



WHY WE GATHER

Multitudes of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are at this very moment identifying with Christ at the risk of their lives. This is why Secret Church began—to gather and pray for them and to learn from their hunger for God’s Word by spending concentrated time studying this Word for ourselves. Like them, we want to give our lives to making this Word known in the world around us.

STUDY

We dive deep into Scripture in order to understand and respond to what God says to us in His Word.

PRAY

We pray for persecuted believers across the globe and for the spread of the gospel to the unreached—people groups and places where there is little or no access to the gospel.

ACT

We respond to what we’ve heard by giving for the sake of persecuted believers and the unreached.

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GOD, GOVERNMENT, AND THE GOSPEL

So Many Questions . . .

- How does God relate to government?
- How should Christians relate to government?
- Should we gladly submit to government, work to change government, or both, or neither?
- What if we don't agree with who the governing authorities are?
- What if we don't agree with how those authorities are governing?
- How does this apply to different types of governments in different parts of the world?
- How does this apply to Christians who are being persecuted under their government?
- Should Christians stay amidst persecution or flee from persecution?
- Is it ever right to disobey the government? If so, when?
- Should Christians work in government?
- What is justice, and how does it relate to government?
- How should a Christian in government decide what is a crime and what the punishment should be?
- Should all sin be a crime?
- If not, then what sin should (or should not) be a crime?
- Should Christians vote?
- If so, who should Christians vote for?
- What about situations where one candidate represents injustice X and the other candidate represents injustice Y?
- Should Christians align with political parties, positions, or personalities?
- If so, which party, position, or personality?
- What should Christians do when they disagree about political parties, positions, or candidates?
- Should churches exert any influence in politics?
- What does the separation of church and state mean?
- Is the United States a Christian nation?
- Is any country a Christian nation?
- Is there only one "Christian" position on political issues?

- Are some political issues more important than others?
- If so, is the level of political importance a matter of personal opinion?
- Should pastors preach about political issues?
- Should pastors endorse political candidates or parties?
- Should a Christian be for or against gun control, abortion, environmental protection, graduated or progressive tax rates based on income, same-sex marriage, capital punishment, immigration restrictions, nuclear weapons, tariffs, military spending, or universal health care?

So Many Considerations . . .

- The breadth of issues.
 - In any country.
 - Across every country.
- The _____ complexity _____ of issues.
 - Moral variables.
 - Economic variables.
 - Physical variables.
 - Social variables.
 - Spiritual variables.
 - Competing goods.
 - Lesser _____ evils _____.
 - Inevitable trade-offs.
 - Debatable co-belligerence.
- The meaning of _____ words _____.
 - Liberal, Conservative, Progressive, Right Wing, Left Wing, Alt-Right, Alt-Left, Capitalism, Socialism, Marxism, Nationalism, Zionism, Ethnocentrism, Feminism, Judicial Activism, Systemic Racism, Social Justice, Identity Politics, Privilege, Amnesty, Illegal, Undocumented, Marriage, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Family Planning, Global Warming.
 - Government:
 - The organization through which a political unit exercises _____ authority _____ and performs functions.

- Politics:
 - The process of organizing people, resources, power, decision-making, and decision-implementing in a political unit.
- Christian:
 - Bible-believing, gospel-embracing follower of Jesus.
- Church (Universal):
 - The body of Christ which includes Christians from every tribe, tongue, people, nation across time.
- Church (Local):
 - A group of baptized Christians who are committed to being the body of Christ to one another by coming together regularly and carrying out the functions of a biblical church.
 - Biblical Preaching and Teaching, Biblical Prayer, Biblical Evangelism, Biblical Discipleship, Biblical Membership, Biblical Leadership, Biblical Fellowship, Biblical Accountability and Discipline, Biblical Worship, Biblical Ordinances, Biblical Giving, Biblical Mission.
- The flexibility of language.
 - For example, “Is the United States a Christian nation?”
 - Did many of the founders of the United States “generally” believe the Bible? Yes.
 - Did Christian beliefs provide the foundation for many of the cultural values still held by many citizens of the United States today? Yes.
 - Is Christianity of various sorts (broadly defined) the largest religion in the United States? Yes.
 - Does the United States government promote Christianity as the national religion? Does a person have to profess Christian faith in order to become a citizen or have the rights of a citizen of the United States? No.
 - Are a majority of people in the United States Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus (i.e., Christians)? No.

- Is belief in Christian values the dominant perspective promoted by the government, the media, and universities in the United States today? No.
- For example, “Did God call {INSERT NAME} to be President/ Prime Minister/Leader of {INSERT NATION}?”
 - Is God ultimately sovereign over any leader who governs any nation? Yes.
 - Does God personally endorse every leader who governs every nation? No.
- The challenges of communication.
 - When we need sustained dialogue, we have sound bites.
 - When we need thoughtful reasoning, we have emotional rants.
 - When we need to listen first, we try to speak louder.
- The importance of context.
 - Context: The parts of a discourse that surround a word or passage and can throw light on its meaning.
 - Physical.
 - Cultural.
 - Social.
 - Temporal.
 - Spiritual.
- The understanding of covenants.
 - Biblical covenant: A binding agreement between two or more parties, with God as the guarantor and enforcer of the agreement.
 - Genesis 1–11: God’s covenants with all humanity.
 - The Adamic covenant.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill

the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. (Genesis 1:26–30)

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:15–17)

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

- A covenant of _____common_____ grace.
- Obey and walk with God.
- Enjoy and work the ground.
- Multiply through _____marriage_____.

■ The Noahic covenant.

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply,

increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.” Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, “Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.” And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.” (Genesis 9:1–17)

- A covenant of common grace.
 - Expectation of just governance.
- Genesis 12 through Malachi 4: God’s covenants with His people.
 - The Abrahamic covenant.

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
(Genesis 12:1–3)

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” But Abram said, “O Lord GOD, what will you give

me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. And he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gergashites and the Jebusites." (Genesis 15:1–21)

- A covenant of _____ special _____ grace with the nation of Israel.
- Faith in promises of blessings, land, descendants, and influence.

■ The Mosaic covenant.

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel. (Exodus 19:5–6)

And God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, “You

“speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. (Exodus 20:1–17)

Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.” And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.” (Exodus 24:3–8)

And the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 34:27–28)

- A covenant of special grace with the nation of Israel.
- Obedience amidst promises of God’s presence, protection, and provision.

■ The Davidic covenant.

Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of

God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.” But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’ Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’” In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David. (2 Samuel 7:1–17)

You have said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: ‘I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.’” (Psalm 89:3–4)

I have found David, my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him, so that my hand shall be established with him; my arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not outwit him; the wicked shall not humble him. I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him. My faithfulness and my steadfast love shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers. He shall cry to me, "You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My steadfast love I will keep for him forever, and my covenant will stand firm for him. I will establish his offspring forever and his throne as the days of the heavens. If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my rules, if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes, but I will not remove from him my steadfast love or be false to my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips. Once for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David. His offspring shall endure forever, his throne as long as the sun before me. Like the moon it shall be established forever, a faithful witness in the skies.
(Psalm 89:20–37)

- A covenant of special grace with the nation of Israel.
 - A promise of a royal line that will last forever.
- Matthew through Revelation: God's covenant with the church.
- The new covenant.
- Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall*

each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:31–34)

. . . for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:28)

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:25)

But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. For he finds fault with them when he says: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah . . ."
(Hebrews 8:6–8)

In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. (Hebrews 8:13)

Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. (Hebrews 9:15)

- A covenant of saving grace for the church in all _____ nations _____.
- Salvation through Jesus: the new Adam, the righteous Judge, the seed of Abraham, the fulfillment of the law, and the King from David's line.

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of

grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17)

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. (Jeremiah 23:5)

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. (Matthew 5:17)

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:32–33)

◦ Understanding covenants today . . .

- God's covenants with all humanity still apply to all people in all nations.
- God's covenants with Israel do not still apply in the same way to all people or to any nation.
 - Laws and structures of governance were given to the specific nation of Israel in the Old Testament.

When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it. (Deuteronomy 22:8)

- Laws and structures of governance are not given to any specific nation in the New Testament.

When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my

people, 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. (2 Chronicles 7:13–14)

- God's covenant with the church applies to all Christians in every nation.
 - God calls the church in the New Testament to obey everything Christ has commanded us.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19–20)

- Unless an Old Testament commandment is somehow restated or reinforced in the New Testament, it is no longer binding for Christians.

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:18)

- The abuse of Scripture.

And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:1–2)

- We must reject liberal distortions of Scripture.

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to

suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:3–4)

- We must be able to discern theological liberalism: when people call themselves Christians yet deny Scripture and orthodox teaching on the primary doctrines of Christianity.

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Galatians 1:6–10)

“Despite the liberal use of traditional phraseology modern liberalism not only is a different religion from Christianity but belongs in a totally different class of religions.”

– J. Gresham Machen

- Oftentimes in an attempt to _____ adapt _____ to a changing culture or appeal to an increasingly non-Christian culture.
- Oftentimes with language that appears to be biblical (though it undercuts Scripture) and claims to be _____ new _____ and contemporary (though it rehashes old heresies).
- Theological liberalism denies . . .
 - The final _____ authority _____ of God’s Word.
 - God’s supernatural work in history.
 - The seriousness of sin before a holy God.
 - Biblical teaching on the person and work of Christ.
 - Biblical teaching on judgment and eternity.
 - Biblical teachings that become unpopular or ridiculed.
 - Consistent teachings throughout church history.

- We must remember the primary function of Scripture.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Peter 1:3–4)

- The Bible was not written to answer every specific political question we have.
- The Bible was not written to address every specific political situation we face.
- The Bible was written to reveal who God is, who we are, and how we can be redeemed by God's grace through God's Son for God's glory.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26–27)

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the

man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22–24)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (Revelation 21:1)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:1–5)

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

... and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (Colossians 3:10)

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. (1 John 3:2)

- We must prioritize accurate _____ interpretation _____ of Scripture.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

- Ask, “What does it say?”
 - Not, “What do I want it to say?”
 - Ask, “What does it mean?”
 - Not, “What does it mean to me?”
- We must recognize varied _____ applications _____ of Scripture.

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. (James 1:21–25)

- The differences among Christians.

For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell. (Acts 15:28–29)

Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. (Acts 15:37–41)

- Political.
- Social.
- Generational.

- Racial.
- Experiential.
- The disunity of the church.
 - The need for theological triage.
 - Primary: That which is essential for Christianity.
 - Christians (Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus) divide from non-Christians over **primary doctrines** that are **clear** in Scripture and **essential** to Christianity, and Christians are willing to **die** for these doctrines.
 - Secondary: That which is essential for church but non-essential for Christianity.
 - Christians distinguish themselves from one another over **secondary doctrines** that are **less clear** in Scripture and **non-essential** to Christianity, and while these distinctions may mean **less fellowship** with one another in their churches, these Christians are glad to still **partner together around primary doctrines**.
 - Tertiary: That which is non-essential for Christianity and for church.
 - Christians disagree among themselves over **tertiary doctrines** that are **even less clear** in Scripture and also **non-essential** to Christianity, yet Christians experience **close fellowship** with one another in the church despite their disagreement.
 - The need for political triage.
 - Primary: That which is essential to the integrity of Christian faith and practice.
 - Christians (Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus) divide over political positions of **primary** magnitude that are **clear** in Scripture and **essential** to Christianity, and for those who don't share these political positions, it is **questionable** if they are Christians and is likely cause for church **excommunication**.

