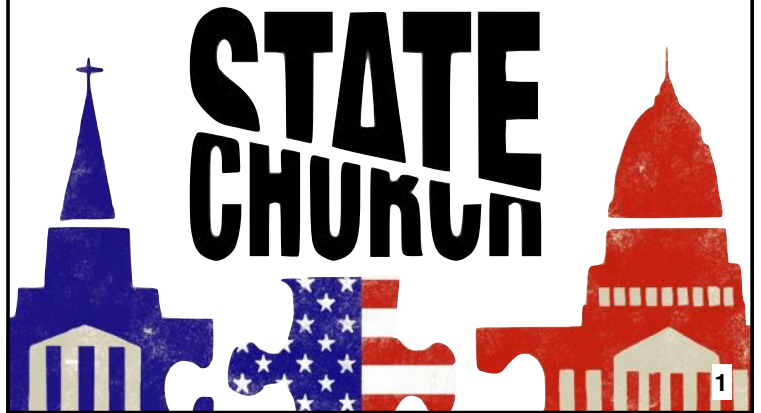


# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Matthew 22:21  
Lesson #9  
Church and State  
11/20/2022

In what sense is separation of church and state biblical?



## 1. Christians live in differing realms, with differing responsibilities.

John 17:16  
"They are not of this world"



Citizens of the Kingdom of God

John 18:36  
"My kingdom is not of this world"

2 Corinthians 5:20  
"we are ambassadors for Christ"



John 17:18  
"I also have sent them into the world"

1 Peter 1:1  
"those who reside as aliens"



Citizens of the World of humanity



Citizens of the Country of residence

2

Matthew 22:21

"Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

**NOTE what Jesus does NOT say:**

**"Don't pay the tax. You can't serve two masters."**

**"Fund just laws only. You can't be tied to evil."**

**"Don't get involved in secular issues."**

**"If you want to influence the state for God, you have to buy a ticket for a place at the table."**



3

Matthew 22:21

"Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

1. Jesus respects two different **spheres of ethical responsibility.**

2. Caesar and God are on **different paths going in different directions.** Jn.18:36

3. Do the ends **justify the means?**

**How is it possible to both support an evil Caesar and serve a holy God?**

4



John 18:36

"Jesus answered (Pilate), "my kingdom is not of this world. **If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting,** that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm."

Is **political activism** a sign of a **misplaced understanding** of Jesus' Kingdom?



5

**The WAY of God often seems foolish or an obstacle to the world's wisdom.**

*Proverbs 16:25*

“There is a way which **seems right** to a man, but its end is the **way of death.**”

*Isaiah 55:8*

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, **nor are your ways My ways,**” declares the Lord.””

*1 Corinthians 1*

“23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a **stumbling block**, and to Gentiles **foolishness**, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power** of God and the **wisdom** of God. ”

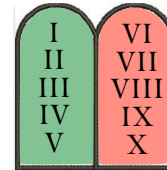
**2. We have many Biblical Mandates, some are for all who bear God's Image, others are for the faith community only.**

**Commission mandate**  
We are to make disciples.

**Character mandate**  
We bear the image of God.

**Creation mandate**  
We are stewards of the planet.

**Church** (faith community)  
**Charismatic mandate**  
We have individual roles



**State** (general community)  
**Cultural (civil) mandate**  
We are our brother's keeper.

**3. “American Caesar” is unique in that WE are the government.**

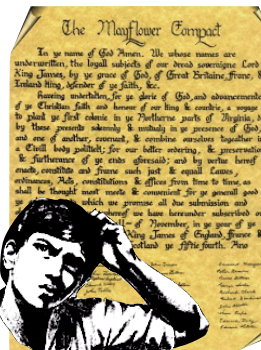
**American government is:**

- OF, BY, and FOR the people.
- rooted in a “**Biblical ethical**” worldview.

**Was America founded as a Christian nation?**



**The Puritans believed that it was, based on the Mayflower Compact?**



The Mayflower Compact reaffirmed loyalty to the King of England; its framers never intended to found an independent state.

Some believe that the Mayflower Compact should be the basis for a Christian nation founded upon a covenant relationship with God. They did not prevail.

Up until the Civil War, America's identity with Christianity was generally accepted as a fact.

Christian Nation

Pluralistic state

1776

1865

2022

**That has changed over the last century and a half.**

Has what was thought to be the “New Jerusalem” become the “New Babylon”?



**The emerging American culture**

**The “God Within” cult of ethical therapeutic pantheism**

- ✓ Political - **Libertarianism**
- ✓ Religious - **Gnosticism**
- ✓ Psychological - **Narcissism**
- ✓ Social-**Deinstitutionalization**
- ✓ Ethical - **Relativism**

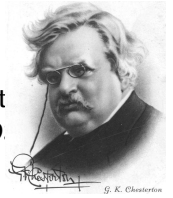
Many Evangelical Christians believe they are called to take back America in the name of Jesus?



