

Government Key Passages

Transcript from David Hamilton's Video project for
the SourceView Reader

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Note for transcript use:

The blue text was used for editing purposes, and should all be gone, but if it is there, compare with video.

The use of red text is to draw attention to scriptures used. While checked for use in the video project, it would be best to confirm when used for the written projects coming. The spoken may have altered a word or added a comment ...and sometimes only selections were used out of a large passage.

The use of green text is to highlight the need to take extra care to find exact spelling or wording, especially quotes used and words in Hebrew. Also any questions on correct wording.

Government Sphere Key Passages

God and the Sphere of Government

1	God our Judge, Lawgiver and King	Isa 33:22
2	Mercy and Justice	Jer 7:5-7
3	God Gives a Unique Law	Psa 147:19-20
4	God Is a Unique Lawgiver	Jam 4:12
5	The Foundations of God's Throne	Psa 89:14,18
6	King Messiah	Isa 9:6-7

To Protect Citizens and Safeguard Justice

7	The Purpose of Government Is to Protect	Rom 13:1-7
8	Daughters of Zelophehad	Num 27:1-11
9	For Such a Time as This	Est 4:13-16
10	Paul Protected by Rome	Act 23:12-35
11	Children Not Protected by Herod	Mat 2:16-18
12	Vigilante-ism Undermines Justice	Exo 2:11-15a
13	Anarchy Undermines Justice	Jdg 21:25
14	Bureaucracy Undermines Justice	Ecc 5:8-9

Principles and Practices of Godly Government

15	Righteous Leadership Is a Blessing	2Sa 23:3b-4
16	Josiah: Good in the Eyes of the Lord	2Ki 22:2
17	Deborah: Women in National Leadership	Jdg 4:4-9,14-16
18	Nehemiah's Leadership Integrity	Neh 5:14-18
19	Joseph Enslaves Egypt	Gen 47:13-26
20	Pray for Those in Authority	1Ti 2:2
21	Fear God and Honor the King	1Pe 2:13-17
22	Biblical Civil Disobedience (#1)	Dan 3:1-30

Principles for the Executive Branch

23	The Law of the Kings	Deu 17:14-20
24	Solomon: Gold, Horses and Wives	1Ki 10:1-11:13
25	Asa: a Good King Goes Bad	2Ch 16:9
26	Manasseh: a Bad King Goes Good	2Ch 33:1-20
27	Give to Caesar What Is Caesar's	Mar 12:13-17
28	Biblical Civil Disobedience (#2)	Dan 1:5-20

Principles for the Judicial Branch

29	Selection, Role and Character of Judges	Deu 1:15-17
30	Equity in Judgement	Lev 19:15
31	A Voice for the Voiceless	Exo 3:9-18
32	Verdicts That Produce Peace	Zec 8:16
33	Solomon's Legal Wisdom	1Ki 3:16-28

Principles for the Legislative Branch

34	Laws Are to Be Life-giving	Eze 33:15
35	Moses Decrees Good Laws	Deu 4:4-5
36	Darius Decrees a Bad Law	Dan 6:6-9
37	Cities of Refuge	Num 35:9-15
38	Biblical Civil Disobedience (#3)	Dan 6:10-24

War and Peace

39	Laws for War	Deu 20:1-20
40	Diplomacy Versus War	2Sa 10:1-8
41	Civil War Destroys a Nation	Luk 11:17a
42	Edom Judged for Wartime Disloyalty	Oba 1:11-15
43	Elisha "Defeats" the King of Aram	2Ki 6:8-23

Government & Healthcare

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| 44 | Establishing Healthy Societal Conditions | Deu 23:9-14 |
| 45 | Rulers Act to Address Health Problems | 1Sa 5:6-6:18 |
| 46 | The King Defers to the Prophet | 2Ki 5:1-14 |

Crossover Passages

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| 47 | Crossover with FAMILY | 2Sa 11:2-27 |
| 48 | Crossover with ECONOMICS | 1Ki 12:4-18 |
| 49 | Crossover with RELIGION | 1Sa 13:7b-14 |
| 50 | Crossover with EDUCATION | Dan 1:3-4 |
| 51 | Crossover with MEDIA/COMMUNICATION | Jos 9:3-27 |
| 52 | Crossover with CELEBRATION | Mar 6:21-28 |

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Introduction to the Government Sphere

So we are now looking at the sphere of government. God has appointed government in order to safeguard justice and create a peaceful society. Rulers should exercise delegated authority in order to serve the citizens whom they govern. The Law of the Kings found in **Deuteronomy 17:14-21** warns those in authority against multiplying that which would lead them into lifestyle of authoritarianism, hedonism and materialism. God's alternative to these three unrighteous value systems is servanthood, purity, and generosity. We must seek to end every form of injustice, corruption, and greed, and establish godly government.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

As with each of the spheres, we begin by looking at God and his character in relationship to that sphere. So we're gonna look at six passages about God and the sphere of government.

Number one: God our Judge, Lawgiver and King.

This comes from **Isaiah 33:22: for the Lord is our judge, our lawgiver and our king. He will care for us and save us.**

This is amazing passage. Reflecting on this passage during the time of the Reformation in Europe, 500 some years ago, these three divine functions led to the formation of governmental structures that resulted in the three separate branches of government, the judicial, the legislative and executive, they model their government based upon what the scriptures reveal about who God is. That's a really good design.

Number two: Mercy and Justice.

from **Jeremiah 7:5-7. but I will be merciful only if you stop your evil thoughts and deeds, to start treating each other with justice. Only if you stop exploiting foreigners, orphans, and widows, only if you stop your murdering and only if you stop harming yourself by worshiping idols, then I will let you stay in this land that I gave to your ancestors to keep forever.**

Only if, only if, only if, only if ...four times...forever. So this is a conditional forever. God always wants to give longevity and permanence, but there are things that we have to do. In this passage the words justice and mercy are both mentioned. Both of them, justice and mercy, are attributes of love. Love is a choice that always seeks the highest wellbeing of the one loved. Therefore a truly loving person will always be just. Injustice has no place in the life of a loving person.

Similarly, a truly loving person will seek every opportunity to be merciful. A lack of mercy reveals a lack of love. Now because God is love, as we read in **1John 4:8**, God is perfectly just and exceedingly merciful in all that he does. Yet here we have a dilemma, for though justice and mercy are each an expression of love, each exhibits a different aspect of love. On the one hand, justice upholds righteousness and equity and thus demand that the penalty of a crime be paid. On the other hand, mercy champions compassion and grace, and thus pleads that the penalty of the crime be waived. So what happens to a convicted criminal? If he is sent to jail to pay for his crime, justice is upheld. If he is set free so that he need not pay for his crime, then mercy has been extended. But he can't at one and the same time be both sent to jail and not sent to jail. Here is the challenge. How can we be just without being unmerciful? Or how can we be merciful without causing injustice? How do we demonstrate both justice and mercy towards others? Or we could ask it this way. If we seek to be people of love, when is it desirable to exercise justice, and when is it appropriate to show mercy?

The interplay of justice and mercy is one of the overarching themes of the scriptures. Understanding this interplay is essential for good governance. When we look at God and see how he chooses this - mercy and justice at any given situation - we learn how governments should function. Only God does this perfectly, but we can learn from him through observing and imitating. God is always just. He'll never be less than just, but he always prefers to extend mercy whenever he can do so justly. These are things to think about and study for our government and actually for all of our personal lives as well.

Number three: God Gives a Unique Law.

Psalm 147:19-20. He has revealed his word to Jacob, his decrees and regulations to Israel. He has not done this for any other nation. They do not know his regulations. Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord? Is that really the right response that only Israel has this regulation or no other nation knows the God's law and the way that Israel does? Shouldn't we want everyone to have the same? What's going on here? See, only God's law, the law of God's kingdom, convicts people for heart attitudes. God's law perfectly addresses the root problem of all lawlessness. No human government is able to do this with such precision.

When we go back to the 10 commandments. They're not just a potpourri of dos and don'ts. They're an intentional instruction going from the most concrete to the most abstract; from the most external to the most internal. You'll look at this when we consider the key passages of the foundations that are true for all of our spheres. But suffice it to say this, that the first nine laws in some form or another are present in almost every society. You shall not murder, laws on adultery, laws on thievery, laws on falsehood, lying and various falsehoods. Those exist in some form or other in almost every culture.

But the last law is thou shall not covet. No nation has that on the books. You're not gonna go to jail because you had a thought about that person's wife is really gorgeous, so I would like to have her, or my! That person's television is really sweet. I'd like to have one like that for myself- That coveting doesn't put you in jail, it doesn't give you a fine, doesn't leave you a death penalty in any other nation. Not in Switzerland, not in Germany, not in South Africa, not in South Korea, not in Canada, not in Mexico. Nowhere. But in the kingdom of God, it reveals the corrupt heart and it needs to be changed.

So God's law is a higher standard. It changes us from the inside out. That's why this law is unique. That's why it is foundational to all other laws, because until you've changed the heart, you really can't expect changed actions.

Number four: God is the Unique Lawgiver.

James 4:12. God alone gave the law as the judge, he alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge a neighbor?

Normally the judicial and legislative branches are separate, but the triune God embodies both of these, plus the kingly executive roles in his one person. He's a unique lawgiver. He's a law giver who can execute the law, and judge when those who have broken the law. He is unique and wonderfully so, to our benefit.

Number five: The Foundations of God's Throne.

Psalm 89:14,18. Righteousness and justice are the foundations of your throne... Unfailing love and truth walk before you as attendants. Yes, our protection comes from the Lord and he, the holy one of Israel has given us our king.

Righteousness, justice, love, truth, protection. These are the elements. These are the characteristics of a godly government. And God is the one who gives kings. God wants us to have this sphere, but he wants it to be done in a way that is in keeping with his character.

Number six: King Messiah.

Isaiah 9:6-7. For a child is born to us. A son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders and he'll be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace.

As I read those, you could may be be hearing this, the music of the Handel's Messiah, ringing in your ears. Beautiful, beautiful words.

His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment to the Lord of Heaven's armies will make sure that this happens.

What a wonderful ruler. He's a wonderful counselor. He, when you need advice, he's the best one. He's a Mighty God. There's never any shortage of power. He can do what you need to having done. He's the Everlasting Father. You always have that covering, loving relationship. And he's the Prince of Peace, he brings wars to end and ministers to the deepest areas of your soul. What a wonderful ruler.

But what a wonderful kingdom, it is forever. It does not end. And it's only increasing. And it says the passionate commitment or the zeal of the Lord will accomplish this. He is doing this. We can help. We can participate. But ultimately it is God our King, who is reigning. And his reign is increasing on this earth, all the time. Governments of this world should look to the government of our God and seek to be imitators, to do that which God is doing. Then their governments too, will increase as they seek to model themselves after God.

So, as the governors of this world, those who carry civic responsibilities in cities and states and provinces and over nations or over international, governance groupings. We need to look to God to see how he governs and seek to imitate him. If you govern as he governs, then it'll be to the benefit of all.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of government is to protect and safeguard justice. And so we're gonna look at eight passages that highlight that from the scriptures.

Number 7: The Purpose Of Government Is To Protect.

We read from Romans 13:1-7. Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted and they will be punished. For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right. And they will honor you. The authorities are God's servants sent for your good, but if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid or they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. So you must submit to them not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience. Pay your taxes too, for these same reasons for government workers need to be paid. There are serving God in what they do. Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them and give respect, and honor to those who are in authority.

God's design for government is that they honor those who do what is right and punish those who do what is wrong. They have been empowered with an authority to maintain justice and protect the citizenship from those who would do them ill. From criminals within their nation or from armies coming from without - invading. They're there to protect. Therefore, government should be given respect, honor, and even taxes. I know that's hard for some people, but that's the Bible. We're to see them as God's servants when they are maintaining societal order honoring the right and punishing the wrong. Government is there by God's design. So we should honor it and see people released into this area as civil servants to advance God's good purposes.

Number eight: The Daughters of Zelophehad.

Wow, that name is a mouthful, and you'll read about them in Numbers 27:1-11. It's longer passage, but pay attention is a lot of interesting material here.

One day a petition was presented by the daughters of Zelophehad - Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. Their father, Zelophehad, was a descendant of Hephher son of Gilead, son of Makir, son of Manasseh, son of Joseph. These women stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the tribal leaders and the entire community at the entrance of the tabernacle. Our father died in the wilderness, they said. He was not among Korah's followers who rebelled against the Lord. He died because of his own sin. He had no sons. Why should the name of our father disappear from his clan just because he had no sons? Give us property along with the rest of our relatives.

