

THE BEREANS

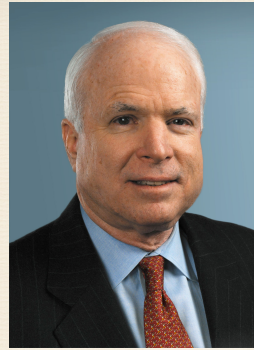
ACTS 17:11

Matthew 22:21

Lesson #49

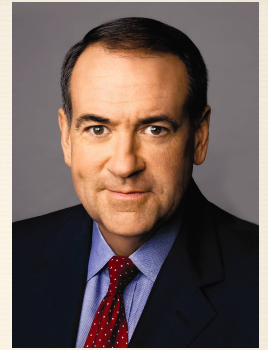
America - hope or hype?

10/30/2016



John McCain

No mention of Christianity
"the Constitution established the United States of America as a Christian nation."



Mike Huckabee

only witherspoon
"Most of the fifty signers who signed the Declaration of Independence were clergymen."

1

Do not place your hope and faith in

Human government • American uniqueness • Political power

John 14:27

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. **Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.**"

2

Do not place your hope and faith in

Human government • American uniqueness • Political power

Does the Bible prescribe any one FORM of human government?

Does AMERICA occupy a special place in God's kingdom?

Is Kingdom POWER political?



3

**To avoid fear - first:
Don't place your hope and faith in any one form of human government.**

Old Testament

God's Kingdom is of this world.
(Theocracy - union of church & state)

New Testament

God's Kingdom is not of this world.
(separation of church & state)

4

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5

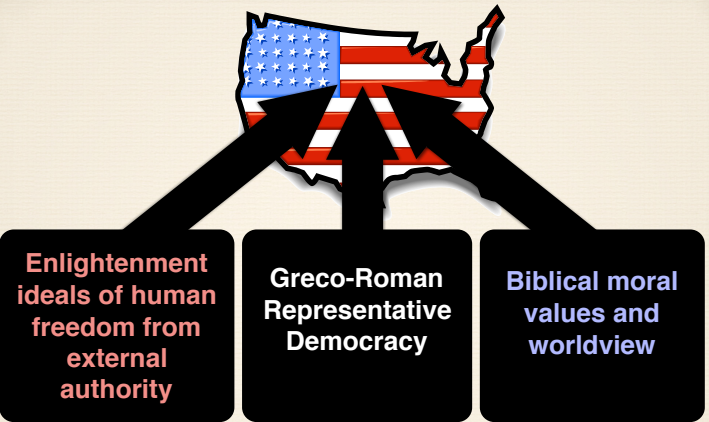
Why does this matter as citizens of the U.S.A.?

1. It shapes our expectations for our nation.
2. It determines our responsibility as citizens.
3. It guides our approach to changing our country.

Do we treat our nation as one big church or as a pagan country?



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America's cultural DNA

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The Bible has a lot to say about hope and the American dream, but it may not be what we expect or want to hear.

1. America's Biblical roots. ("one nation under God".)
2. America's Enlightenment roots. ("deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the governed")
3. Living in two worlds. (Peacemakers and Light Bearers.)

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Biblical moral values and worldview

America's Biblical heritage

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1. Today's Christian nationalists have a good portion of early American history on their side.

Puritan Christian Nationalism

The Puritan's believed:

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

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"The majority of the earliest settlers were Puritans from England. Unlike their cousins back home, these American Puritans strongly identified with both the historical traditions and customs of the ancient Hebrews of the Old Testament. They viewed their emigration from England as a virtual re-enactment of the Jewish exodus from Egypt: England was Egypt, the English king was Pharaoh, the Atlantic Ocean their Red Sea, America was the Land of Israel, and the Indians were the ancient Canaanites. They were the new Israelites, entering into a new covenant with God in a new Promised Land."

Hugh Fogelman
www.christianity-revealed.com/.../puritansweremorejewishthanprotestant

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NOTE:

**All Scripture is written *FOR* us
but not necessarily
TO us or *ABOUT* us.**

Leviticus 25:38

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt **to give you the land of Canaan** and to be your God."

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

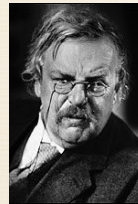
Christian Nation

Pluralistic state

1776

1865

2016



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

G.K. Chesterton
1874-1936

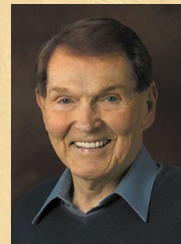
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John Adams
(Unitarian)

"Our constitution was made only for a moral and a religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."

