

Christian Nationalism

Wrong Kingdom, Wrong Fruit

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Anchor Passages

John 18:36 *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

1 Timothy 2:1 *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;*

1 Timothy 2:2 *For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

1 Timothy 2:3 *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

1 Timothy 2:4 *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

Introduction

A. Two Texts, Not One

This study opens with two passages, and together they give the whole argument in a sentence.

Standing before Pilate, Jesus drew a clear line: his kingdom "is not of this world." It is not won or defended the way earthly kingdoms are. Yet Paul tells Timothy, "first of all," to pray for "kings, and for all that are in authority," so that believers may live "a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

These two texts do not pull against each other. Together they say this: **the kingdom of God is not a political project to be won by earthly means — and believers are still called to be faithful, praying, engaged citizens wherever God has placed them.**

B. What This Study Is, and Is Not

This is a study of an idea, not a scorecard for candidates, parties, or bills. "Christian nationalism" names a real and much-debated set of claims about how Christian faith and national identity should relate. The chapters ahead define it, trace its history, and test it against scripture.

Testing that idea is not the same as asking whether Christians should vote, hold office, speak up on moral questions, or want their country governed well. They should — and this study says so plainly, because silence on that point could be heard as a call to withdraw, which is not what scripture teaches.

C. The Two Halves, Stated Plainly

First: Christian nationalism — the fusing of national identity and Christian faith into one political project — is, at real and specific points, out of step with scripture. Chapter 4 gives its strongest defense a fair hearing first. But a fair hearing is not approval, and where scripture says otherwise, this study says so.

Second: godly citizenship — call it godly patriotism — is not merely allowed. It is commanded. Paul puts prayer for those in authority "first of all." Wanting godly leaders, good laws, and a well-governed nation is not a concession to politics; it is obedience to 1 Timothy 2.

These are not two ideas balanced uneasily against each other. They are one idea seen from two sides: no nation is the kingdom of God, and that is exactly why believers can serve their nation faithfully without confusing it with the kingdom.

D. How This Study Works

Everything here is tested against the King James Bible. Where history, surveys, or news reports are used, they are background, not doctrine.

The other side gets a full hearing. The best-known serious defense of Christian nationalism today is Stephen Wolfe's *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (2022). Wolfe does not argue for theocracy or for enforcing the Law of Moses, and he is not presented here as though he did.

Historical claims are held to the same honesty as biblical ones. Chapter 3 asks whether America was founded as a Christian nation and whether its laws are built on the Bible — and the honest answer turns out to be more complicated than either side usually admits.

And this study tests the idea, not anyone's heart. Nothing here questions any believer's sincerity or love of country.

E. Why This Matters Now

Christian nationalism is one of the most hotly argued subjects in American church and political life today. How clearly a believer draws their convictions from scripture, rather than from the surrounding political culture, shapes how the gospel is heard by a watching world. A church that confuses the kingdom of God with a political cause misrepresents Christ. And a church that hears "my kingdom is not of this world" as permission to check out of civic life misses 1 Timothy 2 just as badly in the other direction. This study aims to correct both mistakes.

F. What This Looks Like in Practice

Ideas do not stay on paper. By the time this study was finished, some of Christian nationalism's most visible advocates had moved from argument to organized action — buying land, opening offices, and saying openly that gathering like-minded believers in one place brings, in one advocate's words, "far, far more political power." Appendix B sets out that record: named people, named places, and their own public statements, with sources. Jesus gave us that test himself — "by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16) — and it is a test of public conduct, not of anyone's hidden heart.

Chapter 1: What Is Christian Nationalism?

"Christian nationalism" is not a denomination or a single organization with a platform you can read. It is a label applied to a range of related positions — and treating it as one flat thing causes a lot of confusion.

A. A Working Definition

At its broadest, Christian nationalism is the belief that a nation's identity, laws, and public life should be joined to the Christian religion — that being a good citizen and being a Christian should amount to the same thing, and that government has a role in promoting, protecting, or in stronger versions enforcing Christianity's place in national life.

What it is *not*, by itself: ordinary patriotism, a Christian's desire for good government, or a believer in office speaking openly about their faith.

B. Not One Thing, But a Spectrum

Sociologists Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry, in *Taking America Back for God* (2020), measured Americans' agreement with statements such as "the federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation." They found not one fixed position but a range, which they sorted into four groups: Ambassadors (strong agreement), Accommodators (leaning toward agreement), Resisters (leaning against), and Rejecters (strong disagreement). The point worth taking from their work: most people who hold these views hold them by degree. A believer who wants prayer allowed in public schools is not in the same place as one who wants the Law of Moses enforced by the state.

