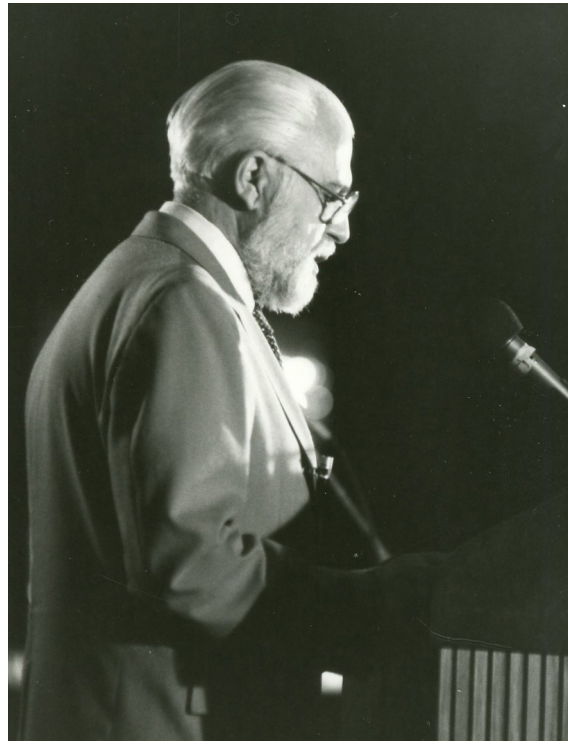


Transcripts of  
**CHRISTIANITY  
and CULTURE**

A Lecture Series by R.J. Rushdoony



**R.J. RUSHDOONY**

(1916–2001)

Rev. R.J. Rushdoony (1916–2001), was a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical law to society. He started the Chalcedon Foundation in 1965. His Institutes of Biblical Law (1973) began the contemporary theonomy movement which posits the validity of Biblical law as God's standard of obedience for all. He therefore saw God's law as the basis of the modern Christian response to the cultural decline, one he attributed to the church's false view of God's law being opposed to His grace. This broad Christian response he described as "Christian Reconstruction." He is credited with igniting the modern Christian school and homeschooling movements in the mid to late 20th century. He also traveled extensively lecturing and serving as an expert witness in numerous court cases regarding religious liberty. Many ministry and educational efforts that continue today, took their philosophical and Biblical roots from his lectures and books.

Learn more about R.J. Rushdoony by visiting: <https://chalcedon.edu/founder>

# Christianity & Culture: Past

R.J. Rushdoony

Some years ago, Dr. Henry Van Til, the nephew of Dr. Cornelius Van Til wrote a book on Christianity and Culture. He pointed out that culture is religion externalized, culture is religion externalized. If you want to know what the religion of a people is, look at the culture. That does not say too much for our country right now. Let us add a bit to Henry Van Til's very telling point, no one has been able to successfully challenge it. Where is religion most externalized? In two areas; law and education. If you want to know what the religion of a country is, look at their law, and look at their education. Well that clearly tells us that we are a humanistic country. Because our law today is humanistic to the core, our education, except in Christian and homeschools, is again, humanistic to the core. The temple, the synagogue, or the church, do not reveal the religion of a country as much as its law and education.

If the people keep their faith bottled up in the church or the synagogue, or the temple, they have no impact culturally. They have surrendered the culture to the enemy. Now this session we are going to deal with Christianity and culture in the past, in antiquity. The first thing we must recognize about the world of antiquity outside Israel is one key fact. The state was the church. There was no separation of church and state. The state was the church. The state was religion incarnate; either in the person or the ruler or the office, or the machinery of the state. The pagan state may have had temples. The common people used them, but the real high priest was the ruler.

He was in varying degrees, god walking on earth or the state was. Whatever the religion of the country in antiquity, that religion was incarnate, its gods who are incarnate in that state. This means there was no such thing as separation of church and state. Just as in Islam today which exemplifies the old pagan order, there is no separation of church or state. And it used to be that all of Islam was united in the figure of, a kind of divine figure of the caliph. The caliph represented the authority of God on earth, and there was no questioning his will. This is essential for us to understand, because as we move away from Christianity in our culture we are seeing the re-divinization of the state.

Since Hagel's day at the beginning of the last century, it has increasingly been an implicit aspect of political theory in the western world that the state is God walking on earth. The humanists do believe in an incarnation, the forces in history the 'geist' as Hagel said, the spirit working and evolving in history, regularly incarnates itself in the state. So the state is God walking on earth. Now this was paganism. The ruler was the high priest. And one of the most audacious things in the whole of the New Testament, that very few people appreciate today, was the statement by Saint Paul in 1 Timothy 2:1,2.

"I exhort therefore, that first, of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

Paul was totally subversive in that statement. Prayer for the ruler? Why the ruler was the high priest and a future god. On his death he was proclaimed a god by the Roman Senate. During his life he could

say, as one Emperor did, that he felt himself becoming a god. If you've ever read Suetonius; The Lives of the Twelve Caesars, it reads like pornography. Why? Because of the conduct of the Caesars. How they deliberately violated every moral law, committed unspeakable crimes, because now they were on their way to godhood, and they were above the law. For them, unlike for us, law was not the expression of the righteousness, or justice of God, it was something to keep those stupid mortals in check. Look at the gods of Greece and Rome and of the other religions, how to them, adultery was nothing, incest was nothing, murder was nothing. They were beyond good and evil, to use Nietzsche's phrase, beyond good and evil, beyond right and wrong, beyond morality. So Paul says pray for the rulers. Now he did not say bless Caesar or bless president Bush, Clinton or what-have-you. No, pray that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Keep them out of our hair! Odd that nobody ever calls attention to what Paul was saying there. "Lord, keep those fellows in Washington out of my hair and out of my life." That's what Paul is telling us to pray. So that we may have the freedom of our faith: "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Praying for Caesar? Why Caesar was the one who was supposed to pray for you! All intercession was made by Caesar. And for these Christian slaves and nobodies, to pray for Caesar? Who did they think they were? Well, they thought and knew they were the sons of God, by the adoption of grace.

This was one of the most revolutionary things in all of the New Testament, and page after page reads, if you know Roman society and law, like a revolutionary manifesto, although without ever advocating violence. As Stewart H Perowne, one historian, commented about this statement by St. Paul, if it were needed, it proved to the Romans: "that Christians were a seditious and subversive organization." I think we ought to do a lot of praying with regard to Washington D.C. and be just as seditious and subversive. It is our God who is on the throne. It is not Washington that is on the throne of the universe.

Well, the pagan state was totalitarian, it governed everything. There was nothing outside its jurisdiction. We are wickedly taught that democracy and freedom originated in Greece, and in Athens in particular. And yet one classical scholar, WK Lacey, has written:

"The slogan of the Athenian democracy was to, 'live as you please.' But it was not so liberalizing as it sounds, and in practice the democracy through its course imposed a considerable measure of conformity with the customs of the numerically dominant middle and lower middle class. And provided in the persons of the informers, the means whereby the wealthy could be forced to toe the line."

