

Government

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Don't Leave It To Washington

Civil government has been a part of human activity for so long that most never even think to question its very existence. The first biblical reference to government goes back to the days of Noah. One of Noah's sons, Ham had a grandson named Nimrod. In Genesis 10:8-10 we discover: "Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord.' **And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar**" (emp. added). Several key points should be made regarding this new civil government. First, it was formed by a descendant of Ham who had been cursed for seeing the nakedness of Noah (Genesis 9:22-25). Second, Babel was the site in which God punished the people, scattering them and confusing their language (Genesis 11:5-9). Additionally, it was on this site that the mighty empire of Babylon would one day rise up and would take over Judea. This is not exactly a picture perfect "model" for civil government.



Is the salvation of the world up to the government?

This reference to the first civil government comes 1500 years after Creation. Thus, one should wonder exactly what was going on before this, and what was God's original plan. Could it be that civil government was not a part of the original plan, but was rather a rebellious act of man not submitting to God? In the opening chapters of Genesis we find God making direct commands (e.g., Genesis 2:10), the indication being that God Himself intended to govern mankind. In addition, the Patriarchal Age demonstrates more of a "family" governance. David Lipscomb pointed this out in 1913 in his book *Civil Government*. Commenting on Nimrod's actions Lipscomb observed, "Undoubtedly the government instituted by God – the family government – existed. He changed this by subjugating a number of families and tribes into one government under himself."

By the time Jesus Christ walked the streets of Jerusalem the existence of civil governments was well established. The Bible speaks clearly of kings and rulers and distinct nations like the Assyrians and Romans. In fact, the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus regarding paying taxes to the Roman government. "But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, 'Why do you test Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image

and inscription does it have?’ They answered and said, ‘Caesar’s.’ And He said to them, ‘Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ (Luke 20:23-25). Paul further clarified the role of a Christian in regards to government when he wrote “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves” (Romans 13:1-2).

One key distinction that is missing throughout history is using the government to convert the lost. This has never been a part of God’s plan. All of the conversions found in the book of Acts were based on preaching Christ crucified, personal relationships where the Truth was taught, and one-on-one interactions. Could it be that modern-day Christians are relying too heavily upon the government to do our job? Are we electing officials who we hope will enact laws favorable to “Christians” so that we don’t have to let our voices be heard? Are we hopeful that legislation will be passed so that we don’t have to confront our neighbors and coworkers who are lost in sin? While legislative laws may try to correct the moral compass of our nation, they cannot change the very real fact that all men have sinned and need the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Have we unwittingly turned over the great commission to politicians in Washington D.C.?

While I do hope that America will pull back towards a moral footing that is aligned with God’s Word, I must understand that it is not the job of politicians to save the lost. As a born-again, New Testament Christian who has been washed by the blood of Jesus Christ that is my job! And it must be my job no matter what type of government I live under. No matter what party rules Congress, no matter who sits in the oval office—I have a job that cannot be delegated to Washington D.C. While God has allowed civil governments to arise, that must not change our allegiance to Him and His commands—the original Lawgiver.

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