

# GOD'S PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT

*"The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men"* (Daniel 4:17).

God created the first human couple from which society originated. He also placed man in an environment of rich material resources to develop and improve his well-being. Since God is the benevolent source and provider for human society, He also has the working plan for the good of man. God's established laws are the basis for the governing of society.

Political science and government deals with such values as equality, freedom, justice, and power. God's law provides these values and a lot more. These are desirable qualities that everyone wants for themselves. The problem is for people to allow others the same right they have, especially where rights conflict and sacrifice is required. The simple "Golden Rule" that a child can understand applies here: *"Do unto others as ye would have them do unto you."*

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## INNOCENCE AND SELF-GOVERNMENT

The Bible shows a progress of doctrine in God's development of human government down through time. God created man in His own image for fellowship. His ideal is that we be in such close communion with Him that His ways are naturally our ways. Adam and Eve lived for a short time in God's perfect environment in innocence and purity without any thought of sin. The Bible's "dominion mandate" gave Adam jurisdiction over creation to use the natural resources and creatures. *"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish, ... the fowl, ... and over every living thing"* (Genesis 1:28).

A Christian view of human government starts with absolutes rather than a void to be filled by doing whatever is right in the eyes of the prevailing rulers. The Book of Judges, in the Bible, reveals the continual bloodshed which human wisdom and self-will produce. Many today would like to ignore their depraved nature and live in what they presume to be Edenic freedom. The result is conflict, fear, murder, and abortion of the unwanted—bondage!

When Eve, then Adam, disobeyed God they were put out of the garden. Adam's labors were intensified and Eve was put into subjection to her husband (Genesis 3:16). God gave the green herbs for food to man and animals (Genesis 1:29, 30) This peaceful time of no bloodshed for food evidently faded away. By Noah's time, the earth was filled with violence.

This grieved the heart of God, and He decided to destroy life on the earth and start over. Noah, the preacher of righteousness, warned the people for many years while he built the ark. *"The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah,"* but then the Flood came (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5). The 2½ miles (average) of sedimentary layers around our earth, full of flora and fauna life-forms, are the result.

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## BEGINNINGS OF GOVERNMENT

God then, in compassion, and understanding human nature, provided the discipline of human government. *"For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth"* (Gen. 8:21). God gave man the responsibility to administer the death penalty on those who commit capital crimes. *"At the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"* (Genesis 9:5, 6). The reason this is so serious is that God made man in His own image. The noble, upright being that God created man to be, a righteous image of God, is violated when human life is degraded or taken.

Salvation for true repentance is the great achievement of God—justice called and mercy answered. However, injustice is not an option with God. He is not the doting father, that many envision today, who just overlooks a lot.

*"Ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it"* (Numbers 35:33).

When legal justice is not carried out, the "law of the land" creates a backlog of required blood atonement that results in social catastrophes.

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## GOD ESTABLISHES A NATION

When human society again degraded into idolatry and Satanic abominations such as child sacrifice, God called out a people to be a showcase of His will. Abraham was the first Hebrew called out of Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 11:31). At first, the father was the magistrate in the family and tribe.

The Jews grew to be a nation in Egypt. God then gave them a law and detailed code of conduct. These moral, civil, and ceremonial laws were canonized for Israel in the books of Moses. The basic Ten Commandments first of all require reverence of the one true God in Heaven. The people were to observe one day of rest in seven, honor parents, respect human life (do not kill), be faithful to one partner in marriage, respect the property of others and don't even covet it. Have only honesty in economic affairs and when speaking of others.

God never intended the Old Testament Law to be a permanent arrangement (Galatians 3:24). The Old Testament points to a future personal rule by God again in the hearts of men (Colossians 1:26, 27). Jesus later summarized all the Old Testament laws under two laws. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Then we are to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30, 31).

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## HUMAN GOVERNMENT FAILS

In time, ancient Israel failed to be God's showcase of right living to the nations. At first, God led Israel through the prophets but Israel soon wanted a king like the other nations. She finally fell into the idolatry of the nations about her and went into captivity to a foreign power. God then gave visions to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, of future governments. Daniel, a Jewish ruler, was the interpreter.

The first vision was of an image, which represented world kingdoms (Daniel 2:31-45). The head of gold represented Babylon, the silver chest and arms Media-Persia. The brass belly was Greece, and the long legs of iron represented Rome. The feet were of iron mixed with clay representing the last Gentile nations, partly weak and partly strong. To people, this image and the kingdoms looked spectacular. Yet each material showed degeneration in sovereign power. God gave visions to Daniel from His viewpoint, portraying the nations as beasts destroying humanity (Daniel 7 and 8).

Human government, benevolent or brutal, can give some social order, but it is just a stopgap arrangement waiting for something better. Ideologists have proposed utopias, promising land, bread, and peace. However, the outworking (as in communism) has perpetrated a life of drudgery, bondage, and the death of millions. Today the UN is supporting many refugee camps with no solution.

Babylon carried Israel captive, but they returned for a time, only to be again scattered over the world by Rome. At that time, when the temple worship was restored, Jesus the Son of God came into the world to fulfill the Old Testament symbols of redemption. He provided the only effective blood sacrifice atonement to God for the sins of mankind.

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## THEOCRACY RESTORED

In the new covenant or agreement with man, Jesus called a new nation of the redeemed from all nations into His church. God's companionship with man, lost in the Garden of Eden, is again restored (Ephesians 2:14). Through the cross and new birth experience, Satan and man's evil nature ("the flesh") can be defeated. Christ now rules in men's lives through the Holy Spirit (Colossians 1:27). Those who do not accept the Spirit's rule in their lives are still under the jurisdiction of the law of sin and death (1 Corinthians 5:5; Romans 8:2).

Jesus said, *"I will build my church."* This is the true essence of the separation of church and state. They are two separate kingdoms. Today national governments have the authority of God to administer laws and punish crimes (Romans 3:1-7). However, in the church of Jesus Christ the members are subject to the higher law of God. Where there are any conflicts, *"we ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). Jesus said that believers are to be *"the salt [preserving factor] of the earth."* The question is raised in political science, "Whose interests are served by the government?" The United States government was a noble effort at government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." However, this is only possible where the ethics and law of God are in the hearts of the majority. This principle of "liberty under God's law" was recognized by the founders of the Constitution ("In God we trust").

Human kingdoms degenerate and are overcome until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. *"I will overturn ... until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him"* (Ezekiel 21:27). At that future time, the kingdoms of this world come to a crashing end. This is seen in the stone that hits the feet of Daniel's image and in the Revelation judgments revealed in the last book of the Bible (Daniel 2:35, 45; Revelation 19:11-21). This is also the time when Jesus will take the church, which is the kingdom of God in this world today (Luke 17:21), into His everlasting kingdom (Revelation 11:15). May our goal be to live forever with Christ in that everlasting kingdom.

~ Elvin Stauffer