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*California State Senator*

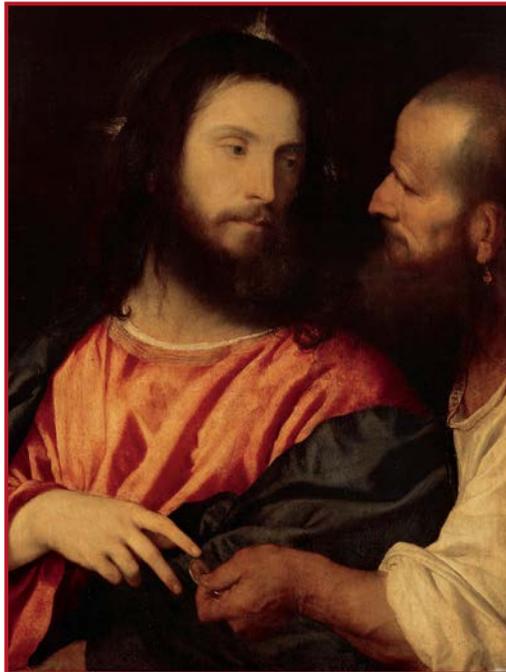
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# PART 1: Five Wrong Views About Christians and Government



The Tribute Money by Titian depicts Jesus being shown the tribute penny.

**T**HERE ARE FIVE ABERRANT VIEWS of Church and State. In the coming weeks, I will discuss those views as we continue to examine the biblical position on Church and State, or as I title here, *Christians and Government*. Following those studies, I will present the flipside: A proper biblically-reasoned understanding of Church and State.

Let us maintain an emphasis on personal spiritual growth as we study together.

Ralph Drollinger

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## Weekly Bible Studies

CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, Location Undisclosed. *Light Refreshments Served.*

SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, Rotating Offices of Senators. *Hot Breakfast Served.*

HOUSE: 9-10 PM Tuesdays Capitol Hill Club, Main Dining Room. *Dessert Served.*





■ ENDORSEMENT

CA State Senator  
Mike Morrell



*“I appreciate Ralph Drollinger and Capitol Ministries. The Bible studies go in-depth on issues we as legislators face daily, always referring back to the foundational principles contained in the Scriptures. And for this I’m am grateful.”*

— Mike Morrell  
California State Senator

California Senator Mike Morrell receives Mike Shreve’s Bible studies. He also reads the studies that Ralph Drollinger teaches weekly to political leaders in Washington, D.C.

I. INTRODUCTION

Many fine Christian books pertain to what the Bible says about the believer and his or her marriage, his or her family, church, and employment, but very little conservative theology has been published regarding the believer’s relationship to the state.<sup>1</sup> What does the Bible say about this? Furthermore, if Scripture gives guidelines for the proper functioning of the institutions of marriage, family, Church and commerce, it stands to reason that it speaks to the proper functioning of the State, and it does! Since you are responsible for that, it makes sense for you to know about it. Let us examine what the Good Book has to say! What follows is the first of five aberrant answers of how the Church should relate to the State.

II. WRONG VIEW NO. 1:  
GOVERNMENT SHOULD  
COMPEL RELIGION

Does the Bible teach that government should compel its citizenry to follow a particular religion? A bit of Church history is in order here in answering that. Since the Reformation was primarily about a revolution in soteriology,<sup>2</sup> i.e. what the Bible taught about how one is saved, there was room for discussion of little else during that time of intense debate. This meant that a theological debate about the separation of the institution of the Church from the institution of the State would have to wait for another

time (with the exception of the Anabaptist movement).<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the Church and State remained institutionally undifferentiated in many a Reformation country: Even to this date in countries such as Germany and England.<sup>4</sup> Post Reformation, it is not until the American experiment in government that an institutional differentiation did occur.<sup>5</sup> And this came about in pragmatic reaction to theocratic England,<sup>6</sup> more so than exegetical discovery. Theocratic nations, be they reformed, unreformed, Islamic, Hindu, or otherwise believe that government should compel religion. With the profligacy of theocratical constructs, the question remains: is such supported by Scripture?

