

On June 28, 1787, the statesman Benjamin Franklin was speaking to George Washington and the other delegates of the Constitutional Convention when he said:

“And have we now forgotten that powerful friend? or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God governs in the affairs of men. I therefore beg leave to move—that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business...”

Indeed, God does govern in the affairs of men. There is no authority, government, people, or nation that escapes the divine supervision of our Creator. This is not an Old Testament phenomenon, but rather a universal principle that applies to all people in all places for all time. God is always directing the government of nations. For example, **Romans 13:1**: *“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”*

This passage means what it says: governing authorities – whoever they may be, wherever they may be, and whenever they may be – are appointed by God. It may appear as though authorities come to their position by virtue of family lineage, democratic elections, or even revolutions. The Scriptures say, no, God is ultimately orchestrating the rise and fall of secular leaders. How He does this is incomprehensible, but the fact that He does do it is undeniable.

We need to be reminded of this principle from time to time, as did the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. His pride and the ensuing humiliation are described in **Daniel 4:30-32**:

The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you [...] and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

Things are not always what they seem. Nebuchadnezzar might have claimed his right to the throne by virtue of his lineage, being the son of Nabopolassar, the previous king. In reality, Nebuchadnezzar's rise to power was the result of divine providence, which is infinitely beyond our comprehension. God can operate in any form of government, in democracies or monarchies, like Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's fall reminds us that the kingdoms of earth are not created by men, they are not sustained by men, and they are not even for men. The kingdoms of this Earth are created by God, sustained by God, and they are for the purposes of God. This principle is emphatically confirmed in **Jeremiah 27:5**: *"It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me."*

Most of us are comfortable with this principle as long as we like the leading authorities. But when the leaders are unapologetically evil, then we hesitate. How could God possibly be responsible for giving this person their position of power? The entire Bible testifies to the fact that even evil leaders have a place in the eternal plan of God. Consider Pontius Pilate, one of the great villains of the Bible. **John 19:10-11**: *“Then Pilate said to [Jesus], "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above.”*

How does this all fit into the plan of salvation? Paul explained God's motives in Acts 17:24-27:

God, who made the world and everything in it [...] has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us...

Nations rise and fall. Governments rise and fall. People come, and they go. And all of this is for one divine purpose – so that the peoples of this Earth will seek the Lord. Something about the organization of the nations through time has been perfectly suited so that people will seek their Creator.

Is it possible our great nation was providentially created by God? It's more than possible; the Bible says it's certain. God creates nations, and he destroys nations. We love this country, but it is nonetheless a secular kingdom under divine supervision. It has a purpose in the plan of God. When that purpose is fulfilled, this nation, like every other nation, will fall.