

# Church and State: The Biblical Role of the Civil Government Toward the Church

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Please turn to the book of Revelation, the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter. We are continuing with the two witnesses. I will begin with verse one.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.<sup>1</sup>

Thus far the reading of God's Word.

We have been looking at these two witnesses for the last couple of Lord's days and I would like to spend some time on a very critically important yet almost universally ignored lesson that I believe our account in Zechariah last week, which we will look at again, and its reference of fulfillment, essentially, in Revelation 11 among other places we will look at teaches us.

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 11:1-14.

Let us turn to Zechariah chapter four beginning in verse one.

And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof: And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.<sup>2</sup>

Now we can see the clear parallel. It is almost a restatement in shortened version in Revelation 11 of these two witnesses, two anointed ones (or in the Hebrew "sons of oil").

Last week I attempted to make the biblical case for the two anointed ones in Zechariah four being the types of the two witnesses in Revelation 11. I also called them symbols; for those of you who are students of hermeneutics, I want to take a moment to acknowledge that types and symbols are different in Scripture. A type is a figure of something to come. A symbol is an image of that which it is intended to represent. Dr. Milton Carey in his standard reference work *Biblical Hermeneutics* gives us a good example of each one. He says Adam was a type of Christ. The rainbow is a symbol of the covenant.

The elements of this vision in Zechariah four including the two anointed ones, sons of oil, I believe, would be called types even though they did not have material existence, but they were a vision. But whatever you want to call them, types or symbols, is not critical.

Last time we saw that the Bible tells us that olive oil is a symbol of God's blessings. The candlesticks are symbols of the Church. Jesus clearly says that in Revelation chapter one. Now we can't take the time to repeat all the proofs of this. If you missed or don't remember last week's sermon, you can pick it up on [SermonAudio.com](http://SermonAudio.com).

The two anointed ones in Zechariah are Joshua the high priest—that is not the Joshua from the Exodus, but another Joshua, the high priest at that point—and Zerubbabel who was the civil ruler, the king, if you will, who both in their respective spheres of church and of state demonstrated their zeal for the true worship of the Lord against the idolatry (and spiritual wilderness) of Babylon. They led Israel out of captivity and brought them back to the Promised Land. And Israel laid the foundation of the second temple in Jerusalem. They are the two sons of oil, the two anointed ones, the Lord's olive trees that like the vision in Zechariah are a conduit of God's blessing to the Church.

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<sup>2</sup> Zechariah 4:1-10.

Now Zerubbabel was the civil ruler, remember. Joshua was the high priest. So we have state and church, just as Moses was the civil ruler and Aaron was the high priest earlier in history. Both kings and priests were anointed with oil when they began their service, a very ancient custom.’

Anointed, by the way, literally just means applied with oil. But it signifies your consecration to a holy office. Anointing a king was equivalent to crowning him. In fact, in Israel a crown was not required for the king. The anointing was the crown. 1 Samuel 16, 2 Samuel two and other places say that. For example in 1 Samuel 16 verse 13 David was anointed as a king by Samuel the prophet of the Lord showing the Lord’s anointing, making this a holy office (as we also see in the New Testament), a minister of God. 1 Samuel 16:13 says:

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.”<sup>3</sup>

So the civil ruler of a nation was considered a holy office since it was believed that he was ordained by God to rule in a ministerial function, but not in the Church. The high priest and the king are each sometimes called the anointed, Leviticus chapters four and six and Psalm 132 are examples.

Prophets were also anointed, 1 Kings 19, 1 Chronicles 16, Psalm 105.

Both the king and the high priest, quote, "stood by the Lord of the whole earth." This is what the two witnesses do, meaning that they are faithful to him. They serve him. They serve as conduits, as pipes for the golden oil of his blessings. For the high priests they are the conduits in the Church for the blessings of the Church. For the king he serves as the conduit for the blessings of God to the state, to the people of the nation. Now, of course, his blessings only come through the Word. We know that as Christians.

