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A Brief Synopsis of Theonomy

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Bible Text: Colossians 1:18
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Or consider another passage where Paul talks about the exaltation of Christ and its implications, Colossians 1:18. Colossians 1:18.

18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead [with what effect, with what intention?]; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

The exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ means nothing less than this, that the day is coming when tv will glorify the Lord Jesus in all that it portrays. It means nothing less than this, that in all the schools Jesus will be the foundation for the curriculum in every department. It means the medical profession will see itself as serving Jesus and his purposes as Messiah and Creator as it heals bodies. It means that politicians will glorify him and economists will do so. It means the entertainments will all be geared toward glorifying him, that in all things he might have the preeminence. Not Jesus and your favorite basketball player. Not Jesus and your favorite politician. But Jesus will have the preeminence in all areas of life. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, Paul tells us now that we must bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. He's not going to settle for some kind of narrow domain over which to rule.

You know, if Jesus were to bargain with the world to be Lord, I mean it's a heretical hypothetical but let's think about this for a minute, if Jesus were to say, "Well, how much will you give me?" You know, the world might be glad to have some narrow area of religion defined as belonging to Jesus but, of course, it couldn't touch entertainment, and it couldn't touch economics, and it couldn't touch the arts, and it couldn't touch the sciences, and it couldn't touch education, and it couldn't touch and it couldn't touch and it couldn't touch until finally what you're going to have is some very narrow slice of life known as religion pertaining to the inward heart of man in his soul's relationship to God and then the world might say, "You can be Lord there." Guess what? Jesus doesn't settle for that.

Paul says so that every thought must be made captive to the obedience of Christ. All of your thinking in any field whatsoever, in all areas of life must be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ and that's why I've come tonight to declare to you that there can be no political polytheism for us as Christians. Now what am I getting at when I say that? A number of Christians, especially those who have grown up in the tradition of American toleration and pluralism, would tell us that Christians have no right to expect politicians

to base their laws and to follow, to base their laws upon and to make decisions on the basis of God's word. You cannot expect politicians to, in their political life, honor the Lordship of Jesus Christ. That is so pervasive that I'm a minority voice tonight when I come and I speak to you. I'm suggesting that this majority opinion that's taken for granted even by God's people in our day is untrue and therefore unfaithful to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Does Jesus settle for the idea that he can be Lord over all but don't touch politics? Does Jesus settle for the idea that every knee should bow to him except, of course, politicians? Is Jesus satisfied that every tongue should sing his praise and every thought brought into captivity to his word except, of course, when you're talking and thinking about politics? That is not biblical at all. That's humanistic. That's the kind of thing that comes from outside the Bible that's imposed on the Bible so that the Bible will fit into our traditions, so that the Bible, then, will conform to our preconceived ideas. I'm here to declare that Jesus is not just king over all creation minus Washington, DC but he's king over all creation, period. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords so Paul says in 1 Timothy 6:15, "the King of kings." Think about that. He's not just the best of kings, King of kings in that sense, but he's the one who rules over all the other kings. He's the king over the other kings. They, therefore, owe him their allegiance and obedience.

Turn in your Bibles to Revelation 1:5 to see what the Apostle John declared about Jesus even in a book where he's going to go on and talk about the persecution of God's people and the historic opposition of political rulers to the church of Jesus Christ. John declares in Revelation 1:5 that his message is "from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." Notice he goes on to say, "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father." He talks about Jesus being the faithful witness, the prophet. He talks about Jesus loosening us from our sins by his blood, the priest. And declares he is presently the ruler of the kings of the earth. King of kings, the best of kings, for sure, but King of king also in the sense that he's the king over kings. He is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

This, of course, upset the Roman Empire and it upsets people today. They don't want that kind of anointed one. They want someone who's anointed to talk and teach, someone who's anointed to die and offer a sacrifice for sins, but they don't want someone anointed to have dominion, they don't want someone to have rule over them, they don't want Jesus to reign. And if he is to reign, they don't want him to reign in this controversial area known as politics. So in Acts, the 17th chapter, verse 7, you'll notice why the early church got into trouble in the ancient empire of Rome. Acts 17:7, we read here that Jason and the brethren were dragged before the rulers of the city and the accusation was that these Christians had turned the world upside down. [laughter] That's exactly right. That's what we're aiming to do, is to turn it upside down. Of course, we believe we're turning it right side up. So here's this accusation, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar." You see, they're political rebels. They're not submissive to what the Roman Empire decrees. And how is it that the Christians were acting contrary to the decrees of

Caesar? It says right there at the end of the verse, "saying that there is another king, named Jesus." You see, that was the declaration of the early church, Jesus is the king. Jesus is Lord. And therefore even Caesar must answer to him.

Don't you love the account of how Jesus stood before Pilate and Pilate is cross-examining him and putting him through this drill? Pilate says, "So, you were born to be a king? Do I have that right?" Jesus says, "You've said it." In other words, "I'm not going to argue about this. That's what you said." And Pilate, you know, at one point gets a little testy and suggests that Jesus should realize who he's talking to, that he has the power of life and death over Jesus. Jesus says, "Let me tell you something, you wouldn't have any authority if it weren't given to you from above. And by the way, that's where my kingdom is from, it's from above. That's why my soldiers aren't out there fighting, you know? My followers, they don't need to do that kind of thing because my kingdom is not of this world, my kingdom doesn't arise from here as yours does." My kingdom, you see what he was saying if Pilate had the smarts to figure it out, Jesus was saying, "My kingdom rules over yours already, Pilate."

