Faith for All of Life
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FAITH FOR ALL OF LIFE

PROCLAIMING THE AUTHORITY OF GOD'S WORD OVER EVERY AREA OF LIFE AND THOUGHT

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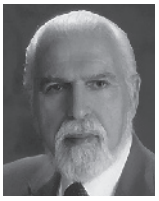
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Our Desperate Need for Zechariah

By R. J. Rushdoony

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Next to Isaiah, the messianic prophecies of Zechariah are the most important in the Old Testament. Zechariah began his prophetic work in November 520 B.C, and verses Zechariah 1:1–6 are dated at that time. Verses 7–17 are dated February 519 B.C.—four months later. The locale is Jerusalem.

It was a time of very great discouragement. The captivity had come. Israel and Judah had been taken captive and scattered. Seventy years of captivity had ended and the hoped-for restoration, the rebuilding, was a very feeble thing. Only a handful returned to Jerusalem and Judea, and this handful had to survey the ruins of a big city with rubble that was impossible to penetrate. It was seventy years before that rubble was cleared and the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt.

They had begun, under the urging of the prophet Haggai, to rebuild the temple. When Zechariah spoke, the temple was partially rebuilt. But the very work of reconstruction was fearfully discouraging so that many wept as they surveyed it. They saw all around them a world of evil triumphant, self-satisfied, and at rest. They saw their feeble efforts at reconstruction, which to them seemed so pitiful, as against the enormity of unbelief, and their reaction was one of despair.

Be Not Unbelieving

The first temple of Solomon had been a great edifice, one of the wonders of the world. The second temple was a very poor building. By comparison it was pathetic. Thus, as they began the task of reconstruction, it seemed that the future had little to offer them. In the face of this Zechariah spoke and in the first six verses reminded them: "God was very angry with your forefathers because of their apostasy." Again and again God spoke to their forefathers, "Return unto me and I will return unto you." But they would not. So His judgment overwhelmed them.

"God has given us a calling and a responsibility. What we cannot do, God does not ask us to do. What we can do, God requires us to do. It is His purpose, His ordination, that evil shall not prevail. The kingdoms of this earth are not ordained to become the dominions of the powers of darkness."

Now, God says through Zechariah, "Be not as your fathers were, unbelieving."

These were the men who had returned to Jerusalem by faith and who were engaged in the task of reconstruction. But in that task of reconstruction they were falling into the danger of walking by sight rather than by faith. They saw the immensity of evil and the feebleness of their efforts; it seemed almost futile to lay another brick. And so God said, "Be not as your fathers were, unbelieving. Did not the word that I spoke unto them overtake them?" It is rendered: [Did not the word that I spoke] "take hold of your fathers?" (v. 6) This can also and better be translated, "overtake them."

God's Word is either obeyed and becomes the ground of our living, or it overtakes us in judgment.

"Your fathers," God said to them through Zechariah, "where are they? And the prophets who spoke unto your fathers, where are they? But my words stand."

So the first message of Zechariah to the people was: "Be not unbelieving. As you begin your task of reconstruction, do not look at appearances, but look at this that you do, that it is done in the name of God. And His Word is the Word that is come true again and again and His power is unchanged still."

Christ In The Midst

Then four months later came the vision of a man sitting on a red horse. "[A]nd he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white" (v. 8).

Immediately the man on the red horse is identified as an angel. Then

He is identified as the angel of Jehovah or the angel of the Lord, so that we are brought to the recognition that this rider is Jesus Christ, God the Son. Over and over again God the Son is spoken of in the Old Testament as the angel of the Lord. We meet Him, first, in Genesis 16:7, again in Genesis 22:11 and repeatedly throughout the Old Testament. And we find Him clearly identified as God the Son.

In the vision we see the discussion between God the Son and God the Father. God the Son speaking in behalf of His people, the church; and God the Son reassuring Him concerning those things which must surely come to pass.

Christ is presented as in the midst of the myrtle trees. And the myrtle trees, an ancient symbol of joy, peace, and purity, were also a symbol of the true church of God. The trees are portrayed as being in the bottom, or in the depths, so that we have a symbolic presentation of the church in the depths, the church in difficulty, the church insignificant in the sight of the world. Yet, Christ is in the midst of the church; and the whole world is portrayed as sitting still and at rest, satisfied that it is in control and has power.

"So the angel that communed with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy" (v. 14). Thus the Word of the Lord is given to Zechariah, a promise concerning Jerusalem and the true church of God: "[M]y house shall be built" (v. 16), i.e, "This temple which you are now building and that is barely underway and seems so feeble an enterprise, it shall be built." *Second*, "a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem" (v. 16), i.e., Jerusalem shall be fenced in and defended, it shall become a walled city. *Third*, "My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad" (v. 17). *Fourth*, and finally, "the LORD shall yet comfort Zion" (v. 17).

All four promises were fulfilled. The second temple was built. Seventy years later, under Nehemiah, Jerusalem was walled. Then the cities through prosperity spread abroad throughout Judea and Galilee. And then, finally, the final promise, the comfort of Zion, Jesus Christ came: He who was spoken of, of old, as the consolation or the comfort of Israel.

Thus, God speaking to a church that was in the bottom, in the depths, gave them His word that "history is in My hands. And the future is determined not in terms of these who are in power, but in terms of Myself, Who am in the midst of the church. And My power is unchanged still."

This is the prophecy of Zechariah. It is a prophecy not only concerning Jerusalem, but concerning the church today; a prophecy that is not a finished word because it had its first fulfillment in Jerusalem. It has its fulfillment now in terms of the church. Why? Because the church is, again, in the depths while the whole world seems to lie at ease, satisfied that it is in power and that history is in the hands of men, not in the hands of God, so that their only question is, which group of *men* will determine the future?

But Christ, through Zechariah, tells us that He is in the midst of His church—His true church, not the visible church, not the outward church, but the church that is the true church, those who are inwardly of Him—He is in their midst. The future is not determined in terms of Moscow, nor of Washington, nor of New York and the UN, nor by London, Paris, Berlin or any other world center. The future is governed and determined by God the Sovereign One, the triune God, by God the Son who stands in the midst of His church. "[W]here two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst" (Matt. 18:20), so that the center of history, the heart of the future, is here in our midst. Wherever any are gathered together in the name of Jesus Christ—whether formally or informally, in every home where Christ is truly worshipped—there He is, and the future of history is determined in terms of every such person, every such group: for they are members of the body of Christ and Christ is in their midst. In terms of them, the future shall be determined.

The Center of History

When our Lord took His leave of His disciples He said to them, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18), and, "[L]o, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the [earth, the end of the] world [to the end of the age]" (Matt. 28:20). Our Lord told His disciples that all power, all authority, all dominion were given unto Him. He repeated the promise given through Zechariah that He stands in the midst of the myrtle trees in terms of the true church, which is often in the depths from the perspective of men, but stands, in reality, at the center of history because the Lord governs through His church and in terms of it.

Therefore, when we look at the future we must walk by faith. We must not look at our efforts and their feebleness as we begin the task of Christian reconstruction. We must look at the reality of God's promise that He is with us always and that all power and all dominion are in His hands. Therefore, the future of the world is determined in terms of Christ in the midst of His church.

2. Therefore will not we fear,

though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

7. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. (**Ps. 46:2–3,** 7)

Between Two Evils

Meanwhile, two great evils have characterized human activities in culture after culture, plaguing us even in the church: *activism* and *quietism*.

There is a kind of activism that feels responsibility for the entire world. Such activists feel that anything that occurs anywhere in the world is their responsibility and they must do something about it. If there is a problem in Africa or in Asia, they must be concerned, they must act. So, little by little, the activist feels a world responsibility which makes him, in his own thinking, comparable to God. If he relaxes at all in his vigilance somehow the world is going to fall apart. So upon himself and other likeminded activists the mantle of God, as it were, is assumed to have fallen and the world will not function if they do not keep up their perpetual concern, their perpetual activism. Such activism is, of course, playing at being God. It is wrong and it is foolish.

On the other hand, there is a great deal of quietism that has, over and over again, possessed men. Men, playing God with their activism, become disillusioned and turn, on the other hand, to a total unconcern about the world. They deny that they have any responsibility except to concern themselves about their own souls. With quietism often comes mysticism, one of the great evils that has plagued human history. With the mystic the concern is not with the material world, not with other people, not even with himself, but total withdrawal from all things and seeking absorption, disillusionment, and dissolution into the absolute, into the universe—a dissolution into the universe and a disillusionment with the world. Quietism is a great evil, and basic to every quietism there is also a fearful pride. Even as the activist assumes himself to be a god, so the quietist says, "I will be one with the ultimate power of the universe." He identifies himself with God whom he defines as being unconcerned with the universe.

Between quietism and activism, what course should the people of God take?

For Every Oppressor, a Destroyer

Zechariah had an answer to this question in a revelation from God that he describes in the concluding verses of the first chapter. Zechariah was speaking to a handful of Israelites who had returned from captivity. For seventy years the land had been idle. What once had been a flourishing country of many cities, a great deal of industry, vineyards and orchards, was now a wasteland. The trees had taken over the farms. Wild animals roamed where once people had dwelt, and animals that had disappeared centuries earlier again took over the land.

Into this situation, a handful of people came, some 40,000. The task of reconstruction seemed to be hopeless. Jerusalem was a heap of ruins, impenetrable by horseback. They had begun their task of reconstruction with the rebuilding of the second temple. This temple was so insignificant compared to the temple of Solomon that they were deeply discouraged.

In addition to the problem directly in front of them, they felt threatened by the people around them as they began to rebuild. Their ancient enemies by no means wanted to see Israel restored and its kingdom reestablished. So as the Israelites turned from one side to the other, they saw only hostility. The Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Samaritans were to the north, the Egyptians to the south, the Philistines on the west, and the Ammonites and Moabites on the east. *Israel was totally encircled by enemies*. They were a handful, some 40,000, *against millions*. When they realized how overwhelming a task they faced, they were filled with despair.

And to them came the vision through Zechariah: "Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns" (v. 18). Here we deal with symbolism that was once familiar to everyone. Throughout most of history, until fairly recent times, it was no problem for anyone to understand the meaning of horns. They signified power, authority, dominion, majesty, and might. Many an ancient crown was characterized by horns. The Persian Empire, during its period of greatness, had two horns on the crown of the emperor.

We meet the symbol of horns from one end of Scripture to the other. For example, we read when Hannah—rejoicing because God had given her the gift of Samuel, the son for whom she had prayed so long—sang her beautiful song (which was echoed centuries later by the virgin Mary) and said, "[M]ine horn is exalted in the LORD" (1 Sam. 2:1).

In Psalm 89 we read:

17. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.

18. For the LORD is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.

22. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.

23. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.

24. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. (Psalm 89:17-18, 22-24)

The symbolism of the horn occurs throughout the Bible and countless times in the world at large. Everyone understood its meaning.

Zechariah spoke of four horns, and then spelled out, "these are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" (v. 19), i.e., "Here are the powers of the ungodly world round about you. These are they that have scattered you and broken you. These are the enemies that surround you. Indeed, you are surrounded by power. You, a small handful of 40,000."

"And the LORD shewed me four carpenters" (v. 20). The word that is translated "carpenters" has a more general meaning in the Hebrew. It can also be rendered as "smith" because it means not only a worker in wood, but also a worker in stone or in iron.

"Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it" (v. 21).

The meaning was immediately apparent to every Israelite. Here were four smiths coming who could dehorn every horn, who had the power to do it, so that even as Israel had been surrounded by oppressors, by the providence of God, destroyers for these oppressors had been raised up so that *for every oppressor there is a destroyer*.

Age after age, history testifies to this, and the Scripture gives us abundant evidence of it. When Israel was oppressed in Egypt, God, using the forces of nature, destroyed Egypt. When they entered into the Promised Land, He used the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites. Age after age when they were threatened by enemies, God raised up someone to destroy the enemies. God raised up the oppressor, Assyria, and then destroyed Assyria with Babylon. Then Babylon was destroyed by the Medo-Persian Empire. And the Medes and Persians were destroyed by Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great was destroyed by other powers so that in every age, every oppressor found that there was a destroyer for him.

So God said to this handful of 40,000 who were feeling hopeless as they faced the task of reconstruction, "The powers are around you but God has already appointed the destroyers. Have no fear. Your task, therefore, awaits you."

This, then, is the meaning of this vision. God declares that for every oppressor there is a destroyer, so that in every situation we can face our problems, our adversaries, in this confidence: that God has, from all eternity, ordained the means of their destruction.

God's Destroyers Free His People to Build

Today those who represent the cause of Christ are a handful. Virtually every church the length and breadth of this country and around the world is given over to evil, is given over to the powers of darkness, so that we face a monstrous evil everywhere in the church and power is in their hands. They are among the horns that oppress us. As we look at the governments of the world, we see them almost uniformly given over to socialism, to communism, to welfarism, to every kind of evil. As we look at education we see, again, the schools in the hands of evil. On all sides we see the horns of the enemy. We see power in his hands.

By comparison, we who have dedicated ourselves to the task of reconstruction seem small and impotent, just like those 40,000 returning captives. All that we represent and all that we hope to do can be snuffed out by powerful enemies in a mere moment. But God says to us, "For every oppressor there is an appointed destroyer," so that our task is reconstruction. God has given us a calling and a responsibility. What we cannot do, God does not ask us to do. What we can do, God requires us to do. It is His purpose, His ordination, that evil shall not prevail. The kingdoms of this earth are not ordained to become the dominions of the powers of darkness.

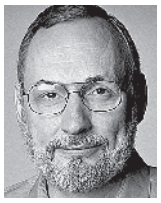
The Lord's Prayer concludes with a sentence that is not only our prayer, but it must be *an article of faith*. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matt. 6:13). This we must believe. If we doubt it, we are doubting God. If we surrender the world into the hands of evil men because we do not believe that God is able to destroy them, we are doubting God. *We are then denying Him*. So, this *must* be an article of faith: *For thine is the kingdom!* We must continually stand in terms of this.

The task of reconstruction before us is our responsibility. That which we can do, we *must* do with all our might. And day by day as we approach God in prayer, it must be an article of faith with us when we declare, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matt. 6:13).

Do you believe this? Then you must live in terms of it.

