***The Divine Laws of Government Establishment
RO165-01***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 13:1-7. Our subject is "The Christian and the State," and this is segment number three.

**The Pledge of Allegiance**

It is evident to all observing people that the liberal, anti-biblical mentality that governs the news media; the politicians; and, the opinion-makers in America today are determined to separate American society from God and from the Bible. Some political leaders are, as a matter of fact, now against requiring public school students to repeat the pledge of allegiance to the American republic as it is symbolized by the American flag. That is not a mindless, crazy act on their part. That is a reasoned, deliberate decision on their part, motivated by their antagonism toward nationalism, and motivated by their antagonism toward exalting your country in some chauvinistic way as being something special about the other countries of the world. That's what is behind the resistance and the objection to pledging allegiance to the flag.

When we have our children in the academy do this on a regular basis, it is emphasizing to them the enormity of blessing upon them for having been born in the United States, and being part of a country with the Christian heritage that our nation has. That flag represents that republic and all that it stands for.

So, the spirit of nationalism offends those who are thinking in terms of a one-world, and who are thinking in terms of bringing people from all viewpoints (the whole political spectrum) into a united world effort. Those of us who know anything about the Bible of all say, "Right. We understand that, because that's exactly what God's plan is. God is moving these leaders to do this. As we have already learned from Romans 13, no government is upon the face of the earth except the ones that God has raised up. No leaders is in public office except those that God has placed there. That is the divine institution of human government. Once we understand that, we know how to deal with both governments and the people who are in positions of power.

So, it is clear that nationalism is an offense to political leaders, and to business leaders, and to powerful people in the economic world. And what they want is an international basis of relating nations to one another, because internationalism enables them to have maximum control, and maximum profits over the people of the world.

Some public schools, as a matter of fact, I have heard recently, have required their students, when they do say the pledge of allegiance, to drop the words "under God" from the pledge, so that they do not say, "One nation under God." There was a time, of course, when that was the way the pledge of allegiance was said. It was in my teenage years that an act of Congress changed the pledge of allegiance to add the words "under God." And then all of us in school were told, "From now on, you will add these two words as you pledge allegiance to the flag: 'one nation under God.'"

Well, that seems like a mindless point of resistance, but it isn't, because when you say "one nation under God," you are thereby declaring that God is sovereign and His word, the Bible, is imposed upon the nation and its leadership and its people. That means that if we are under God, then He calls the plays. But if you don't want to be under God, and if you don't want to be subject to His Word, then you don't want to recognize that God is sovereign.

**How the Movie Industry Treats Christianity**

Furthermore, as another example of detaching the United States from God and His Word, for the first time in the 75-year history of the movie industry, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is being ridiculed and blasphemed in the movie called The Last Temptation of Christ. You have all heard about it, and it's running in Dallas now. Hollywood in the past has never hesitated, of course, to ridicule Protestant preachers and biblical Christians on the screen. We Christians have always been presented as sort of an ignorant, redneck bunch of weirdo's.

**Roman Catholicism**

They have, of course, carefully avoided treating the Roman Catholic Church (Roman Catholic priests and nuns) in that way, because they, after all, represent religion rather than personal relationship to Jesus Christ and the authority of the Word of God. So, Roman Catholicism does not offend in the way biblical Christianity always has.

**Jesus Christ**

The movie moguls have, however, never felt free in the past to degrade Jesus Christ. They make fun of the people of Jesus Christ, but they have never made fun of the Lord Himself. But now they feel confident that Americans just don't care. So, they don't mind blaspheming the person of the Son of God.

**The Hypostatic Union**

Please remember that our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man, could not sin in his thought life, nor could He sin in His actions. This is the doctrine of the hypostatic union, with which you are well-acquainted; that is that He was: both God, 100%; and, Man 100%, and that the natures existed in one person but they were never mixed. They were never co-mingled. They were always separate – one from another. But while being separated, They were coordinated in Their expression. The Person acted as a whole. Therefore, because he is not capable of sinning, the humanity of Christ was totally preserved from any sin. Therefore, He could not have indulged in any sinful thinking or any lustful thinking, as the movie The Last Temptation of Christ implies.