Yes, there is another king and his name is Jesus and he's king not just in some ethereal spiritual sense, that's not just the sort of thing we teach children to sing in Sunday school and yet they go through the rest of their life and they say, "Boy, this is a strange king. He doesn't seem to rule anywhere." He's the King of kings. He's the ruler of the kings of the earth and none of them have authority apart from him. But when we declare that, people will think we're turning the world upside down. "Well, you troublemakers. You know, why don't you just go with the flow? Why don't you just, you know, fit into our culture? Let everybody have their own political and religious opinions and be quiet? If you believe that about Jesus, go believe it over there but don't bother us with that. Don't try to bring the kingship of Jesus Christ out in public. Jesus is king in a closet, fine. Jesus is king in your hearts is fine. Don't make him king in our society." Jesus doesn't settle for that and he shouldn't. The Bible doesn't settle for that and you shouldn't.

Look at Psalm 2:10-12. We really could look at the whole Psalm, we don't have time to do that tonight but I would remind you that this Psalm is about political opposition to Jesus. The nations are raging and the kings of the earth and the rulers are taking counsel against who? The Lord's anointed, the Messiah, the Christos. They're taking, you see, they're making their plans against Jesus. They don't want Jesus to rule over them. God's response in verse 4 is, you see God doesn't quake in fear before the nations, he laughs. He laughs at them in derision and then in his sore displeasure he'll speak to them and declare as verse 6 tells us, "I have set my king Upon my holy hill of Zion. I decide who will be king and I have established him and he is my Son."

Now what should the response of the nations be to that? Verses 10 through 12 gives us our answer, "Now therefore be wise, O ye kings: Be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, And rejoice with trembling. Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way, For his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him." Do you know what we should be declaring to the political rulers of our day, what we should be saying to the kings of the earth and the judges of the earth? Kiss

Jesus. And what does that mean? Sometimes we get a little, you know, uncomfortable with this language of kissing and so forth. How are they supposed to kiss him? I think it would be good if you understood the symbolism of that culture. 1 Samuel 10:1 will explain it to you pretty nicely, I think. 1 Samuel 10:1, we read there, "Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head," this is Saul being anointed as king, "Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?" You see, the kiss here was the kiss of recognition and submission. He anoints his head with oil and kisses him in recognition that Jehovah has made him king.

So now the kings of the earth and the judges of the earth are to kiss the Son. They are to willingly submit and acknowledge that he has been chosen to rule over them by Jehovah God. No, we don't have a polytheistic approach to politics in the Bible. There is only and there is always but one God and he rules over all, and Jesus being the Son of God has been appointed to rule over all areas of life including politics. But now we've got to ask another question: if Jesus is the king, if he's the Lord exalted above all, if he is the king over other kings, and the Bible says that, if they are called upon to serve him with fear and to acknowledge his Lordship, then how does he rule them and by what rules does he rule them? Where are the rules of the king found? What kind of king would it be that didn't have rules? Now sometimes we can say things in words and empty the content of those words, take away what the concept those words talk about is by qualifying qualifying qualifying.

I think I can illustrate this. Let's say that I own a real nice car, that would be great. Let's say that I own a Maserati, and I come to you some day and say, "George, you now own my Maserati. I give it to you." George is pretty excited about that. He'd be happy to have that kind of car to drive around in. I say, "Now but there's just a few qualifications here, George. I want you to follow along now. In the first place, though you own this Maserati, you can't drive it, okay? You own it but you cannot drive it and you can't sit in it either. I don't want you to sit in it, just enjoy being there. I don't want you to take it down the road. Don't want you to sit in it. Don't want you to ever move it. And by the way, I don't want you to sell it either and so you don't have the right to sell it, you don't have the right to destroy it, you don't have the right to use it but it's your car." Now you'd probably after awhile and I could expand the illustration, you get to the point where after awhile you'd say, "Well, what does it mean to say that George owns this car when all of those things that go with ownership aren't granted to him? That's just an empty hollow set of words, you own this car."

In the same way, when we say that Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, we may not empty that of its biblical significance by going into qualifying qualifying qualifying and saying, "But Jesus can't do this, and Jesus can't do that. And he is a king but he doesn't have any laws for these politicians to follow." If Jesus is the king, if he's the ruler, then he's got rules to be followed. On the day of judgment, he's going to judge the kings and the judges of the earth and by what standard will he judge them? Obviously he has rules, he has principles, he has moral criteria that they are supposed to live up to

and where do we find that? Think he wrote it on a rock somewhere? No, you know where you find the rules that Jesus lays down, right here in the Bible.

Oh, but now we're in trouble because here we are, we've been trying to be faithful to the Bible, follow the logic of the Bible all along and we've talked ourselves right into a direct contradiction to the whole spirit of our age. What do you think people are going to say when you tell them, "You know, our politicians, they're supposed to obey this book." They're going to say, "Hey, haven't you ever heard of the separation of church and state?" And you're going to say, "Hey, haven't you ever heard of the kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ?" Maybe you haven't understood the separation of church and state in the biblical way that it is to be understood because according to the Bible, there's a separation between the state and the family too but the family still has to follow God's word. The church is to follow God's word and the state is to follow God's word. That doesn't mean that the family is the state or the family is the church or the church is the state. They're all separate but they all are subject to the king.

So where do we find the standards for political ethics in our day? We find them in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. "The Old Testament as well, Dr. Bahnsen?" Well, if you're asking that question, you need to go back to what I told you last night. I'm just going to take that for granted. Hopefully I've already shown you that according to the teaching of God's word, his law is absolute. It reflects his own character which is unchanging. So when we find the principles of right and wrong, we find them in the Old as well as in the New Testament. Now those are the principles of right and wrong, the moral principles of the Old and New Testament, and Jesus is King over kings and they must obey his law, then they must obey his law in Old as well as New Testaments.