Conflict

Dr. Phillip G. Kayser



Conflict is inevitable. The question is not conflict or no conflict, but "Am I handling conflict in a Biblical way?" One book on conflict resolution states,

> The comment that frightens me most as a consultant on conflict and cooperation is the declaration, "I've been at this church for more than twenty years and we never have conflict." It frightens me because my experience tells me that either this congregation has not done anything for twenty years, or it has failed to admit those instances where conflict has in fact existed.[1]

Another author said,

> Conflict occurs most often in congregations in which there is a deep commitment to the church, the more deeply ingrained is the sense of ownership about what is happening, the more possible the conflict. *Apathy* is a sure guarantee of a conflict-free setting. Persons who do not care about their faith are unlikely to exhibit enough energy to act upon it. Corpses do not fight![2]

The author is not saying that we want to have conflict, or that you are God's gift for bringing conflict. He is observing that apathy is not a good alternative to conflict.

Paul had his share of conflict during his years of service, and I want to look at his seasoned instructions in 2 Cor. 7:1–12 to see how we can deal with conflict, serious or minor. Let's walk through the crucial lessons in this text step by step.

Personal Humility Before the Law

First, in v.1, Paul modeled humility before the law of God and a readiness to apply the gospel to his own life. Paul says, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let *us* cleanse *ourselves* from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Paul included *himself* in that admonition because the easiest way to become a Pharisee in our dealings with others is to fail to start with our own sins first.

This is true even if we are only five percent at fault and the other person is ninety-five percent at fault. Christ said that we must take the beam out of our own eye first, not so that we can ignore the pain in our brother's eye, but so that we can see clearly to take it out.

Specks hurt, and brothers need this kind of intervention that Paul engaged in. But the reason it is so important to look at our own sinfulness first is that we are much more likely to be tender, merciful, and gentle with our brothers who are in sin when we know personally both the work of the law and the work of God's grace. We are also much more likely to be listened to. If we have come across as Pharisees in the past, it is going to be very hard for someone to interpret our current intervention as an expression of love. So, before Paul brings any rebuke to those involved in division, he reveals a heart that is open and ready to hear God's law-word, a heart that is secure in God's grace.

Second, be committed to openness and call for it. Verse 2 says, "*Open your hearts to us*" (cf. v. 6:11). Paul realized that he was being shut down, so he moves to reopen communication.

The first temptation when we're having strong disagreements with each other is to avoid one another, to permit barriers to go up between us. You may be polite and act as if nothing is wrong, yet you won't trust the other person enough to be transparent.

In Paul's epistle, we see that the hurts went both ways. We'll see in a moment that Paul had brought pain into their lives, pain that provoked them to erect barriers against him. But before we examine that aspect, let's look at how Paul handled their wrongful hurts *toward him*.

Paul had been hurt by this congregation over and over again. In chapter 10 he quotes the congregation's stated opinion of him: "*his bodily presence is weak, and his speech is contemptible*" (2 Cor. 10:10). How would you like it if someone talked about you like that? In chapter 11 he was called inferior. He was not paid a salary by them although he deserved it.

In that same chapter they falsely claimed that he did not love them (2 Cor. 11:11). It was actually love that motivated Paul to rebuke them, but they said that he didn't love them. The false apostles had convinced the people that Paul was a fool (11:16). If you read through this epistle you immediately see that Paul had been badly hurt. Concerning this conflict Paul said, "*Outside were conflicts, inside were fears*" (7:5). The most natural thing for Paul to do would be to protect himself by have nothing more to do with the Corinthians.

But rather than pushing such people

off, Paul wanted to maintain open lines of communication. In 2 Cor. 6:11, Paul said, "*O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us*."

This is the hardest step in managing conflict: getting people who have cut themselves off from each other to be willing to be vulnerable and open again—husbands with wives, members with other members, etc. We are *not* talking about merely being civil to one another. *People who are alienated can still be civil and smile and be pleasant to each other*. But *genuine* reconciliation requires that we be willing to have hearts opened. And that's hard.

Opening our hearts involves *acceptance* of the person, *deeper communication* with the person, *love* for the person and *tactful honesty* (about our own failings and theirs). Acceptance does not mean you have to agree. You can accept a person and be committed to him without believing that he is right on the issue that has alienated you. Paul in this epistle continues to work on issues he was not able to resolve in the previous letter, but it is also clear that he accepts the Corinthians in the Lord.

Face the Pain

Third, be willing to face pain. Why are people reluctant to open up? Why had the Corinthians closed off their affections toward Paul? The reason is that the moment you open your heart to someone, you become vulnerable once more and can get hurt all over again.

It is possible to avoid hurts by not getting married, but you will also miss the blessings of marriage. You can avoid hurts by not making friends and by becoming a loner, but you will also be the poorer for it. The best things in life require that you take the risk of getting hurt from time to time. The truth that Paul spoke *hurt*, and these people didn't like that. So the third principle is this: *we must be willing to face pain and betrayal*.

It is not enough for you to be right on an issue. Paul was right, but because he knew the truth hurts, and hurt tends to make people clam up and shut their hearts up, he pursued them with love. He didn't just hit them with truth; he pursued them with love. He did what he could to make open relationships. That should be the goal when resolving church conflicts: not winning an argument, but bringing people to where they are even *more open* with each other, even *closer* to each other, than they were before the conflict.

The fourth principle is this: Do not have a false humility if you are clear of guilt in the situation. In the second sentence in v. 2 Paul says, "*We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have defrauded no one*." He admits later that he had brought them pain. There was absolutely no question about that. But Paul wants them to realize that the pain was not due to Paul's sin. The pain was the truth *exposing* their sin.

This gets us back to the flip side of v. 1. We've already seen that to avoid Pharisaism we must be open and honest about our own sinfulness. But the opposite extreme must also be avoided. We ought not solve conflicts by admitting fault when we are not at fault, which involves lying to maintain peace, and we must not downplay the other person's sin.

G. K. Chesterton once wrote about a man who "was so anxious to forgive that he denied the need of forgiveness." Do you understand what he was saying? When people would sin against that man, he would downplay the seriousness of what they had done because he didn't want to ruffle feathers or make them feel badly.

Unfortunately for some people, this is the only technique they know to resolve a fight—by admitting that they were partly to blame, even when that was not true. That strategy doesn't solve the issues. In fact, it reinforces the sinner in his rebellion and pride.

I have known people who absolutely refused to make a confession of guilt until the other party accepted some blame. They would then dismiss the matter as an example of how all of us are sinners and make mistakes. If you are so proud that you will not humble yourself by confession unless you are also able to throw a stone, you need to repent of that. Such attitudes make genuine conflict resolution impossible.

On the other hand, if you are always making peace by admitting blame when there really is no fault on your part, you become an enabler of the other person's prideful ways. This is the *world's* way of dealing with tough conflicts, those that you can't walk away from. For example, you might reject divorce as an option for marital conflict, so you retreat into a false humility and take the blame upon yourself, which is inherently dishonest.

Positive Communication

The fifth principle is absolutely critical: the need always to communicate a positive attitude (vv. 3–4, 7, 9, 12–16). Proverbs says that a harsh answer stirs up strife. You might be in the right, but when you use harshness, it simply intensifies the conflict. *Harshness is going to make things worse*. Again, being right in a conflict does not guarantee that you have God's blessing or that what you are doing will benefit the other person. The following four points all help in maintaining this positive attitude.

Verse 3 says, "*I do not say this to condemn*." Paul's goal was not to hurt them or to get even. In chapter 3 Paul contrasted a ministry of condemnation with a ministry of life. Both ministries

pointed out sin, but the ministry of condemnation was only concerned about the law and did not care about the person. The ministry of the Spirit is concerned about the restoration of the people as well.

Paul said, "*the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life*" (3:6). He didn't just use the law to bring conviction and prove that he was right. It is easy to use the Word like a club, but Paul was interested in far more than just winning an argument. Paul wanted to win the person. Paul was opening the wound (which inflicted pain) so that he could pour in the medicine of grace. So he assures them, in effect, *I'm not writing this because I'm against you; I'm here because I'm on your side!*

The next phrase continues this positive attitude by expressing confidence in the relationship. Verse 3 says, "*For I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf.*" Some have translated this as "*I have great confidence in you*" (NIV). Don't give up on your Christian relationships. Paul would not give up on the Corinthians. You have every reason to have the same confidence when dealing with believers in *your* congregation. They are loved by God, indwelt by the Spirit, set apart to be conformed to Christ, and endowed with God's promise that He would finish the good work that He has begun.

Once you are armed with the confidence of what God's grace can achieve, you will begin depending upon Him rather than acting like it all depends upon you. In fact, if you think it is up to you to change people's hearts, then you are going to be tempted to anger and frustration when people don't change. So, we need confidence as an expression of our faith in God. But we need to maintain a confidence in the relationship so the other person knows that they can be secure in the relationship of love even though they are wrong.

Another way to show a positive attitude is to express faith in the Biblical process. Paul said in v. 4 "I am filled with comfort, I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation." It was not the situation that gave him comfort, but the process that God had put in place. Paul said that God's methods were capable of tearing down strongholds and taking every thought captive. We don't use the means of conciliation that God has given in a cynical way. We must believe in God's process and be committed to it.

Another way that Paul maintained a positive attitude was to deal not only with the past *but with the future*. There is nothing that can be done to change the past and it won't help the conflict to nag about it. Constantly bringing up the past is a sure way to spoil any attempts at bringing reconciliation. *Forget about the past*. Begin working on the problem now, and have hope for the future. Walking in the preceding four principles were constructive ways that Paul embraced to maintain a positive attitude.

The tenth point is that we should be committed to our fellow believers till death parts us. Do struggles happen in marriage? Yes, but you can't just leave your marriage. You are committed. Paul was so committed to unity that he was willing to live or die for the Corinthians.

Be committed to radical unity and appeal for radical unity. And just look at how radical that unity really was: Paul said, "*you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together*." If people are convinced that you are committed to them in the Lord, it makes all the difference in the world. Isn't that what 1 John 3:16 commands us to do in the church? "*By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*."

When you have *that* kind of radical commitment to each other you are less likely to leave in a huff. Many wives and husbands have been tempted to call it quits—but then they remember that they can't. They are committed. And we need to have that commitment to believers. 1 John 3:16 and this passage call us to be *willing to live and die together*.

Options for Resolution

We shouldn't forget that there are *several* options for conflict resolution. Too many Christians default to one or two. Some churches default directly to church discipline while other churches ignore problems that should not be ignored. While it is true that love covers a multitude of sins, there *are* sins that love *must* confront.

The same is true of our conflicts with unbelievers. While either ignoring an unbeliever's sins or taking him to court are options on occasion, the Bible delineates many more options. Because I am restricting my comments to 2 Corinthians 7, I won't cover these in depth, but I list fifteen options below that are available to you for resolving conflicts. Study them and you will come away with a new appreciation for how God's law-word addresses the messiness of life with a *wide variety of options*:

Options for unbelievers

1. Give in (Gen. 26:15–22)
2. Rebuke (Luke 3:19–20; John rebuked Herod)
3. Ignore (Luke 13:31–33)
4. Flee (Matt 10:23; Acts 8:1)
5. Use the law against persecutors (Acts 22:24–26; Tit. 3:13; Zenas the lawyer)
6. Appeal to officers for help (Acts 23:16–24)
7. Appeal to higher court (Acts 25:9–12)

Options for believers

8. Ignore for a time (1 Pet. 4:8)
9. Rebuke (Lev. 19:17; Luke 17:3)
10. Entreat (1 Tim. 5:1–2)
11. Give in (1 Cor. 6:2). Pagan court brings emotional loss, economic loss, and loss of reputation, ministry, friendship.
12. Negotiation (Matt. 18:15)
13. Mediation (Matt. 18:16)
14. Binding arbitration (1 Cor. 6:4–5)
15. Church Court (Matt 18:16–20)

Paul was not a coward, he faced issues squarely (vv. 5–11). Some people are more interested in peace than they are in growth. Their cowardice avoids the issues that really are destroying the relationship in favor of superficial change. If the stakes are too high, they won't try to win the person. If there is too much emotion, they back out. If they get too stressed out, they decide that pursuing the matter simply isn't worth it. So you need to face the issue squarely.

Paul did this in two ways. First of all, *he was not intimidated by the emotionally charged atmosphere*. Being a conflict resolver was not easy for Paul. Verse 5 says, "*For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears*." Paul found conflict very stressful. Yet he did not avoid the conflicts by avoiding the issues that needed to be confronted.

In this chapter Paul shows that *he was not intimidated by the emotions of others*. He knew that the long term results were worth pursuing. In v. 8 he says, "*For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for awhile. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance*." This shows that Paul was more interested in their well-being than in an artificial peace.

Some people will try to intimidate you with their anger or manipulate you with their tears. They do this so that you won't deal with the real issues. If you let them succeed in this, you are failing them. Certainly, Scripture calls us to cover a multitude of sins with love, but it is never loving to allow alienation to persist for weeks at a time.

We shouldn't let things drop prematurely before the issue is completely resolved (vv. 6–11). As you read through 2 Corinthians 7 there are two things that you should keep in mind: First, there is a difference between regret and repentance (vv. 9–10 makes that quite clear). Second, true reconciliation makes all parties completely "clear in this matter" (v. 11).

With premature reconciliation people might feel like there is nothing more to do because they are at least talking to each other, yet a huge rift may still exist between them. If you were only interested in winning the argument, that would be fine. *But Paul wanted to win the people*. And when genuine repentance came about, it was well worth the wait even though it was a long wait and even though Paul regretted it for a while. In v. 11 Paul says, "*For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner; What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter*." Biblical resolutions of conflict seek to bring a *complete clearing* of the matter.

Win People, Not Arguments

The last principle is that Paul sought to win people, not arguments (vv. 7–16). There are three ways he tried to do this:

First, he always communicated affection and caring for those he differed with. He starts this chapter by calling them *beloved* (v. 1). That's another way of saying, 'I love you." He said that his *heart was wide open for them* (6:11). He told them that *he was united to them* in life and in death (7:3). In v. 12 he says **"that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you."** Over and over Paul reminded them that he loved them and cared for them. We would do well to do the same. During times of conflict people might begin to think that we don't care for them because we disagree with them. Constantly communicate this affection.

The second way Paul sought to win people rather than arguments was that he didn't take sides with people; he took sides on issues … and there is a big difference. He wanted the best for all the parties. For example, in v. 12 he says, "*Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you*." He is saying, "I wasn't motivated out of a like for one person and a dislike for the other." No. He genuinely showed concern and caring for those on all sides of the issue. When you have this kind of attitude, you can work out Biblical solutions in many instances.