Hollywood, the powerful opinion-maker, I can assure you, will one day exalt and honor the antichrist as now they are willing to degrade the true Christ. The goal for all of this, as I've indicated, is not mindless, but to bring the nations together for this antichrist.

Senator Jesse Helms delivered a speech in the Senate recently in which he was giving an evaluation of what is taking place between the United States and Russia – the re-approachment between President Reagan and Chairman Gorbachev. And the thing that concerned Senator Helms was what he called the current detente offensive, which is being waged against the American people. That is a systematic psychological warfare in order to create a euphoric attitude on the part of the American people that the Russians no longer want to rule the world; that they are no longer an evil empire; that they are no longer guilty of the most brutal kind of tyrannies; and, that they will no longer murder you by the cartloads to gain their ends. Senator Helms said that there are masterminds behind this euphoric realignment for the purpose of creating a world power.

When you want to create a world power, I assure you, you must get rid of Jesus Christ, who is destined to be the world ruler, and you must get rid of the Bible, which represents the authority and the will of God, which is against internationalism, and in favor of nationalism. And make no mistake about that. The Bible establishes nations. The Bible is opposed to international, one-world government.

**A New World Order**

Senator Helms had this to say: "The careful examination of what is happening behind the scenes reveals that all of these interests are working in concert with the masters of the Kremlin in order to create what some refer to as a new world order. Private organizations such as the Council on Foreign Relations; the Royal Institute of International Affairs; and, the Trilateral Commission serve to disseminate and to coordinate the plans for this so-called New World Order in powerful, business, financial, academic, and official circles.

**Globalism**

"The viewpoint of the establishment today is called "globalism." In the globalist point of view, nation states and national boundaries do not count for anything. Political philosophies and political principles seem to become simply relative. Indeed, even constitutions are irrelevant to the exercise of power. Liberty and tyranny are viewed as neither necessarily good nor evil, and certainly not a component of policy."

**The United Nations**

The agency which is being used in which these powerful international forces are working to bring about a world government which is a total distortion and violation of the divine institution of government, of course, is the United Nations. That's why, 40 years ago, the United Nations was actually created as an ultimate objective to bring the world together under a one-world government.

So, we have all about us this effort of separating the United States from God and from His Word, the Bible. That, of course, has produced the vileness and the barnyard morality which now characterizes American society. The most shameful things are openly practiced. And people had no hesitancy of pronouncing publicly that this is their lifestyle. The things that you would never have wanted anybody to know about yourself, they now boldly portray on public television. The farther you get away from the Bible, the less restraint you have; the less you have; and, the less intimidation you have concerning your morality.

Government is indeed, as we have seen, a divine institution established by God to control the barnyard morality inclinations of the old sin nature, along with all the other evils of the sin nature. In God's plan of things, government leaders, therefore, are to govern on the basis of Bible doctrine principles, or else they violate the divine institution of government, so they are unfit to govern. Anybody who is in authority in civil government, who violates the principles of biblical morality, or economic principles, or anything else that the Bible addresses, is unfit to govern because he's violating God's divine institution of government, which encases this control element upon human society.

The people who colonized our nation, and who established our Constitution, were guided very clearly by the Bible, and certainly by respect for the Savior, Jesus Christ, as God incarnate. They did not treat Him with blasphemy and contempt. They might have doubted His deity, as someone like Thomas Jefferson did, but they were totally respectful, and never blasphemous of the Son of God.