So Moses brought their case before the Lord, and the Lord replied to Moses. The claim of the daughters as Zelophehad had is legitimate. You must give them a grant of land along with their father's relatives, assign him the property that would've been given to their father and give the following instructions to the people of Israel. If a man dies and has no son, then give his inheritance to his daughters. And if he has no daughter either, transfer his inheritance to his brothers, if he has no brothers give his inheritance to his father's brothers. But if his father has no brothers give his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan. This is a legal requirement for the people of Israel, just as the Lord commanded Moses.

This is a wonderful example of casebook... law. They look at a particular case of circumstances, situation, and try to understand the overarching principle and how it applies in this unique situation. This is where the spirit of the law is debated, and we see how it might be

applied in diverse circumstances. It's an enlightening example for legislation and jurisprudence and has been helpful for the formation of legal processes through the generations.

To understand what's going on here, there are several different steps. First, there was the standard law. This law was not prescribed by God, per se, but it was the normative accepted process within the culture. In the ancient culture of the Hebrews, property was inherited by the sons in the family. Two portions went to the first born and one portion to each of the remaining sons. So there were four sons and two daughters. The first son would get 40%. The other three sons would each get 20% and the daughters would get 0%. That was the norm. This was the culture. And it is reflected in **Proverbs 19:14. Fathers can give their sons an inheritance of houses and wealth.** This norm goes all the way back to the story of Abraham and Sarah in **Genesis 21:10**, where he's says that he's gonna pass on his inheritance to his son.

Now. And we come to the daughters of Zelophedhad. This is point two, and the law needed to be adjusted because of this situation, there were no sons to be had, he had only five daughters. What would happen to the inheritance? The law was modified to keep the family patrimony intact. You needed to guard the inheritance for future generations. So that's was a remarkable how they worked at having the flexibility, keeping the principle, but adjusting it for their circumstance.

But we read a little bit later on in **Numbers 36:1-12**, that the law is readjusted again, because the clan leaders of Joseph's clan, the tribe - because if the daughters of Zelophedhad marry outside of our clan, outside of our tribe, then that property will go to that family, that's no longer part of our tribe. So the land is theirs, but it's also ours. It's not just the nuclear family, but the clan family, the larger family. And so can we make that, require that if they get married, they have to marry within the tribe? And they all thought about it. Yes. They're trying to preserve the inheritance for the small family, for the large family. And that seemed to make sense. We didn't want the larger families to suffer. We didn't want the small family to suffer. So that way in **verse 12**, it concludes the **inheritance of land remained within their ancestral tribe.** They kept the principle and found creative ways to bring application. Great for us as we think about laws today.

Number nine: For Such a Time as This.

We're reading from **Esther 4:13-16. Mordicai sent this reply to Esther. Don't think for a moment that because you are in the palace, you'll escape it when all other Jews are killed. If you keep quiet at a time like this deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this? Then Esther sent this reply to Mordicai, go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then though it is against the law, I will go into see the king. If I must die, I must die.**

Esther was the queen. This was an important governmental role. She needed to act in a way that is righteous even if it put her at risk of suffering. She had to risk her life to eliminate the great injustice, the suffering that was proposed for her people. And we need to follow this principle today. The role of a government leader is to serve those that he or she is leading. And you might have to risk your influence, your position, even your life. That's why you are there, to advocate for justice, to be a voice for the voiceless no matter the cost.

We also learned from this that prayer and fasting are an integral part of advancing governmental justice. We don't only rely on human processes, put on divine methodologies.

Now, Esther was willing to break a law, the law was that no one would go in to see the king without being summoned. If you went in of your own accord, it was very presumptive, very prideful. And so the king could command you to be killed. But she took that risk and was willing to bear the personal consequences in order to uphold a greater law. The law love of justice, of equity. So she risked herself in order to serve her people.

Number 10: Paul Protected by Rome.

Now this next passage, **number 10. Paul protected by Rome**. It comes from **Acts 23:12-35**. It's rather long passage. So I will just summarize some of it. It's when Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, there **was a group of Jews who got together and bound themselves with an oath, not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul**. So there was this plot to murder him on the way to his trial and his nephew, Paul's nephew, found out about this and went and told Paul and Paul said, please tell the commander. And so he has, because he has something important to tell him. So he went to the commander and **Paul's nephew told him some Jews are going to ask you to bring Paul before the eye council tomorrow, pretending they want to get some more information, but don't do it. There are more than 40 men hiding along the way, ready to ambush him. They have vowed not to eat or drink anything until they have killed him. They're ready now just waiting for your consent**.

So there's a lot of drama and intrigue behind the scenes, things going on in the political realm there, it's just a very, you know, high drama story. And the Roman commander pays attention to Paul's nephew. And immediately that night sends Paul out of the city with 200 soldiers guarding him and avoids this calamity. And he writes a letter to the governor, Felix, telling him why he's sending him as a prisoner, that he's protected him from this plot on his life.

So that night as ordered, the soldiers took Paul, as far as Antipatris, they returned to the fortress the next morning, while the mountain truth took him onto Caesarea. When they arrived at Caesarea, they presented Paul and the letter to the governor Felix. He read it and asked Paul what province he was from. "Cilicia," Paul answered. He says, I will hear your case myself when you're accusers arrived. The governor told him. Here's a very interesting story worth reading it in its entirety, but here the key thing is that numerous times in Paul's life, the Roman authorities came to Paul's defense. Paul himself was a Roman citizen, but let's just consider some of these episodes.

On Paul's first missionary journey in **Acts 13**, he's in Cyprus has turned as Sergius Paulus, the governor of Cyprus believes in the gospel and takes a stand for him against those who would be opposing him. On his second journey, in **Acts 16**, Paul finds himself in the city of Philippi and the city officials urged the jailer "to let these men go" as soon as they discovered that he had been unlawfully jailed. Later on in that same journey in **Acts 18** Paul's in Corinth and Gallio, who's the newly appointed governor of Achaia, which would be the equivalent of Greece today, throws out of the court, the groundless accusations of the Jewish religious leaders who wanted to get Paul executed in Corinth. On the third journey in **Acts 19**, the mayor of Ephesus disperses the riotous crowd, and protects Paul from a lynching by a mob.

And so time and time again, we see the government coming to his defense.

You know, many see the book of Acts written has legal brief written to aid Paul's defense before Nero to whom he had appealed when wrongfully arrested in Jerusalem. Paul declares his innocence in **Acts 25:11**, and an assessment is confirmed by both governor Festus and King Herod Agrippa in **Acts 26:31**. After hearing Paul's testimony, they assert this man hasn't done anything to deserve death or imprisonment. You can imagine how this story with all these governors and authorities previously having attested to his innocence, how this would've helped his case before Nero. Actually the only government official that colluded with rioters in

an attempt to kill Paul was King Aretas of the ____ and the ____ were the arch enemies of the Romans. You can read about this in Acts 9:25 and 2 Corinthians 11:32-33. The fact that Aretas wanted to have Paul killed and all his governors were on his side, would've further bolstered Paul's case in the Roman court of law as he faced Nero.

Number 11: Children Not Protected By Herod.

Matthew 2:16-18. Herod is furious when he realized that the Wiseman had outwitted him, he sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who are two years old and under, based on the Wiseman's report of the star's first appearance, Herod's brutal action fulfilled what God has spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, a cry was heard in Ramah. Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeps for children refusing to be comforted for they are dead.

This passage speaks of Herod's brutal action. This is not what one should expect from a government leader. Government is supposed to protect the vulnerable in society. The fact that Herod The Great murdered the most innocent ones, not only here, but in other episodes that are not recorded in the Bible, but are just in history, marked him as one of the cruelest and most corrupt leaders of antiquity. He was despised by his people and rightfully so. He murdered so many of his sons that Caesar declared "It is safer to be a dog in Herod's house than to be one of his sons." His life is an example of how one should not govern.

Number 12: Vigilante-ism Undermines Justice.

Exodus 2:11-15, Many years later, when Moses had grown up, he went out to visit his own people, the Hebrews, and he saw how hard they were forced to work. During his visit. He saw an Egyptian beating one of his fellow Hebrews. After looking in all directions, he made sure no one was watching. Moses killed the Egyptian and hid the body in the sand. The next day, when Moses went out to visit his people again, he saw up two Hebrew men fighting. Why are you beating up your friend? Moses said to the one who had started the fight. The man replied, who appointed you to be our prince and judge, are you going to kill me as you killed that Egyptian yesterday? Then Moses was afraid, thinking Everyone knows what I did and sure enough, Pharaoh heard what had happened. And he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian...

Injustice is never solved by taking the law into your own hands. Private attempts to exercise judicial solutions on others, only multiplies injustice.

Moses may well have wanted to right a wrong. His motive might have been laudable, but his means made him culpable. He was not a liberator. He was a murderer.

See, we have to learn in every sphere to do God's will, God's way. The established protocols of judicial justice in a healthy society are vitally important. Both the end and the means must be just if justice is to be genuinely served. If shortcuts are taken in the 'how' of executing justice, the 'what' of justice suffers and injustice is exacerbated. The problems only increase.

Number 13: Anarchy Undermines Justice.

Judges 21:25 says in those days, Israel had no king. All the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

This is the sad conclusion of a book filled with horrible tales of injustice and evil and human beings doing cruel things to other human beings. Having no government is not a biblical solution to resolving problems caused by a corrupt government because the root problem lies in the hearts or lives of individual men and women. An appropriate government is a deterrent against lawlessness. That's what we saw in **Romans 13**. You'll see a parallel passage in a complimentary thought in the next key passage, number 14.

Number 14: Bureaucracy Undermines Justice.

Ecclesiastes 5:8-9. Don't be surprised if you see a poor person being oppressed by the powerful. And if justice is being miscarried throughout the land. For every official is under orders from higher up and matters of justice gets lost in red tape and bureaucracy, even the king milks the land for his own profit,

Just as we saw in the previous key passage Number 13, that no government is not a biblical solution - more government is not a biblical solution to resolving problems caused by a corrupt government. Because again, the root problem lies on the hearts and lives of individual men and women. More individuals working in the public sector increases more potential for corruption.

Here we have between these two passages, the Goldilocks principle. Remember the childhood story of Goldilocks with the three bears? She comes into that house when the bears are gone and she eats Papa bear's porridge - it's too cold and Mama's bear's porridge is too hot. And Baby Bear's porridge is just right. Then she sits on one chair, Papa bear's chair is too high. And Mama Bear's chair is too low. And Baby Bear's chair is just right and everything is like these two extremes and, and is just right, is that middle point.

The Goldilocks principle is this. It's not no government and it's not excessive government; it is just right government, just the right size. The biblical concept is called subsidiarity. This word, which is not often used by us, means to have as little as possible, but as much as necessary. **Exodus 18**, when Jethro talks with Moses about how to set up the legal system, models this - solving an issue at the lowest most local level possible. And if it can't be solved, then you need to get up to the next level. And the next level. Subsidiarity - just the right amount of government. Goldilocks, thank you.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

Our next section is entitled Principles and Practices of Godly Government. We're gonna look at eight passages and you'll see how very practical, how very real the Bible is to give guidance for this and every sphere of society.

Number 15: Righteous Leadership Is A Blessing.

from **2 Samuel 23:3-4**. We read: the God of Israel spoke. The rock of Israel said to me, the one who rules righteously, who rules in the fear of God is like the light of morning that sunrise, like the morning without clouds, like the gleaming of the sun on new grass after rain. Yeah.

Government can be a good thing. When we do it right, when we do it well, when we do it righteously, government is a blessing, just like those beautiful morning that is described in this passage. It says to rule in the fear of the Lord. As we looked already, several times, **Proverbs 8:13** says the fear of the Lord is defined as the hatred of evil, as the beginning of all wisdom. When we hate evil in government roles and don't bow to corruption and, and serve well, this is desirable for all, like a sunny new day.

Number 16: Josiah: A King who did Good In The Eyes Of The Lord.

2 King's 22:2 Josiah did what was pleasing in the Lord's sight and followed the example of his ancestor, David, he did not turn away from doing what was right.

Some people think that politics is dirty business, but it doesn't have to be so. What Josiah did was pleasing in God's sight. And so it should be in our sight as well. So if you can be in government and please God, let's learn how to do that.

