

Government—part 2

Grace and Truth—part 20

September 3, 2023

DAY 1: The Declaration of Independence

1. Understanding our government means understanding the foundation of our government and the Constitution. Our Constitution is the application of the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence.

2. In business terms, the Declaration of Independence is like the Articles of Incorporation, telling who we are and what we are about, and the Constitution is like the By-laws, telling how the business will operate.

3. “The virtue which had been infused into the Constitution of the United States... was no other than the concretion of those abstract principles which had been first proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. This was the platform upon which the Constitution of the United States had been erected. -John Q Adams

4. Here are the most important principles laid out in the Declaration of Independence and stipulated in the Constitution. You can trace their roots to the bible.

a. Self-evident truths

b. A fixed moral law

c. Endowed by our Creator

d. Inalienable rights

e. Government exists to protect inalienable rights.

f. Consent of the governed.

g. The right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness

5. What strikes you from today's writing?

DAY 2: Self-Evident Truths, and a Fixed Moral Law

A. Self-evident truths

1. Our Founding Fathers were ardent students of history, both ancient history, and European history. When it comes to government, the trend is always the same—government overreach, the thirst for power, which takes away the rights of its own citizens, and ultimately torpedoes a civilization.

2. If government is sovereign, there is no getting around this inevitability. Human corruption, human pride, and the lust for power and control will “win.”

3. Instead, God is sovereign over government and man.

Jeremiah 31:31 “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.

³³ *“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. **“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

³⁴ *No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

B. Fixed moral law

4. To leave law to the government is to invite arbitrary law instead of just and righteous law.

*Psalm 19:7 **The law of the LORD is perfect**, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are **trustworthy**, **making wise** the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are **right**, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.*

⁹ *The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are **firm**, and all of them are **righteous**.*

Psalm 119:89 Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

5. What strikes you about “self-evident truths” and a fixed moral law?

DAY 3: Endowed by Our Creator

The Great Mandate:

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ *So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

²⁸ *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

²⁹ *Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so.*

1. God not only gave us life but gave us the freedom and the rights to steward our lives.
2. The Great Mandate covers every responsibility that is God-ordained. We are to steward our relationships to God and people, our responsibilities, work, finances, ministry and service to others, etc.
3. The role of government is to create an environment where mankind is freest to pursue his stewardships without interference from criminals and foreign enemies. (See Romans 13:1-7).
4. A University of Houston study of approximately 15,000 writings of our Founders, listed the most quoted sources. The fourth most quoted was John Locke, 2.9%. The third most quoted was Blackstone, 7.9%. The second most quoted was Montesquieu, 8.3%. The first most quoted was the bible, 34%.
5. John Locke wrote Two Treaties of Government. He cited the bible over 1,500 times.
6. Believing in a divine Creator is the first step toward limited government, because if government is all-supreme, there is nothing that can impose limits.
7. For the Framers, the historical model of government in 1776 was based on the idea that power flowed from God to the king to the people. The American model of government reversed the last two so that power flows from God directly to people and then power is given to government only as the people deem appropriate.
8. Thomas Jefferson noted that the firm basis of liberty was for people to remember that liberty is a gift from God.
9. The American Revolution was liberty *with* God and it led to the most successful nation in the history of the world. The French Revolution was liberty *without* God and it led to the guillotine and total chaos.
10. If government does not give us our freedom, then government cannot rightly take it away.
11. What strikes you from today's writing?

DAY 4: Inalienable Rights and Consent of the Governed

Inalienable rights:

1. The bible describes our stewardship of all that God gives us and allows us to use. He expects us to utilize what He gives to us for eternal purposes.
2. The parable of the talents pictures a life of initiative, service, responsibility, and stewardship. There is reward for successful stewardship, and there are consequences for failed stewardship. (Matthew 25:14-30)
3. Every person has a set of rights given by the Creator, not government, which government has no authority to interfere with.
4. The book of Proverbs affirms initiative, prudence, diligence, industry,
5. Government is **not** there to provide for us, but to **protect** us while we go out to build our responsibilities and produce benefits to people. The more government provides for us, the less prosperous we are because the less initiative we take.

Consent of the Governed

6. Consent of the governed is mentioned three times in the Declaration of Independence, and eleven times in the Constitution.
7. "It is a great mistake to suppose that the paper we are to propose will govern the United States. It is the men whom it will bring into the Government and interest in maintaining it that is to govern them. The paper will only mark out the mode and the form. Men are the substance and must do the business."- John Francis Mercer, delegate to the Constitutional Convention.
8. This principle of the consent of the governed only follows the principles stating that there are inalienable rights and a fixed moral law. The consent of the governed does not overrule these basic truths.
9. As we saw last week God gives us a voice in our government (1 Samuel 8).
10. What strikes you from today's writing?

DAY 5: The right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness

1. “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness.... The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them.” -George Washington

The right to life:

2. This is inherent in Genesis 1:26-27.

The right to liberty:

3. We covered this in the writing on inalienable rights and stewardship.

The pursuit of Happiness:

4. “A wise and frugal government, which shall leave men free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor bread it has earned- this is the sum of good government.” “Jefferson

5. The Pilgrims tried socialism. Each was expected to work the total collective of land. That plan caused much “confusion and discontent and retarded much employment, that would have been to their benefit, and comfort” and caused people to “allege weakness and inability.” – Gov. Bradford

6. After nearly starving to death, Bradford made two huge changes. He implemented private property and free enterprise.

7. Soon, they were exporting corn!

8. “This had very good success; for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted, than otherwise would have been; by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave for better contentment.” -Bradford

God was revealed at the Constitutional Convention

9. “The real wonder is that the Constitutional Convention overcame so many difficulties. And to overcome them with so much agreement was as unprecedented as it was unexpected. It is impossible for the pious man not to recognize in it a finger of that Almighty Hand which was so frequently extended to us in the critical stages of the Revolution.” James Madison

10. “For my own part, I sincerely esteem a system which, without the finger of God, never could have been suggested and agreed upon by such a diversity of interests.” Alexander Hamilton

11. “As to my sentiments with respect to the new Constitution, it appears to me little short of a miracle. It demonstrates as visibly the finger of Providence as any possible event in the course of human affairs can ever designate.” Washington

12. What strikes you from today’s writing?