**Secular Humanism**

Today, American government leaders are quite ignorant of the Bible doctrine of human government, so they do not understand their divine role as the preservers of freedom, justice, and morality in the society. Unfortunately, the people that we elect to public office now all want to be players on the field instead of umpires keeping the game fair. And when God put together the divine institution of human government, that's the way He set it up. He says, "Some of you are going to be free to be players on the field, and I'm going to appoint some of you who are going to be the umpires (the magistrates) who are going to watch to see that everybody plays by the rules, and the game is kept fair. That's all government was ever appointed to do. When government becomes part of the game, then it all falls apart. Certainly without the recognition of the place in human history of the Lord Jesus Christ as God, human government simply cannot work, and it always becomes an instrument of tyranny. Soviet Russia is a prime example. The alternative to abandoning Jesus Christ and the Word of God is secular humanism.

Here in Romans 13, God the Holy Spirit teaches us to be in subjection as Christians to human governments, and to their leaders, recognizing them as appointees of God. They do indeed govern by divine right. God gives a nation, however, the government and the leaders it deserves, and which fulfill His plans. We as Christians hold a dual citizenship: one in heaven; and, one on earth. When these citizenships come into conflict, we believers obey God as citizens of heaven rather than the civil authorities on this earth. Christians are, in fact, heaven's ambassadors to the kingdoms of Satan's world. But we are not revolutionaries, trying to disrupt and change those kingdoms.

**The Family Unit**

The family unit of a society determines the attitude of the people toward the government and the quality of life in the nation. It is in the family that you learn subjection to authority.

Governments can never do what God did not design them to do, nor what God will not permit them to do. Don't ever forget that. Governments cannot do what God did not design government to do, no matter how people think that they can get around that, nor will He permit them to do what is not His plan for government action. It is a false concept, then, to view government as purely a human creation to be used and operated by man's rules alone.

**God Established Human Government**

So, the divine institution of human government is an unknown quantity in our society today. And it is amazing how many Christians don't understand it. There is a basis, however, for civil authority, and that's why Paul, here in Romans 13, says that we have to be subject to it. God established civil authority for the governing and the control of mankind on earth in the postdiluvian civilization. After the flood came another civilization to keep it from degenerating to the same thing that happened before God established human government. This divine institution of nationalism was established in addition to the three divine institutions which already existed.

**The Divine Institution of Volition**

The first one is volition. No one must ever override your freedom to act within the boundaries of God's law and man's law. Volition is a divine institution. We call it freedom or liberty.

**The Divine Institution of Marriage**

Secondly is the divine institution of marriage. This includes the channeling of sex within the marriage relationship. Marriage is between one man and one woman on a lifetime relationship.

**The Divine Institution of the Family**

Thirdly, the institution of the family that would flow out of that, with lines of authority from father to mother to children.

**The Divine Institution of Human Government**

Now came this divine institution of nationalism – human government. All four of these institutions were designed to preserve the human race from being destroyed by Satan during this era when he controls the world.

**Satan's Attacks**

Well, of course, Satan has regularly attacked the divine institutions of volition, marriage, and family. And it is no surprise, therefore, that he seeks to attack the divine institution of human government. His first attempt at doing this in an organized way was at the Tower of Babel. Man is protected by this divine institution of human government from death by animals, and by premeditated murder. We call it first-degree murder.

**Capital Punishment**

We have this institution set up in Genesis 9:5-6, and you should be acquainted with this passage of Scripture. If you are acquainted with this passage of Scripture, the whole political scene will come into clearer focus and understanding for you. You will know what's going on, and you will be in a position to make decisions about candidates on the basis of what you hear them say, as you match it up to this particular Scripture.

Genesis 9:5 says, "And surely your blood of your lives will I require. At the hand of every beast will I require it. At the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of a man. Whoever sheds man's blood by man, his blood shall be shed. For in the image of God, He made man." Now the basic regulation is: if you take somebody's life willfully, deliberately, and premeditatedly, then you must pay for that act by the extinction of your own life. If an animal attacks and kills a human being, that animal must be killed. That basic principle is still in force today. It was continued for the Jews in the dispensation of the Jews in Leviticus 24:17. It was continued here in the dispensation of the era of the church in Romans 13:4. And it will be enforced in the coming dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom. Isaiah 11:4 indicates that there will be capital punishment in the Millennial Kingdom as well. So, here is the death penalty for those who take a person's life willfully. This is why in the code, the moral code, given to the Jewish people in Exodus 20:13 says, "Thou shall not murder."