Acts 15 is an excellent example of this. If all Paul had been interested in was winning an argument, it would have been a clear-cut case of the Circumcision party being wrong, and the Pauline party being right. But because the church was people-oriented rather than merely issue-oriented, a solution was worked out that didn't compromise on Biblical principle yet still (to a point) satisfied all parties.

Secondly, in Acts 15 everyone was allowed to speak. In this well-structured conference, the minority was given a voice so that a compromise could be

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A Critique of Jordan's and North's View of the Head Tax (Part 3 of 3)

By Dr. Robert E. Fugate



In Part 1 of this 3-part series (July-August 2012 *FFAOL*), we learned that God has given us an infallible revelation of His will regarding civil taxation. That revelation is found only in God's written Word, the Bible, which is sufficient to instruct us how to please God in all areas of life ("thoroughly equipped for **every** good work," 2 Tim. 3:17).[1]

The only God-instituted and God-endorsed form of civil tax in Scripture is the head tax (also known as a poll tax or census tax) (Ex. 30:11–16; 38:25f.; 2 Kings 12:4–16 // 2 Chr. 24:4–14; Neh. 10:32f.; Matt. 17:24–27). The Biblical head tax is: (a) a mandatory civil tax; (b) levied upon every male (age twenty and older); (c) paid annually; (d) a fixed, flat fee (not a percentage) that is a low enough amount that every man can afford to pay it. Such limited tax revenue restricts the state to its God-ordained functions. This view of the head tax is based upon R. J. Rushdoony's teaching.[2]

However, James Jordan[3] and Christian Reconstructionist leader Gary North[4] disagree with R. J. Rushdoony's understanding of the head tax as a civil tax. In Part 2 of this three-part series published in the last issue of *FFAOL*, I laid out my initial critique of their position. I resume a Biblical assessment of their rejection of the Biblical civil tax in this final article, with a view to firmly anchoring this crucial concept against well-intended but misguided assaults so that we might finally apply the Word of God rather than continuing to neglect it to our own hurt.

Further Objections Made by Jordan and North

4. Jordan's fourth argument is that the temple tax mentioned in Matthew 17:24–27 was innovative, unbiblical oral tradition that was not directly founded on Exodus 30.[5]

Rebuttal #4

This view was refuted in our previous article where we analyzed this passage. We concluded that Matthew 17:24–27 teaches that Jesus the Messiah is immune from His Father's temple tax because He is God's unique, divine Son (Matt. 17:5). The passage must be understood messianically. In paying the tax He did not owe, Jesus perfectly confirmed and obeyed God's law on behalf of the elect. Consequently, His perfect righteousness could be credited to His people.[6] In light of our previous argumentation, we believe Jordan's statement, "Jesus goes on to say that taxes are a form of tribute levied on conquered foreigners, so that citizens of the kingdom itself are not subject to them,"[7] is inaccurate, and his subsequent discussion is confused.

Jordan's next sentence extends this "principle" of God not taxing His people to "the Old Covenant Tabernacle and Temple." But then, in the following sentence, Jordan backtracks from his "principle," acknowledging that "the Mosaic head tax was, however, a tax levied occasionally on God's own people." This leads Jordan to call members of the old covenant "strangers" and "afar off" from "the kingdom," presumably meaning[8] that they were not citizens of God's Kingdom—a questionable description of those Israelites who were true believers.[9] If these Old Covenant "strangers" were "afar off" from God's Kingdom, then they must have been "strangers" and "afar off" from the church in the Old Testament (contra orthodox Reformed theology). Is the church in the Old Testament a different church from the one in the New Testament? Since Jordan is not a dispensationalist, he surely would answer, "No."[10]

Furthermore, Matthew 17:25f. does not refer at all to "citizens of the kingdom" (Jordan's term), but to God's "sons" (i.e., the royal family).[11] Consequently, applying Jordan's interpretation of Christ's teaching leads to the position that Old Testament believers could not be God's "sons." For simplicity and clarity, let us state this argument syllogistically:

> God does not tax His sons;
>
> God taxed all adult male Israelites with the head tax (Ex. 30);
>
> Therefore, no adult male Israelites were God's sons.

But if no adult male Israelites were God's sons, this implies that Old Testament believers were unregenerate—another unbiblical notion.[12]

Another difficulty with Jordan's line of reasoning is that Jesus is asserting His

already-existing immunity from paying the temple tax during the Old Covenant era. Jordan extends this immunity to Christ's disciples and to all believers—but the new covenant had not yet been inaugurated. (It was inaugurated in Matt. 26:28.) Christ's statement cannot be viewed as merely proleptic (i.e., prophesying future New Covenant realities), since it concerned Peter paying tax at that time.

This leads us to conclude that Jordan's fourth and final line of argumentation also fails. Thus Jordan's conclusion, "The Mosaic head tax cannot be said to have had any explicitly or even implicitly civil function in the Old Covenant,"[13] is manifestly false. If Jordan's analysis of the Mosaic head tax (i.e., that it is not a civil tax, and that it is irrelevant in the New Covenant age[14]) is mistaken, then his conclusion (i.e., "The Bible gives no explicit instruction regarding how the state is to be financed"[15]) is erroneous. Jordan has not cogently refuted R. J. Rushdoony's position that the Exodus 30 head tax was a civil tax.

5. Gary North adds a fifth objection: To allow temple workers to collect civil tax must result in "either an ecclesiocracy or a political tyranny," in which either church or state will rule the other.[16] It could not be otherwise.

Rebuttal #5

First, if God ordained the separation of church and state in the Old Testament,[17] and since God required the regular workers in the temple precincts to be priests or Levites, then following God's instructions does not necessarily result in the blending of church and state.

Second, Scripture indicates the presence of accountants who maintained a carefully-functioning accounting system in the temple.[18] Separate accounts were probably maintained for church and state.[19]

When there was a problem with priests not following through or perhaps misallocating funds, the king took over the responsibility (2 Kings 12:4–16 // 2 Chr. 24:4–14).[20] Even then "joint oversight of the funds deposited in the chest is provided by a royal and priestly official (2 Kings 12:10; 2 Chr. 24:11)."[21]

Third, viewing the Exodus 30 payment as an ecclesiastical atonement rather than a civil tax (North's position) does not necessarily produce a clearly-defined and harmonious working relationship between the separate jurisdictions of church and state, as 2 Kings 12:4–16 // 2 Chronicles 24:4–14 clearly demonstrates.

Additional Issues with the Jordan-North view

The Jordan-North hypothesis that the males paying the ransom in Exodus 30 are the ecclesiastical Israelite army comprised of temporary Nazirite priests is highly questionable. Consider the *prima facie* evidence against their hypothesis. Neither the word "priest" nor the word "Nazirite" is found in Exodus 30. The word "vow" never occurs in Exodus (which is relevant since people temporally became Nazirites through taking a vow). They cite no scholarly documentation to support their view. I have checked numerous reference sources that are the highest-rated scholarly works in their category (e.g., Bible commentaries, Bible encyclopedias/dictionaries, Old Testament theologies, etc.). None of them draws any connection between Nazirites and Exodus 30; neither do any of them refer to the army of Exodus 30 as priests. If this is so obviously the one-and-only possible interpretation of the passage, why do the best academic commentaries[22] not even list it as a view to consider (or even mention it so as to refute it)? Furthermore, to call Nazirites "temporary priests"[23] ignores the many differences between Nazirites and priests (i.e., the logical fallacy of hasty generalization).[24] Yet, North describes their view of an army of temporary Nazirite priests as "central to Jordan's argument and mine."[25] Since they base their entire position on this hypothesis, surely the burden of proof is on them to produce much more scholarly documentation before we adopt their hypothesis.[26]

North describes the payment in Exodus 30 as made to the priests—although the word "priest" never occurs in Exodus 30:11–16.[27] Indeed, one well-known Old Testament scholar suggests that "Moses may have been the person to receive the collected payments prior to the conquest" (of the land of Canaan) (cf. Ex. 30:11, 16).[28] That would be quite significant, since Moses represented God's authority exercised in the civil sphere, while Aaron represented God's authority exercised in the church.[29] In any case, the payment (unlike tithes) did not support the priests; rather, it was an offering to the Lord for the tabernacle (vv. 13, 16; cf. 2 Kings 12:7–16), which (as we noted above) represents the Kingdom of God, including both its civil and ecclesiastical aspects.

Dr. North asserts that "taking the national census was strictly limited to wartime."[30] This certainly was not the case throughout the ancient Near East. A census served two primary, distinct purposes: levying taxes and registering men for military service in time of war (but not necessarily both in a given instance). Sometimes it was used to conscript forced labor for various state projects.[31]

Dr. North lists two main "problem[s]" in Rushdoony's view of the head tax: (a) "On what basis did the State become the recipient of this atonement payment?" and (b) "When did the State become the recipient of these atonement payments?"[32] However, these

only become serious problems when one assumes the Jordan-North interpretation of the payment in Exodus 30 as a priestly atonement and ransom paid by a temporary, priestly, Nazirite, ecclesiastical army and that this payment was paid to priests. Furthermore, North assumes that the tabernacle and the temple always represent the church; that is, the tabernacle and the temple have no role whatsoever in state functions. (In our previous article we provided scholarly documentation demonstrating that this is totally untrue throughout the ancient Near East and in the Biblical record regarding the nation Israel.) From this position North latches on to one word in this statement by Rushdoony: "It [the head tax] was used *originally* for the construction of the tabernacle (Ex. 38:25–38)."[33] North interprets Rushdoony to say that the head tax was "originally" church money; later it became state money. This is not what Rushdoony was saying. Rushdoony believed that: (a) the tabernacle and later the temple represented the Kingdom of God, including both church and state; and (b) the head tax was revenue for the state (which was headquartered in the tabernacle/temple). Thus the head tax was always used to fund the state; there was no change in the sense that North asserts. When Rushdoony used the term "originally" he is merely saying that the head tax (which was always a civil tax) originally helped fund the building and furnishing of the tabernacle (the state headquarters) and subsequently paid for all state expenses. Obviously, during the construction of the tabernacle, which occurred during Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, there were minimal additional state expenses.

Jordan's View of Nehemiah 10:32f.

After 50,000 exiled Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity to repatriate Israel, they rebuilt Jerusalem and its temple. Subsequently, under their Governor, Nehemiah, they instituted a head tax. This head tax was paid "yearly" (Neh. 10:32), as the Mosaic head tax of 2 Chronicles 24:5 had been.

Jordan does not believe that Nehemiah's tax could be a civil head tax based on Exodus 30:11–16. He offers three arguments for this view:

1. The text in Nehemiah does not specifically refer to the Mosaic head tax. Jordan argues that the phrase "we made ordinances" (Neh. 10:32) is a deliberate contrast to what the Mosaic Law commanded (vv. 29, 34).
2. The amount of the tax is different, i.e., 1/3 shekel (Neh. 10:32) rather than 1/2 shekel (Ex. 30:13).
3. Nehemiah's head tax supported the worship of the temple rather than the civil sphere.[34]

Rebuttals

1. The entire context of verses 28–39 is renewing covenant with God "to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes" (v. 29 NKJV). "All the commandments" / "ordinances" / "statutes" would include the commands regarding the head tax in Exodus 30:11–16. Furthermore, vv. 35–39 continue the thought of "we made ordinances/we accept responsibility" (so translated in NKJV, ESV, NIV, NET, etc.), yet they certainly refer to various Mosaic laws concerning firstfruits, firstborn, tithes, offerings, etc.—even though the term "God's law" is not repeated in any of these verses (neither is "God's law" repeated in vv. 30–33). Thus "we made ordinances" is probably a stylistic variation, not an indication that this action was not based on God's law.

   Indeed, verses 31–40 are written "in the first person and represents the people's point of view, as the priests and Levites are spoken of in the third person … The plain inference [of 'we made ordinances for ourselves' (v. 32)] is rather startling that the people themselves made ordinances to do the things prescribed in the [Mosaic] law."[35] Furthermore, arguing from the absence of another reference to God's law in v. 32 may be viewed as the logical fallacy of an argument from silence. Interestingly, the term "wood offering" does not occur in the Mosaic Law or in the Pentateuch; yet, Nehemiah describes it under the rubric "as it is written in the Law" (v. 34). (It is there by implication, since wood was required for burnt offerings, Lev. 1:7f., 12, 17; 3:5; 4:12; 6:9, 12f.; Num. 19:6.)

   We conclude that Jordan's assertion that "we made ordinances" (Neh. 10:32) means manmade laws that are not part of the Mosaic Law is very unlikely.

2. There are several plausible explanations for the apparent discrepancy between a tax amount of 1/3 shekel rather than 1/2 shekel:

   - One explanation for the discrepancy is the extreme poverty of many of the repatriating Israelites. This extreme poverty had three main physical causes: (a) famine (Neh. 5:3; Mal. 3:9–12); (b) oppressive Persian taxation (Ezra 4:13; 7:24; 6:8; Esther 10:1)—oppressive to the point of bringing them and their children into slavery (Neh. 5:1–5; 9:36f.; Ezra 9:9); and (c) nearly two

months (Neh. 6:15) of continuous work rebuilding the city walls (Neh. 3–7), which provided no income to families who owned no land (5:2), and left landowners little time to cultivate their fields. One of the characteristics of the Mosaic head tax was that it was cheap enough that the poor man could afford to pay it. Perhaps the extreme conditions in Nehemiah's day necessitated a lowering of the amount of the Mosaic head tax to comply with the intent of its legislation.

- A second plausible explanation is that the Persian Empire was providing many of the civil functions (for which it was exacting tax), so Israel reduced its own civil tax rate to avoid double taxation.[36]
- A third possible explanation suggested by several scholars is that this later Babylonian-Persian shekel used to pay the head tax was based on a heavier standard (21 grams); thus 1/3 of the later shekel was equal to 1/2 of the earlier Phoenician shekel (14 grams).[37]
- A fourth possibility is that the small tax reduction may have provided temporary compensation for nearly two month's free labor in rebuilding the city walls.

These plausible explanations demonstrate that this objection is not nearly as substantial as it might first seem to be.

