

## Genesis 036

### A Biblical Philosophy of Government

Genesis 9:5-6

May 16, 2021

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Take your Bibles this morning and open them to Genesis 9:5. The title of our message this morning is "A Biblical View of Government." You say, "Pastor, I wish you would preach on something more relevant."

We are in Genesis 9:5. The title of our message is "A Biblical View of Government." Genesis 1-11 is where we find ourselves, and that features four events: Creation (Genesis 1-2); then comes the Fall of man (Genesis 3-5); and then comes the Flood (Genesis 6-9). Here we are as we are continuing to move chronologically through the Book of Genesis. We are now dealing with events after the Flood.

- I. Genesis 1-11 (Four Events)
  - A. Creation (Genesis 1-2)
  - B. Fall (Genesis 3-5)
  - C. Flood (Genesis 6-9)
    1. Events before the Flood (Genesis 6)
    2. The Flood (Genesis 7)
    3. The abating of the waters (Genesis 8)
    4. Events following the Flood (Genesis 9)
      - a) Provision (9:1-7)
      - b) Covenant and sign (9:8-17)
      - c) Post-Flood sin (9:8-29)
  - D. National dispersion (Genesis 10-11)

The events after the Flood began with a very special covenant that God entered into with Noah. That covenant begins with promises. You might recall that at the end of Genesis 8 there was an atmosphere of worship. Noah had offered an initial sacrifice unto the Lord following the Flood.

It is interesting how God in Scripture tends to disclose Himself in an atmosphere of sacrifice and worship. It is there at the end of Genesis 8 that He starts to make incredible promises, which later coalesce into what we call the Noahic Covenant.

Last week we saw in Genesis 9:1-2 that there are a lot of themes recycled from original Creation; in Genesis 9:3, man becomes carnivorous. (If you catch me at the Long Horn Steakhouse, my biblical excuse for that is Genesis 9:3). Then there is Genesis 9:4, a prohibition against blood. We talked a little bit about that last time.

What we see developing in Genesis 9:5-6 is the origin of human government. Notice, if you will, Genesis 9:5-6. God says:

*"Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. 'Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He [God] made man'" (Genesis 9:5-6).*

What begins to develop now is a gift that God gave to the human race called the institution of human government. Prior to this point in time, in order for justice to be executed, it was God that had to step in and deal in terms of justice. He did that with the Flood, but now you see God bringing something into existence for the very first time: He sets up an institution.

This is the institution of human government, and He vests human government with the sword—He gives human government permission to execute those that are murderers. This is the beginning of human government. It stands to reason that somewhere in the Book of Genesis we would find a reference to the beginning of human government, because we have human government today, and we pontificate that it came from somewhere.

That is why the Book of Genesis is a great book to consult, because it is the Book of beginnings. After all, it is in the Book of Genesis that we find the beginning of the universe; the beginning of life; the beginning of man, marriage, evil, even clothing itself; the beginning of religion; the beginning of grace, salvation; the beginning of language; the beginning of nations; the beginning of Israel. All of these topics we take for granted, but you cannot fully understand them unless you consult where they began under God's design.

Beginning Themes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Universe</li> <li>■ Life</li> <li>■ Man</li> <li>■ Marriage</li> <li>■ Evil</li> <li>■ Clothing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Religion</li> <li>■ Salvation</li> <li>■ Language</li> <li>■ Government</li> <li>■ Nations</li> <li>■ Israel</li> </ul>
Morris, <i>Genesis Record</i> , 18-20.	

One of the things that is included in this list of beginnings is the institution of human government itself. God Himself is the creator of human government. Its purpose is to impose justice—the kind of justice that was lacking in Genesis 6, when people were doing every wicked thought, or fulfilling every wicked thought, that they could do, and violence spread throughout the earth.

There is no justice there, and there is no deterrent for crime there. So God, to prevent humanity from rolling back to what it was like prior to the Flood, created the institution of

human government. Man's nature has not changed at all, pre-Flood to post-Flood; and because man's nature is exactly the same, there has to be something in place to prevent or to curb the wickedness of man. This is where human government started. This is its origin.

Human government is one of the great divine institutions. You say, "What are the institutions?" The institutions are things that the Creator has weaved into culture. Unbelievers and believers alike benefit from these institutions. These institutions are all found in early Genesis. If you do not have early Genesis, you do not have these institutions or an understanding of them.

These things exist to restrain evil in a fallen world. The institutions are marriage and the family (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25); the institution of labor, or work (Genesis 2:15; 3:19); the institution of conscience itself (Genesis 3:22); the institution of government (Genesis 9:6), which we are seeing that here come into existence; and when we get to Genesis 11, we are going to see another institution coming into existence called the institution of nationalism.