- Secondary: That which is _____ not _____ **essential** to the integrity of Christian faith and practice.
 - Christians _____ disagree _____ over political positions of **secondary** magnitude that are **less clear** in Scripture and **not essential** to Christianity, and while these Christians **may remain together in the same church**, these differences may mean **less partnership** with one another in the political arena, even as these Christians are glad to still **stand together around political issues of primary magnitude**.

- A serious caution in our speech . . .
 - “You can’t be a Christian and vote for . . . ”
 - “You can’t be a Christian and support . . . ”
 - “You can’t be a Christian and think . . . ”
- A guiding principle for partnership . . .
 - In essentials, unity.
 - In non-essentials, _____ liberty _____.
 - In all things, charity.

- The avoidance of politics.

“In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churches stand on the sideline and merely mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard so many ministers say, “Those are social issues with which the Gospel has no real concern.”” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Avoiding politics is _____ disobedient _____ toward God.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19–20)

- Avoiding politics is unloving toward others.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.
(Matthew 22:39)

- Avoiding politics is impossible in this world.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Colossians 4:5–6)

- The idolatry of politics.
 - Do you ever find your hope tied to the success of a particular politician or political party?
 - Do you ever see a politician or political party you support as practically perfect?
 - Do you ever struggle to stop, hear, and understand why your political opponent holds his or her position?
 - Do you ever struggle to admit when your political opponent is right?
 - Do you ever side with your political party without thinking through that issue from a biblical perspective?
 - Do politics capture an irresponsible amount of your thoughts or emotions?
 - Do politics ever steal your joy?
 - Is your political speech more kind and honorable, or more harsh and hostile?
 - Are your hidden political thoughts more kind and honorable, or more harsh and hostile?
 - Do you ever hate sin in those you oppose politically but excuse sin in those you support politically?
 - Do you ever hate sin in those you oppose politically but excuse sin in yourself?
 - Do you ever forget that those you oppose (and support) politically are sinners in need of a Savior? Do you ever neglect to pray for them and share the gospel with them accordingly?
 - Do you ever experience disunity with Christian brothers and sisters over secondary political issues?
- The polarization of positions.
 - Among parties.
 - Across countries.
 - Divisive leaders.
 - Ideological silos.

- _____ Reckless _____ generalizations.
- Broad condemnation.
- Politics is a game to be won.
- Contempt is the strategy to pursue.
- Compromise is the weakness to avoid.
- Opponents are _____ enemies _____ to be defeated.
- The demonization of opponents.
 - Turns thoughtful discussions into critical accusations.
 - Turns political dialogue into personal ridicule.
 - Turns healthy disagreement into hostile (even hateful) _____ disgust _____.
- The danger of pride.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:1–11)

- Thinking that we have it all _____ right _____.
- Thinking that others have it all wrong.
- Being quick to accuse others (even if only in our minds).
- Being quick to _____ defend _____ ourselves (even if only in our minds).
- Valuing our rights over what's right.
- Valuing acceptance in government over obedience to God.

- Fearing what people think.
- Ignoring what people need.
- Failing to love our neighbor.
- Failing to love our enemy.
- Refusing to hear and _____ learn _____ from others.
- Refusing to hear and obey God.

But this command I gave them: “Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.” (Jeremiah 7:23)

Our Purpose . . .

- To hear _____ clearly _____ what God has said in His Word about government.

See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? (Deuteronomy 4:5–8)

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:6–9)

- To understand how the gospel relates to government.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel . . . (Philippians 1:27)

- To understand how the gospel is _____ good _____ news _____ for government.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14–16)

- To distinguish _____ carefully _____ between God's Word and our wisdom regarding government.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:1–4)

The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:1–7)

God's Word <-----> **Our Wisdom**

"Rules of the Game"

Biblically mandated

Direct, straight line to positions and policies

Binding on a Christian's conscience—"must do"

Clear and unchanging across cultures and times

Firm Grip / Closed Hand

"Strategy for the game"

Biblically informed

Indirect, jagged line to positions and policies

Freedom in a Christian's conscience—"can do"

Complex calculations in various cultures at various times

Loose Grip / Open Hand

The diagrams and images used in this Study Guide are adapted from Jonathan Leeman's course titled "Christians and Government" at 9marks.org.

- To unite joyfully around God's Word in the church as we work charitably according to our wisdom in the world.

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It
is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!
For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.
(Psalm 133:1–3)*

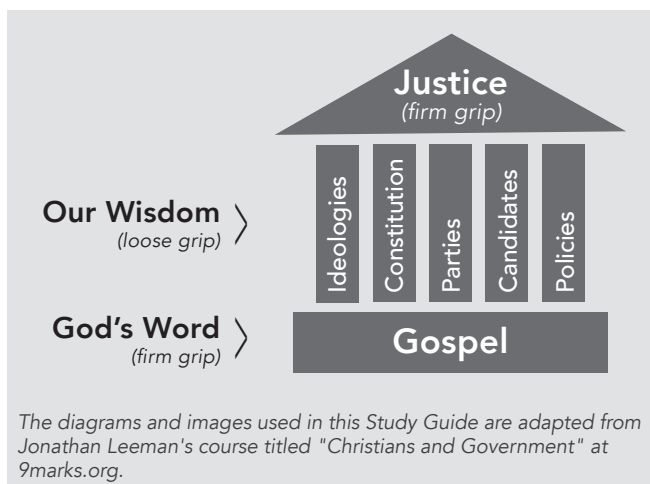
*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all
of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be
united in the same mind and the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10)*

*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy
of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and
gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to
maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body
and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to
your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of
all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1–6)*

*Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a
tender heart, and a humble mind. (1 Peter 3:8)*

- To live justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with God in _____ our _____ nation.

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)



- To live zealously for the spread of God's love and the glory of God's name among _____ all _____ nations.

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Matthew 24:14)

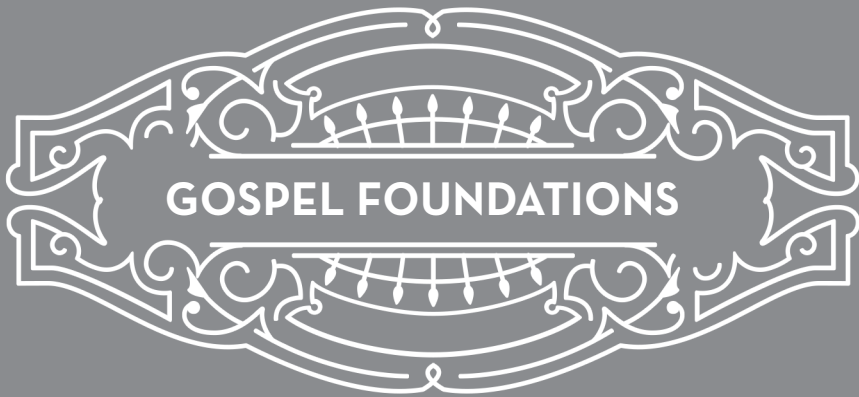
And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18–20)

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,

| *and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”* (Revelation 5:9–10)

Our Plan . . .

- Gospel Foundations
- Biblical Truths
- Gospel Conclusions
- Practical Takeaways



GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

THE GOSPEL

The gospel is the good news that God, the loving Creator, sovereign King, and holy Judge of all, has looked upon men and women wonderfully and uniquely made in His image who have rebelled against Him, are separated from Him, and deserve death before Him, and He has sent His Son, Jesus, God in the flesh, the long-awaited King, to live a perfect and powerful life, to die a sacrificial and substitutionary death, and to rise from the grave in victory over sin, Satan, and death. The gospel is a summons from God for all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, turning from all idols to declare allegiance to Jesus alone as King and trust in Jesus alone as Lord. All who turn from Jesus will experience everlasting, horrifying suffering in hell, while all who trust in Jesus will experience everlasting, satisfying communion with God in heaven.

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Romans 3:21–26)

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him

and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:1–10)

- **G:** God's Character
- **O:** Offense of Sin
- **S:** Sufficiency of Christ
- **P:** Personal Response
- **E:** Eternal Urgency
- **L:** Life Transformation

G: God's Character

God is the loving Creator, sovereign King, and holy Judge of all.

I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.
(Isaiah 43:15)

- God is the loving Creator of all.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. (Isaiah 40:28)

- God is the sovereign King over all.

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. (1 Chronicles 29:11–12)

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. (Psalm 29:10)

- God is the holy _____ Judge _____ of all.

The LORD judges the peoples; judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me. (Psalm 7:8)

But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness. (Isaiah 5:16)

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (Isaiah 6:1–3)

O: Offense of Sin

Men and women are wonderfully and uniquely created by God, yet we have rebelled against Him, are separated from Him, and deserve death before Him.

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. (Psalm 8:5–8)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! (Psalm 51:1–2)

- Men and women are wonderfully and uniquely created by God.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds

of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26–27)

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:13–16)

- Men and women have _____ rebelled _____ against God.

None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. (Romans 3:10–12)

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)

- Men and women are separated from God.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . . (Romans 3:23)

. . . but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. (Isaiah 59:2)

- Men and women deserve _____ death _____ before God.

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins . . . (Ephesians 2:1)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

S: Sufficiency of Christ

Jesus is God in the flesh, the long-awaited King who has come to live a perfect and powerful life, to die a sacrificial and substitutionary death, and to rise from the grave in victory over sin, Satan, and death.

- Jesus is God in the flesh, the long-awaited _____ King _____ who has come.

Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:12–17)

- Jesus lived a perfect and powerful life.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15–16)

You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. (1 John 3:5)

- Jesus died a sacrificial and substitutionary death.

... but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

- Jesus rose from the grave in _____ victory _____ over sin, Satan, and death.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. (1 Corinthians 15:3–5)

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Colossians 2:13–15)

P: Personal Response

God calls all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, turning from all idols to declare allegiance to Jesus alone as King and trusting in Jesus alone as Lord of one's life.

... because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (Romans 10:9–10)

- God calls all people in all nations to _____ repent _____ and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14–15)

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24:45–47)

- This involves turning from all idols.

Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. (Isaiah 45:22)

For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God. (1 Thessalonians 1:9)

- This involves declaring allegiance to Jesus alone as King.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful. (Revelation 17:14)

- This involves trusting in Jesus alone as Lord of one's life.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

- This involves resting in and relying on what God has done for Christ for your salvation.

| *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved ... (Acts 16:31)*

| *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8–9)*

E: Eternal Urgency

Hell is the eternal, horrifying destination for all who turn from Jesus, and heaven is the eternal, satisfying dwelling place of God with all who trust in Jesus.

| *And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27–28)*

- Hell is the eternal, horrifying destination for all who turn from Jesus.

| *This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. (2 Thessalonians 1:5–10)*

| *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in*

the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11–15)

- _____ **Heaven** _____ is the eternal, satisfying dwelling place of God with all who trust in Jesus.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (Philippians 3:20–21)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:1–4)

L: Life Transformation

All who believe the gospel are new creations: filled with God's Spirit, children in God's family, members of God's church, and heirs of God's kingdom.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- All who believe the gospel are filled with God's Spirit.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:25–28)

And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22–24)

- All who believe the gospel are children in God's family.

In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:4c–6)

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:14–15)

- All who believe the gospel are members of God's church.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12:27)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19–22)

- All who believe the gospel are heirs of God's _____ kingdom _____.

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:11–14)

The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:16–17)

Recap: What Is The Gospel?