Turn to Psalm 19, please. It is a wonderful illustration of this, beginning in verse seven.

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.<sup>4</sup>

The Lord’s blessings flow through His law-Word. It is perfect. The law, testimony, statutes are all the same thing, classic Hebrew repetition for emphasis.

Some of the best theologians are in substantial agreement as to who these two witnesses are, the anointed ones in Zechariah, in Revelation the two witnesses, those men throughout history that have brought God’s word to rule in the Church and in the state. Now we have today no problem in understanding the former, that elders in the Church are to be a conduit for the blessings of God to the Church, the visible Church. But few understand—and this is the critically important yet almost universally ignored lesson, as I said before we started, very controversial, and I don’t expect everybody will necessarily agree with this.

*Civil rulers are just as responsible to perform the same duty, being a conduit for God’s blessings to the state and, thus, the people in nation, as the rulers in the Church are to the Church. This is the historic*

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel 16:13.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm 19:7-8.

*reformed position.* Now to prove that, we could cite works by numerous people, by the best-known and brightest minds of the Church. But one need go no further than the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Joseph is passing out a section of the original 1646 Westminster Confession of Faith. If you have a modern version of the Westminster Confession it will not have all of these phrases in it, because some were removed in the American revisions. But this is the original Westminster Confession of Faith as it was written.

By the way, did you know that the assembly that wrote the Westminster Confession was called together by the civil government, the English Parliament? It wasn't just a church assembly, it was an official government commission, to develop a creed for all the churches in England and its possessions..

We are looking at the Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 23 section one:

"God the supreme Lord and King of all the world has ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the people, for his own glory and the public good and to this end has armed them with the power of the sword for the defense and encouragement of them that are good and for the punishment of evil doers.

"Section three. Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven yet he has authority and it is his duty" — and I am skipping over some parts so we don't lose our focus on the subject —" to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed and all the ordinance of God duly settled, administrated and observed."

And of course there are Scripture references to support each of these statements: Romans 13:1-4; I Peter 2:13; II Chronicles 26:18; Matthew 18:17; Matthew 16:19; I Corinthians 12:28-29; Ephesians 4:11-12; I Corinthians 4:1-2; Romans 10:15; Hebrews 5:4; Isaiah 49:23; Psalm 122:9; Ezra 7:23, 25-28; Leviticus 24:16; Deuteronomy 13:5,6,12; II Kings 18:4; I Chronicles 13:1-8; II Kings 24:1-25; II Chronicles 34:33; 15:12-13

This is the historic Reformed position right out of the Westminster Confession. It says the Bible teaches that the civil magistrate or ruler, whether he is a king, a president, governor, legislator, whatever form of civil government a nation has, is a minister of God and therefore has the responsibility to bring, quote, all the ordinances of God to bear on the people in his nation. And, of course, the only place God's ordinances are found is where? The Bible.

Now this is shocking to 21<sup>st</sup> century ears. And it is oh so politically incorrect, isn't it? A civil government official is a minister of God? Can you imagine the reaction if you said this to some of your friends? Even some of your Christian friends? The president, the Congress, the Supreme Court, not to mention all the lower courts, the state governors, the legislators, mayors, city council, county commissioners, all levels of civil government are ministers of God. They are supposed to govern by God's law-Word, the Bible.

What about nations such as China or India or Middle Eastern or African countries where they are not Christian? They are supposed to be ministers of God, too? Yes.

The Lord has only one written Word. It is not just his will for the United States.

In Matthew 28 Jesus said to bring *all* nations under obedience to him.

Further, the Bible says that all those who make laws for a nation are called to be ministers of God *for good*. Please look at Romans chapter 13 beginning in verse one.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.<sup>5</sup>

Three points I want to make about that. First point: All power comes from God, including the power to rule a nation. Verse one:

"There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."

This includes the civil governments of nations. Civil power originates from the creator God, is founded upon His universal dominion as the king of the nations.