## THE DIVINE INSTITUTIONS

- Marriage and family (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25)
- Labor (Gen. 2:15; 3:19)
- Conscience (Gen. 3:22)
- Government (Gen. 9:6)
- Nationalism (Gen. 11:1-9)

God Himself has built these things into the fabric of fallen creation for the purpose of sustaining fallen creation. Without these things, humanity would roll back to the unprecedented evil that existed prior to the flood. What you will discover, of course, as I looked at this list, is that every single one of them is under great attack today, even that second one, labor.

When you go to local restaurants, it is interesting how you have only one server there doing the work of five. Why is that? Because of all of these government bailouts and COVID and all of these kinds of things going on, people can actually make more money staying at home rather than working. What is that? That is an example of an attack on an institution which God established, the institution of labor.

Of course, marriage and family are under attack, nationalism is under attack, etc. A lot of people will ask me, "Who should I vote for in this election or that election?" That is a very dangerous question because I do not like to come across as partisan. The best advice I can give you in terms of voting is to pick candidates that align with these divine institutions.

If, for example, you cannot find a perfect candidate, that is because we are living in an imperfect world. What I typically do is try to find candidates that are as close as possible to these institutions, because if they will not stand for these institutions and protect these divine institutions, then society, or civilization, itself will quickly crumble.

One of the institutions that exists is this institution of human government. You see it reflected in Romans 13:3-5, where the apostle Paul tells us that government rulers exist to condemn those who do evil and commend those who do right. They are to impose their will through the sword. You see the sword right there in Genesis 9:6, and that is going to bring justice to an imperfect world. It is also going to restrain evil in a fallen world.

First Peter 2:13-14 talks about the same thing:

*"...or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right" (1 Peter 2:14).*

This is why we, as Christians, are called upon to submit to government. Government agents are actually called ministers (Romans 13:1-7) because they are fulfilling this God-ordained function. We are called upon to pay taxes, to submit to government, to respect government whenever possible. You see this in Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-14, Titus 3:1, and 1 Timothy 2:1-4. It all begins here in Genesis 9, where human government comes into existence.

One of the things that I had a chance to allude to last time was the sources of authority that our Founding Fathers were quoting from. Did you know that 34% of their citations come from the Bible?<sup>1</sup> That is an amazing figure. When they were not quoting the Bible, they were quoting Baron Montesquieu, who gave us the separation of powers—you do not coalesce political power in just one branch of government, you divide it up. That idea comes from Baron Montesquieu.

Our founders were also quoting William Blackstone, who gave us inalienable rights. Notice that the third person on the list of people they were quoting is a man named John Locke. John Locke gave us what is called social compact theory—this idea that people in a state of nature come together and they allow government to exist, because society is much better off with government than without it. To do that, you have to cede or delegate certain powers or authority to government.

What is interesting about Montesquieu, as I tried to show a little bit last time, is that he got his ideas from the Bible. William Blackstone, as I tried to show you a little bit last

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<sup>1</sup> Donald S. Lutz, *The Origins of American Constitutionalism* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 141.

time, got his ideas from the Bible, and so did John Locke. John Locke, according to this particular writer, Dr. John Eidsmoe, cited the Bible 80 times in his first work; and in his second treatise on government, he cited the Bible 22 times.<sup>2</sup>

"He based the social compact which government is established upon 'that Paction which God made with Noah after the Deluge.'"<sup>3</sup>

In other words, where did John Locke get his ideas of social compact theory? He got them from the Bible. In fact, he got them from the very passage that we are looking at here.

"His basic doctrines of parental authority, private property, and social compact were based on the historical existence of Adam and Noah."<sup>4</sup>

I bring this to your attention, because when our Founding Fathers put together the American system of government (which is a system that is not perfect, but it has certainly given more people more economic and political freedom than any other system devised by man), I want us to understand that our Founding Fathers were not just brainstorming. They were looking at the Word of God. When they were not looking at the Word of God, they were looking at political philosophers that had been influenced by the Word of God.

This leads to a proper balance in the area of government. How should a New Testament Christian look at the institution of human government? You avoid two extremes. On one end of the extreme are people who say, "Abolish government, get rid of government. We do not need government." Believe me, I am in touch with that emotion because I get frustrated with government and the people running it just like you do. But that frustration should never lead to a belief of the abolition of human government, because God Himself established human government in His covenant with Noah.

We are not anti-government people. There is a role for government to play. In fact, without government, society would very quickly become just what it was like in Genesis 6 where violence spread over the whole world. If there is no threat of punishment, there is no deterrence, there is no form of justice. Every man does what is right in his own eyes. Believe me, that is not the kind of world any of us want to live in.

On the other end of the stick are people that believe in maximum government. They think that government should be involved in everything. It should be involved in health care. It should be involved in education. It should be involved in your retirement funds. It should be involved in redistributing the wealth. This is what you call a maximum view of human government.

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<sup>2</sup> John Eidsmoe, *Christianity and the Constitution: The Faith of Our Founding Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987), 61.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

You will notice here that the Bible does not support that either. It supports a government that stays within its boundaries or its guidelines. God gave to government specific boundaries and guidelines. They are to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right. Government is not here to be a Robin Hood.