In other words it was a very un-free place. There was no freedom of conscience, there was no freedom of speech. Without reason whatsoever you could be exiled. The religion of antiquity was the state, and the culture of antiquity was the state. The form of the state could vary, but whether it was Egypt, China, Greece, Rome, Persia, Assyria, whatever. The ultimate power was in the state and the ruler was a divine-human power. In some of the Asiatic societies the ruler was called the 'son of heaven.' They had their doctrines of incarnation, in some fashion. And heaven was incarnate in the ruler. So that for Christ to come, as the son of God, was a direct challenge to the powers that were in that day.

Think of the revolutionary implications of the gospel. It was a threat to every civilized order. The Christians were called atheists! Because for them, in those days, these pagans god was present in the social order in the state. Henry Frankfurt, in the study of the ancient pagan cultures wrote some few years ago, that to be a stateless person was to be a non-person. Think about that. You are only a human being if the state recognized you, apart from that, killing you was no murder. You're a non-person. We fail to appreciate in our day, what a revolutionary gospel the early church preached, and why they were persecuted. Rome was ready to recognize any religious group, provided they went to a government center, offered incense before an image of Caesar, and took out a form to post that they were a legal meeting. And it meant that their gods or spirits or whatever they worshiped were under Caesar, who was the true link between heaven and Earth. And of course the Christians refused. For this they

were persecuted, again and again they pleaded with the Christians, 'recognize Caesar and we'll let you do as you please.' The classic Christian answer was given by Paul in Philippians 2:9-11. And there you have the first confession, the baptismal confession, of all Christians, who were of age: "Jesus Christ is Lord." Lord meaning God. Not Caesars is lord as they were supposed to confess at a government center, "Jesus Christ is Lord." Now can you think of anything which would be a more direct challenge to Rome? Rome said you must confess that Caesar is lord. And the early church made its baptismal confession, beginning with the time of St. Paul, Jesus Christ is Lord. That he is over Caesar, not Caesar over him.

The state was everything. The state controlled every kind of activity. The state was the church because it was everything. The state when it chose could say: 'we have too many people, abort your babies.' And it did. The state could say: 'we need more soldiers, and more workers. You're going to have more babies.' And they were obeyed, because the state was everything. The classical scholar who would never agree with us in our Christian faith. Pierre Grimal, has written of Roman morality that it's very distinct aim was the subordination of the individual the Rome. Not to God, but to Rome as god walking on Earth.

Paganism worshiped the state; it believed that salvation was through the state. When the first emperor celebrated his success on a birthday shortly, before our Lord was born, the heralds, or messengers of the emperor, went all over the empire with this proclamation:

"There is none other name under heaven whereby men may be save than the name of Caesar!"

Now do you appreciate what was that St. Peter said? And how radical it was? When early, not many days after the resurrection, he stood up and declared:

"Men and brethren there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby men may be saved than in the name of Jesus Christ."

That was a direct challenge, a direct confrontation. And you can be sure, because Rome had a good espionage system, as all groups in antiquity did, all states, so that there was never a crowd or group anywhere but an agent was to be found in it, that they knew about that, and that they felt these people have to be watched. They are potentially dangerous. It's an interesting thing, now we hear very little about the martyrdom of Christians. About twenty-five years ago someone, who had just returned from a trip to Europe, and was taken to the Colosseum in Rome where the Christians were martyred, and the guide said: "This is where, according to legend, Christians were martyred." According to legend? We have eyewitness accounts of the martyrdom of Christians in the arena. One of the first very, very early, was of these two young women, very young, in their twenties at most. The one had just had a baby, the other was pregnant. And as they looked around they said: "What a horrible a world to bring up a baby in." And they wound up in a secret Bible study group of Christians and became converted. They came from good families. The one's father pleaded with her, Perpetua, to give up this insanity. She refused. They were arrested, the whole group, put on trial, and because the Roman governor was a friend of her father's, he pleaded with her: "Come to your senses girl, think of what this is doing to your father." And at the trial her mother held up the baby who was crying and said: "Come home, take care of your baby." And she said-we have words written down by a Christian who was present: "My breasts were heavy with milk and ached for my baby, but I could not renounce my Lord for my child." And she said: "From that moment on my breasts hurt no longer." The other girl had her baby in the prison cell. And the guards stood around and laughed at her as she was groaning and crying in travail, and they said: "if this is how you take childbirth, which is normal to every woman, what will you do when the lions tear at you?" And she answered back: "When I'm in the arena, my Lord will be with me, and I will feel nothing." They were put in the arena, they knelt in prayer. And after a while Perpetua and

said: “when are they going to turn the lions loose?” she called to one of the guards who was on the other side of the barred area. And the guard called back: “Look at yourself girl; the lion is tearing you apart.” She felt nothing, and she died quietly. Because she and the others knew that Caesar was not the Lord, Jesus Christ is, and they worshiped him.

There was no freedom in antiquity. The early church was an illegal institution because it refused to submit to Caesar. It refused to get a license to hold meetings. It declared its king to be Jesus Christ. Every time I read about those early Christians I feel distressed because we don't talk about Christ as our king. But he was their Lord, King, and Savior. We have to recognize what it means to call him “Lord.” That he is the absolute governor over us and over all creation. There was no freedom in the ancient world, but there was license for libertinism, licentiousness. Consider the implications of that. The more licentious people are, the more immoral they are, the more they are prone to slavery. They are not free men, they are slaves of sin and easily enslaved of men. And every time a culture moves into license or libertinism, licentiousness; it moves deeper into the slavery of all the people.

This is why abortionism, gay rights, euthanasia, all the trends of the culture today are so devastating. They are, as they had been before in history, the precursors to total slavery, and the death of a culture and the death of a people. This is why, against their own self-interest, one society after another has moved into licentiousness, because it wants total control over the people. As a matter of fact, Rome and all the cultures of antiquity had something we hear very little about today because we might learn too much from it. They had, what was known in Rome as the ‘Saturnalia,’ elsewhere by other names. A religious holiday, from two or three days to as much as two weeks. During that time everybody was forbidden to work, except the bakers. They had to work so that people could pick up loaves freely at the state's expense, and stay alive. But the rest of the time all laws were set aside. If they had a king or they had some kind of ruler, whatever the name was, for the time being, the worst criminal in the prison was taken out and made to take his place, even to possessing his queen or his wife or whatever she was called. During the period of the Saturnalia, no moral law could be abided by, everything, bestiality, incest, you name it, was routinely practiced because it was revival meeting. Now that may seem strange, but it's basic to the paganism of antiquity, and basic to the paganism of our time. Why?

