



Biblical Support for Significant Christian Influence in the State

TO: LEGISLATORS

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To the extent the leaders of a nation follow God's blueprint for civil government is proportionate to its blessing. If one understands and implements what the Bible teaches regarding the structure of a nation, that nation will benefit. The converse is also true: To the degree a nation varies from God's design and purposes is the degree to which it will struggle. This is known as the biblical principle of reaping and sowing. It follows that it's critically important for political leaders to learn and follow what the Good Book says about national leadership and policy. When you think about it, we are apt to hurry to His Book relative to personal, marital, familial or financial problems, but do we look to God's Word for guidance on what's right for our nation? "Righteousness exalts a nation..." states Proverbs 14:34. Let's become experts on that understanding.

INTRODUCTION

We have now concluded Bible studies on five wrong views of Church and State. Those being:

Five Wrong Views of Church and State
> Government Should Compel Religion
> Government Should Exclude Religion
> All Governments Are Evil and Demonic
> Do Evangelism Not Politics
> Do Politics Not Evangelism

We have examined each of the above in detail and built a strong biblically-based argument countering those respective points of view. The proper understanding—as argued from Scripture with the aid of a consistent grammatical, historical, normative hermeneutic—will follow in this and upcoming studies in the weeks ahead. It goes without saying that it is critically important for believing legislators to possess a good, working understanding of this subject.

In the task of developing the proper biblical view of Church and State, it is important to first discover the normative recurrence of believers throughout the Old and New Testaments who involved themselves in and influenced governmental leaders and the policies of the institution wherein they lived. This exercise is fundamental to building an understanding of the subject at hand. What follows first then are OT illustrations (in chronological order) of God's people significantly influencing government.

I. OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

A. MOSES: A PROPHETIC MINISTRY

In Exodus 5, a more mature Moses returns to Egypt and confronts Pharaoh. In speaking on behalf of the LORD Moses states, "Let My people go." Given Pharaoh's recalcitrance, the confrontation escalates in the ensuing chapters. By chapter seven Moses, Scripture says, "became God to Pharaoh" speaking with a prophetic voice to the governmental leader (Ex. 7:1). God desired His people to be free so that they could serve Him (10:3) and Moses adroitly represents God's will to the body politic of the day. All know the end of the story. Suffice to say here, there is no doubt that God's people significantly influenced the destiny of Pharaoh's army (14:26-28).

B. JOSEPH: A SERVICE MINISTRY

In Genesis 37-50 the life of Joseph provides a fascinating story of how one of God's people served the State as an office holder. His service is so impeccable that the whole country prospers as a result of his leadership. Joseph significantly influenced Government for good; he stayed not on the sidelines.

C. NEHEMIAH: A SERVICE MINISTRY



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Nehemiah was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes of Persia. Likened to Joseph, he had curried so much favor by serving the secular governmental leader that the King granted Nehemiah his request to take a leave of absence and go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (2:4-6; 17-18). Nehemiah as it turns out became a great political leader as he gives himself to the task of leading the rebuild and masterfully dealing with the many detractors of the project (2: 19; 4:7; 6:2; 6:16). His service in Government benefitted not only the secular King from where he came, but his own people.

D. MORDECAI: A PROPHETIC MINISTRY

In the Book of Esther, God uses His servant Mordecai (4:5; cf. 4:13-14) to counter the governmental authorities who wanted to annihilate the people of God (3:13). Likened to the Moses account, God used one of His own to save His own from a ruthless governmental leader. One can easily conclude that Mordecai freely engaged in influencing policy.

E. DANIEL: A SERVICE AND PROPHETIC MINISTRY

Daniel exercised a significant influence over the Babylonian Empire and King Nebuchadnezzar. States Daniel in Daniel 4:27,

Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity.

Daniel's voice to the nation is prophetically bold. Here he instructs the world's most powerful leader as to how God would have him run his country. Daniel was a determinative influence on policy, and his policies were biblically based.