In the Hebrew, this is an explicit word. The word "murder" is not just the word for "kill." There are ten or eleven other Hebrew words that refer to killing. But there is this one that exclusively and explicitly means taking life willfully and premeditatedly – first-degree murder. And there is a Hebrew word for it. That's the one that's used in the ten commandments.

So, it is very clear that God esteems life because it's made in His image, and therefore, He made this basic rule: you will not take another person's life. Man's old sin nature really has to be restrained from murder to preserve humanity from extinction. Unless you are exposed to what is going on in the world; unless you know what the police have to deal with; and, unless you are in touch with television news reporting, it's hard to imagine one human being taking another human being's life. It's hard to imagine that there is this deliberate, willful, callous indifferent taking of another person's life for profit. But it's out there. It happens all the time. And there are people who do not mind it at all.

I once heard a talk show that interviewed a mafia hit man, in which he told how he went about killing people, and how he went about taking lives for great sums of money that he was paid for. He was very adept. He was very skillful. Therefore, he drew big payments for what he did. And eventually, somebody said, "Doesn't God bother you about all this?" He said, "No, I don't think there's any God." They asked him, "Well, doesn't it bother you yourself as a human being?" He said, "No, it doesn't bother me at all." And some lady said, "I think you're just scum." He said, "Well, lady, you can have your opinion, but you're not living nearly as good as I am." And it was clear from this conversation that he had no more reaction to deliberately taking a life than you do to stepping on a bug, except for those of you who are into Eastern mysticism – it bothers you, but it doesn't bother the rest of you to squash that bug.

It's hard to realize that murder is out there all the time. It's constant. It's brutal. It's done for no reason at all. And if you didn't have the restraint of civil government bringing these people into captivity and into execution, the world would become indeed like it was before the flood – one death-dealing jungle.

So, God has put together this institution. It has never been rescinded. It continues to this very day. Please understand, as a Christian, there is no debate about whether capital punishment is right or wrong. Capital punishment is right. God has already spoken on that. And only the most deluded, disoriented, arrogant type of human being would presume to want to have a vote on God's decision, and to pass judgment as to whether God's decision to institute capital punishment for first-degree murder is acceptable or not. Anybody who talks like that is not in touch with the real world. But he is in touch with Satan's world and with Satan thinking.

So, these regulations concerning death to human beings and to animals who take the lives of other people is enforced to this very day. Restraint is a form of deterrence before murder; and, neutralizing the murderer after he commits the murder, we'll preserve him from doing it again. So, we put the restraint of the law before the murder. This is what will happen to you if you take a person's life. We neutralize that person, after he has taken a life, by execution. Capital punishment is not cruel and unusual punishment, as we are being told by some politicians today. It is divine viewpoint. Those who oppose capital punishment are the enemies of God. They are in conflict with the divine institution of government. And you can talk yourself blue in the face, but that happens to be the way it is. If you want to be opposed to capital punishment, at least have the integrity to say, "I think God was wrong, and I want to make this right." Or you should say, "I think God has been misrepresented. I don't think the Bible teaches this." But at least recognize that there is an authority for this beyond human opinion.

So, the flood is over. God explains this to Noah, and to his son, and to their wives. Then God establishes Noah as the first civil magistrate in society. He now has the authority from God to impose the highest form of punishment – taking another person's life. So animals that kill human beings were to be killed. That's still true today. People who took other people's lives deliberately (premeditated murder) – they were to be executed. That's still true today. Man, for this reason, because of the divine institution of government has the right from God to appoint civil authorities to try cases that violate the laws of man, and to determine the guilt, and to apply punishment: lesser punishment for lesser crimes.