Josiah was not the only king in the book of **2 Kings** that is said to have been pleasing in the Lord's sight. We can read also about Joash in **chapter 12**, Amaziah in **chapter 14**, Uzziah and Jotham both in **chapter 15** and Hezekiah **chapter 18**. The acts of righteous government leaders were pleasing in to God's eyes. This phrase is similar, though it's a different word in Hebrew, but a synonymous to the righteous acts of a priest offering a sacrifice to God, which was pleasing to his nose, was a pleasing aroma. So pleasing sight and a pleasing aroma appealing to the various senses of how we perceive reality. That passage of the priest and the sacrifices is mentioned 18 times in the book of Numbers alone. And when we look at that, we realize there is no sacred - secular dichotomy. If what the priest does can be pleasing to God's nose and a king can do what pleasing to God's eyes, then let us each pursue God's call on our lives uniquely and seek to be pleasing to him.

Number 17: Deborah: a Woman in National Leadership.

This is from the book of **Judges 4** selections from between verse four and 16. **Deborah was the wife of Lappidoth. She was a prophet who was judging Israel at the time. She would sit under the Palm of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel, in the hill country of Ephraim and the Israelites would go to her for judgment. So this was her judicial role. One day she sent for Barak, son of a Abinoam, who lived in the land of Naphtali. She said to him, this is what the Lord that God of Israel commands you. Call out 10,000 warriors from the tribes of death only and Selin at Mount Tabor. And I will call out Sisera, commander of Jabin's army, along with his chariots and warriors to the Kishon river. There I will give you victory over him.**

So she gives him directions. She's acting as a Commander in Chief, and he says, I will go, but only if you go with me, she says very well, but today you will win a victory, but a woman will get the honor. And so she went with Barak and he is able to have an unexpected, unusual victory. And not a single one of Sisera's warriors were left alive.

It's a powerful story about a powerful woman who served alongside men to advance God's purposes in her generation. Government is a domain in which both men and women can

exercise their gifts. Like all the spheres, they're all open to every single person to use the gifts that God has placed in them to advance good for society.

Number 18: Nehemiah's Leadership Integrity.

Nehemiah 5:14-18. For the entire 12 years that I was governor of Judah from the 20th year to the 32nd year of the reign of king Artaxerxes, neither I nor my officials drew on our official food allowance. The former governors in contrast had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine besides 40 pieces of silver, even their assistants took advantage of the people. But because I feared God, I did not act that way. I also devoted myself to working on the wall and refuse to acquire any land. I required all my servants to spend time working on the wall. I asked for nothing, even though I regularly fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from other lands, the provisions I paid for each day included one ox, six choice sheep, or goats, and a large number of poultry. And every 10 days we needed a large supply of all kinds of wine. Yet I refused to claim that governor's food allowance because the people already carried a heavy burden.

This is a wonderful testimony of an incredibly great leader. It is often said that politicians promised to do good for the people, but they end up doing good for themselves. Making good for themselves. This needs not be so. Nehemiah is a stellar example, he did not profit financially from his position. He did not do so illegally through means of corruption or even legally using the funds that were offered him. This was an example of true servanthood. He did the same work as people, when they were building the wall, he joined them in that work, he didn't stand it at distance. He was engaged with the people in every way. He did not require things of others that he was not willing to do himself. And he did not expand his real estate holdings. He didn't retire from government and now had a plush lifestyle because of all the benefits and trappings he gained. He lived a simple life as the governor and he identified with the people, truly serving them. Why? He was concerned that people already carried a heavy burden. He didn't want to increase the taxes or take more from them. And so that - what a great example that is for government leaders today.

Number 19: Joseph Enslaves Egypt.

In our previous example, we looked at the stellar example of Nehemiah. We're gonna look at a tragic example in this one. We're reading from **Genesis 47:13-26**. This it's a long passage, but it's worth reading carefully. It's often skipped over, but listen well. **Meanwhile, the famine became so severe that all the food was used up and people were starving throughout the lands of Egypt and Canaan. By selling grain to the people. Joseph eventually collected all the money in Egypt and Canaan, and he put the money in Pharaoh's treasury. When the people of Egypt and Canaan ran out of money, all the Egyptians came to Joseph. Our money is gone. They cried, but please give us food. Or we will die before your very eyes. Joseph replied since your money is gone. Bring me your livestock. I will give you food and exchange for your livestock.**

So they brought their livestock to Joseph in exchange for food, in exchange for their horses, flock and sheep and goats, herds of cattle and donkeys, Joseph provided them with food for another year, but that year ended. And the next year they came again and said, we cannot hide the truth from you. My Lord, our money is gone and all of our livestock and cattle are yours. We have nothing left to give to you, but our bodies and our land. Why should we die before your very eyes. Buy us in our land in exchange for food, we offer our land and ourselves as slaves for Pharaoh, just give us grain so we need live and not die. So the land does not become

empty and desolate. So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. All the Egyptians sold him their fields because the famine was so severe and, and soon all the land belonged to Pharaoh.

As for the people, he made them all slaves from one end Egypt to the other. The only land he did not buy was the land belonging to the priests who received an allotment of food directly from Pharaoh. So they didn't need to sell their land.

Then Joseph said to the people, Look today, I bought your you and your land for Pharaoh. I will provide you with seeds so you can plant your fields. And when you harvest, one fifth year, crop will belong to Pharaoh. You may keep the remaining four fifth of seed for your fields and as food for you, your household and your little ones. You save our lives. They explain may please my Lord to let us be Pharaoh's servants. Joseph then issued a decree still in effect of the land of Egypt, that Pharaoh to receive one fifth of all the crops grown in the land. Only the land belonging to the priests was not given to Pharaoh.

Now, I grew up in South America. I lived in Bolivia during my childhood and adolescent years, and during those 17 years of life, there were more presidents than there were years. There were lots of coups and, and military dictatorships. And, and you know, when there's a dictator, you always say nice things to the dictator, because if you don't, you're dead. So when they said you saved our lives, yes, there were still breathing. But that was the only good thing left.

What had happened. He took all their money. Then he took all of their animals. That was the means of production, if you would. It was, they gave them animals for food. That was the original stock exchange. And without those animals, you can't, you know, have kids or cows or calves and, and you can't multiply your wealth. And then they took the land, which is the real estate. And by this time everything was going to Pharaoh.

Now God had saved Joseph in a miraculous way. But the one who's benefiting from this is centralizing all the wealth and all the power in Pharaohs. And he's nationalized all the land. This is a communist policy. This is total socialism at its very worst. And then, they all become slaves. Would you vote for a man who, if you knew that in three, four years time, he would take away all of your civil liberties? See long before the Egyptians enslaved the Hebrews, a Hebrew enslaved all the Egyptians. It says from one end of Egypt to the other.

Now we, this story might be shocking to you, because we usually don't read about this passage in our Sunday school classes.

The only ones that were not enslaved were the priests and these were idolatrous priests. And why did he spare them? Well, he had married the daughter of one of the chief priests. So this was corrupt cronyism, nepotism. This was not a godly form of leadership.

Now, there are a lot of things about Joseph's life that were praiseworthy. He did not commit adultery with Potiphar's wife. He had a financial integrity when he was the steward in the jail where he was kept. He was willing to forgive his brothers who had mistreated him. He didn't harbor resentment or bitterness against them. Although those are virtuous examples, but they are about his personal life. But when he stepped into his governmental role, he loved the power and he controlled. He centralized everything. No one could buy food without his say -so. He was number two. This was his dream from childhood. And this love of authority, this authoritarianism, is the opposite of governmental servanthood. And it grieves God.

From the moment that Joseph enters into that role as number two in the kingdom, the scriptures do not ever record him talking to God or God talking to him again. It just goes silent. He's pursuing the way of the world. This is not the way we're intended to govern. Think of

ways that he could have done. Might he created local co-ops, different ways to diversify the crops. There could have been so many other strategies, had he pressed in and listened to God a little bit more and not wanted to centralize power. We need to re-look at Joseph - imitate him in his personal life, but avoid imitating him in his social life, in his vocational life as a government leader.

Number 20: Pray For Those in Authority.

taken from 1 Timothy 2:2. pray this way for Kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.

This is really important. Governing is a hard job. There are lots of pressures. There are lots of temptations. There are lots of ways in which things could go wrong, and we need to stand with those in authority, through prayer, asking God to intervene, to guide them, to help them.

This peaceful and quiet? That's a really good societal goal. We love it when there's peace in our society. When there's streets are quiet, when there are not disturbances and riots. And you know, he's, he writes this in times when there's persecution, when there are difficulties going on. And so the choices that government leaders make are really important to the wellbeing of people. So pray, pray like to your life depends on it, because it just might.

Number 21: Fear God And Honor the King.

This is taken from 1 Peter 2:13-17. for the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority, whether the king is head of state or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong. And to honor those who do right. It is God's will that your honorable life shall silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you, for you are free yet you are God's slave. So don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Respect everyone. Love the family of believers, fear God and respect the king.

We must always respond correctly with the right attitudes to everyone who's engaged in the various spheres of society. The religious sphere does not obliterate the governmental sphere or vice versa. The governmental sphere does not wipe out the religious sphere. We recognize the role. You fear God, you respect the king. There's a, these things go hand in hand and we need to appreciate and value the role of government.

One of the things that's noteworthy here, it says "you are free". And while talking about government, while talking about submitting to those in authority, it speaks about our freedom. We have an essential intrinsic freedom, but we're free to be slaves of God, in other words, we're free to do those things which are determined by his will. Those things which are good, good for our neighbor, good for our society, good for our families, good for our lives. And we're not free to do evil. We're free to do good. And when we walk in that freedom, then the great things happen in our society.

Number 22: Biblical Civil Disobedience #1

this is the first of three passages about Biblical Civil Disobedience . All three passages come from the book of Daniel. Daniel served at the highest levels of government. And so he writes

about these things with great personal authority. This first example comes from **Daniel 3:1-30** as the whole chapter is too long to read entirety, so it means a few highlights.

King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue, 90 feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then he sent messengers to the high officers, officials, governors, advisors, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the provincial officials to come to the dedication of the statue he had set up. Everyone in government was present. Okay? **So all these officials came and stood before the statue king Nebuchadnezzar had set up, then a herald shouted out people of all race, nations, and languages listened to the King's command. When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship king Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.**

Now present that day were, we don't read of Daniel, but his three friends, Shadrach, Meshak, and Abednego. And when the instruments were played, everyone bowed down. Thousands of people on this plain and these three friends are standing straight. They stand out like a sore thumb, they're very visible. And so the people who were like, enemies, you know, because there's all kind of infighting within the administration of these guys come and pointed out to the king. Do you see those three guys? They're not obeying you. They're not bowing down as they should. So they are brought to Nebuchadnezzar and he says, is it true? Are you refusing to bow down? And we'll give you another chance. And they say this, **O Nebuchadnezzar we do not need to defend ourselves before you, If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God who we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, your majesty.** This is one of the most amazing statements in the Bible. And then what follows is even more awesome. **But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, your majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up,**

Notice how they speak. They speak with such conviction, but honorably. They don't insult him. They're not despising him. They recognize him as your majesty. They speak honorably to him, but they will, they will not bend their convictions. They will not participate in idolatry. And so they're given another opportunity. They refuse to bow down. So they're tied and they're thrown into the flames and the fire is so hot, they've heated up 10 times. You can imagine this is, what would be modern day Iraq. And so this is probably a pit of petrochemicals of oil or tars, some kind that is just very intense. And the guards who get them close enough to the fire to throw them in, they burn up and die.

And when Nebuchadnezzar looks in, he says, **look, I see four men unbound walking around to the fire unharmed. And the fourth looks like a God.** So not three that were thrown in, but four. **And so he shouts onto to them Shadrach, Meshak and Abednego, servants of the most High God, come out, come here.** And then they came out and they were just fine. They'd been in this intense fire that immediately burned off the cords of the ropes and, and it killed the guards. But they, when they came out, they didn't, their clothing was not scorched and they didn't even smell like smoke it says.

That's then Nebuchadnezzar said this. This is the end of this chapter. **Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel to rescue his servants who trusted in him. They defied the king's command and were willing to die rather than to serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation language, speak against a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn from limb to limb. Their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble, no other God who can rescue you like this! Then the king promoted, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to even higher positions in the province of Babylon.**

There's several things to learn from this passage. There are times when we need to choose to obey God, rather than man. This, that phrase is also repeated by the apostles of the early church in **Acts 5:29**. And you may be in situations where you have to go against governing authorities, but notice how they did this, they did it respectfully and they did it believing that God could save them. But even if he didn't, if they had to die for their convictions, they were willing to die. They were willing to accept the consequences. They weren't hurting other people. They weren't destroying buildings, they weren't on a rampage, you know, tearing up their society. They were willing to suffer the consequences of their own choices, But they expected God to intervene.

