

Source night

Topic - The Christian & the State

The Bible from Genesis onward speaks about the nations. Genesis 10, 12 :2 Word 'nations' used 700+ x
There are several **types of governance** for countries.

Theocracy	God rules. Israel was originally intended to be a model nation to the World Deut 4:5-8
Kritarchy	Judges
Monarchy	King Saul, David etc
Democracy/Representative democracy	People
Dictatorship/Particracy	One person or one party Hitler or One party state e.g. China

States always have a small group of people who have power to set rules, punishments, and can force people to do things. It can do things that in another context would be immoral e.g. has power to take money (taxes), 1 Samuel 8 :10-18 Take life (War, Capital punishment) Remove liberty (prison)

Communities/society and States are different, we have choice to belong to a community, and but we live under a state's authority.

God and the nations

States are under the absolute authority of God Romans 13 :1, but have never been Godly or run on Christian principles e.g. Daniel 7, Godly people are never popular for too long in a state Matthew 24 :9

Nations do have the responsibility to restrain evil, and maintain order Romans 13 :3

Even bad governments are better than no government, but governments are run by sinners (e.g. King Saul) reflecting the sinful people of the nation.

God judges whole nations Isaiah 34 :1-2 , Jeremiah 18 :6-10 Satan can deceive nations Revelation 20 :3

History of Christians and the state

*First Christians lived under a state that was anti-Christian, suffered intense persecution.

*Then the Roman Empire adopted Christianity as the state religion.

*The Roman Church became a dominant force within the European nations. Often tied up with politics.

*Erastianism based on ideas of Thomas Erastus 16th century theologian who believed the state to be superior to Church. So monarch can be the Head of the Church. Used in set up of the Church of England.

*John Calvin was involved in setting up a theocratic state in Geneva, where Church superior to the state. However the state was very strict and opponents faced death e.g. Servetus. Adultery was also a capital crime.

* Early puritan settlers in America (e.g. Roger Williams) sought a separation between Church and state. Early writers of US constitution aware of original sin, avoided giving too much power to the President.

* Believers have had an impact on changing the character of a nation e.g. The Evangelical revival, when the nation was transformed e.g. Wilberforce, Fry. Welsh revival, changed the community, Hebridean revival

* Methodism was linked with training up working people into lay preachers etc, some later formed Trade Unions which later led to the Labour Party. 'Labour owes more to Methodism than Marxism' - M Philips

How should a Christian relate to the state?

1. We should pray for the leaders and nation | Timothy 2 :1-4 Jeremiah 29 :7
2. We should submit to authorities Romans 13 :1-7 | Peter 2 :13-17
However there may be situations where obeying God comes first
Examples of civil disobedience
A) Midwives not killing male babies in Egypt. Exodus 1 :17
B) Daniel and friends not eating the Kings food. Daniel 1 :8-9
C) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, refused to worship an idol Daniel 3 :16-18
D) Daniel refused to stop praying Daniel 6 :10+
E) Apostles refused to stop preaching Acts 5 :27-28
3. Pay your taxes Matthew 22 :21
4. Be righteous, to help the country Proverbs 14 :34
5. Look out for Godly leaders (Choose Godly men if we can) | Samuel 12 :13-14
6. Recognise the Christian lives under the state but belongs to a different nation | Peter 2 :9-11
7. We must recognise that rulers and states are temporary Isaiah 40 :15
8. Live a quiet life | Thessalonians 4 :11
9. We are to be salt and light in our nation Matthew 5 :13-14
10. Encourage respect for Israel and Jerusalem Psalm 122 :6 Ezekiel 37 :21 Genesis 12 :2-3 Joel 3 :1-2

How does God want a country to be like?

1. Maintain law and order Romans 13 :3
2. Maintain moral standards Jude :7, Proverbs 14 :34, Nations where moral standards slide, tend to slide as a nation too.
3. Marriage and family life to be respected. Instituted from creation for mankind Genesis 2 :24.
Children to be brought up well Proverbs 22 :6
4. Place of justice. Scales Amos 8 :4-5 death penalty?
5. Place where people can worship God.

Debate—How far can we expect a secular nation to follow God's standards?

Can you legislate for morality? Youtube -The Theonomy Debate | Joel McDurmon vs. Jordan Hall
Theonomy (God law) Theonomists believe that God's civil law laid down in the OT by Moses still applies today. The civil code given to the Jews was good, perfectly just so why not still use it?

Reformed theologians say that the civil law was meant just for the state of Israel in Biblical times.

One answer is understanding the difference between Moral law and Civil law and Ceremonial law

The moral law that declares how man should live.

The civil law that was the legal structures for the ancient nation of Israel.

The ceremonial law that declared how ancient Israel was to worship.

Moral law includes 10 Commandments, some of our nations laws based on it e.g. Murder, theft,
but should we expect our nation to observe Sabbath for example?

Should we expect non Christians to follow God's Moral Law? | Corinthians 5 :12-13

In India during the Empire burning widows with dead husbands was stopped because of Christian ideas.

Last points

As believers in Jesus Christ, we are all members of the same political party—monarchists who are waiting for their King to return (Revelation 19:11-16).

'If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.' | Chronicles 7 :14

When in the UK could it be right to disobey the state?



Can we ask the state to control what the Bible teaches is immoral? e.g. Abortion,
same sex marriage,



Do we have to vote in elections?

Has Britain or any other, ever been truly a Christian nation?

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