***America Today
Romans 13:1-7
RO166-02***

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We continue our study of Romans 13:1-7 on the subject of "The Christian and the State." This is segment number six.

**Human Government**

I've appreciated the response that many of you have expressed concerning this series, and I've been somewhat surprised, I must admit, because in some respects, this seems like old material – things we all know so well. Yet, from many of you has come the expression, "This is where it's all at. This is amazing – what God has provided for human government and rulers, and the way the system is to work.” As one man suggested, these tapes should be placed in the hand of every politician in the state of Texas. And indeed, it wouldn't be a bad idea to get them into the hands of every member of Congress if they would possibly listen to them to find out exactly what human government is all about. If they did, you would not feel that you were listening to a presidential election in which we are being offered Tweedledum and Tweedlededumber, in the process of trying to decide who should lead the nation, where they are totally oblivious to the doctrine of the divine institution of human government.

So, we are in some very apropos, timely, pertinent material. And I want to remind you that we are listening to the voice of God. It is the Bible that teaches us that human government is God's way of controlling the destructive effects of the old sin nature in society. The divine institution of human government is based upon the divine laws for the establishment of government, and we refer to that as the laws of establishment; that is, what government is supposed to do for people. Government is designed by God, basically, to be guided by the moral code revealed in the Bible. This is the only basis for right and wrong. This is the only basis upon which legitimate government can function. The laws which are passed, therefore, must be compatible with biblical morality, and with the laws of establishment, or the rulers will lead people astray, and they themselves will become tyrants.

**American Society Today**

A society of people which does not subscribe to God's moral code cannot enjoy maximum personal freedom without degenerating into social chaos. And that is the problem with American society today. The violations of the moral code (government encroaching itself into roles that were never intended by God for government to perform) have caused resentment, and have caused a degeneration of the institution of government. And it has caused social chaos. The United States has, in the past, been a society which could be both free and governed so that prosperity and safety prevail. Americans, by and large, in the past were free to pursue life, liberty, and happiness, which means the pursuit of possessions without fear of government interference or of criminal attack.

**Humanism**

Government based on God's law is simply not a threat to those who do right, but it is a threat to the evildoers in society. Civil rulers who honor God and His Bible will actually delight in praising the good citizen, even as they are willing to bring swift justice to the evildoer. The United States once possessed a biblical Christian culture which produced a high standard of living with freedom, which was indeed the envy of all the world. American culture today, however, has degenerated into humanism, which places man and his human viewpoint above God and His wisdom as revealed in Scripture.

So, the result today in American society is moral degradation; government domination; socialist programs; ignorance; and, more criminals than there are prisons to hold them. This sorry trend will not finally be reversed, I'm sad to say, until Jesus Christ returns from heaven Himself to rule the nations of the world with enforced righteousness.

So, Americans today are indeed at a crisis time in their national life. People are going to have to once more, on the national level, choose between the paganism of humanism, which makes man his own God and rule-maker, or a Christian culture which is based on God and His laws. Any attempt to mix humanism and Christian culture always results in victory for humanism. Politicians talk Christian culture, but politicians act on the basis of humanism.

Christians who are functioning on humanism are trying indeed to serve two masters. They're trying to keep one foot in the Christian culture camp, and one foot in the camp of humanism. And this cannot be done, as the Lord has pointed out to us in Matthew 6:24 and Matthew 23:10. You simply cannot serve two authorities. American politicians today, therefore, want to silence biblical Christians in order to be free of God's laws which Christians are forever reminding them of. Caesar is now demanding honors and authority, which indeed belong only to God, and Americans are acquiescing to Caesar's demands.

The humanist state wants to be the center of all human loyalties; the sole dispenser of material benefits; the determiner of moral values; and, the sovereign authority over the lives of its citizens. As you may have heard on the news this week, a church group which, once a week (I think on Wednesdays) has been dispensing sandwiches and coffee to needy people, has been told to cease and desist until they get a license from the government to serve food. I wonder what they would do if they dispensed that out of somebody's house, and people kept coming in, and you gave them a sandwich and a cold drink, and they went out in the backyard to eat. Would they come knocking on your door and say, "Just a minute. You cannot dispense food without a license from the government?" It's a small thing. They're doing it under the idea that they want to be sure that those sandwiches are sanitary. They should just send one of their agents down, and he can bite into them, and if he survives, we'll know that all is well.

