



BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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LESSON 11

Our Heritage of Liberty

Isaiah 33:22

"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us."

In the heart of Washington, D.C. is a vast landscaped park known as the National Mall. Originally envisioned in 1791 as "the Grand Avenue" for the new capital, the National Mall now spans more than 1,000 acres and includes iconic monuments, such as the Washington Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial. These serve as constant reminders of America's high ideals of liberty for all. Among these monuments are memorials to our military members who died in World War II, the

Vietnam War, and the Korean War, which serve as testaments to the high price of freedom and America's commitment to defend liberty wherever it is challenged.

Within view of the National Mall stand three remarkable buildings that symbolize the United States government: the U.S. Capitol Building, the Supreme Court Building, and the White House. Each serves as the seat of legislative, judicial, and executive power, respectively. The founding of the United States of America in 1776 marked the beginning of something the world had never seen. The Founding Fathers wanted a representative government with built-in checks and balances. They had witnessed the tyranny of centralized authority and sought to establish a political system ruled by law, balanced by a division of power, and led by elected representatives. But where could such a pattern be found?

The framers of America were highly intelligent men and well-versed in the Scriptures. They took seriously the words of Jeremiah 17:9, which reads, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” For this reason, they advocated for a separation of powers, believing that no single person could be entrusted with absolute authority. Leading philosophers maintained that liberty could not exist if the power to judge was not separated from legislative and executive powers. If judges could legislate, their authority over the citizen’s life and liberty would become arbitrary. Should judges wield executive powers, they could turn into oppressors (see Baron Charles Montesquieu, “The Spirit of the Laws”). These ideas greatly influenced the Founding Fathers. They understood that liberty could not survive where authority was

vested in one figure. To preserve freedom, the functional responsibilities of human government to make laws, interpret laws, and enforce laws had to be divided. The Founding Fathers recognized that each branch of government restrains the other so that no single authority becomes tyrannical.

At the Constitutional Convention of 1787, James Madison believed he had discovered the perfect example of a tripartite government that distinguished between judicial, legislative, and executive responsibilities. Madison directed his peers to Isaiah 33:22, which reads, “*For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king: he will save us.*”

The Lord, as the Judge, exemplifies the judicial branch. The Lord, as the Lawgiver, embodies the legislative branch. The Lord, as the King, epitomizes the executive branch. Unlike Madison’s application of this verse, Isaiah presents something far superior to a three-branch division of power. What humans could never do because of their wicked hearts, the Lord accomplishes perfectly. Human governments that value life and liberty demand a separation of powers. But God, who is holy and unchanging, authors and preserves life and liberty without the need of three governmental branches.

Isaiah 33:22 is a profound verse that demonstrates the Bible's influence on America's founding and serves as an inspiration for its three branches of government. More importantly, Isaiah 33:22 is a declaration of God's nature and character, culminating in His redemptive work. What must be divided among fallible people in human government is perfectly united in the Lord. He is, at once, Judge, Lawgiver, and

King—not in limitation, but in perfection. To understand the true heritage of liberty, we must look beyond the structure of human government and consider the character of God. Ultimately, liberty is not preserved by institutions, but by the perfection of the One who rules. Isaiah 33:22 teaches us that true liberty is found in our relationship with God as our Judge, Lawgiver, and King.

The Lord Is Our Judge.

The Judicial Authority of Liberty

The Lord, as our Judge, presents God as the One who perfectly interprets and applies justice. In human government, the judicial branch interprets the law, evaluates evidence, and renders verdicts. It ensures that justice is rightly applied. In an infinitely greater way, God as Judge does not merely oversee justice; He executes it perfectly.

Human judges are limited, often lacking complete information and subject to bias. Their rulings can be flawed and are subject to appeal. God, however, judges with perfect knowledge and perfect righteousness. He knows every fact, every motive, and every intention (Psalm 139:1-4). His judgments are never mistaken, never partial, and never overturned. Because He is God, His judgments are infallible. As Deuteronomy 32:4 teaches, the LORD's *“work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”* As Genesis 18:25 declares, the Judge of all the earth will do what is right.