The gospel is the good news that God, the loving Creator, sovereign King, and holy Judge of all, has looked upon men and women wonderfully and uniquely made by Him in His image who have rebelled against Him, are separated from Him, and deserve death before Him, and He has sent His Son, Jesus, God in the flesh, the long-awaited King, to live a perfect and powerful life, to die a sacrificial and substitutionary death, and to rise from the grave in victory over sin, Satan, and death. The gospel is a summons from God for all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, turning from all idols to declare allegiance to Jesus alone as King and trust in Jesus alone as Lord. All who turn from

Jesus will experience everlasting, horrifying suffering in hell, while all who trust in Jesus will experience everlasting, satisfying communion with God in heaven.

- **G:** God's Character
- **O:** Offense of Sin
- **S:** Sufficiency of Christ
- **P:** Personal Response
- **E:** Eternal Urgency
- **L:** Life Transformation



Law

History

Wisdom

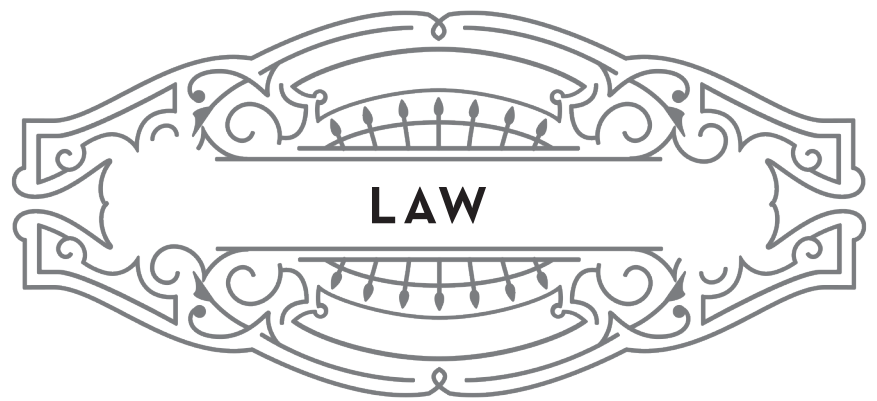
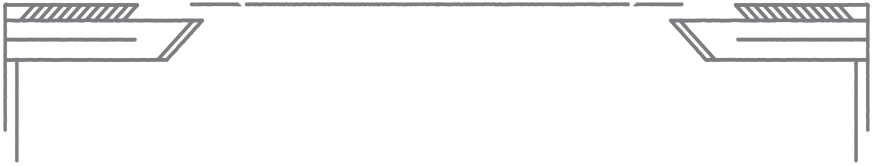
Prophets

Gospels

Acts

Letters





BIBLICAL TRUTHS: LAW

1 All governance belongs to God.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

- God is the supreme Creator of all.

“And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. (Genesis 1:30)

- God is the sovereign King over all.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (Genesis 2:16–17)

For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. (Psalm 22:28)

- God is the righteous Judge of all.

The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein . . . (Psalm 24:1)

- The world is not a democracy; the world is a monarchy, and God is King.
- We don’t make a list of rights; God has all the rights, and we submit to Him.

2 Human governance is delegated by God.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:26–31)

- Governance is a privilege of relationship with God.
- Governance is a responsibility for _____ rule _____ in God's world.

Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. (Psalm 8:5–8)

3 All _____ grace _____ comes from God.

. . . then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (Genesis 2:7)

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Genesis 2:15–18)

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

- Our _____ lives _____ are a gift of His grace.
 - We depend on God for every breath we breathe.
 - We depend on God for everything we need.
 - We live in God's world (not the other way around).
- His _____ law _____ is a gift of His grace.
 - God's law tells us how to enjoy life.
 - God's law tells us how to avoid death.
 - We live according to God's ways (not the other way around).
- Our _____ families _____ are a gift of His grace.
 - God designs marriage as the means for multiplication.
 - God designs marriage as an illustration of the gospel.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:31–33)

- We understand marriage according to God's definition (not the other way around).
- Our _____ freedom _____ is a gift of His grace.
 - Faith in God is not forced by God.
 - Divine sovereignty does not eliminate human responsibility.
 - We are accountable to God for our actions (not the other way around).

4

Sin is defiance of God's governance that leads to disorder _____ in God's world.

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent,

“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. . . . The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:1–7, 14–19)

- As a result of sin, our relationship with God is disordered.
- As a result of sin, our relationships with one another are disordered.
- As a result of sin, our relationships with the world are disordered.

5 The most basic foundation for government is the _____ equality _____ of all people made in God’s image.

And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave

you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 'Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.' And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."
(Genesis 9:1–7)

- Doing justice means recognizing the dignity of every life.
- Doing justice means ensuring the protection of every life.

6 The most basic responsibility of government is to do justice by promoting good and punishing evil.

- This responsibility for justice is delegated by God.
 - For the enjoyment of life.
 - For obedience to His law.
 - For the support of families (namely, marriage).
 - For the protection of freedom (namely, faith).
- This responsibility for justice is entrusted to all.

7 The most basic action of government is to prosecute crimes because of the harm done to people, not the dishonor shown to God.

- The most severe punishment for crime against people is the loss of one's life on earth.
- The most severe punishment for crime against God is the loss of one's life for eternity.

8 Leaders of government are responsible to God and will be judged by God.

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” But Pharaoh said, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.” (Exodus 5:1–2)

For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. (Exodus 9:14–17)

- Government leaders are accountable to God’s Word.
- Government leaders cannot compete with God’s power.
- Government leaders will ultimately yield to God’s glory.

9 Wise leaders share governing responsibilities with other trustworthy leaders who _____ fear God.

You and the people with you will certainly wear yourselves out, for the thing is too heavy for you. You are not able to do it alone. Now obey my voice; I will give you advice, and God be with you! You shall represent the people before God and bring their cases to God, and you shall warn them about the statutes and the laws, and make them know the way in which they must walk and what they must do. Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Every great matter they shall bring to you, but any small matter they shall decide themselves. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. If you do this, God will direct you, you will be able to endure, and all this people also will go to their place in peace. (Exodus 18:18–23)

- This ensures God’s direction.

- This ensures a leader's endurance.
- This ensures a people's _____ peace _____.

10 The Ten Commandments comprise a clear _____ foundation _____ for God's governance of His people and a wise foundation for human governance of all people.

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin." The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. (Exodus 20:1–17)

- Experience abundant life through worship of the right God.
- Experience supernatural love through worship in the right way.
- _____ Revere _____ God in a world of triviality.
- Rest responsibly in a world of toil.
- Prioritize honor in your home.
- Prioritize the protection of others' health.
- Enjoy sexuality according to God's _____ design _____.
- Enjoy possessions according to God's provision.
- Be trustworthy with the truth in a world of lies and letdowns.
- Be content with joy in a world of _____ jealousy _____ and competition.

11 God's just governance promotes _____ love _____ for all peoples.

You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:34)

- Treat the stranger as a native.
- Love the sojourner as yourself.

12 God's just governance promotes _____ righteousness _____ in judicial, social, and commercial transactions.

You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:15–18)

You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just

hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.
(Leviticus 19:35–36)

- Fairness in your courts.
- Kindness toward your neighbor.
- Integrity in your economy.

13 God's just governance promotes care for the poor.

If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold. If a man has no one to redeem it and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it, let him calculate the years since he sold it and pay back the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and then return to his property. But if he does not have sufficient means to recover it, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of the buyer until the year of jubilee. In the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property. (Leviticus 25:25–28)

For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land." (Deuteronomy 15:11)

- The command: Be generous to the poor in your land.
- The goal: Meet the needs of all the poor in your land.

14 God calls leaders among His people to lead in ways that reflect His governance.

When you come to the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, "I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me," you may indeed set a king over you whom the LORD your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the LORD has said to

you, “You shall never return that way again.” And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:14–20)

- Leaders must hear and obey God’s Word.
- Leaders must avoid greed.
- Leaders must avoid adultery.
- Leaders must avoid idolatry.
- Leaders must fear and submit to God’s authority.
- Leaders must demonstrate humility before God and those they lead.

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left. (2 Kings 22:1–2)

But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard how I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. (2 Kings 22:18–19)

Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him. (2 Kings 23:25)



BIBLICAL TRUTHS: HISTORY

15 The government of a people is a reflection of the God or gods they serve.

Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (Joshua 24:14–15)

- We become like what or who we worship.
- We must evaluate what or who we worship.

16 Evil abounds when everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 17:6; 21:25)

- Left to ourselves, we illustrate human depravity.
- Steeped in our sin, we need divine deliverance.

Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. (Judges 2:16)

17 God is the perfect Leader with ultimate authority who entrusts imperfect leaders to govern with delegated authority.

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel,

“Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.” (1 Samuel 8:6–9)

- We are all tempted to turn from God as our King.
- There is no king on earth who is worthy of all our trust.

18 God’s standards for those who govern are different from the world’s standards for those who govern.

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

- The world looks for appearance and prominence.
- God looks for heart and humility.

This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand. (1 Samuel 17:46–47)

19 God promised to send a perfect King, His own Son, in the line of David in order to redeem His people from sin and reign over all peoples with justice.

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will

establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:12–16)

- A continual seed will endure.
- An honored son will reign.

And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and they anointed him as prince for the LORD, and Zadok as priest. Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of David his father. And he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. (1 Chronicles 29:22b–23)

- An earthly king, the son, who represents . . .
- The heavenly King, the Father.

Therefore you are great, O LORD God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O LORD, became their God. And now, O LORD God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. And your name will be magnified forever, saying, “The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,” and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, “I will build you a house.” (2 Samuel 7:22–27a)

- He will redeem God’s people from sin.
- He will reign over all peoples with justice.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6–7)

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.” (Jeremiah 23:5–6)

20

Sexual sin among those who govern is especially serious and carries far-reaching consequences in their governance.

But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD. (2 Samuel 11:27c)

Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’” David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin;

you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.” (2 Samuel 12:7–14)

- Sexual sin appears so subtly.
- Sexual sin harms so deeply.
- Sexual sin controls so quickly.
- Sexual sin _____ devastates _____ so comprehensively.

For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods. (1 Kings 11:4–8)

21 **Prideful ambition is an extremely dangerous _____ weapon _____ in the heart of those who govern.**

So the king said to Joab, the commander of the army, who was with him, “Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people.” But Joab said to the king, “May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?” But the king’s word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel. . . . But David’s heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly.” . . . So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men. (2 Samuel 24:2–4, 10, 15)

- The king was driven by selfish desires.
- The king was resistant to wise counsel.
- The kingdom was shattered by death and suffering.

Wisdom from God is essential for just governance.

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." (1 Kings 3:5–14)

And the king said, "Bring me a sword." So a sword was brought before the king. And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other." Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, "Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him." Then the king answered and said, "Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother." And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had

rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice. (1 Kings 3:24–28)

- We lack the wisdom and discernment we need to govern.
- God possesses all wisdom and discernment in His governance.

Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding . . .”
(Daniel 2:20–21)

- Therefore, anyone who desires to do justice in governance is desperate for and dependent on wisdom and discernment from God.

. . . in whom [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:3)

23

It is right (and at least sometimes required) for those with God’s Word to humbly, honorably, and boldly confront wickedness in worldly government.

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.” (1 Kings 17:1)

Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity.
(Daniel 4:27)

So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison. (Luke 3:18–20)

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.’” (Luke 13:31–32)

After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.” (Acts 24:24–25)

- To humbly, honorably, and boldly confront personal sin in people who govern.
- To humbly, honorably, and boldly confront _____ injustice _____ in how people are governed.

Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days; but in his son's days I will bring the disaster upon his house. (1 Kings 21:29)

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (Daniel 4:37)

24

God possesses all _____ power _____ over all governments and all who govern in them.

