division were for every 10, 50, 100, and 1,000 men.
- Moses had a Council of State that was comprised of 70 Senators
 - 58 Captains of 1,000
 - 12 Tribal Governors
- Moses had an Expanded Council of State that comprised the 70 Senators + 540 Clan Chief's who represented the people.
 - “the chiefs, the heads of the tribes of Israel, shall gather themselves to you.” —Numbers 10:4

Punitive Responsibility

Punitive Responsibility

The government responds to crime.

Genesis 9, Exodus 18, and Romans 13 make clear that the civil government's responsibility is punitive.

- The civil government responds to crime.
- It does not prevent crime. It has no preventative force in Scripture.
- The fear of the Sword is that it is wielded without pity.
- The promise of speedy justice establishes a self-ruled society.

APPLICATION

YAHWEH Will Save Us

Salvation and Authority Belong to God.

[22] For YAHWEH is our judge; YAHWEH is our lawgiver;
YAHWEH is our king; he will save us. (ESV)

Isaiah 33:22

- Civil Government functions correctly as a minister of God.
- Civil Government only functions rightly when it obeys God.
- Civil Government needs “able men who fear God.”

The Righteousness of God

Take Every Thought Captive to Obey Christ

James 1:20–21

[20] for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. [21] Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

2 Corinthians 10:5–6

[5] We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, [6] being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Questions?