

Introduction: Principles and Precepts of Government



As we begin this study of **Government**, compare your mind to a computer. It has to be set up, formatted, and fed data. You load it with programs both to build and to access your data base. Also, a security program is needed to protect against viruses and other destructive agents from hindering or destroying the control module. Much the same is true for the computer of the mind. The acronym GIGO (Garbage In, Garbage Out) depicts the outcome of erroneous programming, be it in a computer, the human mind, or government.

Reformatting your Mind

Benefitting from the educational process entails reformatting your mind with an interpretative system by which you will be able to gain knowledge of reality. *Reality* is the inter-related structure of things that *actually* exist, as opposed to one's *idea or notion* of what exists. Only four major components of reality exist. How the relationship of these four entities are perceived will determine your **worldview**, by which you interpret all new concepts or ideas.

The four basic components of reality are (1) time, (2) matter, (3) man and other life forms, and (4) a Supreme Being or Force ordering the universe. How we comprehend the interrelationship and activity of these four is the **rubric** by which we interpret all reality: our **worldview**. As we study government, we will discover that differences in worldviews largely explain the differences in types of governments. The second system to be formatted in your mind is a **value system**. Values are the benchmarks or standards by which we make choices and order life's priorities. Hence, every decision is driven by our values. As we study government, we should look behind each decision made by officials who fashion **governance** and seek to comprehend the value base for those decisions. Wise people study and assess the values on which legislation is passed by lawmakers.

The third system to be formatted for education and life is a personal **authority system**, just as the Rule of Law is the foundational principle for a state or nation.

Enlarging Your Data Base

This course will concentrate on three areas of study. Chapter I: the historic foundations of government and the contributions of America's Founding Fathers to contemporary US government. Chapter II: the US Constitution and functions of governance that it demands. Chapter III: citizen responsibilities and rights.

VOCABULARY

Government: a system of regulation and control of a state as the ultimate authority over that state

Worldview: the overall perspective from which one sees and interprets reality

Rubric: an established standard or guide

Value System: a set of principles that drive one's priorities; the basis for all decisions and resulting behavior

Governance: the process of governing

Authority System: a set of principles or ideals that determine to whom, or to what, we will submit for control or jurisdiction over our actions

Principles and Precepts of Government

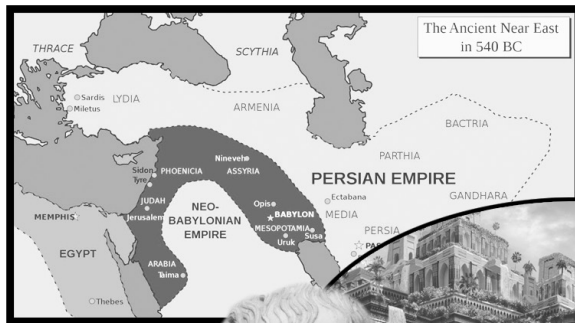


Topic 1
Evolution of
Government

Chapter 1

Section One Topics 1-5

Foundations



Whenever people lived in community, they sensed a need for laws to control and protect the wellbeing of individual members of the community. In the study of government, we use the term *State*, not as we speak of a state in the

United States, but as the term really means: a body of people, living in a defined territory, organized politically, and with the power to make and enforce laws.

The earliest form of government was the *patriarchal* system which grew out of governance of a family. The

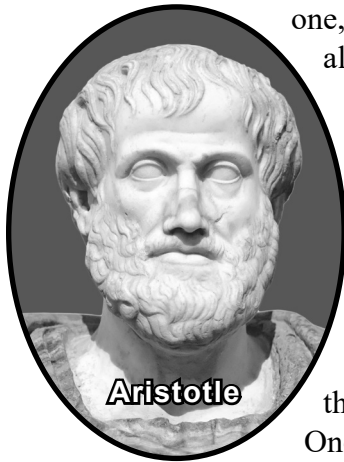
patriarch was sole *proprietor* in whom family possessions were *vested*. Historically, all governments evolved from this concept; the chief was proprietor of the clan or tribe, and the king was landlord of the kingdom.

