

WEAVER STUDY GUIDES

Christian & Civil Government

Study Guide

Civil Government

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A lesson-by-lesson companion for reading, discussion, and written responses.

Downloadable classroom edition | 8.5 x 11 inches

Name / group

Date

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Using this guide

Read the corresponding chapter, then work through the themes, arguments, and Scripture references.

Write your responses before discussing the questions with others. Use the application pages to identify a practical next step.

The study material is retained from the existing lecture study guides. Added writing prompts provide space for your own response.

Print at Actual Size / 100% on US Letter paper. Single-sided and double-sided printing are both suitable. Lessons begin on the next available page; no blank pages are inserted.

Reading assignments refer to the September 30, 2026 edition of the companion book. Online lecture links and QR codes are collected at the end.

LESSON 1

Christian & Civil Government # 1

December 04, 2000

Read Chapter 1 in the companion book, pages 5-37.

Major Themes

Christ's Kingship Over All Spheres

Jesus Christ is King of everything - politics, economics, government, education - not just the church. All authority in heaven and earth belongs to Him.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Jesus Christ is king of the world. He is not just simply head or king of the church. He is indeed that. But he is king of everything.' He cites Matthew 28:18 and 1 Timothy 6:15.

Divine Origin and Purpose of Civil Government

God ordained civil government to be His deacon, exactor of righteousness, and public worship. Government is inherently religious and must be Christian to fulfill its God-given role.

Lecture support: Weaver expounds Romans 13:4,6, noting the Greek words diakonos and leitourgos, and argues: 'God ordained government to publicly worship Him, just like he ordained the family and the church to publicly worship him.'

Sphere Sovereignty and Limited Authority

God gave family, church, and state distinct spheres of authority. When an institution leaves its sphere, it loses its authority. Government has no authority to usurp the roles of family or church.

Lecture support: Weaver illustrates: 'The family cannot tell the church, "Well, you can't preach the gospel." The church cannot tell the state, "Well, you cannot execute that murderer."'

Biblical Qualifications for Civil Rulers

Scripture requires rulers to be believers, morally upright, haters of covetousness, wise, understanding, and ruling in the fear of God. They must know and apply God's law.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Deuteronomy 17:15-20, Exodus 18:21, and 2 Samuel 23:3, emphasizing: 'God never ordained civil magistrates to make their own laws. He ordained civil magistrates to enforce His laws.'

Covenantal Nature of Government

Government is based on covenants between God, the ruler, and the people. When the ruler violates the covenant, the people are released from obedience and may resist.

Lecture support: Weaver cites 2 Kings 11:17, 1 Chronicles 11:3, and Joshua 2:17-20, and quotes Samuel Rutherford: 'When the king defends not true religion... they are not under the king but are presumed to have no king.'

Corporate Responsibility and National Judgment

When rulers sin openly and the people do not resist, God judges the entire nation. Americans are accountable for what their government does and will not escape judgment.

Lecture support: Weaver uses 2 Samuel 21:1, 1 Chronicles 21, and Jeremiah 15:4 to show God judged Israel for the sins of Saul, David, and Manasseh, and warns: 'If you think for one minute that America is going to escape God's judgment for what we have allowed our leaders to do, you're mistaken.'

Key Arguments

All Authority Derives from God

God alone has inherent authority; all human rulers derive their authority from Him. Therefore, their authority is limited, and they are accountable to God.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'God reigns by virtue of His own authority and rights. All others rule and reign by derivation.' He cites Daniel 4:17: 'the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.'

Government Is Inherently Religious

Because God ordained government to be His minister and public worship, there is no separation between government and religion. All law is based on someone's religion.

Lecture support: Weaver argues: 'You cannot separate government and religion. You see, government is either going to be a Christian government or it's going to be a pagan government, but it's still religious.'

Submission Is Conditional on Righteous Rule

Romans 13 commands submission to government only insofar as it fulfills its God-ordained role as deacon, exactor of righteousness, and public worship. Tyranny is not a legitimate form of government.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'God is nowhere in this passage demanding that we submit to a tyrannical government, a usurped power, a usurped authority that God never gave.'

Covenant Violation Releases Obedience

In biblical covenants, when one party breaks the covenant, the other party is freed from obligation. This principle applies to government: when rulers become tyrannical, the people may resist.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Joshua 2:20 and the Fairfax Resolves, and quotes the Declaration of Independence: 'whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it.'

The People Share Responsibility for Rulers' Sins

Because of the covenantal nature of government, when the people allow their rulers to sin openly without resistance, God judges the nation corporately.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'Every Israelite knew that what David was doing was wrong. Even Joab the murderer knew it was wrong. And no one lifted a finger to stop him. And so God judged the people with the ruler.'