The amazing thing, another principle that we can get from this is that in this instance, and a couple more that we'll be looking at, it is always unwise for government to try to stipulate religious dos and don'ts. Government is there to safeguard justice and protected its citizens, not to establish religious practices. And so whenever that happens, there will be people who need to stand up against that, those wrong laws and follow the true God, the God of their conviction, the God of heaven and earth who saved these three and will save us too.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

This next section, we'll be looking at includes Principles For The Executive Branch. We'll look at six different passages.

Number 23: The Law of the Kings.

This is found in **Deuteronomy 17:14-20**. You are about to enter the land that the Lord, your God is giving you. When you take it over and settle there, you may think we should select a king to rule over us like the other nations around us. If this happens, be sure to select as king a man the Lord your God chooses. You must appoint a fellow Israelite. He may not be a foreigner. The king must not build up a large stable of horses for himself or send his people to Egypt to buy horses. But the Lord has told you, you must never return to Egypt. The king must not take many wives from himself because they will turn his heart away from the Lord. And he must not accumulate large amounts of wealth in silver and gold for himself.

When he sits on the throne as king, he must copy for himself this body of instruction on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. He must always keep that copy with him and read it daily as long as he lives. That way, he will learn to fear the Lord his God, by obeying all the terms of these instructions and decrees. This regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud and acting as if he was above his fellow citizens. It will also prevent him from turning away from these commands in the smallest way. And it will ensure that he and the descendants will reign for many generations in Israel.

So among all the laws in the Original Testament, this particular section is that which is dedicated to the executive leadership of a government, the king. Or today you might be the prime minister or the president or the chancellor. And it says the three things that the, that the king should avoid. He should avoid multiplying horses, avoid multiplying wives and avoid multiplying gold. Now, the reason why these are specific injunctions for the king is because of his position or role, he has the capacity to increase these for himself.

Well, what do these mean? What, what does Moses have against horses? Well, horses back in the day represented power. Because if you had an army with horses, you could field a Cavalry or you could set up a brigade with chariots. And that would be very powerful. If you didn't have horses, you'd be limited to infantry. And so whoever had horses had military advantage, had a power advantage. It would be like having, you know, the latest missiles or drones or the stealth technology in warfare today. So to multiply horses had to do with an unrestrained increase and love for power.

Similarly, you're not to multiply wives. This is giving yourself to a life of pleasure, of having a large harem and every night have multiple, pleasurable sexual fantasies come to life, which would be possible if you were a king and you could manage that. This was a life of pleasure.

And finally not to multiply gold and silver. This is a love of things, of possessions.

We could put these three words- horses, wives and gold into the language of power, sex and money. These are the three big temptations. Or say it another way. The love of power - that's authoritarianism. The love of pleasure - that's hedonism or the love of things - that's materialism. These things can destroy the political process. These things corrupt government. These things can distract a king from what he really should be doing as serving the people.

The biblical antidote for these three temptations are: instead of authoritarianism, servanthood; instead of hedonism, purity; instead of materialism, generosity. If we have governors and Kings and rulers that are servants and pure and generous, we'll have good governance.

There's something more that's said in this passage that is really important. After saying what they should not multiply, it says that when this king sits on the throne, he's supposed to hand copy Deuteronomy for himself. Write out the laws for himself. That means take the time to go slow and meditate on it. And this says, he's supposed to take that personal copy and read it every single day. It says this regular reading will prevent him from becoming proud in acting as if he's above his fellow citizens. See, a king can multiply power, sex, and money like no ordinary citizen can. It creates a two-tiered society. It creates a double standard, an unlevel playing field. And if a king remembers that he is just one more person, has this level playing field reading the Bible establishes that day in and day out as a foundation of equality. So with that in mind, you're reminded to be a servant who's pure and generous.

Read the Bible. If you're gonna reign, if you're gonna be a governor, if you're gonna be in politics, read the Bible every day. Listen, it'll help you govern.

Number 24: Solomon: Gold, Horses and Wives.

In our previous key passage, we looked at the law of a king and saw how we were not to multiply these three. In this passage we see that Solomon multiplied all three. The passage goes from **1 Kings 10:1 -11:13** Because it is a chapter and a half, I won't read the whole thing, but let me give you some highlights. But do take time to go through this in your scriptures.

It begins with a visit of the Queen of Sheba and she comes to visit Solomon because she's heard of his wisdom. And she says this, **everything I heard from my country about your achievements and wisdom is true. I didn't believe what was said until I arrived here and saw it with my own eyes. In fact, I not heard that half of it. Your wisdom and prosperity are far beyond what I was told, how happy your people must be. What a privilege for your officials to stand here day after day, listening to your wisdom, praise the Lord, your God who delights in you has placed you on the thought of Israel.**

Now that sounds like a wonderful affirmation. He's got these amazing banquets, this limitless food. He's got these well dressed officials. I mean his personal bodyguard are carrying golden shields, and she's overwhelmed. But we have to remember, be careful how you quote the Bible. These words are the words of a pagan queen. She does not have God's value system. As you, though, she praises him, this story is told and it unpacks first how he multiplied gold and then how he multiplied wives and how multiplied horses. It unpacks these things to show that he violated everything that God intended for a king to do. This is not a good report. Her statement is a statement of a confused pagan monarch who had an ungodly, non-kingdom of God value system.

Let's look at what he did as we read this, because at the very end of this passage, it's gonna tell us that Solomon did what was evil in the Lord's sight.

The Lord was very angry with Solomon for his heart had turned away from the Lord the God of Israel who appeared to him twice. He had warned Solomon specifically about worshipping other gods, but Solomon did not listen to the Lord's command. So now the Lord said to him, since you have not kept my covenant and disobeyed my decrees. I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants. But for the sake of your father David, I will not do this while you are still alive. I'll take the kingdom away from your son.

Solomon did not please God. He started off well, but ended up very poorly because he did not heed the law of the Kings. All three aspects, he did wrong.

Let's look at the horses. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. Way too many for a kingdom as small as his. Yes, Israel was largest under Solomon's reign than it was under any other king, but still that was extravagant for their military needs.

And gold? Well, it says that, as it recites in this passage the taxes he took in, it says that he bought in 666 talents of gold every year, plus so many more talents of silver and bronze. And he talks about wood and spices and all of these things. So there's huge tax burden. Let me just focus on this gold. 6, 6, 6 talents. That number is not accidental. You probably, when you hear that number, you think of the antichrist. Well, precisely. This number was so- was such a gross amount of taxation that it became emblematic. It became symbolic of everything that was anti-God, that harmed people that was not serving to the benefit of the people. And so this is why in the book of Revelation, this number was picked up to be used to describe the antichrist. This is anti-God.

How much is a talent? A talent is 75 pounds. So 666 talents is 49,950 pounds or in kilos over 22,700 kilos. Gold is measured in ounces. There are 16 ounces per pound and at today's rate, which is about \$1,775 an ounce. That would be \$14.2 billion that he brought in. And that's just the gold, not counting the silver and the bronze, all the other elements of taxation - for a country that's you can today drive from the south to the north in three hours. How could you possibly spend that much? 666 tons. They only used 79 talents of gold for the temple, which is the most luxurious building ever. And this is like eight, nine times more than that every single year. It was unhealthy.

Remember that when he dies and his son Rehoboam becomes king and ascends to the throne, he calls in advisors and the people gather and say, would you please lower the taxes? We're dying. This was the real story. The Queen of Sheba's assessment was wrong. She only was in the palace and she was eating all the splendid food, but the people were suffering. The taxes were way too high. They said, please lower the taxes. Rehoboam checked with their old counselors. And they said, yes, heed the people and they'll follow you. And they talked with his young friends, who'd grown up in the palace with him and loved all the magnificent food and all the splendid decorations. And they said, oh no, no, increase it. We want more, we want more.

And greed won the day. And when he said I'm gonna increase the taxes. He said my little finger will be thicker than my father's thigh - is like, it's split the kingdom -10 tribes split away. And for the next 400 years almost, there was war and deaths and so much suffering because Solomon had not trained himself or trained, not trained his son to say, this is enough.

I mean, come on. You're making shields of gold? That's the ultimate hubris. That's like pride on maximum display. Gold is so soft a spear would go through it. And so heavy, they had to be really small little shields. They weren't really protecting anyone of the guard. They would just say, who's gonna attack us. We're we're invincible. We don't need real shields. We can show off our gold this way. This was a point of extraordinary pride. And so grievous to God because he lived in this luxury while the people suffered greatly.

And then, not only did he multiply the horses and the gold, but the wives. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines. The concubines often were ones who caught the King's eye, and he said, bring them into the haram and spent one night with her and then decided he didn't want to make her a wife. And it was maybe just that one night that he spent with her and the rest of her life was wasted. It's a terrible thing. A thousand women. Did he even know their names? Could he remember when he was last with them? Is there any true love in any of that?

Is there any true love in that? Solomon did evil in the Lord's eyes. God was not pleased. He was not serving the people. He was serving his own lust. Lust for power, lust for pleasure, and lust for things.

Number 25: Asa: A Good King Goes Bad.

2 Chronicles 16:9. In the early part of his reign, Asa had faced great odds of battle that he should have lost. And he trusted God, and God did a miraculous thing. And he got an extraordinary victory. But later on in his life, when he was again facing an enemy, he, instead of looking to God, he tried to make allies with a pagan nation. Then the prophet came and said this:

the eyes of the Lord searched the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts who are fully committed to him. What a fool you have been. From now on, you will be at war.

These were the words that the prophet spoke to king Asa, when he relied on his own strength and his own ingenuity and his own strategy, rather than looking to God to really guide and direct him to be his ultimate protector.

If you're working in government or in any other sphere, it's always good to remember is not how you begin the race, but how you finish it, that determines whether or not you win or lose.

In the books of first and second Chronicles, as well as the first and second Kings, there's a sobering review of governmental leaders over four centuries, multiple kingdoms. And unfortunately, there are not many good reports. Some begin bad and continue bad. Some begin good like Asa, but turn bad in the process. All of these stories are to be a sober warning.

So take heed and be warned. The temptations are many. So if you are called to serve in the area of government, seek God, seek him diligently. Remember the law of the Kings and stay true to the very end.

Number 26: Manasseh: A Bad King Goes Good.

This particular passage is the encouraging counterpoint to the previous one. We find this in **2 Chronicles 33:1-20**. Again, this is a long passage. So I'll let you read most of it on your own. The first many verses are cataloging, detailing all the many sins that Manassah did. All the idolatries, all the pagan temples that he built and places that he worshiped. He ruled longer than any other king of Judah, over 50 years. But at the very end, something happened.

But while in deep distress, Manasseh sought the Lord his God and sincerely humbled himself before the God of his ancestors. And when he prayed, the Lord listened to him and was moved by his request. It goes on to say that Manasseh's prayer, the account of the way God answered him and account of all of his sins and unfaithfulness are recorded in the record of the Seers. This is a wonderful passage and it gives us great hope.

Now, let me just tell you some of the evils that he did this. You could unpack this for a very long time, but one of the things that highlights is that he sacrificed to Molech. Molech was a Canaanite God that was a stone statue of granite stone that had a hollowed out belly. And when they worship Molech, they would put fire around the stone until it heated up 'til oven hot. And then they take a, a newborn child or an infant, and place it in the belly of Molech, hot, hot stone, and literally have the child sizzle to death, cook him before their god, cook him alive. Horrific, horrific scene.

And this was in some way, giving up of your seed, of your descendants, you know, in hopes for greater financial wellbeing or better harvest, or other kinds of just distorted ways of thinking, sacrificing the most innocent for financial benefit. And this was the worst, worst of imaginable kind of idolatry. But even so, this story's told to us in this details, details, all of these terrible things he did, and it tells us of this repentance because there's always hope. Repentance is always possible. A bad king can turn good. So remember what we're told in **1 Timothy 2**, pray for the Kings and those in authority. Repentance is possible.

I want to just read his prayer that Manasseh wrote. It is not among the 66 books that we Protestants use, but it's in the canonical books that are used by Catholics and Orthodox. And it's a beautiful, beautiful prayer.

And even though everyone might not consider this to be fully scripture, fully authoritative, it has so much insight into the ways of God. Manasseh prays this. And the wonderful thing of course, is that the scriptures refer to his prayer as being noteworthy. So let's read these words. I'm gonna start in the middle of the prayer.

