



Lesson 13: The Storm of Statism and the Remedy of State Sovereignty

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Introduction

The union is facing a storm of despotism, with federal overreach threatening to drown the sovereignty of the states. This lesson examines how the principles of state sovereignty and nullification can serve as a powerful remedy to counteract the pervasive influence of federal power, drawing inspiration from historical allegories and the wisdom of the Founders.

Key Concepts:

The Ominous Clouds of Federal Overreach:

- Federal power is growing unchecked, with states struggling to maintain their sovereignty amidst a deluge of unconstitutional mandates and regulations.
- The “great madness” of centralization is not only rampant in Washington, D.C., but has infiltrated state assemblies, diluting the authority of state governments.

The Procrustes Analogy:

- The story of Procrustes, the mythical innkeeper who forced his guests to fit the dimensions of his bed through stretching or mutilation, serves as a metaphor for how modern lawmakers distort the Constitution to fit their political agendas.
- Just as Procrustes manipulated his guests, many elected officials manipulate the Constitution, stretching its clauses or cutting away its limits to justify their legislative actions.

The Betrayal of Constitutional Promises:

- Many politicians campaign on promises of adhering to the Constitution and limiting government power, only to abandon these commitments once in office.
- These “conservatives” often rationalize their support for unconstitutional programs, betraying the trust of those who elected them and contributing to the expansion of federal power.

The Need for Unyielding Vigilance:

- Restoring the Republic requires relentless attention to every bill proposed in Congress and a refusal to compromise on constitutional principles.
- The fight against federal overreach must be pursued with the same dedication and resolve as the Founders demonstrated in their struggle for independence.

The Role of Nullification:

- Nullification is a crucial tool for states to resist unconstitutional federal actions and to reclaim their sovereignty.
- As Madison stated in the Virginia Resolution, the states have the right and duty to “interpose for arresting the progress of the evil” of federal overreach.

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Modern-Day Theseus:

- Just as the hero Theseus dealt justice to Procrustes by forcing him to fit his own bed, constitutionalists today must hold elected officials accountable to the Constitution.
- Lawmakers must be confined within the bounds of the Constitution, and any who break their oath must face the consequences.

The Importance of State Sovereignty:

- The sovereignty of the states is the silver lining in the storm of federal overreach. The consistent and courageous assertion of state rights through nullification can dispel the fog of despotism.
- State leaders and citizens must be unwavering in their commitment to uphold the Constitution and to resist the temptations of federal power and influence.

The Call to Action:

- The time has come for every American to declare their allegiance to the Constitution. Partisan labels must be set aside, and the focus must be on defending the principles of liberty and limited government.
- As Edward Livingston of New York said during the debates on the Alien and Sedition Acts, when laws infringe upon the Constitution, the people should not hesitate to choose which to obey.

Conclusion

The current storm of federal overreach demands a response rooted in the principles of state sovereignty and nullification. By following the example of the Founders and holding elected officials to their constitutional commitments, Americans can restore the balance of power and protect their liberties. The fight against despotism requires unwavering dedication and a willingness to stand firm against the tide of centralization. The Constitution is our banner, and we must resist any attempts to distort or discard it. Now is the time to pledge our loyalty to the cause of liberty and to take action in defense of our union.