Well there are two ways the universe came into being; either God made all things as the Bible tells us it did, or everything evolved out of chaos! If you don't worship God you're going to worship chaos. And how are you going to have a revival meeting if your religion is a cult of chaos? which all paganism is. You're going to have a period of ritual chaos! The Saturnalias, because you're going to revive the cultural energy supposedly. Every culture, sooner or later, if it abandons faith in the God of Scripture, moves towards Saturnalias, towards the cults that lead to revival through every kind of depravity. This is why we are morally on the skids as a people. Because we have forsaken the word of God, because we have worshiped chaos, evolution. It's taught in every public school. What amazes me is that the students don't act any worse than they do. They're given the blueprint for total evil. Well, the culture of antiquity was suicidal. Every time a culture has adopted that kind of faith, as with Renaissance, it has been suicidal. It has gone into tyranny and collapsed. The world was culturally at a dead-end when Jesus Christ was born. If you read the thinking of the time, the writers of the time, their thinking was pessimistic, they felt they were at a dead end. That kind of thinking came again with the Renaissance, it is with us again.

Our Lord was born in the fullness of time because paganism was bankrupt. And the only hope was obviously Jesus Christ. Paganism is once again being glorified. Do you know that national and international scientific meetings are often begun nowadays with a religious invocation a service to ‘Gaia,’ the great mother goddess. I think that is very amusing in a grim, a very grim sort of way. Gaia was known by a variety of names in antiquity; Isis, Anahit, and a number of others. One of the features of Gaia worship was that when they had their annual festivals, the priests would whip themselves up into



a frenzy and then castrate themselves and make an offering of their organ to the mother goddess. It was a fitting symbol for that kind of religion. Modern culture is involved in a similar self-immolation. It is suicidal, it cannot continue its existence, it is destroying itself. We, if we will stand in terms of the full-orbed biblical faith, every jot and tittle, which our Lord tells us shall not pass away, neither shall we, we shall become the people of victory. For the kingdoms of this Earth ought and shall be the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Let us pray.

Our Father we thank thee that we are the people of victory, called to move in, to conquer, to occupy until our King comes. And we have thy promise that wherever the sole of our feet shall tread in thine name and in obedience to Thee, that ground shall be thine, and ours in Thee. That we need not fear any man, but fear thee alone. For thou only art King of Kings and Lord over all Lords. How great thou art O Lord. And we praise Thee. In Christ's name, Amen.

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**ENDNOTES:**

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1. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., 1 Ti 2). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
2. W.K. Lacey. The Family in Classical Greece. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968, 156.
3. Acts 4:12

# Christianity & Culture: Present

R.J. Rushdoony

Saint Paul in Philippians 2:9-11 declares:

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It is hard for us to appreciate the importance of those words, because they really should be accompanied by a roll of drums and a blare of trumpets. Because Paul in these words as in so many others in his letters, declared war on the world of antiquity, on the pagan state, on pagan society and culture, because he declared: “Jesus Christ is Lord,” that He is God. We forget that the word ‘Lord’ meant to the people God, it was another way of saying ‘the sovereign of all creation.’ He declares that Jesus Christ is God, and that to confess Him is to give glory to God the Father, because Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, God incarnate.

Then, second, Paul was declaring that the exaltation of Jesus Christ is the work and purpose of God the Father; then third everything in heaven and on earth and under the earth is under the authority, the government, the rule of Jesus Christ, and is totally subject to Him. Then fourth, in due time whether saved or unsaved, every knee shall bow to Jesus Christ as their absolute Lord and judge, that no man can escape Jesus Christ. And finally, as a logical conclusion, it follows that Caesar is under Christ’s dominion, not Christ under Caesar. This was a declaration of war, not of a physical fight, not with swords, but a spiritual warfare. Jesus Christ is Lord. And therefore, the church is an embassy from Heaven.

Now in the Greek, we have references, and it is translated so, to Paul as an ambassador of Christ, and to the church it is called a ‘parochia’ or a ‘parish,’ which meant ‘an embassy’ in Latin and in Greek. So that the church represented a foreign kingdom, foreign to Rome, which was within Rome claiming that its king was Lord over Rome. Now can you imagine a more audacious claim than this that the church made? It would be comparable to some small principality somewhere in a corner of Asia with almost no territory, sending people here to establish an embassy, and to declare that their ruler was king over the United States, Britain, Europe, Asia, and the Americas generally. The audacity of the church amazed Rome, it angered them, they struck at them again and again to obliterate them. This was the issue that led to the persecution of the church. The church said that we are under Christ, not under Caesar. It insisted on freedom from earthly powers, that we were to obey all authorities, and yet to recognize as our true king Jesus Christ. That we were to live in terms of the law of God, and in so far as possible the laws of men because we were not to be revolutionists. But we were to create (this was the mandate as Paul and others proclaimed it) the Kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of God, here on earth.

This was the issue that led to the persecution of the church, it has been the central struggle for twenty

centuries, the attempt of the ungodly to overthrow the freedom won by the church in order to reestablish the totalitarian state.

Very early pastors, evangelists, and bishops proclaimed the freedom of the church. In fact, it was formally set forth by Pope Gelasius I, at that time every bishop was called a 'pope,' but he happened to be the Bishop of Rome. He died in 496. But he set forth what had been proclaimed since the New Testament. He said:

"There are two powers by which chiefly this world is ruled: the sacred authority of the priesthood and the authority of kings. And of these the authority of the priests is so much the weightier, as they must render before the tribunal of God an account even for the kings of men."

Can you imagine a more audacious statement than that?

What he was saying is that the world is free under God. God is ordained two institutions, which are the main ones, which are to rule among men under God; church and state. And all rulers in civil government are to be instructed by the church and are accountable to God. Let me say parenthetically that the word 'priest' is really an abbreviation of the word we have in English, 'presbyter.' It is not the word 'priest' that is used in the Old Testament, so that, although I doubt many Catholics know it, when they call their pastor a 'priest' they are using an abbreviated form of the word 'presbyter.'

Now this was what the church fought about throughout the Middle Ages. Again and again secular rulers claimed to be God's vicegerent on earth. Otto the I, Otto II, and Otto III of the Holy Roman Empire very early, about the year 900, had images struck of the emperor holding the dove, the Holy Spirit in his hand, whereby the empire said: "The emperor is the voice of God, he is the one who possess the Holy Spirit, so bow down before the emperor."

The Church fought against this, it was often subverted from within, you had in the 900's 'the Pornocracy' when Rome was ruled by harlots who made their lovers the Popes, because they had such civil power they controlled totally the Vatican. But the church fought back. The medieval church made itself the supreme court of appeal against the kings, and there was a constant battle back and forth. The kings and Emperors increased their claims as against the church, Frederick II, the Hohenstaufen Emperor went so far as to say he had been born in Bethlehem, and his mother's name was Mary, and he was the true expression of God on earth. The battle seesawed back and forth, the church very often lost, but the seeds had been sown; the king is Christ.