Immeasurable and unsearchable is your promised mercy, he's saying to God. For you are the Lord most high of great compassion, long suffering and very merciful and you relent at man's suffering. O Lord, according to your great goodness, you've promised repentance and forgiveness to those who have sinned against you and in the multitude of your mercies, you have appointed repentance for sinners so that they may be saved.

Therefore you, oh Lord, God of the righteous have not appointed repentance for the righteous for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and who did not sin against you, but you've appointed repentance for me, who am sinner.

For this and that verse. Maybe why is not included in the scriptures because Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did sin. But in his, in his passion of repenting himself, of repenting before God, he sees them as so much more righteous than he was. He says for the sin, I have committed are more number than the sand of the sea. My transgressions are multiplied, oh Lord, they are multiplied. I'm not worthy to look up and see the height of heaven, because of the multitude of

my iniquities. I'm weighed down with many an iron fetter so that I'm rejected it because of my sins. And I have no relief. For I've provoked your wrath I've done what is evil in your sight, setting up abomination and multiplying offenses. And now I've bend the knee of my heart, imploring you for your kindness and is one of the most beautiful statements I know I bend the knee of my heart, imploring you for your kindness. I have sinned O Lord. I have sin and I acknowledge my transgressions. I earnestly implore you. Forgive me O Lord. Forgive me. Do not destroy me with my transgressions. Do not be angry with me forever or store up evil for me, do not condemn me to the depths of the earth for you. O Lord are the God of those who repent. And in me, you'll manifest your goodness for unworthy as I am, You'll save me according to your great mercy. And I will praise you constantly all the days of my life for all the hosts of heaven sings your praise and yours is the glory forever. Amen.

Now that's an amazing prayer of repentance.

Number 27: Give to Caesar What Is Caesar's.

Mark 12:13-17. Later the leaders sent some Pharisees and supporters of Herod to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested. Teacher, they said, we know how honest you are. You are impartial and don't play favorites. You teach the way of God truthfully. Now tell us - is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay them? Or shouldn't we? Jesus saw through their hypocrisy and said, why are you trying to trap me? Show me a Roman coin and I'll tell you. When they handed it to him, he asked who's picture and title are stamped on it? Caesar's, they replied. Well, then Jesus said, give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God who belongs to God. His reply completely amazed them.

You can tell that there were, they were up to no good when the Pharisees and the Herodians came together, because they were usually enemies. The Pharisees were anti-Roman and all pro God. The Herodians were the ones who were for the political establishment and willing to compromise religiously. And when they posed this question, he would be siding either with one group or the other, and half of the society, the pro Romans would be upset or the anti Romans would be upset. And, it was a lose - lose situation, no matter how He answered it.

So he didn't answer it. Instead He turned around and asked them a question and it exposed the duplicity of their hearts. And then he said this very important thing, give to Caesar, what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. Don't pit these things against each other. Don't pit governance against spirituality. Don't pit politics against the church. Don't don't do that. These spheres can collaborate together and you don't have to choose one over and against the other. There's an appropriate place to give to government. And there's an appropriate place to give to God, not an either or scenario, but at both/and, in which the role of both are recognized and affirmed. Of course, as those ever conflict between the two, God has to take preeminence.

Number 28: (Biblical Civil Disobedience #2)

At the end of this section on the executive branch, we're gonna look at a second passage from the book of Daniel about Biblical Civil Disobedience. This one is from **Daniel 1:5-20**. Now, we have to just put yourselves in Daniel's shoes. He was probably, he and his friends were probably between 14 and 17 years of age when they were taken to Babylon as prisoners. This was the first of several times that Nebuchadnezzar raided Jerusalem. And what was the custom was in those days that they sent the top sons of the political leaders and the economic leaders, the cultural leaders as prisoners, as hostages to the court of the conquering kingdom.

So if there was any rebellion in the subjugated kingdom, in this case, the kingdom of Judah, the sons of the upper class would be killed. So their being taken hostage was a way to gain assurance of the non rebellious plots against Babylon.

And as they were brought into the palace, you know, something tragic happened to these four young teenage men who all have dreams of a life and marriage and families of their own. And they're made eunuchs. They're castrated, because every male in the palace, other than the king, is castrated to make sure that there's no hanky panky with anyone in the harem, that only the harem and the king is the only one who has sexual intercourse with them. So just think of a young teenage boy, all the hopes and dreams is like their future is zero. They're never gonna get married, never gonna have children, their family line ends with them. It would lead to great resentment and bitterness. But that is not what Daniel and these three friends do. They determine to follow God in his ways and the midst of this hostile situation that absolutely uprooted and destroyed their life.

It says that- I'm not gonna read the whole passage, but it says -**Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. So he asked the chief of staff for permission to not eat these unacceptable foods.** Now the chief of staff said, listen, if you don't eat these foods and you only eat vegetables and water, like you have suggested, the king, you're going to be look skinnier, and the king is going to think that I'm stealing the food. I'm not feeding you everything. And I'm profiting off of the budget that he's allocated for me to take care of you. And they're trying to be follow the kosher laws of their Jewish faith.

And so instead of just rebelling, they come up with a creative solution. They say, please test us for 10 days. Let's try it out. I understand your concern. We don't want to get you in trouble with the king, but at the end of the 10 days, see how we look compared to the other young men. If we look scrawnier, okay? If we don't look healthy, then you make your decision in light of what you see.

So they understand the needs of their political leaders and cooperate with them, but in such a way that they can stay true to their principles. And at the end of 10 days they looked healthier and stronger than anyone else. God honored their a commitment and God gave the four young men told unusual aptitude and they were 10 times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire realm, kingdom.

So hear the principles. When you are uncomfortable with its imposed upon you by government, give a creative solution, understand what government is trying to do, find a different way to do that, and then be willing to accept the consequences. After 10 days, we'll do whatever you say. And if you stay true to God, amazing things are going to happen. And this is the way we bring about change. When we have issues of conscious that are contrary to government's decisions.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

Having considered together the Principles for the Executive branch. We will now look at five passages that deal with Principles for the Judicial Branch.

Passage 29: Selection, Role and Character of Judges.

Deuteronomy 1:15-17. So I took the wise and respected men you had selected from your tribes and appointed them to serve as judges and officials over you. Some were responsible for a thousand people, some for a hundred, some for 50 and some for 10. And at that time I instructed the judges, You must hear the cases of your fellow Israelites and the foreigners living among you.

Be perfectly fair in your decisions and impartial in your judgments. Hear are the cases of those who are poor, as well as those who are rich. Don't be afraid of anyone's anger, for the decision you make is God's decision. Bring me any cases that are too difficult for you. And I will handle them.

There's several things that we learned from these passages. First of all, the judicial system has to be based on the principle of absolute equity. Perfectly fair, totally impartial. If you don't get special treatment because you're rich, you don't get special treatment because you're poor. Neither ones less or more, you're impartial in your judgments.

The second thing we see is that an appellate system is established here. There are some who are judges over a thousand people, some over a hundred, some over 50 and some over 10. So you start at the lower court level. If those can't solve it at the 10 level, they push it up and they push it up. And if even those who are at the upper level judges over a thousand, can't determine then Moses is like the Supreme court - bring any cases that are too difficult for you to me, he says.

So we see in this passage principles that continue to guide our judicial system, how it has worked and how it should continue to work into the future. It's rooted in biblical insight.

Number 30: Equity in Judgment.

Leviticus 19:15 do not twist justice in legal matters by favoring the poor or by being partial to the rich and powerful. Always judge people fairly.

Absolute equity. Depending on your personality or your position, you might be tempted to disadvantage the rich because you're trying to advocate for the poor. Or you might be sucking up to the rich and powerful and so you ignore the poor. Neither of those are acceptable. You can't go into a judgment with predetermined favoritism. You have to judge with equity. Judge all people fairly.

Number 31: Advocate for the Oppressed.

This is taken from Exodus 3:9-18. This is the passage in which Moses and God have a conversation and God is giving Moses instructions, preparing him to go down to Egypt. God begins talking and it really is God's heart is the reason why this conversation is going to happen.

Look, he says to Moses, the cry of the people of Israel has reached me. And I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them.

I'm gonna skip a few verses and go on and says, he comes up and says, at the end, I have been watching closely and I see how the Egyptians are treating you. I've promised to rescue you from your oppression in Egypt. I will lead you in a land flowing with milk and honey - the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. The elders of Israel will accept your message. Then you and the elders must go to the king of Egypt

and tell 'em the Lord. The God of the Hebrews has met with us. So please let us take a three day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord or God.

Our acts of justice must be rooted in the heart of God. It's he, the most just God, the most fair God, the one who's heart grieves over injustice, who's tender and sensitive to the cries of the oppressed. This is what motivates him to act and should motivate us to act. Here, getting to know God and his heart for the poor and needy of the world, the oppressed of the world is that which should inspire us to work on their behalf.

Number 32: Verdicts That Produce Peace.

Zechariah 8:16, but this is what you must do. Tell the truth to each other. Render verdicts in your courts that are just and lead to peace.

Wow, this is so clear. This must be the purpose of the law and the judicial process. Look at the three key words here. Truth, justice, peace; truth, justice, peace. That's why we have a judicial system.

Number 33: Solomon's Legal Wisdom.

1 Kings 3:16-28. This is one of the best known stories in the Bible. Sometime later two prostitutes came to the king to have an argument settled. Please my Lord. One of them began this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while she was with me at the house. A few days later, this woman also had a baby. We were alone. There were only two of us in the house, but her baby died the night when she rolled over on it. And she got up in the night and took my son from beside me while I was asleep. She laid to her dead child in my arms and took mine to sleep beside her. And in the morning when I tried to nurse my son, he was dead. But when I looked more closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't my son at all. Then the other woman interrupted. It certainly was your son and the living child is mine. No, the first woman said. The living child is mine and the dead one is yours. And so they argued back and forth before the king. Then the king said, let's get the facts straight. Both of you claim the living child is yours. And each says that the dead one belongs to the other. All right, bring me a sword. So a sword was brought to the king. Then he said, cut the living child in two and give half to one woman, and the other half to the other. Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child and who loved him very much better. Oh no, my Lord give her the child. Please do not kill him. But the other woman said, all right, he'll be neither yours nor mine divided between us. And the king said, do not kill the child but give them to the woman who wants him to live for she is his mother. When all Israel's birth, the King's decision that people in all of the king, where they saw the wisdom God had given him for rendering justice.

We see the incredible wisdom of God upon Solomon in the early part of his reign. He knew how to ferret out the truth in the midst of a courtroom trial. He was a great prosecuting attorney. He knew how to play the emotions of the courtroom in just such a way to have that **faux pas** occur in the, in the guilty woman. And so that he could expose the true motives and decide who was really telling the truth and who wasn't.

We need a lot of wisdom. We need God's wisdom to handle many cases that are hard to decide even to this day.

So may we learn from these scriptures.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

Now we have five passages that give us the principles for the Legislative branch.

Number 34: Laws Are To Be Life-giving.

Ezekiel 33:15. For instance, they might give back a better security returning what they have stolen and obey my life-giving laws no longer doing what is evil. If they do this, then they will surely live and not die.

Here is the key principle. For those who are creating laws, legislators, laws are to give life, laws are to enhance life, laws are to protect life. Laws that do this are in keeping with God's character. Laws that do not do this are contrary to his character.

Number 35: Moses Decrees Good Laws.

Deuteronomy 4:4-5. But all of you who were faithful to the Lord, your God are still alive today. Every one of you look, I now teach you these degrees and regulations just as the Lord my God commanded me so that you may obey them. The land you allowed to enter and occupy.

The whole biblical narrative is that God's laws, the laws through Moses were given so that people would thrive in the land. They'd inherit the land, a land flowing with milk and honey. God's intention was always good for them.

God's revelation through Moses was good - good laws that helped people live good lives in the good land that God was promising them. If they obeyed them, they would thrive.

Number 36: Darius Decrees a Bad Law.

Daniel 6:6-9. So the administrators in the high officers went to the King and said long lived king Darius. We were all in agreement. We administrators officials, high officers, advisors and governors that the King should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next 30 days, any person who prays to anyone, divine or human, except to you, your majesty, will be thrown into den of lions. And now your majesty issue and sign this law so cannot be changed an official law of the Medes and the Persians that cannot be revoked. So king Darius signed the law

Now in passage, number 38, just a little bit later, we're gonna look at the rest of the story and see how Daniel had to respond to this. But Darius was swayed by pride. He listened to the adulations of bureaucrats in his administration who are trying to oust Daniel and position themselves more prominently in the government. And the law that he signed- he was basically hoodwinked by these advisors. He was unwise. He was, as they catered to his pride, he signed a law that restricted human freedom. Any laws that restrict human freedom, telling them what you can or can't believe, who you can or can't worship. Any laws that try to dictate the rules of conscience are not to be accepted. And so this was a bad law and it was gonna have bad consequences as we'll see soon in another one of our passages.

