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Christian & Civil Government

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

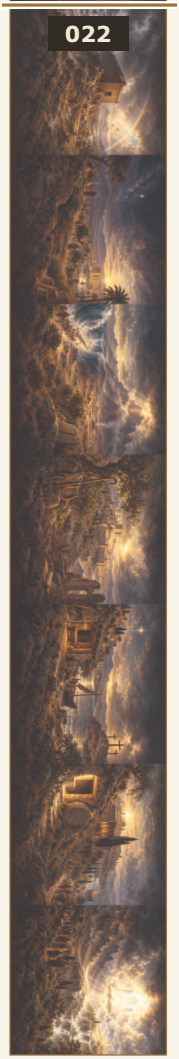
PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE





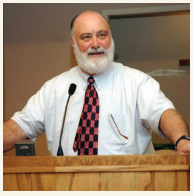
For he is the minister of God to thee for good.

ROMANS 13:4, EXCERPT

Civil government possesses responsibilities, but not unlimited authority. John Weaver examines the source and limits of office, the qualifications of rulers, obedience, and resistance to unlawful commands. This series brings biblical principles to questions of public order while asking both rulers and citizens to account for their conduct before God.

“You may disrespect the man in the office, but you must always respect the office of authority.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

Christian & Civil Government # 1

Some of you have heard me bring some of these truths before, but repetition aids learning. The more you hear, the more you understand. The Word of God says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation or condemnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he that is the civil magistrate is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."

"For this cause pay you tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to

whom fear, honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Introduction and Two Basic Presuppositions

Now tonight I want to begin this series on the Christian and civil government. Lord willing, I want to use a two-edged sword, cutting biblically and historically as well. One of our biggest problems is that we're living in a land of absolute ignorance today. We're ignorant of our history, ignorant of our heritage, and certainly ignorant of the Word of God. Greg quoted Hosea 4 and verse 6, where God says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." But our Lord said it like this in John 8 and verse 32: "You shall know the truth. And the truth shall set you free."

The opposite is equally true. If you do not know the truth, then you are not free; you are bound, a slave. In fact, 2 Corinthians 3 says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord, there is liberty." So where the Spirit of the Lord is not, there is bondage. The main purpose of this study, then, is to equip us with knowledge, that we might learn to be responsible Christians by understanding our duty and what the Word of God teaches.

The first basic presupposition is that Jesus Christ is King of the world. He is not simply head or King of the church, although He is indeed that. He is King of everything: politics, economics, government, and education. Jesus Christ is King of everything.

There is absolutely nothing that does not fall under His authority. In Matthew 28:18, Christ Himself said, "All power" or "all authority is given unto me in heaven and earth." Jesus Christ, then, has all power and all authority. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:15 that Jesus Christ is the only potentate, and potentate literally means the all-powerful one. Jesus Christ Himself declares that He is the all-powerful one; He is literally Head and King of everything.

The second basic presupposition is that the entirety of the Bible is the Word of God and is applicable to us today. The Word of God says in Psalm 119:89, "Forever, O Lord, is thy word settled in the heavens." Whatever God says is true, and whatever God has given us is applicable to us. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is

given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

When the Apostle Paul wrote that, he had in mind primarily the Old Testament, for the New Testament had not been completed at that time. The Bible, then, is our law word and our guide for every area and sphere of life. The Word of God teaches on every subject imaginable. It does not simply teach on the family or the church, but deals with government, economics, law, and a multitude of things. Anything and everything that affects our lives has principles in the Word of God that will correct us, instruct us, and lead us to righteousness and godliness.

Three historical books that I studied were, beside the Word of God, a great help to me. Some of them may be acquired today, although I think one of them is probably out of print. The first is Lex Rex, written by Samuel Rutherford in 1640. Lex Rex is a Latin title meaning “the law is king.” It was written against another treatise entitled Rex Lex, or “the king’s law,” and against the divine right of kings.

His basic premise is this: Kings, like everyone else, are to be subject to the law of God, and a king does not elevate himself above and beyond the law. Lex Rex, 1640, is a very important book, and it is in print today.

The second book was entitled Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos. Again, it is a Latin title meaning “a vindication of liberty against tyrants.” The reprint I have is a 1689 edition by Hubert Languet, or Junius Brutus, which was his pen name. There is another edition from 1616, and some say that this book was even available in the 1400s. It is an excellent book.

The third was Thomas Cobbet’s book, A Christian View of the Civil Magistrate, written in 1653. Of those three, probably the only one that you cannot obtain today is Thomas Cobbet’s A Christian View of the Civil Government. You might find a copy somewhere, and if you do, grab it, because it is exceedingly rare and exceedingly beneficial.

Those books are written in Old English and are sometimes a little difficult to read until you understand that the S's are like F's. You learn how to read them very quickly.

Let us begin by looking at Romans chapter 13, particularly verses 1 and 2. God says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God." The powers that be are ordained of God.

God Ordained Civil Government

Here we have the institution and nature of government. Scripture says very concisely and very clearly that God ordained government. The powers, or authorities, that be are ordained by God. God reigns by virtue of His own authority and rights; all others rule and reign by derivation. In other words, if God does not give someone authority, they simply do not have it.

Have you ever stopped and asked yourself this question? Why is it that the husband has the authority over the wife and the authority over the family? Why is a pastor an authority over the church? The answer comes back because that is the way that God ordained it. And likewise, the Bible tells us that God ordained civil government to be an authority as well. For instance, look in your Bibles, first of all, to the book of Proverbs, chapter 8.

In this passage, you have wisdom personified, who is none other than Jesus Christ. Listen to what He says in Proverbs 8, beginning with verse 15: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, and all the judges of the earth." In other words, no one has any authority except that which our Lord gives them.

Psalm 75, verses 6 and 7, gives us a very clear passage: "For promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the judge. He putteth down one, and he setteth up another." So promotion does not come from man. It does not come from any other direction other than from the sovereign God Himself. It is God who takes rulers down. It is God who puts them up.

Daniel, chapter 2, illustrates this very clearly. Let us begin with verse 20, just so that you can see that God is in the context: "Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are his." Now note, "Blessed be the name of God." So we have God in the context. Verse 21 continues, "And he," that is, God, "changeth the times and the seasons. He," God, "removeth kings and setteth up kings, and he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." The Bible says very plainly that God is the one who removes kings, or rulers, presidents, congressmen, however you want to call them. It is God who removes them. It is God who puts them up. Then, in verse 37, Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou, O king, art a king of kings."

Nebuchadnezzar, why did you have authority over other kings? Why were you unique? Daniel gives the reason: “Thou, O king, art a king of kings, for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, strength, and glory.” Nebuchadnezzar had the power and authority he possessed only because God gave it to him.

Nebuchadnezzar was a proud, arrogant, haughty monarch, and God had to teach him a lesson. In Daniel chapter 4, God decreed that his heart would be changed from a man’s heart and that a beast’s heart would be given unto him, with seven times, or seven years, passing over him. “This matter is by the decree of the watchers and by the command of the word of the holy ones.” The purpose was “to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.”

Why was Nebuchadnezzar going to be driven insane for seven years? So that the living might know that God rules in the kingdom of men and gives those kingdoms to whomever He wills.

Daniel 4 repeats the same truth. “All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months, he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?” While the word was in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, The kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee eat grass as

oxen." Seven times would pass over him, "till thou know" that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

God was teaching Nebuchadnezzar who the real sovereign is. It is God who has instituted and set up authority. Therefore, He Himself is sovereign, absolute, and possesses all power and authority. God reigns by virtue of His own proper authority.

All presidents, kings, congressmen, and all other rulers rule by derivation. In other words, God gives it to them. They derive their power and authority from God. God reigns from Himself; all others reign from Him. God has a jurisdiction that is proper, and all others are His delegates and His vassals. It follows, then, that God's jurisdiction, authority, and sovereignty are infinite; that is, they are unlimited.

But man's jurisdiction and authority are limited. There is no ruler except Christ, of course, who is King of this world. President Clinton may be president of the United States, but he is not president of France, England, or Germany. I am sure the people of those nations are thankful for that important distinction. The prime minister in England is not the prime minister in America. Thus, all kings, all presidents, and all congressmen exercise authority that is limited and confined. God's authority is unlimited and not confined, because God alone is sovereign, and all others are to be His delegates and His vassals.

Why am I emphasizing that? I want you to understand that God has not resigned His throne, abdicated His position, or laid aside His power. God has not given His earth and His people over to a handful of petty bureaucrats to trample under their feet and do with as they please. No, God is still on the throne. We are going to find out that God will judge all those who abuse and misuse the authority and power He gives.

Since God has ordained government and authority, all who receive authority and power are limited, responsible, and accountable. When I say they are limited, it means they can only go as far as God has ordained them to go. It is just like God said to the

sea: "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further. Here shalt thy proud waves be stayed."

So God says, All right, civil government, here is your limitation; here are your confines. Here, church, are your confines. Here, family, are your confines. God has limited all authority, and consequently, each is responsible and accountable to God. Just as the church is responsible to be Christian and biblical, the family is responsible to be Christian and biblical, and likewise, the government is responsible to be Christian and biblical. Let me demonstrate that to you from the Word of God.

The Nature and Titles of the Civil Magistrate

Turn back in your Bibles to Romans chapter 13. Let me take a few moments and go through this passage quickly, showing you the titles, or some of the names, used to describe the civil magistrate. In verse 1, the Bible says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God." Here you read "higher power," "power," and "powers." The word "power" is exousia, which literally means power, jurisdiction, or right. In verse 2, he says, "...whosoever therefore resisteth the power," the same word, "...resisteth the ordinance of God." Thus, in verse 2, they are called not only the power, but the ordinance of God.

Now look at verse 3: "...for rulers are not a terror to the good works, but to the evil." The word "rulers" is the Greek word archontes, which simply means first ones, chief ones, or leaders.

Everyone in this room and everyone outside of this room knows that government deals with leadership, power, and authority. There is a difference between power and authority. Suppose I come up to you after this service, reach into my coat pocket, pull out a .357 Magnum, stick it between your eyes, and say, “Give me all your money.” I have the power to take your money, but I do not have the authority. You can have power without authority, and you can have authority and power, but there is a difference between the two.

I was preaching in Arizona, where a state senator named Wayne Stump was supposed to speak after me. He stood behind the pulpit.

He was a big man. He said, “I have been asked to tell everyone here what government is. I’m going to tell you what government is without God.” He reached under his jacket, pulled out a .357 Magnum, held it up, and laid it on the pulpit. Needless to say, he got everyone’s attention. When everyone was quiet, he said, “That, my friend, is government without God. It’s nothing but force. It’s nothing but raw power.”

Everybody understands that in one sense of the word. But let us make sure, as Christians, that we go as far as God goes and say what God says. For instance, look in verse 4. We are still talking about the civil magistrate: “For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God.” Twice in verse 4, the civil magistrate is called the minister of God. The word “minister” there in the Greek is diakonos, from which we get our English word “deacon.” “Deacon” is a transliteration from the Greek; it was not translated.

The word “deacon” actually means a servant. Literally, verse 4 says, “For he,” that is, the civil ruler, “is the deacon or the servant of God.” Twice in verse 4, then, the civil magistrate is called a deacon, or the servant of God. He says, “For he is the minister of God,” and, in the latter part, “a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.” The word “revenger” is the Greek word ekdikos. Ek is a preposition meaning “out of,” and dikos is righteousness. The revenger here actually means an avenger, or one who exacts righteousness. God says civil government is His deacon, His exactor of righteousness.

In verse 6 he says, “For this cause pay you tribute also, for they are God’s ministers.” The word “ministers” in verse 6 is different from the word in verse 4. In verse 4, you have diakonos, from which we get our English word “deacon.” In verse 6, “ministers” is leitourgoi. Leitourgos is the singular form, and it is where we get our English word “liturgy.” What is a liturgy? A liturgy is a public form of worship. Every church has a liturgy, not just Catholics or Episcopalians. We may think of those as having high liturgy, but every church has one. In a Baptist church, you come in, sit down, someone opens in prayer, you sing a song, and you take an offering.

You go through a certain religious form and ceremony. A liturgy is public worship.

Everyone is willing to admit that government is power and authority, and that it must deal with leadership. But will you go as far as God? God ordained civil government not merely to have authority, power, or leadership, but to be His deacon, His servant, His exactor of righteousness, and His public worship. God ordained government to publicly worship Him, just as He ordained the family and the church to publicly worship Him. If God ordained civil government to be His deacon, His servant, whom is that deacon to serve? Clearly, the One who ordained it. If government is an exactor of righteousness, whose righteousness is it to exact? Obviously, the righteousness of the One who ordained it. If government is ordained by God as a public form of worship, a liturgy, whom is it to worship publicly? The answer is the One who ordained it.

Now, let me show you the impact and the importance of this truth. It means that government is a theological issue. You cannot understand government without God. And there is no such thing, listen to me carefully, as a separation between government and religion. You might have a separation between government and church. In this instance, there does not necessarily need to be a state church. If you were in England and were born in that country, the official church, the official state religion in England, would be Anglicanism. The Anglican Church is the Church of England.

That is all there is to it. You do not have to have the Presbyterian Church or the Baptist Church or the Methodist Church as the official church of this country. No, you do not necessarily have to have that. But listen, just because you do not have a state church or a state religion does not mean that government is neutral. No. You cannot separate government and religion. Government is either going to be a Christian government or it is going to be a pagan government, but it is still religious. Why?

Because here are all these lawmakers, sitting there and passing laws. But guess what they do to pass their laws? They determine whether a law is good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust. Their determination of right and wrong, good and bad, and just and unjust is determined by their religion. If it is the Christian religion, it might

come out a Christian law. But if it is not the Christian religion, it is going to come out a pagan religious law, but it is still religious. You cannot escape religion. Do you realize that, way back when Bobby Kennedy was Attorney General, he said that humanism was the official religion of the United States? The Supreme Court has said that humanism is a religion.

When our government kicked God out, kicked the law of God out, and kicked prayer out, it was not saying, "Now we can be neutral." No, no, no. They swapped the Christian religion for a pagan religion. It is still religious. I want to make a statement, and I am going to develop this in the next several nights, but I want you to understand that the subjection God demands in verse 1, when He says that every soul be subject to higher powers, is based upon those higher powers being what God has ordained them to be in verse 3, verse 4, and verse 6. I have no problem being in subjection to a civil government that is God's deacon, God's exactor of righteousness, and God's public worship.

The Three God-Ordained Institutions

God is nowhere in Romans 13, and I will prove it before the week is over; but God is nowhere in this passage demanding that we submit to a tyrannical government, a usurped power, or a usurped authority that God never gave. That is not what the passage teaches.

Please remember that God ordained only three institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the state, which is a ministry of justice. The family is central. If you were to draw a circle and put God in it, then draw another little circle for the family, and from the family draw circles for the church and the state, you would see why. Without the family, you cannot have a church or a state. The family is absolutely fundamental.

Sphere Authority and the Limits of Government

What God ordained was what you and I would call sphere authority. He gave the family authority to operate in its function, in its certain sphere; the church authority to operate in its sphere; and the state authority to operate in its sphere. Once you leave your sphere of

authority, you do not carry that authority with you. The family cannot tell the church, “You cannot preach the gospel.” The church cannot tell the state, “You cannot execute that murderer.” The state cannot tell the church, “You cannot do this,” nor can it tell the family, “You cannot educate your children.” It has no authority from God to do that. If an institution leaves its sphere of authority, it loses its authority.

Let me give you an illustration, one that everyone can identify with. I come into your home, visit with you, and notice that toys are scattered around, clothes need washing and ironing, dirty dishes are in the kitchen sink, and the grass needs cutting. After sitting there for a few minutes, I finally look around and say, "I've had all this I can take. I just can't take it anymore." Then I look at your wife and say, "Now you get up in there, and you go and wash those dishes. When you get through, wash and iron those clothes." I tell your children, "You pick up all these toys. When you get through, go out and start cutting the grass. Pick up all the trash in the yard."

You are not going to sit there on that couch and say, "That way, pastor, go get her. I've been wanting to tell her that all week long." No, you are going to say, "Pastor, that's my wife. Those are my kids." But I say, "You don't understand. I'm a husband and a father, and I have husbandly authority and fatherly authority."

You would respond, "Well, you might in your house, but not in this house. In this house, I'm the head. If anybody tells that woman what to do, it's going to be me. If anyone tells those kids what to do, it's going to be me. If you want to order somebody around, preacher, go back to your house and tell your wife and your kids what to do. But I'm the head of this house."

Would you be right in telling me that? Sure you would. Just because I have authority over my wife and children does not mean I have authority over your wife and children. I cannot carry that authority with me. In the same way, just because God has given government certain power in a limited sphere does not mean that, when government steps outside that sphere, it still has the same authority and power. Of course not.

It is absolutely foolish for anyone to advise any people that they need to be in submission to tyranny and totalitarianism. Let me tell you very pointedly: God never ordained tyranny or totalitarianism as a lawful, legitimate form of government.

Let us clear up another passage. I want you to look in your Bibles to 1 Peter chapter 2. I will deal with this a little bit later, probably in the week as well. As we turn there, let me remind you that God has not specified a certain type of government. For instance, the Word of God does not demand that we have a republic. I believe the principles in the Word of God will lead to a republican form of government, but it does not demand that we have a republic. It does not demand that we have a monarchy, a constitutional monarchy, an aristocracy, or an oligarchy.

Let me ask you a question. Can God use a monarchial form of government? The answer is yes. He did so in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Can God use a constitutional form of monarchy? Yes. He did so in the Old Testament, in the New Testament, and in England for many years. Can God use a republic? Yes. He did so in this country for many years.

Now, let me show you why I am emphasizing this. Look down to 1 Peter 2:13: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake. Whether it be to the king as supreme or to governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well.” Now, what are you going to do with verse 13? “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.”

When most people read that, they think statutes. They think laws. Did anybody drive over the speed limit coming here tonight? Yes, everybody did. If this verse really meant ordinance in that sense, then going over thirty-five in a thirty-five-mile-an-hour zone would have been sin. Do you follow what I am saying? What if you lived in China, where they require you to have an abortion after the first child? Would you be in submission to that law? The word “ordinance” is the Greek word ktisis, K-T-I-S-I-S.

“Ordinance” literally means that which is established, the thing established, or the act of founding or establishing. What, then, is

being said in 1 Peter 2:13? “Submit yourselves to every kind of government of man for the Lord’s sake. Whether it be”—in other words, it does not matter whether it is a monarchy, a constitutional monarchy, an aristocracy, or a republic, provided that it is set up to carry out the functions for which God ordained it. That is all he is saying in verse 13. He is not demanding that we obey every law that comes down the pipe. Not at all.

In Romans 13:1, government is called the ordinance of God. Here in 1 Peter 2:13, it is called the ordinance of man. Which is it? Is it the ordinance of God or the ordinance of man? The answer is that it is both. God ordained it, but man set it up. Just because it is called the ordinance of God does not mean it is not the ordinance of man, and just because it is called the ordinance of man does not mean it is not the ordinance of God.

God ordained the tabernacle, but men built it and set it up. God ordained the temple, but men built it and set it up. Likewise, God has ordained civil government, but men build it and set it up. Government, then, is the ordinance of God objectively, and the ordinance of man subjectively, because we are the ones who establish it. Therefore, 1 Peter 2:13 teaches that we are to submit to any government set up to carry out the purposes and functions for which God has ordained it. This, of course, excludes tyranny and totalitarianism, because they do not carry out the purpose of government which God has ordained.

Biblical Qualifications for Rulers

If God ordained government and set it up, as Scripture has shown, then He necessarily has the absolute and sovereign right to determine who should be in His government and to list the qualifications. He does exactly that. In Deuteronomy 17:15, God says, “Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee. Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother.” The first requirement is that the individual cannot be a stranger. He must be a brother—that is, he must be a believer.

I’m not going to preach the message, but I can demonstrate from the original charters and constitutions of this country that our

founding fathers took this verse literally. Practically every state excluded from any office anyone who did not profess faith in Jesus Christ and confess the inspiration of both the Old and New Testaments. If you were an unbeliever in this country when it was first founded, you could not hold any political office at all. God is saying, "Look, the very first qualification is you must be a believer."

How in the world can you have a Christian government without Christians? How can you carry out a government that would worship God and be God's deacon and God's exactor of righteousness if you have individuals who could care less about God or His Word? The very first qualification is that he must be a believer.

Look in verse 16: "But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way." Why was God saying not to multiply horses? Remember, horses in the Bible were used offensively and defensively. What you have in verse 16 is a limitation on war machinery. God is telling us that He is our protection.

We could have the largest standing army in the world, the best air force, the best naval force, the best bombs, and the smartest weaponry available. But if God does not protect us, we are unprotected. What does the Bible say? The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but safety is of the Lord. The horse is a vain thing to trust in.

I could say, "There have been a number of muggings, robberies, and home invasions, so I'm going to lay all these pistols around my pillow and on my nightstand. I'm going to put my shotguns in the corner and my rifles nearby. They're not going to get me."

