

“Does God have an Ideal for Civil Government”

The Inspiration and Design of a Federal Constitutional Republic

We live in a day, when man is aggressively trying to redefine the definition of a family. Sex outside of marriage is celebrated, divorce has been accepted as the norm and man is even pushed to legalize same sex marriage.

God has tolerated a lot. But when asked about His intent, His ideal, Jesus responded:

Matt 19:3-8

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

God's patience has put up with a lot. But don't confuse what God is tolerating with what His ideal or intent is.

How do we know what God's will is? Look at what He Created. (Family)

We know that God established the realm of Civil government, but is there one type that is more in line with God's design or intent for government?

What was the original form of government that God established?

- When we think of Israel, it is likely that our original conception is wrong – we think of kings and a monarchy.
- Well, it is true that God was to be their king, but Israel in its original form was not a monarchy.
- The nation of Israel was a commonwealth of twelve sovereign, self-governing tribes (or states) with legal boundaries, with a common Worldview operating under a unifying Constitution – Torah.
- We often think of the Law of God – the Torah – in an only spiritual aspect.

The Law consisted of three sections.

- **The Law** – God’s morality – which transcends time. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not commit adultery.
- **Statutes** – God’s Ceremonial System of Sacrifice. This system pointed to the “Lamb of God” which was sufficient to take away sin. The sacrificial system of the Law of Moses ended with the sufficiency of the Sacrifice of Jesus – as the veil of the Temple was rent.
- **Judgements** – Civil law for the wellbeing and safety of the people.

Within the comprehensive nature of this Law, there were policies that dealt with basic banking and business, fair weights and measures, fair trade, debt, bankruptcy.

- **A person was limited as to the amount of debt he could assume.** You had the ability to mortgage up to six years of the value of your labor. Or you could mortgage your land, but you couldn’t sell it. You could mortgage it or lease it for up to 50 years, then it would be returned to your family.
- They were taught as a people to be productive, prepared to lend – but don’t be a borrower.

If you were caught cheating in business, you paid it back with a penalty. If you stole something, you didn’t go to jail, you paid it back fourfold or worked off that value.

There were rules for sanitary safety, whether it be the latrine or the proper washing of dishes or the putting of sick people in quarantine. Why? God is concerned with health and wellbeing of His people. Rules so they would not be overworked, they were required to rest on certain days, both employee and employer alike, rules that pertained to taking care of the poor – not handouts, but charity where the poor could work for their food and feel the satisfaction of providing for their own families. Rules that pertained to morality and the family, rules that pertained to military service. No man was found guilty without a fair trial and guilt could only be established at the mouths of at least 2 or 3 witnesses.

God lined up different areas of responsibility for different areas of government:

- **Self-government** – It’s up to you to provide for you and take care of your health and welfare.
- **Family government** – It’s up to you to train of your children in the way they should go. It was up to the parents to care for the kids, train them to be adults and when elderly, it was up to the children to care for their parents. Widows and orphans were cared for – not by the state, but by the individual and the family.
- **Civil government** – to ensure the safety and well-being of the citizens of Israel. To defend their life liberty and property.

- **In their dispensation, certain work was set aside for the priesthood. We still have a fourth area, but not the priesthood – the ecclesia – has the responsibility of providing humanitarian needs and promoting moral truth.**

Israel was not ruled by a king or a giant central government. During major crises, God raised up rulers to whom the people consented -- i.e., Moses to lead them out of tyranny; Joshua - military General to lead the conquest of the Promised Land and divide up the land; and "Judges" to lead them out of oppression – somewhat like the Colonies calling on a “judge” named General Washington to lead the Continental Army.

They were a commonwealth of twelve tribes/states governed by one Rule of Law. No need for major taxes as there was no standing central government and no standing army. There was a militia of every able-bodied man across the twelve tribes. They “trusted in God” by following His instruction and trusting God’s design, rather than putting their confidence in a powerful man or central government.

- They chose out from among themselves "capable men who feared God, loved truth and hated covetousness" – to judge righteously in all matters according to the Law.
- There was an assembly of elders that represented the tribes themselves in national assemblies (Numbers 10:2-4) and elders that judged in the gates of the city (Deuteronomy 16:18).
- Ten’s, fifties, hundreds and thousands. There was to be no favoritism to the poor or rich, bribery was forbidden, and the goal was righteousness for the people.

Unfortunately, in 1 Samuel, Samuel was near death, the Philistines were an imminent threat to their security and rather than trusting God and obeying His instruction and following the Law – there was NO security, safety or order as **every man did what was right in his own eyes.**

Originally, they had no king. God gave them a Constitution, the Torah, and they were to be self-governing – but only a righteous people are capable of freedom and we know that Israel eroded morally to where every man did what was right in his own eyes. Rather than trusting God by obeying His directions and enjoying His blessings, they did it their way, made a wreck of things and concluded: ***"We need a strong central government that can take care of us when we have needs and protect us from our enemies and tell us what to do."***

God through Samuel told them that it was not for the best. It was not a good idea, but they did not trust God’s wisdom. They wanted to be protected by and ruled by an earthly monarch like every other nation.