A. Jesus Distinguished the  
Realms of God and of  
Caesar

The crux passage of Scripture that prescribes present-day differentiation between Church and State is Luke 20:25:

*And He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”*

Contextually this passage appears in the midst of Jesus avoiding the trickery of His persecutors. For Him to have answered in the affirmative their question, *“Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”* (Luke 20:22) would suggest support for the hated Roman occupiers of Palestine. To say “no” would



render Him a political revolutionary worthy of death. In answering, Jesus henceforth separates the Church Age from the theocratic Israel of the Old Covenant. Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-14 are classic NT passages that further elaborate the distinct differentiation and separate purposes of the State and the Church. Accordingly, properly understood today, there is an institutional — but not influential — separation of Church and State. In addition and to this point, in the OT, all members of theocratic Israel were called *“A kingdom of priests and a holy nation”* (Exodus 19:6-7), a designation reserved for members of the Church only in 1 Peter 2:9. Summarily, when Jesus said *“render unto Caesar”* He was “signal[ing] the endorsement of a different system...”<sup>7</sup> The *“things that are Caesar’s”* are not to be under the control of the Church—nor are the things that are the responsibility of the Church to be under the control of the State. Make no mistake: America has this right! And, counter to intuition, the Church flourishes when it is separate — institutionally speaking — from the State. This fact is historically illustrated by America.

Jefferson was biblically correct on this point:

“Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, That no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in his body

or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or beliefs; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in nowise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.”<sup>8</sup>

In other countries, wherein government leaders read these Bible studies, take note: Separating your government from *“the things that are God’s”* is biblically proper! Such will help your country prosper! Government should not compel religion. Whenever the Church is tied to the State, history shows that it loses its doctrine, purpose, mission, and impact.

### **B. Jesus Refused to Try to Compel People To Believe in Him**

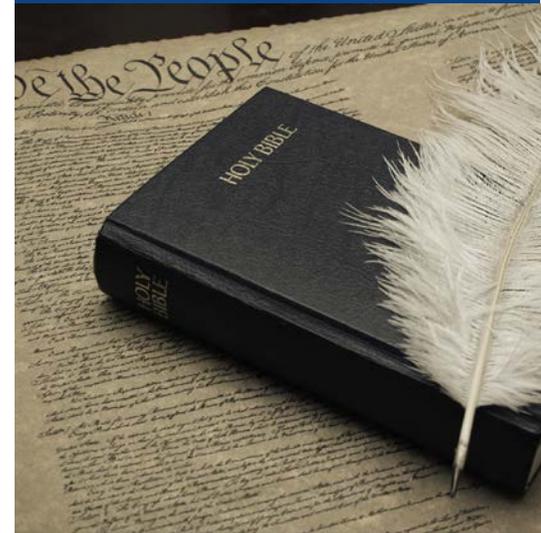
Jesus is not coercive. Coerce: “To make somebody do something against his or her will by using force or threats.” To this day, if you personally are not a follower of Christ, don’t expect Him to force you to submit to Himself. Unlike the Quran and the Islamic religion where the sword is advocated to compel submission to Allah in their quest for world conquest, biblical Christianity knows nothing of this sort.

**WHEREAS 9-11 WAS IN OBEDIENCE TO THE QURAN, THE CRUSADES WERE IN DEFIANCE OF THE BIBLE**

### ♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

## Luke 20:25

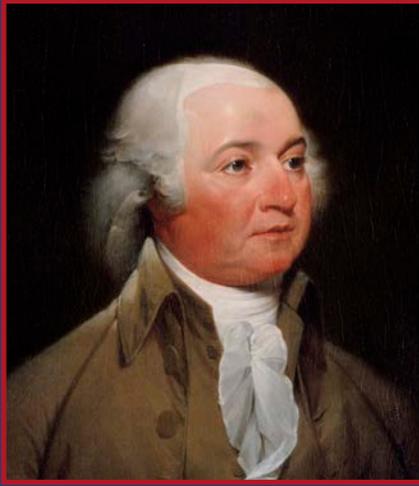
*And He said to them, “Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”*



*The “things that are Caesar’s” are not to be under the control of the Church—nor are the things that are the responsibility of the Church to be under the control of the State.*



John Adams



*“The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.”*

— John Adams, second President of the United States; signer of the Declaration of Independence; judge; diplomat; one of two signers of the Bill of Rights.

Thomas Jefferson, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Washington D. C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), Vol. XIII, p. 292-294. In a letter from John Adams to Thomas Jefferson on June 28, 1813.

Notice the coercive strategy of Jesus’ disciples in Luke 9:52-54 and what resulted:

*And He sent messengers on ahead of Him. And they went, and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make arrangements for Him. But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?”*

James and John thought they had come up with a brilliant formula to assure that Jesus would gain an immediate, broad following. But He turned and rebuked them states 9:55. Not a good idea! Jesus coerces not. Nor should any believer coerce another to follow Christ.

### C. Genuine Faith Cannot Be Forced

Many NT passages further illustrate the individual, voluntary nature tantamount to true saving faith. Several of many passages follow (Acts 28:23-24; Revelations 22:17 resp.)