From softest to hardest, the range looks like this:

- **Civil religion** — a broad blending of national and religious symbols ("God Bless America," national days of prayer) that claims no legal status for Christianity and is shared across parties.
- **Cultural Christian nationalism** — the view that laws and public institutions should actively reflect and protect Christian moral norms, short of an official state church.
- **Dominionism** — the view that Christians are called to take governing authority directly across every major area of society. Chapter 8 looks at its best-known form, the Seven Mountain Mandate.
- **Theonomy** (or Christian Reconstructionism) — the view that civil law should enforce the Law of Moses, including its penalties. This is a minority position even among self-described Christian nationalists, and Wolfe himself rejects it.

C. What Christian Nationalists Typically Want

The positions most often associated with the movement include Christian symbols on government property, prayer in public schools, public funding for religious institutions, a more explicitly Christian telling of American history in schools, legal restriction of abortion and other practices Christian teaching opposes, and, in some versions, immigration policy shaped by religion. Several of these are live debates among Christians themselves; listing them here is description, not a verdict on each one.

D. Why the Line Matters

A Christian who votes by conscience, prays for leaders, hopes for laws that reflect God's character, or speaks up on a moral issue is not, by that alone, a Christian nationalist. What marks the ideology is the claim that national identity and Christian identity ought to be *fused* — that being American ought, in some legal or civic sense, to mean being Christian, and that government should establish or enforce that fusion. That is the claim this study tests. Ordinary godly citizenship — the subject of Chapter 9 — is something else entirely.

Chapter 2: How Did It Begin?

Christian nationalism did not start in one decade or with one founder. Its American story has several distinct threads.

A. Colonial Roots: "A City Upon a Hill"

In 1630, as Puritan settlers sailed for Massachusetts Bay, their leader John Winthrop preached that "we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us." He was not describing a future nation — none existed yet — but he planted an idea that would echo for centuries: that this settlement, and later this country, had a special God-given mission among the nations.

B. A Founding Generation of Mixed Convictions

The men who wrote America's founding documents held a wide range of religious views, from orthodox Christianity to a deism that affirmed a Creator but rejected much of Christian doctrine. Chapter 3 looks at that record closely.

C. After the Civil War: Religion and the "Lost Cause"

A darker thread runs through the decades after the Civil War. Historians such as Anthea Butler trace a line from biblical arguments once used to defend slavery, through the "Lost Cause" story that recast the Confederacy's defeat in religious terms, to the Ku Klux Klan's 1915 revival — which put Christian symbols, including the burning cross, at the center of its rituals — and to religious opposition to the civil-rights movement. Not every form of Christian nationalism today shares this history. But an honest account has to name it: religious nationalism has, at documented points, been used to serve causes scripture condemns.

D. Cold War Civil Religion

In the 1950s a milder thread appeared, driven by opposition to atheistic Soviet Communism. The first National Prayer Breakfast was held in 1953. In 1954 Congress added "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, and in 1956 made "In God We Trust" the national motto. Scholars often call this broad, cross-party blend of faith and nation "civil religion."

E. The Religious Right

In the 1970s and 1980s, evangelical political organizing became a deliberate movement. Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, founded in 1979, rallied evangelical voters especially against abortion after *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and against the Supreme Court's school-prayer rulings of the early 1960s. The shift was from symbolic national religion to organized campaigns for specific laws and court outcomes.

F. The Seven Mountain Mandate and the New Apostolic Reformation

A more aggressive, charismatic thread grew from the 1970s on: the "Seven Mountain Mandate," calling Christians to take influence over religion, family, education, government, media, business, and the arts. It became closely linked with the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), a loose network built around modern-day "apostles" and "prophets," and it framed politics as spiritual warfare. Chapter 8 looks at it closely.

G. The Term Goes Mainstream

Over the past decade "Christian nationalism" moved from academic writing into everyday debate — pushed along by studies like Whitehead and Perry's and by the January 6, 2021 riot at the Capitol, where crosses, "Jesus Saves" banners, and prayer circles appeared in the crowd.

H. A History, Not a Monolith

There is no single origin story. A colonial sense of mission, a troubling post-Civil War religious nationalism, Cold War civil religion, the organized Religious Right, and a newer dominionist strand share a family resemblance — but not one cause or one unbroken line. Seeing that range is what lets us test today's version fairly, without either blaming it for every dark chapter or crediting it with a purity its history does not support.

Chapter 3: Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?

