

Meritocracy, Theocracy, or Democracy?

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Throughout man's history there have been many different forms of government. Every system from a monarchy to a democracy has been exercised on this planet, but all fall short of creating a perfect world. This reality is by design, because the Creator of mankind knew in advance that His children would disagree with, and ultimately reject, the system of governance He established from the beginning of time. So we are bound to continue our grand experiment until every possible form of governance has been exhausted, and we finally admit that His system is the only one that truly serves the people and creates positive results for everyone.

As we will see in this study, a meritocracy and theocracy are complementary. However, a democracy is not compatible with either. But first, a definition of each system needs to be examined:

Meritocracy: a political system in which economic goods and/or political power are vested in individual people on the basis of talent, effort, and achievement; rather than wealth, social class, *ethnicity, or gender*. Advancement in such a system is based on performance, as measured through examination or demonstrated achievement (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meritocracy; emphasis added).

Theocracy: government of a state by immediate divine governance, or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided (www.merriam-webster/dictionary/theocracy).

Democracy: literally, "rule by the people". The term is derived from the Greek, *demokratia*, which was coined from *demos* (people) and *kratos* (rule) in the middle of the 5th century BCE

to denote the political systems then existing in some Greek city-states, notably Athens (www.britannica.com/topic/democracy).

Prior to the creation of mankind, every spirit being was governed by a theocracy that operated according to the word of Almighty God. The results were very positive, and everyone affected by this form a ruler-ship experienced true happiness as the following highlighted section of scripture confirms.

*Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: ²"Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? ³Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. ⁴Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. ⁵Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! (answer: Almighty God) Or who stretched the line upon it? (answer: spirit-being now known as Jesus Christ, cf. Col. 1:13-18) ⁶To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone (answer: Almighty God placed Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, cf. Mt. 21:42; 1Pet. 2:6). ⁷When **the morning stars sang together, and all the sons (angels) of God shouted for joy?"** (Job 38:1-6; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).*

Within the theocracy described above, the principles of a meritocracy could be practiced. Specifically, every spirit-being could apply themselves and work hard to improve their talents and abilities no matter who they were. However, everyone would need to play by the same rules as outlined by the word of God. The "end goal" of those rules of conduct would be to develop individuals who could more effectively assist and advance the well-being of their fellow servants.

*For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: **If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat** (2 Thes. 3:10; cf. 3:12; 1Thes. 4:11; emphasis added).*

*Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, **that he may have something to give him who has need** (Eph. 4:28; emphasis added).*

In contrast, a democratic system of governance today can often discriminate against people who do not subscribe to “the identity politics of the day.” For example, in the United States of America, there is a strong belief on the part of many supporters of the Democratic Party that individuals in positions of authority should be of a specific ethnicity regardless of qualifications,

A diverse party needs diverse representation. The best way to ensure that for the future is for the eventual 2020 Democratic Presidential candidate to choose a person of color for his or her Vice President (Democrats Are Headed Toward A White Nominee by Noah Berlatsky; Los Angeles Time; Jan. 13, 2020).

Ethnicity is not the only yardstick used to determine who is acceptable and who is not in today’s Democratic Party. Sexual orientation is also a requirement. A recent article in Politico reports that:

*The Congressional Black Caucus is demanding that President-elect, Joe Biden, select a black secretary of defense. So the focus is not on who is best qualified. Instead, the primary goal is to place someone in a position of authority based on skin color. **Now feminist groups are up in arms, says Politico, because they want a female secretary of defense.** Those who subscribe to these opinions are more*

concerned about an individual’s gender than their ability to do a great job for the country they are supposed to serve (CBC pushes for Black Defense secretary by Alex Thompson and Theodoric Meyer; Nov. 30, 2020; Politico’s 2020 Transition Playbook; emphasis added).

Again, in God’s theocratic system of government, no one is appointed to a position of service based on the color of their skin or gender. Even during the time of the Old Testament, anyone from any ethnicity could actively participate in the nation of Israel providing they followed the legislative rules of that era, one of which included being circumcised.

*And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and **he shall be as a native of the land**... (Ex. 12:48a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

*For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since **whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land** (Ex. 12:19; emphasis added).*

The ability to serve in God’s theocracy was not limited to one’s gender. For example, Deborah was in a position of authority over the ancient nation of Israel.

*Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time (for a period of forty years). ⁵And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And **the children of Israel came up to her for judgment** (Jgs. 4:4-5; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

Even Barak, the military leader of the time, would not go to battle without Deborah's presence.

And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"⁹ So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the Lord will sell Sisera (leader of the Canaanite army) into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh (Jgs. 4:8-9; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In addition, the theocracy of Almighty God does not penalize anyone for applying the principles of a meritocracy. Instead, these attributes are encouraged and rewarded as the following parable confirms:

*"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. ¹⁵"And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, **to each according to his own ability**; and immediately he went on a journey. ¹⁶"Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. ¹⁷"And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. ¹⁸"But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. ¹⁹"After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰"So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' ²¹"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' ²²"He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' ²³"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few*

things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' ²⁴"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'²⁶"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. ²⁷'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. ²⁸'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. ²⁹**'For to everyone who has** (applied the principles of a meritocracy), **more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have** (that same work ethic), **even what he has will be taken away** (Mt.25:14-29; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

God's theocracy rewards a good work ethic rather than creating disincentives such as raising taxes on those who work harder and/or make the sacrifices necessary to be successful. This is why everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social status pays the same 10% of their productive increase, which is referred to as a tithe in the following section of scripture:

*All **the tithe** of the land, whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord (Nu. 27:30; emphasis added)*

*And concerning **the tithe** of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod (used for counting), the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord (Nu. 27:32; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

Essential government services were funded through the proper management of this tithe,

and the leadership was responsible for making sure the nation of Israel did not go into debt. Unfortunately, democratic governments today are all in debt through fiscal mismanagement, often fueled by the creation of never-ending programs in an ever-growing bureaucracy.

*For the Lord your God will bless you just as He promised you; you shall lend to many nations, but **you shall not borrow**; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you (Dt. 15:6; cf. Prov. 22:7b; emphasis added).*

Again, this confirms that democratic systems are not compatible with either a theocratic based government or meritocratic system because both expect accountability and productivity, while democratic systems continue to burden future generations with debt and its accumulative interest. Before going further it must be stressed again that, in God's theocracy, everyone pays the same percentage of their income; whereas in democracies today there are loopholes that allow wealthy people to pay less,

In a 2007 interview, (Warren) Buffett explained that he took a survey of his employees and compared their tax rates to his. All told, he found that while he paid a total tax rate of 17.7%, the average rate for people in his office was 32.9% (Why Does Billionaire Warren Buffet Pay a Lower Tax Rate Than His Secretary by Maurie Backman; Sept. 25, 2020).

Other forms of government today such as totalitarianism and dictatorships will not be covered in this study because they are against the basic freedoms and human rights of their own citizens and, in almost all cases, against Almighty God, His sovereignty, and His law.

In both a meritocracy and theocracy, everyone is expected to overcome obstacles in order to

improve themselves. In contrast, many programs in democratic systems are counterproductive because they encourage and enable laziness, and other bad habits, combined with an inherent dependence upon a central government. In fact, many of the very programs designed to assist the poor actually harm their personal development and improvement as human beings,

*The first failure of government welfare programs is to favor help with current consumption while placing almost no emphasis on job training or anything else that might allow today's poor people to become self-sufficient in the future. Many states have been securing waivers from the Obama administration so that people on various welfare programs (such as SNAP, that used to be called food stamps), are not required to either work or go to job training classes in order to continue to receive benefits. **This is short-sighted because it keeps people dependent on government benefits.** It is the classic story of giving a man a fish or teaching him how to fish. Government welfare programs hand out lots of fish, but never seem to teach people how to fish for themselves. In a study for ProPublica, Amy Goldstein documents that people who lost their jobs and participated in a federal job training program were less likely to be employed afterward than those who lost their jobs and did not receive any job training. That is, the job training made people worse off instead of better. Right now, the government cannot teach anyone how to fish, let alone catch one (Welfare Offers Short-Term Help and Long-Term Poverty by Jeffrey Dorfman; Oct. 13, 2016; Forbes Magazine).*

If the pioneers, that arrived in the United States hundreds of years ago, had welfare programs similar to those offered today, would they have had the incentive to open up the country from

coast to coast when it would have been easier to stay at home and receive government benefits? Thankfully, the early pioneers were willing to sacrifice and endure the hardships associated with opening up the US without welfare from government programs. At the end of the day, these benefits are paid by the taxes of those who are making better choices and doing what is necessary to remain at work. The Biblical figure, Job, endured many trials and overcame them. As a result, he became a better servant of Almighty God and was rewarded generously for all the struggles he faced,

Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the Lord had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold. ¹²Now the Lord blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep. Six thousand camels, one thousand yoke oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. ¹³He also had seven sons and three daughters (Job 42:11-13).