*When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. Some were being persuaded by the things*

*spoken, but others would not believe.*

*The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.*

If you are not a believer, remember this: Genuine belief need be voluntary. It follows then that a government cannot force its citizenry to believe either! This is a major problem in theocratic nations wherein infants are compelled to be baptized in order to become a part of the State — years before they can reason, repent and receive Jesus by an act of their independent will. Institutional collusion leads to individual confusion.

### D. Not a Worldly Kingdom

John 18:36 states the following:

*Jesus answered, “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 handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not of this realm.”*

Until Jesus returns and sets up the earthly form of His kingdom (at the conclusion of the Church Age and the seven-year Great Tribulation period) wherein He will physically rule over this world (cf. Revelations 20:4-7), His present kingdom is definitively spiritual in nature. That



is to say this regarding the subject at hand:

**HIS KINGDOM IS  
PRONOUNCEDLY NOT TO  
BE CONNECTED TO ANY  
POLITICAL ENTITIES**

This isn't to say that His kingdom should not influence and transform the present physical world. It most certainly should (cf. Matthew 5:13-16)! John 18 is not a prescription for spiritual isolationism, monasticism, or asceticism. Rather, it says this: His kingdom is to be manifest in heart change versus physical might wherein people are compelled to believe by and through various uses of force. Since His *“kingdom is not of this world”* it follows that Jesus does not sanction present-day theocracy.

**E. Practical Implications of  
Rejecting the ‘Compel  
Religion’ View**

As a political leader the application of this biblical precept means that lawmakers should work to uphold the First Amendment, the constitutional tenant of freedom of religion based on Scripture itself! All believers holding office should know the exegetical argument for religious freedom within society as presented herein. Further, to be able to enunciate this study will go a long way in assuaging the fears of groups like The Center for American Progress and the Freedom from Religion Foundation who fear that believers holding office are

espousing a return to theocracy. (If only these groups would read this study and quit beating up both you and me from their ignorance!) Office holders should not only herald and pledge allegiance to the First Amendment, (“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion”) but argue biblically for the genius and correctness of its existence!

**F. What About Giving  
Some Tax Benefits to the  
Churches?**

Additional implications of the State not compelling religion pertain to governmental subsidies of religion:

1. Presently our government financially supports chaplaincy programs in the military, and capitols. This amounts to subsidizing religion. It follows that the aforementioned construct demands that these expenditures be borne by religious entities and not the State. Such changes in governmental policy, pragmatically speaking, would actually lead to the furtherance of the Gospel.
2. This exegetical study further suggests that the State should not give tax dollars to churches, no matter the cause. The government has already classified these entities as not-for-profit institutions.

Elias Boudinot



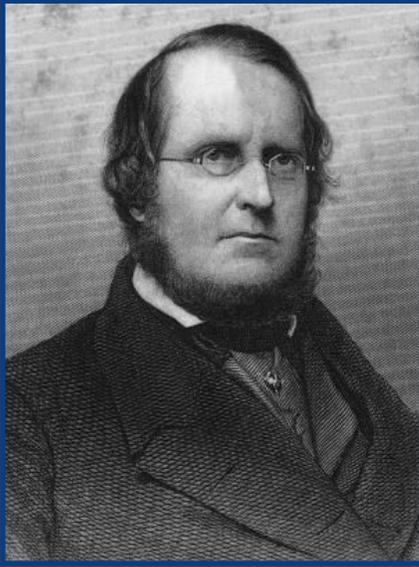
*“Let us enter on this important business under the idea that we are Christians on whom the eyes of the world are now turned . . . [L]et us earnestly call and beseech Him, for Christ’s sake, to preside in our councils. . . . We can only depend on the all powerful influence of the Spirit of God, Whose Divine aid and assistance it becomes us as a Christian people most devoutly to implore. Therefore I move that some minister of the Gospel be requested to attend this Congress every morning . . . in order to open the meeting with prayer.”*

— Elias Boudinot, President of Congress; signed the Peace Treaty to end the American Revolution; first attorney admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court Bar; framer of the Bill of Rights; director of the U.S. Mint.

Elias Boudinot, *The Life, Public Services, Addresses, and Letters of Elias Boudinot*, J. J. Boudinot, editor (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1896), Vol. I, pp. 19, 21, speech in the First Provincial Congress of New Jersey.



Jacob Broom



*“I flatter myself you will be what I wish, but don’t be so much flatterer as to relax of your application — don’t forget to be a Christian. I have said much to you on this head, and I hope an indelible impression is made.”*

— Jacob Broom, Legislator; Signer of the Constitution. Jonathan Trumbull, *Proclamation for a Day of Fasting and Prayer*, March 9, 1774.

Jacob Broom to his son, James, on February 24, 1794, written from Wilmington, Delaware.

