

Christian Nationalism

Wrong Kingdom, Wrong Fruit

Complete — Introduction, Chapters 1-10, and Appendices A-B

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
The two anchor texts, this study's two-part thesis, and method.	
Chapter 1: What Is Christian Nationalism?.....	7
The definitional spectrum, from civil religion through cultural Christian nationalism to dominionism and theonomy.	
Chapter 2: How Did It Begin?.....	8
Puritan roots, Reconstruction-era religious nationalism, Cold War civil religion, and the Seven Mountain Mandate's rise.	
Chapter 3: Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?.....	11
The founding-era evidence in full, including whether the American legal system is actually built on scripture.	
Chapter 4: The Case For, in Full.....	13
Stephen Wolfe's case for Christian nationalism, presented fully and fairly before it is tested.	
Chapter 5: The Case Against, in Full.....	15
“My kingdom is not of this world”: the mainstream theological critique, examined directly.	
Chapter 6: Render Unto Caesar and Romans 13.....	16
Render Unto Caesar and Romans 13, read in full against both sides of this debate — including the fuller word-study pattern behind “ordained of God” in Appendix A.	
Chapter 7: The Administrations Test.....	18
The present Grace administration tested against the future, literal kingdom scripture actually describes.	
Chapter 8: The Seven Mountain Mandate and Dominionism, Closer Up.....	20
The Seven Mountain Mandate and dominionism, examined closely on their own terms.	
Chapter 9: Godly Patriotism — What Scripture Actually Commands.....	21
Godly patriotism: what scripture actually commands, from 1 Timothy 2 to Daniel, Joseph, and Esther.	
Chapter 10: Closing — An Actionable Conclusion.....	23
An actionable conclusion: praying for leaders and being salt and light in the Grace administration.	
Appendix A: “Let Every Soul Be Subject” — The Romans 13:1-7 Study in Full.....	25
The complete companion study behind Chapter 6's reading of Romans 13, testing “ordained of God” word by word against scripture's own pattern.	
Appendix B: Wrong Fruit — Documented Case Studies in Power and Control.....	35
Named, dated, sourced documentation of a movement's own leading advocates pursuing exactly the concentrated political power this study tests and finds displaced.	

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; 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. 2:3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 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 anchor passages rather than one, and that choice is not incidental — it states the whole shape of the argument before a single chapter begins. Jesus’s own words to Pilate draw a real, categorical line: whatever his kingdom is, it is not of this world, not secured or advanced the way earthly kingdoms are secured and advanced. Paul’s instruction to Timothy, just as directly, commands something that looks, on its face, like the opposite of withdrawal: prayer for kings and all in authority, named as “good and acceptable in the sight of God,” so that believers may live “a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.” Held together, these two texts are not in tension. They are this study’s whole thesis, stated in scripture’s own words before this study adds a sentence of its own: the kingdom of God is not a political project to be won by earthly means — and believers are nonetheless called to real, active, faithful engagement with the civil authority God has placed them under, praying for it, desiring good from it, and living godly, public lives within it.

B. What This Study Is, and Is Not

This is a study of an ideology and a doctrine, not a scorecard for candidates, parties, or particular pieces of legislation. “Christian nationalism” names a real, documented, and contested set of claims about how Christian faith and national identity ought to relate — claims this study is going to define carefully, trace historically, and test against scripture, the same way this library has tested every other popular teaching it has taken up. Testing that ideology is not the same thing as testing whether Christians should vote, hold office, speak publicly about moral questions, or want their nation governed well. This study affirms all of that without qualification, and does so at length, because leaving it unstated would risk being heard as an argument for silence and withdrawal — and that is not scripture’s own position, and not this study’s own conclusion either.

C. The Two Halves Stated Plainly

It is worth naming both halves of this study’s argument directly here, so that neither is heard as a footnote to the other.

First: worldly Christian nationalism, examined as a political-fusion ideology, will be tested against scripture and found, at real and specific points, to be in error. This study will show its strongest defenders a fair hearing before testing them — Chapter 4 gives the case for Christian nationalism in full, in its own best form, before Chapter 5 and following take it on. But testing it fairly does not mean approving it, and where this study's own careful reading of scripture finds the fusion of national and spiritual kingdom mistaken, it will say so plainly, the same way this library has said so plainly about tithing, institutional church drift, and every other subject it has examined.

Second: godly civic faithfulness — call it godly patriotism — is not merely permitted by scripture. It is commanded. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 does not describe an optional posture for the unusually civic-minded believer. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all" places prayer for those in authority near the very front of Paul's own instructions for how the church is to conduct itself. Wanting godly leaders, godly laws, and a nation governed well is not this study's concession to political reality — it is this study's own affirmative reading of what Paul actually commands. A believer who prays for their leaders, works through legitimate means toward just laws, and lives a publicly godly life is not falling short of some higher, more spiritual calling to disengage. They are doing exactly what 1 Timothy 2 asks of them.

These two halves are not competing claims this study will try to balance uneasily against each other. They are the same argument, seen from two directions: the kingdom of God is not advanced by political victory — and God's people are nonetheless called to real, active, faithful citizenship within whatever nation they find themselves in, precisely because that citizenship is never itself the kingdom, only ever the place the kingdom's own light is meant to shine.

D. Method

This study follows this library's established method (Research-Method.md), with two commitments held to with particular discipline given how much live political disagreement surrounds this subject.

Differing views are shown in full, per this library's own fifth principle. Christian nationalism's strongest contemporary defense — Stephen Wolfe's *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (2022) — is presented on its own terms in Chapter 4, before this study tests it in the chapters that follow. Wolfe does not argue for theocracy or the direct enforcement of Mosaic law, and this study will not present him as though he does. He deserves, and will receive, the same fair hearing this library gave the standard case for tithing before testing it.

Historical claims are held to the same evidentiary honesty as every doctrinal claim. This study examines two historical questions directly — whether America was founded as a Christian nation, and whether the American legal system is meaningfully built on scripture — and does so the way this library examines any claim: real evidence, stated plainly, without overclaiming what the historical record does not actually support. On the legal-system question specifically, this study will show substantial, documented biblical influence on Anglo-American common law (Blackstone's own direct appeal to scripture as a source of natural law; specific colonial and early state statutes borrowed from Mosaic law) without asserting a direct, one-to-one derivation the fuller record does not support, since much of the Constitution's actual structure — separation of powers, jury trial, the framework of enumerated rights — traces at least as directly to English common law and Enlightenment political theory as to scripture itself.

