

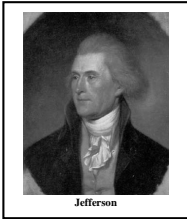
The Divine Ordination of State Criminals and Legalized Crime (Part 1)

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*
May 25, 2005

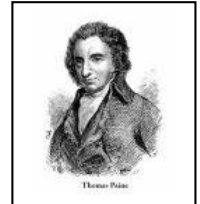
This column is the first segment of a two-part series dealing with the divine ordination of evil state rulers and state crimes.

Just what does divine appointment imply about public policy, particularly proactive varieties? Are rulers (or states) generally good men (or institutions) simply because they are *ordained* by God? How can a God-ordained institution persist in legalizing crime and legitimizing the criminal behavior of rulers?

Thomas Jefferson candidly observed, “Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the forms of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question.”



In *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine agreed: “...could we take off the dark covering of antiquity [pertaining to the origin of kings and of the State] and trace them to their first rise, we should find the first of them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang; whose savage manners or pre-eminence and subtlety obtained him the title of chief



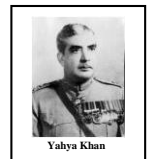
among plunderers; and who by increasing in power and extending his depredations, overawed the quiet and defenseless to purchase their safety by frequent contributions.” Likewise, Sigmund Freud (cited by Albert J. Nock in *Our Enemy, the State*) observed: “Taking the State wherever found, striking into its history at any point, one sees no way to differentiate the activities of its founders, administrators and beneficiaries from those of a professional-criminal class.” History teaches us that rulers and states everywhere have typically advocated evil policies and have behaved in ways that would be categorized as criminal if done in the private sector.

Although states *can* (and often do) legalize crime, God does not sanction such policy. For example, abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, sodomite unions, marriage licensing, divorce (for reasons other than adultery or abandonment), family control rules (e.g., prohibitions against spanking, truancy “laws”), public (pagan) education, affirmative action, taxation (legalized theft) of non-privileged earnings, farm and other subsidies (financed by extortion), welfare and other relief that requires the looting of one person in order to benefit another (e.g., Social Security, food stamps, Pell grants, etc.), and aggressive warfare (murder) are immoral policies but are still legal—and even endorsed by the state. Yet God condemns them in His word.

From before the time of Christ, nearly every state has promulgated such evil policies. And the variety of evil policies is growing. Given this well-established fact, how should we understand the Bible’s teaching that states are “ordained” or “appointed” by God (Romans 13:1)? Divine ordination simply indicates that Providence directs all things. As historic Baptist and Presbyterian confessions of faith declare: “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass.”¹ Surely, the Apostle Paul did *not* purport that all particular states then (and ever since) have been characteristically good or good for society. History evinces the opposite.

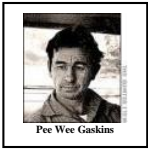


Consider state rulers of the last century alone—mega-murderers—such as Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek (China), Josef Stalin (U.S.S.R.), Adolf Hitler (Germany), Pol Pot (Cambodia), U Ne Win (Burma), Tito (Yugoslavia), Yahya Khan (Pakistan), Tojo Hideki (Japan), Atatürk (Turkey), and Idi Amin (Uganda).



¹ The third article of the 1689 (Second) *Baptist Confession of Faith* says: “God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things, whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin nor hath fellowship with any therein; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor yet is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established; in which appears his wisdom in disposing all things, and power and faithfulness in accomplishing his decree.” The third article of the 1644 (First) *Baptist Confession of Faith* says: “That God has decreed in Himself from everlasting touching all things, effectually to work and dispose them according to the counsel of His own will, to the glory of His name; in which decree appears His wisdom, constancy, truth, and faithfulness.” The third article of the 1649 *Westminster Confession of Faith* says: “God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.”

One might also note prolific (private sector) serial killers such as David Berkowitz (the “Son of Sam”), Ted Bundy, John Wayne Gacy, and Pee Wee Gaskins of the United States; Moses Sithole and Norman Afzal Simons of South Africa; Bruno Ludke of Germany; Javed Iqbal of Pakistan; Luis Alfredo Gavarito and Pedro Alonso Lopez of Columbia; Andrei Chikatilo of Russia; Anatoly Onoprienko of the Ukraine; Bela Kiss of Hungary; Arnfinn Nesset of Norway. We live in an “evil age” (Galatians 1:4). So much bloodshed brings to mind the solemn words of Scripture: “For man also does not know his time: like fish taken in a cruel net, like birds caught in a snare, so the sons of men are snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them” (Ecclesiastes 9:12). At least in terms of raw numbers, states have far and away been the leading “cruel nets” and “snares” that men have had to face, far and away exceeding the evil of all serial killers combined.



In the case of states, God has ordained evil men to rule to accomplish His purposes in the world. Divine appointment or ordination includes that which is evil and nefarious. Many will no doubt be shocked by the Bible’s plain, clear doctrine: the fact that God ordains all things does not necessarily mean that all the things that God ordains are *good*. For instance, Satan, the demons, various false religions, genocidal rulers, and prolific serial killers were all ordained by God yet clearly none of them were good. Clearly, divine ordination does not necessarily imply even a tendency toward institutional goodness in the state. Indeed, God ordains the state in the same sense that He ordains the devil himself.