However, what they're after is to have you people, who are Christians, stop taking the role of the agents of God to alleviate human needs and misery. They want people to look to their government to be the great welfare agency of the country. This is what this current election is all about.

Americans have permitted the federal government to become the very fearful master that the writers of the Constitution sought to avoid. But it was not the fault of the writers of the Constitution. It is *our* fault because we have come into the habit of asking government to take care of us. Now we are shameless in doing that. Did you see the man on television who has become the object of attention, because he cannot afford medical insurance, so he does not want to let his son play football, because he fears he wouldn't be able to cover medical costs if the boy gets injured? This man has no shame to sit there with his family on public television to be interviewed on this subject. I would like to ask that man whether he understands how the system works. I would like to ask him whether he understands that there is a large room in Washington. In that room are all kinds of legislators. We call it the Congress. There is a constitution upon which this has been built. This Constitution authorizes this Congress to raise taxes from people. Down the street is the treasury, and the treasurer. And over here is a vault. This wall holds the money. The vault, however, is empty.

Now this man comes to Congress and he says, "I wish that you would pay for my medical insurance." His legislator says, "Will you vote for me next time?" He says, "You betcha." So his legislator, "OK, I'll get it for you." He ask Congress to do it. Congress never asks whether the Constitution OKs them to buy private medical insurance for people, which of course, it doesn't. But that's been overlooked. The courts have looked the other way, and Congress has ignored the Constitution long ago. So, they say, "OK, we'll do it for you, and you do it for me next time."

So, they order the treasury to buy insurance for this man: "Get this man a policy. The treasurer says, "I just looked in here, and there's no money. I can't pay for it." Congress says, "That's all right. The Constitution has given us authority, and we have all these people out here, and we will, by the gun of the IRS authority, take from all of our citizens a certain amount of money so that we can put money into this vault, and then you will be able to write a check to give this man his insurance."

Isn't that wonderful? And all you sucker deeds are sitting out there, voting people into office who are undermining the Constitution, which is protecting you from government as a big welfare agency. You are ignoring the political party's platforms, and you are putting people in office who are no longer ashamed to tell you that we are going to stuff this vault full of money from your pockets, that you have earned by your legitimate labors, in order that we can give it to this man, who maybe needs it. But by what constitutional right does he have the authority to demand of you that you buy his medical insurance? And what legitimate right does this government have under this system to deny me huge sums of money to make up for the slack of students that we have in Berean Christian Academy that we need to pay for Christian education? Every month, I have to go to the Lord to get enough money to keep that school running, and you have to go to the Lord to give enough money to keep that school running.

When we have a shortage of students, why can't we dip into this treasury? I ask that, and one political person told me, "Because you do not have a powerful voice as a vested interest group." So, it's not a matter of whether the Constitution authorizes this as a legitimate role of government. It is whether you are in a position of power to be able to force that out of people.

I think it is significant that in this political campaign, one of the candidates said, "I am going to increase IRS agents like you wouldn't believe." Why is he saying that? Because people are getting fed up with filling this vault to distribute for this man's insurance and all those other personal projects that people want. And, by the way, I've written to them about my Mary Kay pink Cadillac, and I've received no response from the Treasury Department whatsoever. All the Congress has ignored my request, and I deserve that Cadillac. All I have is Mr. Rouch's old blue 1973 Pontiac. That's all. The treasurer does not feel I am deserving. Maybe if all of you would scream bloody murder, they might give me one. Maybe they would put me on television, and I could wear my oldest suit and sit there: "This poor guy. He drives around the 1961 Chevy. Surely he deserves better. Of course he does. Let's give it to him. Yeah, I'd like to let him have it."