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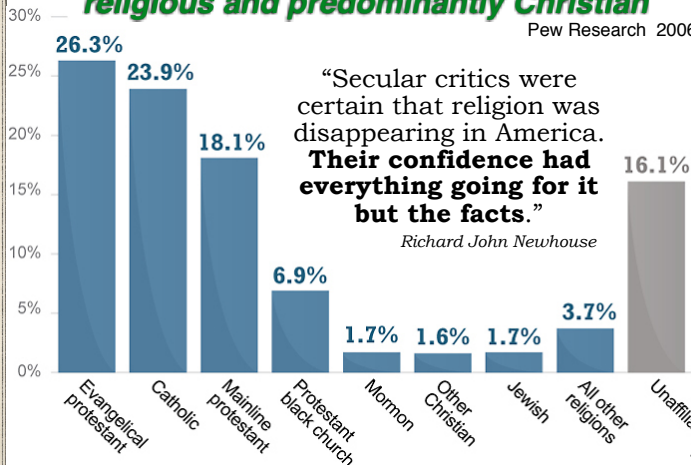
Tim LaHaye

The United States is "a miracle nation" that God raised up to "preach the gospel to the ends of the earth."

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3. America is (by Western standards) very religious and predominantly Christian

Pew Research 2006



"Secular critics were certain that religion was disappearing in America. **Their confidence had everything going for it but the facts.**"

Richard John Neuhaus

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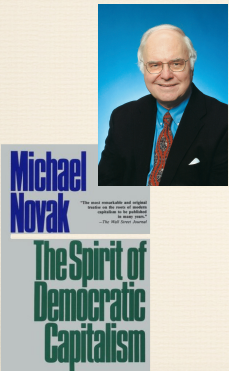
4. The language of the Bible is a part of the popular culture of the United States of America.



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

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5. The American system assumes a Biblical ethic and spirit to function properly.



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Without a Biblical / Ethic:

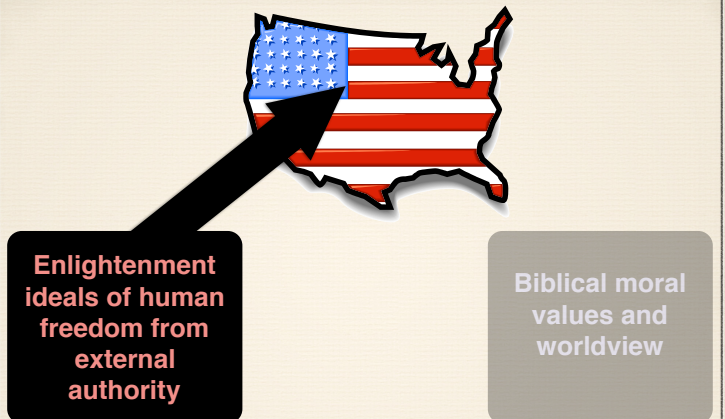
- **Democracy** becomes the abuse of the minority by the majority.
- **Capitalism** becomes the exploitation of the powerless by the powerful.
- **Morality** is reduced to an endless litigation of superficial rules and rights.
- **Virtue** is defined by personal preference, taste, and power.

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6. Three Secular Reasons why America should be Recognized as "Under God".

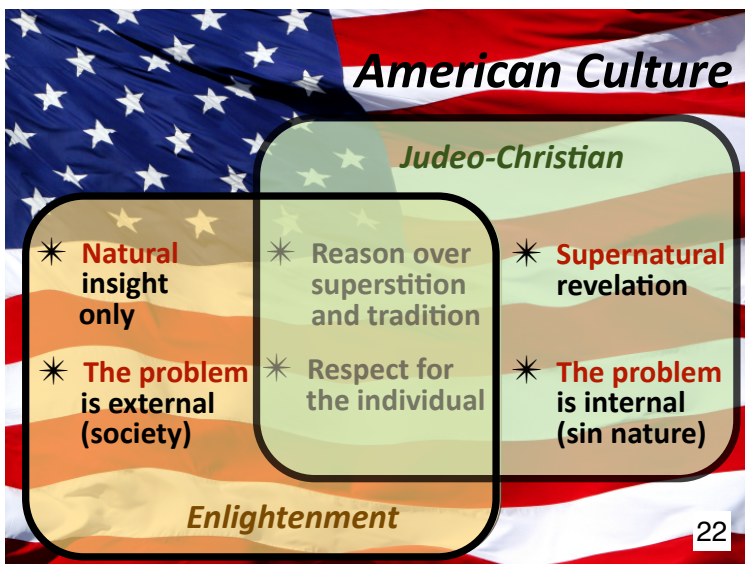
1. Your **rights** cannot be taken away by the government if they come from a power "**higher**" than the government - Creator God.
2. There are no second class citizens if each person is **equal** because each is made in the **image of God**.
3. You can live in **freedom** with few laws if the populous keeps **internal laws** because they are conscious of their **accountability** to a higher power.