The emblem you have here of the cross and the crown is an ancient one going back to the early church, sometimes it has appeared with a lamb crowned and carrying a cross. This was the banner of resistance, the banner whereby the faithful said: "We have no king, not Caesar; we have no king but Jesus Christ." The Holy Roman Empire, 'holy' because it claimed to be the true church, went so far as to control the church totally, together with kings after the Council of Constance in 1415. At that time there had been a great schism and there were three popes, all of them bad eggs, put in by rulers, more than the church. As a matter of fact, if in the College of Cardinals they resisted what the imperial mandate was for the man who was appointed to be the next pope, they, the Cardinals were smothered to death with pillows. That way the cause of death would not be ascertainable. But at the Council of Constance, the kings and the emperor burned at the stake Matthew (of Paris?) and John Huss, 'the morning star of the Reformation,' as some have called him, together with Wycliffe.

They insisted on putting in a man they could control as the single Pope. They made it clear to the popes from that time on: "You are not to start preaching the kingship of Christ." So what did the Popes do, they concentrated on the arts. And most of those selected in that century and on were



often unbelievers. At the time of Luther, when he was a young man, the Emperor Maximilian V actually planned to depose the Pope, and make himself both Pope and Emperor. This was the ancient paganism trying to reconquer Christendom. But they did not succeed.

The Reformation was born, and then the Counter-Reformation, but even then the monarchs, Catholic and Protestant seized power from the church. What happened when Henry VIII made himself the head, the supreme Bishop of the church, it took place in France, that's what Gallicanism was about, it took place in Austria, in all the German states. Throughout Europe the Catholic monarchs and the Protestant monarchs had one goal; the church had to be controlled, otherwise people would have dangerous ideas about freedom under God

The one exception to this tyranny was Calvin in Geneva. Of course, the Genevan city council tried to perpetuate the same kind of tyranny, they sought to control the church lock stock and barrel. When Calvin resisted they exiled him, but the city fell apart. They had only brought Calvin in to begin with because Geneva was a manufacturing center, and they had a problem. There was so much drunkenness and gambling and licentiousness, that it was very hard to get people to work. Those who did not appear for work day after day were growing in number, the city was collapsing. The catholic bishop was helpless in the face of it, he was the Prince of Geneva as well as the bishop, and he abdicated and left the city in disgust. At this point Calvin was called in. He brought about law and order, but they didn't like it because he also said: "The church is to be under God, not the city council."

They exiled him, and the city went downhill, and nobody could get their production schedules in line, so they called back Calvin. They hated him, but they needed him. So they tolerated him, but they insulted him. They would name their dogs 'Calvin.' Other's would sick their dogs on him as he walked through the streets, they would come under his bedroom window at night and shoot off their guns to disturb his sleep. Not until they knew he was dying did they grant him citizenship and a vote. But out of Calvin came the birth of Christian freedom, and the example he set was imitated by Catholics and Protestants. He waged a war unceasingly against the control of the church by the state, and for the freedom of the church. He held that what was the church's property once was its property in perpetuity. That nothing that belonged to the church could ever be alienated for secular use. He also said that the state had an obligation to be under Jesus Christ as its king, that as much as the church was under Christ, even so much was the state required by God to be under Christ, or it would receive His judgment. The spiritual power of the church was to be in doctrine and in instruction, and in showing the state the way it should go by its faithful teaching and preaching. The church was a separate sphere, but like the state to be under God. Together they were to serve God.

The spiritual power of the church in Paul's words, much stressed by the Reformers was, quoting II Corinthians 10:8, and again II Corinthians 13:10, "To edification, not to destruction." To edification, not to destruction.

We look back on Calvin with blinded eyes. He has been so vilified over the centuries, that very few people know the real Calvin. You would think he was a hard, humorless man, but he had a sense of humor. He was kindly, he was gentle. His favorite avocation was bowling. Did you ever hear that about Calvin? Your pastor has, but no-one else. Yes, he was a man who served God with all his heart, mind and being, because what he wanted was man's freedom under God.

But, because all of life is under God and His law-Word, no area can legitimately seek independence from Him. The family, the school, the arts, the sciences, business, civil government, the church, all things must be under and obey the triune God.

Calvin was challenged in his day by a group in Geneva with roots all over Europe known as 'the Lib-

ertines.’ They were called the libertines, and they called themselves that because they believed in free thinking, free living, free sex, and no control over morals. According to A Mitchell Hunter, the Libertines held: “...sin is an illusion.” (No such thing as sin) The libertines said: “...salvation consists in the deliverance from the phantom of sin.” You are saved when you realize there is no such thing as sin. Sounds like the sexual revolutionaries of the sixties, does it not? And exactly so, because it is the same kind of thinking, the same underground kind of people. “What you or I do,” said one of their spokesmen, Quinton, “Is done by God, and what God does we do because He is in us.” In other words, we are God, and anything we do is therefore right. The idea of sin is a false doctrine taught by priests and preachers.

Now the implications of Calvin’s position were developed by later Calvinists, notably Abraham Kuyper and Cornelius Van Til. The doctrine of ‘sphere sovereignty’ or ‘sphere laws,’ that the various spheres of life and thought; the family, the school, business, the arts, the sciences, they are all directly under God, they are to obey Him and serve Him, but they are not under the church nor the state. And of course this is a cardinal doctrine of Christian Reconstruction, or Theonomy. Why should mathematics be under the state? Does the state declare that  $2 + 2 = 4$ ? Should mathematics be under the Church? The idea is ridiculous! Why then should the state control economics, or education, or art, which it is now doing, or the sciences, which it is now doing? The whole point of the Reformation as Calvinism developed it, with deep roots in the Middle Ages and the early church, was the kingship of Christ, and every area of life and thought under the kingship of Christ, not under the church, or under the state.

What is the basic premise of this? Simply this; In terms of the word of God which speaks to you and to me as persons, the basic government under God is self-government. What kind of church or state or society can you have if there is no self-government? The basic government under God is self-government. This is the direction of the church, and of the Reformation. This is what the New Testament is talking about: the enscriptured word.

Years ago I read something by a scholar that said that the giving of an enscriptured word was one of the most revolutionary steps, if not the most revolutionary, in all of history. Why? Because when God gave the Word, he mandated thereby that: ‘If you are going to hear me, you are going to learn how to read. This made education possible. If you are going to learn how to read you are going to study this Word, you are going to be governed by it, and thereby you, the individual believer, are at the heart of the kingdom of God. You are basic to its government insofar as you govern yourself you bring about the kingdom of God on earth.’