Thus shall you speak to Hezekiah king of Judah: “Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them, the nations that my fathers destroyed, Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden who were in Telassar? Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, the king of Hena, or the king of Ivvah?” Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up

to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: "O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone." . . . Have you not heard that I [the Lord] determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should turn fortified cities into heaps of ruins, while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown. But I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me. Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come into my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came. . . . And that night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. Then Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went home and lived at Nineveh. And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place. (2 Kings 19:10–19, 25–28, 35–37)

- They should _____ fear _____ and tremble before the God who holds them in His hands.
- They should do justice before the God who will hold them accountable for the work of their hands.

25

God ultimately uses governments and those who govern to _____ accomplish _____ His redemptive purposes for His people.

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.” (Ezra 1:1–4)

And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.” And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me. (Nehemiah 2:7–8)

Then Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think to yourself that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13–14)

- Sometimes for discipline.

Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if told. For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, who march through the breadth of the earth, to seize dwellings not their own. (Habakkuk 1:5–6)

- Ultimately for _____ deliverance _____.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:1–7)

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will. (Proverbs 21:1)



BIBLICAL TRUTHS: WISDOM

26

**God derides and will ultimately _____ destroy
nations who defy or defame Him.**

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him. (Psalm 2:1–12)

- The nations plot against God.
- The nations pretend to be God.
- The nations cannot thwart God's plans.
- The nations will _____ fulfill _____ God's purposes.

And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." (Acts 4:24–28)

- They will experience His judgment.

The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." (Psalm 110:1)

The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. (Psalm 110:5–6)

- They will bow before Jesus.

But he said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is David's son? For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."' David thus calls him Lord, so how is he his son?" (Luke 20:41–44)

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9–11)

27 A just leader is a _____ blessing _____ to a nation.

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! May they fear you while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth! In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! (Psalm 72:1–7)

- For all people, and particularly the poor and the oppressed.
- For abounding peace, and particularly the flourishing of the righteous.

28 We should pray for God's justice to reign on the earth.

God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment: "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken. I said, "You are gods, sons of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, like men you shall die, and fall like any prince." Arise, O God, judge the earth; for you shall inherit all the nations! (Psalm 82:1–8)

- As we pray, we long and wait for God's kingdom to come.
- As we pray, we live and work to make God's mercy known.

29 Wise government fears God.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud: "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man." (Proverbs 8:1–4)

- Wisdom governs in view of who God is.
- Wisdom governs in view of how God works.
- Wisdom governs in view of what God has said.

30 Wise government shows discernment.

The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth. (Proverbs 17:24)

- Between good and evil.

Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path; for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; discretion will watch over you, understanding will guard you, delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech, who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways. (Proverbs 2:9–15)

- Between righteousness and wickedness.

Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death. The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked. (Proverbs 10:2–3)

Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. The memory of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. (Proverbs 10:6–7)

- Between honesty and dishonesty.

Whoever winks his eyes plans dishonest things; he who purses his lips brings evil to pass. (Proverbs 16:30)

- Between productive and unproductive.

A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. He who gathers in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who brings shame. (Proverbs 10:4–5)

- Between peace and violence.

The violence of the wicked will sweep them away, because they refuse to do what is just. (Proverbs 21:7)

When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. (Proverbs 16:7)

- Between valuable and worthless.

| *Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense. (Proverbs 12:11)*

- Regarding the poor and oppressed.

| *Whoever oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is generous to the needy honors him. (Proverbs 14:31)*

| *A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge. (Proverbs 29:7)*

| *If a king faithfully judges the poor, his throne will be established forever. (Proverbs 29:14)*

- Regarding poverty and riches.

| *Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me . . . (Proverbs 30:8)*

- Regarding integrity and purity.

| *Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out. (Proverbs 10:9)*

| *He who loves purity of heart, and whose speech is gracious, will have the king as his friend. (Proverbs 22:11)*

- Regarding motives and ambitions.

| *A man of crooked heart does not discover good, and one with a dishonest tongue falls into calamity. (Proverbs 17:20)*

- Regarding speech and persuasion.

| *The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. (Proverbs 10:11)*

The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness. (Proverbs 16:21)

- Regarding gifts and bribes.

The wicked accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the ways of justice. (Proverbs 17:23)

A gift in secret averts anger, and a concealed bribe, strong wrath. (Proverbs 21:14)

31 Wise government requires wise leadership.

I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion. The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate. I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. (Proverbs 8:12–17)

- Those who govern should seek wisdom from God.

Many seek the face of a ruler, but it is from the LORD that a man gets justice. (Proverbs 29:26)

- Those who govern should reflect the wisdom of God.

It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness. (Proverbs 16:12)

A king who sits on the throne of judgment winnows all evil with his eyes. (Proverbs 20:8)

A ruler who lacks understanding is a cruel oppressor, but he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days. (Proverbs 28:16)

If a king faithfully judges the poor, his throne will be established forever. (Proverbs 29:14)

32 Injustice and _____ oppression _____ are sober realities in a sinful world.

Moreover, I saw under the sun that in the place of justice, even there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, even there was wickedness. I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time for every matter and for every work. (Ecclesiastes 3:16–17)

Again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun. And behold, the tears of the oppressed, and they had no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power, and there was no one to comfort them. And I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 4:1–3)

- We should not be surprised by the existence of injustice and oppression.
- We should all be _____grieved_____ by the effects of injustice and oppression.
- We should look forward to the end of injustice and oppression.



BIBLICAL TRUTHS: PROPHETS

33

God is holy and just, and He hates unjust government

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. (Isaiah 1:16–17)

But the LORD of hosts is exalted in justice, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness. (Isaiah 5:16)

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (Isaiah 6:1–3)

- We must worship God for His justice.
- We must work hard against injustice.

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

- With kindness toward others.
- With humility before God.

34

Injustice in government is grounded in the idolatry of false gods.

Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! "What to me is the multitude of your

sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.” (Isaiah 1:10–15)

Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made. (Isaiah 2:8)

If a man is righteous and does what is just and right—if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor’s wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, does not lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man, walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully—he is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 18:5–9)

- Idolatry: Abandoning love for God.
- Injustice: Abandoning love for neighbor.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: “I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you;

I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.” (Isaiah 42:1–8)

35 Religion in the name of God is a detestable mask _____ for injustice in government.

Do not trust in these deceptive words: “This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.” For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever. (Jeremiah 7:4–7)

Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD! Why would you have the day of the LORD? It is darkness, and not light, as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” (Amos 5:18–24)

- It is possible to eagerly anticipate future salvation while conveniently denying present sin.
- It is possible to carry out the supposed worship of God while carrying out sickening injustice before God.
- It is possible to be led in _____ religion _____ by leaders whom God loathes.

Behold, the princes of Israel in you, every one according to his power, have been bent on shedding blood. Father and mother are treated

with contempt in you; the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst; the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you. You have despised my holy things and profaned my Sabbaths. There are men in you who slander to shed blood, and people in you who eat on the mountains; they commit lewdness in your midst. In you men uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are unclean in their menstrual impurity. One commits abomination with his neighbor's wife; another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; another in you violates his sister, his father's daughter. In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take interest and profit and make gain of your neighbors by extortion; but me you have forgotten, declares the Lord GOD. Behold, I strike my hand at the dishonest gain that you have made, and at the blood that has been in your midst. Can your courage endure, or can your hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with you? I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it. I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will consume your uncleanness out of you. And you shall be profaned by your own doing in the sight of the nations, and you shall know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 22:6–16)

“I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial and hypocritical Christianity of the land . . . I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels. Never was there a clearer case of ‘stealing the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in.’ I am filled with unutterable loathing when I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies, which everywhere surround me. We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunderers for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus . . . The slave auctioneer's bell and the church-going bell chime in with each other, and the bitter cries of the heart-broken slave are drowned in the religious shouts of his pious master. Revivals of religion and revivals in the slave-trade go hand in hand together. The slave prison and the church stand near each other. The clanking of fetters and the rattling of chains in the prison, and the pious psalm and solemn prayer in the church, may be heard at the same time. The dealers in the bodies of men erect

their stand in the presence of the pulpit, and they mutually help each other. The dealer gives his blood-stained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit, in return, covers his infernal business with the garb of Christianity. Here we have religion and robbery the allies of each other—devils dressed in angels' robes, and hell presenting the semblance of paradise.” – Frederick Douglass

36 God's people should seek the _____ welfare of the nation in which they live.

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.
(Jeremiah 29:7)

- Pray for your nation's good.
- Work for your nation's well-being.

37 It is unjust for government to mandate or restrict worship _____.

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace." Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music,

all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. (Daniel 3:1–7)

Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction. (Daniel 6:6–9)

- Genuine faith must be genuinely free.
- Authentic belief requires authentic choice.
- Human dignity necessitates personal discovery.
 - The opportunity to search for truth apart from threats.
 - The opportunity to settle on faith apart from force.
 - The opportunity to come to conclusions apart from coercion.

Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way. (Daniel 3:28–29)

Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end.” (Daniel 6:25–26)

38 Allegiance to God takes _____ priority _____ over allegiance to government.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.” (Daniel 3:16–18)

Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.” (Daniel 6:13)

- Government is absolutely not worthy of worship.
- God alone is worthy of worship.
- Allegiance to God takes priority over life itself.

39 It is possible for _____ pride _____ in our own nation to keep us from compassion for all nations.

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” (Jonah 1:1–2)

- We can want our way more than we want God’s _____ will _____.

But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD. (Jonah 1:3)

- We can desire the good of our own people more than we desire the gospel for all peoples.

And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” (Jonah 1:9)

- We can be more concerned about our own empty desires than we are about others' eternal destinies.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." (Jonah 4:1–3)

- We can fail to connect the mercy of God in our lives with the mission of God in the world.

And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle? (Jonah 4:11)

40 God requires His people to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with Him.

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

- This is the good life according to God.
- This leads to good government under God.



BIBLICAL TRUTHS: GOSPELS

41

Jesus is the promised perfect King, God's Son, sent from the line of David to redeem God's people from sin and reign over all peoples with justice.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (Matthew 1:1)

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14–15)

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:30–33)

- Jesus came from the seed of David.
- Jesus came as the Son of God.
- Jesus redeems God's people from sin.

Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he

himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.’” Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. (Acts 2:29–36)

- Jesus reigns over all _____ peoples _____ with justice.

And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, ‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.’” (Acts 15:12–18)

Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:1–10)

Jesus was opposed by unjust government.

- From His birth . . .

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." . . . Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more." (Matthew 2:1–8, 13–18)

- Herod pretended kindness.
- Herod intended murder.

- To His death . . .

- Before Jewish authorities.

So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people. (John 18:12–14)

And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. (Mark 14:53–56)

And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. (Mark 15:1)

○ Before Roman authorities.

And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” And he answered him, “You have said so.” And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again asked him, “Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you.” But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. (Mark 15:2–5)

When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he belonged to Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. (Luke 23:6–7)

And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other. (Luke 23:11–12)

And Pilate again said to them, “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” And they cried out again, “Crucify

him.” And Pilate said to them, “Why? What evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him.” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. (Mark 15:12–15)

43

Followers of Jesus will be opposed by unjust government.

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matthew 10:16–23)

- We will be betrayed.
- We will be hated.

If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:18–19)

- We will be persecuted.

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted . . . (2 Timothy 3:12)

- Some will be killed.