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America's Enlightenment roots

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1. Its authority comes from and through the people (not from God directly).

"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;**"

The Declaration of Independence

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2. Its foundation was rooted in the Enlightenment's freedom from external authority and the "common knowledge" of "nature's god."

Matthew 11:12

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men **take it by force.**"

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Was the American Revolution justified?

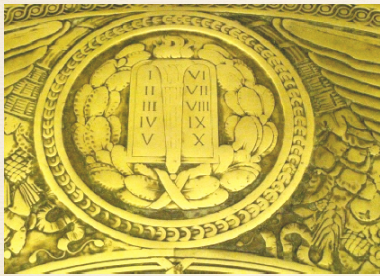
Consider:

- ✓ The N.T. emphasis on submission to gov. (The Apostles argued for submission to Nero's Rome, suggesting that rebellion against England was problematic - Rom.13: 1 Pet.2.)
- ✓ The argument for taxing the colonies. (The British were protecting the colonialists from the French and Indians at great expense.)
- ✓ The meaning of "freedom" in Christ. (When the colonialists cited the Bible in justifying the American revolution they redefined "freedom".)

If there was a valid argument for the American revolution it did not come from the Bible but rather from the Enlightenment.

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3. It emphasizes the moral Law of Moses not the Gospel or Jesus.



The nation's capital is full of Biblical inscriptions, but they center attention on the moral law and Moses not the Gospel and Jesus.



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

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On the doors (both inner and outer) of the Supreme Court and above the Bench of the Chief Justice, are displays of the Ten Commandments!



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John Adams
(Unitarian)

"The Government of the United States is not in any sense founded upon the Christian Religion."

1797, The Treaty of Tripoli, initiated by President Washington, signed by President John Adams, and approved by the Senate of the United States

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4. 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.

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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, 1 Humanist, 2 Advocates of Freemasonry, 4 no record of connections with Freemasonry

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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).

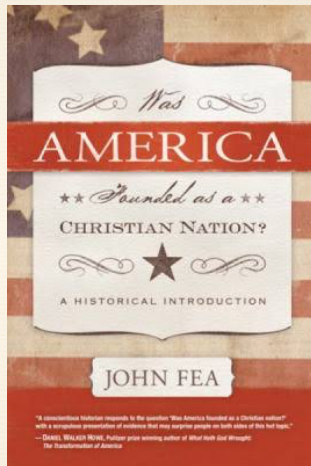
Constitutionally NO!

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

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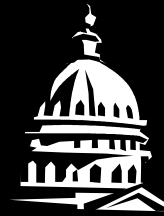


John Fea
Chair of the History
Department at
Messiah College.



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To avoid fear - first:
Don't place your hope and
faith in any one form of



human government.

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To avoid fear - second:
Don't place your hope and
faith in America as



God's chosen nation.

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The Promised Land

Old Testament

The nation - Israel
(Promised Land)

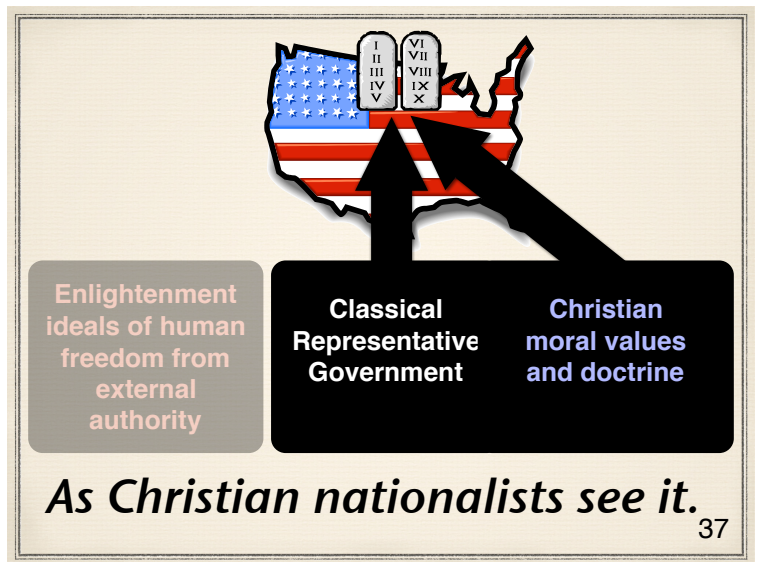
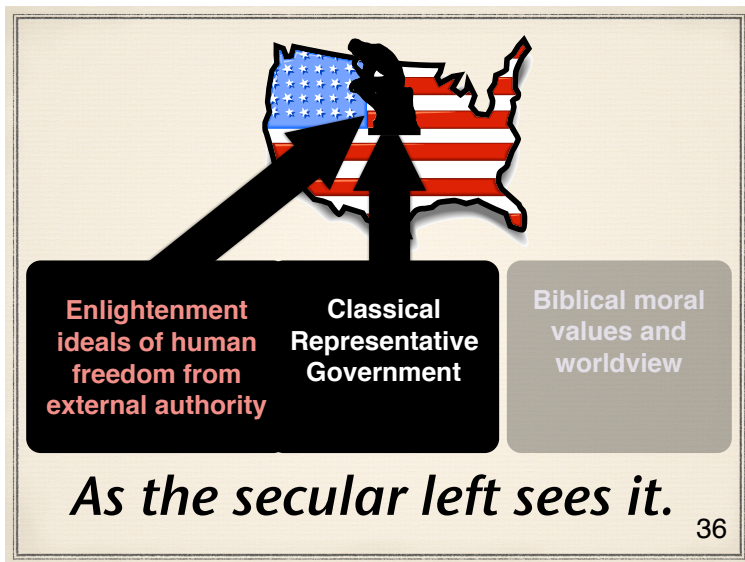
New Testament

