

Should The Government Create Laws From Christ's Teaching■

by Tim Conway

This sermon explores the implications of Jesus being the King of Kings, particularly in relation to political authorities and the creation of laws based on Jesus' teachings. It delves into biblical examples like John the Baptist and Jesus Himself, showing their focus on personal morality and evangelism rather than altering governmental laws. The sermon emphasizes the New Testament's perspective on submitting to and praying for government authorities, without a primary focus on establishing a Christian government or laws based on Scripture.

Scripture: Revelation 19:16, Romans 13:1, Matthew 22:21, 1 Peter 2:13, Acts 5:29, John 18:36, 1 Timothy 2:1, 1 Corinthians 7:20

Topics: "Jesus as King", "Submission to Authority"

Description

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Transcript

What application should we make from the fact that Jesus is the King of Kings? Now, it goes further, but he references Revelation 9.16, and Jesus is called King of Kings. What application should we make? Now, he's not meaning just any general application. He specifically goes to this.

Does this mean that political authorities ought to take Jesus' teachings as a basis for creating laws? Now, I think this is a good question. You hear what he's saying? So, Jesus Christ is King of Kings. He's King over all kings.

He's King of the new King. He is the King of King Charles III. He's King of the greatest rulers in the world, the greatest rulers who have ever lived.

He is King over them all. He is the High King. And because he is, the question is this.

Does this mean that political authorities ought to take Jesus' teachings as a basis for creating laws? You see the question? So, what do you think? What thoughts? Any thoughts come? You could say, you think they ought to. You're saying they ought to. They ought to.

If you're going to make a biblical case for the fact that they ought to. Jesus comes from Christ. They ought to create laws.

Do they? They don't. Are they still His ministers? They still are. Even if they don't.

But is Paul saying they still are even if they don't? Or is he saying they are all the time no matter what? I mean, let me ask you this. Is Romans 13 actually saying... I think what we should do is this. Let's think about our Christian responsibility first.

Let's just think about that. If you come into the New Testament. Let's just take John the Baptist.

Did John the Baptist come in any way, shape, or form? Was his ministry even seemingly directed at changing the government? Well, let's ask this. Did he have any interaction with the government? What interaction? Herod. His brother's wife.

Did we find anything about him instructing Herod on the right laws to make for the land? No. But he was dealing with him about personal morality. But you can imagine how that would have happened, right? You get imprisoned.

Herod wanted to talk to him. We know that that took place. Herod would interact with him.

Herod recognized he was a righteous man. Herod feared him. But Herod still liked... I mean, you get kind of mixed signals from Herod when it came to John the Baptist.

But John was not really talking to him about the way he ruled or the laws that he should make. John basically spoke to him about the fact that he took his brother's wife. He was dealing with him very personally.

Much more like an evangelistic approach. When John came, well, the soldiers came, he really was not on any political agenda. The soldiers said, what should we do? And you know, he didn't say, ah, you guys, if you're Roman soldiers, you work for the emperor, that's bad.

No, he didn't tell them to stop being soldiers. For whoever they were soldiers for, whether they were soldiers for Herod, soldiers for Rome. I mean, he didn't tell them to stop.

The tax collectors, isn't that interesting? Most of those tax collectors, they worked for the Roman government. He didn't tell them to stop. Again, what did he do? He put his finger on morality at the personal level.

There's no government agenda in his ministry. It's evangelistic. Jesus comes on the scene.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Okay, what did he tell Pilate about his kingdom? It's not of this world. He said, look, if my kingdom was of this world, then what would have happened? His disciples would have taken up swords and they would have gone to arms.

But the fact is, he didn't come to set up an earthly kingdom. His kingdom is spiritual. He came to do a spiritual work.

Think about his interaction with government. He was brought before Pilate. He was brought before Herod.

We know that even when they came and they asked him about paying taxes, did he ever say anything about the laws of the land? Did he ever say anything? Yeah, just render to Caesar what's Caesar's and render to God what's God's. The fact is that neither John or Jesus had any kind of specific emphasis on altering the government. Okay, then we get the Apostle Paul.