So, I think it's interesting that one candidate says, "I'm going to increase those IRS agents." because he knows that it's harder and harder to keep that vault filled to keep these socialist programs going. The other candidate is beginning to have some caution, thank God, and is saying, I don't intend to increase the IRS agents. I intend to put some restraints upon the IRS and its independent maverick techniques and its free-roaming style that has made the American taxpayer the bankroller of every vested interest group. Americans have permitted the state and federal governments to become more pagans. And as they have become more pagan, they always become more brutal in their determination to eradicate the purpose of human government, to protect the freedoms of society, and to protect the individual citizen to retain the fruits of his own labor. And it is our fault.

Failure to resist the unthinkable, tyrannical, socialistic violations of the Constitution yesterday have resulted in the thinkable controls and degradation of society that government imposes upon us today. Civil rights cannot be preserved in a society which lacks a Christian culture.

In the apostolic era, the Roman government, through its emperor, claimed divine honors. The divine Caesar was a supreme authority over all the citizens, and his word was absolute law. His was the word of god. Because Christians would not worship the emperor god, they were viewed as traitors, and therefore they were persecuted. In New Testament times, Christians knew that the laws of God, as recorded in Scripture, took precedence over the laws of Caesar. Man's laws, therefore, Christians said, could be judged by a higher law which they had received from God. That's what infuriated the government. That's what caused the Roman government to start killing off Christians, because they knew that if people began to think that there was a higher law from God which governed what the government did, then the politician was in big trouble, because the Roman government at this time had now degenerated to the point where they were providing circuses and welfare to the people on an unimaginable scale in the past history of the splendid Roman Empire. Therefore, when the laws of Caesar were in conflict with the laws of God, Christians in the New Testament times spoke out against the laws of Caesar.

Well, today, the citizens of the United States face the same conflict between God and government. The United States was founded as a nation under God, with His laws as supreme as the guidelines for our laws that we make as human beings. Today, however, the United States is making laws which are guided by the principles of humanism, and are in direct violation of God's laws. So, when God's law says that, for willful first degree murder, you will execute the person, man's laws are coming along and saying, "No, that's brutal. We'll not do that." So, when God's laws come along and say, "From the moment of physical conception, which I, the eternal Creator God have brought about in the first place, a human being is in the process of developing from his inside-the-womb life to his outside-the-womb life. Nothing changes relative to his relationship to the eternal God in terms of his humanity." But an evil Supreme Court said, "No, that's wrong. We will permit you to kill the child when he is still in the womb, and God's laws are overridden by man's laws. And Americans have stood by. They have not risen in righteous indignation to tear out of office those who had the audacity to pass such violations of God's laws, and who support it today.

A society is held together, and it prospers, only under human laws which are compatible with God's laws, as in the four divine institutions. If man's laws are not in subjection to God's laws from the Scriptures, the state will begin to exercise arbitrary and tyrannical power over the citizens. And that's what has happened. I can assure you that if our founding fathers of this nation were on the scene today, they would be absolutely horrified by what the federal government is doing. They would say, "How can this be? This is the very thing that we talked over there in that room in Philadelphia, and that we said we would create a Constitution that would never permit this federal government to do anything except protect you from external enemies with our military forces, and to protect the peace and stability of society internally with a police force. And the reason they said that that's all government can do is because they understood Scripture. That is because that's what the Bible says is what the role of government is all about.

Now if there is no absolute standard by which to judge man's laws, then there is no basis for saying something is right and something is wrong – it's whatever the human judge decides. And that's what judges have started to do. That's what that evil Supreme Court did in the Roe vs. Wade decision, where they actually made the arbitrary law decision that that human being, at the first stage of its development, was not a person. Therefore, it was not protected under the 14th Amendment. Therefore, you could kill the thing. It had no basis – just an arbitrary decision. And the sad thing about that was that probably all the states had laws against killing unborn children. And the Constitution was designed to prevent the federal government from imposing its will upon the states. Yet that is precisely what was done. And nobody blinked an eyelash.