If God does not wake me up in time and enable me to shoot straight, all those weapons would be absolutely useless. If God does not protect us, we are unprotected. That is a sermon in itself. But remember when Elijah was taken to heaven in a whirlwind, in a chariot of fire? Do you remember what Elisha cried? "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." When Elisha died, do you remember what the king said? "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." What they were

confessing was that the protection of the nation is in God, not in a standing army. That does not mean you are not to have some standing army for protection, some small one, but not some great thing. He said you are not to multiply. By the way, the army in the Bible originally was the militia. The Bible teaches that, and not a huge standing army.

So, first of all, the first qualification is that he must be a believer. Secondly, there is a limitation on war machinery. Look, if you would please, at Deuteronomy chapter 17, verse 17: “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away. Neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.” The third qualification is that he must unquestionably have morality. He shall not multiply wives to himself. In other words, the demand for the civil magistrate is that he must be a moral individual.

In our day, you hear politicians say all the time, “What I do in the privacy of my bedroom is my business and nobody else’s.” That is not true. If you are a public figure, if you are a public officer, then it is my business. Why would God say that he must be a man with unquestionable morality? Because if a man will cheat and violate his oath to the wife of his youth, whom he professes to love, what would he do to me, whom he does not love and does not know? God is saying that he must have a morality that is absolutely unquestionable.

If you used these first three qualifications—especially the first and third, a believer and a man of unquestionable morality—we would lose most of our congressmen. The White House would be gone for sure. Look, if you would please, at the latter part of that verse: “neither shall he multiply to himself silver and gold.” I will deal with that in another passage in just a moment. Look, if you would please, at verses 18 and 19. Here is another qualification.

"And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, and to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them."

So what does God say? God says the civil ruler must have his own personal copy of the Word of God. He must read therein every day. He must learn what? That he may fear the Lord, keep all the words of this law and these statutes, and do them. You see, God never ordained civil magistrates to make their own laws. He ordained civil magistrates to enforce His laws.

And then notice, if you would please, in verse 20: "That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children, in the midst of Israel." So God says another reason he must have his own personal copy of the Word of God and read and study it is that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren.

I want to tell you something. If you really want to make a bureaucrat or a politician mad today, call him your public servant. They do not believe they are public servants; they believe they are your rulers. I will tell you the exact words one told me, and I have witnesses. When I challenged him, he said, "I am the state. I could do whatever I please."

I said, "I got news for you, sir. You are not the state, and you cannot do what you please." God says that their heart be not lifted up. Note how our civil government passes laws for the populace, but does not believe it is itself to be subject to those laws. They want those laws to control us, but not to control themselves. So God says he must be a believer, have unquestionable morality, know and study the Word of God, and apply the law of God.

Exodus 18:21 says, “Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers.”

I had told you why I was going to wait to deal with the silver and the gold. Here is why. “Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people able men”—there is another requirement: they must have ability. “Such as fear God”—piety; that is, they must be believers. “Men of truth”—men of integrity. The passage also requires men hating covetousness.

You have heard the old adage: How can you tell if a politician is lying? Watch his lips. If they move, he is lying. The truth is, God says they must be men of truth. How many of you genuinely believe our politicians today? I generally believe exactly the opposite of what they say, and usually that is right. You remember Jimmy Carter said, "Trust me, I'll never lie to you." He did. Sure he did. The Bible says all men are liars. But God says they must be men of truth.

Notice not only integrity, but fidelity. He says, "hating covetousness." It is not merely, "Do not multiply to yourself silver and gold"; you must hate covetousness.

Have you ever wondered why men would spend millions of dollars to get a job that pays $250,000 a year? If you are a congressman, it is less than that. Some men spend $40 and $50 million, and some congressmen spend $6, $7, or $8 million to get elected. Yet the office pays only $80,000 or $100,000 a year. If I can serve only two years at $100,000 a year and have spent $6 million to get elected, I am in the hole.

Isn't it amazing that those who go off to Congress poor always come out rich? You do not have perks, nor an opportunity to swindle, cheat, and steal. That is why God says, "hating covetousness."

When you hear a politician say, "I just want to serve the people," let us go back to the way it was when our country was first founded. Our congressmen served without pay, at their own expense. Congress would not be in session nearly as long as it is today if they had to serve at their own expense without pay.

One of my favorite stories concerns Thomas Jefferson's inauguration as president of the United States. Afterward, he walked across the street to a boarding house for lunch. All the tables and chairs were full, so the president of the United States had to stand in the corner and wait for someone to get up so he could sit down and eat. Their attitude was, "Why should we arise for him? He is our servant. Let him wait." He did not hold up a whole runway and get a $40,000 haircut, I can assure you.

God says they are to be men of ability, men of truth, men of integrity, men of fidelity, and men who hate covetousness.

Now look in Deuteronomy 1:13. This ties right together: “Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.” There is another qualification: wise and understanding. That would eliminate a lot of our politicians today, because they do not have any wisdom, and they certainly do not have any understanding.

In 2 Samuel 23, notice how many times David claims direct inspiration for this one simple truth. This will boggle your mind. Look at it. “Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel said,” and then, “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me.” That is one time.

“His word was in my tongue.” That is twice. “The God of Israel said,” that is three times. “The rock of Israel spake to me,” four times. David claims direct inspiration for this one simple statement: “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.” Isn’t that a tremendous statement? God said that if you are going to be a civil ruler, you must be just and must rule in the fear of God. What is justice? What is being just? What is ruling in the fear of God?

You had better let the Bible determine that for you. For by the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. The Word of God also says in Job 28:28 that it is turning away from that which is evil, wicked, and ungodly. Psalm 72:1-2 and verse 11 says rulers are to do homage to Jesus Christ. Psalm 2:10-12 says they are to be well instructed by Jesus Christ. Isaiah 49:23 and Isaiah 16:10 call them the nursing mothers and nursing fathers of the people of God.

In 2 Samuel 5:12, David understands why God made him king. In this passage, he says, “And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel’s sake.” God raised him up that he might serve, be a blessing, and be a benefit to the people of God.

There are also collective descriptions of civil magistrates in the Word of God. Romans 13:4 calls them the ministers of God and the avengers of God. Psalm 78:70-72 calls them a public shepherd to feed. 1 Samuel 10:1 and 2 Kings 20:5 call them a captain and leader

of the people to defend them. Psalm 47:9 calls them the shields of the earth. All of these are descriptions of civil magistrates.

In 1 Peter 2:13, he said, "Submit yourself to every ordinance of man," or every type of government that man sets up for the purpose which God ordained it. In Romans 13:2, government is called the ordinance of God. Here in 1 Peter 2, it is called the ordinance of man. Therefore, it follows that government is covenantal in nature.

The Covenantal Nature of Government

Hubert Languet, in his book Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos, writes:

"By the same reason, the people are always called the Lord's people and the Lord's inheritance, and the king is governor of this inheritance and conductor or leader of his people, which is the title given to David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and other good princes. When also the covenant is passed between God and the king, it is upon the condition that the people remain always the people of God, to show that God will not in any case spoil himself of his property and his possession when he gives to the kings the government of the people, but establishes them to take charge of and well use them, no more nor less than he who makes choice of a shepherd to look after the flocks, remains notwithstanding himself still master and owner of them."

When God chooses a leader, it is no more than a man choosing a shepherd to look over his flock. The flock still remains the property of the owner; it is not the property of the one chosen to look after it. Likewise, once that civil magistrate gets there, the people are not his property. They still belong to God. But how did Hubert Languet know that government is covenantal in nature? Because he read the Bible.

Basically, in the Bible there are two types of covenant when it comes to government. There is a covenant between God and the king, where God says, "I'm going to be your God," and the king says, "I'm going to be your king." So here is a government covenant between God, the king, and the people. The people are also saying, "We're going to be your people." The second covenant is between the king and the people, where the king agrees to rule faithfully and the

people agree to obey as long as he does so. Let me show it to you in the Bible.

In 2 Kings 11:17, we find both covenants: “And Jehoiada,” who was the high priest, “then Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people that they should be the Lord's people.” Then he says, “between the king also and the people.” So here are two separate covenants, one between God, the king, and the people, and then one between the king and the people as well.

In 1 Chronicles 11:3, we read, “Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron,” that is, to David. “And David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel according to the word of the Lord by Samuel.” So David made a covenant with them.

We see the same thing in 2 Chronicles 23:2-3: “And they went about in Judah and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah and the chief of the fathers of Israel and they came to Jerusalem. And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God.” Verse 3 says, “And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign as the Lord had said of the sons of David.” Then verse 16 says, “And Jehoiada made a covenant between him,” that is, God, “and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the Lord's people.”

So here are two covenants: one between God, the king, and the people. God will be their God, the king will be God's king, and the people will be God's people. Then there is a separate covenant between the king and the people, where the king agrees to rule faithfully and the people agree to obey as long as he does.

If you do not understand this concept, there are certain verses in the Bible you will never understand. For instance, Ecclesiastes 8:2, where Solomon said, “I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.” He said, in effect, that you have given an oath; you have entered into a covenant that you will obey me as long as I rule faithfully, and I expect you to do so.

In the New Testament, Romans 13:5 says, “Wherefore, ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.”

God gives two reasons why you and I should be subject to a godly, biblical, righteous civil government. First, it is for wrath's sake, because God has not given them the sword in vain. They have the authority and power to use the sword. But the second reason is for conscience' sake. The word "conscience" is from the Greek word syneidesis. Syn is a preposition meaning "with," and eidesis means that which you know. Conscience means that which you know with. The word may also be understood through con, meaning "with," and sciens, meaning know. Your conscience is that which you know with.

You should be in subjection to a godly civil ruler not only for wrath's sake, because you know what government is and what God requires of you, but also because you understand the covenantal nature of government.

Most people misinterpret 1 Timothy 2. Everyone says, "The Bible requires us to pray for our rulers." Yes, it does. But why does God ask us to pray for our rulers? Inevitably, someone will say, "So that they might be saved."

That is not the answer. If they are not saved, they ought not to be rulers to begin with, according to the Bible. Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:1, "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority." Why should we pray for them? "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." We pray for them so that they will do right and leave us alone, so that we may do what is right. We pray that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. When we pray for them, it is not for their benefit, but for ours.

In biblical covenants, when one party violates the covenant, it looses the other party from obedience. Everyone understands this, or at least they should. If you do not, you had better never enter into a contract with anyone, because a contract is nothing more than a covenant. A covenant always contains stipulations. One example is found in Joshua chapter 2.

Here was a covenant that was written in and agreed to by the spies and Rahab. Rahab had taken the spies, hidden them, saved their

lives, and was letting them down so they could escape. Before they left, she asked them to promise that they would spare her and her family.

In Joshua chapter 2, beginning in verse 17, we read: “And the men said unto her, We will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear.” They had entered into a covenant and given each other an oath. “Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by, and thou shalt bring thy father and thy mother and thy brethren and all thy father's household home unto thee. And it shall be that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless. And whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him.”

These were the stipulations of the covenant. If Rahab wanted her family spared, she had to bring them into her house and bind the scarlet cord in the window. The spies would not touch anybody in that house. But if any member of her family went out into the street and was killed, that person's blood would be on his own head, because he should have stayed in the house. The spies did not know who belonged to her and who did not.

If they were outside, the spies would kill them all. But if they came inside the house and touched anybody, that person's blood would be on them, because they had agreed not to do so. There was one last stipulation: “And if thou utter this our business,” that is, if Rahab told their secret or violated her end of the agreement, “if thou utter this our business, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear.” In other words, if Rahab revealed their plans, they would be released from their obligation to spare her and her family. If she violated her end of the agreement, they were free from obedience to their end of the agreement.

If you agree with a man that you will pay him when he finishes a job, and he agrees to do that job a certain way, then if he does not do it that way, or finish the job according to the covenant, according to the contract, you do not owe him the money—not until he fulfills his end of the covenant. If he does not fulfill his end, you are not

obligated to keep your end. That is true between man and man. It is also true between God and man.

All of us know that God entered into a covenant with Israel. If you would read 2 Kings 17, beginning with verse 7 through verse 23, you will find how Israel repeatedly violated that covenant. They made molten images, worshiped Baal, turned from God, trampled His law under their feet, and refused to obey. What did God do? God sent the Assyrians upon them and sent them away into captivity.

Could not Israel come to God and say, "God, wait a minute. We are Your covenant people. You have agreed to bless us"? And God says, "Yes, that is right. I did agree to bless you as long as you obeyed, but you have violated your end of the covenant. Because you disobeyed, I have brought the curses of My covenant down upon you." Read the book of Hosea, Amos chapter 4, and Isaiah 58. You will find that when Israel violated her end of the covenant, God was not obligated to keep His end, and He did not. If this principle is true in the least—between man and man—and in the greatest—between God and man—it is also true in that which is in the middle: between government and man.

Samuel Rutherford said in Lex Rex: "When the king defends not true religion but presses upon the people a false and an idolatrous religion, in that they are not under the king but are presumed to have no king so far and are presumed to have the power in themselves as if they had not appointed any king at all. As if we presume the body has given to the right hand the power to ward off strokes and to defend the body, if the right hand should by some palsy or some other disease become impotent and be withered up when ill is coming upon the body, it is presumed that the power of defense is given to the left hand and to the rest of the body to defend itself. In this case, as if the body had no right hand and had never communicated any power to the right hand. If therefore he, the king, defend not religion for the salvation of the souls of all in his public and royal way, it is presumed as undeniable that the people of God, who by the law of God are to care for their own souls, are to defend in their own way true religion which so nearly concerned them and their eternal happiness."

When the king usurps power, becomes a tyrant, or refuses to keep his end of the covenant, the power then goes back to the people as if they had no king at all. Consider the illustration. I am right-handed, and if someone comes up and tries to harm me, I will defend myself. Since I am right-handed, sooner or later I am going to throw my right arm. Suppose that person counters and blocks it with such force that my right arm is broken. Am I then going to say, "Well, you have broken my arm; you might as well go ahead and kill me. I will just stand here while you kill me"? No. When my right arm is broken, I will fight with my left hand. When my left arm is broken, I will kick with my legs.

When my legs are broken, I will bite. When all my teeth are pulled out or knocked out, I will try to gum the attacker to death. I am going to defend myself. If I do not have my right hand, I will fight with my left hand, just as if I had no right hand at all.

If you do not understand this principle, you do not understand how our country was founded and why it was founded. This country was not founded in rebellion; it was founded upon biblical principle: when one party violates the covenant, the other party is loosed from obedience. Let me read to you a couple of points out of the Fairfax Resolves.

Historical Application: The American Founding

Most people do not understand that George III, the king of England, was also king of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. He was king of all thirteen colonies. Each colony had its own separate charter and constitution. None of the colonies was ever under Parliament; they had their own legislatures. King George III was their king, just as the people in England had a king.

On July 18, 1774, Charles Broadwater, George Mason, and George Washington gathered at the Fairfax courthouse in Fairfax, Virginia, and drew up the Fairfax Resolves, consisting of twenty-four resolves. In these resolves, they petitioned the king of England to fulfill his covenantal responsibilities. Some of these could have been written yesterday, though they were written in 1774.

Resolution number five states: “Resolved, that the claim lately assumed and exercised by the British Parliament of making all such laws as they think fit to govern the people of these colonies and to extort from us our money without our consent, is not only diametrically contrary to the first principles of the Constitution and the original compacts by which we are dependent upon the British Crown and government, but is totally incompatible with the privileges of a free people and the natural rights of mankind and will render our own legislatures merely nominal and nugatory and is calculated to reduce us from a state of freedom and happiness to slavery and misery.”

The resolution refers to Parliament making laws as it thinks fit and extorting money without consent. Is that what Congress does? This country was never under Parliament. It is like Canada passing a law tomorrow requiring you to give five cents tax on every dollar to the Canadian government. The Canadian government has no business passing a law for American citizens. Parliament had no business passing laws for the colonials, for they had their own legislatures. Resolution number six follows.

"Resolved, that taxation and representation are in their nature inseparable, and the right of withholding or giving and granting their own money is the only effectual security to a free people against the encroachments of despotism and tyranny, and that whenever they yield to the one, they must quickly fall prey to the other." They declared that taxation and representation are inseparable, and that the right of withholding, giving, or granting their own money is the only effectual security of a free people.

George Washington, George Mason, and Charles Broadwater said that if we do not have the right to withhold our money from the government, we are not free. Can you withhold your money? You may say, "God, I can." You might do so, but you are going to end up fighting. They may come, throw you in jail anyhow, and take everything you have. What does that mean? It means we are not free; we are slaves. That is exactly what George Washington, the first president of the United States, said was tyranny.

In other words, we the people ought to say, "We want this. We will support it, but we do not want that, and we are not going to support

it, and you are not going to do it." But our government is so deteriorated and has become so tyrannical that they say, "You will do it, or we will confiscate your goods and put you in prison to boot."

Resolution number eight declared: "Resolved, that it is our greatest wish and inclination, as well as interest, to continue our connection with and dependence upon the British government. But though we are its subjects, we will use every means which heaven hath given us to prevent us from becoming its slaves." They were saying, George, we want to be your subjects. We are willing to continue our dependence upon Great Britain. But though we are your subjects, we will never be your slaves.

Resolution number twenty-two declared: "Resolved, that should the town of Boston be forced to submit to the late, cruel and oppressive measures of government"—the Boston Port Bill, after the Boston Tea Party. George III and Parliament decided to close the port of Boston and thereby starve the people of Massachusetts into submission. The resolution continued: "that we shall not hold the same to be binding upon us, but will notwithstanding religiously maintain and inviolably adhere to such measures as shall be concerted by the general Congress for the preservation of our lives, liberties, and fortunes."

When Parliament tried to close Boston Port, the other colonies sent food, money, medical supplies, and whatever was necessary for the folks of Boston and kept them going. They said, “We don't care what kind of law Parliament passes. It doesn't affect us. We will not submit to it. We will do exactly opposite of what they want us to do.”

Although Washington, Broadwater, and Mason wrote them, resolution number 23 came from Congress:

“Resolved, that it be recommended to the deputies of the General Congress to draw up and transmit a humble and dutiful petition and remonstrance to His Majesty, asserting with decent firmness our just and constitutional rights and privileges, lamenting the fatal necessity of being compelled to enter into measures disgusting to His Majesty and His Parliament, or injurious to our fellow subjects in Great Britain, declaring in the strongest terms our duty and affection to His Majesty's person, family, and government, and our desire to

continue our dependence upon Great Britain, and most humbly beseeching our majesty not to reduce his faithful subjects of America to a state of desperation and reflect that from our sovereign there can be but one appeal."

They were saying, "George, we want to be your good subjects and we're willing to do that."

But if you violate that Constitution and try to force us to do that which is contrary to that Constitution, we will fight. Everyone understands this, but let me read it to you, because here it is in black and white, the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Now listen carefully: "That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men." Rights do not come from government. Government cannot give rights. The only thing it can do is protect rights. "So 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 to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute a new government, laying foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such a form as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness.

"Prudence, indeed, will dictate that government long established should not be changed for light and transient reasons, and accordingly, all experience has shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing forms to which they are accustomed. But 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 provide new government for their future security."

What did our founding fathers say? George III would not keep his covenantal agreement. He violated it. Consequently, when he tried to force us into slavery, since he had violated his end of the agreement, we were not obligated to keep our end. When he invaded

us, we fought. Who were the rebels? Not the Americans, but George III and Parliament. This country was founded on this very principle.

In biblical covenants, all parties are responsible to the Lord in the fullest. Samuel Rutherford said: “For the king and the people are each of them above and below each other in different respects. The people, because they create the man king, they are so above the king and have a virtual power to compel him to do his duty. And the king, asking, have an authoritative power above the people because royalty is formally in him and originally and virtually owning the people. Therefore, he may compel them to do their duty.”

We have a power over and above our congressmen because we are the ones who make them congressmen. They would not be congressmen without us. But once they get an office, they also have a power over us. If they do not do as we please, supposedly we can call them back and let them cease being our representative. Yet once they get an office, they now have a power over us, and they can make us do supposedly that which is right as well.

When you read the Bible, have you ever noticed that when a king or ruler sins privately, he is always judged privately? But whenever a king or ruler sins openly and publicly, the people are always judged with the ruler. There is a time when just the ruler is judged, but there is also a time when the people are judged with the ruler. Why? Because of the covenantal nature of government.

Corporate Responsibility and Judgment

In biblical covenants, each party is responsible to the fullest. Here is a covenant between the king, the people, and the Lord: We have agreed to be God's people, and we have agreed to be God's rulers. This is why the president, for years, always took his oath of office with his hand upon Deuteronomy 28, the passage containing the blessings and the curses, recognizing the covenantal nature of government.

Look in your Bibles to 2 Samuel, chapter 21, beginning with verse 1. Here is a time of famine in the land: "Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year. And David inquired of the Lord." It is time to inquire of the Lord when there is a famine

three years in a row. And God answered him, "It is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." If you would read Joshua chapter 9, the Gibeonites were those people who came to the children of Israel with moldy bread and old, tattered clothes. And so they said, "Who are you?" "Oh, we've heard about God and we've heard about you."

They said, “We come to enter into a covenant with you.” When asked how they knew they were not of the land, they pointed to their stale bread, old wine bottles, and worn clothes, claiming they had been traveling a long time. They never checked with God. They entered into covenant with the Gibeonites, and afterward discovered that the Gibeonites were part of the Amorites in the land whom they were supposed to kill. God told the Israelites, “Look, you’ve given them your word; you can’t kill them. You might make them your slaves.” The Bible says they made them drawers of water and hewers of wood, but God forbade them to kill them because they had given them their word.