This study also tests the ideology, not the individual. Nothing in the chapters ahead is aimed at questioning any particular believer's sincerity, patriotism, or love for their country. It is aimed at testing

a specific set of claims about how nation and church ought to relate, against what scripture itself actually says.

E. Why This Matters Now

Christian nationalism is one of the more actively contested subjects in American religious and political life at the moment this study is being written, discussed across pulpits, op-eds, and social media with an intensity most doctrinal questions never reach. That makes it an unusually live example of this library's own standing concern: what a Christian actually believes, and how clearly that belief is drawn from scripture rather than absorbed from surrounding political culture, shapes both how that believer lives and how the gospel itself is heard by those watching. A church confused about the difference between the kingdom of God and a political project risks representing Christ poorly to a watching world in exactly the way this library's companion study, *God: Deliverer, Not Destroyer*, already showed a distorted view of God's own character does. And a church that mistakenly hears "the kingdom is not of this world" as permission to disengage from civic life entirely misses 1 Timothy 2's own direct command just as badly, in the opposite direction. This study exists to correct both errors, not just one.

F. A Documented Record

Everything above, and everything the chapters ahead test, concerns Christian nationalism as an ideology — a set of claims about scripture, history, and political theology, tested on their own textual merits. But an ideology does not stay theoretical forever, and by the time of this study's final drafting, some of its most visible contemporary advocates had moved from written argument to organized, documented practice: acquiring land, opening offices, and stating openly, on the record, that concentrating like-minded believers in a single place yields — in one advocate's own words — "far, far more political power" than the same believers living dispersed. Appendix B, "Wrong Fruit: Documented Case Studies in Power and Control," sets out that record directly: named advocates, named places, dated public statements, and a documented pattern of church leadership shielding abusers from accountability. This is not a departure from this study's own discipline of testing the ideology rather than the individual (§D above). Matthew 7:16's own test — "by their fruits ye shall know them" — is a test of visible, public conduct, not a verdict on any individual's hidden heart, and applying it to what a movement's own leading advocates say and do once their ideas move off the page is simply taking that test as seriously as this study takes every other text it examines.

Chapter 1: What Is Christian Nationalism?

Before this study can test Christian nationalism against scripture, it has to be clear about what, exactly, is being tested. This is harder than it sounds. Christian nationalism is not a denomination, a creed, or a single organization with a stated platform anyone can simply read. It is a label scholars, journalists, and believers themselves apply to a range of related but genuinely distinct positions — and treating it as one flat thing, rather than a spectrum, is itself a common source of confusion this chapter aims to correct before the rest of this study builds on it.

A. A Working Definition

At its broadest, Christian nationalism names the belief that a nation's identity, laws, and public life ought to be formally or informally fused with the Christian religion — that being a good citizen and being a Christian are, or ought to be, functionally the same claim, and that government has some legitimate role in promoting, protecting, or in stronger versions enforcing Christianity's place in national life. It is worth stating plainly what this definition does not, by itself, include: it does not, on its own, mean simple patriotism, a Christian's ordinary desire for good and godly government, or public expression of personal faith by a believer who happens to hold office. This study's Introduction already drew that line, and this chapter's task is to describe the ideology precisely enough that the line stays visible rather than blurring under the weight of a single, loaded label.

B. Not One Thing, But a Spectrum

The most careful empirical study of this subject, sociologists Andrew Whitehead and Samuel Perry's *Taking America Back for God* (Oxford University Press, 2020), did not treat Christian nationalism as a single position at all. Drawing on national survey data, they measured agreement with statements like “the federal government should declare the United States a Christian nation” and “the federal government should advocate Christian values,” and sorted respondents along a spectrum into four working categories: Ambassadors (strong, consistent agreement across the whole set of statements), Accommodators (leaning toward agreement, with more qualification), Resisters (leaning toward disagreement), and Rejecters (consistent disagreement). This study is worth citing here, at the lower evidentiary weight this library reserves for background corroboration, not because its own categories are scripture, but because it demonstrates something important on its own terms: most Americans who hold any of these views at all hold them by degree, not as a single, fixed all-or-nothing ideology. Painting every expression of the phrase with the same brush — treating a believer who simply wants prayer allowed in public schools the same as one who wants Mosaic law enforced by the state — is not accurate to how the actual range of belief breaks down.

It helps to name the spectrum's own real range directly, from softest to hardest:

Civil religion sits at the softest end — a diffuse, often bipartisan blending of national and religious symbolism (national prayer days, “God Bless America,” religious language in inaugural addresses) that does not necessarily claim any formal legal status for Christianity and is sometimes held by people who would reject the “Christian nationalist” label entirely.

Cultural Christian nationalism claims something stronger: that the nation's laws, public institutions, and civic culture should actively reflect and protect Christian moral norms specifically, even without full formal establishment of a state church.

Dominionism goes further still, holding that Christians are called to actively obtain governing authority — not merely influence policy from outside, but occupy positions of cultural and political power directly, across every major sphere of society. Chapter 8 examines this position’s most organized contemporary form, the Seven Mountain Mandate, in full.

Theonomy (sometimes called Christian Reconstructionism) sits at the hardest end of the spectrum: the position that civil law should directly enforce Mosaic law, including its Old Testament civil and judicial penalties. It is worth naming clearly, here at the outset, that this is a minority position even among self-described Christian nationalists, and that Chapter 4’s own presentation of Christian nationalism’s most prominent contemporary defender will show he explicitly and repeatedly denies holding it.

C. What Christian Nationalists, Across This Spectrum, Typically Want

Documented policy positions associated with Christian nationalism, drawn from the same body of scholarship, tend to cluster around a recognizable set of concerns: public display of Christian symbols on government property; dedicated time for prayer in public schools; government funding directed toward religious institutions; a more explicitly Christian framing of American history in public-school curricula; legal restriction of practices Christian teaching opposes, most prominently abortion; and, in some versions, immigration policy shaped by religious affiliation. Naming this list here is not this study’s endorsement or condemnation of any single item on it — several of these questions, taken individually, are live policy debates within Christianity itself, not settled by this chapter. It is this chapter’s own attempt at descriptive accuracy: this is what the term, across its whole spectrum, is actually naming when it is used with any precision, rather than as a general-purpose insult or a general-purpose badge of honor.