Number 37: Cities of Refuge.

Numbers 35:9-15. The Lord said to Moses, give the following instructions to the people of Israel. When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan designate cities of refuge, to which people can flee if they've killed someone accidentally. These cities will be places of protection from a dead person's relatives who want to avenge the death. The slayer must not be put to

death before being tried by the community, designate six cities of refuge for yourselves to be on the east side of the Jordan and three on the west in the land of Canaan. These cities are for protection of Israelites, foreigners living among you and traveling merchants. Anyone who accidentally kills someone may flee there for safety.

This is really specific legislation and even shows how to administer it. It sets aside six cities designates where they are. But the point here of this legislation is that recognize that there are different kinds of killings. Some are intentional, have a motive, and some are accidental. And today we call the accidental ones manslaughter, and the intentional ones, homicide or murder.

And the legislation is going into place laws to help protect those who commit manslaughter. They didn't intend to kill someone. Maybe what, whatever happened. Someone died, maybe they were playing with something and a rock got loose and rolled down the hill and crushed the person's skull. And he died. It was not intentional. And by the law of reprisal, there would be a tooth for tooth and eye for an eye. But because this was an, an accidental death, there was provision made to save this person.

But there was also limitations. Once you moved into that city of refuge, we read in other passages that you had to remain there until the death of the high priest, the current reigning high priest. And so there were consequences, even though it was accidental, but your life was spared. You did not suffer the same consequences as if you had done homicide. Wise legislation takes into consideration motivation and circumstances.

Number 38: (Biblical Civil Disobedience #3)

This is the third and final passage from Daniel on Biblical Civil Disobedience. This concludes the story of Darius's bad law in which he commanded that only he be worshiped for 30 days. We find in **Daniel 6:10-24**. Instead of reading you the story from Daniel 6, I'm gonna tell you about it. And together we'll see this well known story of Daniel in the lion's den how significant it is. It's more than the child's story is the story of the most essential principles needed for governance in God's kingdom and in the kingdoms of human beings.

Once Darius had signed the law and Daniel heard about it, he did what he did every day. He didn't hide. He was bold about it. He prayed three times a day to the God of heaven. And just to make sure that people understood that he was not backing down on his convictions it says, quite deliberately that he flung the shutters of his windows open. So he prayed so that everyone could see. He was not doing this in hiding and in secret. He was making his stand for religious freedom. Those who designed the law and tricked the king into making this law quickly noted this and reported this breaking of the law to Darius. And by then it was too late.

He realized that out of envy, these other advisors had suggested this law because they wanted to get rid of Daniel. He was heartbroken. And it says that he did everything he could do to try to avoid this. He didn't, he didn't go and hang out with his harem. He didn't have food. He prayed. He looked at other ways that he could solve this problem. And there was no solution.

I want to use some words here that are very important for us to understand. This I've written in another place. We've already mentioned that the interplay of justice and mercy is one of the main themes about government. And it's one of the main overarching themes of the scripture.

This story highlights one of the main themes of the Bible, the interplay of justice and mercy, and how important it's to understand in the sphere of government, as in many other areas of life. This story from Daniel chapter six is so crucial for our understanding. You see, king Darius loves Daniel, his most trustworthy advisor. The other royal counselors were envious and

devised a plot to rid themselves of Daniel. They tricked king Darius into passing an unjust law, which prohibited everyone to worship anyone other than Darius for a span of 30 days.

While Daniel would have nothing to do with his new law and went on worshiping God in his usual way. When his rivals caught him in the act of prayer, they quickly reported their findings to Darius and demanded that Daniel be brought to justice and be sentenced to death. Darius realized all too late his error, but was now bound by law he himself had signed.

As king he could not justly waive Daniel's penalty while requiring it to be paid by others. To do so would be to govern with a double standard. This would be evidence of gross partiality and an inequitable application of the law. If he did not punish Daniel as stipulated by the law, disrespect for the law and injustice would be encouraged throughout the land. As king he understood that he had to uphold the law; justice demanded it, but at the same time he wanted to spare Daniel mercy desired it. What could he do?

Darius was greatly distressed. He was determined to rescue Daniel and made an effort, every effort until sun down to save him. Daniel 6:14. But he could find no way. Even though he wanted to show mercy to Daniel, justice had to be upheld. And so it was that Daniel had to be thrown into the lion's den and a stone placed over the top. what a dark day, that was, it seemed that all was lost in Daniel's life was doomed in anguish. The king return to his palace spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him, Daniel 6:18.

But with the coming of dawn, a surprising discovery transformed the King's bleak despair into exceeding joy. At day break, when they removed the stone from the lions' den they discovered much to their surprise that Daniel was still alive. God had wonderously intervened and had done what the king could not do. The divine intervention had made it possible for the law to be upheld and Daniel's life to be spared both at the same time. Justice was vindicated and mercy demonstrated. What a great thing that was for both Darius and Daniel.

Darius concludes by praising God saying for he is a living God and he endures forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed. His dominion will never end. He rescues. And he saves, he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. What was the sign of wonder God had performed? In saving Daniel's life from the lions God had found a way for both justice and mercy to have full expression. That was truly extraordinary.

This story foretells an amazing redemptive work of God on the cross. At Calvary, the age long dilemma, blending justice and mercy finds perfect solution. At one and the same time justice is satisfied and mercy is extended. Paul tells us that Jesus became a sacrifice of atonement in order to demonstrate his justice. So has to be just, and the one who justifies those who are faith in Jesus, [Romans 3:25-26](#). In other words, at the cross, the law is upheld and forgiveness is made possible.

This is the one and only point in all of human history where justice and mercy are perfectly fused together in an extraordinary blend of redemptive purpose.

Government has a call to uphold justice and every time they can do that mercifully it is desirable.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

The Bible is extraordinarily practical. For leaders in government it even gives teachings instructions about appropriate ways to do War and Peace. Let's look at these next five passages and see what we learned from the scriptures.

Number 39: Laws for War.

This comes from Deuteronomy 20:1-20. I'll read sections of this. When you go out to fight your enemies and you face horses and chariots and an army greater than you own, do not be afraid. The Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt is with you... do not be afraid as you go out to fight your enemies today! Do not lose heart or panic or tremble before them for the Lord your God is going with you...

Now, the officers of the army must address the troops just before the battle and say this- has anyone who just built a new house, but not yet dedicated it? If so you may go home! You might be killed in the battle and someone else would dedicate your house. Has anyone here just planted a vineyard...? people raising their hands. Well but not yet eating any of its fruit if so you may go home. You might die in battle and someone else would eat the first fruit. Has anyone who just become engaged to a woman, but not yet married her? Well, you may go home and get married. You might die battle and someone else would marry her.

Then the officers will also say, is anyone here afraid or worried? If you are, you may go home before you frighten anyone else. don't want you in our troop - Okay. When the officers have finished speaking to their troops, they will appoint the unit commanders. They whittled everybody down. We know everyone there is focused and ready, and then they give these instructions. As you approach a town to attack it, you must first offer its people terms of peace. You don't just go and attack people without warning. If they accept your terms and open the gates to you, then all the people inside will serve you in forced labor. But if they refuse to make peace and prepare to fight, you must attack the town.

Now, wonderful, wonderful principles. Because there are going to be conflicts in nations. So how do you do it right?

So you must completely destroy the Hittites. Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, just as the Lord your God has commanded you.

This is the peoples who are living in the land of Canaan where Israel is to take possession. Why would he say that? Well, he gives a good reason.

This will prevent the people of the land from teaching you to imitate their detestable customs in the worship of their gods, which would cause you to sin deeply against the Lord your God.

And then this whole section ends with this interesting teaching.

When you are attacking a town and the war drags on you must not cut down the trees with your axes. You may eat the fruit, but do not cut down the trees. Are the trees your enemies that you should attack them? You may only cut down trees that you know are not valuable for food. Use them to make the equipment you need to attack the enemy town until it falls.

So let's just review some of the things. Talking about not fearing. If you're going to have an army going to battle, you want to have people who are ready to engage with their whole heart. This is a part of the training, part of the equipping. Secondly it goes through several of cases of people who are excused from the battle. If you've just gotta have new house, if you've planted a vineyard and not enjoyed its fruit yet, if you just engaged and not enjoyed the advantages of being newly married and well, if you're worried or afraid, then you're excused.

You should always give towns an offer of peace. And the reason you kill is because you do not want to do what they do in worshipping other false gods. And don't cut down the trees. Just think of this principle. Don't raise the raise the ground. We see some battles today and

throughout history where its just a scorched earth policy. And after the war is done, it's just generations and decades and decades until there's fruitful and livable once again. He says there are conflicts between nations. There should be some parameters around what is right and what is wrong. Obviously peace is preferable to war, but if you do it in a way, get the battle over with and leave the environment alone so the next generation can have a fresh start.

Number 40: Diplomacy versus War.

This comes from 2 Samuel 10:1-8. Sometime after this king Nahash of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king. David said, I'm going to show loyalty to Hanun just as his father, Nahash was always loyal to me. So David sent ambassadors to express sympathy to Hanun about his father's death. But when David's ambassadors arrived in the land of Ammon, the Ammonite commanders said to Hanun their master, do you really think there's these men are coming here to honor your father? No! David has sent them to spy out the city so they can come in and conquer it. So Hanun seized David's ambassadors and shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their robes at the buttocks and sent them back to David in shame. When David heard what it happened, he sent messengers to tell the men, stay at Jericho until your beards grow out and then come back.

It was a shameful in that context and that culture of that day to, to have your beard cut. For they felt deep shame because of their appearance. When the people of Ammon realized how seriously they had angered David, they sent and hired 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers from the lands of Beth-rehob and Zobah, 1,000 from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 from the land of Tob. When David heard about this, he sent Joab and all his warriors to fight them. The Ammonite troops came out and drew up their battle lines at the entrance of the city gate, while the Arameans from Zobah and Rehob and the men from Tob and Maacah positioned themselves to fight in the open fields.

In this story, David sends two groups of people. First he sent ambassadors to establish treaties and continuity of peace with the transition of the rule from the king who had passed away to his son, the crown prince would now become king. He wanted to establish peace, but the whispering of the, his counselors made him doubt the sincerity of that offer. So he prepared for war. So instead of peace, instead of diplomacy, instead of a treaty, war ensued.

So first David sent ambassadors, then he sent Joab and all his warriors. How wise it would've been if the young king had received the ambassadors and honored them and established a treaty. It would've been no loss of life. Peace is so much better.

In summary, David tried diplomacy first, but when that failed, he resorted to war. Romans 12:18 brings application today for all of us. It says **do all that you can to live in peace with everyone**. It doesn't mean that you are always gonna live in peace with everyone. Do all you can. They may not participate, they may not reciprocate, but you try to be a peacemaker. Whether that's a personal level or a governmental level, that should be our attitude.

Number 41: Civil War Destroys a Nation.

This is a passage in the gospels in Jesus will speak. We read in Luke 11:17. Jesus **knew their thoughts where he said any kingdom divided by civil war is doomed**. A kingdom divided against itself will fall is another translation. Civil war is a great tragedy. If you look at the wars throughout history, the ones that are most devastating, most violent, most destructive, and have most enduring consequences that go on for generations are those among those who are close brothers and, and family and clans, they're those civil wars. And they should be avoided if at all possible it. It is a horrible tragedy and Jesus recognizes this and warns us against it.

Number 42: Edom Judged for War Time Disloyalty.

This comes from the prophet **Obadiah 1:11-15**. When they were invaded [This is speaking of Jerusalem and Judah to being invaded] you stood aloof refusing to help them. Foreign invaders carried off their wealth and cast lots to divide up to Jerusalem. But you acted like one of Israel's enemies. You should not have gloated when they exiled your relatives to distant lands, you should not have rejoiced when the people of Judah suffered such misfortune, you should not have spoken arrogantly in that terrible time of trouble. You should not have plundered the land of Israel when there were suffering such calamity. You should not have gloated over their destruction when they were suffering such calamity. You should not have seized their wealth when they were suffering such calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads killing those who tried to escape. You should not have captured the survivors and handed them over in their terrible time of trouble. The day is near when I the Lord will judge all godless nations. As you've done to Israel so be done to you. All your evil deeds will fall back on your own heads.