Heaven
(Promised Land)

John 14:27

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. **Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.**"

35



Separation of state from any one religious sect is not the same as separation from any notion of transcendent spiritual authority.

Sacred Canopy - a generic god

Sectarian religions

Note: Sectarian religion is any faith presupposition that takes the role of traditional religion in guiding a life.

Public policies

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David Barton
evangelical Christian political
activist / author and popular
defender of Christian America.

Mark A. Noll
American historian at Notre Dame
specializing in the history of
Christianity in the United States
who challenges the notion of
"Christian America".

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Culture Wars

"The great question of our time is, Will we be motivated by materialistic philosophy or by spiritual power?"

Billy Graham

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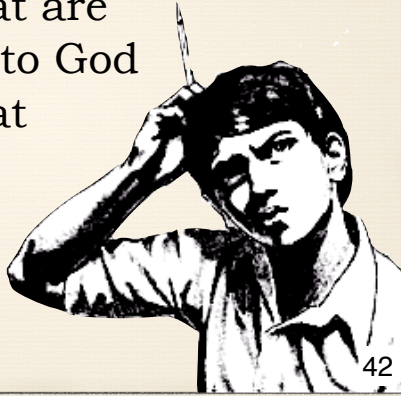
Another place where we can get off track

Believing that America was founded either as an orthodox "Christian nation" or as a radical "secular state".

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Matthew 22:21

“Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”



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Christian alien ambassadors have multiple citizenships which often conflict.



**Citizens of
the Kingdom
of God**



**Citizens of
the World of
humanity**



**Citizens of the
Country of
residence**

1 Peter 1:1

“To those who reside
as aliens . . . chosen
of God”

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**How are Christians to see themselves
in this world?**

Aliens

(citizens of God’s kingdom)

Analysts
(critique)



Activist
(support)

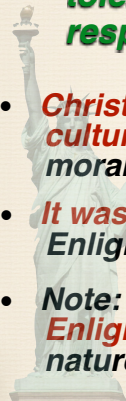
Ambassadors

(salt and light)

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**1. The American system embraces core
values that are conflicted and call for
tolerance, understanding, and mutual
respect.**

- **Christianity had a foundational role in the culture** - World view, education, civic life, morality.
- **It was not the only or primary influence** - Enlightenment values, material greed, etc.
- **Note: The founding documents reflect Enlightenment values more than the Bible** - nature’s god, common grace, humanism.



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2. America’s testimony is mixed.

Positive

Generous

Open

Prosperous

Confident

Negative

Self centered

Prejudiced

Materialistic

Arrogant

Yet



46

“render to Caesar the things
that are Caesar’s”



Participate
(vote, serve,
support)



Tolerate
(submit, respect,
critique)



Model
(moral values,
priorities, civility)

The Christian’s role

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“Responding to those of differing faiths”



**Act civilly
and obey
the law**

**Live with
& love
those who
disagree**

**Bear
witness to
the truth**

The Christian's role

48

“Same sex marriage”



**Act civilly
and obey
the law**

**Live with
& love
those who
disagree**

**Bear
witness to
the truth**

The Christian's role

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Lessons

We do not place our faith and hope in America
- a secular state with the soul of a church.

We seek to influence our government
from the bottom up and from the inside out.

We honor the American constitution
when we respect majority rule.

We do not expect America to
usher in the kingdom of God.

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