3. With regard to the objection that Nehemiah's head tax supported the worship of the temple rather than the civil sphere, we ask, Could the inclusion of some items used for temple worship (v. 33) be merely a temporary accommodation until the new second temple could be fully furnished and stocked with supplies and proper worship fully restored (Neh. 10; 12; Mal. 3:9–12)?[38] Nehemiah's head tax was clearly instituted during an abnormal time, i.e., during the reestablishing of the rebuilt temple and its worship in Jerusalem and while the newly repatriated Israelites were paying excessive tribute to the Persian Empire (which provided some civil functions). This tribute was so oppressive and caused such enslaving poverty that Israel's Governor, Nehemiah, was sacrificially foregoing reimbursement for legitimate government expenses (Neh. 5:14, 17f.), so as not to further enslave the impoverished Israelites. Obviously, such deep poverty hindered the ongoing giving of abundant offerings for the temple and its services. To rebuild his devastated nation, Nehemiah may have prioritized the worship of God over his own salary. A second possibility is that, since the Israelites were already paying high taxes to Persia (which provided them with some civil functions), the Israelites may have diverted a portion of the head tax revenue to the expenses of temple worship. Scripture does not give us enough detail to answer all our questions in this matter. In any case, the objections to Nehemiah's head tax being the reinstitution of Moses' civil head tax are not insurmountable.

4. Jordan's conclusion, "This [Nehemiah's tax] was not a civil tax at all. Its purpose was wholly cultic [i.e., regarding ecclesiastical worship rituals]," presupposes that the tabernacle/temple was wholly ecclesiastical, having no civil function. As we have seen in both this article and in the previous article, this was not the case.[39]

Furthermore, there are positive, contextual and linguistic arguments to substantiate the view that Nehemiah's tax was, in fact, a reinstitution of the Mosaic head tax (Ex. 30:11–16).

First, the institution of Nehemiah's head tax (Neh. 10:32f.) occurs in the context of the renewal of God's covenant (8:1–10:39) and obedience to God's covenant (11:1–13:31), which were recorded in "the Book of the Law of Moses" (8:1; cf. 8:3, 8, 18; 9:3; 13:1; Ezra 6:18). The entire emphasis of Ezra-Nehemiah is obeying God's covenantal law-word in its entirety, in all areas of life—which would include God's directives for the head tax in Exodus 30:1–16.

Second, regarding similarity of language, Nehemiah's phrase describing the purpose of the head tax being "for the service of the house of our God" (Neh. 10:32) is strikingly reminiscent of Moses' phrase regarding the purpose of the head tax, "for the service of the tabernacle of meeting" (Ex. 30:16).[40] One commentator suggests that this similarity of wording "purposely linked" the two passages.[41] Of course, both taxes were paid in shekels.

Third, Nehemiah also describes the purpose of the head tax being for "all the work of the house of our God" (Neh. 10:33), a phrase which denotes the maintenance of the temple building, rather than maintaining its sacrificial rituals.[42] This second purpose of Nehemiah's head tax is identical to the purpose of the Mosaic head tax (Ex. 38:25–28; 2 Kings 12:4–16 // 2 Chr. 24:4–14).

We thus concur with Old Testament scholar and commentator Carl F. Keil: "This appointed payment is evidently only a revival of the Mosaic precept, Ex. 30:13."[43] If Nehemiah's head tax is a reinstitution of the Mosaic head tax—and we believe that it is—then the book of Nehemiah confirms that the head tax

was again in force over one thousand years after Moses had instituted it.[44] We argued in the previous article that the Mosaic head tax was still present in New Testament times (Matt. 17:24–27).

Conclusion

The arguments marshaled by Jordan and North against Rushdoony's view of the head tax (i.e., that it is the only God-authorized civil tax) are unconvincing and at times are not cogent. We concur with Rushdoony's assessment:

> The head tax is thus the support of the civil order, and the tithe is the support of the social order. In Biblical law, there is no land tax or property tax. Such a tax destroys the independence of every sphere of life and government—the family, school, church, vocation, and all else—and makes every sphere dependent on and subordinate to the state, or civil government … A land tax is not lawful … Ungodly taxation is theft … A lawless tax structure [i.e., one rejecting God's sovereign law] spells death to men and society … The power to tax is in the modern world the power to destroy. It is no longer the support of law and order.[45]

Although we have disagreed with Dr. Gary North's view of the head tax,[46] we heartily agree with much of his plan for reconstructing civil government spending and taxation:

> We call for a vast purging of present-day national power, both political and economic. We call for the dismantling of the welfare-warfare State, most notably every aspect of taxpayer-financing for education (except for the national military academies … maybe). I have called for a reduction of aggregate taxes to the level required by 1 Samuel 8: where all levels of civil government *combined* are allowed to collect less than 10 percent of people's annual income.[47] I support the abolition of the local property tax, as well as all state and national direct taxation of individuals and corporations, which includes the graduated income tax, the Social Security tax, the corporate income tax, the capital gains tax, and all sales taxes. I recommend the abolition of all direct taxation by any agency of civil government above the local township or county; every other level of civil government would be forced to seek its revenues by taxing the level of civil government immediately below it. Civil governments above the most local would have to live off the revenues collected from other civil governments. This would decentralize power with a vengeance. The Reconstructionists' version of theocracy is a decentralized system of multiple competing governments in which the modern messianic State and its economic subsidies would be dismantled.[48]

In closing, let us remember that both Drs. North and Rushdoony believe/d in the absolute truthfulness, authority, inerrancy, and sufficiency of God's written Word. Both are/were committed to applying God's law to all of society. Thus their debate over the exact nature of the head tax was an in-house debate among Christian brothers committed to Christian Reconstruction. Our biggest need of the hour is for more Christians to truly be committed to God's infallible and sufficient Word (including His law) and to apply it to our own lives, our families, our churches, and the state—in the power of the Holy Spirit. May Dr. North's and Dr. Rushdoony's spiritual and biological descendants maintain an attitude of brotherly love toward one another. We are on the same team. May we follow the Apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy: "Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things" (2 Tim. 2:7 NJKV). As we study God's Word, may the Holy Spirit give us the illumination to correctly understand it and the wisdom to apply it in our culture—to the glory of the triune God. Amen.

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1. For an explanation and a Biblical defense of the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture see Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God's Words to You* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, LLC, 2012), 341–352.

2. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Exodus* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 2004), 443–446. Idem., *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, vol. 1. (n.p.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1973), 50, 277, 281–283, 492, 510, 719. Idem., *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, vol. 3 (Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 1999), 23f., Idem., *Law and Society* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982), 696f.

Rushdoony summarized his understanding of the head/poll tax as follows: "The basic tax was the poll or head tax (Ex. 30:11–16), which had to be the same for all men. It was paid by men only, all men of age twenty and over. This tax was collected by the civil authority for the maintenance of the civil order, to provide all men with a covering or atonement of civil justice" (*The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 1:492).

3. James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1984), 225–239. When Jordan wrote this book he held to theonomy, a school of thought he has since rejected. The questions Jordan raises are legitimate and deserve an answer. (My rebuttal of Jordan's view of the head tax in no way demeans the many insights contained in *The Law of the Covenant*.)

4. Gary North, *Tools of Dominion* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), 903–912. (My disagreement with Dr. North's view of the head tax in no way detracts from my appreciation for his voluminous writings or for his funding the publication of many important books.)

5. Jordan suggests that the temple tax in Matthew 17 was an oral tradition based on a synthesis of "the Mosaic head tax and on the self-imposed levy of Nehemiah 10:32–33,

which was designed to pay for the sacrifices" (James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant*, 233).

6. Cf. the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 8:4–5; 11:3.

7. James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant*, 234.

8. Ibid. I find Jordan's wording to be confusing: "The members of the Old Testament were still 'strangers' to the kingdom; they were 'afar off' and had not yet been 'brought nigh' in the full New Covenant sense." (Jordan then cites several New Testament verses teaching the inadequacies of the Old Testament ceremonial law.) First, Reformed covenant theology certainly teaches that Old Testament believers were part of the same covenant of grace as New Testament believers: there is one "everlasting covenant" of grace (Heb. 13:20). Second, what does Jordan mean by the term, "the kingdom?" It is most natural to understand "the kingdom" to mean the Kingdom of God. In this case we ask, "were Old Testament believers members of God's Kingdom or were they not members of God's Kingdom?" Most scholars would agree that the Kingdom of God certainly was present in the Old Testament. Could Jordan's term, "the kingdom," mean the messianic or mediatorial Kingdom of Christ, which had not yet been inaugurated prior to the first coming of Christ? Obviously, Old Testament believers could not be part of the not-yet-come messianic kingdom. However, two paragraphs later Jordan describes "true sons of the kingdom" as those redeemed by the blood of Christ. That description must include all Old and New Testament believers. Thus I understand Jordan's term, "the kingdom," to denote the Kingdom of God.

9. Paul applies the terms "strangers" and "afar off" to Gentiles, not to Old Testament saints (Eph. 2:11–13, 17, 19; cf. Acts 2:38).

10. God is not a polygamist. He has only one wife/church throughout both Old and New Testaments (Rom. 11:16–24, 26, 28; cp. 1 John 2:28–32 with Acts 2:17–21; cp. Amos 9:11f. with Acts 15:16f.; cp. Jer. 31:31–34 with Heb. 8:8–10).

11. W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2:744.

12. Old Testament believers were regenerated; this is depicted as: circumcision of the heart (Dt. 30:6; 10:16; Jer. 4:4; 6:10; 9:25f.; cf. Rom. 2:28f); having a new heart (Ezk. 18:31; 36:26; cf. Jer. 32:39f; 24:7); a heart of flesh (instead of a heart of stone) (Ezk. 11:19f.; 36:26); a new spirit within (Ezk. 11:19f.; 36:26; 18:31); God writing His law on the heart (Jer. 31:33f.); and being changed into another man (1 Sam. 10:6, 9). That is why Jesus expected Rabbi Nicodemus to understand the new birth (John 3:10).

13. James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant*, 232.

14. "In conclusion, the Mosaic head tax was never a civil tax. It was a religious tax and has been fulfilled definitively in Christ" (James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant*, 234). Juxtaposing "civil" vs. "religious" is quite misleading. There is no religious neutrality; everything is religious. The correct terminology for Jordan's view is that the Mosaic head tax was not a civil tax; rather, it was an ecclesiastical or church tax. Both a civil tax and an ecclesiastical tax are religious. Cf. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 1:281f.; 3:23.

Interestingly, Jordan adds, "This is not to say that a Christian state may not levy a head tax for civil purposes. It is just to say that a church may not levy a head tax."

15. James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant*, 238. North concurs with Jordan: "The Old Testament never specifically says anything about what is proper for civil taxation except Samuel's warning" (1 Sam. 8) (Gary North, *Tools of Dominion*, 908). Does this comport with the Biblical doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture?

16. Gary North, *Tools of Dominion*, 908–910.

In light of the eleven different kinds of taxes in the Old Testament (excluding tithes and sacrifices), it is a mystery to me how Dr. North can write, "Apart from Samuel's critique of the king's collecting a tithe, the only references to compulsory payments in ancient Israel are the various tithes and sacrifices—clearly ecclesiastical—and the census atonement money of Exodus 30" (908f.). See Robert E. Fugate, *Toward a Theology of Taxation*, 1–9.

17. I demonstrate the Old Testament separation of church and state in my book, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 110; cf. 22–26, 33.

18. The temple "gatekeeper" (Hebrew *shoer*) was actually a temple gate clerk or accountant, responsible for safeguarding the contents of the baskets placed at the thresholds, and perhaps assaying the items deposited, assigning value, and crediting the account of the depositor. The temple "scribe" (*sopher*) was the storehouse accountant, functioning as counter, recorder, ledger-keeper, and enumerator for the temple storehouses. See Marty E. Stevens, *Temples, Tithes, and Taxes*, 172, 71–77.

19. Consider 2 Kings 12:16: "The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the LORD. It belonged to the priests." If that money belonged to the priests, but the census money was not allowed to be used by the priests (see the following endnote), there had to be separate accounting.

20. "Jehoash takes charge much like Solomon to see that the work of temple repair is properly financed and accomplished … By taking the funds out of the hands of the priests, Jehoash reasserts royal Davidic control over the sanctuary" (Marvin A. Sweeney, *1 & 2 Kings*, 351f.). "Joash simply decides to introduce a different method of collection and he himself implements it" (Sara Japhet, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 845). "The notice that funds were not employed to manufacture the vessels used in the temple ritual—basins, snuffers, bowls, trumpets, and so on (cf. 1 Kings 7:38–40, 45–47)—indicates that the funds were used only for [temple] repairs" (Marvin A. Sweeney, 353). Sweeney suggests that "the priest had not properly allocated the funds in the past." In Joash's new arrangement the priests "will be absolved of responsibility to repair the temple, but they will no longer be in charge of the offerings brought to the temple" (August H. Konkel, *1 & 2 Kings* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006], 513; cf. T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 153).

21. Andrew E. Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 540.

22. Exodus commentators include: Propp, Stuart, Hamilton, Durham, Enns, Sarna, Cassuto, Childs, Jacob, Fretheim, Motyer, Kaiser, Bruckner, Murphy, Bush, Driver, Hyatt, Noth, Keil.

23. "During the holy war, the men became temporary priests by taking the Nazirite vow" (James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant*, 231).

24. Jordan lists Num. 6; 2 Sam. 11:11 + Ex. 19:15; Dt. 23:9–14; Jdg. 5:2, 'That long locks of hair hung loose in Israel … ') as his proof that the army of Ex. 30 were temporary Nazirite priests (*The Law of the Covenant*, 231). But a couple of similarities between Nazirites and priests do not prove identity. For example, Israelites and Philistines both fought with swords and spears, but they are not identical people groups. There are at least eight significant differences between Nazirites and priests that must not be ignored.

25. Gary North, *Tools of Dominion*, 911.

26. It is the case that a few older liberal scholars (e.g., Walther Eichrodt and Roland de Vaux)—who were committed to some form of the evolutionary Documentary Hypothesis, in which Mosaic authorship is rejected for most of the Pentateuch (contrary to the teaching of both the Old Testament and to the teaching of Christ and the Apostles), and the so-called priestly portions of the Pentateuch (such as Num. 6) are dated after the Babylonian exile—hypothesize two radically different types of Nazirites. In their view the earlier type of Nazirite was a sacred, charismatic, lone-wolf warrior, who was subject to ecstatic-behavior. Yet, neither Eichrodt nor de Vaux includes Exodus 30 in their discussion of Nazirites.

27. North is so committed to Jordan's and his interpretation of the army being a "temporary priesthood" (*Tools of Dominion*, 911) and the ransom being "paid to God through the priesthood" (906) that he uses some form of the word "priest" twenty-two times in his ten-page article. However, as the old adage goes, "saying it's so doesn't make it so."

28. Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, 639. "You" in Ex. 30:16 refers back to Moses (v. 11) (Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* [Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 1992], 831).

29. Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 110.