At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus, and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him." For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." And though he wanted to put him to death, he feared the people, because they held him to be a prophet. But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company and pleased Herod, so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." And the king was sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests he commanded it to be given. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus. (Matthew 14:1–12)

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:54–60)

He killed James the brother of John with the sword . . . (Acts 12:2)

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. (Revelation 6:9–11)

- The reality: The danger of our lives _____ increases _____ according to the depth of our identification with Jesus.

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. (Matthew 10:24–25)

- The question: How much do we want to be like Him?

44 Followers of Jesus sometimes stay amidst persecution and sometimes flee from persecution.

When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. (Matthew 10:23)

Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. Herod said, “John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?” And he sought to see him. On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. (Luke 9:7–10)

- Moses fled . . . and Moses stayed.

When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from Pharaoh and stayed in the land of Midian. And he sat down by a well. (Exodus 2:15)

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” (Exodus 5:1)

- David fled . . . and David stayed.

So Michal let David down through the window, and he fled away and escaped. (1 Samuel 19:12)

Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. (1 Samuel 24:8)

- Jeremiah fled . . . and Jeremiah stayed.

Now when the Chaldean army had withdrawn from Jerusalem at the approach of Pharaoh’s army, Jeremiah set out from Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to receive his portion there among the people. (Jeremiah 37:11–12)

Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: If you will surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then your life shall be spared, and this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live.” (Jeremiah 38:17)

- Paul fled . . . and Paul stayed.

At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands. (2 Corinthians 11:32–33)

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. (Acts 18:9–11)

“There are few rules in this case. The man himself is best able judge concerning his present strength, and what weight this or that argument has upon his heart to stand or fly.” – John Bunyan

- To stay or go?
 - Our highest priority: Love for God.

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law

against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:34–39)

- Our holy purpose: Proclaim the gospel.

So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32–33)

“Thou mayest do in this as it is in thy heart. If it is in thy heart to fly, fly; if it is in thy heart to stand, stand. Any thing but a denial of the truth.” – John Bunyan

- His hopeful promise: Your eternity is guaranteed.

So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:26–31)

45

As citizens of a government, followers of Jesus have two guiding commands: love God _____supremely_____, and love others _____selflessly_____.

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to

him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 22:34–40)

- Undivided love for God.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26)

- Unselfish love for others.

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.” (Luke 10:25–37)

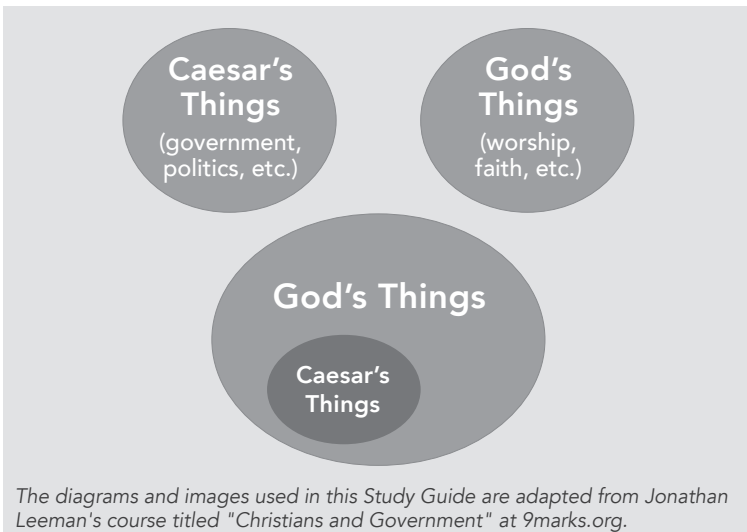
- A compelling love.

- We love neighbors in need not because we feel guilty.
- We love neighbors in need because of the gospel.

- A comprehensive love . . .
 - That doesn't restrict who is loved.
 - That doesn't restrict how much one is loved.
- A costly love . . .
 - That takes great risks.
 - That leads to great reward.

46 Followers of Jesus support governmental authority under God's authority.

And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him. (Mark 12:13–17)



- We give government appropriate support.
 - Caesar's image is on a coin . . . so it belongs to him.
 - With His words, Jesus rejects political passivity.
 - In other words, followers of Jesus pay taxes.

When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the tax?" He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?" And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself." (Matthew 17:24–27)

- God's image is on our lives . . . so we belong to Him.
 - With His words, Jesus rejects political primacy.
 - In other words, followers of Jesus praise God.
- We keep government in proper perspective.
 - Even pagan nations are legitimate nations.
 - Every follower of Jesus is international.
 - We do not all support the same nation in this world.
 - None of us ultimately belongs to a nation in this world.

47

The kingdom of Jesus is radically different from the kingdoms of this world.

And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king." And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." (Luke 23:2–3)

- The claim of Jesus' kingdom . . .
 - He alone is Lord.

From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." (John 19:12)

They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." (John 19:15)

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. (Acts 2:36)

- The basis for Jesus' kingdom . . .

- Is not the authority of an earthly leader.
- Is the sovereignty of the heavenly Lord.

So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin." (John 19:10–11)

- The road to Jesus' kingdom . . .

- Is paved by faith, not by force.

Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself. (John 6:15)

- Is marked by humility, not by hostility.

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and

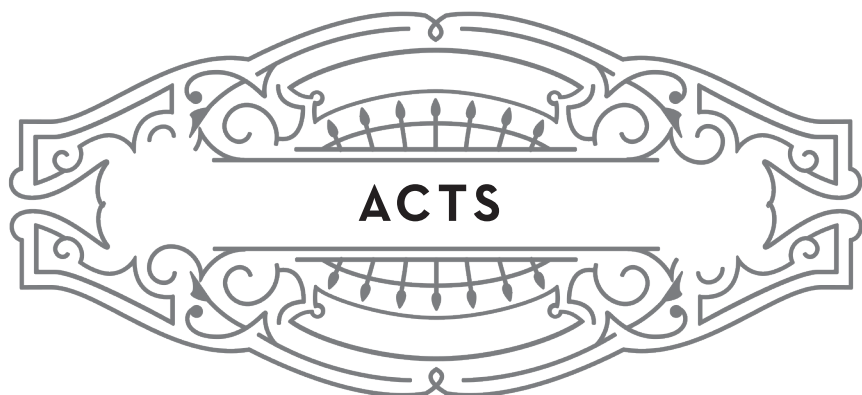
consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village. As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Luke 9:51–58)

- The citizens of Jesus' kingdom . . .
 - Are not those who fight with the sword.
 - Are those who have faith in the truth.

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." (John 18:36–37)

- The inauguration of Jesus' kingdom . . .
 - Is not when He gets elected.
 - Is when He gets executed.

. . . and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matthew 27:29)



BIBLICAL TRUTHS: ACTS

48

The proclamation of the gospel is the proclamation of a King and His kingdom.

In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:1–11)

- Jesus was not instituting a kingdom for one nation.
- Jesus was inaugurating a kingdom for all nations.
- The gospel of the kingdom:
 - The King has come and conquered death for all!
 - The King is coming back to rule as Lord over all!

But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (Acts 8:12)

And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. (Acts 19:8)

And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. (Acts 20:25)

When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. (Acts 28:23)

He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. (Acts 28:30–31)

49 Proclaimers of the gospel are empowered by the Spirit of the King for the spread of His kingdom.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. (Acts 4:13)

- Ordinary people . . .
 - Saved by grace.

“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:36–41)

Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest’s house, and Peter was following at a distance. And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat down among them. Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.” But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.” And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.” And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also

was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:54–62)

◦ Desperate for God.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And when he [Jesus] had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. (Acts 1:8–14)

• With extraordinary _____ power _____.

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1–4)

◦ To obey God’s Word.

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so

that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish." (Exodus 19:16–21)

And he gave to Moses, when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. (Exodus 31:18)

And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. (Exodus 32:28)

- Better than Jesus beside a few of us, Jesus is inside all of us!

◦ To share God's Word.

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:45–49)

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:28–29)

And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. (Acts 2:17–18)

- Every single follower of Jesus has the privilege of speaking for God!

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

50

The proclamation of the gospel creates a unique political community called the church.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:41–47)

- United by God’s grace.
 - People profess faith in Christ through baptism.
 - The church authenticates faith in Christ through baptism.
- Devoted to God’s Word.

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (Acts 2:41)

But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. (Acts 4:4)

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness . . . (Acts 4:29)

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:31)

And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:2–4)

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)

Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. (Acts 8:4)

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John . . . (Acts 8:14)

Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. (Acts 8:25)

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. (Acts 10:44)

Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. (Acts 11:1)

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. (Acts 11:19)

But the word of God increased and multiplied. (Acts 12:24)

When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. (Acts 13:5)

He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. (Acts 13:7)

The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. (Acts 13:44)

And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles." (Acts 13:46)

And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:48)

And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. (Acts 13:49)

And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia . . . (Acts 14:25)

But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are." (Acts 15:35–36)

And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. (Acts 16:32)

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. (Acts 17:11)

When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.
(Acts 18:5)

And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. (Acts 18:11)

This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (Acts 19:10)

So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.
(Acts 19:20)

- Committed to caring for one another.

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:32–37)

- Gathering for worship regularly.
- Interceding in prayer continually.
- Bearing the name of Christ.

But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"
(Acts 3:6)

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

- Spreading the gospel of Christ.

| *And more than ever believers were added to the Lord . . . (Acts 5:14)*

51 The proclamation of the gospel may require disobedience to a government.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, "What shall we do with these men? For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:13–20)

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (Acts 5:27–32)

- Followers of Jesus walk in holy purity.
- Followers of Jesus witness with humble audacity.

The aim of persecution from the government is to silence the gospel. But the gospel cannot be silenced.

Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:54–60)

And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. (Acts 8:1–4)

Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. The report of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose, for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians. (Acts 11:19–26)

Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. (Acts 13:1–3)

- The gospel spreads not in spite of persecution, but _____ because _____ of persecution.

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4:23–31)

- We pray to . . .
 - The One who governs the world.
 - The One who is faithful to His Word.
- We pray for . . .
 - Honor for Christ the King.
 - Boldness for citizens of His kingdom.

- Strategies to stop the church ultimately serve to spread the church.

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. (Acts 5:41–42)

So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church. (Acts 12:5)

But the word of God increased and multiplied. (Acts 12:24)

He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance. (Acts 28:30–31)

53 The proclamation of the gospel poses a threat to idolatrous, immoral, and/or unjust practices.

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. (Acts 16:16–24)

But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. (Acts 17:5–8)

Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. (Acts 19:18–20)

About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship." When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. (Acts 19:23–29)

- Such situations require wisdom in the moment.
- Such situations require perseverance over _____ time _____.

54 **God calls leaders in His church to teach all of His Word, regardless of the _____ risk _____.**

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:22–32)

- Because of what's at stake.

The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman, and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people, then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life. But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand. So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his

iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.”
(Ezekiel 33:1–9)

- Because of who is _____ Lord _____.
- Because of threats among us.
- Because of needs around us.

55 God _____ uses _____ citizens, citizenship, rulers, systems, and structures of government for the spread of the gospel.

- From civil authorities . . .

But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, “Let those men go.” And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.” But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.” The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. So they came and apologized to them.
(Acts 16:35–39a)

- To courts.

And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.” But when Paul was about to open his

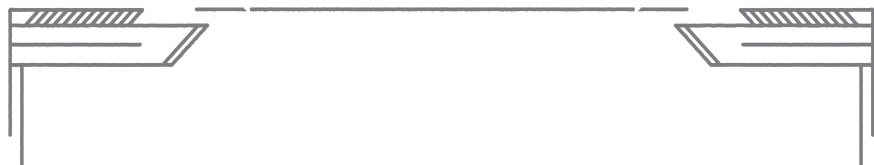
mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things." And he drove them from the tribunal. (Acts 18:8–16)

- From trade over land . . .