Did you hear how many times the prophet said you should not have? You should not have, you should not have. Okay. So the nation of Edom of descendants of Esau, who was Israel's brother and so Jacob is Israel. So there had been enmity going back generations, but they were still family. They were still related. And so when the Babylonians and other enemies came and attacked Jerusalem, you expected family loyalty to kick in, but they took advantage of their cousins, distant cousins' misfortune.

If you are a government leader and you see some nation being attacked and destroyed, you kind of sit by and kind of gloat, because you are rejoicing in their downfall because you can position yourself in the power struggle among nations a little bit more. Be warned. That attitude is very dangerous. And God says that you're godless if you act this way. This is not the right way to act. And if you act this way, what you've done to others will be done to you. Don't gloat over someone else's demise, whether that's an individual or another nation. If you rejoice in another's calamity, it will likely befall you in due time.

Number 43: Elisha "Defeats" The King of Aram.

This is the last this section of War and Peace. One of my favorite passages in scripture. I'm gonna read it and its entirety. It is fairly long. **2 Kings 6:8-23**. I'll pause in between and just unpack it for you.

Now, when the king of Aram was at war with Israel, he would confer with his officers and say, we will mobilize our forces at such and such a place, but immediately Elisha, the man of God, the prophet would warn the king of Israel.

So king - picture the king of Aman and council of war with his commanders. And when he makes a plan, the prophet hears from God and God saying this is gonna happen so they can never be caught off guard.

So Elisha would warn the king of Israel, do not go near that place for the Armenians are planning to mobilize their troops there. So the king of Israel would send word to the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again, Elisha warned the king, so that he would be on the alert there. The king of Aram became very upset over this. He called his officers together and demanded, which one of you is a traitor?

See there's this whole army that is being defeated by the insight that this one prophet is because he knows how to hear God- and the King's paying attention to him. So it's just, all of these plans are being frustrated. He is certain that there's a traitor.

Who has been informing the king of Israel of my plans? It's not us my lord the king, one of the officers replied. Elisha, the prophet in Israel. He tells the king of Israel, even the word you speak in the privacy of your bedroom. Go and find out where he is, the king commanded so I can send trips to seize him.

So now his military target is not the king and the King's armies, but this one solitary prophet, because until he kills this prophet, he can't win the wars.

So the report came back. Elisha is at Dothan, a small little, wall-less city, and in the north of Israel. And so one night the king of Arab sent a great army with many chariots and horses around this to surround the city.

When the servant of the man got up early in the next morning, went outside, you know, he's stretching and getting ready to look up for the day, washing his face and looks up. And, oh my goodness. there, there were troops horses and chariots everywhere. And he goes running into him and says, Oh sir, what will we do now? The young man cried to Elisha.

Don't be afraid, Elisha told him, for there are more on our side than on theirs! Then Elisha prayed O Lord open his eyes and let him see. And the Lord opened the young man's eyes. And when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

That's where we get the name of the movie about the 1924 Olympics in Paris, Chariots of Fire. And so here's one prophet and his servant surrounded by the Aramean forces. And they are surrounded by the forces of heaven, these angelic warriors.

As the Armean is advanced army advanced toward Elisha prayed, oh Lord, please make them blind.

Now he just prayed that his servant would see what you normally couldn't see. And now he prays that the Armenian army goes blind.

So the Lord struck them with blindness as Elisha had asked.

So imagine thousands and thousands of soldiers and charioteers and they're all instantly blind. They're in an unfamiliar territory. There must have been panic in the crowd.

And then Elisha went out and told him, you've come the wrong way. This isn't the right city. Follow me. And I'll take you to the man you're looking for.

And so that's all it says, but from Dothan to Samaria is quite a way. And I imagine it was kind of like, I like they're all blind. Maybe he put a rope and like a teacher with eight or 10 from kindergarten going on a field trip, everyone hold onto the rope. I don't want anyone to get lost or hold onto the shoulder of the one in front of you. And, and the whole army goes single file, being led by the prophet with its huge army banners, probably trailing a, a kilometer or two or mile or two. And he led them to the city of Samaria. As soon as they enter Samaria, Elisha prayed, O Lord, now open their eyes and let them see.

So now they're in the city, the king and his army are all around. And, they're in the city. I mean, you're supposed to keep this enemy outside. And but when the king of Israel saw them, he

shouted Elisha. My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them? Like the king doesn't know what to do. What should I kill him? And Elisha says, of course not. Do we kill prisoners of war?

Thoughts of the Geneva Convention are based on this passage of how we treat people in war. Do we kill prisoners of war? The answer is no. What do we do when someone comes into our town? We show hospitality. So he says, **give them food and drink and send them home again to their master. So the king made a great feast for them and sent them home to their master. After that the Aramean raiders stayed away from the land of Israel.**

What a great way to solve the war problem. You hear from God, you listen to the prophet. If they'd fought a battle that day and people had died, three months later, there'd be another battle. And the year after that, there'd be another battle. And there'd be after another battle. But because of this incredible strategy battle ceased.

We need prophets who hear from God of what evil is being planned against our nation. And the leaders of the nations, like the king of Samira need to be willing to listen to those prophets and be willing to act in bold and in unconventional ways. Every king, every president should pray to have our prophet like Elisha. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we in government learn how to hear from God and act in such kingdom ways that wars would cease?

SECTION INTRODUCTION

This next section is about Government and Healthcare. And we'll look at three passages.

Number 44: Establishing Healthy Societal Conditions.

This comes from **Deuteronomy 23:9-14. When you go to war against your enemies, be sure to stay away from anything that is impure. Any man who becomes ceremonially defiled because of a nocturnal emission, must leave the camp and stay away all day. Toward evening he must bathe himself and that sunset, he may return to the camp. You must have a designated area outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. Each of you must have a spade as part of your equipment. Whenever you relieve yourself, dig a hole with a spade and cover the excrement. The camp must be holy for the Lord Your God moves around in your camp to protect you and to defeat your enemies. He must not see any shameful thing among you or he will turn away from you.**

So I have a friend who talks about this passage and how God instructs the kings to make sure that the society is practicing good, healthy community development principles in terms of their hygiene. And so if you have to relieve yourself, you just don't just go behind your tent and poo you go to a particular area, and you take a little spade, make a hole and then cover it up so the place remains clean. Because God's walking amongst you. And you don't wanna see God walking with a two-step, trying to avoid stepping in excrement that's scattered all over the place. That's a very visual picture.

But what he is teaching here is the importance of the government being involved and helping to establish societal norms, structures, and systems that maintain hygiene, that promote health. And those are important things. This is an area where it's appropriate to relieve yourself. This is not an area and this is how you do it. And those things are good. We need government to help in these areas.

Number 45: Rulers Act to Address Health Problems.

I'm gonna read selections from **1 Samuel 5:6-6:18**. This is a situation when the Philistines had conquered the Israelites and they had stolen the ark of the covenant, but the ark of the covenant was producing plagues in the, in the Philistine villages. And as a judgment, because they were not to have done this. And so this is what happens.

Then the LORD's heavy hand struck the people of Ashdod and the nearby villages with a plague of tumors. When the people realized what was happening, they cried out, "We can't keep the Ark of the God of Israel here any longer! He is against us! We will all be destroyed along with Dagon, our god." So they called together the rulers of the Philistine towns and asked, "What should we do with the Ark of the God of Israel?"

So government leaders are called in, what do we do? "Please send the Ark of the God of Israel back to its own country, or it will kill us all." Is their demand. For the deadly plague from God had already begun, and great fear was sweeping across the town. Those who didn't die were afflicted with tumors; and the cry from the town rose to heaven...Then the Philistines called in their priests and diviners and asked them, "What should we do about the Ark of the LORD? Tell us how to return it to its own country."

So the citizens call the government leaders, the government leaders consult with their religious leaders. This is all among the Philistines, all the pagans.

"Send the Ark of the God of Israel back with a gift," they were told. "Send a gift offering so the plague will stop. Then, if you are healed, you will know it was his hand that caused the plague." ...And they were told, "Since the plague has struck both you and your five rulers, make five gold tumors and five gold rats, just like those that have ravaged your land. Make these things to show honor to the God of Israel. Perhaps then he will stop afflicting you, your gods, and your land.

This is all, you know these pagan priests, the priests of Dagon, are trying to figure out, maybe this will work.

Put the Ark of the LORD on the cart, and beside it place a chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors you are sending as a guilt offering... So these instructions were carried out... Then the Ark of the LORD and the chest containing the gold rats and gold tumors were placed on the cart. ...went straight along the road toward Beth-shemesh...The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley, and when they saw the Ark, they were overjoyed!

So this is the frontier Israelite town closest to the Philistine border.

Many sacrifices and burnt offerings were offered to the LORD that day by the people of Beth-shemesh. The five Philistine rulers watched all this and then returned to Ekron that same day... The large rock at Beth-shemesh, where they set the Ark of the LORD, still stands in the field of Joshua as a witness to what happened there.

So as part of their responsibility to protect citizens, to safeguard justice and protect citizens, government should act and respond to society impacting plagues. And they don't always know what to do. So they should consult with the appropriate people. In this situation, they consulted with their religious leaders. They need to understand why is this happening and what is the solution? They got it right. And every government doesn't always understand why a plague happens and how to solve it, but that should be the purpose - to seek understanding from God as to the real reason of the spread of the illness and to take action. That is of

paramount importance, because that's an essential part of the governmental oversight of protection of its citizenship.

Number 46: The King Defers to the Prophet.

2 Kings 5:1-14. Again, this is a long passage. So I'm just do selections of this. But in this passage, like the earlier ones, we see the problem of health being brought to the king and the king doesn't have an answer in himself, but as he brings in the prophet, that participation of the religious and the government spheres collaborating, we see a great solution. So the king Aram, remember that this was the king that a couple passages back had tried to send commanders to wipe out Samaria.

...he had great admiration for Naman, the commander of his army because through him, the Lord had given Aram great victories, but though Naaman was a mighty warrior, he suffered from leprosy. At this time the Armenian raiders had invaded the land of Israel and among their captives was a young girl that had been given to Naaman's wife as a maid. One day, the girl said to her mistress, I wish my master would go to see the prophet in Samaria. He would heal him of his leprosy.

So Naaman told the king what the young girl from Israel had said. Go and visit the prophet, the king of Aram told him I will send a letter of introduction for you to take to the king of Israel.

Remember these are the guys who are fighting against each other. Now he is sending his chief of staff is his main commander and saying, "would you heal him?" Well, he doesn't want to heal him, he wants him dead most likely, and all the other soldiers. But he, this is a tense political situation.

So Naman started out carrying as gifts, 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold and 10 sets of clothing. The letter to the king of Israel said with this letter, I present my servant Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy.

Now remember the young girl said, go to the prophet. Well, he passed the word onto the king and the king is talking to the other king and says, I want you to take care of this. But immediately this is beyond the capacity of the king to do by himself.

When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes in dismay and said, am I God that I can give life and take it away?

You see having leprosy was like a death sentence, like hearing today that you have cancer, like you're expecting, unless there's some miraculous intervention that your time on earth is limited.

Why is this man asking me to heal someone with leprosy? I can see that he's just trying to pick a fight with me. Like I'm gonna do something. And the whole army of Aram is gonna be on my border again. But when Elisha, the man of God, [the guy who turns whole armies blind and sets up a feast for them] heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes in dismay. He sent this message to him. Why are you so upset? Send Naaman to me. And he will learn that there's a true prophet here in Israel.

So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message, go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan river. Then your skin will be restored and you will be healed of your leprosy. But Naaman became angry and stalked away. I thought he would certainly come out to meet me..

you know, sense of importance. He's the chief commander of the army.

I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the Lord, his God, and heal me. Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abama and Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them?...

He's all upset because of the expected protocol didn't happen.

So Naaman turned away in a rage. But his officers tried to reason with him and said Sir, If that prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he said simply go and wash and be cured. So Naaman went down to the Jordan river, dipped himself seven times that as the man of God had instructed him and his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child. And he was healed.

Wow, you see in this story an amazing inter-play between personal need and governmental interactions from one nation to another. And, and with the religious sphere. The king understood his limits, the king of Samaria. He passed off the problem to the prophet and the desired solution came about.