The genius construct of them<sup>9</sup> is meant to be the other way around: Individuals are encouraged by the government to support the not-for-profit organizations’ respective purposes via income tax-deduction incentives. This is governmental incentive (versus institutional non-separation) which is both biblically and constitutionally permissible. Such is non-discriminatory, which is the spirit of the First Amendment. In this way no denomination or religion receives preferential treatment by the state and government is not compelling religion. And in this way government is incentivizing its citizens to compel religion—which is sheer genius because America’s form of government is only tenable based on a religious people!

John Adams the signer of the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and our second President said: “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”<sup>10</sup>

These clarifications are in keeping with the perspicuity of the aforementioned exegesis and the proviso of the First Amendment.

Plus, such clarity of policy positions do not muddy the waters, or needlessly fuel contempt from secularists.

### G. The Spiritual Influence Behind the ‘Compel Religion’ View

Political leaders who espouse a “compel religion” view of Church and State are either biblically naïve or diabolically opposed to the Gospel’s extension. Let me explain.

1. Theocratic countries of other religions tend to persecute Christians by the use of their exclusive-religion laws. Such theocracies drive biblical Christianity out of their nations. One of the great victories of the war in Iraq was the formulation of a new constitution wherein there exists freedom of religion. Noting the presence of the underground Church in many a hostile nation and God’s ability to supernaturally promulgate His Church in such countries the Gospel effectively competes above ground when there exists a level playing field with other religions. Theocracies greatly tilt the playing field.
2. Mentioned earlier and worth repeating, “Christian states” too are misleading and are spiritually destruc-



tive overall. Why? When Christianity is compelled by the State, fewer people end up possessing genuine faith. The Church-side of the theocracy usually ends up being led by non-believers who render the Church spiritually dead and ineffective in the society. Such destroys the transforming power of the Gospel and what remains in the end are empty, tax-supported edifices to a past faith.

### III. CONCLUSION

For these two reasons, when a nation becomes a theocracy, the genuine work of God is stifled to some degree as a result. Theocracies don't propagate; rather they hinder the work of God to a large extent. **cm**

Next week we will examine the wrong view of:

### PART 2: GOVERNMENT SHOULD EXCLUDE RELIGION

James Otis



*"Has [government] any solid foundation? Any chief cornerstone? . . . I think it has an everlasting foundation in the unchangeable will of God . . . The sum of my argument is that civil government is of God."*

— James Otis, Leader of the Sons of Liberty; Attorney and Jurist; Mentor of John Hancock and Samuel Adams.

James Otis, *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved* (London: J. Williams and J. Almon, 1766), pp. 11, 98.



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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>In this study I will be borrowing from the tome *Politics According to the Bible* (Dr. Wayne Grudem, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2011). Dr. Grudem is a wonderful personal friend. I will also be utilizing *Christ and Culture Revisited* (D.A. Carson, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) wherein he revisits Richard Niebuhr's sweeping cultural analysis of Church and State, a work that has proven to be a historically sustaining (albeit with a wandering hermeneutic) platform for reasoning and discussion on this subject. Another helpful theologically conservative book on this subject is *God and Government* (Charles Colson, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). This was previously published as *Kingdoms in Conflict*.

Note that I will be following Grudem's outline in this study with his permission, as he has outlined this vast study with his unusually gifted abilities.

<sup>2</sup>The vast majority of the theses on the Wittenberg Door were soteriologically related.

<sup>3</sup>See Verduin, Leonard *The Reformers and their Stepchildren* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964).

<sup>4</sup>Verduin calls this the "sacral society" wherein the two institutions are not yet divided. The premise (which the American experiment in government proves false) is that "there must be unanimity at the shrine if there is to be tranquility in the square." Verduin, Leonard *The Anatomy of a Hybrid: A Study in Church-State Relationships* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) p 16.

<sup>5</sup>There exists a small component of American Evangelicalism today the purports theocratic non-differentiation that goes by the name "Christian Reconstructionism" Closely synonymous are "Theonomy" and "Dominion Theology." The chief advocates of these movements are Rousas John Rushdoony and Greg Bahnsen.

<sup>6</sup>Many of the New England Pilgrims faced fines and imprisonment for failing to attend services in the Church of England.

<sup>7</sup>Grudem, Wayne *Politics According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010) p 25.

<sup>8</sup>The Virginia Act for Establishing Religious Freedom" drafted by Thomas Jefferson in 1179, passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 1786.

<sup>9</sup>Drucker, Peter *Managing the Non-Profit Organization* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

<sup>10</sup>The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States: With A Life of the Author by Charles Francis Adams, Volume IX, Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1854.

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