

## VI. Laws of Divine Establishment and the Royal Family Honor Code: The Texas Revolution

We have recently noted such an occasion when U.S. immigrants, who were invited to settle the sparsely populated Mexican district of Tejas, declared their independence after Santa Anna withdrew their rights guaranteed under the Mexican Constitution of 1824. Here is some background on what led up to the so-called Texas Revolution.

### Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "History of Mexico":

*The [Mexican] revolution against Spain began in 1810 under the urging of Miguel Hidalgo y Costillo; and independence was attained in 1821 under Agustín de Iturbide, who presided for two years as emperor.*

*The empire was recognized in the United States on December 12, 1822. But even then Agustín's power and prestige were already ebbing. On October 31, 1823, the Emperor dismissed congress and ruled through an appointed 45-man junta. The act ... provided discontented military men with a pretext to revolt. Among their leaders was Gen.*

*Antonio López de Santa Anna. In Veracruz, Santa Anna proclaimed a Mexican Republic on December 2, 1823. Agustín was forced to abdicate.*

*Santa Anna's rise to power began with this event. It led to the writing of a new Mexican constitution which Santa Anna and the subsequent emperors supported and enforced. The general attitude of the Anglo-American population in Texas toward the revolution, Santa Anna, and the constitution is expressed in this excerpt from James*

A. Michener's Texas. In this historical novel, a fictional priest, Father Francis Xavier Clooney, expresses the Texican's hopes and attitude:

### Michener, James A. Texas. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 1985, p. 235

*"As you've surely heard, there was a wonderful revolution in Mexico last year. Emperor (Agustín) was overthrown by a group of sterling patriots, and the old viciousness has been cleansed away. A new Mexico, a new life for all of us.*

*'The hero of the change is a most splendid man, devout, loyal, brave. General Antonio López de Santa Anna. 'But the excelling news is that Santa Anna and his associates have given us a new constitution, and I promise you*

*that in Mexican history the date 1824 will become as famous as 1776 is in ... America. Because the Constitution of 1824 is a noble document, assuring us the freedoms we've sought. It gives Coahuila Texas its own state government. It protects us. It guarantees a permanent republic. And it erases all memories of Emperor Iturbide and his follies. What a glorious day for Mexico!'"*

This further commentary by Michener:

### Michener, James A. Texas. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 1985, p. 236:

*"Promulgation of the reassuring Constitution of 1824 had a curious aftermath. Hopeful newcomers were now encouraged to think of themselves as Mexicans, citizens of a liberal democracy not unlike that in the United States, and then began to refer to themselves as Texicans.*

*(p. 239f) No American settlers since the Revolution of 1776 had faced the nagging moral problems encountered by those citizens of the republic who moved into Texas in the period of 1820-1835.*

*Even those later settlers who would cross an entire continent to build new homes in California or Oregon would have the reassurance that in moving from one part of the United States to another, they would carry their religion, their language and their customary law with them. But when people emigrated to Texas they surrendered such assurances, placing themselves under the constraints of a new religion, a new language and a much different system of law.*

*Facing these complexities, immigrants followed one simple rule: 'Whatever Stephen F. Austin decides is probably right.'*

*(H)e told visitors who dropped by to talk politics with him: 'Gentlemen, Texas will not only live under this new Mexican Constitution of 1824; it will prosper.'*

*'Aren't there weaknesses in it?' a farmer asked, and Austin snapped: 'There are weaknesses in every document drawn by the human mind. Our new law has certain peculiarities reflecting Mexican custom, but they will not impinge upon our freedom.'*

### **Encyclopedia Britannica, 15th ed, s.v. "Texas":**

*"Unrest throughout Mexico, including Texas, resulted in a coup by Santa Anna, who assumed the presidency in 1833. Texans, hopeful for relief from restrictive governmental measures, supported Santa Anna.*