This means that we cannot look to institutions, not even to the church, though we must honor the church as the redeemed community, as the people of Christ. Because the basic government is self-government. And the Last Judgment is basically a judgment of persons, all the nations shall appear before him, but they shall be judged as persons. The more faithfully we establish Christ’s order, the more free we are from man’s repressive and totalitarian order, and the key to that is the self-government of the Christian man. His self-government comes from knowledge of the Word of God, therefore we must give ourselves to the study of it, we must be faithful in our attendance to the preaching of it, we must learn its implications for us and for the community of believers, and we must see it as marching orders.

One of the sad things in evangelicalism today is that there is only a devotional use of the Bible. What is there in it today that will be comforting to me? To be healing for me? Well, there is nothing wrong with that, but if all you go to the Bible for is what will help you personally, you miss the point of the book! What it means is, and what the translators like Wycliffe and especially Tyndale meant when they translated it, was that the people of God from the poorest ploughboy on all of England, said Tyndale, would find here God’s marching orders. How to bring about the kingdom of God wherever they are, in

their home, at their place of work, in their church, in the civil order, in every area of life and thought.

Cornelius Van Til said that there are only two choices for man; everything else is a pretense. theonomy, God's law, or autonomy, self-law. And we can convert Christianity into a form of autonomy, if all we do when we go to the Bible is to find: "What will give me a nice word for today, because I am feeling a bit upset, I didn't have a good night, and I've got some problems today, now what's a comforting word?" No! What are the marching orders for today? That is why the book is to be read from beginning to end, over and over again, so we might find the marching orders of God continuously. This was the greatness of Calvin's work. He taught from one end of the Bible to the other so that people might know the whole mandate of God for the whole of society.

The words of Joshua are among the greatest in all of Scripture. When we read about the Great Commission, we should stop and think: "What is meant by the word great there?" It was called the Great Commission as a way of distinguishing it from Joshua's commission, and the Great Commission is a summary of Joshua's commission in order to expand it to the whole earth, and this is what Joshua was told:

"Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast."

And now these words:

Joshua 1

"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

The name 'Joshua' is identical to the name 'Jesus,' as you know, it is simply the Hebrew form whereas 'Jesus' is the Aramaic form of the same word. Our 'Joshua,' Jesus Christ, tells us:

"Have I not commanded Thee? Whithersoever the sole of thy foot shall tread if thou move forward in my name, that shall be your ground."

"Therefore, go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations..." make every sphere of life and thought the territory of Jesus Christ, our Lord!

Let us pray. Our Father, thou hast called us to occupy until thou dost come again. Make us zealous in the occupation of all things; use us to recapture this nation for our Lord, and to make all the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. Make us ever mindful that we have not been called to retreat, nor to sit in a corner and wait for thee, but to conquer. Thou hast called us "more than conquerors" in Christ. Give us that faith and the zeal so to be, in Christ's name, amen.

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**ENDNOTES:**

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1. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Php 2:8–11). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.
2. Joseph Huntley Carlton. Christianity and Western Civilization. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1954, 27.
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# Christianity & Culture: Future

R.J. Rushdoony

Thank you all for having me. I am so often treated as a kind of outlaw by many church people that it is wonderful to get so warm a welcome. Our subject tonight is again 'Christianity and Culture; the present scene and the future.' Perhaps nothing better illustrates our present scene than the case of Philip Zimmermann. Since 1993, a grand jury has been collecting evidence which may send him to prison for three to five years with a maximum fine of \$1 million. He has nothing like that of course. The case against him is a federal one.

What has Zimmermann done? As far as I can ascertain, he probably has never received a traffic ticket, let alone committed a crime. He has developed, however, cryptology for the masses. He has devised something whereby anyone with a computer can keep all his knowledge whether it is business or church or personal data, free from anyone tapping into his computer and collecting the information. He has enabled businesses and individuals to protect the privacy of their works and lives by this tried and tested encryption program, and he has made it available freely.

During the first week of April, 1995, the Electronic Frontier Foundation gave Zimmerman its prestigious 'pioneer award' for helping protect the privacy of people, but the federal government says it has a right to eavesdrop on anyone. It has a right to tap into their telephones, their computers, every aspect of their lives. In 1991, Congress attempted to pass a law making what Zimmermann was doing illegal, but people can reach Congress with their complaints, so nothing happened, no law was passed. But this has not restrained the federal government, which is planning to prosecute Zimmermann as an alleged arms merchant. He has no connection with it, but by some far-fetched reasoning they have said that he will enable an illegal arms business to flourish. Oddly enough, they do not care if any foreign government or foreign individual buys or takes freely Zimmermann's encryption program, but they don't want Americans having that privacy.

We are, in other words, fast returning to the world of paganism. The individual is to be totally under state control. And the will of the state overrides all laws. Telephone calls are now subject to eavesdropping. An expert has told me that if you use certain keywords, the equipment will zero in onto your conversation immediately and record it. In the name of drugs control, properties are subject to confiscation even if one is innocent of any relationship with the drug trade, and so on and on.

Incidentally, three million families, mostly ordinary families like us who don't have much property, have had their property seized and they cannot afford to fight getting them back, and when they have been able to and have won, the properties have not been surrendered in most cases. Freedom is rapidly disappearing under the rule of the new paganism. At the same time, license or licentiousness is replacing biblical morality.

There are two cases now in the courts whereby it is held that it is illegal to teach chastity in public schools. Why? Because natural morality leads to sin, after all the natural man will do as he pleases.



So if you teach chastity, you are implying that you need supernatural morality, biblical morality, to be chaste. And therefore even if you do not mention in any high school course the subject of God and the Bible, to teach chastity is to establish Christianity in the school. Incidentally, the film that was the subject of the court action was produced by one of our men.

This means now, that if these efforts succeed, sexual sins are legal for children, legal to be taught in the schools which is already the case, but chastity cannot be taught. Twenty years ago, a man who spent most of his life in Sweden, Roland Huntford, an Englishman, wrote a book entitled *The New Totalitarians*. At that time he said, the Soviet Union, which was still very powerful, was the old model of totalitarianism, because of its use of terror. The new model, which he said would take over, and Sweden was the great pilot example, was education as the means of remaking and reshaping every citizen. All men were to be brought into submission to the monolithic state, Huntford said, by means of statist education, and catharsis was to be found, he said, through rituals of hate. And he gave examples of these rituals of hate in the Swedish schools. The new totalitarians are anti-Christian. But they say that what they are opposing in Christianity is a form of mental illness. This, according to Huntford, is how Sweden describes a biblical Christian faith. In Sweden, the new totalitarianism, Huntford went on to say, means that the judiciary is virtually infallible, and implicitly always right.