You say, "Pastor, do you not believe in a safety net?" The problem is when the safety net turns into a hammock and eventually you run out of what we call O.P.M.—other people's money—because the government is doing things that God never called the government to do. We have to have a lot of balance in this equation here. We have to look very carefully concerning what God has actually said.

Now people will look at someone like myself and they will say, "You are a radical right-winger." Has anybody here been called a radical right-winger? I am thinking, you mean like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson and people like that? But the truth of the matter is, people that talk like that do not understand the political spectrum.

On the right are people that do not believe in government at all. You might put libertarianism there, for example. I am sort of privy or keen to a lot of libertarian arguments, but I am not when they start to say that government has no role in policing drug abuse, in stopping abortion, in stopping pornography, that government needs to disappear in those areas. Of course, we have today the big defund the police movement. All the people that advocate that I noticed live in gated communities. There is this mindset to get rid of the state, get rid of the government. That is on your political spectrum to the right.

If you move to the left, you move into maximum government where the government manages and micromanages and nanny-states virtually everything, and redistributes the wealth. We would put socialism, Marxism, and communism into the far left. Far left is maximum government, far right is no government at all.

People are confused about this because they say the Nazis were the right-wingers. Why do they think that? Because in the parliaments of Europe, certain people that believed in certain government philosophies sat in certain places in a building. The Nazis were seated on the right, the communists were seated on the left, so people think that the Nazis are right-wingers and the communists are the left-wingers. The fact of the matter is, the Nazis, with their view of fascism, actually belong on the left.

They are not going to mention this to you on CNN, for example. So when you talk about a proper view of government and someone calls you a radical right-winger, my response is that I am neither a left-winger nor a right-winger. I am a centrist; I am right there in the middle. There is a role for government to play. You clearly see that with God's covenant with Noah. But at the same time, there are restrictions on government. There are certain things that it is supposed to do and other things it is supposed to stay away from.

In fact, when you look at our United States Constitution, what you are going to see is that it is also centrist. It calls for government to do certain things, but it does not mention a lot of things that the government is involved in today. That becomes a proper

understanding of how to think about this very important institution, which God Himself created, called the institution of human government.

The whole idea of government protecting those or helping those who cannot help themselves is not a biblical idea. God never came up with that idea. God gave that responsibility to the church. The church is supposed to help those who cannot help themselves, but there is not a shred of evidence in Genesis 9, nor a shred of evidence in Romans 13 or any other government passage, that helping those who cannot help themselves is what government is supposed to do. We have abdicated all of this because we have not had enough pastors, preachers, and teachers explaining these basics to us toward a proper, or a balanced, understanding of human government.

Now, ever since COVID hit, there has been a belief which has circulated amongst the body of Christ. I have seen many, many people say this: that you have to submit to the government no matter what the government says. If the government says, "Take a vaccine," you had better take it. If the government says that you cannot meet anymore in your church on Sunday, or that you cannot sing (as some states say, because that allegedly spreads COVID), then you had better buckle under and do exactly what the government tells you to do, because God ordained the institution of human government.

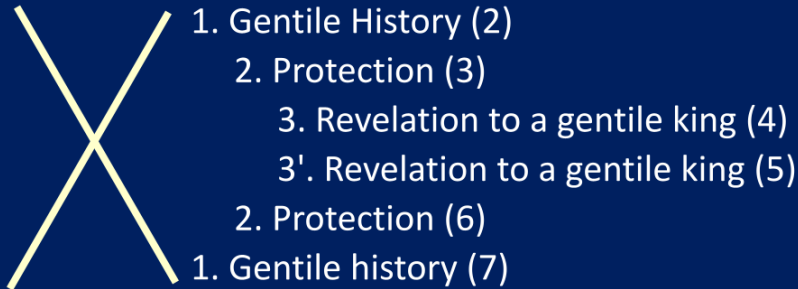
I am here to tell you, with every fiber of my being, that that is an imbalanced understanding of what God says. In the Book of Daniel (we have studied the Book of Daniel at this church, and I have had people mention that the sermons that we did on the Book of Daniel are more relevant now than they were when we actually preached them some years ago), you start to see developing the doctrine of civil disobedience.

The nation of Israel, for the very first time, has to think about: What do you do when God says, "Do this," and the government tells you to do the opposite? The reason the nation of Israel had to start thinking about this is because the Book of Daniel was written while Israel was outside of their land for 70 years. They were in the Babylonian deportation, and they were living under foreign or alien powers. They were God's people living in a different land.

First, the Babylonians reigned over the Jews with their value system. Then came the Persians, reigning over the Jews with their value system. What you see developed in the Book of Daniel as the nation of Israel is taken about 350 miles or so to the east in Babylon is a doctrine of civil disobedience. Living in foreign territory creates a situation where paganism says, "Do this," and God says, "Do that." What do you do? That is why it is in the Book of Daniel that you see the doctrine of civil disobedience starting to get unveiled.