Now watch. Verse 2 says, “And the king called the Gibeonites and said unto them, Now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites. And the children of Israel had sworn unto them. Look, and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.”

If King Saul was slaying the Gibeonites, why did God send a famine on the entire nation for three years? Why did God not simply judge Saul and his house? Because this was not a private sin. It was an open, public sin, and every Israelite knew that the Gibeonites were not to be killed. When they allowed their ruler to murder those Gibeonites contrary to their covenantal agreement, God judged not only Saul but the nation as well.

Look in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles chapter 21. Everybody knows the story of David and Bathsheba. When David committed adultery with Bathsheba, David and his family were judged. But in 1 Chronicles chapter 21, verse 2, David said to Joab and the rulers of the people, “Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring the number of them to me, that I may know them.” Joab answered, “The Lord make His people a hundred times so many more as they be. But my lord the king, are they not all my lord’s

servants? Why then doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a trespass in Israel?" Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed over Joab. David said, "Joab, what I want you to do is go out and number the people."

What David was wanting numbered was his army. This is where you get the real standing army in Scripture. God judged David and the people because of this. Joab was a murderer, yet even he said, "Are not all these the Lord's servants and your servants, David? Why would you be a cause of trespass for Israel?" Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed, so Joab went out and began numbering the people.

First, the army was God's army, not David's. When you read the phrase in the Bible, "the Lord God of hosts," the word "hosts" means armies. God is the Lord God of the armies. The armies of Israel were God's armies, not David's.

Secondly, the armies were not to be numbered except in a time of war. There was no time of war here. Thirdly, when they were numbered, a half-shekel for the sanctuary was to be taken, a ransom. It was not taken.

Verse 7 says, "And God was displeased with this thing. Therefore, He smote Israel." Verse 14 says, "So the Lord sent pestilence upon Israel and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men."

Why did God not simply judge David here as He did when He judged him with Bathsheba? Because every Israelite knew that what David was doing was wrong. Even Joab the murderer knew it was wrong, and no one lifted a finger to stop him. So God judged the people with the ruler.

Remember 1 Kings chapter 18? Elijah said, "As the Lord God lives, before whom I stand. There shall not be rain or dew these years, but according to my word." For three and a half years there was drought in Israel. Why? Because of Ahab and Jezebel. Everybody knew they were wrong and wicked, but no one lifted a finger to stop them. They murdered the prophets of God. God judged the people; He judged the nation along with the rulers.

If there were no other verse in the Bible, this one would be sufficient. If I were to ask you who the most wicked king in Israel was, I would hope you would answer Ahab, for he was. If I were to

ask you who the most wicked king in Judah was, I would hope you would answer Manasseh, for he was. Look at what the Bible says concerning Manasseh in Jeremiah 15:4: "And I will cause them," that is, the people, "to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem."

God said, "I'm going to cause all the people to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh for what he did in Jerusalem." Why not just judge Manasseh for what he did? Because Manasseh was a public figure. Manasseh was their king. There was a covenantal agreement. He led the people into idolatry and seduced them into wickedness. They knew it was wrong, but they never stopped him. So God judged the people with their ruler.

The mentality of the average American is, "It's none of my business what they do in Washington. I just pay my taxes. What they do, they're responsible for." No, that is not true. "It doesn't matter to me what they do in Columbia. I just pay my taxes." No, it does matter what they do. It does matter, because you are in a covenantal agreement.

We have a constitution. That constitution is nothing more than a covenant. We have the Bible. The Bible is a covenantal book. In 1 Samuel 12, God told the people, "You want a king? I'm going to give him to you." In verses 24 and 25, He tells them, "But if you sin against Me, I'll destroy the king and you as well." If you think for one minute that America is going to escape God's judgment for what we have allowed our leaders to do, you are mistaken.

Application and Call to Holiness

We've made murder legal in this country through abortion, sodomy legal, and theft legal. Socialism is still theft. We are probably the only country, and perhaps the only generation, to think we will escape the judgment of God. God will judge everybody else, but He will not judge us. You say, "Brother Weaver, the Lord's coming back." I know He is coming back, literally, visibly, and bodily. But that does not mean He will come back before He judges this country.

He did not come back before 722 B.C., when the Assyrians swept down, destroyed Israel, and took them into captivity. He did not come back before 586 B.C., when Judah was carried away into Babylon. He did not come back before Stalin murdered those millions in the forests of Russia. He did not come back before Mao Zedong murdered his millions. He did not come back before Castro got his. What makes you think we are going to be the only ones who escape God's judgment? We have allowed a government to run amok, totally out of control, contrary to God and God's Word. We have let them kick God out of every avenue and sphere of life, and we think God is pleased? God is angry.

There is a covenantal blessing, but there is also a covenantal curse. You say, "Brother Weaver, what can I do?" Let me show you one verse. Look in your Bibles to Proverbs 28:4. You ought to memorize this verse. God says, "They that forsake the law," that is, God's law, "praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them." If you forsake God's law, you are praising the wicked; if you keep His law, you are contending. To contend means to fight against. One way we fight against the wicked is by obedience. Therefore, by the grace of God, we ought to be the most holy, godly, and obedient people we can be. You say, "Brother Weaver, what in the world is that going to do?" I could be facetious and say, "Well, if you want to change things, write your congressman."

They will not even answer you. If they do, it is amazing what they can say without answering your questions or addressing the issue. One of them may write back, “Well, I appreciate your view, but I must vote my conscience on that matter.” We did not send him up there to vote his conscience. We sent him up there to uphold the rule of law.

You can vote; I am not telling you not to vote. But the Democrats will take you over the cliff at one hundred miles an hour, and the Republicans will take you over at eighty. You are going over one way or the other; it is just a matter of which speed you want to go. What difference does it make if you have the lesser of two evils? If you vote for the lesser of two evils, you are still voting for evil. Socialists A or Socialists B?

You can take it to the courts, but if you believe there is justice in this land, you have not been in any courtroom lately. I am not a communist; I have no sympathy for communists, and I do not normally agree with them whatsoever. But I do agree with one thing one communist said. Gus Hall said, “The reason we refer to our judicial system as the halls of justice is because the only place you can get any justice is out in the halls.” That is about the truth. You surely cannot get it in the courtroom.

You say, “Well, Brother Weaver, what can I do?” You can live as holy, godly, and obediently as you can by the grace of God in your life. You say, “What good will that do?” Have you ever stopped to think that, as wicked and ungodly as Sodom and Gomorrah were, God was willing to spare those countries, those cities, if there were ten righteous people?

There are far more than that in this room. We must fight for what is right, or we will be judged as well. We must stand up for truth, or the judgment of God falls on us. Government has been ordained of God, and it is covenantal in nature. Let us pray: Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us tonight.

Build us up in the most holy faith. Help us see the absolute necessity and importance of having a biblical view of government. Lord willing, Father, we will continue tomorrow night and show exactly why You have ordained it. Give us an understanding heart. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Christian & Civil Government # 2

Open your Bibles once again to Romans chapter 13. We covered a lot of ground last night. One reason I had to preach so long was that, for two or three nights, I was having to cram two messages into one. I think most of the heavy-duty material was given last night, but I hope you will follow along, especially in the Word of God.

Romans 13 begins: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation,” or condemnation.

“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience’ sake. For this

cause pay ye tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."

"Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another. For he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Review of Government's Institution and Nature

Last night we dealt with the institution and nature of government. I took great pains to show that it was God who ordained and instituted government. We looked in Proverbs chapter 8, Psalm 75, Daniel 2, and Daniel 4, and concluded that God alone is sovereign and rules by His own sovereign authority. All others rule by derivation. There is no one—not a father, not a husband, not a pastor, not a civil magistrate—who can have any authority at all except that it comes from God.

God has not abdicated His position, nor has He given His world and His people over to a handful of petty bureaucrats to do with as they please. In Romans chapter 13, we examined terms describing the civil magistrate to demonstrate that God ordained them to be His servants. They are called powers and leaders or rulers; and in verse 4, twice, they are called the minister of God.

The word "minister" is the Greek word diakonos, from which we get our English word "deacon," literally meaning a servant. God has ordained civil government to be His deacon, His servant. In verse 4, the ruler is also called a revenger. The word there is ekdikos—ek, a preposition meaning "out of," and dikē, "righteousness"—one who exacts righteousness out of. God has ordained the civil magistrate not only to be His deacon and His exactor of righteousness, but, in verse 6, he is called a minister again. This time the word is leitourgoi, from which we get our English word "liturgy." God has ordained civil government not only to be a leader and a power, but also to be His deacon, His exactor of righteousness, and His public worship.

Government is covenantal in nature. In the Bible, when one party loses, disobeys, or breaks the covenant, the other party is loosed from obedience. That is exactly how this country was founded. The

Americans were not in rebellion; it was George III and Parliament who were in rebellion. Since George III violated his covenant, the Americans were free from their end of the bargain. When King George invaded, we fought and won the war for independence. In biblical covenants, when one party violates the covenant, the other party is loosed from obedience; both parties are also responsible to God in the fullest.

When a ruler sins individually, God judges that ruler individually. But when he sins openly and publicly, and the people do not stop him, God always judges the people. He judges the nation and the land along with the ruler. Scripture gives numerous examples of this.

The Purpose of Government

The Purpose of Government: Ministry of Justice

Romans 13:3-4 says, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

The Bible summarizes the purpose of government under two simple heads. God ordained and established civil government, number one, to punish evildoers, and number two, to protect the good-doers, or the righteous. Government was instituted and ordained by God to be a minister of justice.

God has ordained only three institutions: the family, a ministry of education; the church, a ministry of grace; and the state, a ministry of justice. Government has never been ordained by God to be a provider government. God never ordained government to be in the welfare business. Welfare historically and biblically has always been a ministry of the family and also a ministry of the church, but it has never been a ministry of government. God has not ordained government to be a provider or a ministry of welfare. He has ordained government simply to be a ministry of justice.

Moreover, God has not ordained civil government to be a ministry of education. That is the family's ministry, not the government's. There were no public schools in this country until 1845 in Massachusetts. Some individuals who set up the government or the public school did so with the specific intent of unraveling the serpent's coils from around our children. According to their definition, the serpent's coils were biblical Christianity.

They have literally unraveled Christianity from government education, or public education. But it may surprise you to know that there were no public schools in the South until after the South lost the war of northern aggression. Then the North forced those upon us during Reconstruction so that our children would learn the northern view, the Unitarian view, rather than the biblical view. That is a fact.

Historically and biblically, education has always been in the family and of the family, and in the church and of the church. It has never, ever been of the government. The Word of God therefore limits government basically to a ministry of justice.

Our Constitution also limits the government. I might add that it does not limit the government as closely as the Word of God, but it does indeed limit the government. While giving eighty grants of power to the federal government, the Constitution of the United States levies 115 prohibitions against it. To the federal legislative power, there are twenty grants of power, and then there are seventy restraints.

The Constitution of the United States is normally referred to either as an express-powers document or as a limited-powers document. The only authority the federal government has is that which is expressly stated, that which is expressly written, in the Constitution. Unless the power is expressly stated there, the government does not have it. To call the Constitution a limited-powers document says the same thing in another way: the federal government is limited to the powers stated in the Constitution.

Someone inevitably asks, “Brother Weaver, where do you find that in the Constitution?” You can find it very quickly and clearly in Article 9 and Article 10. Article 9 says, “The enumeration in the

Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people." The first ten amendments, or the Bill of Rights, are only some of the rights Americans have; they are not all of them. The listing of a few does not deny or disparage the others.

Article 10 says, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."

Here is a clear, concise statement: the states got together and gave the federal government a certain amount of limited power. What the states did not give the federal government, they reserved to themselves. To show you how far we've gone and how everything has been turned upside down, the federal government was ordained to be the servant of the states, not the states the servants of the federal government.

If we were strictly constitutional, there would be no unfunded mandates. There would be no mandates from the federal government. The only mandates would be given by the states to the federal government.

You say, "Brother Weaver, wait just a moment. You've just told me that God has ordained government to be a ministry of justice. You've told me God has never ordained government to be a ministry of welfare, nor a ministry of education. And yet, I know a little bit about the Constitution, and there is in the Constitution that general welfare clause."

Yes, you will find that first of all in the Preamble, and secondly in Article 1, Section 8, in the first paragraph. But let me read the Preamble: "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

You say, "Well, see, Brother Weaver, there it is right there in the Preamble because it says 'promote the general welfare.'" But may I remind you that when the founding fathers put that little phrase in

here, they had no idea of food stamps and WIC programs and any and every other welfare scam and scheme that has come along. All you have to do is read the Federalist Papers. They were written by James Madison, known as the father of our Constitution; Alexander Hamilton; and John Jay, the first Supreme Court justice. Madison was secretary at the Constitutional Convention, and Hamilton was secretary of the Treasury.

Each of these men said in the Federalist that the phrase "provide for the common welfare," or "the general welfare," is an explanation of providing for the common defense. Promoting the general welfare is connected with providing for the common defense. It had nothing to do with what you and I would know today as welfare. Therefore, the Constitution gives the government no right to be a ministry of welfare, nor any right to be a ministry of education.

Government limits it as closely as it can, but not as closely as the Word of God. Romans 13:3 says, “For rulers,” that is, the civil rulers, “are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.” Note closely: rulers are not to be a terror to good works.

What is a good work? Who defines and determines what a good work is? The passage says rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. What, then, is an evil work, and who defines and determines what it is?

God established and ordained government. He has limited it, given it confines, and placed it within boundaries. God says, “I have established you, number one, that you might protect the innocent or the good, and number two, that you might punish the wicked and the ungodly.” As long as an individual is doing that which is good and right, government has nothing to do with him. Our founding fathers envisioned a federal government that had practically no contact at all with the common, ordinary, everyday citizen.

I remember when I was a boy, we used to get to go to town on Saturday. Being raised on the farm, you worked all week long, usually on Saturday morning, and got to go only on Saturday

afternoon. I remember taking trips with my father and mother and hardly ever seeing a policeman.

It was unique to see a police officer. I was always excited when I got to see one because you hardly ever saw them. Isn't it amazing now? You can't turn around without seeing police officers. You can't take a trip without running into roadblock after roadblock. And yet the Word of God says, as long as you're doing that which is right, then the government has nothing to do with you, in one sense of the word.

Negative Law Limits Government

Have you ever wondered why God's law is always expressed in negative terms? For instance, "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not bear false witness," and "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Of the Ten Commandments, only two are positive: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" and "Honor thy father and thy mother," the Fifth Commandment. Each of those positives is undergirded with a number of negatives in the Bible.

There is a reason. First of all, a negative law always deals with a particular evil. For instance, when God says, "Thou shalt not steal," most of us think stealing is when somebody takes a knife, comes to you, puts it to your throat, and says, "Give me your money or I'm going to cut your throat." That is our concept of stealing, but it is not the full biblical concept. Fraud, all kinds of deceit, and refusing to pay when you honestly and lawfully owe are all aspects of theft in the Bible. So when God says, "Thou shalt not steal," it does not deal only with the highwayman demanding our money; it deals with every form of theft imaginable.

Secondly, a negative law always limits or confines the government. If the law says, "Thou shalt not steal," and I am not stealing, what business do they have to interfere in my life?

The answer is none, because I am doing that which is good and right. A negative law deals with a particular evil. It limits and confines civil government.

Thirdly, a positive law always leads to totalitarianism and tyranny. Let me explain that. The Romans had a law that said, “The

health of the people is the highest good." That is a positive law. If we had such a law on our books today, what would it mean? It would mean that government could do whatever it wanted to do to us and for us, whether we liked it or not, under the guise of protecting us.

Let me ask you a question. I am not trying to get into a controversy; I am simply trying to show you some aspects of a positive law. I suppose that you folks who live in the city have fluoride and chloride in your water. Did you vote for and determine that you wanted all those chemicals in your water? The answer is no.

Somebody says, "Fluoride is good for you. It is really good for your teeth." It might be good for your teeth, but it surely is bad for your arteries and an awful lot of other things. You will probably have good teeth when you die, but you will just die a whole lot sooner because fluoride is a byproduct of aluminum, which is a horrible poison.

The point I am trying to make is this: Who determined that you needed fluoride in your water? Who is responsible for my health? Is the local government responsible for my health? No. Is my doctor responsible for my health? No. I am responsible for my health.

If I choose to have good teeth and hardening of the arteries, that is my choice. If I choose to have poor teeth and live ten or fifteen years longer, that is my choice as well. It is not the choice of government. But once you get a positive law, anything and everything can be passed. For instance, there is a new law—I suppose it is a new law—that I have seen on television: "Click it or ticket." In other words, if you do not wear your seatbelt, you are going to get a ticket.

What are they saying? Basically, "We're going to make you safe whether you like it or not." I'm not going to argue over whether seatbelts save lives. I have friends who are EMTs. Some would never wear a seatbelt, saying, "I've seen too many people killed. I will never wear a seatbelt." Others say, "They save lives. I wear one all the time." There is a great debate over whether they do or do not.

I know of two acquaintances. One young girl went under a semi that was turning around in the middle of the road with no lights on. She was not wearing a seatbelt. Because she had one of those little things and was not restrained, she went right under the car; she was unable to slide down under the steering wheel, and her life was

spared. Another friend was wearing a seatbelt when she went under another semi. It was turning around in the road, and the seatbelt held her in place; the semi cut her head off. In one instance, not wearing a seatbelt saved someone's life. In another, wearing one cost someone her life.

The point is this: Whether I live or die, whose responsibility is it to protect my life? It is mine. I must determine, "I believe seatbelts will save my life, so I'll wear one," or, "I don't believe they will, so I'm not going to wear one." But once there is a positive law, the city or state can say, "We need to do this for you, and we need to do that for you. We're just looking after you." I have had bureaucrats and politicians tell me, "We're just thinking of your safety." It is not their responsibility to think of mine; it is my responsibility. Positive laws always lead to tyranny and totalitarianism. They also always lead to revenue-collection agencies, because that is basically what they do—a form of collecting taxes in a different manner.

Now I want to show you something. Let's go back to Romans chapter 13, verse 3: "For rulers are not a terror to the good works, but to the evil."

God Defines Good and Evil

Who determines and who defines what a good work is? Who determines and who defines what an evil work is? Isaiah 45:7 says, "I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things."

We can understand how God creates light and darkness. We can understand how God says, "I make peace," but then God says, "and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things." Now, we know that God is not the author of evil because God is infinitely holy. We know that God is not the instigator of evil. We know that God is not the infuser of evil. So how in the world can it be said in Scripture that God creates evil? How does God create evil?

The answer is very simple. Do you remember when God created the world? The Bible said He beheld everything that He made, and behold, it was good. When God determines and defines what is good, by definition, He has created evil. You say, "What are you talking

about?" When God says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," that is good. But when God said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," on the other hand, He has already said adultery is evil. When God says, "Thou shalt not kill," that is good. But when you kill, that is evil. In other words, God has said what is good, and by definition, what is contrary to what is good is absolutely evil.

When our country was first founded, it was indeed founded as a Christian nation. Our founding fathers always relied upon the Word of God. In fact, our branches of government were taken from the Word of God. Isaiah 33:22 gives the legislative branch, the judicial branch, and the executive branch, based upon God. God is the King, He is the Lawgiver, and He is the Judge. There are the three branches right there.

Our country was founded upon Christianity. The Word of God had the most influence in the founding of our country, and the book of Deuteronomy was the chiefest book in the founding of our country. When this country was first begun, men determined trials, or the outcome of trials, many times based upon the Bible.

Jurors carried Bibles with them into the courtrooms. Today there is a habit—the bailiff comes out and says, "All rise." You stand up, and the judge enters in his long, flowing black robe. Do you know how that got started? The judge used to walk in carrying an open Bible, and men stood in respect for the Bible. Now they have thrown the Bible out and want you to stand in respect of them.

One of the big problems we have in our country can be related to multiculturalism or multireligiousism. There was a time when we all agreed on what was right and wrong, and our definition was based upon the Word of God. At one point, our country had an authoritative, objective standard. Today, everybody has thrown out the Bible, and there is no standard. Everybody does that which is right in their own eyes.

That is true of our Congress, our executive branch, and our judicial branch. There is no standard, objectively speaking, except what is in the minds, whims, and wills of individuals. This country is in absolute chaos and confusion. When I was a boy, and when you were a boy, if you got a whipping in school, you were afraid to go

home, because you knew what was going to happen again, and sometimes again. Everybody had the same standard. But there are no standards anymore, and everybody does that which is right in his own sight.

We have kicked out the Word of God and the objective standard. Thus, we are in absolute chaos, anarchy, and confusion in this country. We wonder why our children are on dope, why they are shooting, killing, and raping one another. Whenever you teach someone that there are no absolutes or standards, and that he is free to do his own thing, human nature, being depraved, will do its own thing. It is not a pretty sight.

In 1 Peter chapter 2, notice verses 13 and 14. I dealt with this passage, the first part, last night, but not all of it. You remember that in Romans chapter 13, God ordained government, first, as a protection of the righteous, and second, as a punisher of the wicked.

