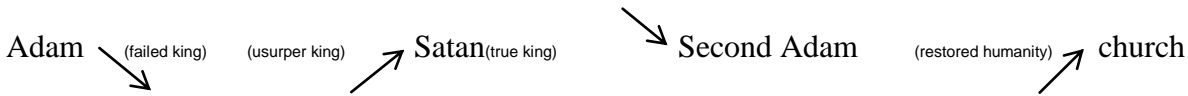


Christ as King

~ Church and State ~

(1) Storyline of the Bible



When Adam fell, Satan usurped the role of king. The kingdoms of this world are really puppets of Satan's rule. The Second Adam comes to reign as the true king, but only by smashing the rule of Satan. So...

(2) If Jesus is king, then why isn't the world presently under Christ's rule? (Question of the relationship between Church and State)

Mark 1:14-15

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and **the kingdom of God is at hand**; repent and believe in the gospel."

The answer is that Christ's kingdom has come, but not yet.

1 Corinthians 15:20-27

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when **he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.** ²⁵ **For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.** ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet."

(3) The key is to find our place in redemptive history:

Eden	Patriarchs	Israel	Exile	New Testament	New Creation
theocracy	dual citizenship	theocracy	dual citizenship	dual citizenship	theocracy

Eden (theocratic rule)

Genesis 1:26

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make **man in our image**, after our likeness. And let them have **dominion over** the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Patriarchs (dual citizenship)

Genesis 21:25-34

²⁵ When Abraham reproved King Abimelech about a well of water that Abimelech's servants had seized, ²⁶ Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, and I have not heard of it until today." ²⁷ So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and **the two men made a covenant.**

Israel (theocratic rule)

Exodus 23:23-33

²³ When my angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out, ²⁴ you shall not bow down to their gods nor serve them, nor do as they do, but **you shall utterly overthrow them** and break their pillars in pieces.

³¹ And I will set your border from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the Euphrates, for I will give the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you.

³² **You shall make no covenant with them** and their gods. ³³ They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.

Exile (dual citizenship)

Jeremiah 29:1-7

¹ These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem **to the surviving elders of the exiles**, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

⁴ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, **to all the exiles** whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But **seek the welfare of the city** where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for **in its welfare you will find your welfare.**"

New Creation (theocratic rule)

Revelation 19:11-16

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are **many diadems**, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. ¹³ He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which **to strike down the nations**, and **he will rule them** with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **King of kings and Lord of lords.**

(4) Question: what is the New Testament period? Is it a theocracy or is it dual citizenship?

Philippians 2:9-11

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Peter 2:11-12

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you **as sojourners and exiles** to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

(5) Dual Citizenship: the city of God and the city of man

Mark 12:13-17

¹³ And they sent to Jesus some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. ¹⁴ And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone’s opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. **Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?** Should we pay them, or should we not?”

¹⁵ But, knowing their hypocrisy, Jesus said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” ¹⁶ And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “**Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.**” And they marveled at him.

Roman denarius:



Front inscription: *Tiberius Caesar Divini Augusti Filius*

Translation: “Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus”

Back inscription: *Pontifex Maximus*

Translation: “High Priest”

John 18:33-37

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” ³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?”

³⁶ Jesus answered, “**My kingdom is not of this world.** If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “**So you are a king?**” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world – to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

(6) The idea of America as a “Christian nation” is to confuse the *city of God* with the *city of man*

2 Chronicles 7:14

¹⁴ If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and **heal their land.**

(7) What is our relationship to civil authority?

Romans 13:1-4

¹ **Let every person be subject to the governing authorities.** For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for **he is God's servant** for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger **who carries out God's wrath** on the wrongdoer.

⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For the same reason you also pay taxes, **for the authorities are ministers of God**, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Acts 5:27-29

²⁷ And when the Sanhedrin had brought the apostles, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, ²⁸ saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us."²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "**We must obey God rather than men.**"

Notes:

(1) Storyline of the Bible

The fundamental story of the Bible is **the clash** between **Satan's false kingdom** and **Christ's true kingdom**.

Remember from Daniel 2, all the kingdoms of this world are really proxies for Satan's rule.

Someone asked, "is America included?" The answer is complicated, but we're going to try to answer that question.

And so if the true king has finally come, why isn't the world fully under his reign? Why do we still have rulers and authorizes and powers in defiance of Christ? And if Christ has come to smash these false kingdoms, what should be our role as Christians? **Should we militate against all secular/pagan rule?**

This is goes to the question of **the relationship between the church and state**. This is one of the most vexing questions that Christians have struggled with. Good Christians disagree. The answer is understanding the fundamental **nature of the Kingdom of God**. Is the Kingdom of God **already here** entirely? Or is it **entirely future**? **Answer – yes**.

Mark 1. You can see that duality in Jesus' announcement at the beginning of his ministry, "**the kingdom of God is at hand**." That phrase, "at hand," is ambiguous. Literally, "drawn close." Does it mean it's already here or that it's close but not yet here? It's both. It's already here, but not yet in it's fullness. "**Already but not yet**."