And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (Acts 19:8–10)

- To travel by sea.

But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar." Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, "To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go." (Acts 25:10–12)



BIBLICAL TRUTHS: LETTERS

Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

“It is often supposed that Paul’s only political comment is Romans 13:1–7, where he states that God has ordained ‘the powers that be’; but this just shows how far our traditions have taken us away from reality. There is no space to explore this in detail, but in almost every letter Paul demonstrates that Jesus is Lord, and that Caesar isn’t; that the ‘gospel’ of Jesus upstages the ‘gospel’ of Caesar; that the true salvation is achieved through Jesus, not Caesar; that the world needs God’s justice, not Roman justice; and, with great irony, that the cross, a hated symbol of Roman rule, had been transformed into the life-giving symbol of God’s self-giving love. Paul’s central arguments constitute a massive outflanking movement against the imperial rhetoric of his day (emperor-worship was the fastest-growing religion of the time).” – N.T. Wright

56 The local church is a political outpost of God’s kingdom designed for the spread of God’s gospel and the display of God’s _____ glory.

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 3:8–10)

- The local church is a political outpost of God’s kingdom . . .
 - A gathering of kingdom citizens.

To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours . . . (1 Corinthians 1:2)

- An earthly assembly of a heavenly reality.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (Hebrews 12:22–24)

- A royal nation under God.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Peter 2:9–10)

- A congregation of sojourners, exiles, and aliens in this world.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11)

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. (Hebrews 11:13–16)

- Designed for the spread of God's gospel . . .
 - Ambassadors of the King.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of

reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. (2 Corinthians 5:17–6:1)

- Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:18b–20)

- And the display of God's glory.

- Through a diversity of members.

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Romans 12:4–5)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

- Brought together as one body.

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing

wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:11–22)

57

Christians have _____ dual _____ citizenship: we are temporary citizens on earth with eternal citizenship in heaven.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have. (Philippians 1:27–30)

- We want our temporary citizenship on earth to be worthy of the gospel.
 - With Christ, not our country, as our life.

| *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)*

- Standing side by side as the church, not our political party.
- Striving and suffering together for the gospel, which is what matters _____ most _____.

| *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his*

glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (Philippians 3:20–21)

- We want our citizenship in heaven to be our fundamental identity.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained. (Philippians 3:12–16)

- The twofold prize for which we live:
 - The completion of our salvation.
 - We live to look like Jesus.

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:7–11)

- The crown of others' salvation.

Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. (Philippians 4:1)

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:9)

For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.
(1 Thessalonians 2:19–20)

- We live so others love Jesus.

To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:14)

58

Christians are _____ submissive _____ citizens of government and free servants of God.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. (Romans 13:1–7)

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (1 Peter 2:13–17)

- Christians are submissive citizens of government.
 - Government is given by God to restrain evil.

- Government is given by God to promote good.
- Christians are free servants of God.
 - We use our freedom in Christ to model good lives.
 - Holy lives.

Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. (Titus 3:1–11)

- Honorable speech.

With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. (James 3:9)

- Hard work.

Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the

brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, and to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one. (1 Thessalonians 4:9–12)

- We use our freedom in Christ to show God's love.
 - We honor everyone, especially our leaders.
 - We care for the church.
 - We fear God.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. (1 Peter 3:14–17)

59 Christians honor Christ by uniting around His Word and refusing to divide over non-essential differences in the world (including non-essential political differences).

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. (Romans 14:1)

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5–6)

- When God's Word speaks clearly and essentially about an issue, obey the Word.

| *For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23c)*

- When God's Word does not speak clearly and essentially about an issue, do what you believe best honors Jesus.

One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. (Romans 14:5–8)

- When others in the church have different convictions on decisions that are not clearly and essentially addressed in God's Word, love them.

Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. (Romans 12:9–10)

For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. (Romans 14:15)

- Listen to and respect others' convictions.

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger . . . (James 1:19)

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1–3)

- Refuse to disparage or quarrel with one another.

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. (Romans 14:1)

Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? (Romans 14:10)

For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. (Romans 14:15)

- Build your relationships with others on what is clear and essential in God's Word.

So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. (Romans 14:19)

- Look for opportunities to please others in the church who have different convictions than you.

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." (Romans 15:1–3)

- Christians live in Christ-bought harmony.

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (Romans 15:5–7)

- Christians live with God-glorifying hope.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. (Romans 15:13)

60

When appropriate, Christians wisely settle various disputes with one another as the church.

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!

(1 Corinthians 6:1–8)

- The overall problem . . .
 - Christians were denying the wisdom they had in the church.
 - Christians were destroying the witness they had in the world.
 - Christians were disobeying the will of God in the _____ gospel _____.
 - We sacrifice our rights to show the love of Christ to another.

. . . and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things. (1 Corinthians 4:12–13)

But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. (Matthew 5:39–40)

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

- We strive for reconciliation with one another in Christ.

Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (Romans 12:16–18)

- The general principles . . .
 - Christians are subject to governing authorities for our good.
 - When _____ appropriate _____, Christians settle disputes among themselves.

61 God holds _____ people _____, not government, ultimately responsible for nurturing marriages and raising children.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:22–33)

- God holds husbands responsible for loving their wives sacrificially.
- God holds wives responsible for respecting their husbands submissively.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:1–4)

- God holds children responsible for honoring their parents obediently.
- God holds parents responsible for raising their children lovingly.

God commands His people to pray for all people, and particularly for government leaders.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. (1 Timothy 2:1–6)

- Who do we pray for?
 - Every kind of person.
 - Leaders in high positions.
- What do we pray for?
 - The promotion of peace.
 - The spread of salvation.
 - God desires the salvation of all peoples.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezekiel 33:11)

- God deserves the honor of all peoples.

Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:21–22)

- Jesus died for the rescue of all peoples.

And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”
(Revelation 5:9–10)

- Government exists to do justice in such a way that the church is able to live in godliness while spreading the gospel.
- By God’s design, the progress of the gospel in the world is
_____ dependent _____ on the prayers of God’s people in the church.

When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. (Revelation 8:1–5)

63 Governments in this world are exceedingly _____ imperfect _____, and they will all pass away.

- Remember . . .

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near. (Revelation 1:1–3)

And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22:7)

- The book of Revelation is not intended to promote hopeless speculation about times and events in the future.
- The book of Revelation is intended to fuel hopeful obedience amidst trials and temptations in the present.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk." And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations." And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (Revelation 17:1–6)

- Two main characters . . .
 - An attractive woman who symbolizes worldly seduction.
 - A picture of infidelity.
 - A picture of idolatry.
 - A picture of immorality.
 - A beast that symbolizes worldly _____ persecution _____.

This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while. As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for

| *one hour, together with the beast. These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. (Revelation 17:9–13)*

- A picture of government acting as a god.
 - Functioning as divine authority.
 - Instead of _____ under _____ divine authority.
- A picture of mighty empires and ungodly leaders.
- Two main actions . . .
 - The woman is devoured by the beast.
 - The woman disappears from the earth.
- Two primary takeaways . . .
 - The kingdoms of this world are full of deceptive _____ attractions _____.
 - Sensual pleasures.

| *For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living. (Revelation 18:3)*

- Material possessions.

| *Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! (Revelation 18:16)*

- The promise of satisfaction.

| *As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, “I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.” (Revelation 18:7)*

- The hope of security.
- The insatiable lust for power.
- The subtle lure of pride.

- o The kingdoms of this world are headed to a definite conclusion.

And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!" The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste. Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!" Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth." (Revelation 18:9–24)

- They will be destroyed completely.
- They will be destroyed suddenly.
- They will be destroyed eternally.

64 The perfect government of God is coming to this world, and it will last forever.

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God . . .” (Revelation 19:1)

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth.” (Revelation 11:15–18)

- For all who turn from Jesus . . .
 - An eternity of never-ending judgment in hell.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11–15)

- For all who trust in Jesus . . .
 - An eternity of ever-increasing _____joy_____ in heaven.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son." (Revelation 21:1–7)

- God will be with us.
 - God the Father . . .
 - Seated on the throne of the universe, dwelling in unapproachable light, surrounded by unending praise, holy above all, with power over all, eternally existent and infinitely glorious, supreme above all things, the Sustainer of all things, and sovereign over all things.
 - God the Son . . .
 - The conquering Savior who redeems, the cosmic Lord who rules, and the consummate King who will reign forever, whose worth is undisputed, whose work is unforgettable, and whose worship is universal.
 - God the Spirit . . .
 - The omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent One who enacts judgment and enables salvation for all.

- We will be with God.
 - Death will be replaced by life (no more sin, sorrow, sickness, or separation).
 - Night will be replaced by light.
 - Corruption will be replaced by purity.
 - Curse will be replaced by blessing.
 - Our bodies will be resurrected, creation will be restored, and we will reign with Him in His government forever and ever.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 22:1–5)

BIBLICAL TRUTHS

1. All governance belongs to God.
2. Human governance is delegated by God.
3. All grace comes from God.
4. Sin is defiance of God's governance that leads to disorder in God's world.
5. The most basic foundation for government is the equality of all people made in God's image.
6. The most basic responsibility of government is to do justice by promoting good and punishing evil.
7. The most basic action of government is to prosecute crimes that harm people, not crimes that dishonor God.
8. Leaders of government are responsible to God and will be judged by God.
9. Wise leaders share responsibility for government with trustworthy leaders who fear God.
10. The Ten Commandments comprise a clear foundation for God's governance of His people and a wise foundation for human governance of all people.
11. God's just governance promotes love for all peoples.
12. God's just governance promotes righteousness in judicial, social, and commercial transactions.
13. God's just governance promotes care for the poor.
14. God calls leaders among His people to lead in ways that reflect His governance.
15. The government of a people is a reflection of the God or gods they serve.
16. Evil abounds when everyone does what is right in his own eyes.
17. God is the perfect Leader with ultimate authority who entrusts imperfect leaders to govern with delegated authority.
18. God's standards for those who govern are different from the world's standards for those who govern.
19. God promised to send a perfect King, His Son, from the line of David to redeem His people from sin and to reign over all peoples with justice.
20. Sexual sin among those who govern is especially serious and carries far-reaching consequences in their governance.
21. Prideful ambition is an extremely dangerous weapon in the heart of those who govern.

22. Wisdom from God is essential for just governance.
23. It is right (and at least sometimes required) for those with God's Word to humbly, honorably, and boldly confront wickedness in worldly government.
24. God possesses all power over all governments and all who govern in them.
25. God ultimately uses governments and those who govern to accomplish His redemptive purposes for His people.
26. God derides and will ultimately destroy nations who defy or defame Him.
27. A just leader is a blessing to a nation.
28. We should pray for God's justice to reign on the earth.
29. Wise government fears God.
30. Wise government shows discernment.
31. Wise government requires wise leadership.
32. Injustice and oppression are sober realities in a sinful world.
33. God is holy and just, and He hates unjust government.
34. Injustice in government is grounded in the idolatry of false gods.
35. Religion in the name of God is a detestable mask for injustice in government.
36. God's people should seek the welfare of the nation in which they live.
37. It is unjust for government to mandate or restrict worship.
38. Allegiance to God takes priority over allegiance to government.
39. It is possible for pride in our own nation to keep us from compassion for all nations.
40. God requires His people to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with Him.
41. Jesus is the promised perfect King, God's Son, sent from the line of David to redeem God's people from sin and reign over all peoples with justice.
42. Jesus was opposed by unjust government.
43. Followers of Jesus will be opposed by unjust government.
44. Followers of Jesus sometimes stay amidst persecution and sometimes flee from persecution.
45. As citizens of a government, followers of Jesus have two guiding commands: love God supremely, and love others selflessly.
46. Followers of Jesus support governmental authority under God's authority.