I think I can prove this to you if you stop and think about the biblical concept of justice. When God lays down his law, his law defines what is just, what is right and wrong, what is fair, to use the kind of whiny expression of our day. "Well, you know, it's gotta be fair." Well, God shows his fairness, his justice, his righteousness in his law but the law of God was not culturally relative. The law of God and its authority was not restricted just to the boundaries of Israel.

I'll tell you kind of a funny story, funny to me anyway. When I was leaving Southern California to move to Mississippi, we're driving across the country and we were in Texas, of all places, and had a pizza, I was interested in having a beer with my pizza. Now for some of you that's going to put an end to my credibility, I know, but we'll talk about that another time. Here's what I found funny. I ordered this pizza and in California I didn't know anything about this, but the person who served the pizza said, "I can't serve you beer." And I said, "Why is that?" He said, "Because we're a dry county." I said, "I don't want a weather report, I want a beer." And he explained to me, he said, "We're a dry county but the next county over," which he claimed was less than a mile away, I could buy a beer. I said, "Now wait a minute, let me understand this. You mean it's forbidden for me to buy a beer here but if I go across the county line I can buy a beer?" He said, "That's right." And he acted like everybody knows that. Where have you been?

Now that makes a mockery of right and wrong, doesn't it? As though right and wrong are geographically defined. Is the law of God like that? Do you think God said about homosexuality in Israel that it was an abomination in his sight but he said if you go over the county line, it's perfectly all right to be a pervert? Do you think God lays down laws about blasphemy like this that says, "You dare not curse my name, but of course you go over the line into Moab, then it's okay. You can curse me from Moab, it's just only in Israel." Of course not. The law of God defines justice in a universal sense. What's right is right. What is wrong is wrong. Put that into your notes. That's the profound message tonight that God's word is universally binding, that there's no definition of crime in God's eyes that differs from between Israel and the other nations.

God's word is not culturally relative and that means that the moral standards of the law laid down by Moses were not simply for Israel. The Israelites didn't think God was just, that Jehovah was just a tribal deity. They didn't just think, "Well, he's the God of our tribe and so we have to obey his law, but then there are other gods out there." That's political polytheism, other gods, other law orders. The Jews declared that Jehovah was God over all the earth, he was the sovereign Creator and therefore all nations had to serve him, and when God laid down his law, he laid down his law for all men.

I think I can prove that to you if you look at Deuteronomy, the fourth chapter, verses 5 through 8. Deuteronomy 4:5-8. This is Moses declaring the law of God to the Israelites. He says, "Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as Jehovah my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the midst of the land whither ye go in to possess it." And somebody says, "See, Dr. Bahnsen, it says right there they're to do the law in the land. This is the law for Israel. This is a special law. This is a unique situation." In the land they were to do this. Read on. "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what great nation is there, that hath a god so nigh unto them, as Jehovah our God is whensoever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

Moses said, "Go in and keep this law so that the nations would see you, so that the nations would be instructed as to what is right and wrong, so that it would be your wisdom in their eyes. As they look at your civil order, as they look at your society and your families and all the rest, when they look at you they will say what God is there, you know, that is as wise and as good as this God, so near unto his children? What nation is there that has laws so just and righteous as all these laws?" You should probably underline in your Bibles if you're in the habit of marking in your Bible the word "all," because you see, again in our day and age we have these blinders on that tell us, "Well, of course the law was the wisdom of Israel in the sight of the nations when it talked about family life. Of course the law was the wisdom of the Israelites in the eyes of their nations when it talked about economic relations or church affairs or spirituality. But God didn't expect the civil law of Israel to be followed outside." Oh, he didn't? Then why is it that Moses says in verse 6 that these people will hear all these statutes and say this? Why is it in verse 8 they declare of the statutes and ordinances that there are none so righteous as

all this law that I set before you? You see, Moses wasn't infected with this disease of the late 20th century that somehow politics is the king's area but all moral principles are off now and it's just kind of a neutral realm where everyone makes up right and wrong for themselves. All of God's law including the law pertaining to society was to be a model of righteousness, it was to be the wisdom of Israel in the sight of the nations.

Look at Proverbs 8:15 and 16. I'd like to give you a short course in Proverbs. We can't do that but in the eighth chapter you need to know that wisdom, God's wisdom is personified. They were taking something which is an attribute of God and personifying it and treating it like it is a person and this wisdom of God is now speaking. Proverbs 8:15, God's wisdom declares, "By me kings reign, And princes decree justice. By me princes rule, And nobles, even all the judges of the earth." All the judges of the earth, all the kings, all the princes will know justice as they are guided by God's wisdom. And where will they find God's wisdom? Does that sound familiar? Back in Deuteronomy 4 Moses said, "This will be your wisdom in the sight of the nations." I don't understand why it has become so controversial in our day to say these things. It seems to me that it's right on the surface of the scriptures themselves that in political matters princes and judges and kings are to rule by the wisdom of God and God set forth that wisdom in his law, all of his law, because he is the ruler over all of creation.

In Isaiah 10:1 we read, "Woe to those who enact evil statutes." Woe to those who enact evil statutes. God is going to judge legislators who pass laws that are wicked in his eyes. Well, that means they should have some place to find what God would want them to pass as laws, isn't that right? Do you think this is some kind of, you know, cosmic crap shoot, that they're supposed to go to Washington and pass laws but they have no idea what God would want them to do? They have to be afraid that God will say, "Woe to you because you've passed a law that is displeasing to me," and yet he has not shown them what would be pleasing? No, the wisdom of God is found in the Mosaic law. It's found throughout the scriptures.