What has resulted is tyranny and terror of the Nazi Germany type, where the word of the Führer could not be challenged by the Bible. This concept of no divine law to exercise restraint on man's law was well expressed by the Supreme Court Chief Justice Evan Hughes in 1907, when he said, "The constitution is what the judges say it is." In a way, that is not true. The Constitution is what the writers intended it to mean, not what the judges decide that it will mean. The framers of the American Constitution deliberately produced a document which was based on the absolutes of God's law in Scripture, and whose meanings were fixed by the words that they used. It was not the arbitrary opinions of judges which are the basis of interpreting what the constitutional writers intended.

So, the current trend in American government to detach the Constitution from the fixed meanings of the framers is the threat to our Christian culture, and to our freedom to proclaim Bible doctrine truth. That's what concerns us as Christians. The more this government drifts off from the restraints of our Constitution, the more it will brutalize us, and the more it will seek to silence the Christian community.

So, where is the status of that American Christian culture today that we looked at in detail last time? Today, America's Christian culture is in decline, and the barbarians are moving in with their religion of humanism to build a pagan culture. A government's ability to rule its people is determined by the biblical character of that people, not by its gross national product. And Americans have drifted off from being a biblical people, they have become a more criminal kind of people. They have become a more violent type of people. America's culture was based upon God's principle that each person is to work with his personal integrity for his own welfare – not for the government's benefit. This was to be a system of a godly nation with a free people, where everybody's efforts were directed to care for themselves and their own, and to have surplus to assist those who were near them that needed their help. That was a workable system.

**Adam Smith**

This concept of government that our founders put together in the Constitution was based in part upon a book written by a man named Adam Smith. That's an old old name, as you know: Adam; and, Adam's last name (jokingly), you may not have known, was Smith, which is why there are so many Smiths in the world today. I think that's true. I'm not sure. But in any case, Adam Smith was the father of what we call the free market economy. He wrote a book called The Wealth of Nations, and he explained how nations become wealthy. The basic point was that they become wealthy by being free from government controls and government distribution of the earnings and the wealth that people produce. That was all it was about. Adam Smith, a very wise man, observed what had happened in the history of nations economically, and he wrote this book, which summarized that history has demonstrated that free enterprise (private property) is the way that nations become rich. They have a surplus of things after a while. And they have a high standard of living. A free enterprise system will determine what people need and what people want.

Therefore, that will decide where the raw materials are used. It decides what will sell. What sells is what people make. Government interference in the free market creates shortages; creates poverty; creates dependence on government; and, it creates wasted raw materials. When automobiles came in vogue, nobody needed horse collars and harnesses anymore. But the principle of government upon which we operate today was that government must come in and say, "You cannot force people to lose their jobs. We will finance your factory. You keep piling up horse harnesses and horse collars because that's what you do. That's your job. We certainly don't want you to go over here and learn how to make cars. When government does not interfere, the people making horse harnesses finally get such a pile of them around, that they say, "You know, this stuff is not selling. We're going to quit making these. Let's go over here, and let's find out how to make cars. And we'll work on that assembly line, and we'll be craftsmen in a product that people will buy. That's how the free enterprise system works.

**Russia**

The reason there is so much poverty in Russia, and the reason Russia is a third world level existence, is because the government determines who's going to make what; what's being made; and, how much it will be sold for. So, it is a joke in Russia when they find a bargain. The Russians says, "What are they selling today that we don't want?" Any time they find a sale sign up, they say, "Uh-oh, they're selling something today that we really don't want." However, there is something that most of you have never been taught in your economics classes, I suspect, and in your American history. Adam Smith, however, taught that his free-market system would produce the highest standard of living for the greatest number of people only if the society operated on biblical, moral principles. You didn't know that, did you? Adam Smith said, "Now what I have written will work only in a society that is governed by a Christian culture. It is people who are governed by biblical reality," he says, "or this system won't work. If you're not governed by biblical principles, you have brutalized people with this system.