47. The kingdom of Jesus is radically different from the kingdoms of this world.
48. The proclamation of the gospel is the proclamation of a King and His kingdom.
49. Proclaimers of the gospel are empowered by the Spirit of the King for the spread of His kingdom.
50. The proclamation of the gospel creates a unique political community called the church.
51. The proclamation of the gospel may require disobedience to a government.
52. The aim of persecution from the government is to silence the gospel. But the gospel cannot be silenced.
53. The proclamation of the gospel poses a threat to idolatrous, immoral, and/or unjust practices.
54. God calls leaders in His church to teach all of His Word, regardless of the risk.
55. God uses citizens, citizenship, rulers, systems, and structures of government for the spread of the gospel.
56. The local church is a political outpost of God's kingdom designed for the spread of God's gospel and the display of God's glory.
57. Christians have dual citizenship: we are temporary citizens on earth with eternal citizenship in heaven.
58. Christians are submissive citizens of government and free servants of God.
59. Christians honor Christ by uniting around His Word and refusing to divide over non-essential differences in the world (including non-essential political differences).
60. When appropriate, Christians wisely settle various disputes with one another as the church.
61. God holds people, not government, ultimately responsible for nurturing marriages and raising children.
62. God commands His people to pray for all people, and particularly for government leaders.
63. Governments in this world are exceedingly imperfect, and they will all pass away.
64. The perfect government of God is coming to this world, and it will last forever.



GOSPEL CONCLUSIONS

G: God's Character

God is the loving Creator, sovereign King, and holy Judge of all.

- God alone, and not government, is ultimately worthy of all glory.

But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (Acts 5:29–32)

- God alone, and not government, is ultimately worthy of all our worship.
 - God alone, and not government, is ultimately worthy of all our trust.
 - God alone, and not government, is ultimately worthy of all our affections.
 - God alone, and not government, is ultimately worthy of all our allegiance.
- To the extent that governments and leaders reflect God's character, those governments and leaders will be good for citizens.

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice! Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! (Psalm 72:1–4)

- Envision governments and leaders reflecting God's love.
- Envision governments and leaders reflecting God's wisdom.
- Envision governments and leaders reflecting God's justice.

- Envision governments and leaders reflecting God's authority.

O: Offense of Sin

Men and women are wonderfully and uniquely created by God, yet we have rebelled against Him, are separated from Him, and deserve death before Him.

- In a sinful world, government possesses _____ authority _____ from God to do justice.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. (Romans 13:1–4)

- To promote good and punish evil.
 - To protect liberty and promote family.
 - To affirm equality and fuel prosperity.
 - To help the poor and support the oppressed.
- In a sinful world, government is a battleground of _____ gods _____ that leads to injustice.

Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." (Psalm 2:1–3)

- The idolatry of self, sex, money, rights, prominence, and power (particularly among leaders).

- Leads to corruption, oppression, discrimination, persecution, and degradation among nations.

S: Sufficiency of Christ

Jesus is God in the flesh, the long-awaited King who has come to live a perfect and powerful life, to die a sacrificial and substitutionary death, and to rise from the grave in victory over sin, Satan, and death.

- Jesus is the only perfect Leader, and He will one day govern over all.

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.
(Revelation 19:11–16)

- Jesus is the only possible Redeemer, and He desires the salvation of all.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. (1 Timothy 2:1–6)

P: Personal Response

God calls all people in all nations to repent and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, turning from all idols to declare allegiance to Jesus alone as King and trusting in Jesus alone as Lord of one's life.

- Followers of Jesus possess an entirely new political identity.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself. (Philippians 3:20–21)

- Two passports . . .
 - We are citizens of a temporary country on earth.
 - We are citizens of an eternal country in heaven.
- Two effects . . .
 - Persecution from government is expected.
 - Opposition to government is possible.
- Followers of Jesus comprise an entirely new political community.

To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 3:8–10)

- The church is the most important political community on earth.
 - It's where the nations *can* see the just governance of God.
- The church is the most important political community for the Christian.
 - It's where the nations *must* see the just governance of God.

E: Eternal Urgency

Hell is the eternal, horrifying destination for all who turn from Jesus, and heaven is the eternal, satisfying dwelling place of God for all who trust in Jesus.

- Our ultimate hope is in God and His kingdom, not _____government_____ in our country.

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." (Revelation 11:15)

- Our ultimate aim is people's salvation, not political _____position_____.

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:22–27)

L: Life Transformation

All who believe the gospel are new creations: filled with God's Spirit, children in God's family, members of God's church, and heirs of God's kingdom.

- Christians honor government through _____good_____ _____works_____ in any nation.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish

those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (1 Peter 2:13–17)

- The church honors God by spreading the _____gospel_____ to every nation.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18–20)



PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

Recognize clearly what God has said in His Word about government.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel . . . (Philippians 1:27)

- Recognize the role of God.

O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. (Isaiah 37:16)

- He is the Creator who has authority over all.
- He is the Judge to whom all will give account.
- He is the Savior who desires the redemption of all.
- He is the King to whom all glory belongs.

- Recognize the _____ responsibility _____ of government.

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. (1 Peter 2:13–14)

- To do justice.
- To promote good.
- To punish evil.

- Recognize the _____ limits _____ of government.

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
(Ezekiel 36:26–27)

- Government cannot remedy human depravity.
- Government cannot change the human heart.
- Recognize the power of government.

Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son! (Psalm 72:1)

- Government influences the spiritual makeup of a nation.
- Government influences the moral fabric of a nation.

Distinguish carefully between God’s Word and our wisdom regarding government.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:1–4)

The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.
(Proverbs 1:1–7)

God's Word <-----> Our Wisdom

"Rules of the Game"

Biblically mandated
 Direct, straight line to positions and policies
 Binding on a Christian's conscience—"must do"
 Clear and unchanging across cultures and times
 Firm Grip / Closed Hand

"Strategy for the game"

Biblically informed
 Indirect, jagged line to positions and policies
 Freedom in a Christian's conscience—"can do"
 Complex calculations in various cultures at various times
 Loose Grip / Open Hand

The diagrams and images used in this Study Guide are adapted from Jonathan Leeman's course titled "Christians and Government" at 9marks.org.

- Distinguish between primary and secondary _____ political _____ positions.

Your righteousness is righteous forever, and your law is true.

(Psalm 119:142)

- Primary: That which is essential to the integrity of Christian faith and practice.
 - Christians (Bible-believing, gospel-embracing followers of Jesus) _____ divide _____ over political positions of **primary** magnitude that are **clear** in Scripture and **essential** to Christianity, and for those who don't share these political positions, it is **questionable** if they are Christians and is likely cause for church **excommunication**.
- Secondary: That which is not essential to the integrity of Christian faith and practice.
 - Christians _____ disagree _____ over political positions of **secondary** magnitude that are **less clear** in Scripture and **not essential** to Christianity, and while these Christians **may remain together in the same church**, these differences may mean **less partnership** with one another in the political arena, even as these Christians are glad to still **stand together around political issues of primary magnitude**.
- Distinguish between church and _____ state _____.

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." (John 18:33–36)

- Government, not the church, has authority to use the sword.
- Church, not the government, has authority to declare salvation.
- Distinguish between rigidity and flexibility.

The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving. (Proverbs 14:8)

- On one side: rigidity regarding issues of God's Word.
- On the other side: flexibility regarding issues of our wisdom.
- Across the spectrum:
 - Competing injustices.
 - Potential compromises.
- Distinguish between prescribed and criminalized.

And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image." (Genesis 9:5–6)

- Sin should not ever be prescribed by government.
- Not all sin should be criminalized by government.
- Distinguish between creating and executing.

So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people. (2 Samuel 8:15)

- We create laws rightly.
- We execute laws impartially.
- Distinguish between process and opportunity .
 - Justice means fair process.

You shall not pervert justice. You shall not show partiality, and you shall not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Deuteronomy 16:19–20)

- Justice means fair opportunity.

May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor! (Psalm 72:4)

- Distinguish between personal responsibility and systemic realities .

But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves and made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and brick, and in all kinds of work in the field. In all their work they ruthlessly made them work as slaves. (Exodus 1:12–14)

- Opportunity in any nation is a right.
- Privilege in any nation is a reality.
- So acknowledge every individual within a surrounding structure.
- And acknowledge how the surrounding structure affects every individual.
- Distinguish between rights and right .

Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just? (Genesis 18:25)

- Justice is not simply giving people their rights (according to their definition of rights).
- Justice is ultimately doing that which is right (according to God's definition of right).
- Distinguish between temporary and eternal.

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.
(2 Corinthians 4:17–18)

- Work hard for that which is temporary.
- Work hardest for that which is eternal.

Unite joyfully around God's Word in the church as we work charitably in the world according to our wisdom.

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:1–6)

- Prioritize the church.
 - Jesus does not tie himself to a political party; Jesus ties himself to a local church.
 - We don't prioritize political party; we prioritize local church.
 - The most important thing Christians can do politically is to be the church.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world

may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.
(John 17:20–23)

- Unity in the church is so important that Jesus died for it.
- The unity that the church displays to the world affects the _____ spread _____ of the gospel in the world.
- Live in _____ diverse _____ community.
 - Across political lines.
 - Across generational lines.
 - Across racial/ethnic lines.
 - Where we acknowledge and _____ appreciate _____ our differences.
 - Where we address our disagreements.
- Listen to and learn from one another.
- Love and _____ defer _____ to one another.
- Particular application for pastors and church leaders . . .

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Timothy 4:1–4)

- Proclaim God's _____ Word _____, not your wisdom.
 - Work hard not to bind the consciences of church members over that which is not clear in God's Word.
 - Work hard not to make statements that ignore proficient knowledge and practical nuance.
- Place your _____ emphasis _____ in the church on that which promotes unity around Christ.

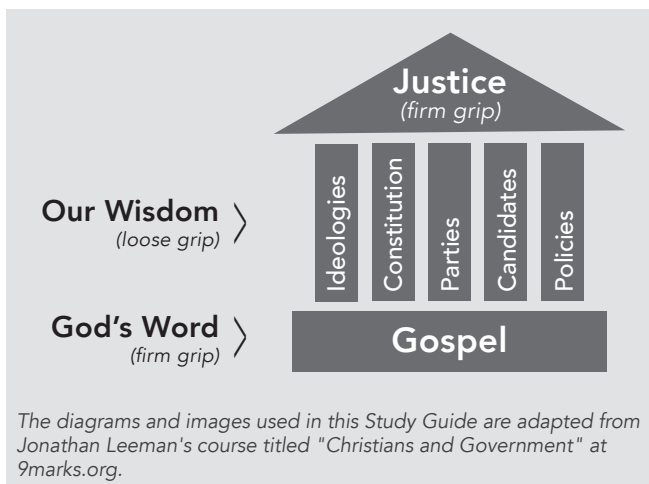
- Work hard not to alienate church members over non-essential differences of conscience.
- Work hard not to tie the _____ name _____ of Jesus where Jesus has not tied His name.
 - Jesus has not tied His name to certain political parties.
 - Jesus has not tied His name to certain political candidates.
- Exalt the name of _____ Christ _____.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2:9–11)

- Jesus does not tie himself to political parties or candidates; Jesus ties himself to a local church and Christians.
 - We don't tie Jesus to political _____ parties _____ and candidates; we tie Jesus to local _____ churches _____ and Christians.
 - The most important thing churches can do is exalt the name of Christ.
- Be careful with how we use His name.
 - Be careful when labeling something “the Christian position.”
 - Be careful when labeling someone “the Christian candidate.”
- Be cautious with how we use our words.
 - Be cautious when labeling something “a _____ gospel _____ issue.”
 - Be cautious when labeling someone “_____ God’s _____ person.”

