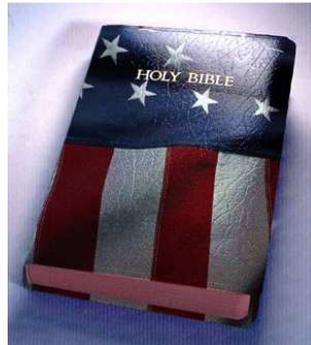


## God or Government, Who Do We Obey?



By Ben Godwin

There is a culture war being waged for the very soul of America. We all have two options: we can either be swept away in the tide of evil or we can take an unpopular stand for truth. The ancient prophet said, “*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil...*” (Isaiah 5:20). The Living Bible states, “*They say that what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right.*” America has lost its moral compass. Sin is being legalized and righteousness is being criminalized. Remember, just because something is legal doesn’t make it morally right.

Prostitution is legal in Nevada, but Scripture clearly condemns it (Leviticus 19:29). Marijuana is legal now in Colorado, but that doesn’t mean it’s a good idea. There are reports that property values are dropping amid other negative factors in pot-prone areas. Gambling is legal in parts of the U.S., but it leads to addiction and poverty instead of true prosperity. Pornography legally floods the internet, and we wonder why there is an epidemic of rape and sexual assault in society.

Some claim “You can’t legislate morality;” you can’t make people live right by simply passing moral laws. Maybe not, but many of our laws were originally based on Scriptural principles and at least reinforced moral conduct in society. More and more, our laws and government condone, endorse, and promote evil. Marriage is penalized, while unmarried couples qualify for free government benefits. Morality is punished; sin is rewarded.

Here in the Bible belt we are embroiled in a legal battle over same-sex marriage, something 81% of voters agreed to ban in the 2006 Alabama Sanctity of Marriage Amendment. But a few liberal, federal judges have overturned similar bans in several states. Even if same-sex marriage is legalized nationwide, it doesn’t make it right. Man’s laws cannot make moral what God has declared immoral. Marriage has been defined Biblically, traditionally, and historically as a union between one man and one woman for thousands of years.

The Bible teaches us to submit to authority and obey the law unless it violates Scripture or contradicts our Christian conscience. Examples of immoral laws in Bible times:

- Pharaoh mandated infanticide in ancient Egypt for Hebrew males, but the midwives feared God and refused to comply. If Amram and Jochebed had obeyed, we would have never heard of a man named Moses and the 10 Commandments, the basis of most legal systems.
- Ahasuerus made a decree to exterminate the Jews in Persia, but Esther exposed the sinister plot and saved her race.
- Nebuchadnezzar coerced idolatry in ancient Babylon but the three Hebrews refused to bow to his golden image, despite facing a fiery furnace.
- King Darius outlawed prayer in Babylon, but Daniel prayed anyway and the God who answers prayer preserved him in the lion's den.
- The Sanhedrin Court forbade Peter and John to preach the Gospel of Jesus in Jerusalem. The Apostle's response was, "We ought to obey God rather man."

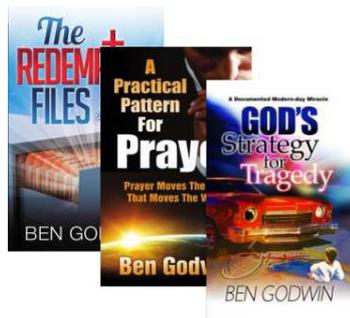
In cases where laws clearly contradict Scripture, we must be guided by a higher law. Martin Luther was excommunicated from the Catholic Church for "heresy" because he rejected its heretical teachings. He nailed his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Whitenburg in 1517. When ordered to recant his views, he boldly stated, "My conscience is captive to the Word of God, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." God used him to translate the Bible into German and spark the Great Reformation.

There is a new kind of bullying occurring in America. We're all familiar with physical and verbal bullying in the schools and cyber bullying on social media. Now there is legal bullying happening in marriage related industries. Florists, bakers, photographers, etc., are being sued for exercising their religious beliefs against gay marriage. In some cases, lawsuits are threatening to close their businesses because they stand for traditional marriage. What's next? Are pastors and churches going to be sued for refusing to perform gay marriages, which violates their beliefs?

What happened to freedom of religion and freedom of speech in America? The politically correct crowd seems to tolerate most any view except the Christian view. People can say any vile thing on TV or the internet and few people object. However, when Christians speak up for Biblical marriage, they are called haters, bigots, homophobes, or extremists. Look what the media tried to do to Phil Robertson of Duck Dynasty fame when he expressed his beliefs on this subject. They pressured A&E to pull the plug on their most popular TV program. Commendably, A&E didn't cave in, perhaps because the show is their number one cash cow.

Ben Carson is a brilliant, black, Christian, retired neurosurgeon from John Hopkins Hospital. He has authored many books including “*Gifted Hands*” which was made into a movie. Carson rose out of poverty in Detroit and became a skilled surgeon—the first to separate conjoined twins connected at the head. He was awarded the Medal of Freedom in 2008 by President George Bush and may run for president in 2016. He has been outspoken about his support for traditional marriage. Consequently, the Southern Poverty Law Center placed him on their extremist watch list with KKK members and neo-Nazis. When this was exposed, they apologized and removed him from their list.

Since when does believing in traditional marriage make you an extremist? Carson is the kind of successful black man America should celebrate—a true role model. But, because he is a conservative Christian, he’s being vilified in the media. It takes courage to go against the current. Any dead fish can float downstream. The farther America drifts from her Judeo-Christian roots, the more Christians will be faced with the hard choice—God or government, who do we obey?



Ben Godwin pastors the Goodsprings Full Gospel Church and has authored three books. Note: this article was recently featured in Ben’s column in the *Daily Mountain Eagle*, a newspaper in Jasper, Alabama. To read more articles, visit his website and take advantage of his 3 book bundle for \$20.00 plus shipping at [bengodwin.org](http://bengodwin.org)