Jeremiah 10:10:

"But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation."<sup>6</sup>

He is the King, everlasting King.

Second point. Rulers of nations are called ministers. Now this should not sound odd to us. In many countries other than the United States what do they have leading their government? A prime minister, a minister of trade, the minister of foreign affairs, the minister of finance. All that is ancient language derived from the fact that a civil ruler is a minister.

*Are we to believe that God wants his civil ministers, those who pass and enforce laws in the nation, to use the power He has given them ("there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God") to enact and enforce laws that He does not approve? Or are we to think he gives them power to govern, anoints them as his ministers, but gives them no rules by which to govern, no laws he wants enforced; He just says, "Do whatever you like. Make up whatever laws you want"?*

We don't think that he does that with his ministers in the Church. Can I just stand up here and tell you whatever I think? Can I say, oh, folks, I don't need the Bible to preach, or to teach me what to think? I

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 13:1-6.

<sup>6</sup> Jeremiah 10:10.

will just give you my own opinions, even if they aren't Biblical. No, of course not. We don't think He expects His ministers in the church to ignore His law-Word, to just make up things as they go along, so why would we think that he does that with his civil ministers?

Third point. Romans 13:4, speaking of the civil ruler, "For he is the minister of God to thee for good." How do we know what is good? Is that something we can make up for ourselves? Satan said so. Remember what he said to Eve? If you eat the fruit you will determine what is good and evil for yourself. And that is what people have been doing ever since instead of listening to God.

How do we know what is good? Even a small child knows the answer to that question. But many adults have forgotten it. The answer is: God is good.

Jesus said in several gospels, "There is none good but one, that is God."

The only one who can tell you what is good is God, Who is the source of all good. And He has written a book to tell you all about what is good. God tells us what is good. He is the source of all that is good, and since a civil government official is an ordained, anointed minister of God *for good*, it is therefore incontrovertible that he is to rule by God's law-Word, the Bible, which tells him what is good, and thus tells him how to do his job.

Now most evangelical Christians will agree that elected officials should be self-professed Christians. Moreover, they believe that elected officials should read their Bible. They should pray about decisions and then they do what they believe is the Lord's will. That is about as far pretty most of them are willing to go.

The problem is that when that's all they think the Lord wants in civil government officials we get presidents like Jimmy Carter. He is a self-professed born-again Christian and a Baptist Sunday school teacher. And his presidency was a disaster. Most evangelicals disagreed with his positions on the majority of issues as well.

Compare the typical evangelical's opinion about the role and duties of civil magistrates to what the Samuel Wiley wrote in his 1803 book *The Two Sons of Oil*.

Commenting on Romans 13, he wrote, "The magistrate is, in Revelation ... Romans 13, called the minister of God for good to men." And Wiley says, "The ultimate end to be attained is the advancement of the glory of God as King of nations and a concern to promote the prosperity of the Church."

Civil governments should have a concern to promote the prosperity of the Church. Now that this one of the teachings of the Bible that sends virtually everyone, even devout Christians, into orbit. It is because it has to do with the sovereignty of God, which is what the flesh hates above all. They shut their eyes to it, because to believe it they would have to change their entire world view. That would mean they might lose their Christian friends who are more interested in being politically correct than biblically correct.

To acknowledge that the Bible teaches that the civil government and civil government officials not only should read their Bible and pray about decisions, but they should promote the prosperity of the Church, well, that is just simply beyond what anyone is willing to accept. What about toleration? What about pluralism, the separation of Church and state? Surely the Bible doesn't teach us state religion. Is that what

I am saying it does? The head of the civil government in charge of the church. Is that what this is all about? Didn't our founding fathers flee from Europe to get away from that?

Let me make it clear. The Bible does not teach that the head of the civil government should be the head of the Church. That is Erastianism. Nor does it teach that the head of the Church should be the head of the civil government. That is papacy. But it does teach that God is sovereign over all areas of life -- including the state. Church and state are and ought to be separate under the Lord.