He says, “Submit yourself to every ordinance of man.” The word “ordinance” is ktisis. It means the act of founding, the act of establishing, or the thing created. Actually, he is not talking about a law here; he is talking about a government, whether it is a monarchy, a constitutional monarchy, or a republic. He says, “Submit yourself literally to every kind of government of man for the Lord’s sake.”

He continues, “Whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him,” for “the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well.” What is God saying? He says, “I don’t care what kind of government you have, whether it is an aristocracy, a republic, or a constitutional monarchy, just so it is set up to carry out the functions for which I have ordained government: the protection of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked.” God ordained government for the punishment of the wicked.

In Romans chapter 13, verse 3, and the first part of verse 4, Paul says, "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good."

Government's Role in Punishing Evil

Do you hear what the Apostle Paul is saying? The civil government, the civil magistrate who punishes the evil, is the minister of God to us for good. Let me explain that. Do you realize the way God has things ordained in the Scripture is like this: If the wicked die, society lives. If the wicked live, society dies. It is just that simple. Every time you read in the Bible, when God demands the death penalty for a certain crime, you will always find this phrase: "and so shalt thou put evil away from among you."

Now let me tell you something, folks. One of the biggest problems we have in this country is that rapists, kidnappers, and murderers are usually set free or paroled. Most of the crime that we have in this country is repeat crime by repeat offenders. Let me give you a Scripture. I will quote it; you write it down, and you can read it later. Ecclesiastes chapter 8 and verse 11 says, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men in them are fully set to do evil." Let me quote that again. God says, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men in them are fully set to do evil." God says that because civil magistrates do not deal with justice toward the wicked, they allow the wicked to escape. Therefore, the hearts of the sons of men in them are fully set to do evil. Let me give you an illustration.

I was preaching in Iowa, and the pastor asked me if I would go out and visit with a man and invite him to church. He told me, "The man is extremely bitter. He's gone through a horrible divorce. I don't even know if you'll be able to talk with him." I said, "Well, I'm willing to try." So I got out and met the man. I tried to invite him to church and talk with him a little bit. The pastor was right. This man was so full of bitterness and vengeance. All he wanted to talk about was his divorce and what he went through.

Before I left that man, he uttered words I have never forgotten: “I should have killed her. I should have killed her. I should have killed her like I started to. Had I done so, I’d have been in and out of prison in seven years. And now I’ve got to pay her alimony the rest of my life.” Those were his exact words. He knew that if he had murdered his wife, he could have been out of prison in less than seven years.

There was a family about 100 miles from us, the Alday family, around Bainbridge, Georgia. Carl Isaacs, his brother Billy, and another man escaped from prison, went to the Alday family, raped and murdered the wife, waited for her husband to come home, and murdered him. When her father went to find out what was wrong because he missed them, they murdered him. I forget how many members of that family they murdered—four or five of them. I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears Carl Isaacs on television, on the news. He said, "Yeah, I killed him. And if I get out here, I'll kill some more of them."

His brother Billy turned state's evidence and got off with about ten or fifteen years. Finally, he got out of prison. I think he was sent to Maine, where he was charged with murdering someone else. In the last several months, I have seen Carl Isaacs back on television again. They are still debating whether or not to execute the man. It has been twenty-five years; his victims have been dead twenty-five years. He admitted it publicly.

Whether you know it or not, I can assure you of one thing: the execution of the wicked does deter crime. You say, "Brother Weaver, that's debatable." No, it's not debatable. It does deter crime. The man you execute will never commit any more. It will deter him permanently; it will stop him.

Now let me show you what is happening in this country. We have turned everything upside down. Government, instead of protecting the righteous and punishing the wicked, is now protecting the wicked and punishing the righteous. You would be amazed at the pastor friends I could name, one after another, who have been in jail in this country, in prison. You say, "Brother Weaver, what have they done?" Not one thing. Not one thing. I have one pastor friend who served three years in prison.

When Government Protects the Wicked

He was charged with violating a court order, although he was not named in it, and it was never served on him. When the deputy testified as to why he had never served the pastor, he said it was because the pastor was not named on the court order. Yet they still convicted him of violating it. Because the district attorney and some

others did not like his politics, nor the fact that he was a Christian activist trying to get wickedness kicked out of his county, they decided they would silence him.

That is not an unusual case. I had one pastor friend in Mississippi who was arrested and handcuffed. His great, horrible crime was running a home for boys and girls without permission from the state. He refused to take a license, based on biblical principles. This man and his wife had either—I forget—eight or nine children of their own. They then took in another twenty or so whose parents could do nothing with them. They worked with these children, and many of them got converted. But when the state finally came to shut him down because he did not have a state license, they handcuffed him with his arms behind his back.

One of those little children, about five or six years old, started crying. They all called him Daddy. The little girl cried, "Daddy, Daddy, Daddy," reaching up to him. She was not his child; she was one he had taken in with some older siblings. The pastor pushed the deputy aside with his shoulder so he could get down and let the little girl hug his neck. When he did that, they charged him with assaulting an officer. He served a year and a day.

I want to show you how easy it is for government to turn everything upside down. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter, chapter 4. As you turn there, I want to explain two legal terms. You will find them in Black's Law Dictionary, Bouvier's Law Dictionary, or any legal dictionary. The first is mala in se, M-A-L-A I-N S-E.

Mala in Se vs. Mala Prohibita

The second term is mala prohibita. Mala in se refers to that which is evil in and of itself. When God says, "Thou shalt not kill," murder is evil in and of itself. When He says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," adultery is evil in and of itself. When He says, "Thou shalt not steal," theft is evil in and of itself. We understand that.

Mala prohibita means that something becomes evil only because man prohibits it or demands it. For instance, a sign says, "Keep off the grass." If I walk on that grass, have I become inherently evil because I stepped on it? No. When you came here tonight, I noticed

a speed-limit sign requiring thirty-five miles an hour. If the sign says thirty-five and you are doing forty, have you become inherently evil and wicked in and of yourself? No. What if the government says you shall follow a particular form and you do not? Have you become inherently evil and wicked in and of yourself? No.

Congressman George Hansen served many months in jail because he did not file a required form. Hardly any of the other congressmen had filed it, and Attorney General Edwin Meese, who prosecuted George Hansen, had not filed it himself. But none of the others had written a book against the IRS as George Hansen had. Here is that which is evil and wicked in and of itself, and here is that which is evil only because a law has been passed requiring or forbidding it.

The only thing required in this country for the righteous to be lawfully prosecuted is that a law be passed with which we cannot comply out of conscience toward Jesus Christ and obedience to the Word of God. Let me show it to you in the Bible. In 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 14, he says, “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.” But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer. Those are mala in se.

"Or a busybody in other men's matters." That's mala in se. Watch. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian," in other words, because of his convictions, because of his faith, because of his belief, "yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

Do you realize that when our government is talking about hate crimes and thought crimes, if I preach what the Bible says about sodomy, they're going to charge me with a hate crime? If I tell you that abortion is murder, now they're going to charge me with a hate crime? Am I to stop preaching what the Word of God says about sodomy and abortion just because there's a law passing?

"You can't say those things." Well, God tells me I can say those things. And so I become a lawbreaker then, and I can be lawfully prosecuted, legally prosecuted, because government has turned

everything upside down and now they're protecting the wicked and prosecuting the righteous.

Now, I want you to understand, folks, God ordained government, number one, for the punishment of evildoers. Whatever the sphere of justice is, government is charged with that. On the other hand, it is also charged with the protection of the righteous, and whatever sphere that is, that is the charge of government.

Now, let me try to answer very quickly in my remaining time tonight a simple question, because this question has been asked me everywhere I've gone. "Brother Weaver, are we to obey every law that is passed? Are we to obey every ordinance, everything that comes down the pike?" If you understand what I preached last night on the institution and the nature of government, if you understand the covenantal nature of government, you already ought to understand the answer. If you understand sphere authority, as I explained last night, you already ought to understand the answer. If you understand the purpose of government, which I just preached, you ought to already understand the answer.

Biblical Civil Disobedience

But in case some have not quite grasped it, I want to be very explicit. I've been asked, "Well, what about civil disobedience?" Everybody believes in civil disobedience. The question is not whether or not you believe in civil disobedience. The question is, where do you draw the line? I've heard preachers say, "When they tell me what I can and cannot preach, that's it." I've heard people say, "When they come after my children, that's it." What do they say? "I will obey as long and as until, but when it comes this, I will say no more." Basically everyone agrees with civil disobedience. They just sometimes draw the line differently. A good exercise is to ask someone who says, "But Brother Weaver, do you remember Romans 13?"

I said, “Yes, I read that a few times.” But they said, “Brother Weaver, the Bible says, ‘Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God.’ The Apostle Paul is telling us to submit to all the laws and every ordinance that comes down the pike.” I answered,

"Are you sure Paul is saying that?" "Oh, yes, Brother Weaver, that's exactly what he's saying."

I said, "Well, let me ask you a question or two. Do you know who wrote the books of Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, and Ephesians?" They answered, "Paul." I asked, "Now, do you know what that group of books is called?" After a moment, they said, "I think they're called the prison epistles." I said, "That's right. Now, do you know why they were called the prison epistles?" Then it dawned on them: "Yes, because Paul was in prison when he wrote them." I asked, "And why was Paul in prison?"

"For disobeying the powers that be. He disobeyed authority." I said, "Now, do you think it's strange that Paul would write in Romans chapter 13 that we're to obey every law, and then he himself would not and did not? Very obviously, your interpretation has to be wrong. The Apostle Paul himself, who wrote Romans chapter 13, did not believe that and did not even do that himself."

Now, let me show you several passages in the Bible. As you turn to 2 Kings, chapter 1, may I remind you of 1 Kings, chapter 18? In 1 Kings, chapter 18, Elijah comes to Ahab, the king, and says, "As the Lord liveth before whom I stand, there shall not be rain or dew these years, but according to my word." God told Elijah to get down by the brook Cherith, and after the brook dried up, He sent him out of the land into a widow woman's house.

I want to tell you something. Ahab was so angry and upset that he searched the entire land trying to find Elijah. In fact, he even sent men into foreign countries. He sent his CIA over there to find out if Elijah was there. When they said, "No, he's not here," he had them take an oath of that government that Elijah was not there, and, if they found him, they would tell him. Why did Ahab want Elijah?

The answer is very simple. He wanted to kill him. Ahab was a wicked tyrant, an ungodly reprobate. Ahab was looking for Elijah, and Elijah knew it. God was the one who told Elijah to get out of the land. Do you think for one instant that Elijah lay in bed at night, tossing and turning, saying, "Oh Lord, oh Lord, should I turn myself into my king? I know he's looking for me and he wants me. Should I turn myself in? Lord, I can't sleep"? Do you think he lost a minute's

sleep doing that? No. Elijah never gave it a thought. Ahab was a murderer; he had already murdered the prophets of God. Elijah knew that if he went back, Ahab would murder him, and Elijah did not go back until God told him to go back. God hid Elijah from Ahab. Elijah, the man of God, purposefully and deliberately disobeyed Ahab and would not cooperate with him at all.

In 2 Kings chapter 1, there was another king, Ahaziah, a wicked rascal. He fell out of a window through a lattice and hurt himself. Evidently, he had a lot of sores, and those sores became infected, with flies all over him, because he sent to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, to inquire whether or not he would recover from his disease. Beelzebub means "the god of filth" or "the god of flies."

As he sent his messengers to Beelzebub, Elijah met them in the way. 2 Kings 1, verse 2: "And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and he was sick. And he sent messengers and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover this disease. But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but thou shalt surely die. And Elijah departed. And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?"

The men said unto him, "There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore thou shalt not come down from the bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die." And he said unto them, "What manner of man was he who came up to meet you and told you these words?" And they answered, "He was a hairy man and with a girdle of leather about his loins."

"And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite. Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him, and behold, he," that is Elijah, "sat on the top of a hill. And he spake unto him,

'Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.'" Here is a direct order: "Get down, prophet. The king wants you." Verse 10 says, "And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." And there came down fire from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

"Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty, and he answered him, and said to him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

"And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the captain of the third fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah. And he besought him and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life and the life of these fifty thy servants be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties. Therefore, let my life now be precious in thy sight."

Now watch this. Elijah purposefully, deliberately, willingly, and premeditatedly disobeyed the highest civil ruler in the land, and he did so with God's blessing. All Elijah did was disobey. It was God who did the barbecuing. God sent fire down from heaven and consumed them. Evidently, God was on Elijah's side, not on the king's side. Here was a tyrant, a totalitarian maniac. May I ask you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Exodus, chapter 1.

Most of us do not name our daughters Shiphrah or Puah, but perhaps we should. Those women had more character than probably several thousand put together today. Look in Exodus chapter 1, beginning with verse 15. Shiphrah and Puah were two midwives:

"And the king of Egypt spake unto the Hebrew midwives, of which the name of the one was Shiphrah, the name of the other Puah. And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools, if it be a son, then ye shall kill him. But if it be a daughter, then she shall live. But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, and saved the

men children alive. And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done this thing, and have saved the men children alive? And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them."

"Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and waxed very mighty. And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses."

What did the highest ruler of the land command? "When these Hebrew women have a boy, you kill him. When a daughter is born, you let her live." But the midwives disobeyed their civil ruler and spared the male children. When Pharaoh called them in and asked what was wrong, they answered that the Hebrew women were not like the Egyptian women, but were delivered before the midwives arrived.

Let me tell you what these Hebrew midwives were doing: they were lying. They told a bold-faced lie to the king. Not only that, they disobeyed him. The Bible says, "And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God," because they obeyed God and not the king, "God made them houses." Here is the blessing of God upon civil disobedience. God honored these women because they honored Him.

You may have a question in your mind, and I want to answer it. Look in your Bibles to Joshua, chapter 2. Let me give you another illustration. I will explain it in just a moment. You may not like my explanation, but I do not think you have a better one, because I believe mine is scriptural. Joshua, chapter 2, beginning with verse 1.

"And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men to spy secretly, saying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went and came into a harlot's house named Rahab and lodged there. And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, Behold, there came men in hither tonight of the children of Israel to search out the country. And the king of Jericho said unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thy house, who are entered into thine house, for they be come to search out all the country. Now look, and the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me,

but I wist not whence they were. And it came to pass about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out. Whither the men went, I know not. Pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake them. But she had brought them up to the roof of the house and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof. And the men pursued after them the way of Jordan unto the fords. And as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate."

Now what was Rahab doing? She was lying—a bold-faced lie to the highest civil authority in the land. He said, "Brother Weaver, that wasn't right." Well, I'll tell you something. Are you listening to me? It must have been right. God not only spared Rahab and her family physically; God also saved Rahab and put her in the genealogy of Christ.

He said, "Brother Weaver, how in the world can you explain that? There are so many verses in the Bible that say that we're not to lie. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." Yet those Hebrew midwives lied and God blessed them. Rahab lied and God blessed her. How do you explain that? Let me explain it to you like this: It is true that the Bible condemns lying over and over and over.

I can show you verse after verse that tells us we are to be tellers of truth. Yet I can also show you several passages, more than these, where God blessed a lie. I can show you passages in the Bible where God even used a lie, and a passage where God even ordained a man to lie.

“Brother Weaver, you can't do that.” Sure I can. Don't you remember when God rejected Saul and sent Samuel to anoint David to be king? Samuel said, “I can't go. If Saul hear of it, he will kill me.” And God said to Samuel, “You tell him that you've gone to offer sacrifice.” Samuel did go to offer sacrifice, but that was not the purpose of his going. He was going to anoint David to be king. God used this subterfuge, this lie, to get Samuel safely there, where he could ordain and appoint David king. Moreover, don't you remember how God sent a lying spirit to Ahab's false prophets, that God might get him up to Ramoth-gilead to kill him?

Here are two principles in Scripture, side by side. First: We must always tell the truth to those to whom we owe the truth. Passages such as Exodus 1, Joshua 2, 1 Samuel 16, and 2 Kings give no children the right to lie to their parents, nor a husband or wife the right to lie to each other. In other words, those to whom you owe the truth, you must tell the truth. But here is another principle: You do not owe the truth to those who are going to abuse the truth.

Let me explain the consequences. Suppose I am walking around a corner, and a man steps out, sticks a pistol in my stomach, and says, "Give me your money." I say, "Sure." I reach into my pocket, find three dollars, and hand it to him. He looks at the money and asks, "Is that all the money you have?"

What do you expect me to do? Say, "I cannot tell a lie. There is a hundred-dollar bill hidden in my shoe"? If I told the truth and did have one there, I would have assisted him in stealing and violating the law of God. I would have become an accessory to theft. No, I am going to tell him, "Yes, that is all I have. I do not have a bit more. There is no reason to shoot me over three dollars. You are not going to get anything else."

Every one of us understands this principle. Suppose there is an unsaved man with whom you have had a falling out. He is angry and upset. You go to him and try to reconcile things, but he says, "I never want to see you again. Get out of my face." A week or two later, you see him and say, "I want us to get things right together." He replies with expletives, "I never want to see you again. Get out of my face. One of these days I am going to kill you anyhow." You leave him. A few weeks later, you try once more, and he says, "I am going to blow your head off."

“And that's all there is to it. You get out of my life.” You go home and sit at your supper table. Suddenly, you and your wife hear tires squealing outside. You look out and see this maniac jumping out of a truck, running toward your doorway with a sawed-off shotgun in his hand. He's already threatened to kill you. Thanks to Mr. Clinton and his friends, you have no weapon in your house because you're a law-abiding man. You know he's going to kill you.

You run, dive, and hide under the bed. Your little wife is standing there, shaking, while the man knocks on the door with the butt end of the shotgun, saying, “Open this door. I'm going to blow it down.” Tremblingly, your wife opens the door. He says, “Where's your husband? I'm going to blow his head off.”

Now here's my question: Do you want her to say, A, “I cannot tell a lie. He's hiding under the bed”? Or do you want her to say, B, “You're too late. He left fifteen minutes ago to Timbuktu”? I don't know about you, but I'm going to choose B. I don't want her to tell him where I am. If she said, “I cannot tell a lie; he's hiding under the bed,” she is now helping this man commit murder.

You don't owe the truth to those who are going to abuse the truth. That's why Rahab lied. That's why Shiphrah and Puah lied. Look in your Bibles at Exodus chapter 2. After Pharaoh could not get the midwives to murder the children, look at Exodus chapter 1, verse 22: “And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.” The Hebrews therefore had to kill their own sons or deliver them to the Egyptians to be killed. But verse 1 of chapter 2 says, “And there went a man out of the house of Levi and took a wife of the daughter of Levi.”

“And the woman conceived and bare a son. And when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months.” You know the story. This is Moses. And when they couldn't hide him in the house, they put him in the ark and put him in the river. You know what the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 11? Amram and Jochebed, that was the father and mother of Moses, they feared not the king's commandment by faith. In other words, they disobeyed the law of the land. And by faith, God honored them. And God saved Moses.

Now, here are individuals, folks, that are violently disobedient to civil rulers. And God is honoring them. May I remind you, in Daniel chapter 3, about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Don't you remember that image that Nebuchadnezzar built in the plain of Dura? And everybody was supposed to be bowing down, but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down?

Those boys had some principle. They had some character. They could have said, “Let's just sit down and rest. He's stupid. He didn't leave to think we're halfway up or halfway down. They'll never know.” They could have gotten away without sticking out like sore thumbs. But no, no, they said, “We're not going to bow.”

And when Nebuchadnezzar brought them up to him, he said, “If you don't bow down, at what time you hear the sound of the sackbut, the dulcimer, harp, and all this manner of music, if you don't bow down, I'm going to throw you in that burning fiery furnace. And what God is He who will deliver you out of My hand?” Listen to what they answered: “Be it known unto you, O King, that our God can deliver us.”

"But whether He delivers us or no"—in other words, that is His business—"be it known unto you that whether He delivers us or no, we will not bow down." That was in-your-face resistance: you can kill us, but you cannot make us bow. God sovereignly delivered them from the burning, fiery furnace.

Daniel gives another example. Why was Daniel thrown into the den of lions? A law had been passed declaring that no one could pray or ask a petition of any God for thirty days. When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he knelt and prayed three times a day, as he did aforetime.

I can tell you how to pray effectively when you get in trouble: be used to praying before you get in trouble. Daniel was used to praying before he got in trouble. What did God do when Daniel was thrown into that den of lions? God sent His angel and shut the mouths of the lions. Daniel had a comfortable night, lying on something soft and cuddly, probably pretty warm. It might have stunk a little bit, but he was soft and warm. The next morning, the king came and said, "O Daniel, Daniel, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee out of the mouth of the lion?" I like what Daniel said.

If that had been most of us, we might have answered, looking up, "You dirty, stinking, rotten reprobate. Yes, He saved me, and I will be glad when I get out of here, and I hope you get down here." But Daniel had no bitterness or resentment. He said, "O king, live forever." The king had been tricked into signing that law; he did not

want Daniel dead anyhow. Yet Daniel disobeyed the law with the approval and blessing of God.

Acts chapter 5 gives us a biblical principle. Peter and the other apostles had been forbidden to preach in the name of Jesus Christ. The rulers said, “Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? And behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” In other words, they had commanded them not to preach in this man’s name. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, “We ought to obey God rather than man.” What does he say? Our first priority is obedience to God.