## Synthetic Outline

### Chiasm in "Aramaic" ( Dan. 2-7)



Daniel 2-7, is very interesting. It is formed all in one language, Aramaic, and it reads like a chiasm—"chi" (a chiasm looks like that letter that we would recognize as "x"). It is a literary pattern that you find in the ancient world that most Westerners are unfamiliar with. The contents of Daniel 2 (the outer edge of the chiasm), will be repeated in Daniel 7—the same concept. Then you move inward into the chiasm, and the contents in Daniel 3 are repeated in different words in Daniel 6. Then you move into the interior of the chiasm, and the contents in Daniel 4 are repeated in Daniel 5.

The themes expressed in Daniel 2, you will say in Daniel 7, "I read that before." The themes expressed in Daniel 3, as you read Daniel 6, you will say, "I have read that before, that idea." The themes expressed in Daniel 4, as you read Daniel 5, you will say, "I read that before." That is by design. It is called a chiastic structure.

As you look at Daniel 3 and Daniel 6, which are meant to go together, what you will discover in those chapters is the doctrine of civil disobedience. It is now developed here because Israel is under pagan authority outside their land for 70 years.

You will recall what happened in Daniel 3 when Nebuchadnezzar made that giant statue. He told Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to bow down to that statue and worship it. Obviously, a devout Jew cannot do that because that would violate the first two commandments in the Decalogue. What you see is Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego telling the king, "No." That is civil disobedience. We must obey God rather than man.

Because Daniel 3 lines up with Daniel 6, you will see the exact same theme in Daniel 6 where Daniel was told by the Persians, "No more prayer." That is a problem for Daniel when this prohibition emerges of no more public prayer, because he prayed three times a day with his windows open, facing Jerusalem. So what did Daniel do under those circumstances? Did he just buckle under and say, "You know what? God ordained

government. I have to do everything government says." Daniel did not do that. He disobeyed the edicts, this time the edicts of the Persian king.

This issue of civil disobedience is so significant. What I have developed is a list of four criteria that have to be met before a Christian can decide to say no to the state. I get these from Daniel 3 and Daniel 6. Your list may be a little different from mine, but this is my best attempt at it.

Beloved, whether we want to face it or not, we are now living in a time period when the state is telling Christians to do things that God does not authorize. What do we do? When do you execute, or exercise, civil disobedience?

**(1) There has to be a crystal clear conflict between the laws of man and the laws of God.** You see that in Daniel 3 and Daniel 6. You cannot disagree with the government or disobey the government just based on whim, based on opinion, based on "I do not like So-and-so," or "I did not vote for So-and-so." There has to be a conflict between the laws of God and the laws of men.

**(2) There must be an exhaustion of all creative legal remedies,** meaning that you have to try to work it out with the state the best you can first. In other words, civil disobedience is not a first option; it is a last option when nothing else will work.

**(3) If you disobey the state, you have to be willing to pay the consequences.** You see that with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who would not bow down to the image. They now had the threat over them of being thrown into the fiery furnace. They say in that chapter,

*"If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire;..." (Daniel 3:17).*

You know the rest of the story. The fourth man in the fire rescued them. They make a very interesting statement in Daniel 3, though. You can see it for yourself there. "Even if He does not—even if God does not show up—we are still not going to bow down to the statue. Even if I am not rescued, even if I have to go to jail, even if I have to be burned to death, I am still not going to worship the statue." They were willing to pay the consequences.

**(4) As Christians engage in civil disobedience, maintenance for the respect of the civil authorities must be maintained.** You never find Daniel or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego becoming disrespectful to the king. They keep referring to him respectfully as "O King." In other words, they respected the office of king. They showed proper respect to government even as they were disobeying the government.

You look at Daniel 3 and you look at Daniel 6, and you see very quickly that this doctrine that is now circulating in the body of Christ of unlimited compliance to the government is a false doctrine. The Bible does not support that. The Bible is pro-government in the sense that God created government, but the Bible also

gives you situations and scenarios where the government goes too far, and the Christian, in order to live according to the Bible or conscience, must disobey the state.

These stories in Daniel are not the only places that you find civil disobedience. Let me give you a few other places: in Exodus 1:15-17, the Hebrew midwives were told to kill all of the male infants by the edict of Egypt. The midwives said no. They disobeyed the state.

There is the story of Rahab in Joshua 2:3-4, where Rahab, against the edicts of the Canaanite authorities, hid the spies. There is the statement that you find in Acts 5:29. In fact, read the whole Book of Acts. The Sadducees, the governing authority of the temple area, were legally coming against the church. The apostles were being flogged. They were being beaten. They were told not to teach anymore in Jesus' name. It is in that environment that the Apostle Peter speaks up and he says:

*"... 'We must obey God rather than men'" (Acts 5:29).*

You have the whole situation of the Antichrist who is coming one day following the Rapture of the church. There will be a generation of people that will live under his diabolical reign, that will be forced to receive the mark of the beast. What are they supposed to do? Are they supposed to knuckle under and say, "If that is what the government says, then that is what I have to do—Romans 13: unlimited compliance"?