This question hangs over the whole debate, and the honest answer is neither a flat "yes" nor a flat "no."

A. What the Founding Documents Say

The Declaration of Independence (1776) speaks of "Nature's God," "their Creator," and "divine Providence" — real theistic language, but language both a deist and an orthodox Christian could sign. The Constitution (1787) never mentions God, Christ, or the Bible, and says in Article VI that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." The First Amendment (1791) adds: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

So the pattern is clear: broad language about God at the level of moral principle, and a deliberate refusal — twice — to make Christianity or any religion the nation's official faith.

The Mayflower Compact (1620) is more explicit. It names its purpose as "the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith." But it was a covenant for one small colony, more than a century and a half before the Constitution — not a founding document of the United States.

B. State Churches, and Their Undoing

Several colonies had official churches — Congregational in New England, Anglican in much of the South — and some lasted past independence; Massachusetts did not fully end its state church until 1833. The federal refusal to set up a national church was deliberate, and Christians pushed for it. Baptist preacher John Leland, who had seen state-church persecution firsthand, pressed James Madison for religious-liberty protections. Madison's own *Memorial and Remonstrance* (1785), written against a Virginia tax to support "teachers of the Christian religion," argued that establishing religion by law harms both the state and the faith. In other words, keeping government out of the church's business was largely a Christian conviction, not simply a secular one.

C. The Treaty of Tripoli

Article 11 of the Treaty of Tripoli, negotiated under President Washington and ratified unanimously by the Senate on June 7, 1797, states that "the government of the United States of America is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion." It was written for a diplomatic purpose — to reassure a Muslim state on the Barbary Coast that America held no religious hostility toward it — and it does not tell us everything about the founders' faith. But it is official language, approved by the founding generation's own Senate, and it speaks directly to this chapter's question.

D. The Founders Themselves

The founders spanned a real range. John Jay, the first Chief Justice, wrote in 1816 that it is "the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers." Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams held orthodox Christian convictions. Thomas Jefferson, by contrast, made his own version of the Gospels with the miracles removed, and Benjamin Franklin's beliefs leaned toward a general, providential deism — though at a deadlock in the Constitutional Convention Franklin proposed that the sessions open with prayer (the motion was not adopted). The founding generation cannot honestly be labeled simply "secular" or simply "Christian." It was both, and everything in between.

E. Is America's Legal System Built on the Bible?

There is real, documented biblical influence. William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765–69) — one of the most-cited authorities of the founding era, after the Bible and Montesquieu — taught that "upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws." The Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641) listed its capital crimes with chapter-and-verse citations from Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.

But the Constitution's structure — separation of powers, checks and balances, an independent judiciary — comes most directly from Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* and centuries of English common law, and John Locke's natural-rights thinking shaped the Declaration's language of unalienable rights. The honest answer: strong biblical influence, alongside strong influence from other sources — neither a Bible-derived legal system nor a purely secular one.

F. What the Evidence Shows

America was not founded, in any formal or legal sense, as a Christian nation; the Constitution and the Treaty of Tripoli settle that much. But it was founded by a people — and largely by leaders — whose moral assumptions were deeply shaped by Christianity alongside Enlightenment thought. If the case for Christian nationalism rested on "America was founded Christian and has drifted," this evidence weakens it. The strongest form of the case does not rest there. It rests on what scripture says a nation owes God — and that is the case the next chapter presents.

Chapter 4: The Case For, in Full

Before testing Christian nationalism, it deserves to be heard at its best. Its most serious modern defense is Stephen Wolfe's *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (2022).

A. Why Wolfe

Even reviewers who strongly disagree with Wolfe generally treat his book as the most rigorous defense of Christian nationalism published so far — a work of Reformed political theology, not a popular manifesto. Testing a weaker version would not be fair. Testing Wolfe tests the idea at its strongest.

B. Nations Are Natural and Good

Wolfe begins before the fall. God's command to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion" (Genesis 1:28) describes, in his reading, humanity's natural calling — one that would have produced distinct peoples, cultures, and governments even if Adam had never sinned. Nations and civil government, then, are good parts of the created order, not just necessary evils after Eden.

C. Nations Are Bound by a Shared People

Wolfe argues that true nations are held together by shared ethnicity, language, and culture, and that such shared bonds give a nation the cohesion it needs. A Christian nation, on his view, is not just a country run by Christians, but a particular people that has, as a people, embraced the Christian faith as its own.