In the Roman Empire, Christians were not put to death just simply because they were Christians. You could believe whatever you wanted to believe. If you wanted to be a worshipper of Venus, have at it. If you wanted to worship Zeus, go for it. If you wanted to worship Aphrodite, that was your privilege. If you wanted to worship Jesus Christ, they did not care. Just so, once a year, you swore by the genius of Caesar and said, “Caesar is Lord.”

The Lordship of Christ vs. Caesar

In other words, you supported the emperor cult. When you said, “Caesar is Lord,” you were saying, in essence, that Caesar was giving you your privileges and your rights. Everything stemmed from Caesar. The Christians would not say, “Caesar is Lord.” They said, “Jesus Christ is Lord, not Caesar.”

Now listen: Christians were not put to death just simply because they were Christians. They were put to death because they were considered traitors and treasonous to the state. Do you remember those mala prohibita laws? You let the hate crime laws get in full swing. You let the thought police get in full control, and all who are not politically correct in their thinking, in their speaking, and in their acting can be classified as traitors and treasonous individuals, just like in the Roman Empire. What has happened is we have gone full circle.

Do you know what the issue today is? The issue today is who is Lord. Is government Lord, or is Jesus Christ Lord? Government is a

power. It has been ordained of God, but it is not God. It has its limitations, its boundaries, and its functions, but it is not God.

In Acts 5, the high priest rose up, and all that were with him, which is the sect of the Sadducees, and were filled with indignation. They laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. Here is a conspiracy, if you want to use the word, or a corporation between the religious authorities and the secular authorities. There were no prisons in the Bible. The heathens had prisons, but not the Hebrews. Now the religious leaders were using the prisons of the humanists, of the pagans. The civil authority was working with the religious authority.

The apostles were thrown into the common prison, but the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and brought them forth and said, “Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” The religious and secular, that is, civil, leaders had gotten together, thrown them into prison, and said, “Don't preach.” God sent an angel, opened the door, brought them out, and said, “You do exactly the opposite of what those rulers told you. You preach to the people all the words of this life.”

Now, you have to come down to this basic question: Who is Lord? Who are you going to obey? As long as government functions biblically and scripturally, we have no problem. As long as it will function even constitutionally, we will have very few problems. But when government leaves the Word of God and leaves the Constitution and turns into that which God never ordained for it, nor our Constitution ever appointed for it, we have to answer this one question: Who is Lord? And to whom do we owe our first allegiance?

I hope your answer is Jesus Christ, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords and worthy of all honor, glory, and praise. Let's pray.

Father, we ask You to teach us, to build us up in the most holy faith, to help us to see what the real issues are. And Lord, we've gone so far in this country from Your Word. We've gone so far from our Constitution. Bring us back to Thyself. Secondly, Lord, to the principles upon which this country was founded. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask it. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Christian & Civil Government # 3

SCRIPTURE READING - Romans 13:1-8 (KJV)

Let's open our Bibles once again to Romans chapter 13. These messages are building one upon the other, and Monday night was foundational. If you missed one or more nights, there may be a skip in your understanding. You need to catch up on those messages so that everything may be tied together.

Romans 13:1-8: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid. For he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For this cause

> pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."

Review of Previous Sessions

> On Monday night we covered the institution and nature of government, showing that God alone is sovereign and that all other forms of government are derived from God. Therefore, they are limited, bounded, and circumscribed. God told them, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further."
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> We pointed out that there is sphere authority. God created only three institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the state, which is a ministry of justice. God gave each institution its proper sphere of authority. When one leaves its sphere of authority, it does not carry authority with it; it leaves that authority in the sphere where God placed it, because no one has authority to function outside the sphere God ordained. We also looked at the covenantal nature of government. Last night we looked at the purpose of government in Romans chapter 13 and answered the question.

Must we obey every law that comes down the pike? And the answer is certainly no, because we looked at numerous individuals who disobeyed the law of the land, even the highest civil ruler, and did so with God's apparent blessing. Not only was there Elijah and Rahab and Amram and Jochebed, there were the three Hebrew children, there was Daniel, and there was Paul and a multitude of others as well.

The question automatically arises: If you and I are not to obey those rulers when they are contrary to God and contrary to the Word of God, how do we resist, and how far can we go? I am going to answer some of that tonight, but before I do, I want to lay down certain propositions for you from the Word of God. Hold Romans chapter 13, and turn in your Bibles to Hosea chapter 5, verses 10 and

11. I could multiply the Scriptures, but let me share this one with you, and I think you shall see the significance of it. In Hosea chapter 5 and verse 10, God says, "The princes of Judah."

The Problem of Unlawful Commands and Tyranny

Now, remember, the prince is the civil ruler. "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound"—or the boundaries. Notice what God says: "Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water."

In other words, here the rulers were limited. They were confined. They were bounded by God. Well, the princes of Judah did not like those boundaries. They did not like those limitations. So they removed them. In other words, they usurped and stole authority and went into that area which God had not ordained for them. Now, says God, "I'm going to pour out my wrath upon them like water."

Now look at verse 11: “Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment.” You have to ask why they are oppressed and broken in judgment. Here is the answer: “Because they willingly walked after the commandment.” In other words, the princes are commanding that which they have no authority to command, and the people are willingly obeying those usurped commands. And so God says, “I will punish the prince. I will punish the tyrant. And I will also punish the people who willingly obey those commands when they certainly have no authority at all.”

The word tyrant literally means one who rules without God. If you take a dictionary and look up tyrant, you may be absolutely surprised at some of the definitions. The first is this: “One who seizes power illegally or unlawfully, a usurper.” Everyone understands that. If we have a duly elected president and someone comes along and takes the presidency away from him by force, that individual would be a tyrant. He would be a usurper.

Here is the second definition: “A cruel, oppressive ruler, a despot.” That is usually what you and I think of when we think of tyrants. We think of someone like Idi Amin, Castro, or Joseph Stalin. We think of cruel, oppressive despots, individuals who have no conscience and simply do whatever they please.

But let me give you the third definition, and I want you to think very closely about this one: “One who uses lawful power unlawfully.” Did you hear that? The dictionary definition of a tyrant is not just a cruel, oppressive ruler. It is not just someone who seizes power illegally and unlawfully. It is someone who uses lawful power unlawfully. So if we lawfully elect a leader, and that leader gets in there having lawful power, and then turns around and uses that lawful power unlawfully to undermine, say, our Constitution or the Word of God, he is still basically a tyrant. An individual does not have to be cruel and oppressive in order to be a tyrant. You can have a benevolent dictatorship as well.

Now, as you look in Romans chapter 13, everything I have just told you is significant for this reason: the subjection that God demands in Romans chapter 13 is demanded in abstraction, and not concretely and absolutely. God is not telling us that we are to absolutely obey every civil ruler in every set of circumstances and every time. No.

Romans 13 and Lawful Authority

Magistrates who use power lawfully, who are what God has ordained them to be in Romans chapter 13—not just a ruler, not just a power, not just a leader, but His deacon, His exactor of righteousness and His public worship—are the ones to whom God demands that we submit. But God is not demanding, in Romans chapter 13, that we submit to a tyrannical, totalitarian despot who abuses and misuses authority. God has ordained government for the protection of the righteous, for the punishment of the wicked, and that which God has given for our good and our right cannot be turned upside down and used against us, where we would be expected to aid in our own destruction.

Romans 13:1 says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" or condemnation. "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same."

First of all, the only power that can tie us to submission is that which is of God: "The powers that be are ordained of God." Secondly, according to verse 2, to resist those lawful powers ordained of God is to resist the ordinance of God. Why? Because, according to verse 3, those powers are not a terror to the good work, but rather a terror to the evil work, and God has ordained them for our good.

In Romans chapter 13, God is not talking about an abused, tyrannical power. He is talking about a power that is ruling lawfully, biblically, and scripturally. When rulers become a terror to the good work, when they become promoters of the evil work, when they become a praise to the evil, and when they destroy that which is just, right, and holy, there is no binding power, because that power is not of God.

In other words, to resist an evil, usurped, tyrannical government is not to resist or reject the ordinance of God. In the first war for independence, some rightly call that the War of Rebellion. The second war for American independence, commonly referred to as a civil war, was called the War of Northern Aggression, and the South were known as the rebels.

Distinguishing Lawful Authority from Abused Authority

Rebellion can only be against lawful authority. If the authority is not lawful, it is not rebellion; it is resistance. For instance, I could look at Mark's wife and tell her, "Get up and go in that kitchen and get me a glass of tea." She could answer, "If you ask me, I'll be more than happy to do so. But don't command me to go get you a glass of tea." If I then looked at Mark and said, "The only problem with your wife is she's just rebellious," his wife could not be rebellious toward me, because I have no lawful authority over her. If she did not get my tea, she would be resisting a usurped authority, but she certainly would not be rebellious toward me.

There is a difference between a lawful authority and an abused authority. There are people in this country, God-fearing people, who have a murder complex and want to surrender and submit to all authority simply because they think it is authority. They are willing to suffer and have their goods confiscated just so they can say, "Well,

I'm in submission." But there is no obligation in the Word of God to suffer merely to be suffering. The only obligation that you and I have in Scripture to suffer is for Christ's sake or for the Scripture's sake. Scripture does not simply command, "Be thou robbed," "Be thou stolen from," or "Be thou abused" just to be abused.

No, the Bible tells us that we are to be faithful unto Christ, even unto death. But let me explain this. There is a difference between God delivering me to suffering and me delivering myself to suffering. There's a vast difference.

The Scottish Covenanters understood the biblical principle. The biblical principle is, “Thou shalt not kill.” That is the sixth commandment. The positive side of “Thou shalt not kill” is, “Thou shalt preserve life.” These Scottish Covenanters were fighting against the tyranny of Charles I. What they would do was simply this: they would fight against that tyranny, and they were captured many times and thrown into the dungeon or the tower.

Then they used every effort they could to escape and get away. They made pains and took pains to get away. However, if they were caught in their escape attempt, they were willing to suffer and be put to death for the cause of Christ. But what they were doing was this: They were trying to preserve their life. The problem today is that many people do not see the difference between a lawful authority and an abused authority, and they just want to submit. When God says no, you have a responsibility to save your life. You have a responsibility to save your property. You have a responsibility to do everything you can to keep from being stolen from and deprived of your life.

There cannot be a stricter obligation between the government and the people than there is between a husband and a wife, parents and children, or even the captain of a ship and the passengers. Let me explain what I mean. I am the head of my house. I am a husband and a father, and I could say to my wife, “Sweetheart, we do not have enough money this month to pay our bills. Here is what I want you to do: take this pistol and go down and rob the bank so that I can have enough money to pay my bills.”

Do not laugh at that. The Bible says, and I can quote the Scripture, “Wives, obey your husbands” in how much? In everything. So what is my wife supposed to say? She should look at me and say, “I love you, and I will certainly pray with you about the money we need, but I am not going to rob the bank because you have no authority to tell me to violate the law of God.” I do not have that authority. I have no authority to ask her to go contrary to the Word of God. My authority is to promote her and build her up, not to destroy her. I have no right to tell my children, “That man over there insulted me; take my pistol and go shoot him.”

I can show you Scripture that says, “Children, obey your parents in everything,” but I have no authority to tell my child to shoot someone. God never gave me authority to violate His law. I can go so far, but no further.

Consider this in another context. You have wanted to take an ocean cruise all your life, so you saved your money. You and your wife finally get to take that cruise, perhaps sailing around the world. One day, you decide to go up and watch the captain sail the ship. You go to the captain’s quarters, where he is piloting the ship, and speak to him; for some reason, he does not speak back.

Suppose the pilot of a ship suddenly became unresponsive. You speak to him, but he does not look at you; he stares straight ahead, his eyes glazed over. Then you see a humongous iceberg sticking up out of the water, and he is going to ram the boat into it. What are you going to do? Are you going to shrug your shoulders and say, "It’s his boat. Let him do what he wants to do with it"?

You are going to jump in and try to get the ship away from that iceberg. If you have to take his life to save yours, the life of your wife, and the lives of the other passengers, you would do it. Why? Because that pilot, that captain, although he may have control of the ship, does not have control of it in order to destroy the passengers.

There is a limitation on his authority. You can see the limitation of a husband over his wife, a father over his children, a pastor over his church, and a captain over his ship. The limitation of government over the people is equally the same. Government can go so far according to the Word of God, but no further. Once it leaves its

proper sphere of authority, it is stealing authority God never gave it; therefore, it is an abused, usurped authority, tyrannical in nature, and can tie no one to subjection.

Resistance to that type of authority—resistance to unbiblical, ungodly, usurped authority—is not resistance to the ordinance of God. Why? God never ordained tyranny as a lawful form of government. Never. Thomas Jefferson said it like this: "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

Samuel Rutherford said, "Faithfulness to Christ cannot be treason to Caesar." That which God has given us for our protection and blessing, for our liberty and freedom, cannot be construed and turned around into that which enslaves us and takes our liberties from us. God has ordained government for our protection, not for our enslavement. Therefore, when we resist abused authority, it is not resistance to the ordinance of God.

It is true, however, that if you resist a lawful, godly, scriptural, biblical government—one functioning as God has ordained it—you are indeed resisting the ordinance of God.

But let me show you what has happened in this land. So many people have taken Romans chapter 13, closed their eyes and minds, and said, "The Bible says submit, and so I've got to submit." Why submit? "Well, God says so." They are trying to say that government here is God's authority on earth, and that if they resist that authority, they are resisting God Himself.

That would be true of biblical government. But if it is an unbiblical, tyrannical, or unjust government—if it has usurped authority and power—when you submit to that government, what you are saying is this: If God were here on earth, He would be commanding exactly the same thing, because government is nothing more than His representative. When a government is drinking the blood of innocence, wasting the church of God, trampling the law of God under its feet, and trying to destroy the people of God and the rights God has given us, that government has never, ever been ordained of God. To resist it is not to resist the ordinance of God. If God has not ordained it, it may be resisted with the blessings of God.

Now, what does our text say in Romans chapter 13? God says, "Let every soul be in subjection unto the higher powers." No matter how high you are in authority, there is always someone higher than you. The government is not the highest authority. God Himself is the highest authority. Just as God requires the family and the church to be scriptural and biblical, so likewise God requires government to be scriptural and biblical. Therefore, submitting to the higher powers applies to government equally as it does to every other institution God has ordained.

I never will forget hearing Lester Roloff. Many of you will remember him. He was fighting the state of Texas when they were trying to license the homes he had out in Texas. Finally, he went to see one lady at the welfare department, children's services, that kind of thing. She was being very evasive. She said, "Now, Brother Roloff, you know, the Bible says that you're to be in submission to the higher powers." Brother Roloff said, "Ma'am, I have no problem with that. I'm willing to be in submission to higher powers. It's you lower powers that's giving me fits."

When government is usurped, it is a lower power, not a higher power. The Bible says in Acts 5 and verse 29, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Let me clear up a little misconception. Inevitably, someone is going to say, “But now, Brother Weaver, don't you know, the Bible says, ‘Render unto Caesar the things that belong to Caesar’?” The Bible does say that. But isn't it amazing how the people who quote that verse never finish it? The Bible does say, “Render unto Caesar the things that belong to Caesar,” but it also says, “and unto God the things that belong unto God.”

The Identity of Caesar and the Constitution

Let me ask you a question: How many things belong to God? Everything, including Caesar. Now, watch this. It is true that the Bible says, “Render unto Caesar things which belong unto Caesar,” but it is equally true that the same God who said that is the God who tells you what belongs to Caesar. If you allow Caesar to tell you what belongs to him, he'll take everything you've got. If you're going to say

Caesar is government, then the God who ordained government can tell you what belongs to government.

Let's be a little more practical. Think this through with me. Let's say that we are going to take the word Caesar to mean government. I had a pastor friend who was teaching in a Christian school, and he asked these teenagers, “Who is Caesar?” Because the Bible said, “Render unto Caesar things that belong unto Caesar.” One kid raised his hand and said, “I know the answer to that, pastor.” The pastor said, “What's the answer?”

He said, “Sir, that dude's dead.” Well, stop and think about that. That is correct. Caesar is dead. Now, if you try to take the word government and make it equal to Caesar, let's do that just for a moment in the context of our country, in the context of America. If God tells us to render unto Caesar that which belongs unto Caesar, what would be Caesar in our country? Don't answer out loud. It certainly wouldn't be the Supreme Court, the White House or executive branch, or the legislative branch of government. What would be our Caesar, practically speaking?

The Constitution of the United States is the agreement that we the people and we the states entered into with the federal government. But, to be even more practical, we ourselves will be the Caesars, because the Constitution says, “We the people do ordain this Constitution.” Caesar, then, is not the government. Caesar would either be our Constitution in this country or be we the people who ordained the Constitution. Government is to be nothing more than our servant, not our master.

Now, I want you to understand that abused authority does not demand obedience. Suppose that I put on the uniform of a policeman. Everyone in this room knows I am not a policeman. After the service, I get out there in this policeman’s uniform and start directing traffic. How many of you are going to pay attention to me? If you have any sense, you are going to say, “That crazy preacher, look at him out there playing cop,” and drive right on. I have not the authority of a law officer in that sense of the word, and you owe me no obedience. You know I am not an officer of the law.

Respecting the Office vs. the Person

There is a difference between the office of authority and the tyrant, or the person in that office who is abusing authority.

Let me give you a practical illustration. How many people in this room have any respect for Bill Clinton? Raise your hand. If you tell me you respect him, would you let your wife be around him alone? How about your daughter? There is no one in this room who has any respect for Bill Clinton. But you say he is the president. Wait a minute. I did not ask how many of you have respect for the office of authority. Every hand ought to be raised. You can respect the office of authority without respecting the individual who is abusing and misusing that office. I am not going to make fun.

Although civil government is ordained of God, God does not require me to respect an individual who abuses and misuses the office. Listen to what Samuel Rutherford wrote in Lex Rex: “He that resisteth the power, that is the official power and the king as king commanding in the Lord, resisteth the ordinance of God and God's lawful constitution. But he who resisteth the man who is the king, commanding that which is against God, and killing the innocent, resisteth no ordinance of God, but an ordinance of sin and Satan. For a man commanding unjustly and ruling tyrannically hath in that no power from God.”

What’s Rutherford saying? The man who is abusing and misusing his office has no binding power.

Now, let me give you an illustration. Look in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles, chapter 26. In this passage, you will read about a king by the name of Uzziah, who had another name, Azariah. Basically speaking, he was a good king; he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem, and God marvelously used him. But toward the end of his reign, he did something really stupid. Look at it: 2 Chronicles 26, verse 14.

“And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name was spread far abroad; for he

was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense."

Now let me stop there for a moment. Here is a king. He has been king for 52 years. He decides he is going to go into the temple and offer incense, which no one but the high priest and the priests could do. Watch what happens in verse 17: "And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore"—that is, 80—"priests of the LORD, that were valiant men." They were going to throw the king out. "And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth."

Look at his attitude: "How dare you stop me? Don't you realize I'm the king? I can do whatever I want to. I am the king." He was angry, and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. Verse 19: "And while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD."

"And Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land." Here was a man who said, "I'm king. I ruled for 52 years. That means I can do whatever I want to do. And so I think I'm going to just go into the temple. I'm going to offer incense." Azariah and those other 80 priests said, "You're not going to do it." When he was angry, God smote him with leprosy. Were Azariah and those priests correct in resisting the civil ruler? Yes. He had no authority in the temple of God. When they resisted him, they were not resisting God's ordinance, because God joined with them and smote him for his arrogance, pride, and haughtiness.

The question has to be asked, and this is what I want to answer tonight: If we are to resist abused authority, tyrannical, usurped power, how are we to resist it? Who is to resist? To what extent should our resistance go, and what form should our resistance take? I want to try to answer some of these questions tonight and tomorrow night. Let me tell you tonight that there are degrees of resistance in the Bible. I'm going to show you three of them tonight. There are degrees of resistance in the Bible.

Degrees of Resistance: Verbal Defense

The first one is verbal. There is a verbal resistance. Let me lay down a proposition, then show it to you from Scripture. The proposition is simply this: If our assaults are verbal, then our defense must also be verbal. If all someone does is attack me verbally, I don't pick up a weapon and start shooting. No, I defend myself verbally. Look in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Kings chapter 18.

In this last night, you remember how Elijah stood before Ahab and said, “As the LORD God liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be rain or dew these years, but according to my word.” God sent Elijah out of the country, and for three and a half years there was a drought. Finally, after three and a half years, God sent Elijah back in to see Ahab. Look what happens.

1 Kings 18, verse 17: “And it came to pass, when Ahab”—that is the king, the highest civil ruler of the land—“when it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.” The king assaults Elijah verbally, and Elijah defends himself verbally.

He did not take a sword and cut the king’s head off. The king needed his head cut off, but Elijah did not do that. He was attacked verbally, and so he defended himself verbally.

Do you realize we are at a distinct advantage in this country? We actually have a fourth branch of government, although we are supposed to have only three. There is the executive branch, the judicial branch, and the legislative branch, but there is also the

bureaucratic branch. Every one of those agencies has all kinds of paperwork and administrative processes through which it must go. With a small amount of work and a little ingenuity, you can tie up any branch of government—local, state, or national—because of all these administrative processes. Sometimes you can do so for a year or two. That does not count getting into court; you can get something in court and tie it up for three, four, or five years. I know, because I have done that.