So, Adam Smith held that government is responsible for protecting and encouraging biblical morality to keep a nation from declining, and for maintaining its prosperity. Adam Smith taught that people need a moral virtue, and not just economic opportunity, in order for them to get out of poverty. He understood that getting out of poverty required, again, moral virtue – Christian culture.

Here's what he said in one place: "Disorderly mirth; the intemperate pursuit of pleasure; and, the breach of chastity are the vices of levity always ruinous to the common people. And a single week's thoughtlessness and dissipation is often sufficient to undo a poor working man forever, and to drive him through despair to committing the most enormous crimes." What was Smith saying? He was saying that if you do not act upon biblical moral principles, you will drive yourself into poverty. And if you're already poor, you're never going to get out until you start acting in a godly way.

He also said, "The liberty, reason, and happiness of mankind can flourish only where civil government is able to protect them." And what Adam Smith recognized was that government cannot govern a society that is floating free of the moral restraints of Scripture. You cannot govern a society that does not operate upon biblical morality. Therefore, more than a higher standard of living, a society needs a high standard of biblical morality.

**What Does America Need Today**

So, what do we need in America today? We need a Congress which will promote the biblical moral standards, and will leave citizens alone in economic freedom. They, in turn, as per the first 150 years of our history, will then, as individuals, care for their families; care for their close friends; care for their church members; and, care for those with whom they are associated in the various institutions of society – they will take care of the needy on that local level. It was a splendid system; it was fair; and, it worked. Did everybody have everything they wanted? No. Did everybody have the right to have what everybody else had? No. The Bible never suggests equality. The Bible only says that all of us are to have freedom. From there, we go by what the grace of God supplies.

The United States Supreme Court, you might be interested in knowing, in the 1890s, officially declared the United States to be a Christian nation under God in its cultural orientation. The United States Supreme Court in 1890 said, "The United States is a Christian nation in its orientation. Unbelievers, liberals, and socialists now want to make us a humanist nation without God and without the Bible. A government will legislate on the basis of its religious principles, whether they be from God or from man. But they will have some principles upon which they will legislate. Christians, therefore, must judge the culture (and get this straight) of the United States government by its laws that its legislatures pass. They must not judge the culture of the United States and be suckered by the words of the politicians who are seeking to be elected.

This is why the politicians hate what some Christian groups do when they pick out a legislative scorecard. And I think that this is a splendid idea. They pick out certain critical pieces of legislation, and they put out a scorecard on how this person in government voted, and they spread it throughout the electorate of his district. Boy, do they scream bloody murder. I have seen them on television almost red in the face in their indignation of people putting out these scorecards on their voting record. Why? Because in their letters, and back home to the people, they talk one way. But when they get to the centers of power, they pull the levers in terms of humanism.

**Christians Need to Vote**

Why do Americans take it? Why do Americans not stand up on Election Day, November the 8th, out on their front porch at 9 o'clock in the morning, or 8 o'clock in the morning (whatever time this is set up), and all scream out at once out in the street, "I'm not going to take it anymore," and then walk down to the polling booth. Maybe you could ask Donaldson or Brokaw to make that a national project. Jennings would love to do it. All of you stand out there: "I'm not going to take it anymore. And I'm going to vote a Christian culture back into this nation."

**A Christian Culture**

So, what are we talking about? We're talking about a Christian view of reality. We're talking about the real world. What is that real world? When we say "Christian culture," we're talking about the fact that there is a final, sovereign, moral authority in the universe Who is the infinite, personal Creator God. It is His character which determines what is right and wrong in human governmental actions. God's binding moral laws are clearly and accurately stated in the Bible. That's what we mean by a Christian culture.

**A Humanist Culture**

On the other hand, what do we mean when we talk about a humanist culture? We're talking about an attitude that makes man the final authority in the universe. Under the humanist view, man is the product of eternal matter which has evolved by chance over vast periods of time. Humanism, therefore, has no moral basis whatsoever except a 51% majority of a society. And out of that inevitably comes arbitrary law. Humanism says that there is no moral standard except what 51% at any time decide is right and wrong.