1 Corinthians 15. We see duality of the *here-ness* and the *future-ness* of the kingdom. **Verse 24** says it's in the future, when Christ destroys all Satanic rule. But **verse 25** says Christ is already "reigning." When Christ's kingship is consummated, death will be no more.

(3) The key is to find our place in redemptive history:

Theocracy – God reigns and no other rival power exists./ Church and state fused.

Dual Citizenship – God's people live as citizens of two kingdoms. First, as citizens of the Kingdom of God, a spiritual realm. This is their ultimate allegiance. Second, as citizens of the world's secular/pagan kingdom, a visible kingdom. This earthly kingdom is temporary and will ultimately pass away when the true king, Christ, comes in power. But until then, God's people are called to live as good, peaceful citizens./ Church and state separate.

Eden (Genesis 1). God reigns as uncontested king of creation. Man images God as his vice-regents.

Patriarchs (Genesis 21).Very different situation.Abimelech is King of Gerar, a pagan Canannite king. He does not fear God. And yet Abraham acknowledges his rule and purchases this well from Abimelech, making a "**covenant**" with **Abimelech**. This is critical to understanding what dual citizenship means. Abraham does not seek to destroy or subvert Abimelech.

Israel (Exodus 23). Israel is explicitly instructed not to make "**covenants**" with the **pagan nations**. Why? Because Israel is to be a theocracy, a restored Eden. The Canaanites are puppets of Satan, and unlike the first Adam, this corporate Adam is to stay true to God and expel the serpent from the garden, being the true king Adam was supposed to be. Israel, within Canaan, is a **prefiguration of the ultimate Kingdom of God**, which is why all pagan Canaanites are to be removed from the land. With Canaan, God alone with reign with no rivals.

Exile (Jeremiah 29). Like Adam in the garden, Israel fails as a Kingdom of God. The nation is sent into exile and Israel **as ageo-political theocracy is no more**. Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon are very instructive. The Jews are not to overthrow their pagan lords (as Israel was instructed in the Mosaic Covenant), but rather, they are to live peacefully within the pagan city and be good citizens. They are to "seek the welfare of the city" and pray for the prosperity of the pagan city. This is a dramatic turnaround to Israel's relationship to Babylon when the two nations were at war.

New Creation (Revelation 19).This is the **consummated Kingdom of God**. Just like with Israel in Canaan, or Adam in the garden, Christ smashes all rival powers to God. But this time, unlike Adam and unlike Israel, Jesus succeeds and faithfully carries out his kingly role. Jesus will reign uncontested as the ultimate king and **all rival powers will be destroyed**.

(4) Question: what is the New Testament period? Is it a theocracy or is it dual citizenship?

Philippians 2. On the one hand, Jesus is Lord. And yet...

1 Peter 2. We are called “**exiles**” and “**sojourners.**” Sojourner is what Abraham was called. So we are back in the time of the Patriarchs and during the exile. We are the people of God living in foreign lands, under pagan kings, and so we are to live as dual citizens.

(5) Dual Citizenship: the *city of God* and the *city of man*

So how does our dual citizenship work out in real life? What does it mean to be good citizens of pagan kingdoms?

Mark 12. The real issue is about the **legitimacy of the Roman Empire**. The trap for Jesus is whether he will **affirm the lordship of the Romans** (and so deny the OT hope of the Kingdom of God) or whether **he will reject Roman rule**, and thus identify himself as an **insurrectionist**. Because to “pay taxes” is really to pay **forced tribute to Rome**. The quandary is whether Jesus will uphold **the Jewish hope of the Messiah smashing the Romans** or whether he will chicken out and join with the hated collaborators.

The stakes are multiplied when you also consider **the claims of Rome itself**. The Roman emperor claimed, not just political oversight, but religious and divine supremacy. On the Roman denarius, which Jesus asked to see, is the claim that the Emperor Tiberius is really the “**Son of God.**” The Romans and the Jews were in complete agreement on this one issue. There can only be one “Son of God.” Either he is Tiberius or he is the Davidic king.

Jesus completely shocks everyone with his answer. He says, essentially, “**pay tribute to the Romans, but the God of the Bible alone is supreme.**” It’s a **revolutionary answer**, because he affirms the Jewish hope of the Kingdom of God over against the Roman Empire, but he carves out space for the Roman Empire to exist as a political entity. In other words, the Roman Empire is wrong to claim ultimate lordship, but nevertheless, the Roman Empire is a legitimate authority. The Jewish Kingdom of God is here, but it is not here politically.

No one had ever expressed such an idea before. It shocked everyone who heard Jesus. Of course, Jesus would go on to be executed by the Romans as an insurrectionist. The Romans **correctly identified Jesus as a rival king**, but not in the way they expected.

John 18. Pilate, as a representative of the Romans, point-blank asks Jesus, “**are you a rival power to Rome?**” Jesus’ answer is ambiguous. Jesus says, “**yes, I’m the ultimate king.** But no, I’m not here to overthrow the Romans, just yet.” Verse 36, Jesus says, “**my kingdom is not of this world,**” meaning in the here and now, my kingdom is spiritual. Pilate says, “so you are a king?” Jesus says, “this is what you say.” Meaning, yes and no.