The sad fact is that most professing Christians refuse to acknowledge the sovereignty of God over all areas of life. That is why most Christians are Arminians. They want to be ultimately in charge of their life, not God. They occasionally give lip service to God's sovereignty, but they really don't believe it. They even think salvation requires their cooperation. That is what Arminians believe.

Try telling them that civil rulers are ministers of God and should apply God's written word to governing the people and you will see how much they actually believe in God's sovereignty.

They can't escape the fact that God created the universe and everything in it, God is king of all the earth in Psalm 47. Jeremiah 10:7 he is king of nations, an everlasting king. So his sovereignty includes rulership over all civil governments, but not through the Church. He ordains ministers for the Church and ministers for the civil government. See the difference? He rules nations, but he doesn't rule them through the Church. He rules nations by appointing his ministers to the Church and his ministers to the state.

Please look at Ephesians chapter one beginning in verse 15.

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.<sup>7</sup>

Note verse 22.

“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.”<sup>8</sup>

Apparently many people's bibles say in verse 22, “And hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church except the civil government.” Of course, it doesn't say that. The government of the United States, the government of the United Kingdom, the government of Russia, Japan, Zimbabwe, North Korea, Cuba, Canada, Nepal, Sweden... the government of every nation in the

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<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 1:15-23.

<sup>8</sup> Ephesians 1:22.

world is under the authority of Jesus Christ. Not "will be," as many Christians believe. All nations are under the authority of Christ right now officially. The reason we don't recognize it in practice is because they are in rebellion against him. God is long-suffering while they are filling their cup of rebellion to its brim. As the Holy Spirit says in Romans 9:22:

"...God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."<sup>9</sup>

So God is patient and long suffering, but that doesn't change the fact that, Jesus Christ is King of the nations right now.

What about "legislating morality"? Is that what I am saying? After all, as we hear over and over again, "you can't legislate morality," right?

Wrong.

You can't *not* legislate morality. *Every law is legislated morality.* It may not be biblical morality, but it is somebody's morality, somebody's idea of what is right and wrong. Laws against stealing including fraud come from where? Thou shalt not steal. Laws against murder? Thou shalt not kill. Laws against perjury? Thou shalt not bear false witness.

Some other laws -- for example, laws prohibiting prayer in government schools -- are based on humanist morality, humanist ideas of what is right and wrong. But every law is legislated morality of one sort or another. Christians believe the Bible is the only source of morality, thus, is the only source of law.

It is important to understand that the laws of every nation are based on the moral system sanctioned by that nation. A nation in which Islam is the official religion uses the Koran as its source of law. A nation in which Christianity is the official religion uses the Bible. Every morality is an aspect and an expression of a religion.

Theologian R. J. Rushdoony wrote, "In every culture the source of law is the God of that society. The source of law is the God of that society, because law governs man and society, because it establishes and declares the meaning of justice and of righteousness, law is inescapably religious. It establishes in practical fashion the ultimate concern of a culture. There has never been and cannot be a nation without a religious foundation or without a law system which codifies, enacts the morality of its religion. Every state or social order is a religious establishment. The question is not: Should there be an established religion? But since it is inescapable, the question is: Which religion should be established? Even the United States has an established religion. It is called Secular Humanism. Every nation has an established religion. Whether they want to say they do or not is irrelevant."

The choice lawmakers have as the source of laws is Secular Humanism, that is, man makes up the laws, or false gods, Islamic Sharia and all other non-Christian sources of law, or Biblical law.

What is implied by ruling according to the Bible? I should warn you: if people are shocked when you tell them that the Bible should be the source of laws for every nation, wait until you tell them this. Among other things, ruling according to the Bible means protecting and defending the Church. The

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<sup>9</sup> Romans 9:22.



Westminster Confession says, chapter 23, section 3: "All blasphemies and heresies are to be suppressed by the civil ruler. All corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed."