He wrote 13 books in the New Testament. What was the flavor? What does he say? When it comes to government, did he ever want us to take up this political agenda? Does he ever tell us to do that? Did any of Jesus' disciples ever do that? Now, Jesus' disciples had run-ins with the government, but what was their run-in? I'm talking Sanhedrin here. What happened? The Apostle Paul was taken by the Romans.

What happened there? None of them ever talked about the laws. Basically, you guys are telling us not to preach the gospel, and that's what we're all about. Now, who should we obey? Should we obey you or should we obey God? When it came down to their specific laws, you don't really see that they got into that.

You don't really see that they had a political agenda. You don't see that that is what occupied these guys. The Apostle Paul, he comes along.

Peter comes along. What did they tell us? They told us to submit to the emperor, submit to the king, submit to the government. In fact, we have the accounts where, should we obey God or man? You know, we're going to obey God.

But you know, isn't it interesting that basically when Peter hits us with it, when Paul hits us with it, they didn't even give exceptions. They just say, obey the government. Pay your taxes.

That's what they say. Nowhere do they tell us to go on some kind of ambitious ministry to try to infiltrate the government. I mean, some kind of reinstating a theocracy.

There's none of that. And you know what the flavor of the New Testament is? See, the Old Testament we recognize. It was a society that was made up of Jewish.

I mean, when we talk Old Testament, we're talking about the Jews. Yes, the government and the religious system, it was all wrapped together in this theocratic nation. So they forsook God and wanted their own king.

But the fact is that when you come into the New Testament, it's not just looking at one country, Israel. It's looking at the world. And it basically sees Christians existing all over the world under all sorts of governments.

And it says, pray for the government and submit to the government. Those things are very clear. But as far as giving the church some kind of great commission for bringing about Christian government or bringing about governments based on scriptural law, that doesn't seem to be the agenda of the church.

I think we would all admit that. Now, if a Christian were to get into some kind of office, now, I'm not really seeing that that's prohibited, nor is it commanded. But let's say you have a Christian like William Wilberforce that gets into parliament.

Well, what would you expect him to do? You'd expect him to live his Christianity out there. You would expect him to want laws that were just. And where's his standard for justice? Well, it's clearly in Scripture.

That you would want the weak. I mean, you want justice. You would want fairness.

If you were a Christian and you were in that place. But the fact is that if somebody's not a Christian, well, what's true right off? Well, they're not going to submit to God's Word. I mean, Romans 8 says they don't even have the capacity to do that.

And so, our expectation should not be that lost people are going to be minded to do that. Of course, if we find that lost people, if we find that there are people in government that make good laws, let me ask you this. Even if we had a government that was entirely based, every single one of those laws, that say, let's just say we got to the place where the English government had such leaders in place that they started all over again.

And they basically built their legal system on the Scriptures. What's the advantage of that? What's the gain? What would we have that we don't have now? Would we have more salvation in the land? I'll tell you this, just recently when I preached through Zephaniah, and you realize Zephaniah was written in the days of Josiah, and Josiah brought one of the greatest revivals to Israel, to the southern kingdom, to Judea, that had ever come. And yet, the prophet wrote Zephaniah with all the judgments in it.

What you recognize is this, that even though you had a king who went and undoubtedly, his laws lined up with Scripture. But guess what it didn't do? It didn't change the hearts of the people. And this is the thing, we can have a government, and it really doesn't matter what the laws are.

The fact is that you can look at some governments that had some of the most unbiblical laws and some of the greatest amount of persecution of God's people, unjust, unfair, and you can see the gospel being more fruitful than almost any time in history. And so, I ask the question again, if we have biblical laws on the book, what's the advantage? As far as the kingdom of Christ, somebody might be able to say, well, if all the laws were biblical, well then we'd freely be able to preach the gospel on the campus. But, you know what? When you have governments that forbid you to preach the gospel on campus, and rather they persecute people that would want to preach the gospel on campus, often times, the way God designs things, when there's persecution, the church has thrived all the more.

So we can't just say, well, you know, if the laws were in place, then that would make it more likely people would get saved. Well, I don't know. Persecution seems to be the soil in which so often the church has thrived.

But, what is the advantage if we have biblical laws on the books? Education. We could have better education. Maybe that, better education.

