



"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

—George Washington

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Coming: A Truly Benevolent Ruler

In Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, the hero, a hard-boiled nineteenth-century New Englander by the name of Hank Morgan, opines that the best government is a benevolent dictatorship—particularly one with him at its head. However, a major problem with benevolent dictatorship is that what seems benevolent to one person—the dictator—appears tyrannical to another. As C.S. Lewis once wrote, "Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive."

In light of human nature, this is very true. What is good for the goose may not actually be good for the gander. One-size-fits-all solutions tend to be very confining for those whose "size" is uncommon. While most of humanity may not be too far off the norm—whatever that may be—people are so varied that the extremes are quite distant from the mean. Try asking Kentucky Derby-winning jockey Calvin Borel to clomp around in Shaquille O'Neal's shoes! The same goes for government policies. For instance, a general healthcare plan will not cover everyone's needs; someone—in fact,

many people—will have diseases and infirmities that are not specifically covered. These people will either be out of luck or have to find an expensive alternative.

A program may work on a small scale yet not be viable on a large one. Some intellectual may have a wonderful idea regarding preschool childcare, and in laboratory-like conditions, it may work superbly. However, it may be entirely impractical to roll a program like that out on a nationwide basis either because of regional educational differences, dissimilar facilities, different levels of funding, differences in teachers and administrators, etc. Besides, not all parents want or need their children to participate in preschool childcare.

Finally, even for themselves, human beings have a limited understanding of what would work best, but their perception of what is best for others is inadequate to say the least. Some people are very happy to live alone and not be bothered by anyone, anytime. Yet, there are millions of Americans, it seems, who have little objection to some aspect of government poking into their affairs on a regular basis. How much is too little or too much government? What human leader has the correct answer to this?

In addition, even if the dictator is the wisest man in [the world](#), the benevolent dictatorship literally has a terminal problem: The dictator will eventually die. He will have to give his power to somebody who is probably not as benevolent as he is. In fact, his heir will probably be a sniveling wastrel or an arrogant thug. Solomon bemoans this fact himself in [Ecclesiastes 2:18-19](#), 21:

Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity. . . . For there is a man whose labor is with [wisdom](#), knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also is vanity and a great evil.

As much as he tried to make his kingdom, the nation of Israel, great and wonderful, he had to leave it to his son—and he could see that his son,

Rehoboam, was nowhere close to his level of genius. But we know the story: Solomon himself did not turn out to be very benevolent, as he overworked and overtaxed his own people to complete his massive building projects. His ironic complaint ends up being just a conceit of one who felt he was a great, benevolent leader.

Surely, many of us have said, "If *I* were the President, I would [insert your own grandiose plan here]!" Have we not been converted and have the mind of Christ ([1 Corinthians 2:16](#))? Do we not know the kind of government and changes this world really needs? Yet, even if we knew all the right policies to enact and enforce, and we did our job perfectly, we would ultimately be failures because we will die. We have only to look at the history of the kings of Israel and Judah to realize that good kings were followed by bad kings, and the people ultimately suffered for it. Even the most godly and benevolent policies and institutions fail because they cannot be perpetuated beyond a generation or perhaps two.

These reasons are why the only answer to humanity's problems is the [return of Jesus Christ](#) to set up His Kingdom and rule with a rod of iron ([Revelation 19:15](#)). Only our Creator knows what humans really need, as well as how and when to give it to them. And being immortal, He will never have to relinquish His throne to an inferior heir. His will be the ultimate benevolent dictatorship.

Once He has established His government on the earth and instituted His righteous, just, and equitable policies over Israel, they will begin to bring [peace](#) and prosperity to all who follow them. Others will see the [joy](#) that His way of life provides to His people, and they will seek His governance over them. His rule will spread over all the earth in perpetuity. In fact, [1 Corinthians 15:25](#) tells us, "For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet."

The church of [God](#) observes the [Feast of Trumpets](#), the holy day the Jews call [Rosh Hashanah](#). We believe that God's [holy days](#), described and commanded in Leviticus 23, reveal to us God's plan of salvation for all humanity. The Feast of Trumpets is the fourth of the seven annual holy days,

sitting in the central position of God's plan, and the great event that it symbolizes is the wonderful return of [Jesus Christ](#) to establish the [Kingdom of God](#) on earth.

On this holy day, we look forward to the time of God's direct intervention into the affairs of humanity, to bring divine order and peace to a chaotic, war-torn, immoral, and deceived world. While some may scorn this as an impossible Utopian vision, we merely point to the pages of the Bible and Christ's promise, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" ([John 14:3](#)). We would like nothing better than to live under the benevolent rule of our King, and thus we pray, "Your kingdom come" ([Matthew 6:10](#)).

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Ecclesiastes and the Feast of Tabernacles \(Part 1\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Love for this world will inevitably bring disillusionment. Realizing that the world is passing away, our priorities should be on fearing God and keeping his commandments. The temporary booths (short lived and quickly deteriorating) at the Feast depicts our temporary and impermanent, often unpleasant and disappointing earthly pilgrimage, contrasted with the permanence of Christ's rule and our future eternal life. Without living for God's purpose for us, this life is absolutely meaningless.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Preparing to Rule!](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Have you ever considered what it will be like right after Christ returns? What will you do, as a king, to help and govern the people placed under you? Believe it or not, you are already developing those skills!

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