

# **THE PURPOSE OF GOVERNMENT**

Part 2 of God & Government. Ezekiel 34:1-6.  
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. April 14, 2024.

## **GOD AND GOVERNMENT**

**In this series, we're looking at topics such as:**

- The Christian's relationship to government.
- What a godly government looks like.
- The purpose of government from God's perspective.

## **FOUR GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS**

**The Bible refers to political and governmental people and events.**

- Kings, queens, emperors, politics, laws, courts, etc.

**God is the supreme ruler of the rulers.**

- For example: Psalm 22:28; Ephesians 1:20-23; Revelation 11:15-17; 15:3-4; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

**The Lord has ordained four institutions of government to help us flourish.**

1. Personal - Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 9:25.
2. Family - Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Ephesians 6:1-4.
3. Civil - Romans 13:1, 3-4; 1 Peter 2:13-14.
4. Church - Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 5:1-5.

## **CIVIL GOVERNMENT IS GOD'S SHEPHERD**

**God designed civil government to shepherd people.**

- "Shepherd" is a metaphor derived from the ancient near east.

- “Shepherds were known for independence, resource-fulness, adaptability, courage, self-sacrifice, and compassion ... For these and other reasons, the shepherd naturally became an icon of leadership.” (Laniak, T. S. (2006). *Shepherds after my own heart: pastoral traditions and leadership in the Bible*).
- When the shepherd-kings obeyed God, the people flourished.
- When bad shepherd-kings ruled, the people suffered.

## **EZEKIEL 34: GOD’S PURPOSE FOR CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

### **1. The civil government should listen to God.**

The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel.”

### **2. The civil government should serve its citizens.**

2b “Prophesy, and say to them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have been feeding themselves! Shouldn’t the shepherds feed their flock?’”

### **3. The civil government should protect and provide for its citizens.**

3 “You eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fattened animals, but you do not tend the flock. 4 You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost.”

### **4. The civil government should not abuse its citizens.**

4b “Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty. 5 They were scattered for lack of a shepherd; they became food for all the wild animals when they were scattered. 6 My flock went astray on all the mountains and every high hill. My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and there was no one searching or seeking for them.”

# **GOD MEDIATES HIS RULE THROUGH CIVIL GOVERNMENT**

**God loves and cares for his people through governments.**

- Leaders “rule” under the ultimate rule of God.
- Deuteronomy 17 describes how this works.

**God chooses rulers.**

Deuteronomy 17:14 (CSB) When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, take possession of it, live in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations around me,’ 15 you are to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses.

**Rulers should not enter into political/spiritual alliances with pagan nations.**

16 However, he must not acquire many horses for himself or send the people back to Egypt to acquire many horses, for the LORD has told you, ‘You are never to go back that way again.’ 17 He must not acquire many wives for himself so that his heart won’t go astray. He must not acquire very large amounts of silver and gold for himself.

**Rulers should know and submit to God’s Word and will.**

18 When he is seated on his royal throne, he is to write a copy of this instruction for himself on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. 19 It is to remain with him, and he is to read from it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to observe all the words of this instruction, and to do these statutes.

**Rulers should not exalt themselves above their citizens.**

20 Then his heart will not be exalted above his country- men, he will not turn from this command to the right or the left, and he and his sons will continue reigning many years in Israel.

**CONCLUSION: WE WANT GOOD SHEPHERDS**

# SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

## READING

- This week, work through Chapter 2 of the Kingdom Politics study guide and/or Chapter 2 of the Kingdom Politics book.

## GET STARTED

- Last weekend, I ...

## DIVE IN

- Review Peter's study guide. What were Peter's main ideas, insights, or Bible passages related to God's purpose for government?
- Read Romans 13:1-7. How does this passage support or differ from the ideas in Ezekiel 34 and Deuteronomy 17?
- Read 1 Peter 2:13-17. What is the context? Who was in power? Was it a good and godly government? So ... how should we understand and apply the passage today?
- What is a national spiritual awakening? How does it happen? What can we do to bring it about? What would be the impact? Is it even a remote possibility? Has it ever happened before? For a brief insight, read: <https://www.northwestu.edu/president/blog/awakenings-and-revivals>

## PRAY TOGETHER

- Pray for national spiritual awakening.
- Pray for the Cornerstone - people, leaders, health, and faithfulness.
- Pray for our families, communities, and nation.