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ISAIAH 9:6

THE SCRIPTURE CONCERNED

> For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and THE GOVERNMENT shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *HIS* GOVERNMENT and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7 AV)

THE MEANING PEOPLE DRAW FROM THIS TRANSLATION

Some people in the Church have looked at this word "government" in these two verses and wanted to apply the meaning that we today in our world have in mind when we use the word "government". Because of the statement "of the increase of his government ... there shall be no end", some people have at times expressed the opinion that this refers to A GOVERNMENT that will continue to grow for all future eternity. It is because of these verses that the expression "The Government of God" came to be commonly used by Mr. Armstrong and by many others in the Church of God.

THE "MISTRANSLATION"

There is no mistranslation as such in these verses. The problem is that the word "government" in these two verses does not really mean what we today think of as "a government".

To us today the word "government" basically refers to a group of people, with someone at their head, who have the power to make and enforce laws for a country. We never think of ONE PERSON as somehow constituting "a government". To us "a government" always implies a group of individuals.

BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT THE WORD "GOVERNMENT" IN THESE VERSES MEANS!

The Hebrew word translated as "government" in both these verses is "misrah", which comes from a primitive root meaning "TO HAVE POWER". The word "misrah" is only used here in these two verses and nowhere else in the Old Testament.

These two verses talk about THE POWER that will be vested in Jesus Christ. They are not speaking about any kind of "government" at all! From this particular passage alone we could not know whether Jesus Christ will rule alone, as a benevolent dictator, or whether He would have a team to assist Him as "a government". That is something we have to learn from other Scriptures which don't use the word "government" in their context.

THE SOURCE OF THIS "WRONG" TRANSLATION

The translation of these two verses is an example of the translators of the King James Version attempting to please King James himself, who had commissioned this translation, by implying that "the government" is intended to be upon the shoulders of kings.

A MORE ACCURATE TRANSLATION

> For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and THE POWER shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *HIS* POWER and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isaiah 9:6-7 AV)

THE MEANING OF THIS CORRECT TRANSLATION

The focus of these verses is that Jesus Christ is destined to receive ALL POWER. After His ministry and His resurrection Jesus Christ confirmed the meaning of these two verses when He said: "ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME ..." in Matthew 28:18.

The focus of Isaiah 9:6-7 is not at all on any kind of government, even as there is no focus on any kind of government in Matthew 28:18. The focus is purely on power and who will have that power.

It is other Scriptures that tell us that Jesus Christ will in fact head up "a government".

IN SUMMARY

Our modern concept of government was not used in biblical times. So we need to be cautious about applying our meaning to the biblical Hebrew word translated as "government". This subject is dealt with in greater detail in the article "SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT CHURCH GOVERNMENT" in the main article directory of this website.

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