It wasn't only that this dealt with the crime of murder. Once Noah was in the position of having this authority, he could also say, "Now as a society, we're going to make rules relative to this; to this; to this; and, to this. And there will be this penalty if you break these rules." These were expanded. That was legitimate. When you had the highest penalty, you could make lesser penalties under that. That was implied. So, all lesser punishments under law for lesser crimes than murder are authorized by the authority invested by God in civil government, and to the magistrates who are appointed by the people.

People have to be held accountable for their evil acts if humanity is to avoid its own self-destruction. Execution does deter murderers, though many will try to discredit that. We have plenty of studies that indicate that, except in a moment of a fit of passion, a person thinks twice before setting out deliberately to kill another person because of the possibility of losing his own life. God's justice in the divine institution of human government demand the execution of the murderer. This is not optional. Capital punishment is not a revenge tactic. That's a popular misrepresentation by liberal mentalities under Satan's influence. Capital punishment, of course, is not a private right. You can't be a vigilante to go out there and do this on your own. It is the right of properly constituted, governmental authorities to properly constituted courts of law. Human government controls the old sin nature of man within a nation with a police force. And it is our military force that controls the sin nature of man externally to the nation.

We are threatened from two sources. We are threatened by the sin nature within our society. Police control that with the laws we set up. Outside we are threatened by aggressors and their sin nature. That's where our military comes in. We have this in Scripture in Romans 13:1-7 – this whole passage that we're studying. Joshua 6:21 and Joshua 8:24 indicate that God's way of controlling the threat to your nature from sin natures outside is through the military power. Romans 13 tells us, then, that we are to be subject to this divine institution which God has created.

Romans 13:5 tells us two reasons why this is so. One is for wrath; that is, we are to be restrained by fear of punishment, and man is afraid of punishment. Secondly, we are to be restrained for conscience sake; that is, because of our values and standards which our conscience has received from the Bible.

The principle of the rule of law for orderly life on earth is biblical. A lawless society is degraded and decadent. If capital punishment is not enforced, crime will increase. If capital punishment is not enforced, it also follows, you will discover, that lesser punishments are not enforced for other evils. At a certain point in time, a nation thinks that it is getting away with something by rejecting capital punishment. But that is a delusion, because periodically, a nation that violates human life tolerates the spilling of innocent blood. That nation will find itself brought under God's judgment, with wars and violence of various kinds that will bring death to members of that society that refuse to bring that death to the people who deserved it.

**The Divine Laws of Government Establishment**

Now, as Christians, in a free society, we respect the government establishment and the laws as ordained by God. We call these the divine laws of establishment, and you should be acquainted with the divine laws of government establishment.

1. **Police Power**

Number one: there is the internal protection of a nation through legally constituted law enforcement forces – the police power. This internal protection of the police power is backed by the people who share in reporting crime. We have this handled through a system of courts and evidence which provides speedy justice. The fashion today, however, is to violate this law of establishment (this divine law of establishment) – internal protection toward speedy trial, and the disposing of the crimes of the criminal. Because we tolerate the criminal today, he has multiplied.

1. **A Military Force**

A second law of establishment is the external protection of the nation through a military force. This is God's way of preserving freedom on earth in the face of external international threats. The primary threat to world peace today, of course, is the communist world, which is determined to create an international one-world government. Soldiers who destroy a nation's enemy in battle do it as onto the Lord. Nehemiah 4:14 made that clear to the people of the Old Testament who faced clearing a land that God had given them, but was now overrun by enemies, and therefore had to be dealt with as a threat to their society: And I looked and rose up, and said into the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, 'Be not afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awe-inspiring, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses.'"

What he's talking about was an external threat to the society in which they live. Here God says, through the prophet, "Use a military force and stop them. If they do not, they will ravage your wives; they will take your children; they will confiscate your possessions; and, they will enslave you.

