

Lecture 1 - Politics In Genesis

Genesis

Genesis - stages in the creation of an ideal world, The Creation mandate, dominion, rulership and stewardship, ancient concepts of leadership, pre-flood politics, the tribe, the development of the city and civic life, Noah. The curse on Canaan as justification for genocide. The tower of Babel, political unity and disunity. Joseph and Egypt. Pharaoh, divine rulers, the complexities of national government. The urbanization of Egypt. Urban - rural tensions.

Stages in the Creation of an ideal world

The ultimate aim of politics is the creation of Eden - the ideal irenic state or later of the New Jerusalem - the ideal civic state. Genesis 1 gives us the stages of Creation which has many applications to building society and the political order.

1. Formless chaos. A "halo-halo" social order.
2. Spiritual presence
3. The Word - Authority creates primal order
4. Light - symbolizing vision, wisdom and revelation is prior.
5. Naming - creating identity
6. Separation - of good from evil, light from darkness.
7. Firmament - the establishment of boundaries, control of fluidity and change.
8. Solid ground - foundational truths and principles
9. Vegetation - basic production and fertility, food, provision, logistics, agriculture and environment as foundational.
10. Sun and moon - markers, seasons, traditions, regulation and routine to the society.
11. Sea creatures and birds - higher levels of complexity and culture, filling the space, high flyers, fecundity, population. The success of life.
12. Blessing - the spiritual empowerment of existence. Fruitfulness, multiplication. Efficiency. A good society is highly and almost miraculously productive.
13. Land animals - that which consumes the production. Second generation complexity.
14. Mankind - the production of leadership
15. The image of God - reproduction of the original leader.
16. Have dominion, Rule over - transfer of leadership in a given domain. Servant leadership.
17. Allocation of resources - green plants to animals, fruit trees to mankind.
18. Eve - complementary leadership team.
19. The Garden - a pilot project.
20. Work - allocation of tasks. Dignity of work as a fundamental part of the social order.
21. In the cool of the day - God meets with the leaders to check on progress.
22. The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil - testing the quality of the leadership.
23. The Curse - impartial enforcement of rules.
24. The cherubim - setting boundaries on failure.

Thus government and politics is not just about having a correct philosophy or constitution but also involves being able to set boundaries, create production and create high-quality leaders. The ability to wisely and practically implement one's agenda is as important as having a manifesto.

The Creation mandate

- Mankind as God's vice-regent
- Fruitful _____
- Multiply _____
- Have dominion _____

Dominion, rulership and stewardship,

- Mashal - to rule over
- Servant leadership
- Stewardship of Creation (including humans) as the basic task of government.

Ancient concepts of leadership and society (Genesis 4 & 5)

- Patriarchy
- Polygamy - male headship
- Lamech - rule by fear
- Tubal-Cain - hereditary guilds of artisans
- Jabal - nomadic agricultural life
- Enoch - city life
- Abel & Seth - stable agricultural life

Pre-flood politics (Genesis 6)

- Demonic, blurring of spiritual boundaries
- Violent
- Led by giants and "mighty men"
- Lawless
- Politics of "might is right"
- The worship of the powerful and how it is politically destructive.
- Application: Gang politics, drug lords, out of control military, piracy.

The Tribe

- The patriarchal tribe emerged as the dominant social unit.
- Political loyalty was based solely on family ties.
- Power was based on age and assets.
- Ideology was not a main factor in politics.
- Politics was the process of extending the influence of one's tribe.
- Principled institutions (such as a Supreme Court) cannot operate effectively where conflicting and powerful tribal loyalties dominate.
- Application to Afghanistan, Iraq and the Philippines.
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- **Urban-Rural Tensions - see article**

Noah - the prophetic politician

When to "flee the wrath to come" - retreat from society vs. participation

Violence and society "might is right"

Occult invasion of society (Genesis 6)

The curse on Canaan as justification for genocide.

Noah cursed Canaan but Joshua obliterated the Canaanites on religious grounds

Is religious genocide acceptable for Christians?

How should we interpret OT examples?

The tower of Babel, political unity and disunity.

Strength in unity

Hubris - political over-reach and pride

God and human affairs

Communication skills

Building peace across ethnic and cultural differences

Joseph and Egypt.

Authority is a gift

Personal political destiny

Christians in high administrative posts

Compromises

Divination and politics

Wisdom from the spiritual realm

Practical outworking

Pharaoh, divine rulers, the complexities of national government.

When rulers claim to be a god - Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Caesar etc

God's sovereignty over rulers - Daniel 5

National government vs. tribal government