Paganism means more than not believing in God, it means the abandonment of everything taught by the Bible. With each decade since World War II, more and more of the Christian faith is abandoned in favor of paganism as the new freedom. This freedom is one in favor of radical immoralism, and for the hatred of Christianity. We either return to a truly Christian, biblically-grounded culture and world, or we regress into paganism and into slavery.

As I said yesterday morning, the two key areas of cultural expression are law and education. Our laws are increasingly non-Christian, in fact the very idea of 'law' as something fixed and eternal, as always true, such as; thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not commit adultery. This is being replaced by bureaucratic regulations. We live less and less under law, and more and more under bureaucratic laws and regulations. The regulations by bureaucratic agencies of the federal government and the states, as well as of the counties, now are so great that each year they fill the equivalent of a large library building. Whereas the laws passed in legislative bodies are very few by comparison, although too many, more than they should be. In fact, some modern ideologues have denied the idea of law, which means that the rules of man have replaced the rules of God. This is an old hope. If you go back to Plato's Republic in ancient Greece, most of humanity was to be made of workers who were to do what they were told, then there were the soldiers to enforce the rule of the leaders over the workers, and above them the philosopher kings whose word was law. There were no laws in Plato's Republic, only the fiat will of man.

Law is being separated from God, so too has education. It is increasingly geared to conforming the mind of the student to humanistic statism, not to God nor to the family nor to one's heritage. It is an exercise in the humanistic conversion of the child to paganism, to life without the Lord, and without fixed moral laws. A medieval idea which is still very, very prevalent today in evangelical circles is the doctrine of the 'donum superadditum.' It is the belief that the natural man as he is, is essentially good, and all that he needs to make his life complete is Jesus Christ. This was a result of the thinking of Aristotle, it crept into the church; Catholic and Protestant, and has damaged both seriously. Instead of seeing man as depraved in every aspect of his being as the Reformed faith holds, this view sees him as good, or almost good, needing only Jesus for the full measure of his satisfaction. All you need is Jesus, that is the 'donum superadditum' gospel. "You've got a good life, you've got it made, now all you need is Jesus." But such a view is not biblical. Man is fallen, he is at war with God, and at heart he hates all of God's law. He hates it with every fiber of his being.

I recall years ago, someone came late at night, banged on the door and I let him in, and he was in desperation. He had, although he was a giant of a person and in excellent health except for one thing, a certain something like a varicose vein of the esophagus. And when he drank, which he did, that would swell and break, his mouth would be full of blood and he would fall, choking. And the doctor said: "Sometime this will kill you." So when he walked in, he was near tears. "What am I going to do?" he said. And I told him: "You are a strong man; you are a bear of a man but you are not in control, and you need to put Jesus Christ in control. And your only chance at life is to overcome your drinking, and you are only going to do it if the stronger man, Jesus Christ has command of you." So I said: "Why don't you pray? Pray to God and ask that by His grace He make you His in Christ?" He sat there for some time, and then got up and headed for the door. He said: "How can a man humble himself to pray?"

Life without God, this is the goal of the modern world. Man is fallen, he is at war with God, and at heart he hates God, he hates the Son, the Father, and the Spirit, and all of God's law. So the fallen man and his world is anti-morality, anti-God, anti-Christ. It favors abortion, homosexuality, and every kind of evil. Because it wants no laws from God to govern men. One person, a man of some prominence, who hated homosexuals with a passion kept it quiet, and he was against anything that would hurt homosexuals. What was his excuse? He said with some profanity: "I hate those blankety blank so and so's," and then honestly enough he said: "But I hate the Bible more." So he was in favor of the gays, as against the word of God.

Today to break down all law, there are powerful forces seeking to make legitimate all child molestation. Did you know that the Kinsey Report, thirty years ago, was in favor of that? That Kinsey held that it was only bad parental teaching that made children upset when it happened? There are forces trying to make legitimate incest, bestiality, and other offenses in the name of freedom. Gaia worship is advocated by important persons in the international community, its target is the end of the division of humanity, into saved and unsaved, into the lost and the redeemed. In fact, John Dewey in 1933 aimed his lectures at Yale, the key lectures of his career, against the biblical doctrine that there are two kinds of people; the saved and the lost, and he said: "It is the ultimate expression of hostility to Democracy. In a democratic world, all people will be equal." Doctor Norman Myers who has been a United Nations advisor, also advisor to the World Bank, the US State Department, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and more, has said and I quote: "There is no longer any we and they. [that is, the Christians and the lost] For the first time and for all time, there is only us. All of us humans together with all our fellow species, and other members of the Gaia community." By other members he meant animals. They must now be given equality with us.

The new community, the family of man and some would say the family of life, to include all plants and animals as well as men, allows for no moral and religious distinctions, and it must include our fellow species as they are called, fellow animals. One of the things that tickles me, is that there are scientists in India, Hindus, who are against the eating of all flesh because Hindus are vegetarians, who are now conducting experiments that they claim prove that vegetables feel pain when they are picked or cooked or eaten. Now what they are going to live on I don't know, maybe they are going to get their nourishment by breathing air?

One commentator on what Doctor Myers has held has said and I quote:

"Furthermore, according to Dr. Myers, creation of such a new world ethic is no side issue; it is recognized as an imperative by world institutions such a United Nations Environmental Program, which in collaboration with radical environmental groups created a world ethic for living sustainably in 1991. In that same year, globalist theologian Hans Kung was commissioned by UNESCO to create a Declaration of a Global Ethic which would impose a set of binding commitments upon religious leaders and institutions."

From Kung's perspective, and by the way, Kung was a noted Catholic theologian until he was forbidden to teach by the Pope not too long ago, and he is joined by many Protestant leaders.

"From Kung's perspective, traditionalist religions have an ethical obligation to cease to exist."

Do you understand what they are telling us? If we were morally decent people we would vote ourselves out of existence, we would disband all Bible believing churches.

In his 1991 book, *Global Responsibility in Search of a New World Ethic*, Kung declared:

"Any form of programmatic anti-Enlightenment and church conservatism is to be rejected."

"To put it bluntly: no regressive or repressive religion - whether Christian, Islamic, Jewish or of whatever provenance - has a long-term future."

Furthermore, according to Kung, there will be no room for religious diversity (and they mean that they are not going to allow room) because:

"If ethics is to function for the wellbeing of all, it must be indivisible. The undivided world increasingly needs an undivided ethic."

"The undivided world increasingly needs an undivided ethic. Postmodern men and women need common values, goals, ideals, visions."

And they call us bigoted and narrow minded! They are not going to allow anyone to exist who disagrees with them! Already in Sweden if you go to a Bible study you become an outcast in the community. The church there is a state church. This means that everyone has a right to vote in the church's elections, so guess who wins when they have an election for church office? The Marxists! So the church is run by ungodly men. Very clearly, the death of Christianity and of biblical faith, law and morality is the goal. Failure to recognize this hostility is a self-imposed blindness on the part of some churchmen.