D. Why the Line at “Ideology” Matters

This chapter closes by returning to the distinction this study’s Introduction already promised to hold. A Christian who votes according to conscience, prays for the nation’s leaders, hopes for laws that reflect God’s own moral character, or speaks publicly about a moral question is not, by that fact alone, a Christian nationalist in the sense this study is testing. What distinguishes the ideology from ordinary civic faithfulness is the specific claim that national identity and Christian identity ought to be formally fused — that being American, in some meaningful legal or civic sense, ought to mean being Christian, or that government’s own proper role includes actively establishing or enforcing that fusion. That is the claim this study’s remaining chapters will trace historically and test against scripture. Simple, godly civic engagement — the subject of Chapter 9 — is a different claim entirely, and this study intends to keep the two as clearly distinguished in every chapter ahead as this chapter has tried to keep them here.

Chapter 2: How Did It Begin?

Christian nationalism, in some form, did not begin in a single decade, with a single founder, or from a single cause. This chapter traces its American history through several genuinely distinct threads — some centuries apart, some barely related to each other except by the label later scholarship has applied to all of them — because understanding where the impulse actually comes from is necessary before this study can test what today’s version of it actually claims.

A. Colonial Roots: “A City Upon a Hill”

The earliest thread reaches back before the United States existed at all. In 1630, aboard the ship *Arbella*, Puritan leader John Winthrop delivered a sermon to settlers bound for the Massachusetts Bay Colony, describing their venture in language that has echoed through American religious and political rhetoric ever since: “we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.” Winthrop’s own vision was not a claim about a future nation’s constitutional structure — no such nation existed yet — but it planted an idea that would resurface repeatedly in later centuries: that this particular settlement, and later this particular country, carried a special, God-given religious mission and example-setting role among the nations. Whether or not that idea is scripturally warranted is a question this study takes up directly in Chapter 3. For now, this chapter’s task is only to note that it is old — considerably older than the specific modern political movements usually associated with the term “Christian nationalism” — and that it supplies much of the emotional and rhetorical inheritance later movements would draw on.

B. A Founding Generation of Mixed Motives

Chapter 3 examines the founding era’s own evidence in full. It is enough to note here that the generation that actually wrote the nation’s founding documents held a genuinely wide range of religious conviction — from orthodox Christian belief to Enlightenment deism that affirmed a Creator while rejecting most of Christianity’s specific doctrinal claims — and that this mixture is itself part of why the “Christian founding” question remains as contested as it does. This chapter is concerned with a narrower question: not what the founders believed, but how the specific idea of formal Christian-national fusion has resurfaced, receded, and changed shape in the centuries since.

C. The Reconstruction Era: Religious Nationalism and the “Lost Cause”

A harder, and more troubling, thread in this history belongs to the period following the Civil War. Historian Anthea Butler and other scholars of American religion trace a documented line running from scriptural arguments used to justify slavery, through the post-war “Lost Cause” narrative — which recast the Confederacy’s own defeat in explicitly religious, providential terms — to the 1915 re-founding of the Ku Klux Klan, an organization that adopted Christian symbolism directly into its own rituals, including the burning cross, and to later organized religious opposition to the Civil Rights Movement. This study includes this thread not to imply that every expression of Christian nationalism today shares this specific history, but because honest historical accounting requires naming it: religious nationalism has been invoked, at real and documented points in American history, in direct service of causes scripture itself condemns, and any study testing this ideology today owes its reader that fuller history rather than a sanitized one.

D. Cold War Civil Religion

A different, considerably less fraught thread emerges in the 1950s, driven by explicit anti-Communist sentiment rather than any of the above. In 1954, Congress added the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance, and in 1956 made “In God We Trust” the nation’s official motto — both changes explicitly framed, in the congressional record of the period, as distinguishing the United States from officially atheistic Soviet Communism. The National Prayer Breakfast, an annual gathering of American political leaders, was likewise formally institutionalized in 1953. This period is often described by scholars of religion as establishing a diffuse American “civil religion” — a blending of national and religious

symbolism broad enough to be embraced across party and denominational lines, and distinct in kind from the more specific, activist movements that would follow it.

E. The Religious Right's Organized Political Turn

The 1970s and 1980s saw the rise of organized evangelical political mobilization as a distinct, deliberate movement rather than a diffuse cultural mood. The Moral Majority, founded by Jerry Falwell in 1979, is the best-known organization of this period, mobilizing evangelical voters around issues including opposition to abortion (following *Roe v. Wade* in 1973) and resistance to court decisions removing prayer from public schools. This period marks a real shift from the civil religion of the prior decades: a shift from broad, largely symbolic national religiosity toward organized, sustained political activism aimed at specific legislative and judicial outcomes.

F. The Seven Mountain Mandate and the New Apostolic Reformation

A further, more theologically activist thread developed from the 1970s onward and hardened considerably in more recent decades, associated with the charismatic and Pentecostal wing of American Christianity rather than the largely Reformed and Baptist Religious Right of the prior section. This dominionist strand — organized, in its most widely known form, around the “Seven Mountain Mandate” calling Christians to seek influence over religion, family, education, government, media, business, and the arts — fused with the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), a loosely organized charismatic movement built around contemporary apostles and prophets, to produce a considerably more explicitly spiritual-warfare-inflected version of Christian political activism than the Religious Right's own more conventional lobbying and voter-mobilization approach. Chapter 8 examines this movement in full.

G. The Term's Mainstreaming

The specific phrase “Christian nationalism,” as an analytical term rather than a self-description, moved from mostly academic usage into mainstream political and religious discourse over the past decade, accelerated considerably by scholarly work like Whitehead and Perry's already-cited 2020 study and by the events of January 6, 2021, when explicitly Christian nationalist symbolism — crosses, “Jesus Saves” banners, prayer circles — appeared visibly amid the Capitol riot, drawing sustained public and journalistic attention to the term in a way it had not previously received.

Closing: A History, Not a Monolith

Read together, this chapter's own history resists the single, tidy origin story either side of today's debate might prefer. It is not simply an old, unbroken tradition reaching back to the Puritans, nor is it simply a recent invention of 1970s political organizing or 2020s online discourse. It is several distinct threads — a colonial religious self-understanding, a genuinely troubling Reconstruction-era religious nationalism, a largely symbolic Cold War civil religion, an organized 1980s political movement, and a more recent, harder-edged dominionist strand — that share a family resemblance without sharing a single cause or a single, continuous lineage. Understanding that range is what makes it possible for the chapters ahead to test today's version of this ideology fairly, on its own actual terms, rather than either dismissing it by association with its worst historical moments or crediting it with a purity its own history does not actually support.

Chapter 3: Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?