12

“The United States is a nation with the soul of a church.”

G.K. Chestert  
1874-19



**“Christian Nationalism”**  
is advocated by many evangelicals.

R J  
Rushdoony

David  
Barton

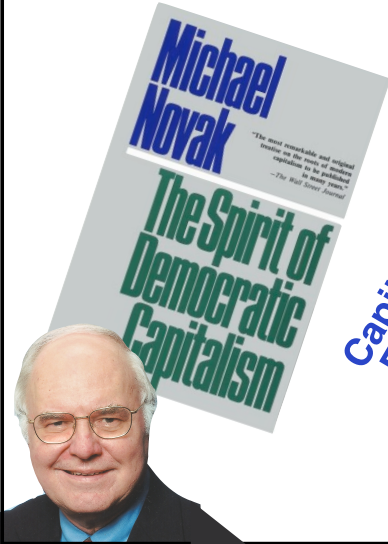
D. James  
Kennedy

Tim  
LaHaye



13

The American System



Biblical ethical spirit

14

The language of the Bible is a part of the popular culture of the United States of America TO THIS DAY.



Rapture  
Armageddon  
Born Again  
David & Goliath  
Judgment day  
Gospel  
Adam & Eve  
Noah's ark  
“to whom much is given, much is expected.”  
In God we trust  
“a house divided against itself cannot stand.”  
Messiah  
The second coming  
Jesus  
“the truth shall set you free”  
Apocalypse  
“judge not lest ye be judged”

15

What does the Scripture tell us about church and state relationships?

Acts 17:24

“God, who made the world and everything in it, since **He is Lord of heaven and earth**, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

The O.T. model is “Theocracy” - church and state are intertwined.

- Biblical Israel was **not a democracy**. When Israel demanded to choose its own kings it was seen as rebellious. (1 Sam.8:1-22; 12:17)
- Every seventh year the land was to be **left for the poor by law**. (Ex.23:10-11; Deut.15:1-12)

16

The N.T. does not call us to a Christian nation, a covenantal state, or a material kingdom.

- God’s Kingdom is not of this world. (Jn.18:36)
- The Body of Christ has no walls. (1 Cor.12:13)
- Christians are aliens in this world. (1 Pet.1:1)
- Christians are ambassadors to this world. (2 Cor.5:20)

**BUT**

does America have a unique covenant relationship with God that calls it to be the Christian light in the world?



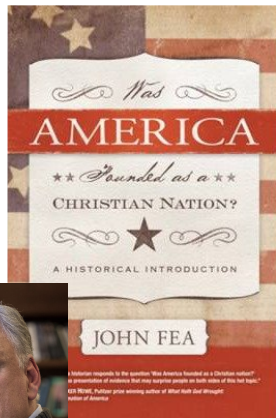
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## Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?

America was never founded constitutionally as a Christian nation.

Its "civil religion" was a general theistic moralism.

Christianity was the dominant religion and part of many state constitutions.



John Fea  
Historian  
Messiah College.



18

## 4. America's roots shape its political culture.

Enlightenment ideals of reason and individual freedom

Common Biblical moral values and worldview



19

## The Declaration of Independence

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, & the **Pursuit of Happiness**:—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers **from the Consent of the governed;**" **(not directly from God)**

20

"Senator, when you took your oath of office, you placed your hand on the Bible and swore to uphold the Constitution. You didn't place your hand on the Constitution and swear to uphold the Bible."



Jamie Raskin  
(Law professor, Congressman)

21

## We Render to American Caesar when:

1. We respect the **LIMITS** of its "sacred canopy".

"We are a secular nation with the soul of a church."

"We hold these Truths to be **self-evident**, that all Men are created equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator** with unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness;

"**American Civil Religion**" (Bellah)  
or "**Common Faith**" (Dewey)

22

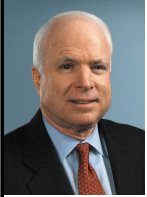
## Note:

- All members of the U.S. **Supreme Court** are theists.
- We have never had an atheist **president**.
- Only one member of **U.S. House or Senate** is religiously unaffiliated.
- All sessions of congress are opened with prayer by a **chaplain** paid by the state.