30. Gary North, *Tools of Dominion*, 905. North's citation of Luke 14:31f. is hardly applicable to Yahweh's wars, since God repeatedly emphasized that He would fight Israel's enemies, enabling them to defeat enemies who were far more powerful than they (Dt. 4:38; 7:1; 9:1, 14; 11:23).

31. See sources cited in Robert E. Fugate, *Toward a Theology of Taxation*, 23–25.

32. Gary North, *Tools of Dominion*, 907.

33. Ibid.; citing Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 1:50.

34. James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant*, 237f.

35. L.W. Batton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, ICC [New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913], 376f.

36. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law*, 1:591.

37. For discussion of the third view see: R. A. Bowman, "The Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. G. A. Buttrick, 12 vols. (New York, NY: Abingdon, 1954), 3:764; R. B. Y. Scott, "Weights, Measures, Money and Time," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, eds. Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley (Hong Kong: Thomas Nelson, 1962), 38 § 35a; D. J. A. Clines, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 207; Jacob M. Myers, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965), 178f.; F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 240; Leslie C. Allen and Timothy S. Laniak, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 143; cf. Edwin Yamauchi, "Ezra, Nehemiah," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (EBC), ed. F. E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 4:742.

38. This argument is somewhat similar to Jordan's reasoning, "People were not in a position to reinstitute the entire Levitical order overnight, so again Nehemiah's provision was a needed accommodation to the situation" (James B. Jordan, *The Law of the Covenant*, 237).

39. Jordan himself admitted, "The Tabernacle was the ultimate political as well as ecclesiastical center of Israel" (*The Law of the Covenant*, 231).

40. There are other language similarities, such as both passages mentioning shekel and atonement.

41. H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 335. L. W. Batton (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, ICC, 377) and Joseph Blenkinsopp (*Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary*, OTL [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1988], 316) believe that Nehemiah's tax is the same tax as that found in 2 Chronicles 24:4, 9. If we reject their critical reconstruction of the Pentateuch (based on the Documentary Hypothesis), then this is the same tax as the Mosaic head tax (Ex. 30:11–16).

42. F. Charles Fensham asserts that the phrase "all the work of the house of our God" (Neh. 10:33) "refers to the maintenance of the building of the temple" (*The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, NICOT, 240; cf. H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, WBC, 336). With reference to the phrase "all the work of the house of our God" (Neh. 10:33), L. W. Batten observed that in Ezra and Nehemiah the term "work" (*mela'kah*) "usually refers to the building" itself, not to rituals conducted in the temple (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah*, ICC, 377).

In Ex. 30:16 "The service [*`abodah*] of the tent of meeting" does not refer to the sacrificial service, but to its construction (Ex. 38:25–28; 39:32), which was to be more of a permanent "memorial" (Ex. 30:16) (Umberto Cassuto *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 394f.). "'Work' must connote not worship … but construction … The silver does not purchase offerings; it is built directly into the Tabernacle (38:27f.)" (William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 19–40*, AB, 479; cf. Nahum M. Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*, 196).

Continued on page 25

Hunger Games

By Andrea Schwartz



In my travels as a "circuit riding" homeschooling mentor and lecturer, I have observed that the institution of the family, by God's design, is like a well-made machine. Nothing that man has devised serves the function of nurture and care better than this building block of society. The family, however, just like a finely engineered car, needs a tune-up now and again. Failing to do the necessary upkeep will produce a God-ordained institution that functions poorly. There are telling signs that adjustments are in order.

The enthusiasm that usually accompanies the decision to homeschool can over time deteriorate into a sea of overload, self-doubt, and guilt. If the major goal is to do a better job than the local private or public school (grades, test scores, etc.), it won't be long before the mother/teacher begins to burn out and become convinced she has embarked on a losing proposition. A home school will *never* run like a day school. In fact, it cannot and should not. Instead of divorcing the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom from the day-to-day activities of family life, homeschooling allows for individualized learning and maturity to occur *within* the context of family life.

The best evidence of a well-functioning homeschool is the hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6) on the part of the children who with their parents express an appetite to seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33).

Hunger and Thirst

How do we apply the concepts of hunger and thirst to homeschooling progress? Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines the terms clearly:

> **Hunger:** 1. An uneasy sensation occasioned by the want of food; a craving of food by the stomach; craving appetite. Hunger is not merely want of food, for persons, when sick, may abstain long from eating without hunger, or an appetite for food. Hunger therefore is the pain or uneasiness of the stomach of a healthy person, when too long destitute of food. 2. Any strong or eager desire. v.i. To feel the pain or uneasiness which is occasioned by long abstinence from food; to crave food.
>
> **Thirst:** 1. To experience a painful sensation of the throat or fauces for want of drink. 2. To have a vehement desire for any thing.

R. J. Rushdoony points out in his book on the Sermon on the Mount referencing Matthew 5:6 that

> Righteousness is the same word as justice; thus, it is the desire for righteousness or *justice* which our Lord speaks of here … To be the blessed of the Lord means that we hunger and thirst after justice. The image is of intense physical craving, of a passion for righteousness or justice, which consumes our being. Apart from God's justice, for there is none other, we are starved and parched. Only His justice can fill and satisfy us. The promise is that we "shall be filled."[1]

Do you and your children manifest a craving to be filled with God's justice? We are told in Ecclesiastes 12:13 that the whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments. If this is not the focal point of Christian education, then what is?

Many say they attempt to get their children interested in spiritual matters, but the children don't seem to have an appetite for the instruction. That is the precise reason why Christian home education is needed in our day. Children are deemed unable to understand the truths of Scripture unless they are taught moral *stories* by vegetable characters that don't reference God as He has revealed Himself. Not only does this underestimate children,[2] it reduces the appetite for real Bible teaching. Just as improper nutritional choices cultivate a desire for junk food, children raised on "junk food" Christianity will shun the good food of the Word.

The environment of the Christian home school can immediately correct attitudes and ideas antithetical to a Biblical world and life view. By avoiding negative influences and temptations that arise in most classroom settings (e.g. back-talk, bullying, and moral compromise) the children aren't hampered by conflicting standards of behavior.

Identifying Their Calling

Young children thrive on imitating their elders, wanting to do the tasks they see their parents or older siblings perform. From the outset, the homeschooling mother should be self-consciously modeling behavior she wishes her children to emulate. If she complains about cooking, laundry, cleaning, reading, or studying, guess what? They will learn to parrot those attitudes. However, if, as she is carrying out all these functions, she explains how and why she is per-

forming them, she is not only actively engaging her children in the importance of *calling*, but she is investing for the future time when she can delegate these tasks to them.

> Another basic function of the family is motivation and guidance. The child is provided with the best kind of guidance, because the family is most interested in him, and the child is, in the Christian family, given the highest kind of motivation for his own future and present development.[3]

Motivation is a key component in obtaining cooperation and participation, whether in household responsibilities or academic learning. If the homeschooling teacher always has to entertain or coerce her children, she will become exhausted and frustrated. For this reason, the children need to understand why homeschooling is the family choice and for what purpose they are learning any given subject or task. When tied in to glorifying God and keeping His commandments, grumbling and complaining are rightly understood as offenses against God.

> **12. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**
>
> **13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.**
>
> **14. Do all things without murmurings and disputings:**
>
> **15. That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;**
>
> **16. Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. (Phil. 2:12-16)**

How do you know if an activity is producing the results you desire? As my husband used to counsel me, *inspect what you expect*. This involves making sure your children know the expectations you have for them regarding their household chores and subjects you wish them to study on any given day. Bypassing this step usually results in the teacher and student having conflicting standards for excellence. It takes prep time and regular inspection on the part of the teacher, but will lessen over time as her children learn not to cut corners and to apply diligence to their work.

Incentives should be tied in to expectations for the student when it comes to academics. Studying the material in a cooperative fashion should hold just as much weight as grasping the material. At what point and how easily the material is grasped is secondary to the approach the student takes. That is why grades or marks cannot be the goal of learning. It is the acquisition of knowledge, properly understood in the greater context of God's Kingdom, that produces wisdom. How well the student can articulate what has been learned and how well he applies it to life are the yardsticks to measure success.

Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22–23 defines the Fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These should serve as the objective evidence of godly learning: Are the children manifesting these attributes? In all areas of life and thought, the claims of Christ must be impressed upon the students. This standard should be the focus as a Biblical worldview is taught throughout the academic subjects covered. If not, even if you have a "straight A" student, you don't necessarily have a godly one. Likewise, if your student struggles with some aspect of the curriculum, the Fruit of the Spirit mindset will allow him to persevere in the pursuit of excellence.

All children need to understand that they were created to glorify God by carrying out His laws and commands. They will not do this naturally because they enter the world selfish and self-centered due to the stain of inherited sin. Only through training will they embrace their calling as son/daughter and brother/sister. Along with learning their native language and gaining self-discipline of bodily functions, obedience to parents is the first major trait that needs to be ingrained in a child. Next, the child should be working on becoming a useful member of the family, seeking ways to love one another with brotherly affection, and outdoing one another in showing honor (Rom 12:10).

Jay Adams, noted Biblical counseling author, has this to say about the Fruit of the Spirit as it applies in family life:

> To be self-controlled … is said to be a fruit of the Spirit (i.e., the result of the Spirit's work) in a believer. This work of the Spirit makes him a sturdy, dependable person to whom others turn for encouragement and help. It makes him the sort of Christian who rarely gets into trouble with others because of indiscretions of word or deed, and who, if and when he does offend, quickly rectifies the situation on his own … His self-control, then, is not a control that comes from himself but from the Spirit, and it is self-control only in the sense that he is not dependent on other human beings for that control.
>
> Discipline begins in a child's life as discipline by others: much of the work of child training … has to do with bringing a child to maturity, that maturity consisting of his ability to discipline himself in the ways of God.
>
> The process of child training that the

> Bible sets forth is one in which the control of parents is gradually replaced by the control of the Spirit through the Word as a child matures into a youth, willing and able to follow the Scriptures on his own without the continued, watchful instruction of parents. The mature person obeys not for fear of punishment or hope of reward, but out of gratitude to God who sent the Savior to die for him. He wants to please God rather than his parents, others, or even himself![4]

This is the sort of training that is uniquely possible within a homeschooling setting as the instruction given in Deuteronomy 6:4–7 states:

> **4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:**
>
> **5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.**
>
> **6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:**
>
> **7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.**

Adams points out that the Book of Proverbs, which is a Hebrew training manual for youth, has as its goal a person who walks according to the law of the Spirit in promoting a self-controlled individual.

> The Book of Proverbs represents the work of the father and mother as bringing the child to this place of independence by teaching biblical truth which shall follow and guide the child throughout life, long after they are gone.[5]

As a mainstay of our homeschool, I took my children through the Book of Proverbs to show the practical application of the law of God as outlined in the Ten Commandments. In fact, the following passage in Rushdoony's *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum* inspired me to challenge my son at the age of seven to begin memorizing entire chapters:

> At St. Thomas Episcopal School in Houston, Texas, children in the early grades memorize proverb after proverb, until the whole book of Proverbs is committed to memory. On one occasion, third grade boys were on the playground, when a teacher confronted one boy with an offense committed earlier. The guilty boy immediately pointed to a second boy, saying, "He made me do it." At this point, a third boy stepped up and remarked, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Prov. 1:10). This is of course one of the advantages of knowledge of Scripture: it enables us to understand ourselves and others as well as to know God.[6]

As side benefits, this activity was useful for public speaking training, as well as handwriting training (as my son often copied the verses to memorize them). I began this when I noted how he had memorized many commercials verbatim from television and figured we should try the Proverbs challenge.

The Return of the Family

Sometimes families *do* struggle to maintain their calling to educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and there *are* many obstacles blocking success. But by re-orienting the purpose and mission of their homes and placing Biblical standards as the umbrella under which all other areas are assessed (academics, sports, the arts, and involvement in church and community activities), they will experience less burnout, especially the homeschooling mother. And while it is true that usurpation by the state is rampant and seemingly insurmountable, there is historically much hope. As Rushdoony notes,

> The state has extensively interfered in the family's functions, and it has claimed vast areas that properly belong to the family. Does this mean that the family has been weakened? Does the future portend a decline in the importance of the family? On the contrary, the more the state has interfered, the more it has thereby underscored man's need for the family. The incompetence of the state as family has made more obvious the competence of the family as a family. The prevalence of sickness does not make health obsolete, but only all the more urgently needed and desired. Historically, every period of statism is followed by an era of an intensely family-oriented society as men turn from sickness to health.[7]

Andrea Schwartz is the Chalcedon Foundation's active proponent of Christian education and matters relating to the family. She's the author of five books dealing with homeschooling and the family. Her latest book is *Woman of the House*. She oversees the Chalcedon Teacher Training Institute (www.ctti.org) and continues to mentor, lecture, and teach. Visit her website www.WordsFromAndrea.com. She lives in San Jose with her husband of 37 years. She can be reached by email at lessons.learned@yahoo.com.

1. R.J. Rushdoony, *Sermon on the Mount* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2009), 23–24.
2. Mark 10:15 instructs us to receive the Kingdom as a child, not to receive it childishly!
3. R.J. Rushdoony, *Law & Liberty* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Book, 1984, 2009), 101.
4. Jay E. Adams, *Handbook of Church Discipline* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 40–41.
5. Ibid.
6. R.J. Rushdoony, *The Philosophy of the Christian Curriculum* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1981, 2001), 28-9.
7. R.J. Rushdoony, *Law & Liberty* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Book, 1984, 2009), 103.

A Tale of Two Governments

By Robert Renaud and Lael Weinberger (Dunrobyn Publishing, St. Louis, MO: 2012)

Reviewed by Lee Duigon



This little volume belongs on every pastor's bookshelf.

The authors' purpose is to teach churches how to protect themselves from being sued if they try to exert church discipline. Actually, what lawyers Renaud and Weinberger are doing is informing pastors and elders that they *can*, and sometimes should, exert church discipline.

As John MacArthur points out in his foreword to the book, Americans have "an unbreakable addiction to self-esteem" (p. 8). If they sin, and their church tries to subject them to discipline, they are apt to be incredulous. And if the church is serious about enforcing discipline, the offending member just might drag the elders into court.

But "the purity of the church is the ultimate and non-negotiable goal," MacArthur says (p. 7). Therefore the church must not, for fear of a lawsuit, throw up its hands and let the offender go on sinning—which is what too many churches do, these days, and which is why the book was written.

A Case in Point

It must first be noted that the book does not address the question of how to apply church discipline when the church itself is lawless. A new pastor in my church once told me she was "happy" when a couple of members involved in an adulterous affair with one another showed up in the pews on Sunday. "Adultery," she said, "is no big deal." (I must add that this is not my church anymore.)