Live justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with God in our nation.

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)



- Live justly.
 - Live with integrity.

Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out. (Proverbs 10:9)

- Strive for justice in your political positions.
- Strive for justice in your _____personal_____ life.

- Care for family.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

- Steward our God-given responsibility for exalting Christ in marriage.
- Steward our God-given responsibility for raising children through _____parents_____.

- Work for liberty.

Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. (1 Peter 2:16)

- Freedom of religion is ultimately given by God.
- Freedom of religion is rightly granted by government.
 - Government does not exist for the establishment of religion.
 - Government does not exist for the elimination of religion.
 - Government exists for the exercise of religion.
 - Not just in episodic gatherings, but in everyday life.
 - Those who gather for worship in private settings scatter to live out their faith in the public square.
- Wisely engage in the struggle for liberty in your nation.
 - Work to stay out of jail for your faith.
 - Prepare to go to jail for your faith.
- Appropriately engage in the struggle for liberty in other nations.
 - Generally, on behalf of all people.
 - Specifically, on behalf of the church.

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. (Hebrews 13:3)

- Learn about the persecuted church.
 - Listen to the persecuted church.
 - Pray for the persecuted church.
 - Serve alongside the persecuted church.
- Be the best citizen possible.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. (1 Peter 2:15)

- Work for the poor and the oppressed.
- Persuade people for the good.

- Pay your taxes to the government.
- Vote for just policies and candidates.
 - Evaluate personal _____ character _____.
 - Evaluate professional judgment.
 - Evaluate political ideology.
 - Evaluate cultural direction.
 - Evaluate _____ ultimate _____ commitments.
- Be the best _____ Christian _____ possible.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel . . . (Philippians 1:27)

- Love your neighbor.

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)

- Neighbor love realizes that our _____ rights _____ are not most important.
- Neighbor love realizes that others' needs are far more important.

For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. (1 Corinthians 9:19–23)

- Become like your Savior.

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. (Isaiah 42:1–4)

*By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.
(1 John 3:16–18)*

- Love _____ kindness _____.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Colossians 4:5–6)

- Are your thoughts, desires, actions, and words _____gracious_____?
 - Is your tone authentically empathetic?
 - Is your timing appropriately patient?
- Are your thoughts, desires, actions, and words charitable?
 - Are you assuming the worst in others?
 - Are you acknowledging good in others?
 - In disagreeing about ideas, are you demonizing _____people_____?
 - In your zeal for truth, are you acknowledging trade-offs?
- Are your thoughts, desires, actions, and words intentional?
 - “How did you come to that conclusion?”
 - “Help me understand your perspective.”
- Are your thoughts, desires, actions, and words _____fair_____?
 - Are you assembling “straw men”?
 - Are you attacking “straw men”?
- Are your thoughts, desires, actions, and words fitting?

- Not all issues are equally important.
- Not all errors are equally evil.

◦ Are your thoughts, desires, actions, and words intelligent?

An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. (Proverbs 18:15)

- Have you researched responsibly?
- Or are you responding ignorantly?

• Walk humbly.

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience . . .
(Colossians 3:12)

- In your approach to politics and party.
 - Most any political party has strengths and weaknesses.
 - Most any political party has idolatrous trajectories.
 - No political parties have a justice monopoly.
 - Sometimes, God's Word may lead you to unlikely alliances.
 - Other times, God's Word may lead you to stand alone.
- In your posture before God and others.
 - Acknowledge grace from God in your life.
 - Celebrate grace from God in others' lives.
 - In their motives and their gifts.
 - Even (or especially) when their views are different than yours.

“Christians have influenced governments positively throughout history. Historian Alvin Schmidt points out how the spread of Christianity and Christian influence on government was primarily responsible for outlawing infanticide, child abandonment, and abortion in the Roman Empire (in AD 374); outlawing the brutal battles-to-the-death in which thousands of gladiators

had died (in 404); outlawing the cruel punishment of branding the faces of criminals (in 315); instituting prison reforms such as the segregating of male and female prisoners (by 361); stopping the practice of human sacrifice among the Irish, the Prussians, and the Lithuanians as well as among other nations; outlawing pedophilia; granting of property rights and other protections to women; banning polygamy (which is still practiced in some Muslim nations today); prohibiting the burning alive of widows in India (in 1829); outlawing the painful and crippling practice of binding young women's feet in China (in 1912); persuading government officials to begin a system of public schools in Germany (in the sixteenth century); and advancing the idea of compulsory education of all children in a number of European countries. During the history of the church, Christians have had a decisive influence in opposing and often abolishing slavery in the Roman Empire, in Ireland, and in most of Europe (though Schmidt frankly notes that a minority of 'erring' Christian teachers have supported slavery in various centuries). In England, William Wilberforce, a devout Christian, led the successful effort to abolish the slave trade and then slavery itself throughout the British Empire by 1840. In the United States, though there were vocal defenders of slavery among Christians in the South, they were vastly outnumbered by the many Christians who were ardent abolitionists, speaking, writing, and agitating constantly for the abolition of slavery in the United States. Schmidt notes that two-thirds of the American abolitionists in the mid-1830s were Christian clergymen, and he gives numerous examples of the strong Christian commitment of several of the most influential of the antislavery crusaders, including Elijah Lovejoy (the first abolitionist martyr), Lyman Beecher, Edward Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe (author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), Charles Finney, Charles T. Torrey, Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, 'and others too numerous to mention.' The American civil rights movement that

resulted in the outlawing of racial segregation and discrimination was led by Martin Luther King Jr., a Christian pastor, and supported by many Christian churches and groups.” – Wayne Grudem

Live zealously for the spread of God’s love and the glory of God’s name among all nations.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18–20)

Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:9–10)

- Pray for God’s kingdom to come.

Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:9–10)

And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. (Revelation 8:3–5)

- Live for God’s commendation alone.

But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

- Cling to the truth of His Word.

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. (Isaiah 40:8)

- Follow the leadership of His Spirit.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

- _____ Long _____ for God's Son to return.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (2 Peter 3:13–18)

- Proclaim His gospel . . .

- To _____ everyone _____ you know.
- To every _____ nation _____ on earth.

- Hasten His coming . . .

- With godly _____ holiness _____ in countries where injustice abounds.

- With all our hope in a kingdom where righteousness dwells.

*He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.
Amen. (Revelation 22:20–21)*

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

For further study on the topics covered in Secret Church 20, see the resources listed below. **Note:** Not everything contained in these resources is endorsed by David Platt or Radical, nor are the political views of the various authors. As always, we encourage you to compare what you read with the teaching of Scripture, which is our ultimate authority.

- Augustine, *City of God*.
- Bacote, Vincent. *The Political Disciple: A Theology of Public Life*.
- Benne, Robert. *Good and Bad Ways to Think about Religion and Politics*.
- Black, Amy E. and Stanley N. Gundry, eds. *Five Views on the Church and Politics*.
- Dever, Mark. *God and Politics: Jesus' Vision for Society, State and Government*.
- Emerson, Michael O. and Christian Smith. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture*.
- Innes, David C. *Christ and the Kingdoms of Men: Foundations of Political Life*.
- Koyzis, David. *Political Visions and Illusions*, 2nd. ed.
- Leeman, Jonathan. *How the Nations Rage: Rethinking Faith and Politics in a Divided Age*.
- Moore, Russell and Andrew T. Walker, eds. The Gospel for Life series (ERLC) ...
 - *The Gospel and Religious Liberty*
 - *The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation*
 - *The Gospel and Abortion*
 - *The Gospel and Same-Sex Marriage*
- Platt, David. *Counter Culture*.

ABOUT DAVID PLATT

David Platt serves as Lead Pastor of McLean Bible Church in Washington D.C. He is the founder and president of Radical, an organization that serves the church in accomplishing the mission of Christ by mobilizing churches to take the gospel to unreached peoples scattered across the globe. Resources from David Platt and Radical can be found at radical.net.

David Platt is the author of *Something Needs to Change*, *Radical*, *Radical Together*, *Follow Me*, and *Counter Culture*, and he has contributed to several volumes in the Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary series.

David Platt received his Ph.D. from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Along with his wife and five children, he lives in the Washington D.C. metro area.

ABOUT RADICAL

Radical exists to serve the church in making disciples among all nations for the glory of God.

We carry out this mission by meeting urgent spiritual and physical needs among the unreached, by training and equipping individuals and churches around the world to take the gospel to the unreached, by hosting catalytic events, and by providing biblical resources in a variety of languages.

Here are a few ways Radical is seeking to serve the church for the sake of Christ's mission:

- **Radical Gap Year**

A nine-month fellowship that exists to assist high school graduates in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ who leverage their entire lives for the sake of God's glory among all nations. The Radical Gap Year is designed to equip and encourage graduates in all areas of life, including godly living, intellectual development, and in terms of everyday responsibilities and life skills.

- **Secret Church**

A unique, one-night event where over 50,000 believers across the world gather via simulcast for intense Bible study and to pray for persecuted believers and the unreached. Secret Church is intended to fuel ongoing disciple-making efforts both locally and globally.

- **Urgent**

Radical's strategic efforts to make Christ known among the unreached. We carry out this goal by addressing the urgent spiritual and physical needs of the hardest to reach peoples and places on the planet.

- **Pray the Word**

A daily podcast from David Platt consisting of a short meditation and prayer based on God's Word. The goal of Pray the Word is to encourage followers of Christ to let their prayers and their lives be shaped by the purposes of God.

To learn more about Radical, go to radical.net.

ABOUT SECRET CHURCH

The idea behind Secret Church comes from time David Platt spent teaching and ministering among underground house churches in Asia. Due to hostility from the government, from the surrounding community, and even from their own family, many of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are forced to gather in secret, sometimes at the risk of their lives.

The plight of our persecuted brothers and sisters also explains why prayer for the persecuted church is a major part of every Secret Church gathering. We remember those who cannot meet openly, asking God to sustain their faith, to change the hearts and the actions of their persecutors, and to use their witness for the spread of the gospel. We also pray for the unreached, those who have little or no access to the gospel.

Why So Much Teaching for One Night?

We realize that each Secret Church study contains too much biblical teaching—over four hours worth!—to digest in one sitting. That's one reason we make it available in bite-size segments at radical.net. However, this deluge of teaching is meant to remind us of the hunger for God's Word that exists among many underground churches around the world. With few opportunities to gather and little access to biblical teaching, our persecuted brothers and sisters may meet for eight to twelve hours at a time simply to sing, pray, and study God's Word.

What's the Goal of This Study?

We hope your faith will be strengthened as you encounter teaching from God's Word in this study. However, the truths you hear are not meant to stop with you. You are encouraged to teach them to others as you meet one-on-one or as you gather in small groups and churches. Secret Church is intended to be a resource for making disciples both locally and globally.

We urge you to consider the role God may have for you and your church as you take the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ to those in your own community and to unreached peoples among the nations. For more Secret Church resources, go to radical.net.

When the majority of people in the underground church can't read well enough to engage with the Bible in text form... you provide it in **audio**.



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- David Platt

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