

## Chapter 7

### If Romans 13 Is Depicting a Secular Government, the Apostle Paul Contradicts Himself in 1 Corinthians 6 and 2 Corinthians 6

For he is *the minister of God ... a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil*. ...they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. (Romans 13:4-6)

#### Imposing Biblical Law

It's not uncommon to hear even Christians assert that righteous men cannot impose biblical law on nonbelievers. *Why not?* To do so does not force conversion on anyone, which is impossible to begin with. Conversion takes place in the heart of man and cannot be legislated.

If it's unbiblical for Christians to enforce biblical law, the 17th-century Christian Colonials violated scripture by establishing biblical civil governments under the authority of God's ministers.<sup>1</sup>

**Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835:** They [the 17th-century Christian Colonials] ... named their magistrates, concluded peace or declared war, made police regulations, and enacted laws as if their allegiance was due only to God. Nothing can be more curious and, at the same time more instructive, than the legislation of that period; it is there that the solution of the great social problem which the United States now presents to the world is to be found [in perfect fulfillment of Deuteronomy 4:5-8,<sup>2</sup> demonstrating the continuing veracity of Yahweh's moral law and its accompanying blessings, per Deuteronomy 28:1-14].

Amongst these documents we shall notice, as especially characteristic, the code of laws promulgated by the little State of Connecticut in 1650. The legislators of [New Haven] Connecticut begin with the penal laws, and ... they borrow their provisions from the text of Holy Writ ... copied verbatim from the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy....<sup>3</sup>

**John Clark Ridpath, *History of the United States*, 1874:** In June of 1639 the leading men of New Haven [Connecticut] held a convention in a barn, and formally adopted the Bible as the constitution of the State. Everything was strictly conformed to the religious standard. The government was called the House of Wisdom.... None but church members were admitted to the rights of citizenship.<sup>4</sup>

**William Holmes McGuffey, *McGuffey's Sixth Eclectic Reader*, 1879:** Their form of government was as strictly theocratical insomuch that it would be difficult to say where there was any civil authority among them distinct from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Whenever a few of them settled a town, they immediately gathered themselves into a church; and their elders were magistrates, and their code of laws was the Pentateuch.... God was their King; and they regarded him as truly and literally so....<sup>5</sup>

Many contemporary Christians scorn the very suggestion that Christians should hold dominion over society by means of God's moral law. The vacuum created by Christians' dereliction of duty has not been left unfilled *or unnoticed*:

Like a trampled spring and a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked. (Proverbs 25:26, NASB)

Is society better off under the rule of non-Christians, who invariably revile good as evil and legitimize evil as good?<sup>6</sup> Many Christians seem to think so. With such [defeatist theology](#),<sup>7</sup> no wonder contemporary Christianity finds itself trampled under the foot of man:

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. (Matthew 5:13)

People who claim righteous law cannot be required of unrighteous people are at odds with the Apostle Paul in Romans 13, 1 Timothy 1,<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 6, and 2 Corinthians 10,<sup>9</sup> and the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 2.<sup>10</sup> All five of these passages depict righteous men—ministers of God—imposing God’s law on the unrighteous. For example:

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that *the saints shall judge the world*? ... Know ye not that we shall judge ... *things that pertain to this life*? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church [*ecclesia*]. (1 Corinthians 6:1-4)<sup>11</sup>

Paul and Peter’s assertions regarding righteous rulers governing society by God’s law are in fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy concerning the restoration of the kingdom under Christ:

But *the saints* of the most High shall *take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom* for ever, even for ever and ever ... and *judgment* was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints *possessed* the kingdom.... And *the kingdom and dominion* ... shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (Daniel 7:18, 22, 27)

Both the kingdom and the judgment (the civil sanctions) required to maintain the kingdom on a community level were given to the saints. This was definitively accomplished by God at the time of the Roman Empire (as prophesied by Daniel in Daniel 2 and 7) and is to be progressively pursued by every generation of Christians thereafter.