The current forms of anti-Christianity are really sophisticated versions of the thinking of the Marquis de Sade. The presupposition is that man's only true realm is the natural. The Marquis de Sade said that since the Bible and Christianity advocate a supernatural morality, they must be forbidden. Everything else, including every crime, he said, should be made legal.

The death of God school of the early 1970's is really basic to our current mindset. It did not end, it was simply absorbed by all the modern seminaries, so that in all the modernist seminaries the death of God school of thinking is basic. And what did they say? They did not say that "God is dead," but: "God is dead for us." We will no longer pay attention to God, whether he exists or not is irrelevant for us, we want a world without God or Christ. So in our public schools, values-clarification teaching prevails. It teaches the students: "There is no ultimate good or evil, good and evil is what is good and bad for you, you decide, you make your own morality."

Now such a world is anarchistic and lawless. It is the world of the book of Judges, when because God was not recognized as king, as lord over all: "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This morning I called to your attention the fact that in Calvin's Geneva, that was precisely the gospel of the Libertines who fought against Calvin, who blackened his name all over Europe, who hated him with an intensity that we can scarcely appreciate. But Calvin won over the Libertines, whose champion was

Servetus. And we as Calvinists are going to triumph over the new libertines, because their outlook and their world is suicidal. It destroys the foundations for community and for life.

One of the remarkable books of the past quarter of a century was Harold J Berman, *The Law and Revolution, the Formation of the Western Legal Tradition*. Harold J. Berman in that book said that the Western world is founded on the doctrine of the atonement, that every system of law that made possible Western civilization, rested on the doctrine of the atonement, and therefore God's law. That if you violate God's law, restitution is necessary which only Christ, the incarnate God, can render. When you break the law against your fellow men, restitution then alone is possible, and it was true that at one time we did not have prisons except to hold people pending a trial, it was restitution; either by death, or by paying for your offense, making restitution.

Berman predicted that early in the next century if we had not returned to the doctrine of the atonement and the law it presupposes, our civilization will be in a total state of collapse. But he says it will return. What you and I represent, is the beginning of the return of Christ the King, because we affirm His atonement as the premise of our life, and His law as the rule of justice in our society. The foundations are being destroyed right now. This destruction will mean the death of our civilization, but I believe a greater culture, a truly Christian one is under way.

The significant fact is that from the beginning, whether in Eden, Babel, Rome, Babylon, the United States or the British Empire or the Soviet Empire, all things established on anything other than the God of Scripture, and on the biblical doctrine of atonement end up in confusion and death. We live in a dying world, but a new world is being born, and you are a part of it. We are the people of life. All things are being shaken, so that as we are told in Hebrews: "Only the thing which cannot be shaken may remain." We are the people of the future, because we are the people of Christ.

In the sixties, the campus revolutionaries, the sexual revolutionaries, held: "the whole Christian era is in its last days." The number of Christians from '68 to '88 more than doubled in this country, and elsewhere in the world. And we believe that the whole humanistic statist era is approaching its last days. One of the sharpest minds of this century, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, observed in 1945, as he looked ahead:

"No people can live without faith in the ultimate victory of something."

And he felt that no one could live without faith in the Word of God and the God of Scripture. He said also, tragically, how few still believe that the past two thousand years have really been a story of man's salvation. The two millennia of Christian history. The average layman or even theologian will speak with at best admiration for the life and teachings of Jesus, but appears to think that God has more or less abdicated since then. Yet unless we do believe that Christ began a life-process which has continually transformed us and the world we live in, true faith is dead. We are the people of victory.

Rosenstock Huessy rightly stated that paganism has always affirmed, unintentionally, while it speaks of one world, the disunity and the dividedness of mankind. When man is at war with God, he will be at war with himself, and he will be at war with his neighbor. He cannot create a one-world order. The old pagan myth from Greece about the god Kronos, devouring all of his children, is true of all paganism. It destroys itself. Wherever the human spirit in man's thinking replaces the Holy Spirit, mankind decays and dies. We alone are the people of the future, but only if our faith is totally biblical and Christ is for us Lord and Savior, in and over every realm of life and thought.

The Bible is full of such magnificent statements about the certainty of our victory; Paul especially uses some amazing phrases to express that. He was a Roman citizen, and no doubt he was familiar

with Rome and with the Roman triumphal entries. The victorious generals would march into the city with their army, the crowds would line the streets, chariot after chariot would be loaded with gold and silver that had been captured, and behind the chariots in chains would be the kings and nobles of the realm conquered. It was a spectacle designed to convey the idea of imperial power, of Roman majesty before whom nothing and no one could stand. And how did Paul describe us? He said: "...For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter... [but] we are more than conquerors..." through Christ Jesus. The power and the majesty, the imperial splendor of the triumphal entries was as nothing compared with the power and conquest that is ours in Christ, and it is one that shall stand for all eternity. So we must say again with Paul: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" We are the people of the future.

Let us pray. All Glory be to thee God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, who by thy sovereign grace has chosen us to be thy people, ordained that for all time and eternity that we are heirs of thine eternal kingdom. Make us mindful of how rich we are, and how powerful we are in thee, so that in all things we may indeed be more than conquerors in and through Christ. We give thanks to thee for these thy people, whom thou hast through all eternity and for all eternity ordained to be thine. Bless them by thy Spirit. Empower them by thy grace, and give them a holy boldness as they face the trials and adversities, the animosity, of the world that hates thee, and which shall be judged by thee. How great art O Lord, and we praise thee. In Christ's name, amen.

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#### **ENDNOTES:**

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# Christian Mandate in Parable of God's Judgment

R.J. Rushdoony

Our Scripture this morning is from the Gospel according to Luke, Luke 18:1-8.

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

I find this parable a very moving and a shattering one. I first came to its meaning perhaps half a century ago. I was startled by what it said, and startled by my ignorance in having read it for many years and having missed its point. I realized that this was a mandate. One of the sad facts of our day is that the gays have ‘come out of the closet’ and the Christians have gone in! They have retreated from problems, they figure they are losers, and I don’t believe that, because the Bible never teaches that. Certainly not this parable. This parable is routinely misunderstood in terms of the last sentence:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

Because of that sentence it is routinely held to refer to conditions at the end of the world, at the last, at the second coming. But it does not. “When the son of man cometh...” doesn’t mean the last coming, because over and over and over again the Bible speaks of God ‘coming’ in judgment, in the Old Testament, once coming in the clouds of judgment. In Isaiah alone we have at least ten nations who are going to see ‘the day of the Lord,’ the day of His judgment, and saw it within a few years. So obviously this refers to God’s judgment but not the last judgment, because God comes often in judgment. The fall of Rome was a judgment, the fall of the medieval order was a judgment, the fall that is beginning all around us of the modern age is a judgment. It is the day of the Lord. God comes repeatedly in major judgments and in minor judgments, and a time of judgment is a time of trouble.