**Ann Landers**

Here is a question which was sent to Ann Landers, and I find that she always has an interesting response. The question was, in responding to a September 8th syndicated column, in which she gave advice to a woman who wanted to know how to deal with her grandmother's disapproval of the woman live-in boyfriend. Ann Landers said that: "Things have changed since Grandma was courting. She should not judge you by the standards that are 40 years old." This item goes on and says, "Correction: we have a hunch that grandma was thinking of standards that go back a lot farther than 40 years – say about 2,000 years, when St. Paul told the people of Corinth that fornicators would not get to heaven. The problem today is that too many people take their moral guidance from Ann Landers instead of St. Paul."

That is right on the button – just exactly right on the button. This illustrates that when Ann Lander speaks to people, and they listen to her, and they follow her advice, she is not coming from the frame of reference that there's a God out there who has spoken to us, and, on moral issue, she has a guideline to pass to them. She is speaking to them on 51% majority of the sin natures of this country.

Humanism recognizes no knowledge from outside of man himself to which he must subject himself. Man alone then is the final judge of morality based on his old sin nature. The United States, I'm sorry to say, is such a humanist nation today, and it is consequently in decline. In practice, what we have is a small, elite group of leaders who make arbitrary laws to impose on all Americans no matter who gets elected to public office. Humanist principles have reduced the value of man from the image of God. This leads to the murder of abortion, and it destroys true compassion for the helpless and the weak.

**The ACLU**

The American Civil Liberties Union (the ACLU) has, in fact, perverted the First Amendment to say that government cannot be influenced by God's Word in morals, ideals, and goals. That's the ACLU for you. However, it may want to parade itself as the protector of liberty. It is an agency which was spawned by a communist, and it is an agency which has regularly supported leftist causes and collectivist causes. It is an agency which, every now and then, picks a good cause to cover up its dirty tricks. So, it will point and say, "Hey, look. We're defending this person or this cause. Aren't you in favor of that?" And they think that you're going to be dumb enough to believe that that tells us what they are really like.

**The First Amendment**

The First Amendment was passed by our Congress, and it is the first amendment. You may need to be reminded that probably the basic cause of the American Revolution was that England had determined to impose the Church of England, the Episcopalian Church, upon the United States (the United Colonies). And this was going to become the state religion supported by taxes for the Church of England. As John Adams pointed out, this finally brought the colonies to a boiling turmoil, with all the other taxation without representation issues stirring up the pot still more. The basic problem was England's decision (parliament's determination) to impose the control of the Church of England over the colonies. It is no wonder that the very First Amendment that they insisted on adding to the Constitution for protecting civil rights was that about no establishment of religion, meaning no establishment of a church of the United States, and the protection of the free exercise of religion by which they explained, in the Federalist Papers, they meant freedom for Judeo-Christianity to be taught and to influence government.

That's just the opposite of what the ACLU tells you. But unless you know some historical background, these suckers will con you every time. The government in the United States has, for decades, since 1940, been systematically imposing humanism on Americans as their religious frame of reference. And people of our country have been so indifferent to Scripture that they have not complained. And the reason people have been so indifferent is because the average American is an ignorant person when it comes to Bible doctrine. He doesn't know it. He does not flood, by the hundreds, into a church that's going to teach him the mind of God. He will flood by the hundreds into a church that is going to tickle his emotions; make him laugh; and, play upon his prejudices. But he will not float by the hundreds to be absorbed on a regular basis in the Word of God.

**Feeding on the Word of God**

All you have to do is look around you, and watch people drifting off from their attendance at these public teaching sessions, and see how (a little later down the line) their lives are shipwrecked upon the shores of humanism, and shipwrecked upon some human viewpoint that they began pursuing because they went spiritually crazy. The only stability for you and me as Christians is in the teaching and the feeding upon the Word of God.