So we are not to believe that the moral standards of the Mosaic law were only for Israel. We are not to believe that the civil standards of the Mosaic law were only for Israel. Look at Leviticus 18:24-28. Hopefully I can confirm this thesis that I've set before you. Leviticus 18 at the 24th verse Moses says, "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you." Moses saying this, of course, for God. He has just forbidden a number of abominable things like offering your children to Molech and so forth, bestiality, other forms of sexual perversion. God says, "Don't defile yourself in these things because that's what the nations have done that I am casting out before you. And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants." Listen to the logic now. God says, "You keep these laws and don't you do these abominable things as the Gentile nations in the land have done because I'm casting them out of the land." A very gross image, God says, "I'm vomiting them out of the land. They are appalling to me. Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourneth among you (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the

land is defiled)." You are to keep them. They didn't. They're being cast out. You are to keep them. Notice verse 28, "that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you."

Does it look like God has a double standard, one standard for the pagans, for the Gentiles, and another standard for the Jews? He says, "Let me tell you how I'm going to operate. They didn't keep my laws, they committed abomination and the land cast them out, and if you don't keep my law, you'll get treated the very same way." God is not a God of partiality when it comes to moral matters. Justice is universal and he says, "If you commit these abominations, you'll be vomited out even as they were." This assumes that the Gentile nations who had not been given a written or verbal revelation of God's law were nevertheless obliged to obey it.

A lot of people say, "Well, of course they couldn't have kept the Mosaic law because they weren't given the Mosaic law." Well, do you know what the biblical answer to that is? They knew God's standards from creation. They had God's standards and the testimony thereof in their very hearts. Yes, it was a great advantage to have Moses give it orally and in writing but nevertheless all men know these standards. They are not somehow unique to the written revelation of God, they are the same standards that are found in the natural revelation of God. You know, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed years before Moses came along and gave the 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai. And why were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? The New Testament tells us because of their lawless deeds, because they perverted the natural order and contrary to God's law, they committed homosexual acts and so God destroyed them. He destroyed Gentile peoples even though they had not been given a written revelation of his law and he destroyed them for breaking his law.

What does that tell you about God? God is just. God says, "You know very well this is wrong." And you know, even those people who don't read the Bible today in 20th century America, they know that homosexuality is wrong. They know it in their heart of hearts. The very natural order tells them it is wrong. And those who commit abortion don't have to read the Bible to know that is wrong. And those who embezzle know that that is wrong. And on and on the list could go. God's law is known in the created order, it's known in the inward conscience of man, and it's found in its clearest correcting expression, that is to say, correcting our perversion of conscience in what we see in the created order. The corrected version is found right there in the Bible. That's what was given.

Notice Nineveh was destroyed by God or was going to be destroyed by God if it did not repent. Well, what was Nineveh supposed to repent of if it wasn't violations of the law of God known in the natural order and in the conscience of man? All of the Old Testament prophets bear witness to this. They not only condemned Israel for breaking the Mosaic law, they go right on and condemn the nations for breaking the Mosaic law.

I think one of the best illustrations of that is seen in Isaiah 24:5. Turn with me in Isaiah 24 to the 5th verse. God's judgment on the nations is being expounded upon by Isaiah and

he says at verse 5, "The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant." The earth has been defiled by the nations and how is it that they did this defiling? Because they broke God's statutes, because they transgressed God's laws. Isaiah is not talking about Israel, he's talking about the whole earth. He's talking about the nations and they are in [unintelligible] and therefore we have to believe, given everything that the Bible would teach us, that the Gentiles were under the law of Moses in its moral principles and demands just as much as Israel was, and that the Gentile rulers are under the laws of Moses just as much as the Gentiles in all other areas of their lives.

And that explains to us very easily why in the 119th Psalm David says at verse 46, "I will also speak of thy testimonies before kings, And shall not be put to shame." David is not talking about kings in Israel. He is the king in Israel. David, the king of Israel, says, "I will speak your law, your testimonies, your statutes before kings," plural, "And will not be put to shame for that." And I trust that you don't feel ashamed when you today argue that kings and judges and rulers ought to obey the law of God found throughout the Bible. Don't be put to shame by that because, you see, the alternative is to believe that politics is not under the Lordship of Christ or that ethics is relative.

In 1 Timothy 1:8-10 we'll see that in the New Testament the law of God was understood as being properly used to restrain crime. 1 Timothy 1 at the eighth verse. "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully." You understand that verse, I expounded it last night. I hope you remember that. It's coming up in tonight's quiz so I really hope you remember that. We know that the law is good if a man uses it lawfully but I didn't go on to read for you or to expound for you anyway, is how Paul gives an illustration of a lawful use of the law. What would be one of the things the law could be used for, Paul? Give a good illustration of how God is pleased when the law is used in a particular way. "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for abusers of themselves with men, for menstealers, for liars, for false swearers, and if there be any other thing contrary to the sound doctrine." Just about every commentator you look at will tell you what Paul is saying here is the law is lawfully used to restrain, you know, misdeeds, injustice in the outward order of men.

The law is particularly good for the public restraint of evil. I don't think it's an accident that the major sociopolitical problems that we face in our nation today are violations of the law of God. No respect for property. No respect for life. No respect for the family and sexual purity. And on and on the list could go. I don't think there's one major social problem that we have that you can't find tied to a law of God in the Bible that we have decided to ignore. We think we're so smart. We think we're so wise. Moses said, "This is your wisdom in the eyes of the nations, to obey all these statutes that I have given you."

