

Lecture 2 Notes: The Exodus.

The plagues as political acts.

- the plagues were aimed at the power of Pharaoh and the Egyptian “gods”.
- The “gods” were the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms and were behind the political order.
- the plagues challenged Pharaoh’s divinity
- the plagues aimed at freeing a subjected people group (the Jews) from political domination
- the plagues eventually removed the heir to the throne

Liberation.

- Moses starts out on the wrong track by murdering the Egyptian
- Liberation was first from the spiritual powers (the Egyptian gods whose power was broken) then finally from the temporal power (Pharaoh)
- Revolution without spiritual change is powerless because the principalities will reassert themselves and the “revolutionary becomes the new dictator.”

Can Christians lead a revolution?

- Not all governments are good. Some governments need to be replaced eg Ahab and Jezebel.
- The Bible indicates a wide range of attitudes to the state depending on how just the state was and how capable it was at delivering justice to the people.
- Before a revolution is biblical governments must meet a few criteria - they must be a) corrupt, unjust and oppressive or b) incompetent “failed states” and generally c) opposed to the gospel and its progress in that culture.
- Where Christian revolutions have been successful e.g. in bringing down Soviet Russia they have been non-violent and based on dealing with the powers through intercession first of all.

The difference between social and spiritual concepts of salvation.

- Spiritual salvation brings us into a new relationship with God and equips us for eternal life.
- Social “revolutionary” salvation brings us into a new relationship with the state and at its best makes this life more advantageous.
- Social revolution without spiritual revolution fails because the old corrupt value system is left intact and the evil principalities and powers are left in place.

The errors of liberation theology and Marxist analysis.

- Dialectical materialism - is essentially an economic theory where “only matter matters”
- History is thought to have its own logic and be evolutionary rather than being under the control of a just Creator.
- Sees the person as primarily an economic unit.
- Fails to produce functional states.
- Tends to degenerate into Stalinism and rule by secret police.

The formation of a new nation state.

- The Exodus represents the formation of a new nation state from religious refugees.
- Values before structures

Not A Theocracy.

- The new state was run by tribal elders (e.g. Joshua, Caleb) who were assisted by the priests.
- Moses (the political leader), not Aaron (the priest) was in charge.
- The only specified priestly duties were in the tabernacle.

Eldership. (Deuteronomy 18)

- 72 elders appointed to run the state, a plurality of leadership
- Single leadership a disaster for leaders and people
- Good government has adequate staff to handle matters expeditiously
- Justice delayed is justice denied

Delegation.

- Decisions delegated “upwards” (not downwards)
- Basis of delegation was level of complexity
- Lower levels dealt with all that they could competently handle
- No decision was sent to a higher level that a lower level could competently handle.
- Higher levels could not hang onto control of minor matters.
- Ensured that the top people only got to tackle the major matters.

Anointing of leaders.

- Leaders were anointed and “prophesied”
- The Holy Spirit empowers leaders to lead

Leadership transition to Joshua.

- Joshua was mentored by Moses for 40 years
- Clear and obvious transition which was well prepared for in advance.

Balaam - shamanism and politics. (Numbers 22)

- Balaam employed by the king of Moab to curse Israel
- Balaam a “shaman” who uses ecstatic states for divination and prophecy and in this case was well-respected and paid for it.
- Haiti and many South American and African regimes employ voodoo and witchcraft to maintain the state

Curses and blessings as direct political tools.

- Blessings: be fruitful, multiply, have dominion
- Curses: barrenness, frustration, powerlessness and defeat
- Involve the use of the spiritual realm to affect the temporal realm
- Creation under-girded by the spiritual realm
- Changes in the spiritual realm can affect the balance in Creation
- God can turn the curse into a blessing as He did with Balaam.
- Throughout history politicians have asked for blessings from the Church
- Occasionally formal cursing of political enemies has also been undertaken. (see imprecatory Psalms)

God as sole Supreme Ruler.

- Israel was the first monotheistic state
- All law thus flowed from one divine Source who was rational and just.
- There were no true “competing powers” life was not a struggle between good and evil or multiple spirits but was ordered by a sovereign and good God.
- Not a different god for each tribe, all tribes unified by having one God.
- Led to systematic government rather than the chaotic pleasing of multiple deities.
- Led to a rational view of cause and effect and a view of the universe as lawful and rational and capable of being understood and thus gave rise to scientific enquiry and progress.

Values at the core of culture and politics.

- Government is the expression of the will of a society which is of course based on the values of that society.
- Values determine the direction the culture will take when faced with a choice.
- Values determine whether or not it is a priority to help the poor.
- Values determine which programs will get the resources they require.
- Values underlie the legislation
- Values determine the degree that people will cooperate with a formal government

The Ten Commandments.

- Define the common core values of Israel
- Set boundaries on behavior
- Set main legal categories in place.
- Everything is free except that which is prohibited (in contrast to Pharaoh - everything is banned except that which is permitted.)