This book is for churches that recognize the authority of God's Word and try to see that their members and officials abide by it. And the good news is: they can.

A case in point: in Texas, in 2009, a marriage counselor made a career change and became the pastor of a church. Some of his clients followed him. These included a woman engaged in an adulterous affair. Now a pastor instead of a counselor, Buddy Westbrook pleaded with the woman, face to face in private, to stop committing adultery. She refused. When he asked her again, in front of two confidential witnesses, she refused again. So the pastor informed the whole congregation in a letter, and exhorted them to break fellowship with the woman until she repented and ceased from her sin.

So of course the woman sued the pastor and the church for revealing these details of her private life. The case went to the Texas Supreme Court, where the nine justices ruled unanimously in the church's favor, finding that the case was not about the woman's privacy, not about her outraged feelings, but rather that "It was about the relationship between church and state" (p. 63).

Church Autonomy

Lawyers Renaud and Weinberger painstakingly present their argument, delving into legal history and case law all the way back to Colonial times—an argument backed up solidly with facts, not to mention 384 footnotes in a mere 110 pages. But don't be put off by that. Their presentation is admirably clear and cogent, and written in plain English instead of legalese.

In a nutshell, American law and jurisprudence hold that church and state are two separate spheres of authority and jurisdiction, and that neither is to trespass on the other's turf.

"It's the good news that the government is limited and not all-powerful—and that the church in America has the freedom and the legal protection that Christians have struggled to obtain for centuries" (p. 14). That is, "Separation of church and state, at its most basic, simply means that the church and state are separate and distinct institutions" (p. 18).

Can this be so? We're used to hearing militant atheists shouting "separation of church and state" as their battle cry in a crusade to erase every vestige of Christianity from American public life. But this familiar rhetoric, the authors demonstrate, is a political and social doctrine, not a legal doctrine. In law, "separation of church and state" is usually invoked to defend the church against encroachment by the state, not the other way around.

Nor, say the authors, should it be confused with "two kingdoms theology," which postulates that "God's redemptive work is only going to occur through the church (and therefore efforts by Christians to redeem other institutions of culture are more or less misguided)" (p. 34). It's needful to clear away such misconceptions before pastors and elders can learn how to use "separation of church and state" as the legal basis for church autonomy.

"Church autonomy" is the legal principle recognized by American courts since the founding of the country. After

building the historical case for church autonomy—from St. Augustine to Luther and Calvin, and the Pilgrims and the Puritans—the authors go on to show how, in James Madison's words, "religion is wholly exempt" from the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate (p. 59).

You Don't Have to Keep Your Organist

The First Amendment, say the authors, "was all about jurisdiction … It prohibited the national civil government as an institution from interfering with the church as an institution" (pp. 60–61).

In a very recent case (2012) before the United States Supreme Court, the federal Justice Department argued that the Lutheran Church ought to be forced to re-hire a former church school teacher. The government lost, 9–0, because the judges—including the "liberals" we so often see ruling to expand the powers of the government—found that the state does not have the authority to tell the church who can be a minister in the church and who can't. The church in America has always enjoyed a "ministerial exemption" from various laws regulating employment or selection of church personnel. "The legal basis for church autonomy doctrine," say the authors, "is as solid as anything gets in the law" (p. 66).

What if, for instance, a church decides to fire its organist because the elders discovered he was involved in an adulterous affair and wouldn't stop? What if the organist sues to get his job back? This particular case is not covered in the book, but it's the kind of thing that might suddenly crop up in any church, and Renaud and Weinberger provide the guidance which the church will need.

First, "federal courts require that church autonomy be raised as a regular defense at the outset of the lawsuit, not a jurisdictional defense that can be brought up anytime" (p. 69). The case may not get as far as federal court, but it's vital to raise the church autonomy defense from the beginning.

In our hypothetical case, the organist may not have a formal title such as "music minister." He may be simply an employee. Nevertheless, the 2012 U. S. Supreme Court case shows that the church may still claim a ministerial exemption even when the employee has not been formally ordained a minister.

Church autonomy doctrine protects the church's authority to enforce discipline, and also its rights in the selection and appointment of its officers (p. 72). And, "the civil government is to respect and defend the jurisdiction of the church to exercise its own discipline" (p. 76). A plethora of cases is cited to show that churches enjoy a ministerial exemption to anti-discrimination laws (p. 78).

All well and good: the church can fire the hypothetical organist, and win in court in case he brings a suit. But given that "Disgruntled parishioners have been creative in the kinds of lawsuits they bring" (p. 75), how shall a church maintain discipline among the congregation?

Helpful Hints

"The decline of church discipline is perhaps the most visible failure of the contemporary church," Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in 1998 (p. 100). In 1985 the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church reported a decline in church discipline due to "fear of criticism" in the media (p. 101). "But thanks to church autonomy doctrine," say Renaud and Weinberger, "America's churches have robust legal protections when they handle disciplinary matters properly" (p. 102).

It would be an injustice to the authors, and make for an overly long book review, to repeat all the details of their prescription for successfully applying church discipline. But it would be unjust to readers to say nothing about it at all. Bearing in mind that "The true purpose of church discipline is restoration" of the sinner to the church, with forgiveness following sincere repentance and turning away from the sin (p. 93), we ought at least to mention the highlights.

The authors very strongly advise churches not to "make it up as you go" (p. 103). That is, "church government must be in place at the time that the disciplinary procedure was initiated," with all the rules in writing (p. 103). Warning: house churches, and other informal kinds of churches, are apt to neglect this. Such a church should still be operated as a church, and not a social club.

Churches should have, in writing, "clear membership requirements" known to all members at the time they join the congregation (p. 104). Don't take it for granted that everybody knows the rules! The church should always have, preferably in writing, a "clear doctrinal basis for action" (p. 104). That, after all, will be the grounds for the defense in any lawsuit filed by a disgruntled member.

The church should *document* every step of any disciplinary process (p. 104). It's important to have a written record, which can be presented to a court of law, of everything that's been done. Never, the authors warn their audience, never rely on just a phone call! Otherwise it's easy to wind up with a "he said, they said" argument that a court will not easily resolve.

Finally, the authors exhort churches *always* to leave the door open for the sinner's restoration to the church

(p. 105). Ideally, excommunication is temporary—as St. Paul reminded the church in Corinth when it had to excommunicate one of its members. "Sufficient to such a man is the punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him" (2 Cor. 2:6–8).

Only God is Sovereign

"We have seen that church discipline is not meant to be harsh or vengeful," the authors conclude, "but is rather practiced out of love and concern for the body of Christ" (p. 106). Without discipline, it is impossible to maintain the purity of the church—as can be easily seen in such churches where discipline has been allowed to fade into obsolescence.

Only God is sovereign—not the state, and not the church—"and thus no human institution can be either all-powerful or 'sovereign' in an absolute sense. Personal liberty follows from this limit on human institutions" (p. 107).

With either church or state all-powerful, there can be, in the long run, no personal liberty at all. For churches to refrain from disciplining errant members or officers because they're afraid of being sued in court is to surrender the church's sphere sovereignty to the state. There is no need for this. When the church so timorously and incorrectly limits itself, the state doesn't have to try to encroach upon the church's sovereignty: church sovereignty is then lost by the church itself, and state power expanded by default. It is surely in the best interests of our constitutional republic for the churches to maintain their sovereignty.

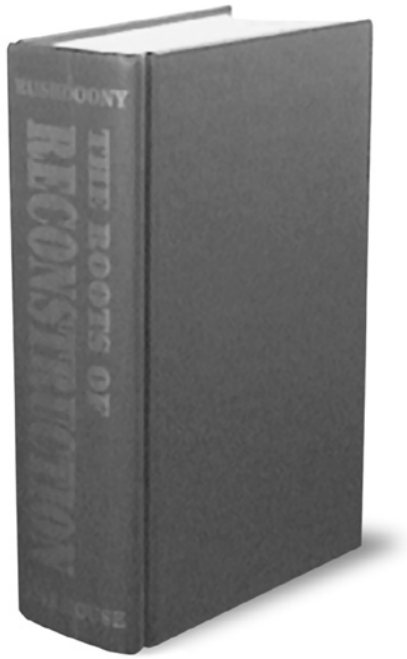
Meanwhile, *A Tale of Two Governments* also satisfactorily answers questions about church property disputes and situations in which a pastor or an elder might be criminally liable for some violation of the civil law—in which case the doctrine of church autonomy will definitely not protect him.

Readers are told pretty much all they need to know about the history and practice of church discipline down through the ages. Most importantly, we are told clearly and simply how to revive church discipline where it has lapsed.

The book will be on sale by the end of the year, available through amazon.com in both standard book and Kindle formats. We have no hesitation about recommending it.

Lee Duigon is a Christian free-lance writer and contributing editor for *Faith for All of Life*. He has been a newspaper editor and reporter and is the author of the Bell Mountain Series of novels.

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The Tree of Life: The Parable of the Mustard Seed

By Steve Zink



On more than one occasion a Christian brother has told me that the Kingdom of God is not a reality for today. Rather, it is the great hope of the future. Often this is followed with an empirical argument: "if Christ was ruling now, would it look like this?" Surely the evil and rampant unbelief in the world disprove the present reality of the Kingdom.

Several assumptions underpin this opinion. The first is that Christ's Kingdom would be glorious—comprehensive and conspicuous. This assumption cannot be faulted. It is assuredly Biblical. The second assumption is that this magnificent state of affairs is to be introduced abruptly. That is to say, Christ's Kingdom is *at once* comprehensive and conspicuous. Thus, the Kingdom age is a sharp interruption in the course of the previous age. There exists a clear dividing wall between the two ages—the present age and the glorious Kingdom age. Unlike the first assumption, this is manifestly false. In fact, it is this assumption that Christ attempts to disprove in the parable of the mustard seed.

Like many Christians today, the Jews never doubted that the Kingdom of God would be glorious.[1] They believed that the intrusion of God's rule in the world and the victory of God's people would be thorough in its power and sweeping in its influence. Jesus' portrait of the Kingdom of God in the parable of the mustard seed certainly supports this belief. The Kingdom would indeed be glorious. The parable, as found in Matthew's gospel, reads as follows:

> **The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches. (Matt. 13:31–32)**[2]

Though the context of the sowing is a "field," the environs are pictured as being populated with "herbs." This is likely why Luke tightens the specificity of the scene to a "garden" (Luke 13:19). Thus, the mustard plant, which sometimes reached upwards of fifteen feet, would be relatively the largest of the herbs. Luke pictures it becoming a "large tree" in comparison with other garden herbs (Luke 13:19[3]). Mark makes the superlative grandeur explicit: "greater than all herbs" (Mark 4:32). The Kingdom of God is the largest of kingdoms.

This also seems to be the implication of what attends this large tree—"the birds of the air nested in its branches" (Luke13:19). There is likely an allusion here to Ezekiel 17:23, where "birds of every sort" dwell in the renewed covenant tree. Gentile nations stream into the covenant people, the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord. The idea is again here reinforced that the Kingdom of God is a tree of life that swallows the entire horizon, ubiquitous and glorious. But again, nothing here would be startling or in any way novel to Christ's hearers. The Jews uniformly believed in this portrait of the Kingdom. Their error was in conceiving of this state of affairs entering the world *abruptly*. And it is this misconception that the parable is actually intended to redress.

Christ had, on earlier occasions, taught the *present* reality of the Kingdom of God (Matt.11:12; 12:28; Mark 1:15). But this kind of teaching did not seem to square with Jewish anticipation. Christ's ministry lacked the comprehensive sweep that popular expectation cherished. Even John the Baptist appeared to be disappointed in Jesus' ministry and its results (Matt. 11:2). Should not the Kingdom be greater than this? Surely a handful of unlettered disciples is a far cry from the Psalmist's vision of the Messiah ruling from sea to sea (Psa. 72) and Isaiah's vision of divine knowledge blanketing the earth (Isa. 11:9)! Surely the Kingdom awaits its advent in the world. It simply can't be now! And yet, this perspective is very much in error. Here we engage with the point and the power of the parable. Despite the lowly beginnings, the Kingdom *had* indeed begun. The confusion on the part of the hearers was in thinking the fullness of the Kingdom comes at once. Jesus corrects this in two ways.

First, Jesus points out that the full and flourishing Kingdom begins as a modest seed. God created instantaneous mature trees in the creation week (Gen. 1:11–12). However, in the good pleasure of God this was a singular act. After this initial direct act of creation, the trees, grass, and herbs would propagate themselves (albeit, of course, by God's providential superintendence). God cre-

ated these things with "seed … in itself" (Gen. 1:11). We can speak, then, of two "tree models"—the creation model (direct, instantaneous, without means) and the providential model (organic, process oriented, employing means). The Jews evidently thought the Kingdom would come in a fashion analogous to the first model—the creation model. It would come as a miracle of direct divine action, in a flash, as it were. But Jesus here points instead to God's providence over nature, to ordinary growth in ordinary life as a parable of the Kingdom. He seizes upon an agrarian image that would be familiar to his hearers. The mustard seed, proverbially known as the "smallest" of seeds ironically became the "largest" of plants. This latter point has already been developed. But the real rub of the parable is the implications of the former.[4] The Kingdom of God starts small! It may not be initially impressive. It may lack the splendid features of the expected latter day glories. And yet it is the very same reality, though in its humble infancy.[5]

Second, Jesus indicates that the seed stage of the Kingdom arrives at full flowering by a steady process of natural growth. Christ's hearers may have still felt the temptation to insert a "bump" of transition between seed and tree. But this would distort the intent of the imagery.

This parable of Jesus is undoubtedly based upon Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom dream. Daniel pictures numerous empires. Among them stands a rather unusual kingdom. It is a stone "cut without hands." That is to say, it is a non-human kingdom—the Kingdom of God. But again, notice that it begins *among* the other kingdoms: "… in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom" (Dan. 2:44). The divine Kingdom begins "in the days of these kings." Although it becomes the greatest kingdom, crushing all others (Dan. 2:34–35, 44), it nevertheless begins in their midst. The idea is of a humble but realized inauguration that progresses to consummative supremacy. The Kingdom of God, then, *"becomes"* a great mountain, filling the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). It is not introduced great. It is not inaugurated consummated. Rather, it *becomes* the ideal—it *grows* into greatness. There is no room in this portrait to wedge a cataclysm, miracle, or scene change that separates the "the days of these kings" (Dan. 2:44a) from the swallowing of the whole earth in Kingdom fullness (Dan. 2:35, 44b). The beginning and end are not two distinct ages but are in fact the two poles of *one* age!