In Romans 13, Paul declares that the civil magistrate is to obey and enforce the law of God. Romans 13 is one of those interesting illustrations in the Bible where a chapter division gets in the way of understanding the flow of thought. The chapter divisions, I

hope you remember, were not in there from the beginning. God didn't reveal, "Call this verse 1, verse 2, chapter 1, chapter 2," and so forth. They were added later. Sometimes they weren't added as well as they could have been, okay? Paul tells us in chapter 13 that the magistrate is an avenger of wrath against those who do evil, but to understand that you have to back up to Romans 12 at verse 17 where we are told, "Render to no man evil for evil." And in verse 20, "But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Don't be overcome of evil but overcome evil with good." In our private relationship with other individuals, we are not to avenge wrath against them and when people mistreat us, we are to treat them kindly and meet their needs. That's probably if not the hardest, certainly among the hardest of the commandments of God in the Bible, to love your enemies.

Now I don't want to pretend that I'm so sanctified that I find, you know, doing other things, you know, real easy but I do find other commands of God easier than that. I sometimes think that I would rather crawl on tacks to Disneyland, you know, than to be kind to someone who's been unkind to me. It's really hard to do that but, you know, going beyond this, there are people who will say not only is it hard to be kind to those who have mistreated you, that's not fair that they get away with it. I want to avenge the wrong that has been done. But Paul says, verse 18, "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men." Don't avenge yourselves, beloved. Why not? For you are to give place to the wrath of God. "It is written, Vengeance belongs to me. I will recompense says the Lord." But here's the other objection. Somebody says, "Okay, God says he's going to avenge the wrong that's been done to me. I am to be kind to my enemies. I am to try to be at peace with them. I'm to meet their needs knowing that God will take care of that which is unjust in our relationship. He will avenge the wrong that has been done." And somebody will now complain, "Yeah, a lot of good that does in the hereafter. How about right here and now when I'm suffering?" You know, when someone has molested your child or killed your child, you're going to find it very hard to believe you're just supposed to, you know, return, you know, kindness and favor and that the vengeance of God is just in the by-and-by. That's why chapter 13 should not begin where it does because by breaking the chapter there, you think Paul's broken into another thought. He isn't. He's now answering that problem.

How does God avenge wickedness and injustice in this life? "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and will receive judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain." Now listen, "for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil." Paul's just said, "Don't return evil for evil. Don't avenge yourselves. Don't take your own wrath." Why not, Paul? "Because God has ordained someone who will avenge his wrath against the one who does you evil." And who is that? That's the civil magistrate, the powers that be, the one who bears the sword. And he doesn't bear that sword, he doesn't have the coercive power, he doesn't have that punitive power for nothing if he does it in obedience to God. So we read

later in verses 8, 9 and 10 of the 10 Commandments not doing any evil to the neighbor. Love works no evil to its neighbor. Love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

What is the standard the civil magistrate should follow if he would punish evil? He must look for those who break the law of God. He must avenge God's wrath against evildoers, and he bears not the sword in vain in so doing. Do you know what that means? It means that the civil magistrate should even punish people the way God says. We talk about an extreme thesis, you know, I'm going to take it right to the end here. We need to understand that not only are the civil laws of the Old Testament binding for the reasons we've been arguing, but even the penal code of the Old Testament is binding. He bears not the sword in vain. God has shown him how to punish evildoers and that is what he is supposed to do.

You know, in Revelation, the 13th chapter, wouldn't you like to know who the beast is tonight? Well, you're going to have to come back for the conference on eschatology. But whoever the beast is, past, present or future, the Bible tells us that the beast requires that his name be written on the forehead and on the hand. You've all heard messages about that. You've probably read a lot of speculation about it. You know, the sad thing is if people knew their Bibles, they wouldn't have any trouble identifying what that's all about because in Deuteronomy 6, the eighth verse, Moses declares that the law of God is to be written upon the forehead and the hand. And what did that mean? It meant that the law of God was to inform our thinking, the way we see things, and the way we act in the world, how we use our hands. But now a political ruler will come along who will say, "Oh no, no, no. Not the law of God, my law. Not God's personality but my name. That will be written on your forehead. That will be written on your hand."

Paul refers to this person in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 as the man of lawlessness. How did we get so mixed up in the late 20th century that we didn't realize that the law of God must inform the civil magistrate of how he's to pursue his office or we end up with a beast through a ruler, a monster for a ruler? The man of lawlessness is what we get as God's judgment on us because we will not let his law pertain to all areas of life or his Son be the King of kings and rule over everything.

The law of God according to the New Testament even in its penal code is to be followed by civil magistrates. I'm going to bring this to an end by having us look finally at Hebrews 2:2 where the author of Hebrews says, "if the word spoken through angels," by the way, that's the law of Moses, "if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast," unalterable, "and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" The argument is rather clear. He says, "How do you think you'll escape eternal damnation if God's justice is unalterable?" And do you know how he proves it, do you know what the foundation for his argument is? It is that you know in the Old Testament every transgression, every offense received a just recompense of reward. In the Mosaic law, you know that the steadfast, unchangeable, unalterable law of God declared what justice demands in punishing. So since you know that, then you'd better realize that hell will be just for all eternity if you neglect so great a salvation.

