

The Christian and Civil Government (40th)

(The study today gives insights concerning the overall status and confusion of many denominations and congregations regarding the importance of this subject. It is feared that not only all branches of so-called Christian religion, but the Baptists as a whole are totally unaware of the importance of the place of the Christian and his association with civil government.)

In our last study we saw some inconsistencies of the early Baptist, particularly in the New England states, as they sought religious freedom. We further outlined some of the dangers of many congregations and denominations registering with the government under the 501(c)(3) tax code status and the banking institutions demanding that congregations be identified by the government in order to have a banking account. More and more the government is stretching its tentacles to paralyze congregations and endeavoring to force them to totally bow to the state for any and all reasons. In some places it is suggested by the government to make it illegal for congregations to meet together for worship unless the members are vaccinated against certain diseases. We have seen all across this country, as well as many other countries, where religious institutions and Christian congregations bowed to the government and closed their doors under the recent scare of a virus. Additionally, some congregations continued to obey the Lord and exercise their First Amendment right and were fined and their ministers put in jail as well as fined. Needless to say, the spirit of our Baptist forefathers is rare today and in many places nonexistent. In fact, the status of the nation is more that of the days of the judges in Israel: “every man did that which was right in his own eyes,” Judges 17:6b; 21:25b. To show somewhat the state of confusion today we will present some vignettes of this nation.

In a previous podcast, we pointed out the inconsistency of the Baptists in 1790 when they joined with the Congregationalists in petitioning the Congress of the United States to govern over the publications of the Bible to assure that only “correct” bibles were printed. Thankfully this was rejected by Congress. Sadly, many today (even Baptists) would think this to be a great thing. While deciding which Bible might have been a simple thing in the 1790’s, this would not be the case today with all of the different translations and other publications presented as the Bible. In March of this year (2021) the Tennessee House passed a resolution declaring the Bible as the official state book. The representative that presented the bill is not only a member of a Baptist congregation, but he had previously pastored the congregation for twenty-five years. He had presented this same bill two times previously knowing that it was in violation of the Tennessee Constitution. The “Baptist Press,” the official news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, in their March 11, 2016 issue, reporting on this matter when the bill was previously presented in that year stated, “A similar bill was introduced in Mississippi in January and last year in Louisiana.” While the “Baptist Press” reported on the article, it did not give any opinion regarding this issue. It is true that making the Bible a state book would not force religion on anyone; however, what if the state of Utah voted to make the Book of Mormons a state book, or if some other state voted to make the Koran a state book? By default, such an action would declare that the government recognizes the religion propagated by such book as being superior to all others. Let us be clear: Caesar (civil government) has no authority in such matters and especially regarding the congregation of God. While I believe all men are responsible before God to worship and honor Him and they will give account to Him as to whether they do or not, it is not the place of civil government to be involved in such matters. Yes, ultimately, every knee will bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord over all (Philippians 2:9-11), but God will do that and not Caesar.

To further show the confusion of some professed believers regarding the role of civil government in religion, a professed Christian news source named *The World View in 5 Minutes* gave the following in their broadcast on April 16, 2020, in their closing comments:

And finally, 49 percent of Americans believe the Bible should have at least “some” influence on U.S. laws, while 23 percent say the Bible should have “a great deal” of influence, according to [Pew Research](#).

The study also found 28 percent of Americans believe that the Bible should take precedence over the will of the people in terms of influencing U.S. laws.

Wisdom says in Proverbs 8:15-16, “By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, all the judges of the earth.”

https://theworldview.com/#!/news_broadcasts/doj-sides-wchristians-fined-for-drive-in-service-trump-pulls-world-health-funding-congo-muslims-kill-35-christians

Note: over one-fourth of Americans believe the Bible should take precedence over the will of the people regarding the laws of governing the United States population. And this “Christian” news source evidently agrees from the passage from Proverbs quoted. Though the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, as well as the constitutions of many (if not all) of the states agree, that there should be freedom of religion for all, there continues to be a vast number of people that believe otherwise. Such people are either ignorant of the overall consequences of such a belief or they fully embrace the philosophy of the role of civil government in religion or the conscience of man as set forth by pagan philosophy and adopted by the Catholics and Protestants afterwards. Personally, I believe it is a mixture of both due to the mass indoctrination of the public school system, the ignorance and lack of teaching from the pulpits, and other contributing factors. In this day of instant mass communication, snippet conversations via text messaging, entertainments appealing to the base nature of man, and a total ignorance of true history as opposed to revisionist history, we have lost the insight of why there is a total breakdown of society and the remedy for it. Obviously, we live in a society of sinful people and ultimately all societies (kingdoms) will fail, but unless God changes the heart of man he will always follow the path to destruction. History has proven this. The Holy Scriptures proclaims and validates this truth as well. While the Christian will believe the Scriptures and the unbeliever will reject it, he cannot escape the facts of history. Man refuse to believe the facts, but the facts still remain.

Another sign of confusion and a display of total ignorance regarding the place of religion and the civil government is found a few miles from where it live. There is a Baptist congregation in the community that I frequently pass that has three American flags hanging on display on the front of their meeting house. I assume it is suppose to be some sort of display for the purpose to show respect to veterans, but I do not know that that is the reason. While I certainly have no problem in respecting our veterans who sacrificed so much to secure the freedoms we have been blessed with over the years, this is not the purpose of the congregation of God as established by the Lord Jesus Christ. The house of God is no place to display the flag of any country, outside or inside the building, or the Crusaders’ flag either. The Crusaders’ flag is not Christian. Also, the so-called Christian Flag equally should be removed from any congregation devoted to the truth of the gospel. The believer pledges his allegiance to Christ when he professes faith in Him and follows Him in scriptural baptism. Much more could be said regarding this subject, but I only submit this to show more the utter confusion of professing Christians regarding the overall issues concerning the Christian and civil government. While many people may consider this to be reactionary, it is as John Leland said regarding preachers being paid to perform a chaplain role in government: “The thing here spoken of, is a small thing, which the nation can never feel; but trace it to its root, and it contains that principle which is so

pernicious in the world, and is now used as a stirrup, by the petitioners, to mount the steed and ride down the people.” *The Writings of John Leland*, edited by L. F. Greene, page 563.

Allow me at this point to say that I have great difficulty in seeing our flag being displayed on poles in all kinds of weather twenty-four hours of the day. I believe in honoring and respecting the flag as I was taught in my early days in grade school. In fact, occasionally, I was assigned the duty of either raising or lowering the flag which was done daily at our little country school. It was impressed on me the great importance of making sure that the flag in no way was desecrated by touching the ground, and if it did it had to be properly removed from service by either burning or burial. Obviously, when it began to rain we had to immediately take down the flag and store it in safety. Today, the flag may be on display more, but it appears to me that it is respected less, but that is another subject. Our purpose is to emphasize that the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and His house is separate from the kingdoms of this world and the two are not to be joined together. Nevertheless, our time is up for today. Farewell.