You do not find that at all in the Book of Revelation. You find people disobeying the Antichrist. In fact, in Revelation 13:10, there is actually a word of encouragement given to those suffering, exercising civil disobedience during this time period.

You say, "I wish you would talk about something more relevant." Cheer up, folks, it gets worse. These are just some recent headlines. These go back a number of years. Here: "Baker Faces Prison for Refusing to Bake a Same-Sex Wedding Cake."<sup>5</sup> What is interesting to me is that it is always an evangelical Christian on the wrong side of the law. How come they do not go into Muslim bakeries and say, "Back a same-sex wedding cake?" Because Muslims have a very strong view against homosexuality, just like we do. How come they do not go into the home of a baker of a Jewish origin and say, "Bake us a Nazi cake"? Today, it is always the evangelical Christian that is being forced to give up their conscience in the name of obeying the government.

Another story: "Oregon Declares War on Aaron & Melissa Klein."

"In yet another example of gay activist overreach, an Oregon official has not only burdened a Christian couple with a ridiculous fine, he has imposed a gag order on them...In one of the most egregious anti-Christian acts committed by a state official in recent memory, Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian not only upheld the ridiculous \$135,000 fine

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<sup>5</sup> Ken Klukowski, "Baker Faces Prison for Refusing to Bake Same-Sex Wedding Cake," online: <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2013/12/12/Christian-Baker-Willing-to-Go-to-Jail-for-Declining-Gay-Wedding-Cake>, 12 December 2013, accessed 16 May 2014.

levied against Aaron and Melissa Klein for declining to bake a cake for a lesbian commitment ceremony, but he ordered the Kleins to 'cease and desist' from making any public comments about their religious convictions relative to the case."<sup>6</sup>

This is not happening in China. (It is far worse in China.) This is not happening in Cuba. This is not happening in Saudi Arabia. This is happening in the United States of America. I am not here to give you a political speech on "let us get the right people elected and change this." What I am here to communicate is this: the tide of the culture is changing. We have to, in this changing tide, understand what God says and does not say about the institution of human government.

Up on our northern border, (I shared this with you last time): "Canadian Police Place Barricade at Church Entrance with Fencing Tarps to Keep Worshippers Out."<sup>7</sup> As you probably know, there are three Canadian pastors, as I speak, that are on the wrong side of the law in Canada. Normally, they are God-fearing, God-honoring, law-abiding people, but now, with COVID, they are criminals because they are holding church against COVID regulations.

In other words, they are getting up in the morning and they are looking at Hebrews 10:25, which says:

*"not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some,..."*  
(Hebrews 10:25).

They are holding church because that is what the Bible tells them to do, and they are being arrested. This is stunning that this is happening. One of them even spent time in a maximum security prison for this. Think about that. As all this is happening, everybody is quoting Romans 13: obey the state. Yet that is not what the Bible says.

You think of the Civil Rights movement here in the United States—the Civil Rights movement of 1964, the Jim Crow South, segregation—and you think of a woman named Rosa Parks who got on a public bus and was told, "You are black and your section is over here. You cannot sit in the white section." What did she do? Did she quote Romans 13? "I just have to submit to the state." No, she did not. She engaged in civil disobedience and she launched the Civil Rights movement. In fact, without her dissent, we probably would not have the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which says you cannot discriminate against people based on a quality about themselves, like skin color that they cannot change.

We all understand that such discrimination is immoral, and yet it was practiced all over the United States, particularly in the Jim Crow South. Somebody stood up and told the state no, and we have the Civil Rights movement as a result of it.

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.onenewsnow.com/perspectives/michael-brown/2015/07/06/oregon-declares-war-on-christian-faith>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.faithwire.com/2021/04/07/canadian-police-place-barricade-at-church-entrance-with-fencing-tarps-to-keep-worshippers-out/>

How about this nation that we are in today? Look at all of the freedom that we enjoy, the prosperity that we enjoy. Ask yourself a very simple question: How exactly did the United States of America come into existence? It came into existence through civil disobedience. You might agree or disagree with the Founding Fathers. I personally agree with them. They reached a point where their inalienable rights were being trampled on, and they told King George no.

I am sure there were many voices during that time period that said, "Romans 13—submit to the government." But the founders of this republic said no. Today we are benefiting from the fruit of that decision towards a balanced view of government. That is the title of this message. Obviously, you have a respect for government, because God Himself created government for a reason. At the same time, you do not have a mindset that says that everything government tells you to do, you acquiesce to.