1. **Government for Changing Rulers and Laws**

The third law of establishment is a structure of government that has certain lines of authority, and means for changing the rulers and the laws. It is God's order to have a structure of government that is understood; that is workable; and, that has ways of changing rulers and laws. You can have any kind of structure of government you want, but it must have an orderly structure.

1. **A Free Enterprise Economy of Capitalism**

The fourth divine law of establishment is that the economy of a nation is to be based on free enterprise – capitalism and business being free to create profits for people is the foundation of prosperity, and this is what the Bible teaches. Today, Russia is desperately trying to reduce its military outlays because the nation is ripping apart at the seams economically. Gorbachev has come in and he's convinced his comrades that unless he can get the United States to agree to cut back on military weaponry so that they feel safe to reduce their military outlay, they're not going to survive. Secondly, he's determined to create the image that he wants peace so that he will be able to get the huge loans from Western banks that Russia now needs to survive, as a people.

When you have government controls in a society, it lowers the standard of living of people that is always characteristic of socialist nations. You destroy incentive. So, a nation is poor. I'm afraid that few of us Americans have had the opportunity to visit Russia. It would be more evident if we were there, and were really free to visit the country. I'm afraid that most Americans do not understand that the standard of living of the average Russian is what we find in a third-world country. The standard of living is not anything like what you enjoy. Occasionally, you can see a program, such as a year or so ago, when Donahue went over there and he ran his show in a Russian audience. That camera panned across those people, and they looked just like human beings. They looked just like us. They had suits and ties and dresses, and they picked the girls so that they had the nicer looking ladies. . . . And they had all these classy looking, nicely dressed people. And it was just show. That's not the way the average Russian lives. They live on the level of third-world countries – in poverty and scarcity. Three to four hours a day they are standing in line just to get the essentials of living.

**Private Property**

Yet, they want to rule the world to make things better for us. This is caused by the violation of the divine law of establishment of free enterprise economy that the Bible teaches. Basically, we're talking about the right to private property, which is very clear in the Bible. The right to private property is essential to the exercise of free choice. Socialism always destroys volition, and therefore it destroys incentive. Private property is the key. The Bible makes it clear that in the millennium, when Jesus Christ rules the world, the economic system in every nation will be private property. That's why he tells the Jews, "Finally, when you get to your kingdom, I will assure you that every one of you will sit under your own vine and your own fig tree, and you will enjoy the fruits of your own labor. It couldn't be clear in the Bible. Now that is private property capitalism, and that's why the millennium is going to be such a blessing. It's going to be such a prosperous time.

1. **A System of Laws**

The next divine law of establishment is that a nation must have a system of laws which are objectively and fairly enforced. The United States Constitution is our basic system of law which was designed to restrain the government. The legislation that the government makes is to protect the freedoms; the life; and, the property of its citizens. It is not designed by God, nor indeed by the founders of our nation, to provide welfare to some citizens from the fruits of labors taken by force from other citizens.

1. **A National Culture**

A sixth law of establishment (and here's where we come to nationalism) is that a nation is to have a national culture reflecting the ideals and the principles of the nation around which the people can be unified. The United States has such a national culture. It is being terribly diluted today because we are having enormous immigration from people of other cultures who do not have the background of reformation, biblical Christianity, which has been the core of American culture. Therefore, American culture is now under attack, and it is being diluted, and being dissipated from the power that it once had. A nation has to have a culture around which the people unify. That will include a view of God and of His sovereignty.

We are being deluged with nations which think that God is a force (an impersonal force), and that deity lies within all of us. It's a totally different concept that is undermining the national culture. We have to have a moral code that is practiced that is not a consensus of 51% of the people. We have to have a culture that includes public information and freedom of speech – culture compatible to American culture that concerns itself with the quality of entertainment, such that there are certain things that simply cannot be tolerated in public entertainment.

There is also an educational level that is required in a nation's culture. There is the concept of patriotism, and an esteem for national heritage. And this is to be taught to our children.