*Austin expected a friendly hearing about these grievances but instead was imprisoned in Mexico City for encouragement of insurrection. Freed in 1835, he returned home to find that skirmishes had already developed between colonists and Mexican troops and that Santa Anna was preparing to send reinforcements. Texans formed a provisional government in 1835 and in 1836 issued a declaration of independence at Washington-on-the-Brazos.*

*The famous siege of the Alamo in San Antonio lasted from February 23 to March 6, 1836. The strategic objective of the stand was to delay Mexican forces and thereby permit military organization of the Texas settlers. As the battle climaxed with a massive attack over the walls, the defenders (about 187) were all killed."*

On March 3<sup>rd</sup>, upon realizing that reinforcement was not only not going to arrive at the Alamo but that they had not even been sent, the garrison commander Col. William Barret Travis gathered his men and challenged them with this famous speech.

### **Tinkle, Lon. 13 Days To Glory. 1st ed., New York: McGraw- Hill Book Company, Inc., 1958, pp. 181-82:**

*"I have deceived you by the promise of help. I have been deceived by others. Every letter from the Texas Council, every report brought in to the Alamo before the siege assured me and Colonel Bowie that the colonies would organize recruits and come to our aid.*

*As a result I believed that we would have a large enough army to repel an enemy of any size and to enforce our own conditions of surrender and guarantee of peace. And now, today, it is clear that the promised help will not arrive.*

*You men must be prepared for the worst. I can no longer offer hope, either of help or survival. Our fate is sealed. Within a very few days-perhaps a very few hours-we must all be in eternity. This is our destiny and we cannot avoid it. This is our certain doom.*

*We can only assume that the Texas government was as surprised as we were by Santa Anna's early arrival. Colonel Fannin has no doubt been detained by fighting Mexicans elsewhere. Again, I must apologize for having misled you. Nevertheless, I must make the situation clear. Surrender is unthinkable, worse than death; to cut our way through the enemy lines is impossible. All that remains is to die in the fort and fight to the last moment. We must sell our lives as dearly as possible.*

*Every man has his choice. For myself, I will fight to the death as long as there is breath in my body. I can assure you that any of you who stay will be cherished in memory. Your death will give the colonies the spur to save themselves."*

At this point Colonel Travis drew the sword he always carried. In front of the men, he traced with it a long line over the ground, extending from the right to the left end of the file and then returned to the center of the column, and said:

*"I now want every man who is determined to stay here and die with me to come across this line. Who will be the first? March!"*

Back in the late '50s, a song writer from Austin, Texas named Jane Bowers wrote a song about the Battle entitled, "Remember the Alamo." One of its verses sums up this event initiated by Travis:

*"A hundred and eighty were challenged by Travis to die;*

*By a line that he drew with his sword when the battle was nigh.*

*'The man who would fight to the death, cross over, but him that would live better fly.' And over his line went a hundred and seventy-nine."*

Moses Rose opted out. The rest stayed and did indeed die. But each and every one made an individual choice to oppose Santa Anna. Their rationale was to fight in defense of the Constitution of 1824. The issue was the loss of their lands purchased under a system agreed upon between the Mexican government and the Texans and administered by Stephen F. Austin. Property and life were considered sacred and worth dying for. But they fought under rights they believed were protected in the Constitution of 1824 which Santa Anna initially supported but later rescinded.

So, we repeat point 19: The individual believer is left to his own devices to determine his course of action when and if human law ever requires him to violate an inflexible divine mandate.

According to the Scriptures under Establishment's Order Code, individuals have the right to consider their lives, their property, and their privacy as sacred.

### **Rationale:**

Order Code commandment number 6:

**Exodus 20:13 - You shall not murder.**

Conclusion: Human life is sacred and government may not "deprive a citizen of his life without due process of law (5<sup>th</sup> Amendment)."

Order Code commandment number 8:

**Exodus 20:15 - You shall not steal.**

Conclusion: Property is sacred and government may not seize it "without due process of law" and "just compensation (5<sup>th</sup> Amendment)."