D. The Christian Prince

Wolfe's best-known proposal is the "Christian prince": a believing ruler who uses the state's legitimate power to direct the nation toward the true religion and to restrain public blasphemy and false worship. Wolfe insists this does not mean forcing anyone's private belief, which he agrees cannot be coerced. It means shaping the nation's *public* religious life, as rulers in the older Christian political tradition were understood to do.

E. What Wolfe Rejects

In fairness: Wolfe explicitly rejects theocracy in the Reconstructionist sense, rejects enforcing the Law of Moses and its penalties, and rejects forced conversion. He presents his view as a recovery of Reformation-era Christian political thought, not something new.

F. The Case in Brief

Nations are a good, natural part of creation. A true nation is bound by a shared people and culture. A Christian nation is one whose people have embraced Christ together. And a believing ruler may use his office to protect and guide the nation's public religious life — without becoming a theocrat. That is the case at its strongest, and that is the case the following chapters test.

Chapter 5: The Case Against, in Full

A. "My Kingdom Is Not of This World"

Jesus said these words standing before Pilate, being asked point-blank whether he claimed to be a king — the one moment in the Gospels when his relationship to political power was put to him most directly. His answer: "if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight... but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). The proof he gives of his kingdom's nature is that his servants do *not* fight to defend it. By his own reasoning, a kingdom that advances by force shows itself to be "of this world."

B. Jesus Turned Down Earthly Power Again and Again

This was not a one-time answer.

- After feeding the five thousand, Jesus "perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king," and "departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15).
- Offered "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" by the devil in exchange for worship, he refused (Matthew 4:8-10).
- Asked to settle a family inheritance dispute, he answered, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14).

C. The Early Church Followed the Same Pattern

Nowhere in Acts or the epistles does the church seek office, lobby for official status, or try to take power from Rome — even under real persecution. Paul writes instead, "our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20), where "conversation" means citizenship — a striking thing for a man who held, and used, his Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25-28) but never treated it as ultimate.

D. "Not Carnal" Weapons

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)" (2 Corinthians 10:3-4). The church's weapons are prayer, the gospel, and the power of God — not coercive law, state power, or the

sword. Reaching for civil force as the main tool for advancing the kingdom reaches for exactly the kind of weapon Paul says the church does not use.

E. Where Wolfe's Case Falls Short

- **Genesis 1:28 is about creation, not government.** The dominion God gives is "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." It does not mention nations, rulers, or political structures. Building a theory of the Christian nation on it reads into the verse something it does not say.
- **The church is not built on ethnic peoplehood.** The New Testament's picture of God's people is deliberately multi-ethnic: "there is neither Jew nor Greek... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28), and a redeemed multitude "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Revelation 7:9). A definition of Christian nationhood that makes shared ethnicity essential sits uneasily beside that.
- **The Christian prince asks the state to do the church's work.** However carefully Wolfe separates restraining public blasphemy from forcing private belief, it still asks civil law to enforce a religious standard that scripture nowhere gives to civil government in the present age. Chapter 7 explains why.

F. The Case Against, Summed Up

Jesus's own words to Pilate, his repeated refusals of political power, the early church's pattern, and Paul's "not carnal" weapons all point the same way: the kingdom of God is not established or defended by political power, state force, or the sword.

Chapter 6: Render Unto Caesar and Romans 13

Two passages are quoted more than any others in this debate — often by both sides at once.

A. "Render Unto Caesar"

The Pharisees and Herodians set a trap: is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar (Matthew 22:15-22)? Say yes, and the crowd resents you; say no, and Rome hears sedition. Jesus answers, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." That is not a dodge. It names two real and different obligations. The coin, stamped with Caesar's image, belongs to Caesar's sphere; worship and final allegiance belong to God. Both are real. Neither swallows the other.

B. Romans 13:1-7

Paul states government's legitimacy as strongly as scripture anywhere does: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1). The ruler is "the minister of God to thee for good," "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," and "beareth not the sword in vain" (13:4). Government is not a necessary evil here; it is a God-ordained institution with real authority.

But what does "ordained of God" claim? The Greek word behind "ordained" means to arrange or assign to a position. It describes God putting authority in its place — not God approving a ruler's character. Scripture uses the same kind of language for rulers nobody would call good:

- God "setteth up kings" and gives the kingdom "to whomsoever he will," even "the basest of men" — said of Nebuchadnezzar, who destroyed the temple (Daniel 2:21; 4:17, 32).
- God calls that same Nebuchadnezzar "my servant" and commands the nations to serve him (Jeremiah 27:5-8).
- Jesus tells Pilate his power was "given thee from above" — at the very moment Pilate was about to condemn an innocent man (John 19:11).
- Paul himself, in the same letter, says God "raised up" Pharaoh (Romans 9:17).