Let's look at Isaiah chapter 49. This passage is very, very important and very much ignored. In it the Lord is disclosing to His people what the future holds for His body, the Church. Beginning in verse 22, the Lord says:

Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.<sup>10</sup>

The civil rulers, he says, are to protect and defend the Israel of God which is the Church of Jesus Christ this side of the cross. And this care is described in the tenderest of terms; as a mother and Father cares for and protects their newborn infant.

"And kings shall be thy nursing fathers."<sup>11</sup>

Remember, He is talking to the Church.

"... and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."<sup>12</sup>

Now this passage is not about what happens after Jesus returns. It is not about life in the earth made new. How can we be sure? For one, in the new earth there won't be any kings and queens. Furthermore,

"...for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me."<sup>13</sup>

There will be no waiting for the Lord in the new earth. *Isaiah 49:22-23 tells us what will happen on this present earth in human history before Christ returns at the last day.* Kings will be nursing fathers to the Church. Queens will be nursing mothers. They will serve, protect, defend and nurture the Church, the people of God.

Isaiah 60 has exactly the same message to the Church:

10 "...kings shall minister unto thee."<sup>14</sup>

12 "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish ; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."

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<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 49:22-23.

<sup>11</sup> Isaiah 49:23.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 60:10.

14 "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet..."

16 "Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings..."

Another illustration of the civil government feeding or sustaining and nurturing the Church which will happen in time in history.

You know, we live in this little sliver of time, and we get discouraged and can't see how this could be possible, but we have to see with spiritual eyes and believe the Lord when He promises us that "with God all things are possible" (Mt. 19:26).

How specifically will civil rulers nurture the church, protect and defend it, promote its prosperity? We have already seen what the Westminster Confession says, which is simply explaining what the Bible says: "All blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administrated and observed."

This says the role of civil government is not simply to keep civil order (which is the power of the sword), although that is an important part of the civil government's ministry. It is also to carry out the rest of what God commands, such as "thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not bow down to them or worship them."

If a civil government permits the open worship of false gods, is it not violating these commandments? If a civil government permits the public blasphemy of God's name, is this in keeping with the Lord's will? Or the corruption of the sabbath or notorious rebellion against parents?

I know that people say, "God never meant for civil governments to enforce these commandments. They regulate only private behavior."

My question to them is this: Where in the Bible do you find the basis for that belief? Where do you find that these commandments only regulate private behavior? Were the 10 Commandments given only to private individuals, or were they given to the body politic of Israel? Did or did not God expect Moses as the civil ruler to enforce these commandments? Did he or did he not give Moses detailed case laws telling him how to apply the laws against false worship, against blasphemy, profanation of the sabbath and more?

The standard response is, "those case laws are only for ancient Israel. They don't apply to us today. "

Again: Where in the Bible do you find the basis for that belief?

I will tell you one place in the Bible in the New Testament where you find the case law is upheld, one very important one. Please turn to Acts 25. In Acts chapter 25 Paul is being kept a prisoner and in Acts 25 in verse 11 Paul, Festus, says:

"For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Acts 25:11.

He says, "If I am guilty of anything worthy of death, put me to death." Paul clearly believed that the Old Testament case laws requiring capital punishment for certain crimes remained in force. Capital punishment is not part of the Ten Commandments -- it is part of the case laws. And it clearly remains in force in New Testament times.

In Matthew 5:18 the Lord said:

"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."<sup>16</sup>

Those little punctuation marks shall not pass from the law. The smallest letter in Hebrew will not pass from the law. The smallest little punctuation mark will not pass from the law until all be fulfilled.

Samuel Wiley, again, in his book *The Two Sons of Oil* says, "The civil ruler ought to remove all external impediments to the true religion and worship of God whether they be persons or things such as persecution, profaneness, heresy, idolatry in their betters as did Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah and other pious kings."