The Divine Ordination of State Criminals and Legalized Crime (Part 2)

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*
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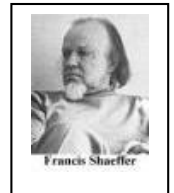
This column is the second segment of a two-part series dealing with the divine ordination of evil state rulers and state crimes.

May a state legalize crime or actions that God says are wicked? Does God give the state permission to break His laws by virtue of the fact that it is the appointed civil authority—elected or otherwise?

As I have documented in *Bible and Government: Public Policy from a Christian Perspective* (Alertness Books, 2003), the insidious nature of the state with its public policies is manifest in over 90% of the occurrences of the motif in the Bible (outside of the Old Testament theocracy). The Apostles lived under Nero, who was certainly one of the most evil rulers in history, along with local draconian rulers like Herod. They had no delusions about the nature of the state which often persecuted them.

Moreover, since the closing of the canon, the menacing nature of public policy and states has continued to be manifest. As the Bible instructs us: “If you see the oppression of the poor, and the violent perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them” (Ecclesiastes 5:8).

Building upon the argument in my recent columns dealing with “Christians and Self-defense against Criminals—Including the State,” I concur with the premises of Dr. Francis Schaeffer in *A Christian Manifesto* and those of the Christian Founding Fathers: Christians may oppose the state when it decrees evil public policies, either passively or actively, even to the point of armed resistance under the right circumstances. Both Tory doctrine and the neo-orthodox pietism of Dietrich Bonhoeffer are wrong. The biblical premise of Operation Rescue may rightly be applied to us today: “If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small. Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, ‘Surely we did not know this,’ Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds? (Proverbs 24:10-12).

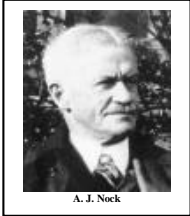


Who defines criminal behavior? The state may have its definition, but God’s definition differs. Nero tormented the Christians (whom he considered to be criminals), Hitler eradicated Jews, Stalin obliterated Kulaks, Turks annihilated Armenians, and Lincoln ravaged and castigated “rebel” southerners, for

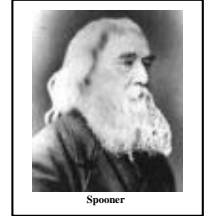
their “crimes”. In the mind of God, all of these “ordained” rulers were criminals while their victims, by and large, were not.

And what should we think of those American leaders who brought down liberty and replaced it with tyranny by means of oppression? Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were among the greatest American criminals. Lincoln was responsible for slaughtering hundreds of thousands of Americans. Roosevelt legalized wholesale plunder and redistributive theft. Would their assassins be considered criminals in the eyes of the state as well as the eyes of God? Would killing them be any less just than killing a robber in your home? Why should rulers enjoy amnesty (as heads of state) unlike other criminals?

Yes, evil rulers are ordained by God. But that fact does not mean that they are “good” for society.



They are exalted criminals with immunity, what Albert J. Nock called “most dreadful swine”; a cohort that Lysander Spooner referred to as “open robbers and murderers”. No surprise that rulers love the reshaped divine right of kings doctrine promoted by Evangelical Tories then and now. Only within the mechanism of the state can a man legally be a thug without reprisal or public shame. Yet God ordains such thugs: “to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom



of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Daniel 4:17).

In a very real sense, ruling a state is a low, sneaking business. God often appoints “the basest of men”, particularly unprivileged in character, to rule. Historically and biblically speaking, it is evident that divine ordination has only rarely led to godliness among rulers since the Babylonian Empire. Indeed, the opposite seems to be true: God ordains wicked men—knowing that they will do evil—to rule this world. Yet God uses such rulers to accomplish His temporal purposes: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes” (Proverbs 21:1)—even mega-murderers.

God’s temporal purposes seem to primarily accomplish two objectives: (1) the sanctification of His beloved church and/or (2) the terrestrial judgment of the hated workers of iniquity that anger Him (Psalms 2:1-5; 5:5, 7; 7:11). In this sense the state serves a nonrandom purpose. God certainly knows the futile thoughts and plans of the wicked (Psalm 94:11) and can turn them to work for His appointed designs according to His “determinate counsel” (Acts 2:23). “He catches the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them” (Job 5:13). Nevertheless, a state *may not* legalize crime or actions that God says are wicked. Such legalization would be immoral and would reflect the evil nature of the state. God does not give the state *permission* to break His laws by virtue of its divine appointment as the civil authority—elected or otherwise—even though it routinely does so.

Many are appalled when they read statistics about how many members of Congress have been convicted of crimes like assault, fraud, shoplifting, or who have gone bankrupt (or have very bad credit), or otherwise have been of low character. But such is far more the rule for states and rulers than the exception. And no one who knows anything about history, economics, or the Bible should be surprised by the criminal behavior of rulers.