



Letters To The Editor

Government as an Evil

The article by Dennis Behreandt in the December 23, 2019 issue of TNA, "The Divine Message of Freedom," is a great discredit to an otherwise fine publication. The overarching issue becomes clear in Behreandt's quotation of the statement, "Everyone can admit that [the Gospels] were not written as strictly historical documents." This is a reflection of the modern view of many who refuse to accept that the Holy Bible is both inerrant (without error) and infallible (cannot be in error); it is the Word of God, who cannot lie.

From there Behreandt proceeds to misrepresent the Holy Bible as teaching that civil government is evil, using faulty exegesis of scripture, namely the people's demand to Samuel for a king, Christ's temptation in the wilderness, rendering to Caesar, and Romans 13 on civil government.

For the sake of space, this writer will only comment briefly, but interested readers will do well to consult the commentaries by John Calvin and Matthew Henry on these passages. Helpful books include Samuel Rutherford's *Lex Rex*, William Symington's *Messiah the Prince*, and Alexander McLeod's *Messiah, Governor of the Nations of the Earth*. A more modern treatment is at <https://beforgiven.info/JCRoHRaF.pdf>, Jeremiah Bezael's "Jesus Christ: Rock of Human Rights and Freedom."

Behreandt claims that 1 Samuel 8 teaches that "government is the means to enslave the people." That is beyond absurd when you consider that God had already given Israel a civil government by the hand of Moses! The problem confronting the prophet Samuel was that the people wanted to reject God and his instituted government for a "king like all the [idolatrous, heathen] nations." In other words, the people wanted to put a bad government in place of a good one, instead of putting good public officials in place of bad public officials (called judges).

As to the temptation of the Lord Jesus, Behreandt takes the father of lies at his word, saying, "The devil promised to give Him the nations and the peoples of those nations, something that would lead Jesus into the idolatry of political power." On the contrary, Christ does not deign to debate with such a liar, but blows him off with simple statements from Scripture.

A valid interpretation of Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-17, and Matthew 22:21 shows that civil government is not, as Behreandt believes, the "Antichrist," but given by God.

Man's sinfulness will never go away completely; we thus need civil government to restrain evildoers. Present-day California exhibits this truth nicely. Communists might believe that the state will "wither away," because they do not recognize that all humans are born rebels against God, and sinners against God and man. Contrary to what they and other liberals believe, changing externals will not fix this sinfulness. In Christ, this sinfulness will be forgiven those who put their trust in Him and commit to Him, through the lone instrument of God-given faith.

The Puritans and Scottish Covenanters were bitterly and often fatally persecuted by civil governments, yet they correctly upheld the Scripture, teaching that civil government is a good thing, and is from God. Evils perpetrated by governments are the fault of people in them, not civil government as a biblical institution. One might as well condemn fatherhood on the basis of the fact that some sinners abuse their



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children.

Tom Sullivan

Sent via e-mail

Dennis Behreandt responds: *The letter writer on this matter does us the service of presenting the case for a supposedly biblical rationale for the total state. I encourage readers to consider his words, read carefully his references, and to refer to scripture in order to form their own opinions on the matter, as well as to consider that the record of the state is one of unrelenting tyranny over the entire course of human history, with the state nearly always weaponized against Christians, beginning with the persecution and murder of Christ Himself.*

As to the nature of the state, we should keep in mind Christ's teaching: "There is no good tree that bringeth forth evil fruit; nor an evil tree that bringeth forth good fruit. For every tree is known by its fruit." And what, precisely, has been the fruit of government? State-sanctioned pillage, rapine, murder, and mayhem on a massive scale. We might well wonder how such a supposedly good tree has spawned such evil as this.



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