This is the question Chapter 2's own history keeps circling back to without answering, and it deserves a full, direct treatment on its own before this study goes any further. It is also a question this library's own method requires handling with particular care, because it is contested by real evidence on more than one side, and because the honest answer is more complicated — and more useful to this study's own argument — than either a flat “yes” or a flat “no.”

A. What the Founding Documents Themselves Actually Say

The Declaration of Independence (1776) invokes “Nature’s God,” “their Creator,” and “divine Providence” — real, deliberate theistic language, but language a deist and an orthodox Christian could both sign in good conscience, and several signers were, by their own account, closer to the former than the latter. The Constitution (1787), by contrast, does not mention God, Christianity, or scripture anywhere in its body text at all, and states directly, in Article VI: “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” The First Amendment (1791) goes further still: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Read side by side, the nation’s two founding-era documents show a real pattern: broad, generic theistic language at the level of political philosophy and moral justification, paired with a deliberate, explicit refusal — twice — to establish Christianity, or any religion, as the nation’s own official faith. This is not silence on the question. It is a documented choice.

It is worth noting, for full accuracy, that an earlier and more explicitly Christian document exists in the same national memory: the Mayflower Compact (1620), signed by the Plymouth colonists more than a century and a half before independence, which opens by naming its purpose as being “for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith.” That document is real, and its language is unambiguous. But it is a colonial covenant among a single small settlement, not a founding document of the United States, and citing it as though it settles the national question conflates two different things separated by a hundred and fifty years and a deliberate, later choice not to repeat its language at the federal level.

B. Colonial Establishment, and Its Deliberate Undoing

Several colonies did maintain formally established churches well into the eighteenth century — Congregationalism in New England, Anglicanism in much of the South — and some state-level establishments outlasted independence itself; Massachusetts did not fully disestablish its state church until 1833. But the federal Constitution’s own refusal to establish any national church was not an oversight. It reflected, in real and documented part, the lobbying of Baptist dissenters like John Leland, who had personally experienced state-church persecution and pressed Madison directly for the religious-liberty guarantee that became the First Amendment. Madison’s own 1785 *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*, written against a proposed Virginia tax to support “teachers of the Christian religion,” argued that civil establishment of religion corrupts both the state and the religion it establishes — an argument written by a man who was himself a professing Christian, aimed not at removing Christianity from public life but at keeping government out of the church’s own internal affairs. The federal refusal to establish a national religion, in other words, was itself substantially a Christian-motivated choice, not simply a secular one — a detail that complicates both sides’ preferred version of this history equally.

C. The Treaty of Tripoli

One further piece of documentary evidence is cited often enough, on the “not a Christian nation” side of this debate, to require direct examination here. Article 11 of the Treaty of Tripoli, negotiated under President Washington and signed under President Adams, ratified unanimously by the Senate on June 7, 1797, states: “the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.” This is real, official, unambiguous language, agreed to without recorded floor debate by the same generation that had just finished writing the Constitution. It is not, by itself, a complete accounting of the founders’ religious views or intentions — it is a single treaty, addressing a specific diplomatic purpose (reassuring a Muslim-majority Barbary state that the United States held no religious enmity toward it) — but it is a document real historians on every side of this debate have to reckon with honestly, not explain away, precisely because it states, in the founding generation’s own words and with the Senate’s own unanimous consent, exactly the question this chapter is asking.

D. A Founding Generation of Genuinely Mixed Religious Conviction

The individual founders themselves spanned a real range. John Jay, the first Chief Justice, wrote plainly that “it is the duty as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers” — about as direct an affirmation of a Christian national self-understanding as exists in the founding generation’s own words. Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams held similarly orthodox convictions. Thomas Jefferson, by clear contrast, produced his own edited version of the Gospels with every miracle removed, and Benjamin Franklin’s own private religious views ran closer to a generic providential deism than to orthodox Christian doctrine — even as Franklin, at a genuine impasse in the Constitutional Convention, called the delegates to prayer, an act of practical piety that does not, by itself, settle his personal theology. This is not a founding generation that can be honestly flattened into either “secular” or “Christian” as a single label. It was both, and everything between, at once — which is itself the clearest evidence against any simple version of this chapter’s title question.

E. The Legal System Question

This study’s Introduction already flagged this as its own section, and it deserves that treatment. Sir William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-1769) was, by documented citation frequency, the second most-referenced authority among the founding generation, behind only the Bible itself, and Blackstone’s own legal philosophy grounds all human law explicitly in two sources: “the law of nature and the law of revelation” — scripture named directly as one of law’s own two proper foundations. Real, specific colonial statutes went further still: the Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641), one of the earliest colonial law codes, cites Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy by chapter and verse directly in its list of capital offenses. This is genuine, documented, substantial biblical influence on early Anglo-American law — not a modern overstatement.

But the fuller record does not support a direct, one-to-one derivation of the American legal system from scripture. The Constitution’s own structural architecture — separation of powers, checks and balances, an independent judiciary — traces most directly to Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of the Laws* and to English common-law precedent developed across centuries of judicial rulings, not to any specific scriptural text. Locke’s natural-rights theory, itself only partially grounded in explicitly biblical argument, shaped the Declaration’s own language of unalienable rights at least as directly as any single scriptural passage did. The honest finding here mirrors this whole chapter’s own finding: real, substantial, documented biblical influence, alongside real, substantial, documented influence from other sources entirely — not a scripture-derived legal system in any simple sense, and not a purely secular one either.

F. Weighing the Evidence Honestly

Held together, this chapter's evidence resists both of the tidy answers this debate usually offers. America was not founded, in any formal or legal sense, as a Christian nation — the Constitution's own refusal to establish a national religion, confirmed explicitly by the Treaty of Tripoli's own language, settles that much directly. But it was founded by a population, and substantially by a founding generation, whose moral and legal assumptions were shaped by real, documented Christian influence alongside Enlightenment political philosophy, in a genuine and inseparable mixture neither side of today's debate can honestly claim in full. This finding matters directly for the chapters ahead. If Christian nationalism's own claim rests on the premise that the nation was founded as an explicitly Christian nation and has since drifted from that founding, this chapter's evidence weakens that specific premise considerably. The stronger form of the argument — the form Chapter 4 presents next — does not, in fact, rest its weight there. It rests on scripture's own claims about what a nation owes God, independent of what any particular nation's own founders intended. That is the version this study owes a full and fair hearing before testing it.