In none of these does God's "setting up" a ruler mean praise for the ruler. So Romans 13:1 means that civil government as such exists under God's ordering of history — not that God approves of whoever holds power or whatever they do with it. (Appendix A looks at this more closely.)

C. What These Texts Do *Not* Say

"Render unto Caesar" only works if there are two distinct spheres — Caesar's and God's — not one. Romans 13 does not say government should be run by the church, staffed only by believers, or organized by the Law of Moses. Paul wrote it to Christians in Nero's Rome, who had no expectation of a Christian government. Both passages describe civil government as real and God-ordained, but separate from the church — not the church's instrument.

D. The Limit Both Texts Assume

Neither passage teaches obedience without limit. When the rulers ordered the apostles to stop preaching Christ, Peter answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Government's authority is real, but it is not final. When a ruler commands what God forbids, God's command comes first.

E. Two Spheres

Put together, these texts give the clearest picture of how the kingdom of God and civil government relate today: two real, distinct, God-given spheres, each owed its proper due, neither absorbing the other.

Chapter 7: The Administrations Test

This chapter explains not only *that* the fused church-and-state structure Christian nationalism reaches for is wrong for today, but *why* — and why that same structure is not wrong in every age. It uses a simple framework: scripture describes a series of administrations, periods in which God deals with people on distinct terms. Three of them matter here: the Mosaic Law, the present Grace administration (from Pentecost on), and the coming kingdom.

A. Theocratic Israel Was Real

The fused structure Wolfe gestures toward is not invented out of nothing. Under the Law of Moses, Israel really was governed that way: one people, one covenant, civil and religious law as one law given by God, with civil penalties for religious offenses. Christian nationalism is reaching for something scripture really does describe.

B. Why It Does Not Carry Over to Today

Scripture says that at the cross the old arrangement changed. Christ "hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us... having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:14-15). What takes Israel's place today is not a new nation built the same way, but a body gathered out of every nation: "neither Jew nor Greek" (Galatians 3:28), "neither Greek nor Jew... Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (Colossians 3:11). The church is called *out* of the nations, not fused *with* one of them.

C. The Coming Kingdom Will Join Them Again — Under Christ

Scripture also promises a real, future kingdom in which Christ himself reigns over all the nations of the earth (Isaiah 2:2-4; 11:1-10; Zechariah 14:9; Psalm 2; Daniel 2:44; Revelation 20). Then civil and spiritual rule will be joined again — not through a human ruler standing in for Christ, but under Christ's own personal, visible reign.

D. Where Christian Nationalism Goes Wrong

This is the heart of the matter. The fused nation belongs to two periods scripture names: the Mosaic administration, which has closed, and the coming kingdom, which has not yet begun. It does not belong to the present age. No human ruler, however godly, is Christ. No nation today, however Christian its laws, is the coming kingdom. And the church in this age is deliberately different from both Israel under Moses and the world under Christ's coming reign. Christian nationalism's central mistake is one of timing: asking this age to do what belongs to another.

E. Not Wrong Forever — Wrong for Now

So the fused structure is not evil in itself. It is out of place — real, scriptural, and coming, but not now, and not through any human prince.

Chapter 8: The Seven Mountain Mandate and Dominionism, Closer Up

A. What the Movement Teaches

The idea is usually traced to a 1975 meeting between Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth With A Mission. It was popularized in its "mountains" form by Lance Wallnau and Bill Johnson, notably in their 2013 book *Invading Babylon: The 7 Mountain Mandate*.

The movement calls believers to take influence and authority over seven "mountains" of culture — religion, family, government, education, media, business, and arts and entertainment — treated not as places to serve but as spiritual battlegrounds to be "taken." It overlaps heavily with the New Apostolic Reformation, associated especially with the late C. Peter Wagner.

B. Spiritual Warfare Over Territories

The movement reads Ephesians 6:12 — "principalities... powers... the rulers of the darkness of this world... spiritual wickedness in high places" — as describing specific demonic rulers assigned to particular cities, nations, or "mountains," to be identified and driven out through what it calls "strategic-level spiritual warfare." This is a distinctive and disputed reading, not the only one Christians hold.

C. The "Dominion Mandate"

The movement's main proof-text is Genesis 1:28. But as Chapter 5 noted, the verse names its own object: "the fish of the sea... the fowl of the air... every living thing that moveth upon the earth." It says nothing about government, media, education, or business. The seven mountains are read into the verse, not out of it.

