



God in Politics

Bible Study Part One

Creation and Stewardship

'Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.' **Genesis 1:26,27**

What does the Bible say about politics? In one sense, very little. There's no advice on good transport policy, no prescription as to whether health care should be provided by the State or the market, no suggestion about the best way to set interest rates...

But politics has been defined as the 'art of living together in community' and this is precisely what the Bible is about; what it means to be God's people living in God's world. Scripture sets out His vision for creation – and those inhabiting it.

For our first study we need look no further than Genesis 1 to discover that God's 'creation mandate' requires us to get involved with the world around us and exercise authority over all He has made. This has many implications for the practicalities of politics today.

- **Humans, male and female, are created in the image of God**

We are made in the very image of our mighty Creator – bearing the family likeness. We represent the pinnacle of God's creation. It is not our insignificant size that determines our status but our relationship with Him. Human dignity is conferred on us by God, no matter what value society places on us – regardless of our age, health or abilities.

Read Psalm 139 which offers a wonderful insight of God's love and care for us.

- **Humans are given dominion over every living creature.**

Read Psalm 8 - a wonderful declaration of God's glory.

It describes humankind as 'only a little lower than God' with the responsibility for care-taking the whole world. Man and woman are created to be God's *representatives*, His stewards over all creation. He delegates to us the role of dominion that is, in the first place, His own. God's creation is ordered and we are placed at the head of that order as stewards, to look after it. Piece by piece He brought everything into being and declared that each individual part of creation and the way it all works together, is good.

From the beginning, government and order were important aspects of God's world. Even after the Fall, and the coming of sin into the world, creation remained 'good' even though it was now marred. So it should be respected and looked after as such.



Discussion and questions

Every culture organises itself around an understanding of what it means to be human. Our entire society is based on assumptions about who we are, why we're here and what we're supposed to be doing. Consider the views of philosopher Peter Singer. He believes that chimpanzees share some of the 'morally relevant characteristics' of adult humans – self-consciousness, communication, etc – unlike newborn babies. Therefore, he reasons, chimps have a claim on the notion of 'personhood' which very young children do not.

- ❓ **What does Genesis: 1 say about what being human means?**
- ❓ **How does this differ from widely held secular views?**
- ❓ **What are the practical implications for society?**

The command to fill and subdue the earth has been called the 'Cultural Commission' – a decree that goes beyond personal conversion and requires us to develop an entire worldview. This faith encompasses all parts of life and every aspect of the world. We are all called to participate in the task of stewardship.

- ❓ **If we are given stewardship over God's earth, how does this shape our attitude towards the world around us?**
- ❓ **How can we apply this to environmental issues?**
- ❓ **What about the political sphere?**

Politics and the exercise of political authority in our world is an extension of God's stewardship mandate – but with authority comes accountability.

Do you know who your MP is? Could you commit yourself to follow what he or she does in Parliament and the constituency? Try to find out whether he or she has represented your constituency well?



Prayer

'I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.' **1 Timothy 2:1-4**

The Bible clearly tells us to pray for those in authority. Spend some time doing that now, before you close.