

God and Politics: Four Models

- **Positive Theocracy**--socio-political sphere integrated with theological authority
- **Anti-State**--political power as inevitably corrupt and antagonistic to God
- **Dialectical Separation and Interaction of Church and State**--two kingdoms, proximate justice, liberal democracy
- **Negative Theocracy**--political state as a matter of ultimate indifference to the church

I. Positive Theocracy Model

1 Sam. 10:1 Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on [Saul's] head, and kissed him; he said, "The Lord has anointed you ruler over his people Israel. You shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their enemies all around."

1 Chron 28:4-5 [King David:] "Yet the Lord God of Israel chose me from all my ancestral house to be king over Israel forever; for he chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah my father's house, and among my father's sons he took delight in making me king over all Israel. And of all my sons, for the Lord has given me many, he has chosen my son Solomon to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel."

Psalm 2:7-9 [Words of a Davidic King]

I will tell of the decree of the Lord:

He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have begotten you.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.

You shall break them with a rod of iron,
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Psalm 72:1-2

Give the king your justice, O God,

and your righteousness to a king's son.

May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.

Romans 13:1-2 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

1 Peter 2:13-17 For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

II. Anti-State Model

Gen 11:4-9 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves." . . . So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth.

Judges 8:22-23 22 Then the Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also; for you have delivered us out of the hand of Midian." 23 Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the Lord will rule over you."



1 Sam 8 [Elders to Samuel:] "...Appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations." But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to govern us." Samuel prayed to the Lord, and the Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them."

Daniel 7:20-22 [Concerning] the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke arrogantly, and that seemed greater than the others. As I looked, this horn made war with the holy ones and was prevailing over them, until the Ancient One came; then judgment was given for the holy ones of the Most High, and the time arrived when the holy ones gained possession of the kingdom. .

Rev 18:2-3, 7-8 [An angel] called out with a mighty voice,
"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul and hateful bird, a haunt of every foul and hateful beast. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her . . .
Since in her heart she says, 'I rule as a queen; I am no widow, and I will never see grief,' therefore her plagues will come in a single day— pestilence and mourning and famine— and she will be burned with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who judges her."

III. Dialectical Separation and Interaction of Church and State

Luke 22:24-30 A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. . . You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matt 22:17-22 "Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

Jer 29:4-7 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters . . . 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.

Luke 3:12-14 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked [John the Baptist], "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

IV. Negative Theocracy--state as matter of ultimate indifference to the church

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority."

Psalm 146:3-4

Do not put your trust in princes,
In mortals, in whom there is no help.
When they breath departs, they return to the earth;
On that very day their plans perish.

Heb 11:9-11 By faith [Abraham] stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Heb 11:13-16 All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