Chapter 4: The Case For, in Full

This study's method commits to showing differing views in full before testing them, and nowhere does that commitment matter more than here. Christian nationalism's most serious contemporary intellectual defense is Stephen Wolfe's *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (2022), and this chapter presents his argument on its own terms, in its own strongest form, before any chapter that follows takes it on.

A. Why Wolfe Is the Right Test Case

Wolfe's book is, by wide agreement across reviewers who otherwise disagree sharply with him, the most rigorous and philosophically serious defense of Christian nationalism published to date — a sustained work of Reformed political theology rather than a popular manifesto. Testing a weaker or more casually stated version of this ideology would not test the position fairly. Testing Wolfe tests it at its strongest.

B. The Dominion Mandate and the Naturalness of Nations

Wolfe's argument begins before the Fall. Genesis 1:28's command to "have dominion" and to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" describes, in his reading, humanity's own natural end — a mandate that would have produced distinct peoples, cultures, and governments even had Adam never sinned, because differentiation into particular nations and communities is part of the created order itself, not a consequence of sin to be undone. If something belongs to the natural, pre-Fall order, Wolfe argues, it is good, and civil government — along with the ethnic and cultural particularity that produces distinct nations in the first place — is one of those good, natural things, not a regrettable necessity imposed only after Eden.

C. Ethnic and Cultural Nationhood

Building on that foundation, Wolfe argues that real nations are naturally bound together by shared ethnicity, language, and culture, and that a nation composed of two or more ethnicities lacks the natural cohesion a genuine nation requires. A Christian nation, on this view, is not simply a nation whose government happens to be run by Christians, but a nation whose own particular ethnic and cultural people has, corporately, embraced the Christian faith as its own — Christianity taking root in and through a people's existing natural bonds, rather than replacing or dissolving them.

D. The Christian Prince

Wolfe's most distinctive and most discussed proposal is the figure of the "Christian prince" — a civil ruler who is himself a believer, and who uses the state's own legitimate coercive power to direct the nation toward the true religion and to restrain public blasphemy and false worship. Wolfe frames this explicitly as an act of restraint and public order, not forced individual conversion: the prince does not compel private belief, which Wolfe agrees cannot be coerced, but he does use law to shape the nation's public religious life in a Christian direction, on the same grounds any ruler is understood, in the classical Christian political tradition Wolfe draws on, to have real authority to shape a nation's public moral order.

E. What Wolfe Explicitly Denies

Fairness to this argument requires stating clearly what it is not. Wolfe repeatedly and explicitly denies that he is arguing for theocracy in the Reconstructionist sense, for the direct civil enforcement of Mosaic judicial law and its Old Testament penalties, or for the state's use of force to compel individual religious conversion. He positions his own argument within a specific historical Reformed tradition of Christian political thought — reaching back through Reformation-era political theology — rather than as a novel invention, and presents it as a recovery of ideas he believes the modern church has largely forgotten rather than as a break from historic Christian teaching.

F. The Argument Stated Plainly

Assembled together, Wolfe's case runs: nations are a natural, good part of the created order, not merely a post-Fall necessity; a genuine nation is bound by real ethnic and cultural particularity; a Christian nation is one where that particular people has embraced the Christian faith corporately; and a civil ruler who shares that faith may rightly use his office's legitimate authority to protect and direct the nation's public religious life, without thereby becoming a theocrat in the fuller, Mosaic-law sense. This is the strongest form of the case this study sets out to test. The chapters that follow — Chapter 5's mainstream theological critique, Chapter 6's direct exegesis of the two texts most contested in this debate, and Chapter 7's application of this library's own administrations framework — take up that testing directly, on the argument's own actual terms as stated here, not on a weaker version of it.

Chapter 5: The Case Against, in Full

Having given Christian nationalism's strongest form a full and fair hearing, this study now turns to the case against it — presented here, as Chapter 4 was, in its own full and strongest form, before Chapter 6's direct exegesis and Chapter 7's administrations test sharpen the argument further still.

A. "My Kingdom Is Not of This World," in Its Own Context

This study's own anchor passage, John 18:36, was not spoken in the abstract. Jesus said it standing before Pilate, under direct interrogation about whether he claimed to be a king — the one moment in all four Gospels where the question of Jesus's own relationship to worldly political power is put to him most directly, by the very authority best positioned to crush any political ambition on the spot. His answer draws the line as clearly as language allows: "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." The proof he offers of his kingdom's own nature is precisely its refusal to be defended by force — a kingdom that fights for itself, by Jesus's own logic here, would thereby prove itself to be of this world. That is not an incidental detail. It is the very test he sets.

B. Jesus's Own Repeated Refusals of Earthly Power

This was not a single, cornered answer improvised under Pilate's questioning. It was consistent with a pattern running through the whole of Jesus's earthly ministry. In John 6:15, 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" — withdrawing from, rather than accepting, a popular movement to install him in exactly the kind of political power a Christian-nationalist reading might expect him to seize. In Matthew 4:8-10, offered "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" directly by the devil, in exchange for a single act of worship, Jesus refused outright — worth noting carefully, since the offer itself concedes that worldly political dominion was, at that moment, in the tempter's own gift to offer, and Jesus still declined it. And in Luke 12:13-14, asked to settle an ordinary civil dispute over an inheritance, Jesus responded, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" — declining even a small, legitimate exercise of civil arbitration authority that was, by any ordinary reckoning, well within his rights to grant.

C. The Apostolic Church's Own Pattern

The apostles who carried this ministry forward followed the same pattern under the far more hostile circumstances of the Roman Empire. Nowhere in Acts or the epistles does the early church seek political office, lobby for legal establishment, or attempt to seize governing authority from Rome — even as it endured real, sustained persecution under a government it had every theological reason, on a Christian-nationalist reading, to want reformed or replaced. Paul writes instead, in Philippians 3:20, "our conversation is in heaven" — the word rendered "conversation" carrying the sense of citizenship, a deliberate contrast with the Roman citizenship Paul himself held and valued (Acts 22:25-28) but never treated as ultimate.

D. Not Carnal Weapons

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 states this directly: "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.)” This is the same text this library’s companion study, *God: Deliverer, Not Destroyer*, already examined at length regarding the church’s own discontinuity from the Old Testament’s literal warfare — worth naming again here, because the same principle applies with equal force to political power. The kingdom’s own weapons are explicitly, categorically not the tools of worldly political and military contest — not coercive law, not state power, not the sword — but prayer, the gospel, and the Spirit’s own work. A Christian-nationalist reading that reaches for civil law’s coercive power as a primary kingdom-advancing tool reaches for precisely the category of weapon Paul says the church’s own warfare does not use.