Scripture References

Romans 13:1-8

Read as the foundational passage on submission to civil government, with emphasis on 'higher powers' being ordained of God.

Hosea 4:6

Quoted by Greg earlier; Weaver references it to highlight the destruction that comes from lack of knowledge.

John 8:32

Cited to show that knowing the truth brings freedom, and ignorance brings bondage.

2 Corinthians 3:17

Paraphrased to argue that where the Spirit of the Lord is not, there is bondage.

Matthew 28:18

Used to support Christ's universal kingship: 'All power is given unto me in heaven and earth.'

1 Timothy 6:15

Cited to show Christ is the only potentate, the all-powerful one.

Psalm 119:89

Used to assert the eternal settled nature of God's Word.

2 Timothy 3:16

Cited to show all Scripture is profitable and applicable, with Paul primarily referring to the Old Testament.

Proverbs 8:15-16

Wisdom personified as Christ declares that by Him kings reign and princes decree justice.

Psalm 75:6-7

Promotion comes from God alone; He puts down one and sets up another.

Daniel 2:21, 37

God changes times and seasons, removes and sets up kings; Nebuchadnezzar's authority given by God.

Daniel 4:16-17, 28-32

Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation to teach that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men.

1 Peter 2:13-14

Submission to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; 'ordinance' interpreted as type of government, not every law.

Deuteronomy 17:15-20

Qualifications for a king: must be a brother (believer), not multiply horses, wives, or gold; must write and read God's law.

Exodus 18:21

Rulers must be able men, fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.

Deuteronomy 1:13

Rulers must be wise and understanding.

2 Samuel 23:1-3

David claims direct inspiration: 'He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.'

2 Samuel 5:12

David perceived God established him king for the sake of God's people Israel.

2 Kings 11:17

Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people, and also between the king and the people.

1 Chronicles 11:3

David made a covenant with the elders before the Lord.

Study notes

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean practically that Jesus Christ is King over politics, economics, and government? How should this affect our voting and political engagement?

Consider: Weaver's first presupposition is that Christ is King of everything, not just the church.

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2. How does the biblical teaching that government is God's 'deacon' and 'public worship' challenge the modern idea of a secular state?

Consider: Weaver explains the Greek terms in Romans 13:4,6, showing government's religious role.

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3. In what ways has our government overstepped its God-given sphere of authority? How should Christians respond?

Consider: Weaver discusses sphere sovereignty and the limits of government authority.

4. How do the biblical qualifications for rulers (Deuteronomy 17, Exodus 18) apply to our selection of leaders today? Should Christians support candidates who do not meet these qualifications?

Consider: Weaver lists qualifications such as being a believer, moral, and hating covetousness.

5. What is the covenantal nature of government, and how does it affect our obligation to obey? When is resistance justified?

Consider: Weaver explains the two covenants in Scripture and the principle that covenant violation releases obedience.

6. How does the American founding reflect the biblical principle of resisting tyranny? Are there situations today that might warrant similar action?

Consider: Weaver reads from the Fairfax Resolves and Declaration of Independence.

7. Why does God judge a nation corporately for the sins of its rulers? What responsibility do citizens have to oppose wicked policies?

Consider: Weaver uses examples like Saul, David, and Manasseh to show corporate judgment.

8. What does it mean to 'contend' with the wicked by keeping God's law? How can personal holiness impact national judgment?

Consider: Weaver cites Proverbs 28:4 and the example of Sodom to encourage holy living as a form of resistance.

Applications

Recognize Christ's Kingship in All Areas

Believers must acknowledge Jesus Christ as King over government, economics, and education, not just the church, and live accordingly.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Jesus Christ is king of the world... He is king of politics. He is king of economics. He is king of government.'

Evaluate Government by Biblical Standards

Christians should assess civil government by whether it functions as God's deacon, exactor of righteousness, and public worship, not by secular metrics.

Lecture support: Weaver argues from Romans 13:4,6 that government is ordained to be God's minister and public worship.

Resist Government Overreach

When government exceeds its God-given sphere, believers must recognize it loses its authority and should not submit to tyranny.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'If it leaves its sphere of authority, it loses its authority.'

Apply Biblical Qualifications to Leaders

Christians should support only rulers who meet biblical qualifications: believers, morally upright, haters of covetousness, and ruling in the fear of God.

Lecture support: Weaver lists qualifications from Deuteronomy 17, Exodus 18, and 2 Samuel 23.

Understand Covenantal Accountability

Recognize that citizens are in a covenantal relationship with rulers and are accountable to God for what they allow their government to do.

Lecture support: Weaver warns: 'If you think for one minute that America is going to escape God's judgment for what we have allowed our leaders to do, you're mistaken.'

Contend Through Holy Living

One way to fight against wickedness is by keeping God's law and living holy, godly lives, which can spare a nation from judgment.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Proverbs 28:4 and the example of Sodom: 'God was willing to spare those countries, those cities, if there were what? Ten righteous people.'