We see in 2 Kings nine that King Jehu cut off the idolatrous house of Ahab. He destroyed the worshippers of Baal and God commended him for doing all that in 2 Kings 10 and promised him that his children would sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation. King Asa in 1 Kings 15 "removed" the sodomites from the land. (I don't think he deported them; God's law required that sodomites, homosexuals, be executed.) He removed the sodomites from the land and all the idols his father the king had made. And in 2 Chronicles 14, "and thus did, good and right in the eyes of the Lord."

There are many other examples of civil rulers practicing zero tolerance for false worship. That is one reason the Westminster Larger Catechism question 108 says in part, quote, "The duties required in the Second Commandment are... disapproving, detesting, opposing all false worship. And according to each one's place and calling" -- a very important phrase -- "removing it and all monuments of idolatry."

In other words, if you are a civil minister then it is your job to obey the Second Commandment, remove false worship and all monuments of idolatry as your authority permits.

In addition, civil rulers are to use the lawful power that has been given to them by God to promote the unity, purity and peace of the Church and its reformation. And 2 Chronicles 29 King Hezekiah commanded the Levites to reform themselves. Yes, the *king*, the civil ruler, did this, not the priests or high priest. The Levites assisted the priests. They were set apart, holy. The civil ruler commanded them to reform themselves and to reform the worship of the Lord. In 2 Chronicles 29:5 Hezekiah says:

"Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place."<sup>17</sup>

And in 2 Chronicles 29:30 King Hezekiah commands the people to attend the worship services and to observe the Passover. Again, he wasn't the high priest. He was the king.

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew 5:18.

<sup>17</sup> 2 Chronicles 29:5.

The civil ruler is Christ's vice regent in the civil government for the good of the Church. Rom 8:28 says He works all things together for the good of His people, His church. And civil government is certainly among the "all things."

Many will say, "That is all Old Testament. How can you apply this in the New Testament time?"

Rom 8:28 says He works *all things* together for the good of His people, His church. Ephesians 1:22 says that the Father has given Christ "to be the head over *all things* to the church." Civil government is certainly among the "all things."

There is nothing in the New Testament that tells us this duty of the civil ruler has been fulfilled or abolished.

Many believe that we should only take out of the Old Testament what is reaffirmed in the New Testament, I again ask: Where in the Bible do you find the basis for that belief?

It doesn't exist. If you want to operate on that principle, then you have no Biblical reason to oppose bestiality, because it is only prohibited in the Old Testament and not mentioned in the New Testament. The same is true with rape.

William Symington in his book *Messiah the Prince* talking about what we read in Ephesians 1:22 where the Father has given Christ to be head over all things to the Church, he says... let's go back and look at that, if you would, because we have been in Acts for a few minutes. Again, let's go back to Ephesians to remind us what Ephesians 1:22 says. Again the Father:

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.<sup>18</sup>

William Symington in his book *Messiah the Prince* writes, "Does not the apostle Paul speak of God having put all things under the feet of Christ and given him to be head over all things to the Church? Mark the language. Is not only head over all things, but head over all things to the Church. It is for the sake of the Church that he is invested with universal regal authority. In other words, the ends of the Christ's universal, mediatorial dominion is the good of the Church. Thus far all is clear and undeniable. But the nations are among the all things over which Christ is appointed head. It follows then that Christ is appointed head over all the nations for the good of the Church. If so, there must be" — now follow the reasoning here — "if so, there must be some way in which the nations are capable of subserving the interests of the Church. Is it possible, then, to concede that it is not the duty of the nations to promote by every means in their power the good of the church? Is it conceivable that nations are not under obligations to advance the very end for which they are placed in subjection of Christ?"

Let's pick that apart. Ephesians 1:22 says that Christ is head over all things to the Church. And we know that the end of Christ's dominion is the good of the Church. No Christian would deny that. So therefore the nations are among the all things that he is head over. So therefore he is appointed head over all the nations for the good of the Church, since he is appointed over everything for the good of the Church. Therefore there must be some way in which the nations are capable of serving the Church.