This has direct implications for Christian liberty. If God is Judge, then liberty is not the absence of judgment; it is the assurance of righteous judgment. Without a judge, law becomes meaningless, and liberty collapses into confusion. However, because God judges perfectly, liberty is anchored in divine justice rather than human opinion.

For the believer, this produces both assurance and accountability. We are free from condemnation in Christ (Romans 8:1), as the Judge has declared all believers righteous through the finished work of Christ. At the same time, we are accountable, for every life will be evaluated according to God's standard (II Corinthians 5:10). Christian liberty is not freedom from judgment, but the confidence of living under a perfect Judge who always rules aright.

The Lord Is Our Lawgiver.

The Legislative Authority of Liberty

The Lord, as the Lawgiver, reveals God as the One who defines truth and establishes the standard for life. In human government, the legislative branch creates laws, sets standards, and determines what is right and wrong within society. Similarly, God as the Lawgiver does not merely write laws; He reveals reality with perfect accuracy.

Unlike human legislatures, which debate, develop, and revise laws because they are limited and imperfect, God speaks with perfection. He does not discover truth. God declares truth from His own nature. His law is not evolving or provisional; it is

complete, unchanging, and authoritative (Psalm 19:7). God's law flows directly from His unchanging character (Malachi 3:6). Right is right because it reflects who God is.

Consider the implications for Christian liberty. If God is the Lawgiver, then liberty is not defined by personal preference or cultural consensus. Liberty is defined by the revealed will of God. Just as human law structures society, God's Word structures life. Freedom does not exist in the absence of boundaries, but within the right ones. Christian liberty operates within the framework of God's Word. These boundaries do not restrict life; they make it ordered, stable, and meaningful.

Without a fixed Lawgiver, liberty falls into chaos. Good is called evil, evil is called good, right is wrong, and wrong is right. But because God has spoken, liberty is anchored in objective truth. Therefore, Christian liberty is not the freedom to determine what is right but the freedom to live according to what God has already declared to be right. The Lord is the Lawgiver; thus, we are not left to guess at life. We do not navigate by opinion. We walk in revealed truth, and that is where true liberty is found.

The Lord Is Our King.

The Executive Authority of Liberty

The Lord, as King, reveals God as the active Ruler who governs and secures His people. In human government, the executive branch enforces laws, administers policies, and manages a nation's affairs. Executive power takes what has been established in the legislature, interpreted in the judiciary, and ensures it becomes a lived reality. Likewise,

God as King does not simply define truth; He executes and applies it. God's Kingship is not passive authority; it is active governance. Psalm 103:19 affirms that “*His kingdom ruleth over all.*” He orders the course of history, directs the lives of His people, and ensures that His purposes are accomplished. Unlike human executives, whose power must be limited because they are corrupted by sin, God's authority is perfect, unified, and incorruptible. What must be divided in human government for safety is united in God because He is perfectly righteous.

This truth has direct implications for Christian liberty. Liberty is not merely defined by God; it is lived out under His rule. What God establishes as Lawgiver, He carries into effect as King. Consequently, liberty is not theoretical. True liberty is experienced through daily guidance, direction, and purpose under God's authority.

Practically, believers are freed from uncertainty. Liberty is not the burden of determining our own path, but the confidence of being led by the perfect King. This means liberty is secure. Human systems often fail to consistently uphold justice, but God ensures that righteousness ultimately prevails. “*He will save us*” reminds us that the King not only rules but protects. Therefore, Christian liberty is not self-directed independence. It is the freedom to live under God's active guiding and sustaining rule.

More than describing God, Isaiah 33:22 defines the only secure foundation for liberty. Because the Lord is our Judge, we are freed from condemnation and anchored in perfect justice. Because the LORD is our Lawgiver, we are not left to define truth

but are guided by what is eternally right. Because the LORD is our King, we are not left to direct our own lives, but are led, sustained, and secured under His perfect rule.

Christian liberty is the freedom to live as we ought. We are free to live under the authority of a God who is perfectly just, perfectly true, and perfectly good. When we see God in these roles with biblical clarity, we will live more confidently in true liberty. For liberty is not found in escaping authority, but in living under the authority of the One who loves us and *“will save us.”*