There may arise a time in your life, maybe sooner than later, when you are going to start seeing a conflict between the laws of God and the laws of man. When that happens, you have some rules, or principles, to follow. From Daniel 3 and 6, the Bible does not teach maximum total submission to government, any more than a counselor who is a pastor would tell a woman living in a violent marriage—an abusive marriage, a situation where her head is being made a punching bag by somebody—no pastoral counselor in their right mind would tell a woman to submit to that because "After all, the Bible says that the husband is head of the home."

It is well recognized that that man, or that abusive monster, has outstepped his authority. You do not have an obligation to submit to someone who is moving in a totalitarian direction. Let me just tell you something, folks, the government is about ready to become, to some extent, that abusive husband—totalitarianism—picking on the weak, beating up people.

These are things that Christians, for the last 2,000 years, have had to deal with. For the first time, we are having to deal with them ourselves. We have been largely sheltered from these things and we do not know how to think about them correctly. We do not have balance in our understanding of human government, and that is why I have titled this message toward a balanced perspective on human government.

Now, let us go back here to Genesis 9:5-6 for a minute, because God puts the sword into the state. Now that we have a right understanding of what the state is and what the state is not, you will notice what God says in Genesis 9:6:

*"Whoever sheds man's blood,  
By man shall his blood be shed,  
For in the image of God  
He made man" (Genesis 9:6).*

We see that the state not only has the authority to punish evil, but also has the authority to execute those who murder another human being. This is the beginning of a doctrine called the doctrine of capital punishment.

I was accused one time in school of coming up with my political ideology first and then trying to make the Bible fit my political ideology. I say to that, "Nonsense! I believe the way I believe about some of the most controversial issues of our day, including capital punishment, not because it is some sort of personal, political, or ideological perspective, but because it is what God says in the Noahic Covenant at the dawn of human history."

God knew exactly what He was doing when He created government, because He saw what had happened to the world before government. Genesis 6:11 had happened. It said,

*"Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11).*

You will notice the Hebrew word there for "violence." It is the word from where we get this word "Hamas" ("chamas" [חָמָס]). Sounds familiar, does it not, particularly in light of all of the things that Israel is experiencing as I speak.

*"Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence ["chamas" (חָמָס)]" (Genesis 6:11).*

That is what the world would be like in a heartbeat if government were removed. There would be no threat to injustice; there would be no threat to murder; and you could go right on through your life murdering, maiming, killing, and ruining fellow human beings that God happens to have a lot of regard for because they are manufactured in His image. They are sacred.

You remember that in Genesis 8:21 we made this point concerning the Flood and following the Flood. It says,

*"...the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth;..." (Genesis 8:21).*

That is a post-Flood statement. The Flood did not fix the internal problem of man. His basic propensity is evil. There are people in this world who are so wicked and so rotten and so vile that the only thing that holds their hand back, as I speak, from abusing and murdering a fellow image bearer of God is the threat of punishment. You take away the threat of punishment and there is nothing left to withhold what their wicked hearts and thoughts already want to do.

God gave the institution of human government for a very specific reason: to prevent the world from rolling back to the "chamas"-filled violence that covered the earth just prior to the Flood. God made a promise that He is not going to flood the earth again. If He is not going to flood the earth again, we must have something in place that prevents the violence from happening that was happening prior to the Flood.

Government exists to not only deter crime, but also to punish wrongdoers by imposing justice. You will notice that here God delegates this authority for the first time to an institution. Prior to this, God took care of the justice. That is what the Flood was about. Now God says, "I am delegating this to a man-made institution."

Genesis 9:6 says, *"Whoever sheds man's blood,..."* Notice what it does not say. It does not say, "By God his blood will be shed." It says, *"By man his blood shall be shed"* (Genesis 9:6).

I like this quote from one of our very early speakers of the House of Representatives, Robert Charles Winthrop. It is a tremendously biblically accurate quote. He is speaking here to the Bible Society. He is telling them that you are doing a good job printing Bibles and giving them out to everybody, because this Book is an internal constraint on man's wicked heart. He says,

"Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled, either by a power within them, or by a power without them; either by the Word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible, or the bayonet."<sup>8</sup>

Robert Charles Winthrop is saying that we have given America a limited government and we want to keep it limited. The only way we can keep it limited is if people can control themselves by a power from within. Therefore, in this address to the Bible Society, he says, "Print your Bibles, pass out your Bibles, and teach your Bibles, because if the Bible is removed, then the internal restraint on violence is removed and the only thing left is the metal detectors, the chain link fences, and the hand of big government."

We have lost sight of this. We are in a generation in which leaders look at the Bible as the enemy, that it is the enemy of America. You go back to America's founding and you see that they saw the Bible as a friend, because the friend will keep man's nature in check internally. Therefore, government does not have to grow to disproportionately obese sizes—I call it "Fedzilla"—to control people.

You can go into a prison ministry and you could hand out a Bible. It is interesting that if you had handed that same Bible to that criminal when they were in junior high school or elementary school, maybe it would have prevented them from ending up in prison in the first place. It is absolutely insane the direction that we are moving, this attack and this war on Christianity.