"The idea is of a humble but realized inauguration that progresses to consummative supremacy. The Kingdom of God, then, *'becomes'* a great mountain, filling the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). It is not introduced great. It is not inaugurated consummated. Rather, it *becomes* the ideal—it *grows* into greatness."

To return to our parable, Jesus' emphasis is very much that of Daniel's. The seed does not "pop" into the mature tree by a miracle or sudden disruption in the ordinary course of growth. Rather, all the potential of the mature tree is laden in the seed. It simply requires the patience of time to ripen into its ideal. As David Brown put it,

> [T]he grain of mustard seed may grow to be a tree sufficient to overshadow the whole earth; but the mass is the same, and the tree is the same, at every stage. The whole is there from the first. Not a new element is added. Expansion and development, growth and maturity, are all the difference.[6]

Since the church has within her all the means of realizing her fullness, should we not be more confident in the God-blessed efficacy of the divine Word? Should we be daydreaming of a second advent to demarcate a distinct age of "the Tree?" Should we not rather see the full and flourishing kingdom-swallowing Kingdom as the natural and inevitable maturation of evangelistic hard work begun with the first disciples? Should we not renew our confidence and participation in the present power of the gospel, ramifying the humble mustard seed into the salvific haven of all men? If what began with eleven men resulted in the world's largest religion, what will the world's largest religion be able to accomplish when it recovers the apostolic confidence in the apostolic gospel?

Steve Zink is the assistant pastor of Ottawa Reformed Presbyterian Church. Steve was mentored by author and Christian counsellor, Dr. Richard Ganz. Both he and Dr. Ganz now partner in ministering to the Ottawa RP congregation. Steve regularly speaks at conferences on Christian worldview and apologetics. He also teaches at Ottawa Theological Hall. He currently resides in Ottawa with his wife Kim and their two children, Heidi and Ezra. He can be reached at rom9_16@yahoo.ca

1. That the Jewish expectation embraced the absolute victory of the cause of God and truth and the elimination of all enemies that would threaten that triumph, see the prophecy of Zacharias in Luke 1.

2. Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by Permission. All rights reserved.

3. The adjective μέγα ("large") is absent

from א, B, and some others. However, it is found in the majority witness (*Byz*), as well as others (A, W, etc.).

4. D. A. Carson notes, "For him it was not essential to stress the greatness of the future kingdom; few would dispute that. It was more important for him to find a metaphor emphasizing the kingdom's tiny beginning." D. A. Carson, "Matthew" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 8. ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1984), 318.

5. "God beginneth his kingdom with very small beginnings, to the end that by the growing on of it, beside the expectation and hope of all men, his mighty power and working may be the more set forth." Note on Matt. 13:31 in *The 1599 Geneva Bible* (White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege Press, 2006–2007), 976.

6. David Brown, *Christ's Second Coming: Will it be Pre-Millennial?* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1868), 332.

Kayser … Conflict cont. from page 9

worked out. So there was procedural satisfaction, which further united them.

Thirdly, all sides of the debate were treated with respect and honor, and all of the major concerns of the parties were at least partly addressed. The circumcision party was not made to feel like outsiders.

Paul shows those same sensitivities in this epistle. Because he sought to win people, not arguments, he gave the Corinthians from all sides at least minimal satisfaction on the issues, both on the procedure that was followed and on the respect and care that was shown. If we want to win people rather than arguments, we need to do the same.

The evidence that Paul put winning people first over winning arguments was that he ended up closer to the Corinthians as a result of the conflict. This is the outcome that we should all desire. Verse 7 says, "*and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more*." Everybody grew through this time of conflict. Verse 15 says of Titus, "*his affections are* greater *for you*." Titus actually cared more for them now than he had before. His affections were greater for them.

One of the ways that you can tell if you have handled conflict in a Biblical way or not is by examining the long term results. Are you closer to the people, or is there a lingering distance and alienation? Is that person made to feel fully welcomed back (as was the prodigal son), or is he treated poorly? For Christians the latter is never an option. We are called by God to win people, not simply to win conflicts.

While there is far more that God's law has to say about this subject, the span of scripture we've examined above sets forth a clear framework for achieving resolution to difficult issues. However, there will be occasions when resolution is simply impossible. This is why Romans 12:18 says, "*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men*." Therefore, it is my prayer that we all depend upon God to use us as peacemakers. May God receive the glory through the faithful efforts that we make.

Phillip G. Kayser, PhD. is the author of over 60 books and booklets. For fifteen years Dr. Kayser has been involved in coaching church planters, mentoring seminary students, and teaching seminars on Biblical leadership internationally. Phil is the pastor of Dominion Covenant Church. Many of his books are available for free download at Biblicalblueprints.com.

1. L. Randolph Lowry, J.D. and Richard W. Meyers, *Conflict Management and Counseling*, volume 29 of the Resources for Christian Counseling series (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, Inc, 1991), p. 189.

2. McSwain, Larry L., and William C. Treadwell, Jr. *Conflict and Ministry in the Church* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), p. 36.

Fugate … Head Tax cont. from page 16

43. Carl F. Keil, *1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 3:253.

44. James Ussher dates Nehemiah's work at 454 B.C. (*The Annals of the World*, § 1243).

45. Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, 1:283f. North's observation, that this Rushdoony quote does not distinguish covenantal, God-ordained institutions (i.e., family, church, and state) from non-covenantal (i.e., school, vocation, and all else), has merit (*Tools of Dominion*, 909).

46. North describes the payment in Exodus 30 as "a blood covering for warriors-become-Nazarite [KJV spelling] priests who were about to go into battle" (*Tools of Dominion*, 912). Of course, this definition completely ignores the other occurrences of the head tax in Scripture.

47. "The combined tax burden of all levels of civil government should not equal the tithe of 10 percent of net income. The largest share must be taken by local civil government. Taxes by higher levels should be imposed on the lower governments, but not on citizens directly. By violating this principle of local sovereignty, civil government is centralized, as it was in Samuel's day (1 Sam. 8). He described this process as a curse, but the Israelites did not believe him. Neither does modern man" (Gary North, *Healer of the Nations: Biblical Blueprint for International Relations* [Ft. Worth, Texas: Dominion Press, 1987], 61).

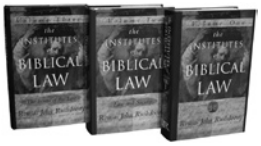
48. Gary North, *Political Polytheism: The Myth of Pluralism* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989), 584f; cf. 294. Dr. North does not believe that an income tax less than 10% is explicitly approved by God in Scripture; he infers it from 1 Samuel 8. He does not elaborate on the steps involved in making this logical inference.

Any income tax inherently causes government intrusion into one's privacy. I critique many different kinds of taxes (including income taxes) in my monograph, *Toward a Theology of Taxation*, available at LordoftheNations.com.

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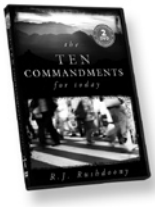
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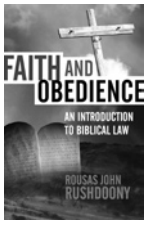


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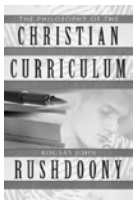
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The Harsh Truth about Public Schools
By Bruce Shortt. This book combines a sound Biblical basis, rigorous research, straightforward, easily read language, and eminently sound reasoning. It is a thoroughly documented description of the inescapably anti-Christian thrust of any governmental school system and the inevitable results: moral relativism (no fixed standards), academic dumbing down, far-left programs, near absence of discipline, and the persistent but pitiable rationalizations offered by government education professionals.

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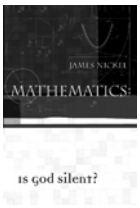
Intellectual Schizophrenia
By R. J. Rushdoony. Dr. Rushdoony predicted that the humanist system, based on anti-Christian premises of the Enlightenment, could only get worse. He knew that education divorced from God and from all transcendental standards would produce the educational disaster and moral barbarism we have today.

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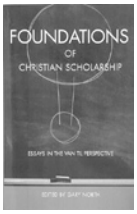
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By R. J. Rushdoony. From Mann to the present, the state has used education to socialize the child. The school's basic purpose, according to its own philosophers, is not education in the traditional sense of the 3 R's. Instead, it is to promote "democracy" and "equality," not in their legal or civic sense, but in terms of the engineering of a socialized citizenry. Such men saw themselves and the school in messianic terms. This book was instrumental in launching the Christian school and homeschool movements.

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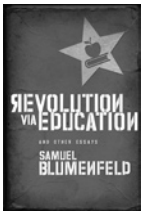
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Edited by Gary North. These are essays developing the implications and meaning of the philosophy of Dr. Cornelius Van Til for every area of life. The chapters explore the implications of Biblical faith for a variety of disciplines.

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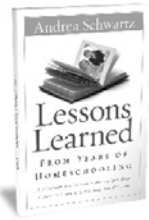
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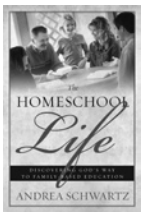
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By Samuel L. Blumenfeld. Blumenfeld gets to the root of our crisis: our spiritual state and the need for an explicitly Christian form of education. Blumenfeld leaves nothing uncovered. He examines the men, methods, and means to the socialist project to transform America into an outright tyranny by scientific controllers.

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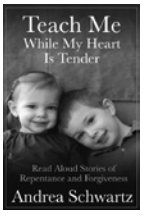
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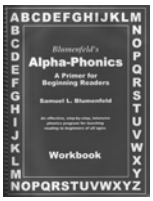
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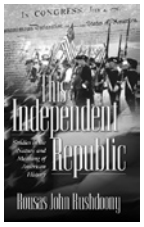
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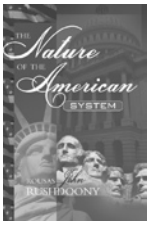
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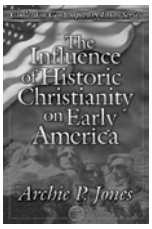
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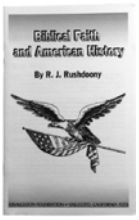
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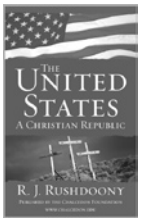
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By Archie P. Jones. Early America was founded upon the deep, extensive influence of Christianity inherited from the medieval period and the Protestant Reformation. That priceless heritage was not limited to the narrow confines of the personal life of the individual, nor to ecclesiastical structure. Christianity positively and predominately (though not perfectly) shaped culture, education, science, literature, legal thought, legal education, political thought, law, politics, charity, and missions.

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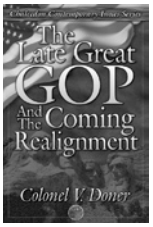
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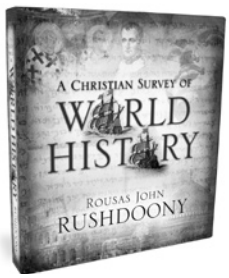


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World History

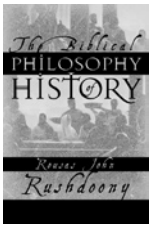


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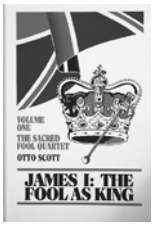
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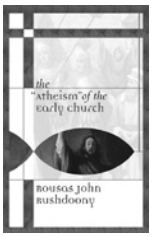


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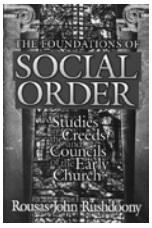
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Church History



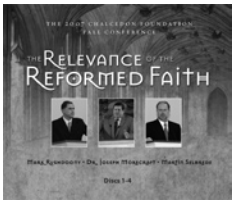
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By R. J. Rushdoony. Early Christians were called "heretics" and "atheists" when they denied the gods of Rome, in particular the divinity of the emperor and the statism he embodied in his personality cult. These Christians knew that Jesus Christ, not the state, was their Lord and that this faith required a different kind of relationship to the state than the state demanded.

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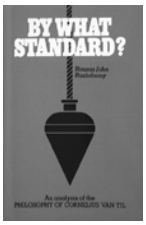
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By R. J. Rushdoony. Modern man has a problem with knowledge. He cannot accept God's Word about the world or anything else, so anything which points to God must be called into question. This book will lead the reader to understand that this problem of knowledge underlies the isolation and self-torment of modern man. Can you know anything if you reject God and His revelation? This book takes the reader into the heart of modern man's intellectual dilemma.

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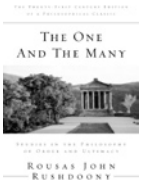
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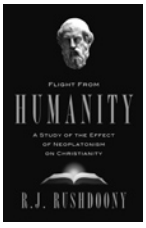
By What Standard?
By R. J. Rushdoony. An introduction into the problems of Christian philosophy. It focuses on the philosophical system of Dr. Cornelius Van Til, which in turn is founded upon the presuppositions of an infallible revelation in the Bible and the necessity of Christian theology for all philosophy. This is Rushdoony's foundational work on philosophy.

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The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy
By R. J. Rushdoony. This work discusses the problem of understanding unity vs. particularity, oneness vs. individuality. "Whether recognized or not, every argument and every theological, philosophical, political, or any other exposition is based on a presupposition about man, God, and society—about reality. This presupposition rules and determines the conclusion; the effect is the result of a cause. And one such basic presupposition is with reference to the one and the many." The author finds the answer in the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

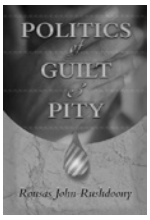
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The Flight from Humanity: A Study of the Effect of Neoplatonism on Christianity
By R. J. Rushdoony. Neoplatonism presents man's dilemma as a metaphysical one, whereas Scripture presents it as a moral problem. Basing Christianity on this false Neoplatonic idea will always shift the faith from the Biblical perspective. The ascetic quest sought to take refuge from sins of the flesh but failed to address the reality of sins of the heart and mind. In the name of humility, the ascetics manifested arrogance and pride. This pagan idea of spirituality entered the church and is the basis of some chronic problems in Western civilization.