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 2

Christian & Civil Government # 2

December 05, 2000

Read Chapter 2 in the companion book, pages 39-64.

Major Themes

Government as a Ministry of Justice

God ordained civil government solely to punish evildoers and protect the righteous, not to provide welfare or education.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'God ordained and God established the civil government, number one, to punish the evildoers and number two, to protect the good-doers or the righteous.'

Limitation of Government by Negative Law

God's law is expressed in negative terms to deal with specific evils, confine government, and prevent tyranny.

Lecture support: Weaver explains, 'A negative law always deals with a particular evil... A negative law limits and confines civil government... a positive law always leads to totalitarianism and tyranny.'

God as the Definer of Good and Evil

God creates evil by defining good; what is contrary to His law is evil. Rejecting God's standard leads to societal chaos.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'When God determines and when God defines what is good, by definition, He has created evil.'

The Necessity of Punishing Evil

Failure to execute justice emboldens criminals; executing the wicked deters crime and protects society.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Ecclesiastes 8:11 and states, 'The execution of the wicked does deter crime... The man that you execute will never commit any more.'

Biblical Civil Disobedience

Scripture provides examples of God honoring those who disobeyed ungodly rulers, establishing the principle of obeying God rather than man.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Elijah, the midwives, Rahab, Daniel, and the apostles, concluding, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'

The Lordship of Jesus Christ

The ultimate issue is whether government or Christ is Lord; believers must give first allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'The issue today is who is Lord. Is government Lord or is Jesus Christ Lord?'

Key Arguments

Government's Purpose is Limited to Justice

The Bible limits government to punishing evil and protecting good; it has no biblical mandate for welfare or education.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'God has never ordained government to be a provider government... He has ordained government simply to be a ministry of justice.'

Negative Laws Prevent Tyranny

Positive laws, like 'the health of the people is the highest good,' allow government overreach, while negative laws confine it.

Lecture support: Weaver argues, 'A positive law always leads to totalitarianism and tyranny... once you get a positive law, then any and everything can be passed.'

Rejecting God's Standard Causes Chaos

America's abandonment of the Bible as an objective standard has led to moral anarchy and confusion.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'We've kicked out the Word of God. We've kicked out the objective standard. And thus, we are in absolute chaos, anarchy, and confusion.'

Justice Deters Crime

Scripture teaches that swift punishment deters evil; leniency encourages more crime.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Ecclesiastes 8:11 and says, 'Because civil magistrates do not deal with justice toward the wicked... the hearts of the sons of men in them are fully set to do evil.'

Government Now Protects the Wicked

Modern government often punishes the righteous and protects evildoers, inverting its God-given role.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'Government, instead of protecting the righteous and punishing the wicked, is now protecting the wicked and punishing the righteous.'

Obedience to God Supersedes Obedience to Man

When human law contradicts God's law, Christians must obey God, as demonstrated by biblical figures.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Acts 5:29: 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'

Christ's Lordship is the Central Issue

The conflict between government and Christianity is ultimately about whether Christ or the state is Lord.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'The issue today is who is Lord. Is government Lord or is Jesus Christ Lord?'

Scripture References

Romans 13:1-7

Weaver reads the passage as the foundation for the message, emphasizing subjection to governing authorities.

Romans 13:3-4

Weaver uses these verses to establish the purpose of government: to punish evil and protect good.

Isaiah 45:7

Weaver explains that God creates evil by defining good; what contradicts His law is evil.

1 Peter 2:13-14

Weaver cites this to show that government is for the punishment of evildoers and praise of the righteous.

Ecclesiastes 8:11

Weaver quotes this to argue that delayed justice emboldens evildoers.

1 Peter 4:14-16

Weaver uses this to distinguish suffering for evil (mala in se) from suffering as a Christian.

2 Kings 1:2-15

Weaver recounts Elijah's defiance of King Ahaziah and God's judgment on the king's men.

Exodus 1:15-21

Weaver tells of the Hebrew midwives who disobeyed Pharaoh and were blessed by God.

Joshua 2:1-7

Weaver recounts Rahab's lie to protect the Israelite spies and God's blessing on her.

Exodus 2:1-3

Weaver mentions Moses' parents hiding him in defiance of Pharaoh's edict.

Hebrews 11:23

Weaver references this verse to show that Moses' parents acted by faith, not fearing the king's command.

Daniel 3

Weaver recounts Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's refusal to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's image.

Daniel 6

Weaver tells of Daniel's disobedience to the law against prayer and God's deliverance.

Acts 5:29

Weaver quotes Peter and the apostles: 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'

Acts 5:17-20

Weaver recounts the apostles' imprisonment and the angel's command to preach despite the rulers' prohibition.