Our church was attacked by the state of Georgia. It was absolutely ridiculous. The state of Georgia wanted to give our church a license to drink water from our own well, although we had had the well for over forty years. They had never heard of ex post facto laws before; they simply insisted that we take the license. Our church building was at the edge of the city limits, on forty or fifty acres of property, with no one around us. We had our own deep well, and our water did not have chlorine or fluoride in it.

They wanted us to have the license, and the run-ins went on for a year. Finally, the head honcho from Atlanta called me. He said, "Pastor Weaver, it looks like this thing is going to court." I said, "Yes, sir, it really does." He said, "I want to keep it out of court." I said, "So do I." He asked, "What would it take for us to resolve this problem?" I said, "The answer is very simple: leave us alone. We did not bother you. You bothered us."

He said, "Brother Weaver, I know you are against putting chemicals in your well. We will be willing to forego those chemicals. You will not have to put chemicals in your well. All we want you to do is take the license. If you take the license, you will not have to chloridate or fluoridate."

I had other men on the phone listening. I said, "Sir, tell me exactly what it is you're interested in in this case." He said, "Safe drinking water. We want safe drinking water for all the people of Georgia." I said, "Sir, let me ask you a question. How much safer is our water with a license than it is without a license?" There was silence. I said, "You know as well as I do, this issue is not over safe drinking water. This issue is over control."

I had the law right in front of me. I said, “Let’s do just a little supposing. Suppose I did take your license. Would there ever be a time that you could annul it, revoke it, repeal it, or take it back?” He said, “Of course.” I had the law right in front of me, and it said he could. He said, “Well, we probably could, but we would never do anything like that.”

I said, “Sir, if I took your license, then according to the agreement I made with you, you would be the head of this church, not Jesus Christ. You would be the one who determined when we could use this property and how we could use it, and not Jesus Christ. There’s no way I’m going to take your license. I’ll never take your license. You might as well leave us alone. I don’t need a license to drink water out of my own well.”

There had never been anyone sick, anyone reported, or any problem with our water. They just wanted to give us a license to drink water out of our own well. I said, “Sir, when I was a boy, I saw a lot of Westerns. I know for a fact, not only on the Hollywood screen but in history, that there are a lot of range wars over water and water rights.” There still are today. Georgia, Florida, and Alabama have been fighting over water for the last ten years, over the Chattahoochee River. Whoever controls your water controls your life. Literally, we tied those folks up for a year or two, just writing letters back and forth.

Finally, we got tired of it and took them to court. When the judge heard what the case was about, he looked at the state's attorney and said, “Are you sure you want to go through with this?” The attorney said, “Well, that's what they sent me down from Atlanta for.” After the judge heard us, he looked at the attorney and said, “You tell your people to stay off that church property and tell them to never go back again unless I give them permission to go. Is that understood?” “Yes, sir.” Case dismissed.

We walked out, and they left us alone. The point is that you can use a verbal defense and use the process, tying the bureaucrats up with their own paperwork for years. That is the first way that we resist verbally. May I point out that this is where we fail most of the time at the lowest level? We do not speak out against wickedness. We do not speak out against usurpations of power.

We normally keep our mouths shut so we can stay out of trouble and not get involved. That way, no one bothers us, and we do not bother them. While they are slowly placing the chains around others, they are also placing them around us; we simply do not realize it. Whatever government can do to one citizen, it can do to the rest. We had better learn to use our voices.

Degrees of Resistance: Flight

The very first means of resistance is a verbal defense. The second one is flight.

Do not think that when I speak about flight, whoever flees is a coward. Our Lord told His disciples in Matthew 10:23, “But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.” Thus, our Lord gives a lawful means of resisting tyranny: when they persecute you in one city, flee to another.

In Matthew 23:34, our Lord says, “Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.” That is, somebody was fleeing, and so they were being persecuted from city to city.

Flight does not mean that one is a coward. Turn in your Bibles to John chapter 7. You are going to see that our Lord Himself used a form of this resistance. He did not necessarily actually flee bodily, but He did stay out of the way. John 7:1 says, "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." The Jews were trying to kill Christ. What did Christ do? He stayed out of the way. He avoided them. He did not go near them or where He knew they were.

Now, was Jesus Christ afraid? Look at John 12:27, where He spoke about death: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." Jesus Christ said, "I came to die." He was not afraid to die. Why, then, did our Lord withdraw from these people, refuse to go where they were, and not stay around them?

I'll tell you why: He was using flight, and flight is a nonviolent means of preventing violence by other individuals. So He stayed out of their way.

In Matthew chapter 2, God Himself ordered and ordained flight for Mary and Joseph. Matthew chapter 2, verse 13: "And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt."

God tells Joseph, "Arise, take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt." Do you think that God was afraid of Herod? Of course not. God could have killed every one of Herod's family, every one of his friends, and his entire kingdom, had He pleased. But God ordered and ordained flight in this instance to prevent the Lord and His family from being killed. It was a nonviolent way to prevent violence by wicked men.

You've heard the old saying that discretion is the better part of valor. Let me illustrate it. Here I am, walking down the street, and it is getting a little dark. I look up, and two men step out from a corner, dressed like thugs. One has a log chain with a C-link in his hand; another has a Coca-Cola bottle. I think to myself, "This is just as much my sidewalk as it is theirs. I'm not about to let them scare me off this sidewalk, and if they start something, I believe I can take them." So I keep walking.

I walk a few more steps, and two more step out. I think, "This is still just as much my sidewalk. I'm not going to give it up. I believe if they start something, I can take all four of them." I take a few more steps, and four more step out, all armed the same way. I think, "I think I can handle four, but I don't know about eight. You know, that sidewalk on the other side of the street is just as much mine as this one is. I think I'll walk on that side a while." Now, am I a coward because I walked over on that side of the street?

The answer is no. I am more than willing to fight, but I am going to fight on my terms, not theirs. I am not afraid of the fight, but I am going to make sure that the battlefield is leveled when I fight.

If you think fleeing is a form of cowardice, may I remind you that David fled from Saul? Why did David flee from Saul? Not because he was afraid, but because he did not want to kill him. Do you remember what they sang? “Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands.” David was not afraid of Saul; he simply did not want to have to kill him.

May I remind you that Elijah fled? Read 1 Kings chapter 19. Elijah had just come down from Mount Carmel, where he had killed 450 prophets of Baal and cut off their heads. Old Jezebel said, “By this time tomorrow, you’re going to be like one of them,” and he hit the road. I do not think Elijah was afraid. He may have been discouraged or distressed, but just because he fled does not mean that he was a coward. I do not imagine most of us have enough courage to face the king and 450 false prophets, challenge him to a contest, and then, after they lose, cut off their heads.

Consider another man who fled: the Apostle Paul. Acts chapter 9, verse 25, says, “Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.” The significance of that statement becomes clear in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, where we learn whom Paul was fleeing. He was fleeing from the government: “In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.”

This individual was no coward and was certainly not afraid. The civil ruler was after him, and he used flight to get away.

In Hebrews 11:37–38, the Word of God speaks of Christians: “They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” Why were they wandering in the mountains and staying in caves and dens? They were fleeing persecution and prosecution. Were they cowards? No.

Flight is a nonviolent way to prevent violence by wicked men. But there are problems with flight. In Jeremiah 26, there was a man named Uriah, a prophet who was preaching and teaching exactly

what Jeremiah was preaching and teaching. The king became angry with him. “And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath-jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah.” He was saying nothing new; he was saying exactly what Jeremiah said.

“And when Jehoiakim the king with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt; And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt. And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.”

Uriah fled to Egypt and got out of Jehoiakim’s jurisdiction. But that did not help him. Jehoiakim had the equivalent of the CIA, and he sent men to Egypt to kidnap Uriah and bring him back. Then he killed him.

What are the two problems with flight? The first should be obvious: It does not always work. Uriah fled and got out of the country, but the king sent someone to kidnap him and bring him back.

The second problem is that not everyone can flee. It is easy for one man to flee, and sometimes for a husband and wife, perhaps even a family. But where can a whole church flee? Where could the whole city of Greenville flee? Where could South Carolina flee? Flight is not always possible. You have a verbal defense, and you have flight. That brings us to the third means of resistance: violent self-defense.

Degrees of Resistance: Violent Self-Defense

I have two hours' worth of teaching on self-defense taken from the Bible, but remember that the Sixth Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is the fundamental proposition for self-defense. Every negative has a positive. If we went through the Ten Commandments and examined the positive of each, we would find that the positive for the Sixth Commandment is, "Thou shalt preserve life." If you are not to

kill, you have an obligation to preserve life, which includes preserving your own life. Hence, I am to kill rather than be killed.

Samuel Rutherford stated it this way in Lex Rex: "God has implanted in every creature natural inclinations and motions to preserve itself. And we're to love ourselves for God and have a love to preserve ourselves rather than our neighbor. And God's law teacheth every man to love God best of all, and next ourselves more than our neighbor. For the law saith, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'" He continues: "It is true I am to love the salvation of the church, as it cometh nearer to God's glory, more than my own salvation, as the wishes of Moses and Paul do prove. And I'm to love the salvation of my brother more than my own temporal life. But I'm to love my own temporal life more than the life of any other. Therefore, I am rather to kill than to be killed."

I usually use this illustration when discussing biblical law. I was living in Greenville at one time, and a man who was a professing Christian came up to me and asked, "Brother Weaver, what would you do if you woke up during

“What would you do if someone were breaking into your bedroom window in the night?” I said, “That depends on whether I could get my hand on a pistol. If I could, I’d shoot him. If I couldn’t, I’d get a baseball bat and hit him in the head.” He said, “I don’t think you ought to do that. I think you ought to go in the other room and pray about it.”

“What? You mean to tell me you think I’ll be in the other room praying while he is in there raping my wife or murdering my children? I’d pray. I’d pull that baseball bat back and say, ‘Dear Lord, don’t let me miss him this time.’ Pow! That’s how I’d pray.”

Scripture tells me I have a right to defend my life, my family, and the lives of others. Would it not be a mighty defect if God allowed all the animals to defend themselves and not us?

Look out at nature. We had a neighbor with a humongous tomcat that walked around as if he owned the neighborhood. Behind our house, a mother mockingbird had made her nest in a little bush. When the tomcat came through our backyard, mama mockingbird

dive-bombed him, pecked his head, and ran him off. What was she doing? She was defending her young.

I was raised on a farm. I would love to have you come to a farm where there is a sow with little pigs. If you do not know how to pick up a pig, try picking one up and let that little pig start squealing. Mama will eat you alive. The only way to pick up a pig so it will not squeal is by its tail; put your hand on its stomach, and you have problems.

My father went deer hunting and shot a big, four-point buck. He got out of his tree climber and walked over, but the buck was not dead. The buck started getting up.

Dad tried to shoot him again, but his gun had jammed. That buck lowered its head and charged at my father. My father took a brand-new .30-06 and broke the stock over that deer's head as it came at him. He killed the deer but broke the gun. Someone said, "Well, now, Brother Weaver, that was a mean deer." No, that was not a mean deer. That deer was doing what it was supposed to be doing.

It was trying to protect its life. There's nothing wrong with that, and there's nothing wrong with you and me protecting our lives, our families, and the lives of others. It is obedience to God.

I want to take a few moments and tell you some history. If you've never read Fair Sunshine, written by Jock Purves, I commend it to you. It's a little book about that thick, a little paperback on the Scottish Covenanters. Now let me read to you about the Sanquhar Declaration. Charles I, of course, was tyrannizing, and the Scottish Covenanters had been run out of their pulpits.

Historical Examples and the American Founding

They could not hold field meetings. Many times, when these people gathered in the woods to pray, the king's dragoons would come upon them, shoot them, kill them, stab them, cut off their heads, and do all kinds of wicked things to them. Finally, the Covenanters said, "Look, we need to defend ourselves." Thus came the Sanquhar Declaration, posted June 22, 1680.

Richard Cameron, whom I will tell you about in just a moment, was known as the Lion of the Covenant. His brother Michael and his

men came into Sanquhar town, read this declaration, and posted it. Here is part of the declaration. Michael Cameron reads that they "disown Charles Stuart, who have been reigning, or rather tyrannizing, as we may say, over the throne of Britain these years bygone, as having any right, title to, or interest in the said crown of Scotland for government, as forfeited several years by his perjury and his breach of covenant both to God and his church, and usurpation of his crown and royal prerogatives therein."

"As also we, being under the standard of our Lord Jesus Christ, Captain of Salvation, do declare a war with such a tyrant and usurper, and all the men of his practices, as enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ, and his cause and covenants, and against all such as have strengthened him. As also we disown, and by this, the reception of the Duke of York, that professed Papist, as repugnant to our principles and vows to the Most High God."

Charles Stuart had signed the Solemn League and Covenant, but he had turned his back upon it. Now he was persecuting the very men he had promised to protect and taking their lives. One of the leaders was Richard Cameron, the Lion of the Covenant. When Richard Cameron was ordained to the gospel ministry, he had to leave Scotland because of the persecution. He went to Holland, studied there, was ordained to the ministry, and was sent back to Scotland.

After Brown, Coleman, a Dutch minister, had lifted their hands, the great McWard, who was a Scottish pastor as well, kept his hand upon Cameron's light brown locks and said at his ordination: "Here is the head of a faithful minister and servant of Jesus Christ who shall lose the same for his master's interest, and it shall set up before the sun and the moon in the public view of the world."

How would you like to have your pastor ordained to the ministry and someone put his hands on his head and say, "Here is a man, a servant of Jesus Christ, who's going to lose his head, and that head is going to be set up before the sun and the moon in public"? Such was the ordination of Richard Cameron. Of course, Richard Cameron went back to Scotland, began to teach the people and preach, and they would meet in little bands out in the wilderness.

Finally, one day, as they were preaching and praying, the king's dragoons came upon them. The Covenanters had gathered around Richard, with the horsemen on either side and those on foot. Three times, Richard Cameron, the Bible says—the history book says—appealed to the Lord of the Sabbath to spare the green and to take the right. Then he looked at his brother and said, "Come, Michael, let us fight it out to the last. For this is the day that I have longed for, to die fighting against our Lord's avowed enemies. And this is the day that we shall get the crown." To his loved fellows he said, "Be encouraged, all of you, to fight it out valiantly, for all of you who fall this day, I see heaven's gates cast wide open to receive them."

Then, with eyes turned to heaven and calm resignation, they sang their last psalm to the God of their salvation. When the king's dragoons came upon this little band of praying men, they did fight, and there was a tremendous battle. Richard was killed, and several other men were killed as well. They took Richard Cameron, cut off his head and his hands, put them in a sack, and went back to Edinburgh, showing the callousness of the soldiers.

They saw a young woman and asked her whether she liked to play ball. She said, "Yes." They said, "We'll play with this." They emptied Richard Cameron's head onto the ground and kicked it to her as a football. The young woman screamed and fainted. They laughed, put the head back into the sack, and, before they put it on the Netherbow Port, they had one other

In the prison languished an old man for his faith in Jesus Christ. His name was Alan Cameron, the father of Richard and Michael. They went into the prison, took the head and hands of Alan Cameron's son, and thrust them toward him. They asked, "Do you know them?" His son's head and hands were very fair, as was Alan Cameron's complexion. He took his son's hands and kissed them, saying, "I know them. I know them. They are my sons, my own dear sons. It is the Lord. Good is the will of the Lord, who cannot wrong me or mine, but has made goodness and mercy to follow us all the days of our lives. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Then they took the head and hands of young Richard Cameron and placed them on the Netherbow Port for all the world to see in

the light of the sun and moon. You know why those Scottish Covenanters fought? Because verbal defense was gone. Flight was gone.

May I remind you of a man named Mattathias in 168 B.C.? He was a priest of the first 24 courses in Modin, a city of Judah. Antiochus Epiphanes, or Antiochus the Illustrious, was forcing Hellenism upon the Jews. He had sent someone to offer a sow on the altar. When Antiochus's men came and tried to get old Mattathias to offer the sow, he refused: "I will never violate that altar." One of the king's traitorous men said, "I will sacrifice that sow." When the man started to put the sow on the altar, old Mattathias said, "You want a sacrifice? I'll give you a sacrifice." He took his knife and killed the man who was going to violate that altar. Then Mattathias and his sons escaped.

That was the beginning of what was known as the Maccabean Revolt. His son was Judas Maccabeus. I wish you could read some of the history of how those men fought, and how many times they defeated larger numbers. The way Judas died was very significant. His enemies were intent on capturing and killing them, so they put men on elephants in boxes, with archers shooting down on Judas's men. Judas's men were being devastated because they could not reach the archers to stop them. Old Judas Maccabeus said to his men, "As you see me do, so do ye."

Judas took out his sword, ran up under the elephant, and jabbed the sword into its stomach. Then he ripped the elephant so that its entrails fell out. The elephant fell down on Judas and killed him. Seeing that, his other men did the same thing, and they were still able to defeat their enemy in that battle. You see, there is a time even in history when verbal defense and flight are no longer working or workable.

Let me tell you one more. I want to encourage you to read The Great Siege, written by Ernle Bradford, E-R-N-L-E Bradford, if you can get it. The great siege took place from May to September in 1565. The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem had been run out of Cyprus and had gotten onto the little island of Malta. They were supposed to protect the pilgrims as they went to the Holy Land, but the Turks had been going through there, killing and conquering everyone.

De Valette, the leader of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, was in his 70s during this battle. When he got to Malta, he immediately began trying to fortify it. De Valette had only 1,000 trained fighting men—1,000 knights. Some other men from the island joined him, giving him a grand total of 10,000 men. Suleiman the Magnificent sent 40,000 Turkish warriors to destroy the knights, so the knights were outnumbered four to one.

The significance of this battle is that it stopped the westward victory of the Turks. We are Christian over here; from over there, they are Muslim. This was the deciding battle that stopped the western flow. Dragut the pirate was 80 and was commanding the Turks, while de Valette was in his 70s.

When the battle started, some of de Valette's knights were captured by the Turks. De Valette had captured a number of the Turks as well. Those Turks took their knives, ripped out the hearts of the captured knights, and threw their bodies into the water so they would float back up and the other knights could see what was happening. The Turks were saying, "We're not giving any quarter. We're going to do this to every one of you." When de Valette saw what the Turks had done to his knights, he had a thousand Turkish prisoners.

He made them all kneel down. His men took their swords and cut off their heads. Then de Valette took their heads, stuffed them in his cannon, and shot them back on the Turks, saying, "That's what we're going to do to you. We're not going to give you any quarter." That battle lasted nearly six months—the great siege. After nearly six months, when the Turks left, only a thousand men of de Valette's were alive. The Turks had killed nine thousand; only a few knights remained. Less than 10,000 Turks went home. The Knights had killed 30,000 Turks. It was that one battle that stopped the western flow of Mohammedanism.

I could stand here tonight and tell you historical example after historical example in which people were forced to defend themselves, but let me show you what the Bible says. As much as I love history, history cannot take the place of, nor does it have the authority of, the Word of God.

In Nehemiah chapter 4, a number of enemies entered into a conspiracy to destroy Nehemiah's work and attack Jerusalem. Beginning in verse 7, the Bible says, "But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it." Here was a conspiracy: all these people together were going to fight physically against Jerusalem. Verse 9 says, "Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them." Verse 11 adds, "And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease."

SCRIPTURE READING - Nehemiah 4:12-18 (KJV)

> "And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you." Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them. Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah. They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded.

“And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.” Here is Nehemiah, the man of God: “If you attack us with physical weapons, we're going to defend ourselves with physical weapons.”

Here is a principle: Arms may be used to defend the kingdom of God, but not promote or advance the kingdom of God. We are not conquistadors. We do not go out and put a sword to someone's throat and say, “You repent or perish.” You can get a lot of confessions like that. You can get a lot of decisions and professions, but that is not the way we do things, and it is not the way Scripture tells us. We may defend the work of God, the kingdom of God, and our lives with physical weapons, but we cannot use those weapons to promote the kingdom of God.

Our Lord said it like this in Luke 22:36: “He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.” He was saying that there is a time when it is necessary to use physical weapons in defense of one's life, one's home, and one's country. It might be the last means, the means of last resort. Still, when God's enemies attack God's people with weapons, it is lawful to defend with physical weapons.

Do not quote 2 Corinthians 10:4, where the Apostle Paul says, “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.” Go back and read the context. Paul is talking about the battle of the mind. He is not saying, “Do not defend your life,” your family, or your country and nation. He is saying that physical weapons are useless when it comes to controlling your mind. What are the means of resistance? Verbal, flight, and violent self-defense. Those are the only three mentioned in the Bible.

Our founding fathers, on July 6, 1775, put out a document entitled “The Causes and Necessities of Taking Up Arms.” They wanted everyone to know that what they did was not some light, transient thing. They did not take a flippant attitude toward defending their lives, homes, and country with physical weapons. Let me read several paragraphs.

They say this: “They have undertaken to give and to grant our money without our consent, though we have exercised an exclusive right to dispose of our property. Statutes have been passed for

extending the jurisdiction of courts of admiralty and vice-admiralty beyond their ancient limits, for depriving us of the accustomed and inestimable privilege of trial by jury in cases affecting both life and property, for suspending the legislature of one of the colonies, for interdicting all commerce to the capital of another, for altering fundamentally the form of government established by charter." In other words, here are some of the crimes that George III has committed.