When I went to school, I had to study courses that were called civics or government or citizenship. Some of you have. In most schools in the United States, there are no such courses anymore. I mean, we study them down in grade school up through high school. You had to take a course in government. You had to take a course to understand how American culture worked on the government level; on its economic level; and, on its heritage. Patriotism was built upon that kind of instruction.

Finally, you have to have religious freedom and subjection to the authority of a Bible. That's the culture that characterizes American culture. Respect for authority and for these divine laws of establishment, of course, begins in the home. Then it goes to the community; to the school; to the city; to the county; to the state; and, to the nation. If it doesn't begin in the family, it's not going to be found anywhere else.

So, knocking the divine laws of establishment may seem popular in some circles, but it's a very foolish thing to do, and it's an anti-God thing to do, because God says, "You must establish these basic requirements of divine laws of establishment in order to fulfill the divine institution of government. Today, there are a few rulers who govern according to God's standard and principles, but the office of government is nevertheless to be respected. Daniel 4:17, Romans 13:1, and 1 Peter 2:14 all make it clear that government is a creation of God.

It did not matter to the early apostles the nature of the government they lived under. They knew that they had to be subject to it as long as it did not violate their Christian principles. Part of respect for government is paying your taxes. Matthew 22:21 and Romans 13:6 both point that out. We pay taxes. And in the United States, we pay taxes in order to preserve the kind of nation of laws and freedom with these principles of divine establishment that we do enjoy.

Now, of course, if we permit the government to get out of hand, then there's one thing that inevitably politicians will do. They will buy their way back into office with the votes of those to whom they have distributed benefits from the public treasury. And once that began in the United States, it has snowballed. That is our problem of controlling what is happening in our country today. We have a political campaign on right now where that is the whole question: is this government going to be kept from distributing benefits to the people out of the pockets of earners and laborers – taking their fruits from them and distribute them by force to idle people? Or are we going to continue to try to pull this government back down to where it is the servant of the people, and not a fire gone out of control?

When you are called upon to serve in the military, you do not claim conscientious objection on the basis that the Bible as against war. That's not true. Psalm 144:1 praises God for teaching his hands how to do military combat, and how to be successful as a soldier in the field. And God is the one that he attributes this instruction to.

We are to pray, of course, for all levels of government authority. 1 Timothy 2:1-3 tell us to do that, so that we may have a safe and quiet society in which to live. Obeying the law is showing respect for God, and for the divine institution of human government.

This is summarized as a conclusion for us in Romans 13:2. Paul says, "Whoever therefore resists the power." The word "resist" is the Greek word "antitasso." "Antitasso" means "to rebel." He who takes the attitude of rebelling sets himself (this is middle voice) in rebellion against some authority. The authority referred to here is the Greek word "exousia." And that, here in this context, refers to government authorities.

Whoever resists a segment of the government, and the rulers in that government, is resisting (is opposing) the ordinance of God. The word "ordinance" is the Greek word "diatage." "Diatage" refers to what? The divine institution number four of human government. Those who rebel against civil authority are acting in rebellion against the divine institution of human government. That is what Paul is saying. This is something which God has instituted – the ordinance (the institution) of God. Rebelling against government authority is resisting God. God has appointed government and rulers to do His will. Whatever government is in power is the one that you're in subjection to.

To the apostle Paul, it did not matter how the Roman emperor came to power. It did not matter how just or unjust the emperor was. He lived under a terrible emperor: Nero. He was one of the all-time slime balls on the face of the earth. And yet the apostle Paul is telling Christians, "You obey the authority of the emperor.

On occasion, human governments fail to fulfill their divine role, as under Nero. And then they become tyrannical and evil. The divine institution of government is the key to human preservation upon this earth. That is the reason that God the Holy Spirit says, "Treat government, and those who rule over you, with enormous respect. Do not be subject to what they propose that is evil. But to that which is right, you must obey them. For in doing so, you are obeying God Himself.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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