D. Apostles and Prophets Today

Ephesians 2:20 describes the church as "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." A foundation is laid once, at the start; the verse describes the church's founding, not an office reissued in every generation. Scripture also tells us to test such claims — "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21) — and warns of "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:13). That is not a verdict on every individual in the movement; it is the test scripture itself tells us to apply.

E. The Great Commission

The movement often presents "taking the mountains" as the Great Commission. But Jesus's actual words are "teach all nations, baptizing them... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). The task is making disciples, not taking control of society's institutions.

F. Summed Up

On its own key texts, the Seven Mountain Mandate does not hold up: Genesis 1:28 is about creation, Ephesians 2:20 describes a foundation already laid, and the Great Commission is about disciples, not dominion. It is Chapter 7's timing mistake in its most organized form.

Chapter 9: Godly Patriotism — What Scripture Actually Commands

Every chapter so far has tested a claim. This one turns positive: what does scripture actually ask of believers as citizens?

A. Pray for Those in Authority — First of All

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Paul does not suggest it; he urges it, and puts it "first of all." Its purpose — "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" — is tied directly to God's desire that "all men... be saved, and... come unto the knowledge of the truth" (2:4). Praying for our leaders is not a distraction from the gospel. It serves the gospel.

B. Seek the Good of the City — Even in Exile

Jeremiah wrote to Israelites carried off to pagan Babylon, with no country of their own. God's instruction was not to withdraw: "seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (Jeremiah 29:7). If God asked that of exiles in a pagan empire, it applies at least as much to us.

C. Joseph, Daniel, and Esther

- **Joseph** served Pharaoh with such skill and integrity that he saved Egypt — and his own family — from famine, without giving up the worship of his God (Genesis 41).
- **Daniel** served Nebuchadnezzar and later Darius with excellence, "because an excellent spirit was in him" (Daniel 6:3). He disobeyed only the one law that forbade him to pray — and accepted the lions' den rather than either compromise or rebellion.
- **Esther** risked her life for her people, working through the legitimate channels of a pagan court.

None of them tried to seize power or impose their faith by law. All of them served faithfully, with excellence, inside governments that were never their own.

D. Salt and Light

"Ye are the salt of the earth... Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt works from within; light is seen and followed, not forced on anyone. Christian influence is real and commanded — but it works through godly lives and good works, not legal establishment of the faith.

E. Subject, and Ready for Every Good Work

"Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work" (Titus 3:1). Submission to government and active good works appear in one breath — one posture, not two competing ones.

F. Godly Patriotism, Summed Up

Praying first of all for our leaders; seeking the good of our nation, as even the exiles were told to do; serving with excellence and integrity; shining through good works; and submitting to government up to the point where it would require disobeying God. That is not withdrawal, and it is not fusion of church and state. It is what scripture asks.

Chapter 10: Closing — An Actionable Conclusion

A. What We Have Found

Christian nationalism is a real movement, and at its strongest, in Stephen Wolfe's work, a serious argument. Tested against scripture, it does not hold. Jesus's refusals of political power, the early church's pattern, Paul's "not carnal" weapons, and "render unto Caesar" all stand against fusing nation and church. And the reason is one of timing: that fused structure belongs to the Mosaic administration, now closed, and to Christ's coming kingdom — not to the present age. What scripture offers instead is godly patriotism: faithful, excellent, visible citizenship.

B. Pray for Your Leaders — by Name

1 Timothy 2 is concrete enough to obey literally. Name the leaders over you — local, state, and national — and pray for them regularly.

C. Pursue Good Laws the Right Way

Wanting good leaders and just laws is right. How we pursue them matters too. Voting by conscience, taking part in civic life, speaking up for justice, and serving in office if called are all legitimate. Seeking to enforce religious conformity by law is something else.

D. Be Salt and Light Everywhere

Matthew 5 is not only about politics. It is about ordinary excellence and visible godliness at work, in public, and with neighbors and officials alike — the way Joseph, Daniel, and Esther lived.

E. Guard Against Both Errors

Two mistakes are possible, not one. Withdrawal — treating "my kingdom is not of this world" as permission to ignore civic life — disobeys Jeremiah 29:7 and 1 Timothy 2. Fusion — treating political power as the way the kingdom advances — reaches for something that belongs to another age. Ask yourself both questions: Am I treating politics as the kingdom? And am I neglecting the faithful citizenship God asks of me now?

F. A Final Word

"My kingdom is not of this world," and "supplications, prayers, intercessions... for kings, and for all that are in authority" were never in conflict. They are one call from two directions: do not mistake any nation

for the kingdom of God — and for that very reason, give your nation the faithful, prayerful, godly citizenship scripture asks of you.