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<sup>18</sup> Ephesians 1:22-23.

So shouldn't we concede that it is the duty of nations to promote the good of the Church? Aren't they under obligation to advance the very end for which they are placed in subjection to Christ? That is what he is saying.

James Bannerman in his book *The Church of Christ* writes, "It is a striking fact that the only form of civil polity ever framed and established by God himself should stand markedly in connection with the Church of God. Although many of the circumstances attending the alliance of church and state among the Jews were peculiar to that people, yet the alliance itself cannot be regarded as ceremonial or particular or peculiar, rather, but must be held as intimating the divine will as to the lawfulness of such a connection."

In other words, the only laws for a nation ever framed and established by God himself stand in connection with the Church of God in ancient Israel, the Israel of God. Many of the circumstances of that alliance were peculiar to Israel. That's why the Westminster Confession, chapter 29 section 4 states that the Mosaic civil laws, "not obliging under any now, further than the general equity thereof may require." One example of the general equity requirement is the law about putting a fence around your roof (Deuteronomy 22:8). Is that required today? No, because in our culture we don't entertain on our roof. That was to keep people from falling off the roof when people used their roofs as we use decks or patios today. But the principle is still the same. You protect yourself, your family and your guests. And the law is in force in any culture that still uses roofs as outdoor spaces. The general equity of the case law is that you are required to make your home safe.

The point Bannerman makes is that the only form of laws ever framed and established by God himself stands in connection with the church of God. Although there were certain aspects of that that were peculiar to Israel, like the fence around the roof, yet the alliance itself cannot be regarded as ceremonial. It is not part of the ceremonial law, but it is the divine will as to the lawfulness of such a connection between God's law, the Bible and a nation.

The Puritans in Massachusetts legislated both tables of the 10 Commandments. And that was a high point of Christianity in this country. As the nation pulls away from enforcing God's laws, one by one it sinks deeper and deeper into Paganism and barbarity. Under Paganism, anything goes, including civilization. The Lord punishes a nation more and more as it pulls away from His law-Word law into Humanism or some other false religion. It is punished more and more by God through plagues, natural disasters, terrorism, crime, new diseases and much more, including -- especially -- apostasy of the Church. 1 Peter 4:17 is a chilling verse:

"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"<sup>19</sup>

God brings judgment on the house of God. He *begins* his judgment on the house of God. And we see it in what once were faithful churches and denominations.

I have a question for you to ponder and discuss: If civil government officials are ministers of God, commanded by him to reward good and punish evil, if the Bible is the only authoritative way to know what is good and what is evil, then what should be the source of civil laws? The Bible? Or men's own ideas?

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<sup>19</sup> 1 Peter 4:17.

The two sons of oil, the two witnesses represent those men throughout history that have brought God's Word to rule in the Church and the state. Although the exercise of their God given powers differ, for the Church they are spiritual, 2 Corinthians 10.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.”<sup>20</sup>

The exercise of their given powers differ. For the Church they are spiritual. For the state they are worldly, Romans 13:4.

“... he beareth not the sword in vain.”<sup>21</sup>

They are both to rule, the civil governor and the church governor, ministers, they are both to rule as God's anointed ministers applying God's Word to every area of life. Civil rulers, whether they are presidents, legislators or judges are to rule by God's law Word the Bible. Constitutions of nations are to be founded on the Bible. They are to acknowledge the Lord as the source of all law, God's Word as the source of all law and Jesus Christ as the ruler of all nations.

Therefore, the ideal Christian candidate for public office is the man who believes that the Bible should be the source of civil law and who will support, nurture, protect and defend the church of Jesus Christ.

Finally, please turn to Psalm two. We will end with Psalm two verse 10.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:4.

<sup>21</sup> Romans 13:4.

<sup>22</sup> Psalm 2:10-12.