E. Testing Wolfe’s Argument Directly

Chapter 4 presented Wolfe’s case in full; this section names, directly, where it does not hold against the evidence just assembled. The dominion mandate of Genesis 1:28 — examined again in fuller detail in Chapter 8 — commands dominion over “the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth”; its own object is the created, non-human world, and reading a mandate for national political structure into it requires importing a category the text itself does not name. Wolfe’s claim that “no nation is composed of two or more ethnicities” sits uneasily against the New Testament’s own explicit vision of the church itself: Galatians 3:28’s “there is neither Jew nor Greek... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus,” and Revelation 7:9’s vision of a redeemed multitude “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” gathered as one body — a body whose own unity is explicitly not organized along ethnic-national lines, which is difficult to reconcile with a definition of Christian nationhood built on ethnic particularity as a necessary condition. And the “Christian prince” who restrains public blasphemy by law, however carefully Wolfe distinguishes this from compelled conversion, still asks civil law to enforce a religious standard scripture nowhere assigns to civil government under the present administration — a claim Chapter 7’s own framework will name with more precision.

Closing

Held together, John 18:36’s own direct testimony, Jesus’s repeated refusals of offered political power, the apostolic church’s own consistent pattern, and Paul’s explicit naming of the kingdom’s weapons as “not carnal” build a real, substantial case that the kingdom of God is not advanced, defended, or established by the tools of worldly political power — civil law, state coercion, or the sword. This is the case against, in its own full and strongest form. Chapter 6 now turns to the two texts most directly contested by both sides of this whole debate, and Chapter 7 supplies this library’s own distinctive contribution to settling it.

Chapter 6: Render Unto Caesar and Romans 13

Two texts are cited more often than any others on both sides of this debate, frequently by both sides at once, in support of opposite conclusions. This chapter examines each directly, in its own context, before either is put to further use.

A. Render Unto Caesar, in Context

Matthew 22:15-22 records a deliberate trap. The Pharisees, allied unusually with the Herodians for this single purpose, ask Jesus whether it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar — a question with no safe answer under Roman occupation: agreement would alienate a Jewish crowd chafing under foreign taxation, refusal would be reportable to Rome as sedition. Jesus's answer refuses the trap's own false choice: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." This is not an evasion. It is a real answer that draws a genuine distinction between two legitimate, non-identical domains of obligation — a Roman coin, bearing Caesar's own image, belongs in some real sense to Caesar's own sphere; the worship and ultimate allegiance due God belongs to a different sphere entirely. Both are real obligations. Neither collapses into the other.

B. Romans 13:1-7, in Full

Paul's instruction to the Roman church states civil government's own legitimacy in the most direct terms scripture offers anywhere on the subject: "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" (13:1). Government, in Paul's own description, is "the minister of God to thee for good" (13:4) and "revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (13:4) — a real, God-ordained institution with real, legitimate authority, including the authority to "beareth not the sword in vain" (13:4). This is not a grudging toleration of civil government as a necessary evil. It is a positive, theological account of government's own God-given place and purpose.

That claim rests on a specific word, and scripture is not left to assert it in the abstract. "Ordained" translates *tetagmenai*, from *tasso* (Strong's Greek 5021) — a term that means to arrange in an orderly manner, to assign to a position, not to approve of a person's character. Scripture's own established usage confirms this is positional, administrative language rather than a moral verdict on the ruler: the same kind of language names Nebuchadnezzar — a pagan tyrant who leveled Jerusalem's own temple — as set in place by God's own hand (Daniel 2:21; 4:17, 32), and God commands submission to that same king again by name through Jeremiah, in advance of any change in his conduct: "I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant... and the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar... that nation will I punish" (Jeremiah 27:5-8). Pilate is told his authority is "given... from above" (John 19:11) at the exact moment he is about to misuse it worst, condemning an innocent man. And Paul himself, in this same letter, names Pharaoh — the ruler who enslaved Israel — as raised up by God for God's own purpose (Romans 9:17). In none of these four instances does "ordained of God" function as praise for the ruler's conduct; in every instance it states God's own sovereign claim over the office and course of governing authority as such, regardless of who holds it or how well they govern. Romans 13:1's claim, read against this pattern, asserts that civil government exists under God's own ordering of history — not that God specifically approves of any particular ruler's character, acts, or use of that office. (This distinction, and the fuller pattern behind it, is examined at full length in Appendix A.)

C. What These Two Texts Do Not Say

It is exactly as important to state what neither text says as what each does say. Matthew 22 does not say Caesar's domain and God's domain are the same domain, or that one is meant to absorb or govern the other — the force of Jesus's own answer depends entirely on there being two real, distinct spheres, "Caesar's" and "God's," not one. Romans 13 does not say civil government is to be run by the church, staffed exclusively by believers, or organized according to explicit Mosaic statute; Paul wrote this

instruction under Nero's own pagan Rome, addressed to believers with no expectation their government would ever be a Christian one, and grounded government's legitimacy in God's own ordaining of the office of civil authority as such — not in that office being held, structured, or administered by the church. Both texts, read on their own terms, describe civil government as a real, distinct, divinely legitimate institution, structurally separate from the church rather than an extension or instrument of it.

D. The Limit Both Texts Assume

Neither text teaches unconditional civil obedience, and scripture supplies its own explicit limit elsewhere. When the Sanhedrin directly commanded Peter and John to stop preaching Christ, their answer was direct: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Civil authority's own legitimacy, real as Romans 13 states it to be, is not absolute; where civil command directly requires disobedience to God, the higher obligation prevails. This limit does not weaken Romans 13's own force — it clarifies exactly what kind of authority is being described: real, God-ordained, and owed genuine submission, but not itself the final authority a believer answers to.

Closing

Together, these two texts supply this study's clearest textual account of how the kingdom of God and civil government actually relate under the present administration: two real, distinct, divinely sanctioned spheres, each owed its own proper obligation, neither absorbing the other, and civil government's own legitimate authority understood as real without being final. Chapter 7 now places this finding inside this library's own distinctive framework, showing precisely why this two-sphere structure — rather than the fused civil-religious structure Chapter 4 presented — is the structure scripture actually assigns to the present administration.

Chapter 7: The Administrations Test

This chapter applies this library's own distinctive contribution to this whole debate — the Seven Administrations Project's framework — directly to the question Chapters 4 through 6 have been building toward. It is, in a real sense, this study's most important chapter, because it explains not simply that the fused civil-religious structure Christian nationalism reaches for is wrong, but precisely why it is wrong, and why the same structure is not always and everywhere wrong.