Democratic systems function as if it is their responsibility to "protect" everyone from every adversity.

In reality, these good intentions end up protecting people from their own wrong choices. This also compounds problems such as the cycle of generational poverty. Even the educational systems shield students from failing a grade. How does this equip them for future failures that are part of life? Also, students are being taught that there will be no consequences for their actions, or lack thereof, and when a serious problem arises they are ill-prepared to deal with it because they were never taught to discipline themselves,

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience (endurance or perseverance). ⁴But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be(come) perfect and complete, lacking nothing (Jas. 1:2-3; cf. Ps. 34:19; 119:71; Prov. 24:16a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

None of this means that the poor should be ignored. Instead, God's theocracy helps them through a process that also builds closer families, friends, and neighborhoods, rather than shifting responsibility to an impersonal central government and the tax payers that fund it.

It is ludicrous to believe that the welfare systems of democratic governments will solve the problems associated with being poor and contribute to a better society. Christ said that mankind would always have poor people and this is primarily due to the laws of God, pertaining to poverty, being ignored (cf. Mt. 26:11a). First and foremost, it is the responsibility of each family, whether nuclear or extended, to look after its own members. For example, if a family member made a wrong decision leading to the loss of property and/or equipment necessary for his livelihood, anyone in that family can legally purchase and return it to their family member. This would allow the poor family member to provide for himself again.

If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possessions, and if his kinsman-redeemer comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold (Lev. 25:25).

*Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, ⁴⁸after he is sold he may be redeemed again. **One of his***

brothers may redeem him; ⁴⁹or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him... (Lev. 25:47-49a; emphasis added).

There's no need for expensive government housing for the poor in God's theocracy. Instead, the nuclear or extended family members are to provide shelter without any form of opportunism until they get on their feet again.

And if one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. ³⁶Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. ³⁷You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit (Lev. 25:35-37).

At the end of the day, the tax payers of a country should not be expected to take responsibility for the poor. Instead, families who have poor members are expected to help their own. In cases where there are no reliable "next of kin", then a close friend is expected to step up. The reason Jesus Christ asked John to care for his mother was because he knew his family members would all be persecuted following his death, while John would continue to live for a much longer period of time in comparative safety.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing by, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son (John)!" ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" and from that hour that disciple took her to his own home (Jn. 19:25-27; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Even widows were not to be a financial burden to the early church of God providing they had family members capable of assisting them.

But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God (1Tim. 5:4).

But if anyone does not provide for his own (family members), and especially those of his (immediate) household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1Tim. 5:8; Ed. notes in parentheses).

If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her assist them; let the church not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are real widows (having no one who can genuinely care for them) (1Tim. 5:16; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Democratic governments with their many tax funded "assistance programs" work against personal and family development and improvement. By contrast, the theocratic system of God's government works to improve individuals and their families through accountability for decisions and actions. In short, bad behavior, in whatever form, has consequences while good conduct is rewarded. The latter is also the hope of those who subscribe to the goals of a meritocracy. Those living in democracies around the world are so conditioned and accustomed to the government programs they have grown up with that God's theocratic system seems like a fantasy. In reality, God's theocracy is synonymous with the "kingdom of heaven" which is based on God's laws and commandments being applied equally to all its citizens. This is the system that Jesus Christ will be teaching and enforcing upon his return to bind the god this present evil age (Rev. 20:1-3 cf. 2Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4). Needless to say, there will be an organized resistance to the establishment of this

completely different method of governing mankind as the following parable confirms.

*Therefore he said: "A certain nobleman (Christ) went into a far country (heaven) to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas (approx. 3 months' salary), and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, '**We will not have this man (Christ) to reign over us**'" (Lk. 19:11-14; cf. Ps. 68:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).*

The resistance against the government of Almighty God, and His representative Jesus Christ, began at the moment Lucifer rebelled against it and he has been working ever since to prevent it from being established universally. Thankfully, he will fail and his faulty system replaced forever (Rev. 20:7-10).

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