

## Lesson 5: Human Authority & Government

### A. Example Issues:

1. To what extent should a Christian be patriotic? Can he love his country? Show loyalty?
2. Should he support wars against evil countries? Against not-so-evil countries?
3. Should a Christian Vote? Must he vote? If so, what issues should be most significant to him?
4. Is political activism right? Commanded? If so, for what causes (spiritual, moral, social, ecological, economic, and ecological)?
5. Should a Christian support a corrupt government? Should he work to overthrow it?
6. Should the Christian support the death penalty? Should he fight for/against it?
7. Is the use of civil courts (in matters with Christians or non-Christians) right? Advisable?

### B. The Christian's World View

1. Have there been authority structures (man over man) in place since creation (I Cor 11:3)?
2. Is there an inherent requirement for retributive justice (on earth) for crimes? When was this first noted? (Gen 4:8-10, Gen 9:5,6 and compare to Heb 11:4; 12:24)
3. Did men abuse the concept of "justice"? (Gen 4:23,24). Is there a tendency toward disorder & crime in groups of men (society) after the fall (Gen 6:5; 11:4-9;13:13; 15:16...)
4. What was the basis for the penalties for murder under Moses' law? (Num 35:30-34)
5. Was Israel, as a nation, to be judged for their obedience? (Ex 19:5,6; Dt 7:6-9)  
Were other nations also judged by their national "righteousness"? (Lev 18:24-30; Jonah 1:2)
6. What is the relationship of world governments to God? (Dan 2:21; 4:17; Acts 12:21-23)
7. Is Jesus' kingdom intended to be both civil & religious? (John 18:36; Matt 22:21; Lk 12:14)  
Is God still the original power over all other rulers? (John 19:11)
8. What roles of government (and other authorities) are described or implied in the Bible?
  - a. Eccl 8:11
  - b. Dt 25:1; Rom 13:1-7; I Pet 2:13,14
  - c. Dt. 17:8-12
  - d. I Tim 2:2
9. Are human governments pictured in the Bible as generally pretty good?
  - a. II Sam 15:2-6 (note the political campaigning!)
  - b. Matt 5:25,26; Luke 18:2,3
  - c. Acts 24:10 and 26,27
10. Are Christians supposed to be better at judging than worldly judges? (I Cor 6:1,2)
11. Is there such a thing as a "national righteousness"?
  - a. Do unpunished crimes cry out against a nation? (Gen 9:5,6; Num 35:29-34; Dt 17:12)
  - b. How is a national righteousness created? (Prov 14:34)
  - c. What causes it to deteriorate, and what kind of society results? (as in Micah 7:2-7)
12. What is our responsibility toward governments and other kinds of authority over us?
  - a. Titus 3:1; Rom 13:1; Acts 23:5
  - b. Rom 13:17; Matt 22:21; I Pet 2:13-17
  - c. Rom 13:2; Prov 24:21,22
  - d. I Tim 2:1,2
  - e. Matt 5:23-26; I Cor 6:1,2,6; and see Rom 13:8-9; I Pet 2:20
13. What is God's relationship to earthly authorities? I Tim 6:15; Rev 19:15,16
  - a. Where is our citizenship? (Phil 3:20)
  - b. When is the real justice executed, and by whom? (see Rev 6:9,10)
14. Do rulers have a special, (perhaps higher) personal standard by which they are judged? (Prov 31:4,8,9; Jer 22:1-7)

### C. Applications

1. Should a Christian's primary identity be related to his earthly citizenship?  
Is any human institution worthy of unquestioning trust?
2. Should a Christian attempt to be seen favorably by the government?  
Should he show respect and provide the required support?      What limits are there?
3. Is it right for governments to punish criminals (even with execution)?  
Is it right for governments not to punish criminals? To whom will they give an account?
4. Should a Christian be skeptical about:
  - a. Dependence on earthly governments for his personal (e.g. economic) security?
  - b. The likelihood that major human problems will be solved by government?
  - c. Civil courts ability to resolve personal disputes fairly?
5. Should a Christian think of events in government (especially as changes occur) as a part of God's carrying out His plan?      If so, should we have a lot of anxiety about these changes?  
(see for example Hab 1:5; 2:3,4)
6. How do Christians change the world? (Matt 28:19, & see, Acts 17:6, & 19:26,27)
7. Would it seem to be the best use of time and effort to attempt to change the morality of a nation by government-enforced laws?

Lesson List

## Lesson 5 – Lesson Logic

# Human Authority & Government

1. **Authority structures are required to impose order on a world not subject to God.**
2. **God sets up and removes human governments.**
3. **Nations are punished for not punishing criminals.**
4. **Human governments are imperfect & unreliable.**
5. **Christians must honor and obey human governments.**
6. **God will judge men who rule in human governments.**
7. **Christians should not depend on government for security, or as a force to promote moral behavior.**

Lesson Logic

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