Isaiah 33:22

Weaver mentions this verse as the basis for the three branches of government.

1 Kings 18

Weaver references Elijah's defiance of Ahab and God's protection of him.

1 Samuel 16

Weaver mentions God instructing Samuel to use a subterfuge to anoint David.

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding government as a 'ministry of justice' change the way we evaluate modern government programs?

Consider: Weaver argues that God ordained government only to punish evil and protect good, not for welfare or education.

2. In what ways do positive laws today lead to the kind of tyranny Weaver describes?

Consider: Weaver explains that positive laws, like seatbelt mandates, can expand government control under the guise of safety.

3. What are the consequences for a society that rejects an objective moral standard like the Bible?

Consider: Weaver states that abandoning God's Word leads to chaos, anarchy, and confusion.

4. How should Christians respond when the government fails to execute justice, as described in Ecclesiastes 8:11?

Consider: Weaver argues that delayed justice emboldens criminals and that capital punishment deters crime.

5. What principles from the examples of Elijah, the midwives, and Rahab guide us in deciding when civil disobedience is justified?

Consider: Weaver uses these biblical accounts to show that God honors those who disobey ungodly rulers.

6. How do we balance the command to submit to authorities (Romans 13) with the command to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29)?

Consider: Weaver addresses the apparent tension by explaining that Paul himself disobeyed authorities when they contradicted God's will.

7. In what ways is the early Christian refusal to say 'Caesar is Lord' parallel to challenges Christians face today?

Consider: Weaver compares the Roman emperor cult to modern hate crime laws that could criminalize biblical beliefs.

Applications

Recognize Government's Limited Role

Believers should understand that government is ordained only for justice, not for welfare or education, and should not look to it as a provider.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'God has never ordained government to be a provider government... He has ordained government simply to be a ministry of justice.'

Uphold God's Law as the Standard

Christians must maintain the Bible as the objective standard for right and wrong, resisting the cultural trend of moral relativism.

Lecture support: Weaver warns, 'We've kicked out the Word of God. We've kicked out the objective standard. And thus, we are in absolute chaos.'

Support Justice and Punishment of Evil

Believers should advocate for swift and just punishment of criminals, recognizing that it deters crime and protects society.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Ecclesiastes 8:11 and argues that executing the wicked deters crime.

Prepare for Suffering as a Christian

Christians should expect potential persecution when obeying God over man-made laws, and not be ashamed when suffering for righteousness.

Lecture support: Weaver cites 1 Peter 4:16: 'Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.'

Obey God Rather Than Man

When government commands contradict God's Word, believers must obey God, following the example of biblical figures.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Acts 5:29: 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'

Confess Jesus Christ as Lord

In all areas of life, Christians must affirm that Jesus Christ is Lord, not the state, and give Him their first allegiance.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'The issue today is who is Lord. Is government Lord or is Jesus Christ Lord?'

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 3

Christian & Civil Government # 3

December 06, 2000

Read Chapter 3 in the companion book, pages 65-93.

Major Themes

Lawful vs. Tyrannical Authority

Only authority that functions within God's ordained sphere and purpose is lawful; authority that exceeds its bounds or is used for evil is tyrannical and does not demand obedience.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Magistrates that use the power lawfully, magistrates that are what God has ordained them to be in Romans chapter 13... those are the ones to whom God demands that we submit to. But God is not demanding... that we submit to a tyrannical, totalitarian despot who abuses and misuses authority.'

Sphere Sovereignty and Limited Government

God has given each institution (family, church, state) a specific sphere of authority; when one leaves its sphere, it carries no authority, and resistance to such usurpation is not rebellion.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'God only created three institutions... And God gave each one of these institutions its proper sphere of authority. And when one leaves its sphere of authority, it does not carry authority with it.'

Biblical Degrees of Resistance

Scripture provides three escalating means of resisting tyranny: verbal defense, flight, and violent self-defense, each appropriate to the nature of the threat.

Lecture support: Weaver outlines: 'There are degrees of resistance in the Bible. I'm going to show you three of them tonight... The first one is verbal... The second one is flight... And then that brings us to the third one, which is violent self-defense.'

The Duty of Self-Preservation

The Sixth Commandment implies a positive duty to preserve life, including one's own, which justifies killing in self-defense when necessary.

Lecture support: Weaver argues: 'The positive for the Sixth Commandment is "Thou shalt preserve life." If you are not to kill, that means you have an obligation to preserve life, which means you have an obligation to preserve your own life. Hence, I am to kill rather than be killed.'

Resistance to Tyranny as Obedience to God

Resisting a tyrannical, unbiblical government is not resisting God's ordinance but obeying God, because God never ordained tyranny.

Lecture support: Weaver quotes Thomas Jefferson: 'Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God.'

