

BIBLE PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH AND STATE

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:43 says "...the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to nation bearing the fruits of it." Cf. I Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

MEANING: The nation of Israel (technically, Judah) was replaced by the Christian Church as God's nation now. This means that God does not have a political or geographical nation in which He rules through its national laws. In other words, there is no legitimate theocracy today, which means that no American Christian can rightfully claim that the United States ought to enforce God's laws or principles simply because they are God's laws!

SCRIPTURE: John 18:36 says "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

MEANING: This text supports the one above that God no longer has a theocracy, a political nation in which He rules through its national laws.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 1:6-8 says that when the disciples asked Jesus at His ascension, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?", Jesus replied that "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

MEANING: So when His disciples asked Jesus about the restoration of God's *political* kingdom, He directed them to *spiritual* power instead. In other words, Christians should not be concerned about God's *political* power or kingdom on earth, but only with receiving and utilizing His *spiritual* power of the Holy Spirit to do His will *outside* of political institutions and laws.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 22:21; Luke 20:25 Jesus says "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (cf. Mark 12:17).

MEANING: In these texts, Jesus separates political power (i.e., Caesar's authority) and spiritual power (i.e., God's authority), meaning that each of them represents a separate and distinct entity.

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 13 = 2 symbolic beasts are pictured in vision; they're obviously symbolic animals because of their descriptions (see especially verses 2-3 for the 1st beast and verse 11 for the 2nd beast).

A symbolic beast in Scripture always represents an earthly kingdom, empire, or nation (see Daniel 7:17, 23; 8:20-22); there is no other example in Scripture to anything else. According to Revelation 13:12, 15, the 2nd beast will enforce *worship* of the 1st beast. By definition, this will be a union of political and religious power. Moreover, we know that it will be a union of church and state because the 2nd beast will perform “great signs” so that he “deceives” (verses 13-14), and Jesus Himself stated in Matthew 24:24 that “false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” In other words, both references refer to end-time deception using *great signs*, and in Matthew 24, it is “false christs,” which make it professed, but a false Christian power! Thus, the 2nd beast in Revelation 13 is also a nation whose people (i.e., majority) claim to be Christian. Therefore, the end-time “false Christ” will actually be a nation whose majority claim to be Christian. And God condemns this church-state union!

SCRIPTURE: Revelation 17 pictures a symbolic woman riding on a beast, thus controlling it. In the context of the chapter, this vision ultimately is portraying the end-time rule of the Antichrist.

MEANING: The harlot woman in this chapter is symbolic because she is called “Mystery, Babylon the Great” (verse 5). The Greek word for “mystery” is used in the New Testament to refer to some spiritual truth that is hidden to unbelievers but not to believers (see Matthew 13:11, Romans 11:25; 16:25, Ephesians 3:3; 5:32; 6:19, Colossians 1:27; 2:2; 4:3, II Thessalonians 2:7, and Revelation 1:20). If Babylon the woman were literal Babylon, then it wouldn’t be called a “mystery”. Moreover, a symbolic harlot woman in Scripture refers to an organized professed people of God, that is, those among God’s people who had gone spiritually astray seeking other “lovers,” a metaphor used in Isaiah 1:1, 21, Jeremiah 3:6-9, Ezekiel 16:1-3, 15-43; 20:30; 23:4, Hosea 1:2; 2:5; 3:1; 4:15; 5:3; 6:10; and 9:1. The meaning is thus clear: Babylon, the harlot woman, is an organized group of people claiming to belong to God but which are in fact apostatized and removed from Him spiritually. This apostate group then uses political nations to enforce its will on the whole world (see the entire chapter of Revelation 17). **NOTE:** This chapter + chapter 13’s 2nd beast *appearing* like a *lamb* (i.e., it *looks* Christian, like Jesus the *Lamb*) but speaking like a dragon have important implications—that the Antichrist is actually a false Christian Church which teaches that it has the authority to speak for Jesus on Earth and to change His law (see also Daniel 7:25). Therefore, the Antichrist will support the union of church and state throughout all the nations of the world. As a Christian, then, it’s our duty to oppose church-state unions since we know that Satan will use this method to deceive the world.

SPECIAL NOTE: Romans 13 does *not* teach that the state should enforce God’s laws because the context in that 1st century is the pagan Roman Empire, the most prominent expressions of this pagan religious tradition then being sun worship, emperor worship, and nature-based polytheism.

SPECIAL STATEMENT OF BIBLICAL LOGIC: Moral decline is used by the Religious Right to demand that America’s government endorse Christian values. But a spiritual problem requires a spiritual solution. An attempted political solution will only be a band-aid at best because the spiritual solution is a new heart, which only the miraculous power of *God* can provide, *not* the power of *government*.

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