"We saw the misery to which such despotism would reduce us. We, for ten years, incessantly and ineffectually, besieged the throne as supplicants. We reasoned. We remonstrated with Parliament in the most mild and decent language." For ten years, they tried verbal defense.

"Parliament adopted an insidious maneuver calculated to divide us, to establish a perpetual auction of taxations where colony should be against colony, all of them uninformed what ransom would redeem their lives, and thus to extort from us at the point of the bayonet the unknown sums that should be sufficient to gratify, if possible to gratify, ministerial rapacity with a miserable indulgence left us of raising in our own mode the prescribed tribute. What terms more rigid and humiliating could have been dictated by remorseless victors to conquered enemies?"

"We are reduced to the alternative of choosing an unconditional submission to the tyranny of irritated ministers, or resistance by force. The latter is our choice. We have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery. Honour, justice, and humanity, forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors, and which our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us.

"We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of resigning succeeding generations to that wretchedness which inevitably awaits them, if we basely entail hereditary bondage upon them. Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and, if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable. We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favour towards us, that His Providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy, until we were grown up to our present strength, had

been previously exercised in warlike operation, and possessed of the means of defending ourselves."

"With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world, declare, that, exerting the utmost energy of those powers, which our beneficent Creator hath graciously bestowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabating firmness and perseverance, employ for the preservation of our liberties; being with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves."

"In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birthright, and which we ever enjoyed till the late violation of it—for the protection of our property, acquired solely by the honest industry of our fore-fathers and ourselves, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms. We shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed, and not before. With an humble confidence in the mercies of the supreme and impartial Judge and Ruler of the Universe, we most devoutly implore his divine goodness to protect us happily through this great conflict, to dispose our adversaries to reconciliation on reasonable terms, and thereby to relieve the empire from the calamities of civil war."

Our forefathers said, "Look, when we took up arms, it was not flippantly." We did so when all else had failed. What did our Lord say? "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." Because there is a time, He said, when self-defense is absolutely necessary.

Father, we ask You in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us. We do, Lord, want to be instructed and edified in the most holy faith. May we see the absolute purity and authority of Your Word. Enable us to understand the difference between a lawful authority and usurped, abused authority. Let us use every means to fight against wickedness and tyranny and ungodliness. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Christian & Civil Government # 4

SCRIPTURE READING - Romans 13:1-8 (KJV)

Review of Previous Sessions

Open Bibles to the book of Romans chapter 13, Romans chapter 13. Once again, we'll read the first eight verses and we'll take a few moments to review and then Lord willing, go from there. So Romans chapter 13, beginning there with verse one. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath but also for

> conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Let me take just about five minutes and try to bring those first-time visitors tonight up to where we are. I dealt on Monday night basically with two subjects. The first one was the institution and nature of government, showing you how that God alone has ordained government, that God alone is the sovereign, and therefore any ordained government is limited and confined and bounded by God. I pointed out the fact that God created three basic institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the state, which is a ministry of justice. We looked through Romans chapter 13, and I showed you how the civil magistrate is not just simply called a power and a ruler, but he's called the minister of God in verse 4 twice. And that word is diakonos. It's where we get our English word deacon. It literally means he's to be the deacon, the servant of God. And then in verse 4, he's also called a revenger.

The civil magistrate is not only God's deacon, he is God's exactor of righteousness. In verse 6, he is called a minister again, but this time the Greek word is leitourgoi, which means liturgy, a public form of worship. God has ordained civil government not simply to be a power or a rulership, but to be His deacon, His servant, His exactor of righteousness, and His public worship. Just as the family and the church are responsible to be biblical and scriptural, likewise the government is just as responsible to be biblical and scriptural, because it is limited, accountable, and responsible to the God who ordained it and set it up.

Government is covenantal in nature. The Word of God says specifically that there are two types of covenants. One is between God, the king, and the people, where the king agrees to be God's king, or the civil ruler agrees to be God's civil ruler, and the people agree to be God's people. The second covenant is between the king and the people, where the king agreed to rule faithfully, and the people agreed to obey as long as he did. This is basically how our

country was founded, because when one party violates the covenant, the other party is loose from obedience. That is exactly what George III, King of England, did: he violated his covenant with the colonies. Consequently, when he sent soldiers over here to coerce and subjugate the colonists, they said, "We are not going to submit to this. We are going to fight." The Fairfax Resolves show the colonists begging George III to keep his end of the covenant, but he would not, and he did not.

All parties are responsible in a covenant, and God holds each one accountable. When a king or civil ruler sins individually, God judges him individually. But when he sins publicly, and the people do not stop him since they have a responsibility to, God always judges the people. He always judges the land and the nation along with the civil ruler.

Resistance Must Be Led by a Proper Magistrate

We saw that government basically was for the protection of the righteous and for the punishment of the wicked. Government is not to be a welfare agency or an educational ministry; it is, according to the scripture, a ministry of justice. Then I answered the question, must we obey every law that comes down the pike? The answer is undoubtedly no, and I showed you numerous scriptural illustrations where men and women disobeyed their civil leader with the blessing of God. Elijah certainly did so, as did the Apostle Paul, Amram and Jochebed, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel, and a multitude of others in the Bible. So very clearly, God does not hold us responsible to obey those laws that are contrary to His word. In fact, I showed you scripture last night where God judged a people who were willingly walking after ungodly and unbiblical commandments. Then we looked at the fact that abused and usurped authority ties no one to subjection. I made one point last night, and I want to really emphasize it again: rebellion is only to lawful authority. If the authority is not lawful, it ties no one to submission, and therefore you may resist it with the blessing of God. It is not rebellion; it is simply resistance. That's why Thomas Jefferson said, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience unto God." So abused, usurped authority is not binding. Then we began to look at the three forms of resistance. If we are to resist abused, tyrannical authority, how are

we to resist? I showed you the three steps in the Bible: verbal defense, flight, and violent self-defense. The only problem with flight is, number one, sometimes it does not work, and number two, not everyone can flee at all times. Now, I want to pick up there tonight because I want to deal with a subject which most people probably have never entertained: if we are to resist, how are we to resist? The answer comes back, well, we're to resist by any and every means available to us that is biblical and right. The truth of the matter is this: we must resist in every way. We must begin with verbal resistance, accomplish whatever we can by using it, and then move on to the others.

God requires each of us to be active in every sphere, to be responsible. In Isaiah 58:1, He says, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." Over and over, God calls upon us to lift up our voices and cry out.

Most of the time, individuals want to talk about resistance by force of arms. Let me tell you very clearly that resistance by force of arms, according to the Bible, is reserved for those who are led by a proper magistrate. That does not include self-defense. If I'm standing on the street corner and someone comes up to mug me or rob me, I don't say, "Wait a minute, I can't defend myself until I get a police officer around here who will lead me in self-defense." No. I'm to defend my life according to the sixth commandment whenever and wherever it is absolutely necessary. I do not need anyone to lead me in self-defense because self-defense is obligatory according to the sixth commandment. The sixth commandment is "Thou shalt not kill." It's a negative. The positive is "Thou shalt preserve life." So I'm obligated to preserve life, including my own. Therefore, when I say that resistance of arms is reserved for those who are led by a magistrate, it does not include self-defense.

But it does exclude what you and I would call mob uprisings and insurrections. If we are going to have the use of arms, it must be done properly and biblically.

Look in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 20, and let me establish a principle for you. God says, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called." God does not call every man

to the use of the sword. That's what the Bible said in Romans chapter 13. What did He say about the civil magistrate? "He beareth not the sword in vain." God has called some individuals for the use of the sword, others He has not. So the common principle is, let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called.

According to 1 Corinthians 14:33, God is not the author of confusion. So very clearly, not all men have been called to use the sword. It is said of those who have been called to use the sword that "he beareth not the sword in vain." But the Scripture also says concerning those who unlawfully use the sword, in Matthew 26:52, "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." In other words, if you use the sword unlawfully, then you shall die by the sword either through divine vengeance or what you and I would call capital punishment.

The Distinction Between Private and Public Persons

To clarify this, there is a difference between what you and I would call a particular or a private person and a collective or a public person. You have a private person on the one hand, you have a public person on the other hand, and the duties of one are not necessarily the duties of the other. It is true that all men are bound to serve God. All men are called to serve God, but not to serve Him in the same capacity in the same way. For instance, not everyone in this room is called to be a preacher. Not everyone in this room is called to be a doctor. Not everyone in this room is called to be an economics professor. In other words, whatever calling God has placed upon you, it is true you're duty-bound to serve Him in that particular area. But you and I both know that there are some individuals that God gives greater responsibilities unto. He gives them greater blessings. He gives them greater advantages. And therefore, they are more accountable and answerable unto God. And so when God then takes an individual and He places him in a place of public trust, when He places him with an added amount of power and authority, then that individual is more accountable and answerable unto God. So let me try to demonstrate to you the difference between a private person and a public person. Let me show you the duties of the one, or not necessarily the duties of the other.

Let me give you an illustration most of you can identify with. I am in my own home, sitting back in my office studying, when I hear my wife up in the front of the building let out a scream. I can tell by the scream that she is in real trouble. As I jump up from my desk, I happen to reach over and pick up a pistol just to make sure I am covered in every area. When I get up front, here is a man who has broken into my house and is attacking my wife. I order him to stop, and he draws out a knife. When he does, I take the pistol and shoot him dead. I call the sheriff: "You better come out here. There's a dead man in my living room." The sheriff gets out there, sees where the man broke in, sees the scars on my wife where he attacked her. What is the sheriff going to do to me? The answer is nothing. It is very clearly, very obviously self-defense. The man broke into my home. I have the right to protect my life and the life of my wife. Now let's put it on the other hand. Suppose the man breaks into my home, my wife happens to be there alone, he attacks her, and he escapes. There is no one there to defend her. When I come home, I find the sheriff and the medics there, and the man has gotten away. They have done everything they can to find him, but they cannot find him.

They call out the dogs. The dogs can't catch his scent. He's simply gone. But my wife recovers and we're riding down the road one day, maybe three or four or five months later, and all of a sudden she said, "There he is." I said, "There who is?" She said, "That's the man that attacked me." I said, "Are you absolutely positive?" She said, "Of course I am. I'll never forget him." I said, "That's all I wanted to know."

I pull my car over. I reach in the backseat. I pick up my rifle. I lay it out the window and shoot him dead on the sidewalk. Would you please tell me what's going to happen to me now? I'm going to be arrested. What am I going to be arrested for? Murder. Because I was not at that particular time defending my wife, nor defending my life. I just executed the man on the spot.

Change it around just a little bit. Since I am a private individual in that instance, I had no right to take his life. But suppose instead of taking that rifle out of the backseat and shooting him dead, I took the rifle out of the backseat, jumped out, ran over, stuck it right between his eyes and said, "Sir, you better not even blink until the

sheriff gets here." And I held him until the sheriff arrived. My wife identified him, the sheriff took him in, and suppose we have a biblical court of law and a biblical jury and a biblical judge.

Biblical Word Study: Magistrate

Once the facts have come out and the evidence has been submitted, they find the man guilty and sentence him to death. It just so happens that I am the state executioner, the man who puts him in the electric chair. I strap him down, put the electrodes on him, reach over and pull the lever, sending all that voltage through his body. I watch him quiver and die. What's going to happen to me now? Nothing. Why? Because what I did in that instance, I did as a public person and not as a private person. There's a difference between the one and the other. We've got to understand that magistrates are public persons. So we better make sure, if we're going to follow someone, that they are indeed a lawful magistrate. Take your Bibles and turn to the book of Judges, chapter 18. I want to take you through the Bible very quickly, and I won't have time to deal but with two or three words. The first one is magistrate, and another one will be rulers. But I want you to see, according to the Scripture, who the rulers are.

Now, this may cause you to think fairly deeply, and I hope it does. But look in Judges 18, if you would please. Judges 18 and verse 7. The Bible says, "Then the five men departed and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt carelessly, after the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Sidonians, and had no business with any man." Now note the phrase, "and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing." Now, the word magistrate here is the Hebrew word atsar, and it literally means to hold back. It means a possessor of restraint. Literally what verse seven says, there was no magistrate in the land. There was no one there who had the authority and who had the power to stop them. So that's what the word atsar means. It means someone with the power of restraint. Someone who has the authority to use weaponry or whatever that would be sufficient to restrain someone.

Turn in your Bibles to the book of Ezra, chapter 7, verse 25. The king tells Ezra that he is to make magistrates, and here the Hebrew word is a different word, shaphat. "And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not." The king says, Ezra, you have my authority to set up magistrates. One of the qualifications for a magistrate is not just that he is a possessor of restraint, but the king says he must be someone who knows the law of God. And if he doesn't know the law of God, then before he can be a magistrate, you must teach him the law of God.

A magistrate, according to the Bible so far, is not just simply someone who has the power of restraint, but he is also someone who knows the law of God. Look in Luke chapter 12. Verse 11: "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say." When they bring you to the magistrates, the word magistrates is just archos—someone who is first, someone who is a leader. In verse 58: "When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate," the word magistrate is archonta—someone who is first in rank, a prince or ruler or leader. So far in the Old Testament, you have someone who is a possessor of restraint and someone who knows the law of God. In the New Testament so far, we just have a leader or a prince or a ruler, but it doesn't stop there. Go to Acts chapter 16, where the word magistrate is mentioned five times in just a few short verses.

Acts chapter 16, verse 20: "And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city." Verse 22: "And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them." Verse 35: "And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go." The magistrates here have power to use force, to subdue and subjugate, and to release. Verse 36: "And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace." Verse 38: "And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates." In each and every instance, the word magistrates is used. It comes from the Greek word strategos. Strategos comes from the Greek word stratos,

which means an army. The word strategos means a general, a military officer, a governor, a commandant, the chief of the Levites. The word strategos refers not just to a military officer, not just to a commandant, not just to a governor, but to the chief of the Levites. The Levites in the Old Testament were the priests.

They were the ones who kept the tabernacle and the temple. They were the ones who did the teaching of the Word of God. Hold Acts chapter 16, but turn back to the book of Numbers chapter 3, verse 32. You remember Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the high priest. "And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary." It would be an interesting thing to find out exactly what all these Levites did. Most of the time we think of the Levites as the ones who did all the offerings in the tabernacle and the temple, the ones that stood and sang and praised the Lord. But verse 32 says not only was Eleazar the chief over the chief of the Levites, but these Levites were the ones that kept the charge of the sanctuary. The word charge is a military term. Literally, he was over the ones who were guarding the sanctuary. These Levites were charged by God himself to protect the high priest. If anyone came within that tabernacle or that temple who was not supposed to be there, they were to kill him. All the Levites were armed.

We're going to see this in just a few moments. Eleazar was over the chief of the Levites. The Levites had different and varying chiefs, and whoever they were, they answered to Eleazar, who was the son of Aaron, the high priest.

Turn back to the book of Acts, chapter 4. Many people do not know the answer to this question. If I were to ask who the Sadducees were, many could tell me. If I were to ask who the Pharisees were, you could tell me. If I were to ask who the Herodians were, some could even tell me that. But if I were to ask who or what were the captains of the temple, most couldn't answer that question. Yet there were captains of the temple in the New Testament. Look in Acts chapter 4 and verse 1: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them." Who in the world was this captain of the temple? A little

bit later on, you'll see the word used in the plural form, so there was more than one.

But here was a captain of the temple. Look in Acts chapter 5, beginning there with verse 24, Acts 5, verse 24.

"Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow." Now, once again, you have the captain of the temple referred to in verse 24. Let's read verse 25. "Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." Now, I want you to note what the captain and his officers did. They brought them without violence. Not that these men were not armed. None of these men did not have the power to use violence. They did so. But why did they not use violence? The Bible gives you the answer. "For they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned." In other words, the captain and his officers were outnumbered. And they said, to keep our own selves from getting hurt, we'll not use our weaponry. We'll just take these men in and that'll be it. So in other words, they had power to use the sword. But they did not in this particular circumstance.

Now turn in your Bibles to the book of Luke, chapter 22. Luke, chapter 22, and look at verse 4, first of all, and here is the word used with the plural so that you can see there was more than one captain. Luke 22 and verse 4. "And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them." So Judas now is communing with the captains. Now look in verse 52 when they came out to get Jesus Christ. Look at what is said. Luke 22 and verse 52. "Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?" So when the captains came to get Christ, they were armed. Now I want you to note what Jesus Christ said. Jesus Christ asked this question, "Why are ye come out against me as a thief with swords and staves?"

Our Lord did not question that they have the power and authority to have those weapons and to use them. His only question was, why

are you using them against me? If you're walking down the street and turn the corner, a policeman draws out the pistol and puts it right in your chest. You don't say, what are you doing with a pistol? You don't have the power to use that pistol. You don't have the authority to have that pistol. You know he's got the authority to have that pistol. What you want to know is, why are you pointing that thing at me? I haven't done anything. I'm not a thief. That's what our Lord was saying. He was not saying, you don't have the authority to have the weapons. You have that authority. But why are you trying to use them against me? I have done absolutely nothing wrong.

Now, who in the world were these captains of the temple? I want you to go back in your Bibles to Psalm 42. We're not going to look at the psalm, but we're going to look at the heading of the psalm. And then I'll tell you something about the history of the context. Look, if you would please, just at the heading. It says this: "To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah." So David wrote Psalm 42 for the sons of Korah to sing.

Now, that might not mean anything to you. But if you remember Numbers chapter 16, there were three men who rebelled against Moses and Aaron and led an uprising against them. They were Dathan, Abiram, and Korah. Now, Dathan and Abiram were of the tribe of Reuben. But Korah was a Levite. And you remember what happened? Moses said, let the earth open up and let a new thing happen. Let these folks go down alive to the pit. And that's exactly what happened. But when you get to Numbers chapter 26, you'll find that the sons of Korah died not with Korah. In other words, when Moses said, separate yourself from these people, the sons of Korah went with Moses. That is, they turned against their own father because they knew the father was wicked and wrong. And so the sons of Korah died not.

Now I want you to watch this. Korah was a Levite. So the sons of Korah then, and you'll find them mentioned in the Bible oftentimes, you'll either find them called Korahites or Korhites. And every time you say that word, they're nothing more than Levites. Now watch this. Look in your Bibles, if you would please. 1 Chronicles 9. First Chronicles, Chapter 9, and let me show you these Levites who are mentioned as the sons of Korah. First Chronicles, Chapter 9, and

let's look at verse 19. "And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, of the house of his father, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle: and their fathers, being over the host of the LORD, were keepers of the entry." Now, when you read the phrase, keepers of the gates and keepers of the entry, you know what that means? That means that these Korahites, translated Levites, of the father of the descendants of Korah, these men were armed guards.

Notice what the Bible says: "and their fathers, being over the host of the LORD." The host of the Lord was the army. So in the Old Testament tabernacle and temple you have armed guards, armed Levites at the doors, protecting the high priest and the things of God, and keeping out certain individuals who are not supposed to be there.

Now look at 1 Chronicles chapter 12, verse 1. These Levites, although they were preachers and teachers of the word of God and men who offered sacrifice to God, were also warriors. "Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war." Some of David's mighty men are listed. Skip down to verse 6: "Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites," who were of the family of Korah, who were nothing more than Levites. Then at verse 26 the Bible says it very plainly: "Of the children of Levi, four thousand and six hundred." So David had 4,600 preachers and teachers of the Word of God fighting in his army.

I want you to understand who the captain of the temple was. The captain or captains of the temple were these Levites from the Old Testament who continued in the New Testament, protecting the temple. Turn to Second Chronicles, chapter 23. This ought to really get you excited. Not only does it show that the Levites were armed, but it shows something else. Do you remember when the government attacked the people at Waco, David Koresh and that bunch? I don't know anything about David Koresh, and I'm sure I would not agree with his theology, but one of the things they accused him of was having weapons in the church. You remember that? Of

course, what they did not tell you was this: Koresh and a number of his men were licensed gun dealers. That's one of the ways they made money—they would take weapons and repair them, fix them up, and resell them.

And no, they were not fully automatic. They were just simply men who had federal firearms licenses. That's all. And they sold them. But they tried to make a big to-do out of the fact that they had weaponry in the church. Well, let's see what the Bible says, 2 Chronicles chapter 23, verse 7, Jehoiada the high priest is giving the orders and look what he says, the king now has been anointed, the king is a young child. He says in verse 7, "And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever else cometh into the house, he shall be put to death: but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out." Now what did Jehoiada the High Priest do? He put his preachers, he put his teachers, he put his Levites around the king with their weapons. And he says, whoever comes in this house not supposed to be there, kill him.

Now watch verse 8. "So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go out on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses." Watch verse 9. "Moreover Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's, which were in the house of God."

Where were all those weapons stored? In the temple. Who had control over them? The priest. And in the time of emergency, he passed them out. So when God in the New Testament tells us that the captains of the temple came, here's the carryover from the Old Testament to the New Testament where these Levites had their weapons. They had the power and the authority to use those weapons because they were to defend the temple just like they did in the Old Testament. So a magistrate now, I want you to think with me, a magistrate so far in the Old Testament and the New Testament is not only someone who has the power of restraint, a possessor of restraint, someone who has authority to have weapons and to use those weapons.