When Christianity disappears and the Ten Commandments leave the classroom, then the metal detectors come in. We are not going in the right direction in this society, because we do not understand, or we have given away, these basic fundamentals.

God put the sword into the hands of the state for purposes of fear. I am so afraid of the punishment that if I do not want to do the time, I do not do the crime. That is the logic of capital punishment. "Come on, Andy, this is just Old Testament stuff. It does not teach that in the New Testament, does it?" The last time I checked, the Book of Romans is the New Testament, is it not?

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<sup>8</sup> Robert Winthrop, *Address and Speeches on Various Occasions* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1852), 172. Speech to the Massachusetts Bible Society (1849-05-28).

*"...But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing;..." (Romans 13:4).*

That is right out of Genesis 9:6.

*"or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers..." (1 Peter 2:14).*

When you take someone's life via murder and you destroy a fellow image bearer of God and the blood of the victim cries out to the ground for God to do something about this, as was the case with Cain and Abel—you will recall Genesis 4—God says, "I have a solution for this. It is called the institution of human government."

That is why government is here. That is why government exists: to impose justice and to do it swiftly and to do it fearfully. That is your job. That is why you are a minister. That is why we pay our taxes.

What has happened is that the government has gotten outside of that design and has started to get involved in all kinds of tasks that God never called it to, moving us into totalitarianism. If there is ever a subject that we need balance on, it is this subject of human government.

Jesus said this in Matthew 26:52. Remember, Peter took out his sword and started swinging because he did not like the arrest of Jesus. Remember what Jesus said to Peter?

*"...'Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword'" (Matthew 26:52).*

What does that mean? It means, "Peter, if you start swinging away and you kill someone, then the government has the right to kill you." I think Christ is going right back to the Noahic Covenant in Genesis 9:6. All of this to say that this institution of government and capital punishment is something which is affirmed in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

I know what you are thinking. You have a lot of objections to capital punishment. I already know what they are. You have eight of them, and I do not have time to get to it now, but the next time I am with you I will talk you through these eight objections and show you that they are all wrong-headed, in a message next week titled "Is Capital Punishment Christian?"

Having said all that, and since that is too much information to get to today, I want to show you something that is very helpful. You only see it through a chronological reading of the Bible. You will only see this if you study the Bible verse-by-verse, as is our habit, our custom, here at Sugar Land Bible Church. Watch this very carefully and here is what I want you to see: government does not give rights; government rather exists to enforce preexisting rights.

Who in the world gave the preexisting rights? God did. God never gave the government the power to create rights. What He gave it the power to do is to enforce rights given by God. How do I know that? Because in Genesis 1:27, it says,

*"God created man in His own image,..." (Genesis 1:27).*

People matter to God. People are valuable to God. It is what we call the sanctity of life. We do not value people based on their beauty or their productivity; we value them as human beings because they are made in God's image. That is a very different worldview from what is being taught today.

We believe, as Christians, in the sanctity of life. We do not believe in what is called the quality of life—a certain person has value if they have a certain quality that they bring. If they are healthy, they are not disabled, they are productive, they are not too young, they are not too old, they can pay for the rest of our Social Security taxes, we will give them value.

But what if they get sick? What if they get injured? What if you have situations of mental disability or birth defects? Then life is not valuable anymore. That is called quality of life. The Bible teaches sanctity of life: people, regardless of socioeconomic status or beauty or appearance, are valued by God because they are fellow image bearers of God. Even the homeless guy under the bridge with alcohol all over his breath that you cannot wait to get away from because he is such a nuisance is an image bearer of God, too.

That man is an image bearer of God is something that God said about humanity at the very beginning. The state did not even exist when this was said. It is said in Genesis 1. As you move chronologically through the Bible, you will come to Genesis 6, where those beings were being slaughtered through "chamas," or this Wild West mentality. Then Genesis 9 follows Genesis 6.

Finally, you will get to Genesis 9 and you will get to our chapter that we are looking at. You will see the beginning of the institution of human government. You will notice that God reaffirms man as an image bearer.

*"Whoever sheds man's blood,  
By man his blood shall be shed,  
For in the image of God  
He made man" (Genesis 9:6).*

Notice this: the fact that people are image bearers of God was in existence long before the state ever showed up. Then what is the purpose of the state? The purpose of the state is to protect what God said about people in Genesis 1, which was being violated in Genesis 6.

The Fall of man did not erase our image-bearing status because it is repeated here. It effaced it, but it never erased it. People matter to God even in their fallen state. God does not want innocent people slaughtered even in their fallen state because they are still image bearers.

I do not know if this hits too close to home, but that is why we should not gossip about people. James 3:9 tells us not to tear people down with our tongues. "Why not, James?" Because James 3:9 says,

*"With it [the tongue] we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;" (James 3:9).*

That is why I do not tear people down (or should not anyway) behind their back: because they have a dignity. They are not naked apes. They are not evolved animals. They did not come to us from the goo to you by way of the zoo over billions of years. They are not accidents; they are image bearers, and we should treat them accordingly.