A. Theocratic Israel Was Real

It is essential to this chapter's own honesty to state plainly that the fused structure Chapter 4 described is not a Christian-nationalist invention out of nothing. Under the Mosaic administration, Israel genuinely was governed this way: a single people, bound by ethnic and covenantal identity, whose civil law and religious law were the same law, given directly by God through Moses, enforced by civil penalty for religious offense. Exodus through Deuteronomy record a real, historical nation organized exactly the way Wolfe's "Christian prince" gestures toward — a nation where public worship and civil law were never two separate domains at all. This history matters directly here: the theonomist and dominionist impulse this study has been testing is not reaching for something scripture never describes. It is reaching

for something scripture describes in vivid, sustained, historical detail — and asking whether that same structure belongs to the present administration.

B. Why That Administration Does Not Transfer to the Grace Administration

Scripture answers that question directly, and the answer is that it does not transfer, on grounds this library's own framework states with particular clarity. Ephesians 2:14-15 describes what happened at the boundary between administrations: Christ "hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us... abolishing in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances" — the very Mosaic law that had bound Israel's civil and religious life together as one is described here as itself abolished in its dividing, nation-defining function. What replaces it is not a new nation organized the same way, but an explicitly trans-national body: Galatians 3:28's "neither Jew nor Greek," Colossians 3:11's "neither Greek nor Jew... Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," a body called out of every existing nation rather than reconstituted as one. The Grace administration's own structure — Pentecost onward, the administration this study and its readers presently live under — deliberately does not extend theocratic Israel's fused civil-religious pattern into a new "Christian nation." It replaces national fusion with a called-out, trans-national ekklesia instead.

C. The Future Administration Restores This Pattern — But It Is Not Ours to Occupy Now

This library's own dispensational method has never treated the Old Testament's kingdom promises as merely spiritual or already fulfilled, and this chapter does not depart from that method here. Isaiah 2:2-4, Isaiah 11:1-10, Zechariah 14:9, Psalm 2, and Daniel 2:44 describe a real, future, literal administration in which Christ himself reigns as King over all the nations of the earth — civil and religious authority genuinely fused once more, exactly as under the Mosaic administration, but this time under Christ's own direct, personal, visible reign rather than through any human ruler acting in his place. Revelation 20 describes this reign's own duration in explicit terms. This study affirms all of this fully and without spiritualizing it away, consistent with the same method this library has applied to every other future-kingdom text it has examined.

D. Wolfe's Error, Named Precisely

Here is this chapter's own distinctive diagnosis, and it is sharper than a simple "wrong." Wolfe's Christian prince reaches for a real structure scripture genuinely describes — but reaches for it out of its own proper administration. The fused civil-religious nation belongs to two administrations scripture actually names: the Mosaic administration, already closed, and the future kingdom administration, not yet opened. It does not belong to the administration presently in force. No human prince, however personally godly, is Christ; no present nation, however deliberately its laws might be shaped toward Christian moral standards, is the coming kingdom scripture describes; and the Grace administration's own called-out, trans-national body is structurally, deliberately different from both the nation Israel was under Moses and the kingdom the whole earth will be under Christ's own literal reign. Christian nationalism's core error, tested against this library's own framework, is a category error of timing — asking the present administration to occupy a role two other, non-overlapping administrations actually hold.

Closing

This chapter does not conclude that the fused structure Chapter 4 described is inherently illegitimate, only that it is inherently *displaced* — real, scriptural, and coming, but not now, and not through any human prince’s own office. That distinction matters for everything the remaining chapters build on it: Chapter 8 shows what happens when this same timing error is pursued with organized, activist intent, and Chapter 9 shows what scripture actually does ask of believers living faithfully inside the administration presently in force.

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

Chapter 2 introduced this movement historically; this chapter examines its own specific claims directly, because it represents the sharpest and most organizationally active point on the spectrum Chapter 1 described, and because Chapter 7’s administrations-test error appears here in its most explicit, activist form.

A. What the Movement Actually Teaches

The core concept traces to evangelical leader Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, in 1975, and was popularized in its present “mountains” framing by Lance Wallnau, joined by Bill Johnson, in their 2013 book *Invading Babylon*. The movement calls believers to seek influence and governing authority across seven identified “mountains” of cultural life — religion, family, government, education, media, business, and arts/entertainment — framed not as neutral spheres to be influenced through ordinary participation, but as spiritual battlegrounds to be actively “taken” for the kingdom. The movement developed alongside, and substantially overlaps with, the New Apostolic Reformation, a loosely organized charismatic network built around contemporary figures claiming the offices of apostle and prophet, associated particularly with the late C. Peter Wagner.

B. The Spiritual-Warfare Framing

A distinctive feature of this movement’s own teaching reads Ephesians 6:12’s “principalities... powers... rulers of the darkness of this world... spiritual wickedness in high places” as referring to specific, identifiable demonic beings assigned territorially over particular cities, nations, or societal “mountains,” to be discerned and displaced through targeted intercessory prayer this movement’s own literature calls “strategic-level spiritual warfare.” This is a distinctive and contested reading of that text, not the only one available within Christianity, and this study notes it here as description rather than endorsement.

C. Testing the Dominion Mandate Claim

Chapter 5 already flagged this briefly; it deserves full treatment here, since it functions as this movement’s own primary scriptural foundation. Genesis 1:28’s command to “have dominion” specifies its own object directly: “over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” The text names the created, non-human world — animals, land, the earth’s own resources — as dominion’s object. It does not name government, media, education,

business, or any other human societal institution. Reading “the seven mountains of society” into “dominion... over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” requires importing categories the verse itself simply does not contain, a move this library’s own method — grounded in what a text actually says before asking what it might further imply — cannot support without a clearer textual bridge than this movement’s literature supplies.

D. Testing the Apostles-and-Prophets-Today Claim

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-laying role, tied by the text’s own architecture metaphor to the church’s own founding, not language describing an office continually reissued generation after generation. Scripture supplies its own explicit test for any claim to renewed apostolic or prophetic authority: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21), and its own explicit warning that such claims require real scrutiny rather than automatic acceptance: “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:13). Naming this test is not this study’s blanket verdict on every individual who has held the title in this movement; it is a direct application of the same scrutiny scripture itself commands believers to apply to any such claim.