We wouldn't be slaughtering our children. Maybe if they made laws against some of the stuff that doctors get away, or the big pharmaceuticals get, or big business gets away with, it's unjust. Your energy prices probably wouldn't have just gone up 60% in this country.

I mean there's things like that. If we had leaders that were just, then life here in this world gets easier. I think we would all agree with that.

Life would be easier, even for the lost person. Because just laws obviously would benefit, they would benefit all of us. But it doesn't necessarily make the gospel more fruitful.

But anyway, my whole point in all of this is just to point out that when a question like this comes up, I would say, yeah, yeah. Do I like Roe v. Wade being overturned? Was that an unbiblical allowance in the law, that women could abort their children? Yes, that was bad. Is that good to outlaw such a thing? Yes, that's good.

I mean, if capital punishment, does that help deter crime? I think it does. And if it doesn't, what it does do is this, it eliminates people that do those kinds of things. It eliminates the rapists, it eliminates the murderers, it eliminates these people.

And when they're gone, well, society's safer. I mean, you can think about how life here, but you know, the feel you get in the New Testament is that we're not really called to live primarily to try to make life here like Joel's thing, our best lives now. It isn't really the feel that you get.

It's more like, it's like Paul says, if you're a slave, don't try to get free. I mean, if you can be free, get free. But if you're married, act like you're not married.

It's almost like all these things in this life don't really even matter. It's like you can live the godly life, you can live the Christian life, in whatever circumstances you find yourself. Whether you're single, whether you're married, whether you're a slave, whether you're not a slave.

It's like, don't really even overly concern yourself for it. Really? Really? Yeah. Because His kingdom's not of this world.

We're headed towards something else. So I would just say this, I'm as happy as anybody to hear a William Wilberforce gets into Parliament. Or that we actually had somebody that, you know, makes good laws or overturns bad laws.

I think that's great. I rejoice when I hear it. I pray towards that end.

And we're supposed to pray for our leaders. And what would we pray for them? Pray for their salvation? Pray for the God-given wisdom? We should pray for them. But even there, where it talks about praying for them, it's not so much that the primary reason is to pray for them so that they would just, you know, make certain laws.

What is one of the main reasons that we pray for them? Right, but there is a reason given there. Peaceably. Isn't that interesting? It's more like pray for them so that they just leave you alone.

But, I mean, if we're just being honest with the flavor of the New Testament, then I think we do recognize that Jesus didn't come along and set all of His disciples about some kind of political agenda. I think we all have to admit that. Their agenda was very much one of preaching the Gospel.

And when the authorities interfered with that, well, then they said, you know, we're going to obey God. But even there, you know, it wasn't like they got a petition going to change the laws of the Sanhedrin. It wasn't that.

It was just like, we're going to go do what we do and we'll suffer the consequences. You throw us in jail, well, maybe you'll cut our heads off and maybe you'll kill us like they killed James. And maybe God will just

throw the doors open like He did Peter, and we'll go on with our ministry.

Which our ministry is to reach the world with the message of salvation. Hunter, what say you? You're searching the Scriptures over there to see if these things be so. I'm thinking when Christ says that the disciples are going to be delivered out the four kings.

Yeah, even there. And that's the feel that you get with John the Baptist with Herod. He was bearing witness to these things.

It was more of, you know, even when you think about Paul before Felix and Festus, what was the feel that you got? It was like he was being evangelistic. It's like, I want you to be a Christian. You know, the almost Christian.

He's like, you've almost persuaded me, Paul. I'll speak to you at another time. But what was he speaking about? Well, he was speaking about Christ.

He was speaking about the Gospel. He wasn't there to get the laws of the land changed. Yeah, that's exactly right.

And even when he says, you know, you're going to be taken and they're going to haul you into their courts and before the Sanhedrin and whatever. And he said, don't mind what you're going to say in that day. The Spirit will give you things to say.

And you know, the Spirit is all about giving people... Have you ever heard some of the things that some of the martyrs said when they were brought before the Inquisition? Just some of these very common Christians, old ladies and stuff being brought before the Inquisition and how God would just give them words. Anyway, that's kind of...

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