**NOTE:** This affirms a respect for a generic, personal, theistic faith but it says nothing about a "Christian" nation.

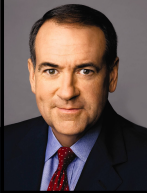
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**We must be careful not to overstate our "Christian" roots.**



**John McCain**  
*"the Constitution established the United States of America as a Christian nation."*

**No mention of Christianity**



**Mike Huckabee**  
*"Most of the fifty-six men who signed the Declaration of Independence were clergymen."*

**Only John Witherspoon was**

**Freemasonry captures the soul of the U.S. Constitution's spirit.**



**Geometry (reason)  
 God (religion)  
 Gnosis (righteousness)**

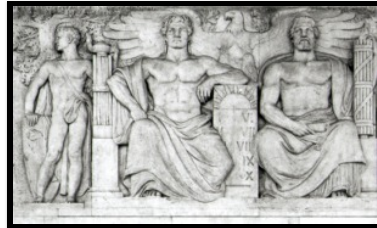
NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM,  
 "a new order has begun."

**rational, moral, theism**  
 - virtue, courage, loyalty, prudence, truthfulness, compassion, etc.

**20 GREATEST NAMES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

- **John Adams** - Spoke favorably of Freemasonry -- never joined
- **Samuel Adams** - (Close and principle associate of Hancock, Revere & other Masons)
- **Ethan Allen** - Mason
- **Edmund Burke** - Mason
- **John Claypoole** - Mason
- **William Dawes** - Mason
- **Benjamin Franklin** - Mason
- **Nathan Hale** - No evidence of Masonic connections
- **John Hancock** - Mason
- **Benjamin Harrison** - No evidence of Masonic connections
- **Patrick Henry** - No evidence of Masonic connections
- **Thomas Jefferson** - Deist with some evidence of Masonic connections
- **John Paul Jones** - Mason
- **Francis Scott Key** - No evidence of Masonic connections
- **Robert Livingston** - Mason
- **James Madison** - Some evidence of Masonic membership
- **Thomas Paine** - Humanist
- **Paul Revere** - Mason
- **Colonel Benjamin Tupper** - Mason
- **George Washington** - Mason
- **Daniel Webster** - Some evidence of Masonic connections

**Summary: 10 Masons, 3 probable Masons, 2 Advocates of Freemasonry, 1 Humanist, 4 no record of connections with Freemasonry**



**On the doors (both inner and outer) of the Supreme Court and above the bench of the Chief Justice, are displayed the Ten Commandments.**

**Religious symbols are only of MORAL LAW.**

**The east side of the Supreme Court Building pictures Moses as the supreme lawgiver.**



**The Capital buildings are full of Biblical symbols.**



**In the chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives**

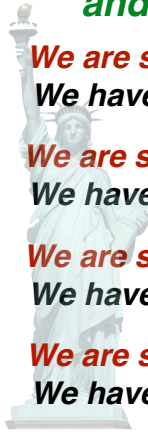


**On the floor of the National Archives**

**But they are NOT distinctively Christian.**

**Americanized Christianity is tainted by a spirit of independence from all and any external authority.**

- **We are suspicious of central government - We have a libertarian impulse.**
- **We are suspicious of church hierarchy - We have a local congregation mentality.**
- **We are suspicious of community identity - We have a “personal” (self defined) faith.**
- **We are suspicious of a sovereign God - We have a god made in our image.**



30

**Puritan Christian Nationalism**

- **Old Testament Israel is our story.**  
(The O.T. is to be applied directly to our situation.)
- **Political freedom is a part of the Gospel.**  
(There was a need to justify a break from England.)
- **Providence is assurance of God’s favor.**  
(The success of the American Revolution is a sign of God’s sovereign hand on America.)

**NOTE:** This was not the understanding of the authors of the American Constitution.

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In 1864 a Christian group in Xenia, Ohio proposed the following amendment to the U.S. CONSTITUTION:

“We, the people of the United States, (recognizing the being and attributes of Almighty God, the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, the law of God as the paramount rule, and Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior and Lord of all) in order to form a more perfect union, . . .”

**It was rejected.**

John Fea, “Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?” p.23

32

**The American model (between England & France)**

**England**



Union of one religious sect and the state



Separation from any one religious group but not from a generic sacred canopy

**France**



Separation of generic religion from public life

33

**Was (is) America a Christian nation?**

**Culturally YES & NO!**

- 80% profess Christian faith and many of our core values have been shaped by **BIBLICAL ETHICS, (which is not the same as orthodox Christianity).**

**Constitutionally NO!**

- the Christian faith is not mentioned while enlightenment ideas of freedom from external authority prevail.

34

**My concern is that we sync the old and new covenants in our shaping of the church’s role in this life and world.**

1. **We place too much hope & passion in political systems & power.**
2. **We confuse God’s kingdom with American Christian Nationalism.**
3. **We are more exclusive than inclusive.**
4. **We have not respected the value of our political diversity.**

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## Next Lesson

How much and in what sense  
are we to be:

Aliens  
Analysts  
Activists  
Ambassadors



36

## A Berean's look at ...



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