We should not have a world that maims and mauls and victimizes and destroys these image bearers, because that is what you had prior to the Flood. God says, "I am going to put a stop to that." It is called the institution of human government. Even if people are wicked to the core, at least they will say to themselves, "I do not want to do the crime because I do not want to do the time." It has a deterring effect on evil in our world.

Do you see the pattern here? The pattern is that the state does not give rights. The state enforces preexisting rights given by God. Very few governments in the history of mankind understand this. If you read the United Nations declaration, they will source human rights to the United Nations, when the fact of the matter is, the United Nations is in no position to give anybody rights because the rights existed before the United Nations ever came into existence.

One of the few governments that actually got this straight was the one you are in, the United States of America. When you read the Declaration of Independence authored by Thomas Jefferson, you will read things like this:

"we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,"

"they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,"<sup>9</sup>

The United States government exists not to give rights; it exists to recognize preexisting rights given by God and to protect those rights, which is the identical chronology that you see when you go from Genesis 1 to Genesis 6 to Genesis 9.

John Adams, America's second president, said,

"Rights [are] antecedent to all earthly government; Rights...cannot be repealed or restrained by human laws; Rights [are] derived from the great Legislature of the universe."<sup>10</sup>

That is a biblical perspective. He understands that the United States does not give rights. It recognizes rights. That is why when you read our Declaration of Independence, you will read these words:

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<sup>9</sup> Church of the Holy Trinity v. U.S., 143 U.S. 457, 467-68 (1892).

<sup>10</sup> Church of the Holy Trinity v. U.S., 143 U.S. 457, 467-68 (1892).

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."<sup>11</sup>

Look at the next clause: "That to secure these rights..."<sup>12</sup> The United States exists to secure or to protect previously existing rights given by God, given from above, given from the "great Legislature of the universe."

"That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,"<sup>13</sup>

God help us to understand this, because we have a generation coming up that does not. If that generation is deceived into thinking that it is the United States that gives rights and it is the United Nations that gives rights, then guess what? What man giveth, man can taketh away.

The way the Creator set things up, and the pattern found in the American system of government, is that you can tell the state no if the state wakes up one day and says, "Do not go to church anymore. It is only going to be two weeks. Trust us." (Right. What are we on? A year and a half into this? They told us two weeks. What is next? "Turn in your weapons just for two weeks. You can trust us.")

What has happened when these things begin to transpire is that the government now has gone outside of its boundaries and is now interfering with inalienable rights. You as a Christian, just like Rosa Parks, just like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and just like Daniel in Daniel 6, can tell the state, no. The Constitution allows you to do that. The Declaration of Independence allows you to do that. And you know what? This Book allows you to do it. You know that because you went to Sugar Land Bible Church on that particular Sunday when that guy was talking about balanced government.

Here is my final quote, I think, for the day. This is from Janet Reno. She is the former attorney general. This is what she said when they executed (is what I call it) those Branch Davidians in nearby Waco. She made this statement that was picked up by the Wall Street Journal in the wake of all of this. This goes back to 1995. She said this:

"You are part of a government that has given its people more freedom...than any other government in the history of the world."<sup>14</sup>

I hope you see that for what it is. That is an absolute lie. How much time do we have left to critique this up one side and down the other? It is fundamentally at odds with Genesis 1, Genesis 6, and Genesis 9. It is fundamentally at odds with the Declaration of

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<sup>11</sup> Declaration of Independence, In Congress, July 4, 1776, The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Speech by Attorney General Janet Reno, Newark, New Jersey, May 5, 1995. Quoted in James Bovard, "Waco Must Get a Hearing," Wall Street Journal, May 15, 1995.

Independence and the United States Constitution, because government does not give rights. God gives them. We need to get our thinking correct on this, amen?

We will come back next week and there will be some more: Is capital punishment Christian?

Speaking of capital punishment, Jesus came into the world to bear our capital punishment in our place, the ultimate capital punishment: He died for our sins. By simply trusting or believing what He has done for us, we are saved from the sting of sin, which is death. Here we are talking about eternal death. *"For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).*

Jesus died in our place. It was a mockery of justice, the way He was treated. But He died in our place so that we would not have to be the criminal that experiences justice. He took justice for us. He did that through His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Now He is in a position to give us what we do not deserve, which is grace, where we receive by faith what He has done in our place.

If that happens, then just like that, you are made right with God. This is what we call the gospel, the good news. If anyone here within the sound of my voice has never trusted in Christ, our exhortation is to do that now as the Spirit places him under conviction. If you find yourself in that condition today, under conviction, our exhortation is to respond to that conviction. It is there for a reason. It is there because God loves you and He wants to spend eternity with you. You just follow through in the privacy of your own heart and trust, which means to rely upon and depend upon what Jesus did for you. That is what makes you right with God.