

# Direction from God

Saint Augustine, in The City of God, said there were two cities: the City of God was the body of believers, and the City of Man was the secular world. He said that God created the city of man in order to insure the safety and security of the City of God. The Divine Right of Kings came from this theory that God chose these particular Kings as rulers. For this reason they were accountable only to God. This sanctification of absolutist rule continued under numerous religious leaders well into the seventeenth century. (1)

**SECULARISM:** Exclusion of religion from public affairs - Religion and religious bodies should have no part in political or civic affairs or in running public institutions. Rejection of religion or its exclusion from a philosophical or moral system.

“Ref: Encarta World English Dictionary, 1999”

King James I spoke on his Divine Right in a speech to Parliament on March 21, 1609:

“The State of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth: For Kings are not only God’s Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God’s throne, but even by God himself they are called Gods. There been three principal similitudes that illustrate the state of monarchy: One taken out of the word of God; and the two other out of the grounds of Policy and Philosophy. In the Scriptures Kings are called Gods, and so their power after a certain relation compared to the Divine power. Kings are also compared to Fathers of families: for a King is treuly Prens patriæ, the political father of his people. And lastly, Kings are compared to the head of this Microcosm of the body of man.

Kings are justly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Divine power upon earth: For if you will consider the Attributes to God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a King. God has power to create, or destroy, make, or unmake at his pleasure, to give life, or send death, to judge all, and to be judged nor accountable to none: To raise low things, and to make high things low at his pleasure, and to God are both soul and body due. And the like power have Kings: they make and unmake their subjects: they have power of raising, and casting down: of life, and of death: Judges over all their subjects, and in all causes, and yet accountable to none but God only.” (2)

The Divine Right of Kings was severely restricted by the 1689 English Bill of Rights. Parliament banned the abuses of power against the political opponents of the King and his unilateral suspension of law without the consent of parliament. However, this did not end the use of the concept. The Emperor of Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm II, believed that he ruled by divine right well into the early years of the twentieth century. His unreasoning policies contributed to the disaster of World War I. (3)

The modern variant of this theory now asserts that all law derives from the same divine source. Chief Judge Roy Moore of the Alabama Supreme Court said, “The Ten Commandments stands for the moral foundation of the law, and to acknowledge that moral foundation, you must acknowledge its source, which is the God of the holy scriptures..” Moore specifically rejects American law established by the people. He said, “I’ve

obeyed the rule of law by not following the unlawful dictates of man.” Moore has been removed from his judicial office for refusing to remove his 5,280 pound granite version of the Ten Commandments from the rotunda of the Alabama judicial building. His removal from office has sparked a national effort to change long standing laws supporting the prohibition of the establishment of religion by or in government as set forth in our Constitution’s Bill of Rights.

Of greater concern are the views of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. He quotes the Bible in defending his support for the death penalty. Note that this is a man who rails against other Supreme Court Justices using material other than the Constitution and explicit United States law but maintains a position that using the Christian Bible as a resource in deciding matters of law is allowable and recommended. Quoting from his essay:

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” (4)

In the next paragraph of his essay he continues, “But the core of his message is that government—however you want to limit that concept—derives its moral authority from God. It is the ‘minister of God’ with powers to ‘revenge,’ to ‘execute wrath,’ including even wrath by the sword (which is unmistakably a reference to the death penalty). Paul of course did not believe that the individual possessed any such powers. Only a few lines before this passage, he wrote, ‘Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.’ And in this world the Lord repaid—did justice—through His minister, the state.” (5)

Application of the rhetoric of Moore and Scalia would explicitly contradict the U. S. Constitution which defines government as coming from the will of the people. The notion of moral authority of the law being derived from God is a throwback to the Dark Ages with its Divine Rule of Kings. Scalia is charged with the highest role in preserving the Constitution as a secular document. His attempts to change the source of governmental authority should be of concern to us all. There is a disturbing tendency for those who see God as the source of moral authority to invoke that authority to validate the most extreme Old Testament sanctions. Scalia’s essay is specifically in support of the death penalty. There is one paragraph that underscores his linkage of the death penalty with Christianity:

“So it is no accident, I think, that the modern view that the death penalty as immoral is centered in the West. That has little to do with the fact that the West has a Christian tradition, and everything to do with the fact that the West is the home of democracy. Indeed, it seems to me that the more Christian a country is the less likely it is to regard the death penalty as immoral. Abolition has taken its firmest hold in post-Christian Europe, and has least support in the church-going United States. I attribute that to the fact that, for the believing Christian, death is no big deal.”

It may or may not be that we are better off as a society if we have the death penalty. However, we certainly should study the question applying reason and logic instead of accepting it just because Scalia thinks “for the believing Christian, death is no big deal.”

If our law comes from God, according to the words of religious text, it comes from an arbitrary, fierce and inhumane God. If it comes from the consent of the governed it is more likely to have some thoughtful reason, logic, and compassion in how it is written and applied. A prime example of God given law being enforced by man is the Taliban rule in Afganistan. Remember that the Christian God says blasphemers should be put to death. Leviticus 24:16, “And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death.”

References:

(1) Divine Right of Kings

[www.wsu.edu/~dee/GLOSSARY/DIVRIGHT.HTM](http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/GLOSSARY/DIVRIGHT.HTM)

(2) James VI & I on the Divine Right of Kings

<http://history.wisc.edu/sommerville/351/Jamesdrk.htm>

(3) Web source at Penn State:

William II, *German Emperor*

<http://ftp.cac.psu.edu/~saw/royal/r01.html#121>

(4) Scalia is quoting Romans 13:1–5

(5) First Things, May 2002

Antonin Scalia, “God’s Justice and Ours”

<http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0205/articles/scalia.html>

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Thus, the purpose of the organization is to recapture the territory of the secular mind (now claimed by religious extremists) for societal benefit by making the knowledge of alternatives to religion public and ubiquitous.

ASUSA invites all who share our concern with the trend away from the “separation doctrine” to join with us. We are not concerned over the private practice of religion, only with those who are moving the U.S toward theocracy.

Please join us in our effort to help steer public opinion back to support for a government run on a secular basis, one that is concerned with the public welfare of all citizens. For more info:  
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