The People as the Source of Civil Authority

In the American system, 'Caesar' is the Constitution or the people, not the government; government is a servant, not a master.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Caesar then is not the government. Caesar would either be our Constitution in this country or be we the people who ordained the Constitution. Government is to be nothing more than our servant, not our master.'

Key Arguments

Romans 13 commands submission only to lawful, God-ordained authority

The passage describes rulers as ministers of God for good, not as tyrants; therefore, resisting a tyrannical ruler is not resisting God's ordinance.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'In Romans chapter 13, God is not talking about an abused, tyrannical power. He is talking about a power that is ruling lawfully and biblically and scripturally.'

Both rulers who overstep and people who willingly obey unlawful commands are judged

Hosea 5:10-11 shows that God punishes princes who remove boundaries and people who willingly follow their unlawful commands.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'Here the princes are then commanding that which they have no authority to command. And here the people are willingly obeying those usurped commands. And so God says, I will punish the prince... And I will also punish the people who willingly obey those commands.'

Authority is limited by God's law; no human authority can command sin

Just as a husband cannot command his wife to rob a bank, civil rulers cannot command what God forbids, because their authority is for good, not destruction.

Lecture support: Weaver illustrates: 'I don't have any authority to ask her to go contrary to the Word of God. My authority is to promote her and to build her up, not to destroy her.'

Resistance to tyranny is not rebellion because rebellion requires lawful authority

Rebellion can only be against lawful authority; resisting usurped, unlawful authority is resistance, not rebellion.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Rebellion can only be to lawful authority. If the authority is not lawful, it is not rebellion; it is resistance.'

Verbal defense is the first and often neglected means of resistance

Christians should speak out against wickedness and use legal and bureaucratic processes to challenge unlawful government actions.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'We don't speak out against wickedness. We don't speak out against usurpations of power. We normally just keep our mouths shut so we can stay out of trouble... And while they're slowly placing the chains around others, they're also placing them around us.'

Flight is a biblical, nonviolent means of preventing violence

Jesus, Paul, and others used flight to avoid unlawful violence; it is not cowardice but a strategic preservation of life.

Lecture support: Weaver notes: 'Flight is a nonviolent way to prevent violence by wicked men.'

Violent self-defense is biblically justified when other means fail

Nehemiah 4 and Luke 22:36 show that physical weapons may be used to defend life, family, and nation when attacked.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'Arms may be used to defend the kingdom of God, but not promote or advance the kingdom of God.'

Scripture References

Romans 13:1-8

Weaver reads the passage as the primary text, emphasizing that it describes lawful, God-ordained authority.

Hosea 5:10-11

Used to show that God judges both rulers who remove boundaries and people who willingly obey unlawful commands.

Acts 5:29

Cited as the principle that we must obey God rather than men when commands conflict.

2 Chronicles 26:14-21

The story of Uzziah, who trespassed into the temple and was resisted by the priests, showing lawful resistance to a king acting outside his sphere.

1 Kings 18:17-18

Elijah's verbal resistance to King Ahab, illustrating verbal defense.

Matthew 10:23

Jesus instructs disciples to flee persecution, establishing flight as a lawful means of resistance.

Matthew 23:34

Jesus speaks of prophets being persecuted from city to city, implying flight.

John 7:1

Jesus avoided Judea because the Jews sought to kill him, demonstrating flight.

John 12:27

Jesus acknowledges his purpose to die, showing his flight was not from fear but strategic.

Matthew 2:13-14

God commands Joseph to flee to Egypt to protect Jesus from Herod, ordaining flight.

Acts 9:25

Paul is let down in a basket to escape, using flight.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33

Paul explains he fled from the governor under Aretas, confirming flight from civil authority.

Hebrews 11:37-38

The faithful wandered in deserts and caves, fleeing persecution.

Jeremiah 26:20-23

Uriah fled but was captured and killed, showing flight does not always succeed.

Nehemiah 4:7-18

Nehemiah arms the people for self-defense while building the wall, illustrating violent self-defense.

Luke 22:36

Jesus tells disciples to buy a sword, indicating a time for physical self-defense.

2 Corinthians 10:4

Weaver clarifies this verse refers to spiritual warfare of the mind, not prohibiting physical self-defense.

Study notes

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Discussion Questions

1. How does the definition of tyranny as 'one who uses lawful power unlawfully' change the way we evaluate modern governments?

Consider: Weaver gives three dictionary definitions of a tyrant, emphasizing that cruelty is not required for tyranny.

2. What are the practical implications of the statement 'Caesar is dead' for how Christians relate to civil government today?

Consider: Weaver argues that in America, 'Caesar' is the Constitution or the people, not the government itself.

3. Why is it important to distinguish between respecting the office of authority and respecting the person who holds it?

Consider: Weaver uses the example of Bill Clinton to illustrate that one can respect the office while not respecting the individual abusing it.