Although governments grew out of the patriarchal system and assumed *autocratic* control, the right of the ruler was based on a different system of interpretation than the right of the father. The father's right was based on his role of *progenitor*, whereas the autocratic ruler based his right of governance upon *Divine Rights*, meaning that God had placed the ruler over a group of people. Hence the ruler's authority was the "authority of God". Autocratic rule became known as a *monarchy*, which comes from the Greek word *mono*, meaning *single* or *alone*, and *archy*, meaning *leader* or *ruler*. *King* was the older name for monarch. The modern word for monarch is *dictator*. The main difference in the two concepts is that a king inherited his rights, while a dictator usually takes control by force.

We are indebted to Aristotle (384–322 BC), a Greek philosopher and scientist, for the classification of governments we still use today. The first in this classification was the rule of

VOCABULARY

Patriarch: male head of a family
Proprietor: owner
Vested: fully guaranteed as a legal right
Autocratic: rule of one
Progenitor: male parent, the begetter of children
Provinces: divisions of a country having subordinate jurisdictions; similar to counties
Foment: to be politically incited, stirred-up to rebellion
Mercenary: a soldier hired from a foreign country



one, which we have already addressed. The second term Aristotle used was *oligarchy*, which defined governance by a small group, and has taken different forms throughout history.

One is an *aristocracy*, which comes from the Greek word *aristos*, meaning *most virtuous, noblest, or finest*. Such rulers were usually defined by social standing or wealth.

The second type of oligarchy is a *theocracy* which is rule by priests or religious groups. Aristotle's third category of oligarchy was a *democracy*, which literally means *rule by the people*. Various kinds of democracies have existed since Aristotle, but the two main types are known as a *representative democracy* (in which the people participate through elected representatives) and a *direct democracy* (in which all citizens participate directly in policy creation and enactment)—as in New England Town Hall meetings where citizens of a community gather to vote directly on issues affecting the town.

Another form of democracy is so-called *democratic centralism* and is associated with communist regimes of the twentieth century. It is far removed from Aristotle's definition of democracy, since the State exercises total control over every aspect of life.

Three other theories of government that vary from Aristotle's classifications follow: The *Force Theory* holds that governments resulted from one group conquering another and forcing its rule upon the vanquished group. The *Divine Right Theory* postulates that governments resulted

from rulers deriving their authority from God; and their families and heirs govern in like manner. Several ancient cultures, in countries such as China, Egypt, and South America, also subscribed to this theory and assigned godlike qualities to rulers. The *Social Contract Theory* was developed in the 17th and 18th centuries, in opposition to the Divine Right concept. In this view, governments were created by people cooperating with each other to follow a set of rules to bring order and safety to the populace.

Historic Empires

An empire is a major political unit having a territory of great extent or a number of territories or peoples under a single sovereign authority. Empires were usually formed by military conquest, in keeping with the Force Theory.



Artist's concept of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon

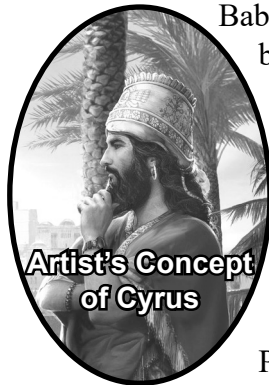
The Babylonian Empire. Ancient Jewish prophetic writings presented an overview of the empires of the world, which came from the period of the Babylonian Empire while the Jews were in captivity there, due to the overthrow of their nation by Babylon. The King had a dream that was interpreted by Daniel, one of the Jewish captives, which described a huge image of a man with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, legs of

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iron, and feet of iron and clay. The King was told that he was the head of gold, and that lesser kings, represented by silver, bronze, iron and clay, would rule in ages to come.

Many scholars who study ancient prophecies, comparing them with history, acknowledge that the giant image may describe the major empires of history. The Babylonian civilization, which existed from about 350-500 BC, included Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, plus parts of Saudi Arabia and Iran. It had a strong government with one ruler, and effective laws with punishments and rewards. The laws were extremely harsh; for example, if a doctor operated on a patient who died, the doctor's hand would be amputated. If a builder built a house that collapsed and killed the owner, the builder would be killed.

The Persian Empire.



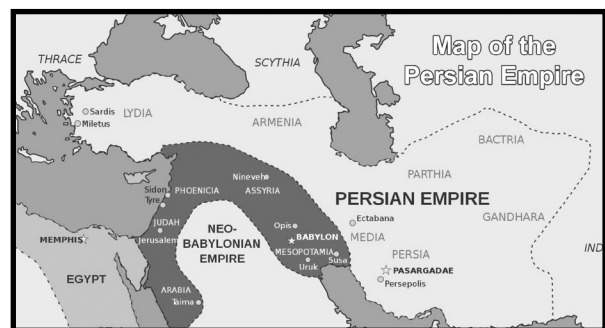
Babylonians were conquered by the Persians under King Cyrus in 539 BC.