See, no one sphere can go it alone. When we have problems in society, problems that are beyond the capacity of any one of us, we need an integrated and collaborative approach. Now healthcare is a common concern of religion, family, government, and the economic spheres. We talk about healthcare in each one of those four spheres, because all contribute, all should be involved in the maintaining of the life and the health of the people. We need to do this together. We need to value the contribution that each sphere brings so that all people can walk in health and thrive as God intends them to.

SECTION INTRODUCTION

We're now ready to look at the six final passages that we look at the crossover between government and each of the other six spheres. In these we'll see how they collaborated well together or how they failed to collaborate well together, and the consequences of each.

Number 47: Government and Family.

We take this story from **2 Samuel 11:2-27**. Again, because it's a longer passage I will summarize some of this. Many would know this passage. It was, David was king and he was staying in his palace and he looked out over the city and he noticed a woman of unusual beauty, taking a bath, looking through his rooftop, observed this. And he goes and sends one of his underlings to go and fetch her and, and invites her to the palace. Her name was Bathsheba, and he has sex with her, they have an adulterous relationship. Come to find out a few months later, she discovers that she was pregnant. The problem is that her husband, Uriah the Hittite, is one of David's mighty men. He is one of his close associates, one of the leaders in his army. And while David's been in the palace, he's been out on the field at war. And so it's obvious that her pregnancy is not due to her husband's interaction with her, but to someone else's. So after doing, committing adultery, David plots how to murder his friend, Uriah.

Then David sent word to Joab the commander of the army: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent him to David. When Uriah arrived, David asked him how Joab and the army were getting along and how the war was progressing.

Then he told Uriah, "Go on home and relax. " David even sent a gift to Uriah after he had left the palace. But Uriah didn't go home. He slept that night at the palace entrance with the king's palace guard.

And he didn't. He went on to explain to the king, when King's David said, why didn't you go home? He says, how could I enjoy the pleasure of my wife when my colleagues are risking their life on the battle front? He had an integrity that David didn't have. And so finally he goes back to the battlefield and David sends a letter to Joab the command of the army and said,

"Station Uriah on the front lines where the battle is fiercest. Then pull back so that he will be killed." So Joab assigned Uriah to a spot close to the city wall where he knew the enemy's strongest men were fighting. And when the enemy soldiers came out of the city to fight, Uriah the Hittite was killed along with several other Israelite soldiers...When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. When the period of mourning was over, David sent for her and brought her to the palace, and she became one of his wives. Then she gave birth to a son. But the LORD was displeased with what David had done.

Certainly he was. David in this instance violated the law of the king. He committed adultery with the 10 commandments. He committed murder by proxy, but it was at his command that not only Uriah, but several others lost their lives. And, and he did so because he could, he had the power. He could command Bathsheba to come to the palace when her husband was gone. He could command Joab up to set Uriah up for a certain death.

David used his position as king abusively. He abused his power. It was authoritarian and hedonistic what he had done, two of the, of the three things that were prohibited in that law of the king. He did that to obtain what was not appropriately his, to have the pleasurable sexual experience with Uriah's wife.

Government power does not authorize you to commit adultery and murder. David later repents of this in **Psalm 51** and reading this passage is shows you how deeply God had to work in his heart to bring about a profound change and restore him to a place of right relationship with God and his neighbors.

Just because one has governmental power and can command things that he ought not to command does not mean that he should. He should exercise self control. Adultery and murder are not acceptable. Whether you're a king or an ordinary person, don't do it.

Number 48: Government and Economics.

1 Kings 12:4-18 is really a follow up on our passage. Number 24, where we talked about Solomon and how he multiplied not only horses and wives, but he multiplied gold. And in the gold area alone, he had 666 talents of gold, over \$14 billion worth of gold in taxes every year. Plus everything else. Solomon has just died. And his son Rehoboam is ascending to the throne and people gather to him and they say this: **Your father was a hard master. Lighten the harsh labor demands and heavy taxes that your father imposed on us. Then we will be your loyal subjects. Rehoboam replied, give me three days to think this over...**

And so I'm gonna skip through this passage in a little bit, but consults with some wise older counselors, they say, they're absolutely right. It's a legitimate request that they have. Lower the taxes, back off on the labor demands that you have. But then he asked his friends who grew up in the palace with him and they said, no, you don't want to diminish your lifestyle, keep it up, increase it even.

So, Rehoboam decided to take the council of his friends, the younger ones. And when the people came back after three days, he said, *my father laid heavy burdens on you, but I'm gonna make them even heavier. My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions. When all Israel realized that the king had refused to listen to them, they responded, Down with the dynasty of David. We have no interest in the son of Jesse, back to your homes O Israel.*

And they left.

So after they split, Rehoboam only had two tribes, a tribe of Judah and Benjamin. This was a great tragedy. And it was all because as a king, he had not learned for himself and had not seen in his father, the exercise of self control. If you have the power, you have to know how to limit yourself. When we consider Solomon's failure, he violated everything in the law of the Kings and Rehoboam followed in his father's footsteps. And misery was compounded upon misery and great was the destruction that happened.

Self control, knowing how to say no to yourself, how to limit yourself, when you have the authority as a ruler, as a leader is one of the most important virtues to cultivate. The lack thereof can destroy you and your people.

Number 49: Government and Religion.

This is from 1 Samuel 13:7-14. So Israel was on the verge of war. Saul, who was king stayed *at Gilgal, and his men were trembling with fear.*

They were facing the Philistine army. And Saul waited there seven days for Samuel, because Samuel, the prophet had instructed him earlier to wait for seven days, but Samuel still didn't come. Saul realized that his troops were rapidly slipping away. People was trying to abandon ship. They were trying to desert. *So he demanded bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings.* Because he was king, people obeyed him. This was not what he was supposed to do. Only the priest, only the prophet was supposed to offer the offerings.

And Saul sacrificed the burnt offering himself. Just as Saul was finishing with the burnt offering, Samuel shows up. *Saul went out to meet him and welcome him. But Samuel said, what is this you have done? Saul replied I saw my men scattering from me. You didn't arrive when you said you would, and the Philistines are at Micmash ready for battle. So I said, the Philistines are ready to march against us at Gilgal, and I haven't even asked the Lord for his help. So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering myself before you came.*

If you're a leader and you feel compelled to do something that you know is not right. Stop. Don't do it.

How foolish, Samuel exclaimed you have not kept the command of the Lord your God, that was given to you. Had you kept it The Lord would've established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom must end for the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already appointed him to be the leader of his people because you have not kept the Lord's command.

Wow. That seems like a very, very harsh judgment. Unless we really understand what's going on. See God was looking for a man after his own heart. God has the most power and all authority in the universe. And God lives with extraordinary self control. He doesn't do everything he could be doing just because he's God. He holds back so that we have the

freedom to make our choices and do our actions. And he respects us. God, he has power over his power. He has self control over his control.

And if you don't learn that, that's how good leaders, true leaders, godly leaders, godlike leaders lead. If you don't do that, you cannot be trusted. If you're given power and you use it, unwisely, use it precipitously. You use it without any restraint, not keeping within the boundary of your domain. You will lose your authority.

The issue here is the importance of understanding the scope and the domain of every authority. When you use authority to usurp the domain of another - so he took on the role of the religious - you lose your authority. That's why in our governments today we have executive and judicial and legislative branches. When one tries to do something that is outside of their domain, it violates things. We have other spheres of society besides government. Government isn't supposed to do everything. There are certain things that government's supposed to do. Other things that religion is supposed to do. Other things that family is supposed to do. Other things, oh, everyone has their domain.

And most interpersonal and most international conflicts can be traced back to some person or some nation usurping the domain or the authority of another, one party against another. It's not a small thing. If leaders are not capable of exercising self control and confining themselves to appropriate boundaries of their authority, they lose all legitimacy to rule. That's why good governments have constitutions that specify the limits of government so that everyone knows government can do up to here and no more. Stay within your boundaries if you want to rule as God rules.

Number 50: Government and Education.

This comes from **Daniel 1:3-4**. Then the king [that's Nebuchadnezzar in this case] ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families who had been brought to Babylon as captives. Select only strong, healthy, and good looking young men, he said. Make sure that they're well-versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment and are suited to serve in the Royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon.

And this is how we start the story of Daniel and his friends. And when they arrive as captives into the palace of Babylon, they're submitted to a whole educational curriculum. Now it's interesting that biblically, education lies normally within the domain of the individual and the family and is supported by the religious sphere because the church is the family of God. So it's an extension of the family.

In the Bible we rarely see government having a role in education. This is the most obvious exception to that rule. And of course here, the government that is doing this is a government as an opposition to the people of God. It's a pagan government. And their curriculum is about the language and literature of Babylon. The language is okay. But the literature? my goodness, that was all about their mythology and their false gods and their idolatry. The government was pagan. And the education was trying to socialize them into thinking in ways that were contrary to God. That's not a good example. We don't want to imitate that. We don't want to have governments, secular governments, imposing curriculum that is forcing people to think like they think in their religious paradigms when there's not in conformity with the ways of God. Every sphere should function in its own area of responsibility in its own domain of authority.

Number 51: Government and Media/Communication.

I'm gonna summarize the story that we find in **Joshua 9:3-27**. As you've got this in your Bible, take time to read the whole thing, but it starts off saying this **when the people of Gibeon** (this is one of the cities in the lands that, Joshua and Israelites were intending to conquer) **heard that Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they resorted to deception to save themselves.**

So the first thing you have to think, their communication plan is essentially false. The media, their story- is deceptive. It's misinformation, disinformation. They sent some ambassadors and **they put on worn out patched sandals and ragged clothes. And the bread they took with them was dry and moldy. When they arrived at the camp of Israel at Gilgal, they told Joshua and the men of Israel, "we have come from a distant land to ask you to make a peace treaty with us."**

You know, they, it was a drama. It was a great theatrical presentation, but it was all untrue. And so they said, where do you come from? They don't give a clear answer. So we come from a very distant country And they check out the bread, the bread's old and stale looking and they take the word for it.

So the Israelites examined their food, but they did not consult the Lord. Joshua made it peace treaty with them and guarantee their safety and the leaders of the community, ratified their agreement with a binding oath. **Three days after making the treaty, they learn that these people actually live nearby. The Israelites set out at once to investigate and reached a town in three days.** They didn't do a thorough investigation initially. It's no good to investigate after you've already made a commitment.

The people of Israel grumbled against their leaders because of the treaty. Yeah. I mean, didn't do the right thing. And so Joshua marches and there with his army and talks with them, but he's made a treaty. So he can't fight them because he would be losing all authority. His word would be null and void. So Joshua did not allow the people of Israel to kill them. But that day he **made the Gibeonites the wood cutters and water carriers for the community of Israel and for the altar of the Lord, wherever the Lord would choose to build it. And that is what they do to this day.**

A poor governmental decision was made because the veracity of the communication was not dually verified. There was no investigation and there was no pursuit of God. You can do the due diligence and with a natural gifts and also spiritually be in tune, check out, listen to God. If you're a government leader, even your due diligence is often not enough. Listen to God, consulting him before decision was made. They were manipulated by a misinformation campaign by their would-be enemies. If you're gonna make a major decision as a government leader, don't be hasty. Before you make a treaty. Investigate thoroughly and then investigate some more to make sure you have all the right facts and then listen to God. Then you can make the decision.

Number 52: Government and Celebration.

This comes from **Mark 6:21-28**. **Herodias's chance finally came on Herod's birthday. He gave a party for his high government officials, army officers, and the leading citizens of Galilee. Then his daughter, also named Herodias, came in and performed a dance that greatly pleased Herod and his guests. "Ask me for anything you like," the king said to the girl, "and I will give it to you." He even vowed, "I will give you whatever you ask, up to half my kingdom!" She went out and asked her mother, "What should I ask for?" Her mother told her, "Ask for the head of John the Baptist!" So the girl hurried back to the king and told him, "I want the head of John the**

Baptist, right now, on a tray!" Then the king deeply regretted what he had said; but because of the vows he had made in front of his guests, he couldn't refuse her. So he immediately sent an executioner to the prison to cut off John's head and bring it to him. The soldier beheaded John in the prison, brought his head on a tray, and gave it to the girl, who took it to her mother.

It is never good to make governmental decisions when you are in a drunken state. Don't do it at the party. When the emotions are high. When the entertainment has been captivating. When you're spur of the moment decisions, responding emotionally to seductive stimuli, not a good time to make governmental decisions. Take a breath, let the moment pass. Ponder deeply. Then you can make the good decision. If you don't, someone's liable to lose their head.