Take away the author's premise and what do you have? People today will say, "Well, we don't know that the civil code of the Old Testament declares right and wrong or defines right and wrong for everybody. That's just for the Jews. We don't know that the punishments laid down by God in the Old Testament are binding upon all mankind. God can change them." But you see, if you say that, then the author of Hebrews has lost his argument because he says, "Since you know that those penalties were just, how much more will the eternal penalty of God be just and unavoidable?" If we don't know that they are just, if we don't know that they're unalterable, if they can be changed, then do you know what? We might think God could change his mind about hell too. You know he threatens this maybe for a number of years, people who reject the gospel go to hell, but maybe God will lighten up later. After all, this is the image that many people have of God. In the Old Testament he was so harsh, had these laws, but then with Jesus God lightened up. Now we don't have those laws anymore. You see, that's not a compliment to God, that's to declare that he is unjust and back then when he punished people in that way, that was inhumane, that was harsh, and finally he's got it worked out and we do it right today. Now I want to suggest we do it wrong today and that what we need to do is go back to the word of God, go back to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and call upon the kings and the judges of the earth to serve the Lord with fear, to rejoice with trembling, and kiss the Son lest they perish in the way.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we ask that you would change our thinking and protect us from the influence of our traditions and our culture so that we would acknowledge not just in word but in deed and in full understanding that you are the Lord over all, you are the king, the King of kings, and that every area of this world and every person who lives therein owes you allegiance in all that they do. We pray that we would not compromise and we would not mitigate that, that we would see that our political rulers, our legislators, our judges, all those who serve in positions of civil authority owe you obedience. How we thank you that you have not left us in the dark about what justice is, that you have not left us to our own devices and to just majority opinions and to changing relative standards, but you have shown us in your word what is universally true and right and good.

We do ask you, Lord Jesus, that we would not only understand these truths but you would make us more efficient, more clear, more forceful and winsome in declaring them to people about us. We pray that you would bring a revival in our land, a revival that would bring the hearts of men and women to you, that they would bow before you and acknowledge that you are Lord, and that this revival would in its turn bring the sanctification and reformation of every area of life, and we dare even to pray that it would sanctify and change our political order, that you would be honored, that we would not perish in the way but that all mankind would bow the knee to you and do so in everything in every department of their lives for this is what you are worthy of. We would not ask that you receive from us anything less than that, than our 100% devotion that we might bring every thought captive, even our political thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. Lord, we pray in your precious name. Amen.

We're going to take just a few minutes for questions tonight. If you should have questions about tonight's lesson, then that's where we'll begin and probably end as well. But does anyone want to ask about what you've heard? Yes, ma'am?

[unintelligible]

The question is a question about political strategy. Do I think God's people should take over one of the parties or try to influence one of the parties or start a new party of their own? And I have to confess to you that I don't consider myself to have wisdom enough to answer that with any kind of authority or definitiveness. I can share some thoughts that might be worthy mulling over but political strategy is not the sort of thing that I have specialized in.

Here is my concern. My concern is that if Christians were to start their own political party, we'd bring disgrace upon the Lord Jesus Christ because as I travel around and as I write and I see even some of the best theologians of the land having trouble swallowing what I've taught you tonight which is very clear in God's word. What do you think would happen if we had a political party and to get together and put a platform together? It would be a disgrace, you know? It would be oil and water. It would be, you know, elements that are good, elements that are terrible, and in the end, if we put together a political party, we're going to be like a light on a hill. We'd better get our act together and do it right or what will happen is we'll set Christian politics back another 100 years.

So that's my fear. Now I do think, however, Christians should influence politics everywhere they are, wherever they find themselves. Whether you're a Democrat or a Republican or a Libertarian, however you vote in terms of that categorization, you ought to be voting cross party lines for that person that comes the closest to realizing the standards of justice in God's word. And I realize that the humanist parties of our day, the Republicans, the Democrats, so forth, they hate to hear that but, you see, our allegiance is not to a party, our allegiance is to our Lord. So if I'm a registered Democrat, I said if, if I'm a registered Democrat and it turns out the Republican has got the candidate who more closely approximates what God's word would have politicians to do, then I should vote for him.

Please notice I did not say that you should vote for the one who makes the loudest noise about being a Christian. This is probably going to provoke some of you, you may not agree with it, but think it over. I feel that sometimes Christians should vote, if you had two candidates and one claims to be a Christian but is a raving socialist, you know, supporter of abortion. I mean, I'm overwriting this to make my point. And you have another man who doesn't claim to be a Christian and yet he believes in the free market, he believes in the sanctity of human life and so forth, then I would vote for the non-Christian who more closely approximates the civil justice of God's word because in the end the civil magistrate doesn't take his profession of faith in Jesus and impose that on people, he's to impose the law of God as it applies to political affairs.

So for what little value there may be, that's my wisdom tonight on political parties and how to vote.

Other questions? Yes?

[unintelligible]

Good question. Was the kingdom of God upon the earth in the Old Testament? You will be told by many with a dispensational or Anabaptist slant on things the kingdom did not come until Jesus arrived, and the reason why that is credible and there's a sense in which it is biblically true is because Jesus came proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom, "Behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But on the other hand, Jesus also taught that the kingdom was yet future. When he returns, then people will enter into his kingdom or they will enter into the outer darkness where there's weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. He taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," and yet Jesus also declared the kingdom has come.

So we have to understand that the kingdom of God has different phases and so when Jesus declares that he has brought the kingdom, which is very important to my theology and to yours as well, that is true but it doesn't necessarily rule out that there's a future phase to the kingdom when he returns in glory to consummate it, nor does it rule out that the kingdom existed previous to his Incarnation. And then having said that, I'd like to prove that it did because Jesus said to the Jews, "The kingdom of God is taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruit thereof." If it didn't exist in the Old Testament among the Jews, then Jesus didn't have anything to take away, did he?