With this Biblical background, it's important that we remember what America once was and how we were designed to operate.

One of America's worst Presidents, who led in establishing the Federal Reserve and changing the purpose for which the Senate was created, wrote a column published in the July 1887, edition of Political Science Quarterly:

"Wherever regard for public opinion is a first principle of government, practical reform must be slow, and all reform must be full of compromises... With opinions, possession is more than nine points of the law. It is next to impossible to dislodge them. Institutions which one generation regards as only a makeshift approximation to the realization of a principle, the next generation honors as the nearest possible approximation to that principle, and the next worships the principle itself. It takes scarcely three generations for the apotheosis. The grandson accepts his grandfather's hesitating experiment as an integral part of the fixed constitution of nature."

In layman's terms, what the first generation would resist but eventually accept, the next generation would accept it because their parents had and every following generation would operate under the assumption that it has always been that way.

Today, we believe that 320 million people are ruled by an all-powerful President with a phone and a pen OR a "SUPREME" court. Neither is true.

On July 2, 1776, representatives of the thirteen British Colonies voted to approve the Lee Resolution and officially secede from the British Empire. After two days of haggling over the final wording, the Declaration of Independence was signed, and thirteen states became thirteen sovereign states (nations).

Each state had its own Constitution and government. By the way, they were all very heavily influence by Christianity. For example, consider this excerpt from the Delaware Constitution:

ARTICLE 22: Every person who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office of place of trust, before taking his seat or entering upon the execution of his office, shall...make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: "I, _____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, Blessed forevermore; and I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by Divine inspiration."

After declaring independence, the tyrant king of England wasn't planning to let them go. The thirteen states constituted a formal union called the *Articles of Confederation* for securing their common defense, their liberties and their mutual and general welfare.

Each state clearly retained its “sovereignty, freedom and independence.” In fact, when the Treaty of Paris was signed after the war, it was between Great Britain and each of the “free sovereign and independent states” which made up the voluntary union called the United States.

In 1787, representatives of the thirteen United States gathered in Philadelphia for the stated purpose of strengthening the Articles of Confederation. Instead, they drafted a new constitution “In order to form a MORE PERFECT UNION.”

Since all men were created equal and there was no divine right of kings, who has the authority to rule over another? No one. The states constituted a limited central government to take care of their “general welfare” and their “common defense”, delegated few and very specific powers to this new entity retaining all other powers to themselves and rather than vowing to be ruled by a supreme monarch, they pledged to submit to the law which was specifically and clearly defined and limited in the Constitution.

Knowing the sin nature of man when power is concentrated, power was divided between each sovereign state and what was delegated to the new Federal government. Then the power was divided within the Federal government.

The House of Representatives was proportional and represented the people. All spending measures originate in the House, because the government had no money. The only money they had was the people’s as it was derived from taxes or from limited loans which obligated the people to repay.

Senators were appointed by the state legislatures and they represented the states. Each state was equal with equal representation.

Only Congress had the power to make laws and their power was defined and limited by Article One, Section Eight of the Constitution. Federalist Paper #45 addresses this very issue:

The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite. The former (federal government) will be exercised principally on external objects, as war, peace, negotiation, and foreign commerce; with which last the power of taxation will, for the most part, be connected. The powers reserved to the several States will extend to all the objects which, in the ordinary course of affairs, concern the lives, liberties, and properties of the people, and the internal order, improvement, and prosperity of the State. The operations of the federal government will be most extensive and important in times of war and danger; those of the State governments, in times of peace and security.

The President was charged with the responsibility of carrying out the will of the people as decided by Congress. The first five Presidents (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe) are referred to as the “Founding Era Presidents” as all were alive during the founding era. During their combined 36 years in office, they issued a total of 15 executive orders and 10 vetoes. They did not believe it was their responsibility to rule over the people, but to enforce the law.

The Supreme Court had very limited jurisdiction as defined in Article Three, Section Two.

Israel’s original design was a commonwealth of righteous, self-governing people in their sovereign tribes unified and governed not by an all-powerful man, but by their written Constitution (the Torah).

America’s original design was a was a voluntary union of righteous, self-governing people in their sovereign states unified and governed not by an all-powerful man, but by our written Constitution.

The concept of the Constitution is the only way 320 million people can possibly coexist. Liberal states have the right to be liberal. Conservative states have the right to retain their conservatism. However, we agree to work together for our common defense and our general welfare.

America has been exceptional! We have been the freest, most prosperous, most respected & most sought after country in world history. We are the only country in 2000 years to provide Christians with Civil and Religious Liberty! It has not been an accident.

The closer you get to doing it God’s way, the better it works out. America has never been perfect and never will be, but we have been exceptional when compared to the rest.