F. JONAH: AN EVANGELISTIC MINISTRY

This four-chapter book of the OT reveals God's ministry plan for His reluctant servant. After taking the long-about way to his destiny, Jonah leads the King of

Ninevah to repentance and faith in Yahweh (3:2-9). Such evangelization changed the course of the nation (3:10)!

G. MANY OTHERS

Other OT servants of God applied God's principles to State leaders. Note Isaiah 13-23; Jeremiah 46-51; Ezekiel 25-32, Amos 1-2; Obadiah; Nahum; Habakkuk 2; and Zephaniah 2. Many examples of this exist throughout the OT Scriptures. Summarily we learn from these accounts that...

GOD EXPECTS HIS WAYS TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STATE LEADERS—AND HE TASKS HIS OWN WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DELIVERING HIS MESSAGE TO THEM BY WORD AND DEED.

These OT accounts provide wonderful insights as to the way God goes about things. It follows then that government involvement by believers is therefore necessary in order to achieve this revealed economy.

This cursory inductive survey of specific OT saints who were called to the political arena unveils an additional important observation: As indicated in the aforementioned outline captions there exists at least three primary callings relative to the believer's role in influencing Government: Some are called to *serve*, while others are called to *admonish*, still others are called to *evangelize*. The balanced Christian approach—the view that Church leaders need embrace today—should therefore be to acknowledge the importance of each role, versus holding to one as being superior to the others (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-5; 12-27).

II. NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Similar illustrations of particular people of God possessing prophetic, service and evangelistic ministries to governmental leaders are evident in the NT. Wherein the overabundance of illustrations relate to the ministry of evangelism (in the book of Acts there are numerous narrative illustrations of Paul converting governmental-related individuals) the scrutinizing question in theological debate today is whether or not the NT provides illustrations of any of the other two



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aforementioned categories: Service and prophesy. In that Luke is addressing both of his Bible books to “most excellent Theophilus” in the Gospel of Luke (1:1-4) and in the Book of Acts (1:1) who by title is a governmental leader, one can reason that Luke herein exemplifies *service* to a governmental leader. The question then narrows to this: Are there any NT illustrations of prophetic ministry to governing leaders? What follows are two:

A. JOHN THE BAPTIST: A PROPHETIC MINISTRY

So with many other exhortations he preached the gospel to the people. ¹⁹ But when Herod the tetrarch was reprimanded by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the wicked things which Herod had done, ²⁰ Herod also added this to them all: he locked John up in prison.

The inference, with the aid of the OT patterning relative to the same, is that John the Baptist also spoke about what was morally right and wrong with the whole of Herod's life. That would seem to encompass his policies as a governmental leader as well because John spoke to him about “*all* the wicked things [he] had done” (emphasis mine). “All” is expansive, suggesting the inclusion of matters over and above personal, spiritual life. Note lastly the cost in this case of being an influence in Government; it cost John his life. How high of a personal price are we willing to pay today to influence for good the direction of our Government?

B. PAUL: AN EVANGELISTIC AND PROPHETIC MINISTRY

Reference to Paul's enormous evangelistic ministry to governmental-related people in the Book of Acts has already been noted. Now, as it relates to his ministry of admonition (or prophesy) note Acts 24:24-25:

But some days later Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in

Christ Jesus. ²⁵ But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you."

The Roman governmental leader named Felix heard the Apostle Paul speak not only about “faith in Jesus Christ” but he also spoke to Felix about “righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come.” Classic NT evangelistic technique is on display here: To illustrate to an individual their need for Christ one kindly needs to point out their sin: Seeing one's sin reveals one's need for a Savior; one leads to another. It is therefore not a stretch to assume that what is meant here by what is said is that Paul was pointing out to Felix his vast moral deficiencies, which would include his governing policies. Why? In order to illuminate Felix's conscience relative to his need for salvation in Christ. Further, in light of all the other prophetic illustrations of Scripture previously seen, “it would be an artificial restriction on the meaning of the text to suppose that Paul only spoke with Felix about his private life and not about his actions as a Roman Governor.”¹

These Old and New Testament illustrations of God's individuals impacting Government make it clear that...

