

Good Government

September 17, 2000

Introduction: Deut 1: 9-18, 16:18-20

As elections draw near, the age old cycle resumes. It has never really ended. The public display of politics-campaigns, commercials, and televised speeches is not really government, but men vying for influence and power, often at the expense of others.

As we see in Webster's definition of the words *govern*, and *government*, the word 'govern' means to control: to restrain; to keep in due subjection; as to govern the passions or temper. The exercise of authority by a parent or household. Ex. Children are often ruined by a neglect of government in parents. "Let family *government* be like that of our heavenly Father, mild, gentle, and affectionate." (Kollock)

The ruling of a people presumes that there are people who know how to be ruled, and to rule others presumes the ability to exercise self-rule. God has established different spheres or realms of government. They are the family, the church, and the civil magistrate. All presume self-rule.

Self Control (Self Government)

- What is self-government? Webster speaks of the regulation of passions and tempers. Well, we know we are to measure ourselves against the Word of God. Paul says, "Imitate me as I imitate Christ".
- Jesus says in Matthew 7:20, regarding false prophets, "You will know them by their fruits".
- We are to put off sin. (Eph 4:25-5:5) Edify one another; be kind and tenderhearted; imitate God; walk in love as Christ did.
- We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. (Rom 12:2) It is the Word of God that transforms our minds by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ps. 17:4, 119:9-11, 18, 25, 165). All good government presumes good self-government.

Family Government

The first governmental structure God set up is the government of the family. It is the first example of church and the first example of civil government a man will experience. A man is raised in a family and eventually establishes his own family, moving from being governed, to governing. The hierarchical structure of the family is the father, mother, and children (Eph 5:22-29, Col 3:17-21) The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. A wife is called to joyfully submit to, help, and respect her husband. She is to run her household well and train up her children under her husband's authority (Titus 2:4-5, Proverbs 31). Children are called to obey and honor their father and mother. (I Tim 5:1)

Church Government

We see in I Cor 12:12 that the Church is the body of Christ, and Christ, not man is the head. The members are organically connected to one another. The church body, like the physical body, needs all its parts to function wholly and properly to the glory of God. If one member suffers, the whole body suffers.

Offices and officers are for the equipping of the saints and to ensure decency and order in public worship. The qualifications of officers are objective, not subjective (I Tim 3:4, Titus 2:3-5, Acts 13:1-3, Rom 12:3-8). Elders are not priests (I Peter 2:9), and *Christ* is the mediator between God and man, not the Church, not the elders, and not the pope. A man serving in a church office should be a man who shows a godly governing of his family.

Civil Government

The Civil Magistrate is God's minister. The Civil Magistrate bears the sword (Rom 13:1-7). This means its job is to punish evil doers and to protect those communities and families in its jurisdiction.

- God established the role of civic rule and rulers. He grants the realm and sphere and gives limits thereof, just as he does in family and church government.
- God establishes offices. Officers are chosen by the people. (Deut 1:9-18)
- Civil authorities are primarily local in orientation
- Justice must be done according to God's law.
- Civil rulers must understand that God deals covenantally with families, churches, and nations.

Summary: Two examples of Blessings and Curses.

- Let's turn to Amos 8:11-14. In verse 14, it was prophesied that they would fall and never rise again. How should we then govern?
- In 380-400 AD, Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, refused the Emperor communion at the Lord's table.

Conclusion:

Good godly self-government leads to good godly family government, which leads to good godly church and civil

government. You are God's people. You vote before the face of God. Do not fear him who can kill the body only, but fear Him who can destroy both body and soul. Voting for the lesser of two evils is still evil. It is better to not vote by faith, than to vote faithlessly. So the question still remains. Can you by faith vote for Al Gore or George Bush? That is for you and your house to decide.