Order Code commandment number 10:

**Exodus 20:17 - You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

Conclusion: Privacy is sacred. Personal property cannot be protected, provided for, improved, administered, or enjoyed if you do not have the privacy to do so. Thus, the government may not invade your privacy and seize your property without a “warrant” and then only “upon probable cause (4<sup>th</sup> Amendment).”

Here is an interesting tidbit of information: if you don’t give the government “probable cause” it has no motivation to initiate “due process of law” in order to “deprive you of life, liberty, or property.”

Thus, the challenge for the royal priest of the Church Age is to present himself to society in the same way the Levitical priest presented himself before Aaron: without spot and without blemish.

*Amomos* is defined as follows by:

**Kittel, Gerhard. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. “Amomos”:**

*In the NT amomos is used of the perfect moral and religious piety of Christians to which believers are obligated by membership of the holy community.*

**Vine, W. E. Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, s.v. “Amomos”:**

*Blameless in character and conduct.*

**Arndt, William F. and F. Wilber Gingrich. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, s.v. “Amomos”:**

*Innocent as far as evil is concerned.*

**Zondervan. Analytical Greek Lexicon, s.v. “momos”:**

*A disgrace to society.*

Consequently, the context of Philippians 2:15 has to do with a believer’s relationship toward society, government, and his fellow citizen. Therefore, we will translate *amomos*: “not a disgrace to society.”

This is the outward expression of inner integrity. As unbelievers observe your lifestyle and behavior, they consider you not to be a disgrace to society but rather a person of honor.

**Philippians 2:15 [Corrected Translation] - In order that [purpose clause] you yourselves might become [potential for historical impact] blameless [establishment integrity] even undiluted by evil [Christian integrity], students under the discipline and authority of God [genuine humility] not a disgrace to society [person of honor] ...**

These attributes result in the development of credibility within the commonwealth. You are not a trouble-maker, you do not challenge establishment authority, and you willingly submit to the nation’s civil and criminal codes. Therefore, your honorable lifestyle influences the Zeitgeist in which you live. Although the basic morality of your fellow citizens has declined, you continue to stand your ground. You must remain a beacon of truth in the midst of darkness. And so, the purpose clause continues by identifying the circumstances in which your historical impact is to be expressed. You are to influence your client nation’s Zeitgeist. It continues with the accusative of time from the adjective: *mesos* - “in the midst of” or “in the middle of.”

This word indicates that the action is to take place during a continuous period of time indicated in context.

We have established through our isagogics—our study of the Julio-Claudian Caesars—the period of history in which the Philippians lived.

Their circumstances were not unique. Almost every generation of history experiences some form of political corruption, miscarriages of justice, and unfair treatment from government.

We are to receive encouragement from the manner in which the Philippians conducted themselves during the period of their national crisis.

What the Philippians were in the midst of is stated next and is described by an adjective and a verb. The adjective is the genitive of: *skolios* - “*crooked, unscrupulous, dishonest.*”

This is used in the figurative sense and so an English translation would bring out the loss of integrity among the citizens.

The **Oxford English Dictionary**, s.v. “**crooked**”:

*With reference to moral character and conduct: deviating from rectitude or uprightness; not straightforward; dishonest, wrong, perverse; perverted, out of order, awry.*

When describing politics and politicians, this seems to be the best adjective to use, at least according to **Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary** which defines crooked as “*dishonest*” and then gives these two examples: “... *a crooked election; crooked politicians.*”

Crooked doesn’t quite cover it for Nero and most of the first-century Roman citizens whom he governed, but crooked sure does have a nice ring to it, so that’s the way we’ll translate it which is exactly the way the three major English versions treat it.

*Skolios* is followed by a connective conjunction: *kai* - “*and*” followed by the perfect passive participle from the verb: *diastrepho* - “*make crooked; to pervert.*”