IT IS NORMATIVE FOR GOD'S CALLED-OUT-ONES TO BRING SIGNIFICANT GODLY INFLUENCE ON GOVERNING LEADERS

Influencing government for good via the inculcation of biblical truth through the mediums and ministries of prophesy, service and evangelism are the patterns and categories of acceptable involvement that all believers should wholeheartedly attempt today.

III. ROMANS 13 AND 1 PETER 2

Romans and First Peter contain the two major NT instructional passages relative what God expects from government and government leaders. Given their existence in the whole counsel of God, how is a governmental leader to know what the Good Book says regarding them if all believers shirked all influence on



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government? Romans 10:14 (cf. Ephesians 4:12) speaks about God's design in this regard: That His truths be heralded by His people. Given this fact...

HOW CAN GOVERNMENT LEADERS POSSIBLY KNOW HOW TO PLEASE GOD IF GOD'S PEOPLE REFUSE TO TEACH THEM?

If Church leaders feel convicted to teach God's counsel to husbands and wives, children and businessmen (to say nothing of what God's Word specifically instructs them to teach relative to the development of Church leaders for the future benefit of God's Kingdom and the present-day world) why would they not feel convicted to teach governmental leaders His respective principles and truths? Such conclusions and actions are illogical (save if one believes that most governments are evil and demonic).²

The Church should herald what God's Word teaches about Government as an institution, government policies, governmental leadership and the biblical precepts and morality God expects from the same. Otherwise how is one in government to know? How will young believers and non-believers alike be prepared for a lifetime of calling and service in government if the Church neglects this explicit duty? God has certain expectations about all this in His Word and Christian leaders need to teach it. Why? Because all of His teachings are relevant to and needed by such.

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE'S TEACHING

As previously seen, Scripture teaches believers to be in subjection to governing authorities (Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2). Those same governing authorities desire believers to be involved in the Institution of Government (in that they have written and interpreted America's Constitution to be a representative form of government wherein government has been entrusted to its citizens). Therefore for a believer to evade involvement and influence is tantamount to disobeying authority, which Scripture commands us to obey. This is a simple and profound argument that non-involvement believers need reckon with. In that many

in the non-involvement-in-government camp posture themselves as spiritually superior, are they not somewhat the opposite in light of this argument?

SUMMARY

Church leaders are commanded to "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). Such is to include "All that I [Jesus] commanded" (Matt. 28:19-20). The Apostle Paul was quick to point out one of the most important aspects of his past ministry when he said "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). Given this premise, it therefore follows from the numerous personal illustrations of the Old and New Testament saints, as well as the didactic instructive passages of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2, and the stated desires of governmental leaders, that it is biblically proper and normative for believers today to be involved in and significantly influence Government for good via the representation and personal manifestation of the Word of God. This is to be achieved in and through the ministries of Prophecy (in the sense of proclamation) Service and Evangelism. May the Church (while remaining institutionally separate) influence the State! Thus saith the Word of God.

¹ Grudem, Wayne *Politics According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010) p 61

² This is the view of MacArthur in his commentary on Romans 13 (Chicago: Moody, 1985). It follows that one should isolate themselves from all governmental involvement if one believes such are controlled by Satan. The primary passage that leads to the demonic possession theory of government is Luke 4:6. MacArthur and Boyd in contrast to Grudem believe Satan is not lying to Jesus in this passage. I hold to the Grudem position. My belief is that Satan does not own that which he portends to own when he tempts Jesus (similar to the lie in the narrative passage of Genesis 3:6). Therefore one cannot reason outward and conclude that government is satanic based on this passage. Furthermore why would the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2:13-14 require all believers to be in subjection to governing authorities—"for the Lord's sake"—if those authorities were demonic? Such is a theologically incongruous position.