- 4.** In what situations might verbal defense be the most appropriate form of resistance, and why do Christians often neglect it?

Consider: Weaver notes that many Christians keep silent to avoid trouble, allowing tyranny to advance.

- 5.** How can flight be a form of resistance rather than cowardice, and what biblical examples support this?

Consider: Weaver cites Jesus, Paul, and others who used flight to preserve life for further service.

- 6.** Under what conditions does the Bible permit violent self-defense, and how does the Sixth Commandment support this?

Consider: Weaver argues that the positive duty to preserve life justifies killing in self-defense when necessary.

7. How should the principle 'arms may be used to defend the kingdom of God, but not promote it' guide Christian involvement in civil conflicts?

Consider: Weaver distinguishes between defensive and offensive use of force.

Applications

Discern between lawful and tyrannical authority

Christians must evaluate whether civil rulers are functioning as God's ministers for good or as tyrants, and respond accordingly.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'God is not telling us that we are to absolutely obey every civil ruler in every set of circumstances and every time.'

Use verbal defense as the first line of resistance

Speak out against wickedness and use legal and bureaucratic processes to challenge unlawful government actions.

Lecture support: Weaver says: 'We don't speak out against wickedness. We don't speak out against usurpations of power.'

Employ flight when necessary to preserve life

When facing persecution or unlawful violence, fleeing is a biblical strategy to avoid unnecessary suffering and continue serving God.

Lecture support: Weaver notes: 'Flight is a nonviolent way to prevent violence by wicked men.'

Prepare for violent self-defense as a last resort

When verbal defense and flight fail, Christians have a duty to defend their lives, families, and nation with physical force.

Lecture support: Weaver states: 'If you attack us with physical weapons, we're going to defend ourselves with physical weapons.'

Respect the office of authority while opposing the abuser

Christians can honor the God-ordained institution of government while resisting the individual who misuses it.

Lecture support: Weaver explains: 'You can respect the office of authority without respecting the individual who is abusing and misusing that office.'

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

LESSON 4

Christian & Civil Government # 4

December 07, 2000

Read Chapter 4 in the companion book, pages 95-122.

Major Themes

Resistance to Tyranny Must Be Led by a Proper Magistrate

Armed resistance against tyranny is not for mobs or private individuals acting outside their calling, but must be led by a lawful magistrate, though self-defense is always permitted.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'resistance by force of arms, according to the Bible, is reserved for those who are led by a proper magistrate' (484.8-516.3s) and distinguishes this from individual self-defense (517.0-546.7s).

Distinction Between Private and Public Persons

A private person may only use force in immediate self-defense, while a public person (magistrate) has God-given authority to execute justice, as illustrated by the home invasion analogy.

Lecture support: Weaver contrasts shooting an intruder in self-defense (no legal consequence) with executing a past attacker (murder), then shows the same act is lawful when done as a state executioner (902.0-1006.9s).

Spiritual Leaders Are Also Magistrates

The Bible uses the same terms for civil and spiritual rulers, indicating that pastors and priests hold magisterial authority and may act when civil rulers fail.

Lecture support: Weaver traces the words 'magistrate' and 'ruler' through Scripture, showing that Levites were armed guards and that spiritual leaders like Samuel and Jehoiada executed justice (1108.1-2350.7s; 3023.1-4108.6s).

The Doctrine of Interposition

When higher civil authorities fail to fulfill their God-ordained duties, lower magistrates - including spiritual rulers - have the responsibility to step in and act.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Moses ordering the Levites to slay idolaters (3154.1-3290.2s), Samuel hewing Agag (3349.0-3463.0s), and Jehoiada overthrowing Athaliah (3871.6-4073.5s) as examples of interposition.

The Failure of Modern Preachers

America's moral and political decline is primarily due to preachers who have abandoned their role as spiritual magistrates, choosing comfort over confrontation.

Lecture support: Weaver laments, 'The preachers in this country have sold their souls for pension and ease and comfort' (4996.2s) and calls for a return of the 'Black Robed Regiment' (4867.8-5061.3s).

Historical Precedent of Pastoral Leadership in Resistance

The American Revolution was led by preachers who taught principles of liberty and often took up arms themselves, serving as examples of spiritual magistrates in action.

Lecture support: Weaver details the stories of Jonas Clark, James Caldwell, and Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, emphasizing their role in training and leading armed resistance (4205.2-4864.4s).

Key Arguments

Armed Resistance Requires a Lawful Magistrate

The Bible restricts the use of force in resistance to those led by a proper magistrate, not private individuals or mobs, except in immediate self-defense.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'resistance by force of arms, according to the Bible, is reserved for those who are led by a proper magistrate' (484.8-516.3s) and cites Romans 13:4 and Matthew 26:52 (591.8-648.8s).