Cyrus, often referred to as "Cyrus the Great," extended his empire from the border of India and Pakistan in the east, to the Balkan Peninsula in the west, and from the Persian Gulf in the south to Central Asia in the north. His son, Cambyses, added Egypt. The next ruler, Darius I (522-486 BC), added regions in India and Europe, making Persia the largest empire of ancient history. He reorganized it into 23 **provinces** called *satraps* and provided the details to maintain a strong and stable government that lasted about 200 years as an autocratic monarchy, in which the king ruled by the power of his presumed divinity.

The governor of each satrap was also called a *satrap* and ruled as a viceroy or king's representative. The satrap was in charge of the land he administered in every detail and maintained a small army to put

down local rebellions. The satrap was aided by various royal appointees, including an emissary called "the eye of the king".

Darius introduced major innovations in travel and communication to tie the huge empire together. Highways were built to unify the kingdom, including the King's Highway which was more than 1600 miles long. These highways were guarded and had water and inns placed at strategic points about one travel-day apart. A courier service, much like the Pony Express in America, was also established.



Darius introduced fair economic policies, as well as strong social policies to placate citizens. Conquered peoples were allowed to continue their religious practices; and Persia was the first nation to attempt to alleviate discrimination among different ethnic populations. However, toward the end of Darius' reign, rebellion began to **foment**. In 499 BC, he had to quell an uprising, followed by the Persian and Greek Wars that lasted over a quarter of a century. These were followed by revolts in Syria and Egypt. Persia was truly in decline by 464 BC. Then in 330 BC, Alexander the Great of Macedonia defeated the Persian armies; thus, the Empire that had incorporated the major parts of Asia, Africa, and Europe fell to the Greeks.

The Grecian Empire. The Greeks experimented with various forms of government. Throughout much of its history, Greece was a loose confederation of city-states in which the prevailing types of

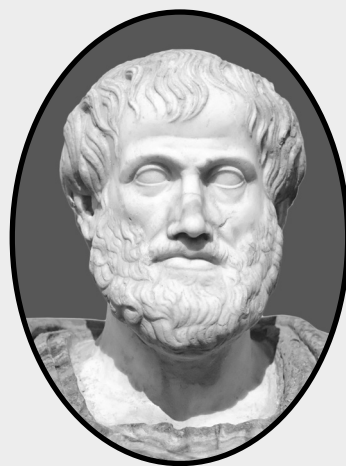
governments were monarchies ruled by kings, each with a small group of advisors.

Monarchy. From approximately 2000 to 100 BC, the Mycenaean people comprised what we know today as Greece. They were a warrior people, ruled by a king who usually served for a lifetime and was succeeded by his eldest son. If he had no son, military leaders usually vied for kingship. The Mycenaean monarchies survived until about 1200 BC, when their trade routes were pirated; and internal conflicts tore the city-states apart. Invaders destroyed what remained of the monarchies, and autocratic government disappeared from Greece.

Oligarchy. Between 1100 and 800 BC, oligarchies ruled many of the Greek city-states. Then, from 800 to 400 BC, they began to disappear for various reasons. Severe problems arose causing wealthy land owners to build armies and procure *mercenary* warriors to oppose political leaders. Around 400 BC, only Sparta remained an oligarchy.

Tyranny. During this same time period, merchants and manufacturers, who made up the growing middle class in many of the Greek city-states, demanded greater political and social rights. When the oligarchy refused to grant social privileges, strong leaders (often from the military) would lead an insurrection to establish a form of government known as a *tyranny*. This term comes from the Greek word *tyrannos* and means “*usurper with supreme power.*” The leader, known as a *tyrant*, exercised absolute, oppressive power. A tyrant differs from a monarch in that neither he nor his heir can claim a *right* to rule. Tyrannical rule spread across the Greek city-states during the 6th century BC. Then in 510 BC, invasion forces from Sparta and Athens forced Hippias, the last tyrant of Greece, to abdicate and abandon Greece.

LIFE PRINCIPLE:



“It is our choice of good or evil that determines our character, not our opinion about good or evil.”

– Aristotle (Philosopher)