Conclusion:

We are **citizens of two kingdoms**. We are citizens of the pagan/secular kingdom we live in. We acknowledge their role and pay taxes, obey the laws, and do not seek to overthrow them, the way Israel was instructed to overthrow the Canaanites. **We do not seek to establish a theocracy.** Our goal is **not to make our present nation like Israel** because we are exiles and sojourners.

But at the same time, **our ultimate allegiance is to the invisible, spiritual Kingdom of God.** There is no lord but Jesus. All other powers are temporary and will pass away. One day, Jesus will smash all pagan rivals. We live in both kingdoms. The ultimate spiritual kingdom, that will one day become visible/physical. And the present, temporary visible kingdom we live under. **They are not to be combined or confused.** For that is to misunderstand our place in redemptive history. As Jesus say, “my kingdom is not of this world,” and “render to the pagan Caesar the proper obedience.”

Theocracy – fusion of church and state.

Dual citizenship – separation of church and state.

(6) The idea of America as a “Christian nation” is to confuse the *city of God* with the *city of man*

One of the arguments you hear among Christians is that America was **founded as a “Christian nation.”**

Aside from the history, this is a **very dubious biblical category**. What do we mean by a “Christian nation?” Do we mean something like Israel, a theocracy in which the laws and government are in accord with Scripture? If that is the case, this is to confuse the city of God, which is spiritual (remember Jesus said, “my kingdom is not of this world”), and the city of man, which is physical and political. This is also to **mistaken our place in redemptive history**. We are not in Israel. We are *exiles* and *sojourners*. Remember, Jeremiah instructed the exiles, not to overthrow the pagan Babylonians and establish a “biblical kingdom,” but to be good citizens.

The **counter-argument** is that shouldn't the civil laws of Israel have value for all nations and societies? Don't we want America to glorify God and reflect Christian values in its laws? The sentiment is good, but this is to deeply **confuse our place in redemptive history**. Remember, we are *dual citizens*. We must not seek to fuse our citizenships into one coherent whole. That is an over-realized eschatology. We must wait for Christ to come back and New Creation to be ushered in. In the meantime, **we live in Rome and Babylon**. There are good governments and bad governments, but there are not “Christian” governments and non-Christian governments. No government can be Christian because **government and politics is not a sphere which Christ outlined has his domain in the here and now**. Again, Christ said, “my kingdom is not of this world.” His kingdom is spiritual for the here and now. One day, it will be political and governmental and physical, but only in the end. Therefore, present governments have a legitimacy that does not depend on adherence to Christianity, but grounded in what theologians call “common grace.”

This confusion of church and state is reflected in so many Evangelical endeavors, like *See You at the Pole* and the *National Day of Prayer*. Again, the sentiment is really commendable, but the theology is dubious. The theme verse is **2 Chronicles 7:14**, there's also Michael Card's song. The idea is that if American Christians pray and seek God, then God will bless America and America will prosper. The major theological problem with this is that 2 Chronicles was given to Israel as a theocracy. Again, a theocracy is where church and state are fused. So that the piety and devotion of the people **will affect the well-being of the nation politically and economically**. Israel's disobedience is why the nation suffered famines and invasions, etc. But the same principle DOES NOT apply to the United States or any other nation, because America is not Israel, and we are not in that redemptive historical epoch.

People can be Christians, but not nations. This is to misunderstand the redemptive epoch we are currently in. Only during the OT was one nation elected as God's nation – Israel. That period was over with the exile. Until Christ comes back, **geo-political nation-states are not categories of Christ's dominion**. We live in a dual citizenship epoch, where people are Christ's, but nations are given their own limited, temporary authority.

(7) What is our relationship to civil authority?

As dual citizens, what is our relationship to civil authorities? It's complex. On the one hand, the NT clearly teaches us to respect and obey the civil authorities. What makes **Romans 13** remarkable is that Paul is talking about the **brutal Roman Empire under Nero**. And yet, even the Roman Empire is an instrument of God **for the general welfare of people** and society. They keep the order. Christians are not anarchists. We are always the best citizens of any kind of government, be it secular, pagan, Muslim or Christian-friendly.

But, on the other hand, if you look at **Acts 5**, the church frequently disobeyed the civil authorities. Here is the biblical justification for **civil disobedience**. Our ultimate allegiance is not to man but God. If a human government instructs us to do evil or prohibits the mission of the church, **we are commanded by God to disobey the government**, even at the risk of imprisonment and death. There have been countless Christian martyrs who have died in defense of the faith.

Human government has a **good and proper role in human society** and is placed there by God to keep order and peace. However, we must not put our ultimate trust or allegiance to any government. **Our ultimate allegiance is to Christ**, who is the true and final king, who will one day come and establish his reign on Earth forever. So all governments and nations are temporary.

Therefore, **Christians make the best citizens**, because we live and pray for the peace and prosperity of the city. But at the same time, **we never forget that we are pilgrims and exiles**. That our real home is New Creation. We “live in tents,” so to speak, never sinking our roots so deep that all that we have is invested in this present order.