

Document A: THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS

An Homily¹ Against Disobedience And Willful Rebellion (1571) [MODIFIED]

As God the creator and Lord of all things created His angels and heavenly creatures in all obedience to serve and to honor His majesty: so was it his will that man, his chief creature upon the earth, should live under the obedience of his creator and Lord.

For that cause, as soon as God had created man, he gave unto man a clear code of law. If man did disobey and break God's law and commandment, the punishment would be death. If man had not rebelled and disobeyed God's law, there would be no poverty, no diseases, no sickness, no death, nor other miseries that now trouble the world...

The first rebel, and mother of all mischief, was Lucifer,² once GOD'S most excellent creature, and most obedient subject. By rebelling against the Majesty of God, the brightest and most glorious angel became the blackest and most foulest fiend and devil: and from the height of heaven, is fallen into the pit and bottom of hell. Here you may see the first author and founder of rebellion, and the reward of the rebel...

After this rebellion against God, all mischief and misery overflowed into the world. God saved the world from confusion and ruin by giving laws unto mankind. His law demands not only the obedience to God, but that the wife should be obedient unto her husband, the children unto their parents, the servants unto their masters: but also, that the people should be obedient to their governors and rulers.

The holy Scriptures declare that Kings and Princes, the evil as well as the good, do reign with God's approval, and that their subjects must obey them. GOD gives Princes wisdom, great power, and authority. God defends them against their enemies, and destroys their enemies horribly...

O Most mighty GOD, the Lord of hosts, the Governor of all creatures, the only giver of all victories, defend thy servant and our governor, Queen Elizabeth and all thy people obedient to her rule. O Lord, protect us from the cruelty of all those who rebel against the truth of thy eternal Word when they rebel against their own natural Prince and country. God, protect our sovereign and gracious Queen.

SOURCE: *Following a dispute in 1570, Pope Pius V declared Elizabeth I of England an illegitimate Queen and supported several plots by English Catholics to assassinate her and replace her with a Catholic monarch. In 1571, Elizabeth authorized this sermon be distributed to churches across England and read during Sunday services.*

¹ Or sermon, a lesson delivered by the priest in the middle of a church service.

² Biblical name for the devil. According to Christian teachings, the devil was once an angel who rebelled against God. This act of rebellion brought suffering and evil into being.

Document B: THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Excerpts from “Second Treatise of Government,” by John Locke (1690) [MODIFIED]

Of the State of Nature

To understand Political Power right, and to derive it from its Original, we must consider what State all Men are naturally in, and that is, a State of perfect Freedom to order their Actions, and dispose of their Possessions, and Persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the Law of Nature, without asking permission of any other Man...

Of the Beginning of Political Societies

Men being by Nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this property, and subjected to the Political Power of another, without his own Consent. The only way whereby any one divests himself of his Natural Liberty, and puts on the bonds of Civil Society is by agreeing with other Men to join and unite into a Community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure Enjoyment of their properties, and a greater Security against any that are not of it. This any number of Men may do, because it injures not the Freedom of the rest; they are left as they were in the Liberty of the State of Nature...

Thus, when men leave their state of Nature and unite into a Community, they give up the power and freedom necessary to create a Society, and for the good of the majority of the Community...

On the Dissolution of the Government

Governments may be dissolved from within when the laws of a society are corrupted. Listed here are 3 examples of how laws may be corrupted:

1. When a single Person or Prince³ sets up his own Arbitrary⁴ Will in place of the Laws. Laws must reflect the collective Will of the Society, and be declared by the Legislative.⁵
2. If a Prince hinders⁶ the legislative from acting freely in the interests of the people.
3. Thirdly, when by the Arbitrary Power of the Prince, the Electors, or ways of Election are altered, without the Consent, and contrary to the common Interest of the People, there also the Legislative is corrupted.

In these and the like Cases, when the Government is dissolved, the People are at liberty to provide for themselves, by creating a new Legislative as they shall find it most fit for their safety and good. For the Society can never, by the fault of another, lose the Native and Original Right it has to preserve itself.

SOURCE: English philosopher John Locke wrote “Two Treatises of Government” in the early 1680s. Published in 1690, the “Second Treatise of Government” argues that government should be based on an agreement between the people and their ruler, and if that ruler violates the agreement, a rebellion by the people may be justified.

³ A leader.

⁴ Unregulated; subject only to personal desires.

⁵ An elected lawmaking assembly, such as Congress or Parliament.

⁶ Obstructs or prevents