Self-Defense Is an Individual Duty

The sixth commandment obligates every person to preserve life, including their own, so self-defense does not require a magistrate's leadership.

Lecture support: Weaver explains, 'I'm obligated to preserve life. I'm obligated to preserve my life' (517.0-546.7s) and illustrates with the home invasion scenario (787.2-819.2s).

Magistrates Are Defined by Scripture as Armed Leaders Who Know God's Law

A biblical magistrate is not merely a civil officer but one who possesses the power of restraint, knows God's law, and may be a military or spiritual leader.

Lecture support: Weaver examines Hebrew words *atsar* ('possessor of restraint') and *shaphat* ('one who knows the law'), and Greek *strategos* ('general, military officer, chief of Levites') (1074.1-2350.7s).

Spiritual Rulers Are Equally Magistrates

The term 'ruler' (*nasi*) applies to both civil and spiritual leaders, meaning pastors hold magisterial authority and can act when civil rulers fail.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'the term ruler is equal to the term magistrate. And I'm going to show you that the term ruler is equally applied to spiritual rulers as it is civil rulers' (3001.2-3021.5s).

Interposition Is a Biblical Duty of Lower Magistrates

When higher civil authorities neglect their God-given duties, lower magistrates - including spiritual ones - must step in to execute justice, as seen in multiple Old Testament examples.

Lecture support: Weaver cites Samuel executing Agag when Saul failed (3349.0-3463.0s) and Jehoiada ordering the death of Athaliah (3871.6-4073.5s) as acts of interposition.

The American Revolution Was a Biblical Act of Interposition Led by Pastors

The founding fathers' resistance to British tyranny was led by preachers who acted as spiritual magistrates, teaching and modeling armed resistance.

Lecture support: Weaver describes the 'Black Robed Regiment' and pastors like Jonas Clark and Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg who led their congregations into battle (4205.2-4864.4s).

Modern Preachers Have Abandoned Their Magisterial Duty

The moral decay of America is directly linked to preachers who refuse to act as spiritual magistrates, instead preaching passive submission.

Lecture support: Weaver declares, 'We will never reclaim this country until we reclaim the preaching ministry' (5004.7-5061.3s) and criticizes preachers who 'know nothing of what Romans 13 really teaches' (5061.3s).

Scripture References

Romans 13:1-8

Read at the opening as the foundational text for the series on civil government.

Romans 13:4

Cited to show the civil magistrate is called God's 'minister' (diakonos) and 'revenger'.

Romans 13:6

Cited to show the magistrate is also called a 'minister' (leitourgoi), indicating public worship.

Isaiah 58:1

Used to support the call for verbal resistance: 'Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet.'

1 Corinthians 7:20

Establishes the principle that each person should abide in their calling, implying not all are called to use the sword.

1 Corinthians 14:33

God is not the author of confusion, supporting the idea that not all are called to use the sword.

Matthew 26:52

Warns that those who take the sword unlawfully will perish by the sword.

Judges 18:7

Shows the absence of a magistrate (atsar) leads to a lack of restraint in the land.

Ezra 7:25

Magistrates must know the law of God; if not, they must be taught before serving.

Luke 12:11, 58

Uses the Greek word archos/archonta for magistrate, meaning a leader or prince.

Acts 16:20, 22, 35, 36, 38

The word 'magistrates' (strategos) refers to military officers or governors with power to use force.

Numbers 3:32

Eleazar was chief over the chief of the Levites, who kept the charge (military guard) of the sanctuary.

Acts 4:1; 5:24-26

The 'captain of the temple' was an armed Levitical officer with authority to use force.

Luke 22:4, 52

The captains of the temple came armed to arrest Jesus; He questioned their purpose, not their authority to bear arms.

1 Chronicles 9:19

The Korahites (Levites) were keepers of the gates, armed guards of the tabernacle.

1 Chronicles 12:1, 6, 26

Levites were among David's mighty men; 4,600 Levites fought in his army.

2 Chronicles 23:7-9

Jehoiada the priest armed the Levites to protect the king and stored weapons in the temple.

Titus 3:1

Believers are to be subject to principalities and powers, obeying magistrates, but only when they are godly.

Exodus 22:28

Commands not to revile the gods (civil rulers) or curse the ruler of the people.

Psalm 82:1-8

God calls unjust judges 'gods' because they represent Him, but warns they will die like men.

Study notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between private self-defense and public armed resistance, and why does the Bible require a magistrate to lead the latter?

Consider: Weaver distinguishes between a private person defending his home and a public executioner acting under authority (902.0-1006.9s).

2. How does the biblical definition of a 'magistrate' as a possessor of restraint and one who knows God's law challenge modern views of civil government?

Consider: Weaver's word study shows magistrates must be armed and knowledgeable in God's law (1074.1-1248.9s).