Right now we are in a time of trouble because it is a time of judgment. Seventy percent of all Americans right now are making less than they were two years ago. That is why so many wives have to work. In fact, the rise of the number of working women began about 1972 and has steadily increased. Isn’t that a judgment when God creates such chaos in the economic order, when taxes rise so, when it becomes necessary for there to be more than one wage earner in a family, isn’t that a judgment upon an age? We live in a time of judgment, when men’s hearts fail them for fear. And so we had better understand the meaning of this parable, because it is talking to us. A parable by our Lord for His people.

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint...”

Whatever the judgment that confronts you, whatever the problems, you are not to get discouraged and disheartened, but you are to pray expecting an answer, a good answer.

“Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.”

Well you would have to say that our Lord really loaded the deck, He stacked things. A crooked judge. Well judges then and now, especially then, had a great deal of freedom to do as they please. I don't know about this part of the United States, but in our part, unless it is a big city and there are a lot of judges in the city, you don't run against a judge at election time, because as a lawyer you are out of business if you do. And here is a crooked judge, and a widow. Now widows and orphans are singled out in the Bible as types of helpless people. The widow in antiquity was especially a prey for con-artists, she was commonly defrauded, and an orphan, a child without parents, who can be more helpless? So here was a widow, she had been defrauded, she had no recourse, no one to go to, no relative, no friend, nobody to help her, and she appeals to a crooked corrupt judge: “Avenge me of mine adversary.” And he would not for a while. But afterward he said within himself:

“Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.”

Well, this woman did what women very often are very good at; she nagged the judge! She sat outside of his office where she could see him every time he went in and out, and she was there to present her petition: “Avenge me of mine adversary.” He'd go in. When it was time to come out, to eat or to do something whatever, or to see the secretary, whatever it was, there she was again: “Avenge me of mine adversary!” It made him look terrible. Here was this woman always nagging him, every time he went in and out. Advertising the fact that she had been defrauded and he was doing nothing about it.

He was a crooked man; “unjust judge.” A judge is supposed to represent justice. In many courts, the term including here in the United States at some levels is not judge but ‘Justice.’ Because they are supposed to be fountains of justice, so their very title is ‘Justice.’ Our judges on the Supreme Court are called ‘Justices,’ because that is what they are supposed to represent, and this has been historically true in one culture after another. So when you talk about an unjust justice or judge, you are putting together something that is horrifying. In the Psalms, God tells the unjust judges, ‘elohim’ as they were called, little God's as it were:

“Ye have lived as God's, but ye shall die as men because you have corrupted my law.”

So this unjust judge gets weary of this woman's nagging, and so he says: “I don't care two cents about justice, I want what I can get, but his woman is a bad advertisement for me. She nags me every time I go and come, and it's getting to me, it is wearing me out. I will give her what she wants.” And he does, he does, that's at the heart of this parable. Even a crooked judge will at times give justice. And the Lord said:

“...Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?”

Those words sound like a whiplash to me. What is our Lord saying? “If a crooked judge can give justice, how much more God the Almighty, the source of all justice? How dare you pray and not expect an answer? How dare you not pray when you believe in the name of God? How dare you endure injustice around you and in your life and not go to the Lord of all justice? How dare you treat God as

though he were not as good as this crooked judge? If a crooked judge can give a helpless widow justice, how much more so the God of all justice?" If we do not pray for justice, we indict God. We are guilty of blasphemy. We are saying; "Well, maybe you are too busy God, maybe you are like the Baal whom the priest of Baal worshiped and whom Elijah mocked, saying: 'Shout a little louder, maybe he is asleep and can't hear you.'" Is our God like that? Then why aren't we praying for justice?

It wearies me that so often prayers are said for the president but not in a biblical sense. When Paul said "Pray for all rulers that that they may allow us to live a Godly life in quietness and peace." To leave us alone, so that we may serve God, and pray for justice that we may be freed from the evils of this world.

"I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."

That's quite a promise! Our Lord says men ought always to pray and not to faint, because God is better than a crooked judge, and He will avenge us speedily. How dare we not pray for justice? We live in a world surrounded by evil. Wherever we look we find ungodliness. We find legalized horrors like abortion, homosexuality, and now actually taking place as nurses have told me, euthanasia, and much more. I can recall when in this country not many people locked their doors. There never was a problem, in entire communities. And now they have all kinds of locks and bars on the doors. And what have the Christians been doing all the while?

"...men ought always to pray, and not to faint..."

"...shall not God avenge his own elect..?"

Which ones?

"...which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

They may not be the best of saints, he has to put up with a great deal from some of us, He bears long with us, yet He will avenge us.

Are we surrendering our country to the devil? Are we saying it is hopeless to pray for justice? Cannot God bring about justice in the face of all the pharaohs, all the presidents and prime ministers of this world? There was a time when Christians were ready to get down and pray when they saw evil, and then get up and act. Now we resign ourselves to it, we act as though that's all that we can expect. The world is an evil place, which it is, it is a fallen humanity, which it is, but is not our God greater than any of the powers that be? He who destroyed the power of death can destroy the power of all sin:

"...shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

I began by saying that when I first appreciated the meaning of this parable it was like a slap in the face. I had read, and this goes back about half a century, something in Kipling, and it sounded good, but I soon came to realize it was evil. He wrote about not expecting justice, that was his subject. Why? Well the world is full of evil, a great deal of the world is very ungodly, and wherever you go there is more and more evil taking place, therefore we should not expect justice in this world. It sounded so logical, only it was ungodly. We are told in this parable to pray for justice, and after reading Kipling and agreeing with him I came across this parable and was ashamed of myself.

'...when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?'

Will He find this faith in a time of judgment? If He doesn't find it, it is because we brought on the judgment, we retreated. We holed up in our houses and let the world go to the Devil, we did not pray without fainting that God overthrow the powers of darkness.

I am asking all of you therefore, make justice, as well as the conversion of the ungodly, a matter of daily prayer in your private devotions. Otherwise, we will find indeed a time of judgment that will judge us because we have fainted, and we have treated God as though he were not up to the caliber of a crooked judge. We are his children, we are His people, He will hear us.

Let us pray.

O Lord our God we come to Thee, surrounded by a world of evil. A world that mocks at thee and thy kingdom, and thy people are slaughtered like sheep all the day long, all over the world. Avenge us, O Lord, of our adversaries. Bring them to their knees in faith, or bring them down in thy judgment, and make of us a people that know thou to be the all-righteous judge, our heavenly father, our shield and our defender. O Lord our God, give us zeal in praying for thy triumph, thy justice, thy kingdom. In Christ's name, amen.

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**ENDNOTES:**

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1. The Holy Bible: King James Version (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Lk 18). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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