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Sources Consulted

This study is built from the King James Bible; the sources below supplied background only. Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry, *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (Oxford University Press, 2020), for the spectrum and survey categories in Chapter 1. Stephen Wolfe, *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (Canon Press, 2022), for Chapter 4, checked against reviews in *Christianity Today* and The Gospel Coalition. Anthea Butler, *White Evangelical Racism* (2021), for the post-Civil War thread in Chapter 2. Standard historical sources for the founding-era record in Chapter 3, including the text of the Treaty of Tripoli, John Jay's 1816 letter to John Murray, Blackstone's *Commentaries*, the Massachusetts Body of Liberties, and Donald Lutz's study of founding-era citations. Published descriptions and critiques of the Seven Mountain Mandate and the New Apostolic Reformation for Chapter 8. Strong's Concordance and the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge for the word studies in Chapter 6 and Appendix A. Sources for Appendix B are listed at its end.

Appendix A: “Let Every Soul Be Subject” — A Closer Look at Romans 13:1-7

Chapter 6 said that "ordained of God" speaks about the office of government, not the character of the ruler. Because "the powers that be are ordained of God" is so easily misused as a blank check for any ruler, it is worth looking at more closely.

A. The Passage

Romans 13:1 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

Romans 13:2 *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

Romans 13:3 *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

Romans 13:4 *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

Romans 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

Romans 13:6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Romans 13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

B. Not a Change of Subject

Chapter divisions were added to the Bible many centuries after Paul wrote, and this one hides a connection. Romans 12 ends by telling believers not to take revenge: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (12:19). A few sentences later, Paul calls the ruler "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (13:4). In Greek, "vengeance" (*ekdikesis*) and "revenger" (*ekdikos*) come from the same root. Paul's point: don't avenge yourselves — God's justice against evildoers is carried out, in this present age, through civil government. The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge draws the same link, cross-referencing Romans 12:19 to 13:4. Romans 13 is not Paul changing the subject from the church to the state; it answers the question Romans 12 raises.

C. What the Key Words Mean

- **"Powers"** translates *exousia* — authority, a *right* to act — not *dynamis*, raw power. Paul is speaking of lawful authority, not whoever happens to be strongest.
- **"Ordained"** translates a form of *tasso*, "to arrange, to assign to a place." It is the language of putting something in its position, not of approving the person placed there. The same root runs through the passage: "ordinance" (13:2), "resisteth" (literally "sets himself against the arrangement"), and "be subject" (*hypotasso*, "to place under").
- **"Minister"** translates *diakonos*, a servant — the same word used of a deacon. The ruler serves under an assigned task; he does not own the authority.
- **"Sword," "tribute," and "custom"** are ordinary features of Roman government: the power of capital punishment, taxes on persons and property, and duties on goods. Paul is talking about real, everyday civil government — not about unseen spiritual powers.

D. God "Sets Up" Rulers He Does Not Approve Of

Scripture consistently uses this kind of language for rulers it plainly does not commend:

- **Nebuchadnezzar**, who destroyed the temple: God "removeth kings, and setteth up kings" and "setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 2:21; 4:17). God even calls him "my servant" and commands the nations to serve him (Jeremiah 27:6-8).
- **Pilate**: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11) — said at the very moment Pilate was about to misuse that power worst.
- **Pharaoh**: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up" (Romans 9:17, quoting Exodus 9:16).

In every case, God's setting up a ruler describes his rule over history, not approval of the ruler. That is what "ordained of God" means in Romans 13:1: government as such exists under God's ordering — not as a character reference for Nero or anyone else.

E. The Limit

Submission to government is real, but it has a limit, and scripture shows it being kept:

- The Hebrew midwives disobeyed Pharaoh's order to kill the baby boys, "and God dealt well with the midwives" (Exodus 1:17, 20).
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's image: "we will not serve thy gods" (Daniel 3:18).
- The apostles, ordered to stop preaching: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

The limit is built into Romans 13 itself. Paul grounds the ruler's authority in his task — being "a terror" not "to good works, but to the evil" (13:3). A command to do evil turns that task upside down. Romans 13 and Acts 5:29 do not contradict each other; they answer two different questions. In ordinary matters — taxes, public order, restraining crime — believers submit, "not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake" (13:5). When a ruler commands sin, God comes first.