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Psychology



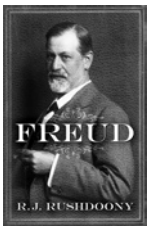
Politics of Guilt and Pity
By R. J. Rushdoony. From the foreword by Steve Schlissel: "Rushdoony sounds the clarion call of liberty for all who remain oppressed by Christian leaders who wrongfully lord it over the souls of God's righteous ones.… I pray that the entire book will not only instruct you in the method and content of a Biblical worldview, but actually bring you further into the glorious freedom of the children of God. Those who walk in wisdom's ways become immune to the politics of guilt and pity."

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By. R. J. Rushdoony. The Biblical doctrine of psychology is a branch of theology dealing with man as a fallen creature marked by a revolt against maturity. Man was created a mature being with a responsibility to dominion and cannot be understood from the Freudian child, nor the Darwinian standpoint of a long biological history. Man's history is a short one filled with responsibility to God. Man's psychological problems are therefore a resistance to responsibility, i.e. a revolt against maturity.

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By R. J. Rushdoony. For years this compact examination of Freud has been out of print. And although both Freud and Rushdoony have passed on, their ideas are still very much in collision. Freud declared war upon guilt and sought to eradicate the primary source of Western guilt — Christianity. Rushdoony shows conclusively the error of Freud's thought and the disastrous consequences of his influence in society.

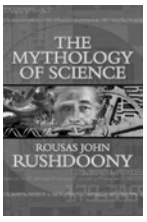
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The Cure of Souls:
Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession
By R. J. Rushdoony. In *The Cure of Souls: Recovering the Biblical Doctrine of Confession*, R. J. Rushdoony cuts through the misuse of Romanism and modern psychology to restore the doctrine of confession to a Biblical foundation—one that is covenantal and Calvinistic. Without a true restoration of Biblical confession, the Christian's walk is impeded by the remains of sin. This volume is an effort in reversing this trend.

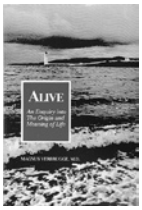
Hardback, 320 pages with index, ~~$26.00~~ $18.20

Science



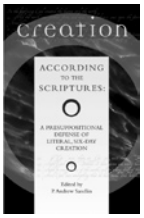
The Mythology of Science
By R. J. Rushdoony. This book is about the religious nature of evolutionary thought, how these religious presuppositions underlie our modern intellectual paradigm, and how they are deferred to as sacrosanct by institutions and disciplines far removed from the empirical sciences. The "mythology" of modern science is its religious devotion to the myth of evolution.

Paperback, 134 pages, ~~$17.00~~ $11.90



Alive: An Enquiry into the Origin and Meaning of Life
By Dr. Magnus Verbrugge, M.D. This study is of major importance as a critique of scientific theory, evolution, and contemporary nihilism in scientific thought. Dr. Verbrugge, son-in-law of the late Dr. H. Dooyeweerd and head of the Dooyeweerd Foundation, applies the insights of Dooyeweerd's thinking to the realm of science. Animism and humanism in scientific theory are brilliantly discussed.

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Creation According to the Scriptures
Edited by P. Andrew Sandlin. Subtitled: *A Presuppositional Defense of Literal Six-Day Creation*, this symposium by thirteen authors is a direct frontal assault on all waffling views of Biblical creation. It explodes the "Framework Hypothesis," so dear to the hearts of many respectability-hungry Calvinists, and it throws down the gauntlet to all who believe they can maintain a consistent view of Biblical infallibility while abandoning literal, six-day creation.

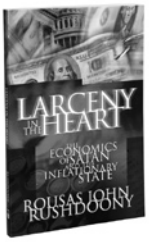
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Economics



Making Sense of Your Dollars: A Biblical Approach to Wealth
By Ian Hodge. The author puts the creation and use of wealth in their Biblical context. Debt has put the economies of nations and individuals in dangerous straits. This book discusses why a business is the best investment, as well as the issues of debt avoidance and insurance. Wealth is a tool for dominion men to use as faithful stewards.

Paperback, 192 pages, index, ~~$12.00~~ $8.40



Larceny in the Heart: The Economics of Satan and the Inflationary State
By R.J. Rushdoony. In this study, first published under the title *Roots of Inflation*, the reader sees why envy often causes the most successful and advanced members of society to be deemed criminals. The reader is shown how envious man finds any superiority in others intolerable and how this leads to a desire for a leveling. The author uncovers the larceny in the heart of man and its results.

Paperback, 144 pages, indices, ~~$18.00~~ $12.60



A Christian View of Vocation: The Glory of the Mundane
By Terry Applegate. To many Christians, business is a "dirty" occupation fit only for greedy, manipulative unbelievers. The author, a successful Christian businessman, explodes this myth in this hard-hitting title.

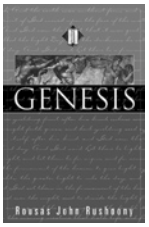
Pamplet, ~~$1.00~~ $.70



Christianity and Capitalism
By R. J. Rushdoony. In a simple, straightforward style, the Christian case for capitalism is presented. Capital, in the form of individual and family property, is protected in Scripture and is necessary for liberty.

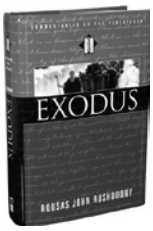
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Biblical Studies



Genesis, Volume I of Commentaries on the Pentateuch
By R. J. Rushdoony. In recent years, it has become commonplace for both humanists and churchmen to sneer at anyone who takes Genesis 1-11 as historical. Yet to believe in the myth of evolution is to accept trillions of miracles to account for our cosmos. Spontaneous generation, the development of something out of nothing, and the blind belief in the miraculous powers of chance, require tremendous faith. Theology without literal six-day creationism becomes alien to the God of Scripture because it turns from the God Who acts and Whose Word is the creative word and the word of power, to a belief in process as god.

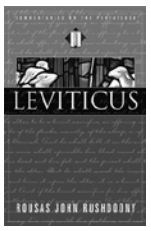
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Exodus, Volume II of Commentaries on the Pentateuch
By R. J. Rushdoony. Essentially, all of mankind is on some sort of an exodus. However, the path of fallen man is vastly different from that of the righteous. Apart from Jesus Christ and His atoning work, the exodus of a fallen humanity means only a further descent from sin into death. But in Christ, the exodus is now a glorious ascent into the justice and dominion of the everlasting Kingdom of God. Therefore, if we are to better understand the gracious provisions made for us in the "promised land" of the New Covenant, a thorough examination into the historic path of Israel as described in the book of Exodus is essential. It is to this end that this volume was written.

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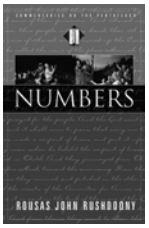
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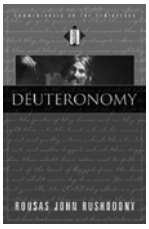
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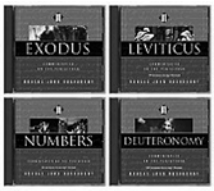
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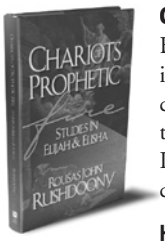
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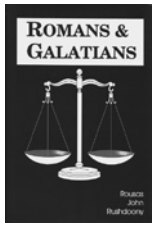
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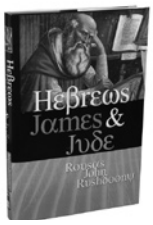
The Gospel of John
By R. J. Rushdoony. Nothing more clearly reveals the gospel than Christ's atoning death and His resurrection. They tell us that Jesus Christ has destroyed the power of sin and death. John therefore deliberately limits the number of miracles he reports in order to point to and concentrate on our Lord's death and resurrection. The Jesus of history is He who made atonement for us, died, and was resurrected. His life cannot be understood apart from this, nor can we know His history in any other light.

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By R. J. Rushdoony. From the author's introduction: "I do not disagree with the liberating power of the Reformation interpretation, but I believe that it provides simply the beginning of our understanding of Romans, not its conclusion.... The great problem in the church's interpretation of Scripture has been its ecclesiastical orientation, as though God speaks only to the church, and commands only the church. The Lord God speaks in and through His Word to the whole man, to every man, and to every area of life and thought…. This is the purpose of my brief comments on Romans."

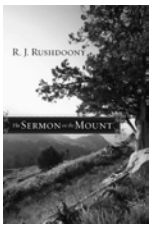
Hardback, 446 pages, indices, ~~$24.00~~ $16.80



Hebrews, James and Jude

By R. J. Rushdoony. The Book of Hebrews is a summons to serve Christ the Redeemer-King fully and faithfully, without compromise. When James, in his epistle, says that faith without works is dead, he tells us that faith is not a mere matter of words, but it is of necessity a matter of life. "Pure religion and undefiled" requires Christian charity and action. Anything short of this is a self-delusion. Jude similarly recalls us to Jesus Christ's apostolic commission, "Remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 17). Jude's letter reminds us of the necessity for a new creation beginning with us, and of the inescapable triumph of the Kingdom of God.

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Sermon on the Mount

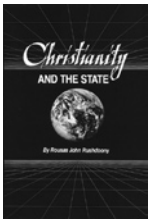
By R. J. Rushdoony. So much has been written about the Sermon on the Mount, but so little of the commentaries venture outside of the matters of the heart. The Beatitudes are reduced to the assumed meaning of their more popular portions, and much of that meaning limits our concerns to downplaying wealth, praying in secret, suppressing our worries, or simply reciting the Lord's Prayer. The Beatitudes are the Kingdom commission to the new Israel of God, and R. J. Rushdoony elucidates this powerful thesis in a readable and engaging commentary on the world's greatest sermon.

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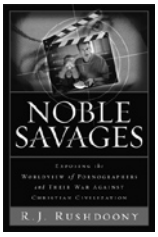
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By R. J. Rushdoony. Salvation in Scripture includes in its meaning "health" and "victory." By limiting the meaning of salvation, men have limited the power of God and the meaning of the Gospel. In this study R. J. Rushdoony demonstrates the expanse of the doctrine of salvation as it relates to the rule of the God and His people.

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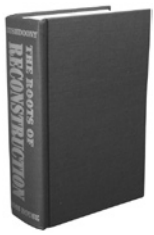
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By R. J. Rushdoony. The Christian faith once meant that a believer responded to a dark world by actively working to bring God's grace and mercy to others, both by word and by deed. However, a modern, self-centered church has isolated the faith to a pietism that relinquishes charitable responsibility to the state. The end result has been the empowering of a humanistic world order. In this book, Rushdoony elucidates the Christian's calling to charity and its implications for Godly dominion.

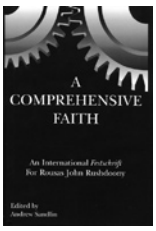
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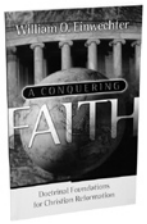
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A Comprehensive Faith

Edited by Andrew Sandlin. This is the surprise *Festschrift* presented to R. J. Rushdoony at his 80th birthday celebration in April, 1996. These essays are in gratitude to Rush's influence and elucidate the importance of his theological and philosophical contributions in numerous fields. Contributors include Theodore Letis, Brian Abshire, Steve Schlissel, Joe Morecraft III, Jean-Marc Berthoud, Byron Snapp, Samuel Blumenfeld, Christine and Thomas Schirrmacher, Herbert W. Titus, Ellsworth McIntyre, Howard Phillips, Ian Hodge, and many more. Also included is a foreword by John Frame and a brief biographical sketch of R. J. Rushdoony's life by Mark Rushdoony.

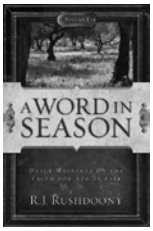
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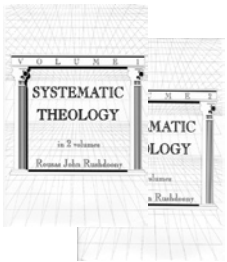
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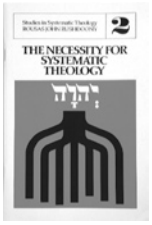
Theology



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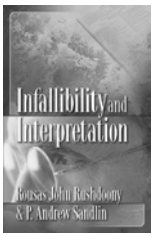
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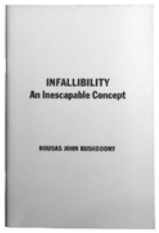
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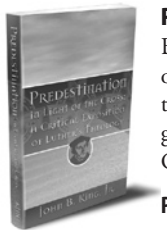
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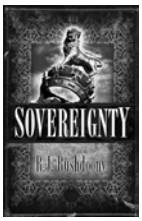
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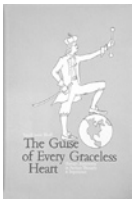
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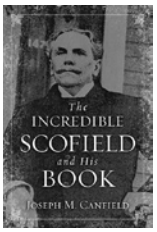
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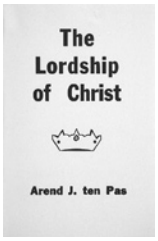
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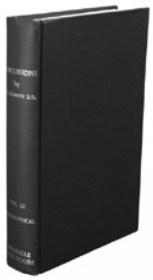
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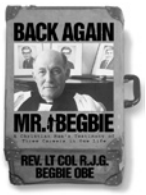
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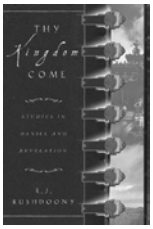
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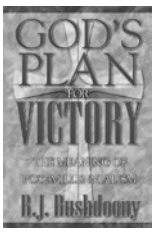
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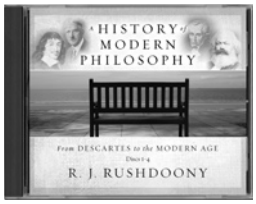
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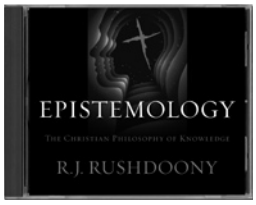
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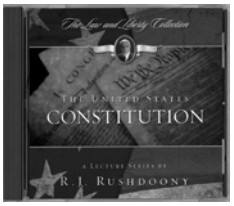
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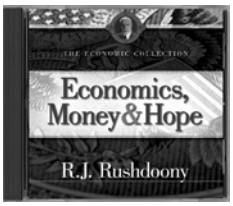
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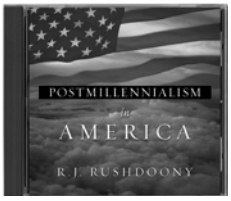
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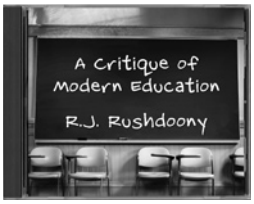
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