

DIVINE PRINCIPLES OF CIVIL GOVERNANCE

INTRODUCTION

There is an election in 44 days and ballots will be mailed out 16 days from now. It is not the role of the church to endorse any candidate, party, or ballot initiative. Indeed, whether you vote at all is a personal choice and none of the church's business. Nevertheless, if you choose to cast a ballot, let it be informed by certain principles set forth in Scripture.

I. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE LED BY THE RIGHTEOUS

A. Proverbs 16:12; 2nd Samuel 23:3

Those in power should be moral. Character that matters.

B. Proverbs 14:34

Voters wield considerable power in a Republic and ought to be morally upright.

II. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE LIMITED AND LOCAL

A. 1st Timothy 2:1-2

Christians must pray for governing authorities to leave us alone.

B. 1st Peter 2:13-14

Government exists to fulfill two purposes: punishing evildoers and praising do-gooders. Every other thing government does, it does without divine sanction.

C. Ecclesiastes 5:8

The greater the amount of bureaucracy, the greater the amount of corruption.

D. Exodus 18:13-26

Centralized authority should not meddle in local matters. Resolutions ought to be sought at the local level before escalating.

E. 1st Samuel 8:10-17

Government powerful enough to give you all you want is powerful enough to take all you have.

F. Genesis 11:1-9

The first time a one-world government was attempted, God intervened directly to prevent it.

III. GOVERNMENT SHOULD RESPECT CIVIL RIGHTS

A. Acts 22:24-26; 16:35-39

Paul leaned on his citizenship to avoid abuse and he wasn't above intimidating authorities who had already trampled his rights.

B. Luke 3:14

John was inspired of God to remind soldiers not to abuse their power by intimidation. There is a reason for that.

C. Hebrews 11:23, 31; Matthew 2:13-16

The unalienable right to life must be preserved. Regrettably, government often destroys life.

D. Daniel 6:7, 10; Acts 4:18-28

Freedom to worship and proselytize ought to be sacrosanct, but government interferes worse than any other enemy.

E. Luke 13:31-32

Free speech, including speech critical of those in power, must be honored.

F. Luke 22:36; Genesis 14:14-16

The right to keep and bear arms, even to the point of training and arming a private militia, is legitimate and just.

IV. GOVERNMENT SHOULD PUNISH EVIL

A. Romans 12:17-13:5

God has removed vengeance from the aggrieved party and transferred it to the authorities. To prevent vigilantism, government must punish the wicked.

B. Ecclesiastes 8:11

There is a terrific deterrent effect when punishment is meted out in a timely fashion. To delay it is to encourage crime.

V. GOVERNMENT MAY TAX WITHIN LIMITS

A. Romans 13:6-7

God did endow government with the authority to levy taxes.

B. Matthew 22:15-22

Caesar needs to stay in his lane, though. The powers that be seek to expand taxation, imposing burdens on income, sales, property, inheritance, payroll, etc., such that the same dollars get taxed over and over. Just because the Lord permits Caesar to tax the people does not mean every form of taxation is just.

C. Luke 3:12-13

The people do not deserve to be abused by the tax collectors.

VI. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE FISCALLY PRUDENT

A. Genesis 41:35-36

Government should not spend all it has, but save against emergencies.

B. Genesis 47:15

Money can fail.

C. Proverbs 22:7

Debt is slavery.

D. Proverbs 22:26-27

Taking on the debt of others is a foolish deal.

VII. GOVERNMENT DOES NOT NEED TO BE PROVIDER TO ALL

A. 2nd Thessalonians 3:10; Proverbs 16:26

People need to feed themselves.

B. 1st Timothy 5:8

People need to feed their own families.

C. **Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37**

Church members may pool their resources to relieve needs among their own. That is not socialism/communism; that's voluntary association and sacrifice.

D. **Genesis 47:19**

People who are dependent on government for food are slaves.

VIII. GOVERNMENT SHOULD REFRAIN FROM INTERVENTION

A. **Proverbs 26:17**

Meddling is dangerous.

B. **1st Timothy 2:1-2**

Since saints are called on to pray for leaders to make policy decisions which result in peace, it would be incongruous to elect warmongers.

CONCLUSION

A. **Proverbs 27:24**

No matter how well we vote and no matter how well leaders govern, this nation and each nation under the sun will eventually meet its demise.

B. **Isaiah 9:7**

However, there is no end to the rule and dominion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Submit to His authority.

C. **Philippians 3:20-21**

Become a citizen in the heavenly kingdom.