I remind you that you can use the analogy of the physical body. When you're feeling good, you don't worry too much about taking vitamins. When you're feeling good, you don't worry too much about not eating bad stuff that you shouldn't be eating. When you're feeling good, you don't worry too much about all the rest that you should be getting. You don't worry about the exercise. You get up and you say, "Oh boy, it's so hard to exercise." And it is. It's terrible. It takes an enormous amount of self-control and drive. But when you get sick and you can't do anything, then you know how valuable all of that was. When you get really broken down, and you're in great agonies, then you wish that you could just get well again. And maybe you think back on how you could have prevented all that. That's the same thing in spiritual health. It is when you have found your life shipwrecked, and you think back on how good you had it, and how sweet it was when you were eating the Word of God and feeding upon its nourishment, and not being carried away, as Scripture says, "By every wind of every fool's doctrine."

The only way you can do that is by knowing the Word. You have to know categories of doctrine. The only way you can judge the government and its leaders is when you know the Word of God. Then they cannot con you no matter what they say. The Christians of the New Testament were versed in the Word of God, and Caesar could not fool them. Yes, Caesar could punish them. He fed them to the lions. He soaked them in oil and tar, and made torches out of them for the night games. And they paid the price. And Caesar will do that to you once Caesar is in a position of power so that he answers to no one to be able to do that to you.

So, people have been indifferent to this gradual imposition of the religion of humanism on our country. Laws have been made by court rulings without any challenge to Congress, even though the courts are not supposed to make laws – but interpret laws. This was the source of the abortion ruling. That court made a law. It was supposed to interpret. It wasn't supposed to make a law, but it made it in. And Congress complain one bit.

If God really exists; if He's really out there; and, if He has really spoken to us in Scripture, then only fools will think that He will ignore our national acceptance of humanism with its deification of man.

**Russia**

The other side of the coin in Marxism / Leninism is based indeed upon the concept of humanism as the only reality in the universe. Therefore, in Russia, the government is under no restraint to subscribe to the laws of God. Therefore, in Russia, human life is not in the image of God. Therefore, it is brutalized and devoured for political ends. Russia, therefore, operates on arbitrary laws made by a small elite who are unaccountable to the people. There are a group of leaders who perpetuate themselves. And in the news now, you have just recently heard that Gorbachev has shoved the old guard out of the way, and has made himself the president as well as the Chairman of the Central Committee. He has taken to himself all the highest offices. Was there an election in Russia to do that? No, the people have nothing to say about this. This is a government which is running amok because it is based on humanism, and it is based on power and force and brutality. And Americans stand here and think there is something delightful about the Russian system that we can learn from. And they want to come closer to it, and be compatible, and be friendly with such a brutal beast.

**The Lord Jesus Christ**

It is our Lord Jesus Christ who is going to destroy, in time, the communist, brutal, godless culture which Satan now is trying to impose on this nation and on all the nations of the world. It is our Lord Jesus who gave us the example to follow in Matthew 22:21, when they asked Him, "Should you pay taxes to Caesar?" And He asked them to show a coin, and He asked them, 'Who's image is on the coin?'" Matthew 22:21 says, "And they said unto Him, 'Caesar's'. Then He said unto them, 'Render, therefore, unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God, the things which are God's."

**God is Sovereign**

It is our Lord who has told us that government has a legitimate claim on the Christians. But it is He who also told us that that claim is not absolute. That claim is restricted, and is governed by the Word of God itself. Only God has absolute claim over this nation and over you as a citizen. And God is sovereign over the government just as He is sovereign over your marriage; as He is sovereign over your family; and, as He is sovereign over your personal volition. He is sovereign over all four divine institutions.

The pattern for us to follow is that which describes the Lord Jesus Christ in Acts 10:38. Here is the Christian citizen operating under the Word of God in his finest hour. Acts 10:38 says, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power; who went about doing good, and doing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." We who operate on the Word of God have God with us. And it is within our great capacity to do that which is good. As He went about doing good, so we are to go about doing good.