But he's also a leader. Now, I want you to look in your Bibles to the book of Titus, chapter three and verse one. Here's the last time I'm going to show you the word magistrate that you'll find in the book of Titus, chapter three and verse one, and there's no problem here with this passage, I'll explain it to you. But he says, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates."

"To be ready to every good work." Paul is saying, look, we need to teach the people biblical submission.

Now, there's no contradiction here with what I've been preaching. You and I are to be in submission to a biblical, godly government and authority. I have no problem with authority. People have come up to me and said, "Brother Weaver, it sounds like you want to overthrow our government." I don't want to overthrow our government. All I want to do is throw the wickedness out of our government. I have no problem with authority, but I do have problems with wickedness and rebellion in government that want to overthrow the law of God and the law of the land. God is telling us, as long as we can be in submission, fine. I have no problem being in submission to a godly authority.

Let me tell you this, folks. It is true that the Bible says the wife is to be in submission to the husband in everything. But it's equally true that the Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." It's easy for a woman to be in submission to her husband when the husband loves that wife the way Christ loved the church.

The point I'm trying to make is this: it's easy for a citizen to be in submission to a government that is fulfilling the functions and acting in the way that God has ordained it to act. There's no problem there. Your problem arises when the government wants to be God itself, and begins to act like a God and tries to subdue and subjugate and enslave the people.

So here's the last word for magistrate in the New Testament. Let me give you another word, and that's the word rulers. I want you to look in your Bibles to the book of Exodus, chapter 22, verse 28. You need to understand this passage because it's very, very important. I'll

tell you what the Hebrew word is in just a moment. There are two words.

Biblical Word Study: Ruler

We're going to deal with one of them rather quickly. Exodus 22:28 says, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." What does God mean when He says, "Thou shalt not revile the gods"? Is He talking about false gods like Baal and Ashtoreth? No. God reviles those Himself. One of the main Hebrew words for an idol is gillulim, which literally means dung ball. That's the title God gives to a false god. He makes fun of them Himself: they're dumb, they can't speak, hear, see, or walk. So when God says, "Thou shalt not revile the gods," He's not talking about false gods. He's talking about men whom He has ordained to office. Let me show you that in the Bible. Hold Exodus 22; we're coming right back there, but first look at Psalm 82.

Watch this carefully. Psalm 82, beginning with verse one. I told you last night there is a difference between having no respect for an abusive and tyrannical officer and having respect for the office. You may disrespect the man in the office, but you must always respect the office of authority. Here's why: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods." What gods is He talking about? Not false gods. Psalm 82 is a psalm to civil rulers and particularly to judges. This passage shows that God, the supreme judge of all the earth, is ready to judge the judges of the earth. He says, "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?" Then He tells them to "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked." Now notice what He says about these judges: "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course." That is, they turn everything upside down. And look what He said to these judges: "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." So God says, you who have special authority and special offices, I called you gods, why?

Because you are supposed to represent me. You say, "Brother Weaver, I don't know if that interpretation is right or not." Turn to John chapter 10, where our Lord gives the exact same interpretation. In verse 34, "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" Notice verse 35: "If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came." In other words, God says, I gave you a special office and special authority and special direction. In fact, I can show you where God tells the judges, "for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD."

You are to represent Me. And so, therefore, they are called gods. And so, when He is saying, "Thou shalt not revile the gods," what He is saying is, basically, you are not to mock and to make fun of anyone who is fulfilling the office the way God ordained him to. May I remind you of those young children in 2 Kings chapter 2 who mocked and made fun of Elisha when they came out and said, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." And he turned around and cursed them in the name of the Lord, and two she bears came out of the woods and tore forty and two of them. You see, you're not to mock those whom God has ordained and who are indeed functioning in the way that God has ordained them to function. Now, let's go back to Exodus chapter 22. I wanted to clear that up, but that was not the word that I want to deal with in Exodus chapter 22. If you'll notice there in verse 28, again, he says this, "Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people." Now, here's the word ruler. The word ruler is a word that is equal to the word magistrate. It is those who have been exalted and elevated out of the congregation.

To understand that, turn in our Bibles to the book of Numbers, chapter one. In Numbers, chapter one, a nasi—the word for ruler—is one who is exalted, elevated, or lifted up by or in the local assembly. Thus, it means someone who has been chosen and elected by the local assembly. Look at verse one: "And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation." Then he tells him to take the sum. Skip down to verse four: "And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the

house of his fathers." There were twelve tribes, so twelve men were chosen—the prince, ruler, or nasi of that tribe. From verse 5 to verse 15, those men were chosen, lifted up by the tribes, and exalted to be ruler in that tribe. Verse 16 says, "These were the renowned of the congregation," that is, the ones lifted up, exalted out of the congregation, "princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel." So here are men that are exalted. The term nasi, then, or ruler, applies to any ruler of God's people who are lifted up and exalted out of the congregation.

The Doctrine of Interposition

To save time tonight, if you look in Exodus chapter 16 in verse 22, Joshua 9 in verse 15, Joshua 9 in verse 18, and Joshua 22 in verse 30, you will find once again these individuals are called princes. They are called rulers. It is the same word. In other words, they have been lifted up out of the congregation. The term ruler is equal to the term magistrate. The term ruler is equally applied to spiritual rulers as it is to civil rulers. When you stop and think about this, you have a spiritual ruler and a civil ruler. They are both rulers. They are both individuals designated, ordained, and called by God and endued with certain authority. Scripture shows that oftentimes when a civil magistrate fails to do his duty, in the Bible sometimes a spiritual magistrate steps in and does it. How in the world could that be unless the spiritual magistrate is equally a magistrate just like the civil magistrate is?

This is also known as the doctrine of interposition. When a higher ruler fails to do his job or duty, it is likewise the responsibility of the lower ruler to step in and do what should have been done by the higher ruler. Why? Because the lower ruler is equally a ruler as well. And you're going to find this happening over and over in the Bible. It is true that sometimes the spiritual ruler leaves the normal functions of his office and steps over and does that which is out of and beyond the call of duty. But he does so because he is equally a ruler when the civil ruler fails to do his duty.

Look in your Bibles to the book of Exodus, chapter 32. Let me give you the first illustration. Exodus, chapter 32. And notice verse 27.

You know the story how Moses has come down from the mount. The people have committed idolatry, they're committing adultery. Moses is so upset, he throws the Ten Commandments down. He breaks them. He takes the idol. He grinds it up in powder. He burns it. Then he throws the ashes in the brook. He tells all the people to drink of the water. Well, there were some men who would not drink.

And so in Exodus chapter 32 and verse 27, let's read verse 26. "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses." "And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." So here is Moses, the man of God, the prophet, the preacher, the teacher. When these people refused to obey, he says, God says they're to be killed. They won't come over here. You Levites, you come over here, put your sword on and you go in and slay every one of them. And that's exactly what happened. And by the way, you'll find later in the word of God, God commends the children of Levi for doing exactly what Moses told them to do. Now, Moses was a spiritual leader, but he was here ordering the execution of these people. Now granted, and I'm going to give you this one, granted Moses is also called a king. You will find that, you don't have to turn there, but you'll find it in Deuteronomy chapter 33. The Bible says very clearly in verse 5, "And he was king in Jeshurun." So Moses then had a dual role. Moses was not only a spiritual ruler, he was also a civil ruler as well.

Turn to 1 Samuel chapter 15 for another clear illustration where this one was simply a spiritual ruler. God sent King Saul on a mission: slay the Amalekites—every one of them, man, woman, suckling, ass, boy, girl, sheep, ox, camel. Saul and the people spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and the best of the sheep and the best of the oxen, but everything that was refuse they utterly destroyed. God sent Samuel to Saul, and when Saul saw Samuel, the first thing he said was, "Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD." Samuel said, "Saul, if

you've obeyed God, what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul tried to blame it all on the people: the people spared, the people wanted to do this for sacrifice. Samuel said, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Therefore God rejected Saul for being king. Now look what happens in 1 Samuel chapter 15.

Verse 32: "Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately." Evidently, this was a prissy individual. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." And Samuel said, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. Here stood the king, the highest civil officer in the land. He had disobeyed God. Samuel, the prophet, comes along. He said, "Saul, you've disobeyed God. You bring me out Agag. I'll do what God wanted done." And he takes the sword and he hews him in pieces. When the Bible says that he hewed him in pieces before the LORD, literally, it is as unto the LORD. In other words, Samuel did to Agag exactly what God wanted done to Agag.

Samuel could not have done that unless he himself was a magistrate or a ruler. When Saul refused to fulfill the duty for which God ordained him, the spiritual magistrate stepped in and did exactly that. One of the main problems in this country is with our preachers. In 1 Samuel 16, God sends Samuel to anoint David king. When the rulers and elders of Bethlehem hear that Samuel is coming, verse 4: "And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?" What kind of question is that to ask a preacher? "Comest thou peaceably?" When's the last time your pastor went to a city council meeting or a county council meeting and before he can get there, all those men send messages out the door, "Now preacher, are you coming peaceably?" When's the last time anyone trembled at a preacher? They trembled at Samuel. Because Samuel knew his office. And they knew Samuel knew his office and his authority because he had hewed Agag to pieces.

First Kings chapter 18. That great contest at Mount Carmel: King Ahab, the prophets of Baal, 450 of them. Elijah challenged them. They leaped upon their sacrifice, cried, pleaded, cut themselves. Baal never answered. About the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah put the sacrifice in order, called for water, a trench dug around the sacrifice, filled the trench with water, covered the sacrifice with water three times. Then he said, "O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." Fire came down from heaven and licked up the sacrifice and the water in the trench. Then Elijah said, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." The scripture says he brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

Right in sight of the highest civil ruler in the land. Ahab should have been cutting off their heads, but he didn't. But Elijah did. May I remind you of Numbers, Chapter 25. I've got two particularly that I want to share with you. Look in Numbers, Chapter 25. Here is Phinehas. I've just preached a series of messages on Psalm 106, and I dealt with this passage because it's repeated again in Psalm 106, but look in Numbers chapter 25, the people now have committed whoredom. They've committed idolatry with the daughters of Moab. And one Israelite is so brazen that he brings a Midianitish woman into the camp. Numbers chapter 25, and let's begin reading there with verse 6. "And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." All the leaders were at the door of the tabernacle weeping.

Now, I don't know if they could not act out of grief or because they were so broken up or because they were physically unable to act because they were so weak. I don't know. But the Bible says they were there weeping. Watch what happens. "And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them

through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand." Now, listen, God must really be upset with Phinehas because Phinehas is a priest.

He's jumped up, he's run into the tent, and he's killed two people. Well, verse 10, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." Was God angry with Phinehas? No. Well, how could Phinehas do that? Because he was a ruler. He may have been a spiritual ruler, but he was still a ruler. He was someone who was ordained by God, he held an office, and in that office he had authority. The civil rulers were not doing their duties, so he did it.

May I remind you of 2 Kings chapter 11? I want you to turn there. There was a grandmother by the name of Athaliah, and this grandmother did a very un-grandmotherly thing. When her son Ahaziah died, she murdered all of her grandchildren except one, Joash. And the only reason she didn't murder him was he was stolen. He was kidnapped by the high priest's wife and hid in the temple. And Athaliah, a wicked, ungodly murderess, set herself up as queen and was ruling over the land. And when Joash was seven years of age, they brought him into the temple, they anointed him to be king.

And I want you to look at this. Second Kings, chapter 11 and verse four. "And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son." Now skip down to verse 8. He tells the Levites, "...and ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in." Now let's skip down. Verse 14, Athaliah hears the people

shouting. And she comes down, "and when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason." By the way, I want you to understand, what Jehoiada the high priest did was not treason. Now, Athaliah called it treason.

But remember, Athaliah was a murderess and a pervert. George III called what we did treason, but it wasn't treason. You must understand what treason is. She said, "Treason, Treason." Watch verse 15: "But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD. And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain." So the high priest says, kill her and everyone who follows her. How could the priest do that? Because he also was a ruler. The king was seven years old, Athaliah was a murderess, and the priest had an office and authority. No one could use that authority in the civil sphere, so he stepped in and did what needed to be done because he, too, was a ruler.

Now look at Hebrews 11. Some of these heroes of faith are not named, but they are listed. Notice verse 32: "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel." Remember, Samuel is the one who killed Agag. "And Samuel, and of the prophets:" the prophets, the preachers. Watch what they did: "Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." He particularly mentions Samuel and the prophets.

Historical Application: The Black Robed Regiment

Let me tell you about the founding of this country. The real leaders of the American War for Independence were the preachers. It is true

there was a Sam Adams and a Patrick Henry, but where did these people learn the principles of liberty, freedom, righteousness, and justice? From the preachers. There were so many preachers who fought in the American War for Independence, commonly called the Revolutionary War. The preachers were so prominent.

The English called them the Black Robed Regiment because all the pastors at that time wore black robes. Consider Jonas Clark. Most have never heard of him, but you have heard of the Battle of Lexington and Concord and the shot heard around the world. Those men were taught and trained by their pastor, Jonas Clark. The battle took place on the courthouse and on the church steps and green right in front of the church. Sam Adams's biggest question was, will these men fight? Jonas Clark assured him they would fight and they would die. When the battle began, one man who had vowed he would never run from the English died on the spot. Another of Jonas Clark's men died on the steps of the church as he ran in to get more powder and ball. Where were the ammunition and arms stored in 1776? In the church. After those stalwart men lay dead and the smoke had cleared, a woman approached Pastor Clark and said, "There, Pastor Clark, are you satisfied with what you have done?" She was upset because of the death of those men. He replied, "Madam, I would not recall those men if I could, and I would not stop this moment if I could, because from this day forth there will be a new cry for independence and freedom that will shake this world."

The English hated the churches. You have probably seen the movie The Patriot and heard the hubbub from England about the burning of those people in the church. Pastor John Rogers, a Presbyterian pastor of New York, said of the English: "They have, in the course of this war, utterly destroyed more than 50 places of worship in these states. Most of these they burned. Others they leveled with the ground and in some places left not a vestige of their former situation, while they have wantonly defaced or rather destroyed others by converting them into barracks, jails, hospitals, horse stables. In Boston, Newport, Philadelphia, and Charleston, all furnished melancholy instances of the prostitution and the abuses of the houses of God and of the nineteen places of public worship in this city."

"When the war began, there were but nine fit for use. When the British troops left." So in New York, they destroyed 10 churches alone. Let me tell you about James Caldwell of Elizabethtown, New Jersey. He was such a fiery preacher and such a man of conviction that his people were one with him. In fact, he was branded by the British the Rebel Parson and his people were known as the Rebel Parish. So hated was James Caldwell that a price was put on his head. Now, this was a Presbyterian preacher. He was so hunted by the British that when he preached the gospel of peace to his people, he did so with loaded pistols on the pulpit to defend himself if the English were to burst into his church. I'll tell you how much they hated him: when the English one time were passing by his house, they looked in and saw his wife, Hannah, holding a baby. And one English soldier aimed and shot Mrs. Caldwell right between the eyes. Thankfully, a neighbor woman was there and caught the baby as Mrs. Caldwell fell dead. That almost sounds of recent origin, does it not? But James Caldwell was a fire eater, and in one battle, he saw the fire of a company of colonial soldiers slacking for lack of wadding. Now, if you've never shot a muzzleloader, you've got to understand that you put the powder in first, and then you put usually a piece of paper or a piece of rag in with the ball, because the ball is a little smaller than the diameter of the muzzle loader. And if you don't have that wadding, then the ball will roll out. So you need the wadding to hold it tight. And so you knock it down in there, and then when you fire, the fire goes off, and of course, the wadding and the bullet come out the barrel. Well, the men could not shoot because there was a lack of wadding. So he jumps on his horse and rides through the firing lines to the closest Presbyterian church house. He goes in, he grabs up all these hymnals by Isaac Watts, these beautiful hymns written by Isaac Watts. He gets an arm load of them, rides back once again through all the fire, goes to that company whose fire was slackened because of lack of wadding, and starts throwing these hymnals out to them. And he says, "There you go, boys. Put Watts into them. Give them some religion. Put Watts into them."

Finally, James Caldwell himself was murdered, shot dead by the British. I could tell you story after story, but let me tell you about Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg. He was pastor of a Protestant Episcopal

Church in Dunmore County, Virginia. One Sunday he announced that at three o'clock in the afternoon he would preach a patriotic sermon on the duty men owed their God and their country. At three o'clock the building was packed; people stood not only in the aisles but outside as well. Pastor Muhlenberg ascended to the pulpit and took his text from Ecclesiastes: "There's a time for every purpose and for every work. There's a time for war, there's a time of peace," etc. He preached powerfully. When he came to the end of his message, wearing that long flowing black robe, he exclaimed, "The time to preach has passed! The time to fight has come!" And he ripped off his robe. There he stood in full military uniform. He looked at a young boy previously appointed to start drumming for recruits. Three hundred men volunteered. Within the next few days, they marched behind their pastor to help George Washington corner Cornwallis in Virginia. Defending himself afterwards, he said, "I'm a clergyman. It is true. But I am also a member of society as well as the poorest layman, and my liberty is as dear to me as to any man. Shall I then sit still and enjoy myself at home when the best blood of the continent is spilling? Heaven forbid. Do you think of America should be conquered, that I should be safe? Far from it. And would you not sooner fight like a man than die like a dog? The cause is just and noble. Were I a bishop, even a Lutheran one, I should obey without hesitation. And so far from thinking that I am wrong, I am convinced it is my duty so to do, a duty I owe to my God and to my country." Now, listen to what he said: "Shall I then sit still and enjoy myself at home while the best blood in the country is spilling? God forbid it. Do you think of America should fall that I should be safe? Far from it. And had you not rather fight like a man than die like a dog?" I'll tell you something, folks. The mess this country is in, the primary reason we are in the mess that we're in is because of the preachers. Where are men like James Caldwell? Where are men like Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg? Where are men like Ezra Stiles?

Call for Modern Preachers to Lead

God has said, here you are, pastors. You have an office. You're a ruler, ordained with authority. If the civil government will not do so, then you must lead in righteousness and truth. Please listen to me. Don't laugh at what I'm about to tell you, because I'm not saying this

to be funny. Do you know who the first person is in this country that should be leading us back to God, back to the principles of our founding fathers, back to our Constitution? The first person that should be leading us back to those things is Bill Clinton.

If he won't do it, then Al Gore should. If Al Gore won't, then the Speaker of the House should. If the Speaker won't, then every other congressman ought to. If none of them will, then the governors of the state must. If they won't, the lieutenant governors should. If they won't, the speakers of the house should. Then go down to your state legislatures. If none of them will, then the county chairman ought to. If he won't, his assistant. If he won't, then some councilman. If they won't, then the city. Start at the top and go down. Here's the doctrine of interposition: if there's a duty, and the highest civil officer will not fulfill it, then the lower one must step up and fulfill it. If none of them will fulfill the office for which God has ordained them, then the only ones left are the preachers, spiritual rulers, spiritual magistrates. The preachers in this country have sold their souls for pension and ease and comfort. They've not only sold their souls, they've sold the souls of their people and also the soul of this nation.

Where are the preachers when truth and righteousness and liberty and freedom are at stake? We will never reclaim this country until we reclaim the preaching ministry. It was those preachers who spread the truth and instilled in those people the principles of right and freedom and liberty and justice and righteousness. And you don't hear that today from the pulpit. All you hear is submit, submit, submit, and they know nothing of what Romans 13 really teaches. The Black Robed Regiment. Would to God we had it again. Would to God, when your pastor went to the next council meeting, someone would come out and say, "Comest thou peaceably?" Would to God we have some men. We have sired an entire generation of people who are spineless, gutless, jellyfished, backboneless, that have no character and will not stand for anything. I was talking to a black man about a year or so ago. I said, "You know, I hate to tell you this. But do you know most black folks and most white folks under 40 are not worth shooting?" You know, he agreed with me.

I know there are exceptions, but stop and think what this country is like. Look at the generation we've sired. They want pleasure,

comfort, ease, and everything. But what's right, holy, and godly? We better pray for God's preachers—those willing to take a stand. We better get behind them, support them, protect them, and do everything we can for them, because one day you might be following one of them. If there's no civil leaders to lead, you must have a proper magistrate. The only other magistrates left are the spiritual ones. Make sure you pray for God's men. Let's pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we cry to thee this night, especially for your preachers. We do know, Lord, there are many men who have entered into the ministry as a profession.

They could care less about truth and could care less about righteousness and your word. But Lord, that does not negate the fact that You do have Your men. And there are more than we can think of. And there are more than we know of. You have Your people and You have Your men in place all throughout this country. And in Your time, You will raise them up. Give us grace, Lord, to pray for them and support them and do everything we can to enable them to get the Word out. May we be men and women of character and integrity who love truth and righteousness and freedom and liberty more than the comforts and the pleasures of this life, that we may serve Thee effectively with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen. They could care less about truth and could care less about righteousness and your word. But Lord, that does not negate the fact that You do have Your men. And there are more than we can think of. And there are more than we know of. You have Your people and You have Your men in place all throughout this country. And in Your time, You will raise them up. Give us grace, Lord, to pray for them and support them and do everything we can to enable them to get the Word out. May we be men and women of character and integrity who love truth and righteousness and freedom and liberty more than the comforts and the pleasures of this life, that we may serve Thee effectively with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

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