So the conclusion I have come to and you'll find this in my tapes and writings if you want to pursue it further, is that we have to see the kingdom of God in anticipation, the kingdom of God in establishment, and the kingdom of God in consummation. God gave the kingdom, his kingdom, in anticipation to the Jews of the Old Testament. There it is in shadowy form. Then Jesus comes and he establishes it because he comes as the king. And yet in the future, Jesus will consummate that kingdom when all of its glory, everything that is wicked is cast out and we enter into the joy of the Lord forever. So we see the kingdom in these three phases: anticipation, establishment, consummation.

Does that help?

["Very much."]

Good. Other questions? Sir?

[unintelligible]

Okay, the question is what are the implications of public education for respect towards God's law? I have a tendency to come on like gangbusters sometimes and I can bowl people over so I want to be careful not to do that here, although my guess is from what

I've learned about y'all, you probably wouldn't mind on this question anyway, when I go about, I take a very strong stand that Christians have no business having their children in public schools. I can imagine some extreme circumstances but you don't make good principles and laws on the basis of exceptions. Okay, so putting the minor extreme exceptions aside, why would someone who worships the Lord Jesus Christ turn his or her children over to those who follow Molech to be educated? Either you do not understand the implications of the Lordship of Christ or you have no idea how powerful education is.

Education not only teaches our boys and girls how to do the multiplication tables and who won the War of 1812, the facts as we might put it, education also communicates values and interpretation of this world. And it is so strong that what the teacher does not say will also influence the mindset and the outlook, the perspective of our children, so that when boys and girls go to, let's say, 12 or 13 years of state-supported education and there it is forbidden to bring the Lord Jesus Christ into discussions unless you happen to have a unit on ancient history and the Jews and so forth, but Christ is not foundational to mathematics, Christ is not foundational to literature, to history and all the rest, when he is never brought up, doesn't this communicate to our children that he is irrelevant to these things? We can get by perfectly fine without Jesus in math because we never mention Jesus, we never pray to him or understand that there couldn't be math without Jesus and, you know, the universality of his character and so forth, there's no connection between Jesus and math. Oh, and there's no connection between Jesus and science. And lo and behold, there's no connection between Jesus and literature. You know, this Jesus and what we call the Christian religion, that's pretty narrow stuff and not the most important either. It just has to do with, you know, your private thoughts at home between you and God. That at its best is what public education teaches your children. At its worst, and by the way, it usually is worse, not the best scenario, at its best it insults the Lord Jesus Christ, at its worst it actually talks him down, it actually teaches things be it evolution or the right to an abortion or whatever it may be. It teaches things which are ungodly.

So come back to the question: why would someone serving the Lordship of Jesus turn his children over to someone who follows Molech to be educated six hours a day, five days a week, nine months out of the year for 13 years of their life? It doesn't make a bit of sense and here's where, I guess, it can come on as gangbusters, I would suggest that it violates the first commandment. You're to have no other gods in my presence, no other gods before me. And when we turn our children over to those who follow other gods, by the way, if they're atheist they have another god too, it may be man, it may be reason, whatever, but when we turn our children over to other gods, we are violating the first commandment and we are not keeping covenant with God. We are walking outside of his law and we are not recognizing his first primal universe claim on us, that there is to be no other ultimate authority in life but him.

Colossians 2:3, in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge deposited. In Christ. If you want your children to get an education, don't send them someplace that doesn't know where wisdom and knowledge is deposited but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. We have this idea that education can be neutral and at the end of the educational process then maybe people will fear the Lord. That perspective of

God's word is the very opposite. God's word says the fear of the Lord is the first step of education, not the last step, not the conclusion but the foundation. I guess I'm beginning to preach.

I think that public education should be ruled out for the Christian and what will happen if our children go to state schools and don't learn the relevance of God and the Lord Jesus for all areas of life? They will be taught that morality and especially sociopolitical morality cannot be based upon what God says. They will be told, "You can't bring religion into there. Religion has got to be kept out." And I want my children to know that no one dare say to the Lord Jesus, "You've got to stay out of this domain," because he's Lord over all.

[unintelligible]

Okay, we're going to get further into this than I think is probably wise tonight. The question has to do does the same apply to Christian college?

[unintelligible]

Yeah, Christian college versus secular university. And my own opinion on that is, in an ideal world you ought to send your children to a Christian college as well as a Christian grade school and high school and so forth. We don't live in an ideal world and, as a matter of fact, at some point in the educational process you do make a transition from what might be called laying the foundation for life to living life and getting the tools of a trade, what have you, even if it's, you know, medical or teaching so forth. And some people would argue, not everyone will agree with this so I'm going to be brief and let you think it over, some people would argue when it comes to college, the necessity of Christian education, the demand for it is not the same as when you're in the laying the foundation phases for your child because if you push very hard on the idea it should be Christian education through 12th grade and college, then the next step is, and you should only work for a Christian employer and only sell to Christian people and so forth and so on. But that is never the idea of Christian education is that we're not going to associate with the world. At some point you make the transition to the world and there are some people who would say that transition is made in college, not just when you go out into the workforce. That's for thinking about. I'm not going to take a position one way or another.

[unintelligible]

Okay, good question. Somebody might say, "Well, why should I endorse these rules or follow these rules, I'm not a Christian?" Well, the first place you have to start to be obvious is to say, "Well, you should be." And if you stop and think about it, since God has laid down this law, this law indicts you too, not just politicians but you and you're in need of a Savior, a Savior who will be a prophet, priest and a king to you. So I think evangelism and in a sense I'm glad you brought this up because I didn't say much about it in my presentation, but I want to make very clear I think evangelism is the key to political

change. I don't think evangelism that leaves the soul, you know, just a baby and doesn't nurture and teach God's law, but evangelism is crucial.