### **Does the Apostle Paul Contradict Himself?**

If instead Paul, in Romans 13, is promoting Christian submission to secular government under the jurisdiction of non-Christians, he’s in conflict with himself in 1 Corinthians 6 where he reprimands the Corinthians for going to non-Christian courts of law to settle their disputes.

If, in Romans 13, Paul is promoting a secular government that would allow for *both* Christians and non-Christians to serve together, he would be in conflict with himself in 2 Corinthians 6 where he condemns such unequal yoking:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. (2 Corinthians 6:14-17)

As important as this directive is for personal relationships, how much more crucial that it be applied to those who govern others? The ramifications are much greater.

Paul reiterates essentially the same prohibition to the Christians in Ephesus:

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. (Ephesians 5:11)

To unequally yoke non-Christians and Christians in civil leadership is a recipe for disaster. One needs to look no further than the today's Constitutional Republic:

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3)

Do not be deceived. "Bad company corrupts good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33, NASB)

[E]very kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.... (Matthew 12:25)

Yoking Christians and non-Christians in civil leadership is not only a bad idea, it makes Christians complicit in the sins of their non-Christian colleagues:

For many [plural] deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.... Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your [personal, State, White, Senate, or] house [of Representatives], neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (2 John 1:7-11)

Complicity is also imputed upon those who help elect non-Christians to public office:

Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thus share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. (1 Timothy 5:22, NASB)

### **Segregated Leadership**

It is incumbent upon anyone who teaches Romans 13 is about secular government to also insist civil leadership in such a government be limited to non-Christians, lest they pit Paul against himself.

In light of Paul's charge against unequal yoking, both sides of this issue must promote a segregated leadership in the government they allege Paul is writing about. If Romans 13 is about biblical government, it eliminates non-Christians from civil leadership. (See again Ridpath's and McGuffey's quotations.) If Romans 13 is about secular government, it eliminates Christians from civil leadership.

If the latter is true, Paul was advocating a secular government ruled solely by non-Christians. Can you imagine where this would lead? *All* secular governments based upon man's capricious edicts and ruled by non-Christians eventually terminate on the precipice of moral depravity and destruction. How can anyone think this is what Paul was promoting?

[C]ertain lewd fellows of the baser sort ... drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down ... do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. (Acts 17:6-7)

Turning the world upside down (what is, in reality, right side up) will never occur by tolerating its secular governments. Turning the world right side up *begins* by exposing any and all secular governments for their sedition against the King of kings and eventually by replacing them with the biblical government depicted by Paul.<sup>12</sup> This is overcoming evil with good.

1. For more regarding the 17th-century Colonial governments established upon Yahweh's moral law under the authority of ministers of God, see [Chapter 3](#) "The Preamble: WE THE PEOPLE vs. YAHWEH" of *Bible Law vs. the United States Constitution: The Christian Perspective*.

2. "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as Yahweh my God commanded me.... Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as Yahweh our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deuteronomy 4:5-8)

3. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 2 vols. (New York: NY: The Colonial Press, 1899) vol. 1, pp. 36-37.

4. John Clark Ridpath, *History of the United States*, 4 vols. (New York, NY: The American Book Company, 1874) vol. 1, p. 181.

5. William Holmes McGuffey, *McGuffey's Sixth Eclectic Reader* (New York, NY: American Book Company, 1879) p. 225.

6. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20)

See blog article "[Right, Left, and Center: Who Gets to Decide?](#)"

#### 7. [Self-Imposed Impotence](#)

8. "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." (1 Timothy 1:8-11)

9. "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and *we are ready to punish all disobedience*, whenever your obedience is complete." (2 Corinthians 10:5-6, NASB)

10. "[G]overnors ... sent ... for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." (1 Peter 2:14)

11. See the Conclusion for the *timing* of the biblical government depicted in Romans 13, 1 Corinthians 6, 2 Corinthians 10, 1 Timothy 1, and 1 Peter 2.

#### 12. [A Biblical Constitution: A Scriptural Replacement for Secular Government](#)

See also series of ten online books on each of the Ten Commandments and their respective statutes, and judgments, beginning with [\*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.\*](#)