F. Written Under Nero

Romans was probably written around A.D. 56–58, early in Nero's reign — a period many ancient writers remembered as well governed, before Nero's murder of his mother (A.D. 59), the Great Fire of Rome (A.D. 64), and the persecution of Christians that followed. Paul was not naïve about Rome; he was stating a general principle about government's God-given place. Peter later wrote the same to believers under the same empire: "Fear God. Honour the king" (1 Peter 2:17) — two commands, kept distinct, in that order.

Appendix B: Wrong Fruit — Documented Case Studies in Power and Control

Chapters 1 through 8 test Christian nationalism as an idea. Jesus also gave a test for conduct: "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16). That test does not judge anyone's heart; it looks at what is publicly said and done. This appendix sets out what some of the movement's most visible advocates have said and done, using their own public statements and published reporting. Sources are listed at the end.

A. Gathering for Power: RidgeRunner and Jackson County, Tennessee

RidgeRunner is a real-estate company led by Josh Abbotoy, managing director of the investment firm New Founding, that develops rural communities marketed to conservative Christians moving from liberal-leaning states. By late 2024 it had bought several hundred acres — reported as about 600 — near Gainesboro and Whitleyville in Jackson County, Tennessee, and it later opened an office in Gainesboro that includes a podcast studio. Andrew Isker, a pastor and co-author of *Christian Nationalism: A Biblical Guide for Taking Dominion and Discipling Nations*, was planning a church there, and podcaster C. Jay Engel, who calls himself a "Heritage American," was also connected with the community.

Isker has stated the strategy openly. In a video posted August 29, 2024, he said: "If you were able to take even a few hundred people that all think the same way... you could exercise far, far more political

power." Nashville's NewsChannel 5 reported that Isker and Engel have described the civil-rights movement as a mistake, that Isker has said naturalized citizens still don't belong in America, and that Engel has said he detests "the specific impact of college-educated White women on the culture." Jackson County's Republican Party vice chair, Diane Murphy, told reporters: "It scares me that they are very clear about taking over." One local resident compared the newcomers to the villains of Stephen King's *Salem's Lot*.

B. A Working Model: Douglas Wilson and Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho

Isker's thinking draws heavily on Douglas Wilson, pastor of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho, whose community is often described as a working model of the Christian nation this movement wants. Religion News Service has reported Wilson's proposals: limiting the vote to heads of household — which would take the vote from married women — and repealing the 19th Amendment; restoring laws against sodomy; and ending no-fault divorce.

Wilson has drawn wider attention through Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who has called him a mentor and invited him to lead a monthly worship service at the Pentagon. In an August 2026 interview with journalist Mehdi Hasan, Wilson said that, had he lived then, he would have fought on the Confederate side, "to defend Maryland, which is where I grew up," and denied that this meant fighting for slavery. In 1996 he co-authored, with Steve Wilkins, the booklet *Southern Slavery As It Was*, which portrayed slavery in the South as relatively benign. The booklet was withdrawn after it was found to contain passages copied without attribution from Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman's 1974 economic history *Time on the Cross*; Wilkins took responsibility for those passages.

C. How the Vulnerable Were Treated

A movement's fruit shows most clearly in how it treats the vulnerable in its own house. Two men connected with the Moscow congregation, Steven Sitler and Jamin Wight, were convicted of sexual crimes against children. In 2017 the presiding ministers of Wilson's own denomination, the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, issued a report on the church's handling of both cases. It found that Christ Church's leadership made "a serious mistake" in not informing the congregation of Sitler's pattern of molestation promptly; questioned the wisdom of Wilson's letter asking the judge for a "measured and limited" sentence for Sitler; said the leadership "should have been far more careful" about Wight's fitness; faulted blame-shifting language in Wilson's account of the Wight case; and criticized Wilson's public responses for "derogatory or calloused language about women." Separately, in 2022 a former Christ Church deacon, Alex Lloyd, was indicted for possession of child pornography; he later pleaded guilty and was sentenced in 2023.

D. Reading the Fruit

None of this is a verdict on anyone's standing before God. It is what Jesus said fruit can show: public, documented conduct. And it is not incidental to the ideas tested in this study. Gathering like-minded believers in one place for "far, far more political power" is Chapter 7's timing mistake turned into a plan. Taking the vote from married women is the opposite of the godly citizenship of Chapter 9. And failing to protect the vulnerable is about as far from "salt and light" as a community can get. Scripture names the underlying temptation in its oldest form: when Israel demanded "a king to judge us like all the nations," God told Samuel, "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel 8:5, 7). The desire to secure by concentrated human power what God asks his people to trust him for is an old temptation. This record shows it wearing a Christian name today.

Sources for Appendix B

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