We're not...I don't imagine we're going to be able to get a majority of unbelievers to endorse what God's law says for society just on the observed benefits of it but that is the second part of the answer, and that is that even unbelievers will sometimes go to doing what the Bible says to do because they've tried everything else and it doesn't work. There are some unbelievers who are so fed up with the present system that they're willing to endorse the notion of restitution. Well, that comes right out of the Bible. You know, it's kind of like God told us that years ago. Sometimes when I go to college campuses and talk about this, I make reference to something like that Clarence Thomas hearings, you know, Anita Hill's accusations, and what a fiasco, right? Here's the nation all up in arms, men against women, you know? I mean, it's just incredible the things that you hear, issues, you know, like sexual harassment and all this and who do you believe, and I say, you know, when all else fails, why don't we read the instructions? You go to the instructions, the Bible makes it very clear a person does not have a right to make a public accusation even when they're telling the truth unless they can back it up. At the mouth of two or three witnesses every charge shall be established. Now if we observed that, that is, if our legislators, let's take our senators in that situation, if they had said, "Look, we're willing to hear any charge that has been established against this man but it's going to have to be done justly," that would have been the end of it right then and there. When all else fails, read the instructions.

Now I think there are some unbelievers who in hearing this regardless of their opinion of Jesus might say, "Boy, that sounds a lot better than what we did. We sure made a mess out of it." And there are unbelievers who are fed up with the AIDS epidemic and all these homosexual rights and so forth. It's going to be a backlash. By the way, when the unbelieving world has its backlash against homosexuals, it's not going to be with Christian compassion. And so I know that we take a hard stand against homosexuality but in the end it will prove to be better than the mercy of the wicked. The mercy of the wicked is cruel.

So two things. 1. We need to work on evangelism. 2. There will be some people who can see the wisdom of God's proposals for society even though they haven't become Christians and so we should work on showing the advantages. We ought to be able to know them and talk intelligently about them.

Yes, sir?

[unintelligible]

Well, yes, I see your point and I'm appreciative of your bringing that out, however, my fear about a Christian party is not just that we'll fall into factions which, you're right, we already have, my fear is that the factions, let me start this right, the factions we now have do not have the name of Christ on them. My problem is that if as a Christian party we dishonor the teaching of God's word because Christians are not very educated about

sociopolitical ethics from a biblical perspective, that when you put the name of Jesus on that, it will set back the cause of Christ rather than set it forward.

[unintelligible]

Oh, yeah, I understand it. I'm not suggesting, you know, heaven is on earth right now. We've got real problems. And I'm not suggesting that a Christian party is in the nature of the case ruled out. But try to appreciate where I'm coming from. I travel around and I speak on these issues and I hear, I debate with theologians, I go to colloquiums on Christ and civil government and, I mean, I tear my hair out sometimes. The best that we have to offer many times is deplorably weak. And so that's my hesitation. It's just that I think I have a pretty good feel for how uneducated and confused the Christian church is today about politics but, believe me, in principle I'm not saying a Christian party is wrong or that it has to be perfect, I just don't want to disgrace the name of the Lord and at this point, I guess, that's my fear. I don't at all hold it against you if you have a different perspective and that doesn't become your fear. I'm not campaigning against a Christian party, that's personal opinion.

Okay, I want to...now what are you guys going to do to me? Okay. I'm going to take this question down here because you've been patient in waiting. I was thinking I might cover the rest and come back over here but because we can only take one more, to be honest, I'm going to end with this and those who did not get their questions in, I will expect you to be the leaders in getting the pastors here to invite me back some day.

Yes?

[unintelligible]

Okay, the question is why do I see this transformed world, why is the timing of this transformed world what I have suggested, that it's before Jesus returns rather than after he returns? Do you remember where we began tonight's lesson, this whole idea that Jesus is presently a prophet, presently a priest, but he's only going to be a king in the future? That doesn't make any sense theologically. He's the anointed one. He's prophet, priest and king, and therefore he's king now. We should expect him to exercise his kingly prerogatives now. But I'm going to go beyond just theological models here and suggest this is what you want me to come back and talk about so I'll do it in detail then.

But if you look at 1 Corinthians 15, Paul tells us that every enemy is now being subdued under the feet of Jesus and that when he returns, the last enemy will be defeated. What is the last enemy? Death. When Jesus returns, he's going to raise his people from the dead. What a glorious indication that death has now been vanquished. But listen what Paul says: that is the last enemy when Jesus returns. Well, if the last enemy is defeated when Jesus returns, then when were all the other enemies defeated? They have to be before Jesus returns. So in the timing of scripture, Paul specifically tells us when Jesus comes back that's going to end it all. He's not going to have another thousand years put in there to finish the work. It will be finished when he returns because death will be the only

enemy left to vanquish. Moreover, many of the passages that talk about the blessing of the rule of the Messiah, well, I should say many of them do talk about the eternal state but many talk about something less than the eternal state because there are things like warfare and death and conversion still going on.

So when you see those things in passages like Isaiah 2 or Isaiah 65 and so forth, then you can tell your friends this is clearly a time when the kingdom of God is growing because when Jesus returns, there won't be death, there won't be warfare, there won't be anymore evangelism and conversion. And so that is a thumbnail sketch answer as to why we time it the way we do. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David to establish it and uphold it forever, and the zeal of Jehovah of hosts will accomplish this. So says Isaiah, the ninth chapter, of the increase of his government and peace. We believe in a growing kingdom, growing peace, and it's not without significance that when Jesus explained the nature of his kingdom, he said it's like a mustard seed, it begins small, grows to be very big. So there's some of the biblical reasons why we do that.

Thanks so much for coming.