3. In what ways were the Levites both spiritual and military leaders, and what does this imply for the role of pastors today?

Consider: Weaver demonstrates that Levites served as armed guards and warriors (1421.9-2094.7s).

4. What is the doctrine of interposition, and how do the examples of Samuel, Elijah, and Jehoiada support it?

Consider: Weaver defines interposition as lower magistrates acting when higher ones fail, citing multiple Old Testament instances (3023.1-4108.6s).

5. How did the 'Black Robed Regiment' of the American Revolution embody the principles of spiritual magistracy, and what can we learn from their example?

Consider: Weaver recounts the stories of Jonas Clark, James Caldwell, and Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg (4205.2-4864.4s).

6. Why does Weaver argue that the failure of modern preachers is the primary cause of America's moral decline, and do you agree?

Consider: Weaver states that preachers have 'sold their souls' and calls for a return to magisterial preaching (4867.8-5061.3s).

7. How should Christians today balance submission to government (Romans 13) with the duty to resist tyranny, according to this lecture?

Consider: Weaver argues that submission is only required to godly authority and that resistance is lawful when government becomes tyrannical (2357.0-2489.9s).

8. What practical steps can believers take to support and encourage pastors who are willing to act as spiritual magistrates?

Consider: Weaver concludes with a call to pray for and support God's preachers (5145.9-5223.7s).

Applications

Understand the Limits of Personal Resistance

Believers must recognize that while self-defense is a personal duty, organized armed resistance requires leadership by a lawful magistrate.

Lecture support: Weaver explains, 'resistance by force of arms... is reserved for those who are led by a proper magistrate' (484.8-516.3s) and illustrates with the home invasion analogy (902.0-1006.9s).

Recognize Pastors as Spiritual Magistrates

Church members should view their pastors not merely as teachers but as God-ordained rulers with authority to lead in civil matters when necessary.

Lecture support: Weaver argues that 'the term ruler is equally applied to spiritual rulers as it is civil rulers' (3001.2-3021.5s) and gives biblical examples of priestly interposition.

Support Courageous Preachers

Believers are called to pray for, protect, and stand behind pastors who boldly proclaim truth and lead in times of moral crisis.

Lecture support: Weaver exhorts, 'we better pray for God's preachers... and we better get behind them, and we better support them, and we better protect them' (5145.9-5187.9s).

Practice Verbal Resistance First

Before considering other forms of resistance, Christians must begin with verbal opposition to ungodly laws and actions, as commanded in Isaiah 58:1.

Lecture support: Weaver states, 'We must begin with verbal resistance. We must begin and we must accomplish whatever we can by using verbal resistance' (442.5-467.6s).

Discern Lawful vs. Unlawful Authority

Believers must distinguish between godly authority that merits submission and tyrannical authority that must be resisted, using Scripture as the standard.

Lecture support: Weaver says, 'I have no problem being in submission to a godly authority' but opposes 'wickedness and rebellion in government that want to overthrow the law of God' (2357.0-2407.7s).

Learn from Historical Examples

Study the lives of pastors like Muhlenberg and Caldwell to understand how spiritual magistrates have acted in times of national crisis.

Lecture support: Weaver recounts the stories of the Black Robed Regiment as models for modern believers (4205.2-4864.4s).

Reclaim the Pulpit for Righteousness

The church must demand and support preaching that addresses civil government, liberty, and justice, not just personal piety.

Lecture support: Weaver laments that 'all you hear is submit, submit, submit, and they know nothing of what Romans 13 really teaches' (5004.7-5061.3s).

Prepare for Potential Leadership

In the absence of faithful civil rulers, believers should be ready to follow their spiritual leaders in acts of interposition, even to the point of armed resistance if necessary.

Lecture support: Weaver warns, 'if there's no civil leaders to lead, you must have a proper magistrate. And the only other magistrates that are left are the spiritual ones' (5145.9-5187.9s).

Study notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Personal Application and Notes

Which application will you work on, and what specific step will you take?

What Scripture or teaching will you return to as you put this into practice?

Additional notes or questions to discuss

Online Lecture Resources

Scan a code or select the lecture link in the PDF. The original lecture identifiers and destinations are preserved.

Lesson 1: Christian & Civil Government # 1

Lecture JW01094

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Lesson 2: Christian & Civil Government # 2

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Lesson 3: Christian & Civil Government # 3

Lecture JW01092

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Lesson 4: Christian & Civil Government # 4

Lecture JW01091

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Source information

Study material: existing Major Themes, Key Arguments, Scripture References, Discussion Questions, and Applications from the corresponding Weaver Bible College lecture records. Original lecture titles and provenance are retained in those source records.

Layout upgraded September 30, 2026. Original manuscripts, study-guide data, and previous PDFs have not been changed.