**The Reformation**

It was the Reformation (to tie this all together) which brought the role of human government back into perspective. The Renaissance movement in Southern Europe operated on humanism, and therefore it made man and human reason the final authority. But in the north of Europe, the Renaissance produced the Protestant Reformation, which made God the center of everything, and the Bible the final authority. All the nations that have been influenced and descended from those southern European countries are today nations of poverty. They are the backward countries. They are third-world countries. They are decrepit countries. They are the countries that are trying to charge cross our borders into our country. They were dominated by a religious system. They were dominated by humanistic viewpoint that has brought them nothing but grief. All the nations, such as ours, that were the product of those northern European nations, are the nations that prospered, and became powerful, and became the envy of all the world.

**Thomas Aquinas**

It all began with their view of human nature, because the greatest of the medieval theologians was a man named Thomas Aquinas. Thomas Aquinas taught that man's mind had not been corrupted by the fall into sin in Eden. In other words, he rejected the total depravity of man. As, we read Scripture, we discovered that the soul of man is depraved. That means his will is depraved; his mind is depraved; and, his emotions are depraved. They are not compatible with God. But Thomas Aquinas said, "Yes, man's world is depraved, and his emotions are depraved, but his mind is not." It was a terrible mistake. But once he set that in motion, and people began to believe that, in time, the idea was projected that man, by his own human reasoning, unguided by doctrine of Scripture, could arrive at the ultimate truths of God. Suddenly, the reason of man was able to even judge the Bible itself, and to evaluate what was true and what was from God.

So, men with high IQs, even non-Christian philosophers, were used to determine the value of biblical precepts because the human mind could not be wrong. It was free from the defects of the fall in Eden.

Well, in the 16th century, the reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin returned to the biblical view of the total depravity of man. They rejected, therefore, the capacity of human reason, apart from the Bible, to arrive at any divine viewpoint truth. They said that Thomas Aquinas was seriously in error. The Bible was then accepted as the literal, inerrant Word of God, as it claims to be, rather than as a compilation of the writings of human viewpoint efforts which were then judged by other views. They declared that the Bible, furthermore, was not an enigma, but that it was clearly written in language that we could understand, and through which God the Holy Spirit would guide us into an understanding of what was true truth.

So, once the Bible was translated into the languages of people, such as Luther's grand effort of bringing the Bible into German, then anyone could read the Bible, and then the rulers were faced with the thing they feared most. Suddenly, the rulers of government could now be judged by the average Joe Six-pack on the basis of Scripture. Everybody could read the Word of God, and they could look at a politician, and they could look at a government, and they could say, "The Bible says that this is what's right, and you say that that's wrong. You are condemned by Scripture. I'll have none of it." And that sent a chill of terror through the medieval political world.

So, Luther and Calvin said that, "Nothing that human reason could produce is superior to what the Bible teaches." So, the reformers therefore declared that man and all his human institutions (political and religious) were under the authority of Scripture. The pope was rejected as the ultimate authority in spiritual matters. Autonomous reason was rejected as the final authority in the laws of government. The reformers taught that the ruling authorities themselves were under God's laws as found in the Bible, because they were put in office by God in the first place. So, there was no human who was above God's revelation in Scripture. The Bible then, for them, became the reference point to which government was to look in making laws and in governing, so as not to fall victim to the sin nature of man. And that's exactly what they did. And part of the marvelous product that came from that was the United States of America and all of Western civilization.

It was the Reformation that taught us that freedom was a gift from God. It was not, as Russia tells its citizens, a beneficence from the state. Because freedom was a gift from God, no government could, under any condition, do anything to violate the divine institution of human volition in any way to restrict your personal freedom. All government could do, by God's authority, was to protect your freedom from external enemies with your military power, and from internal enemies with the police force. Government was never intended to do anything else in the lives of people. And to the extent that government has chosen to do more, government is under the judgment of God.

We live at a critical time. You are facing a vital decision in the coming elections. Would to God that more Americans could be taught the doctrine of the divine institution of human government. This would change and revolutionize this nation overnight, and bring it to prosperity, and to peace, and to power such as it has never dreamed before, because all of our technology and all of our advanced wisdom now would be channeled in the right way. And of our efforts would go to the right direction so that this nation, under God, would have a rebirth of freedom and a rebirth of glory, reflecting the glory of God such as it has never known in its history before.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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