E. Testing the Great Commission Substitution

This movement’s own literature frequently invokes the Great Commission as a warrant for its “taking the mountains” strategy. Matthew 28:19-20 records what Christ actually commissioned: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them... teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The commission’s own object is disciple-making and teaching obedience to Christ’s commands — not the acquisition of governing authority over society’s institutions. Substituting territorial cultural conquest for disciple-making changes the commission’s own stated task into a different task scripture does not itself describe as the church’s mandate.

Closing

Tested directly against its own primary texts, the Seven Mountain Mandate’s central claims do not hold the scriptural weight its own literature places on them: its dominion-mandate foundation misreads Genesis 1:28’s own stated object, its ongoing-apostles-and-prophets claim outruns Ephesians 2:20’s own foundation-laying language without meeting scripture’s own test for such claims, and its Great Commission substitution changes the commission’s own task. This is Chapter 7’s administrations-test error in its most organized, activist form — reaching, with real institutional intent, for authority scripture assigns to a different administration entirely. Chapter 9 now turns from what scripture does not command to what it actually does.

Chapter 9: Godly Patriotism — What Scripture Actually Commands

Every chapter to this point has tested a claim and found it wanting in some real, specific way. This chapter changes direction entirely. Its task is not critique but affirmation — laying out, in full, what

scripture actually and positively commands of believers regarding civic life, so that this study's second thesis stands as fully developed as its first.

A. 1 Timothy 2:1-4, in Full Weight

This study's own second anchor passage belongs here in its fullest force. "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" (2:1-2). Paul does not suggest this; he exhorts it, and places it "first of all" among the instructions that follow — a rhetorical marker of priority, not an incidental aside. The stated purpose, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty," and the stated reason, "this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (2:3), together describe intercession for civil authority as a direct, positive good in God's own sight, tied to his own desire that "all men... be saved, and... come unto the knowledge of the truth" (2:4). Civic engagement, on this text's own terms, is not a distraction from the gospel's advance. It is bound directly to it.

B. Jeremiah 29:7 — Commanded Even in Exile

This command's force is sharpened considerably by an Old Testament text describing an even harder case. Jeremiah wrote to Israelites carried captive into pagan Babylon — a people with no nation of their own at all, governed entirely by a foreign, idol-worshiping power — and God's own instruction to them was not withdrawal: "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" (29:7). If God commanded active civic investment in a pagan empire's own welfare from a people with every earthly reason to want nothing to do with it, the same command carries at least as much force for believers living under any government, however imperfect, in the present administration.

C. Daniel, Joseph, and Esther as Models

Scripture supplies its own real examples of exactly this pattern lived out. Joseph served Pharaoh's Egypt with such skill and integrity that he rose to save the very nation — and, eventually, his own family within it — from famine, all while never assimilating his own worship of God to Egypt's (Genesis 41). Daniel served Nebuchadnezzar and later Darius with documented excellence, "because an excellent spirit was in him" (Daniel 6:3), refusing only the one command that directly crossed a real line — the order to cease praying to God — and accepting the lions' den rather than either compromising his worship or attempting to overthrow the government that issued it. Esther risked her own position, and her life, on her people's behalf, working entirely within a pagan court's own existing structures and legitimate means rather than around or against them. None of these three sought to seize governing power for themselves or to remake their host nation's own religion by law. Each served faithfully, excellently, and without compromise of worship, inside a government that was never their own.

D. Salt and Light

Matthew 5:13-16 supplies the New Testament's own governing image for exactly this posture. "Ye are the salt of the earth" — salt preserves and flavors from within what it is mixed into; it does not rule over it. "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" (5:14, 16) — light is seen and followed; it is not imposed by force. Influence here is real and is commanded, but its mechanism is visible godly life and public good works, not coercive legal establishment. This is the positive shape godly civic engagement takes across

scripture's own examples: real, active, visible, excellent — and never dependent on holding or seizing formal religious authority over the state itself.

E. Titus 3:1 and the Full Weight of Chapter 6

Titus 3:1 restates Romans 13's own instruction in Paul's own compact form: "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." The pairing in this single verse is instructive on its own — civil submission and active good works named together, not as competing priorities but as a single posture.

Closing

Held together, these texts describe godly patriotism in scripture's own words: fervent, prioritized prayer for civil authority; active investment in the nation's own welfare, commanded even under pagan rule; skilled, excellent, uncompromising service within existing civil structures; visible public good works and godly living as the mechanism of real influence; and willing submission to civil authority short of the point it demands disobedience to God. This is not withdrawal, and it is not political fusion. It is this study's own second thesis, stated in full, at last as fully developed as the first. Chapter 10 now draws both together into a single, actionable close.

Chapter 10: Closing — An Actionable Conclusion

This study set out, from its own Introduction onward, to test one claim and affirm another, and to close not merely with a summary of both but with something a believer can actually act on. This final chapter does that directly.

A. What This Study Has Found

Worldly Christian nationalism, examined across Chapters 1 through 8, is real, documented, and — at its strongest, in Stephen Wolfe's own careful presentation — a serious argument deserving a serious answer rather than dismissal. Tested against scripture directly, it does not hold: Jesus's own repeated refusals of offered political power, the apostolic church's consistent pattern, the "not carnal" weapons of 2 Corinthians 10, and Render Unto Caesar's own two-sphere distinction all stand against the fusion of nation and church this ideology proposes. This library's own administrations framework supplies the precise reason why: the fused civil-religious structure Christian nationalism reaches for is real, but it belongs to two administrations scripture actually names — the Mosaic administration, already closed, and the future kingdom administration, under Christ's own personal reign, not yet opened — not to the Grace administration presently in force. Godly patriotism, examined fully in Chapter 9, is Christianity's own real, commanded, positive alternative: not withdrawal, but faithful, excellent, visible engagement within the civil order God has placed each believer under.

B. Pray for Leaders, Specifically and Regularly

1 Timothy 2:1-2's own command is concrete enough to obey literally, not merely admire. A believer who wants to take this study's own conclusion seriously can begin by naming, specifically, the leaders over

them — local, state, and national — in regular prayer, precisely as Paul instructs, rather than treating this as a vague background sentiment.

C. Pursue Godly Laws Through Legitimate Means

Wanting godly leaders and godly laws is not this study's concession; Chapter 9 already established it as commanded. The means matter as much as the desire. Voting according to conscience, participating in civic processes, advocating publicly for just laws, and holding office if called to it are all legitimate exercises of the civic participation scripture commands — categorically different from seeking to fuse civil law with enforced religious conformity, the specific claim this study has tested and found wanting.

D. Be Salt and Light, in Both Public and Private Life

Matthew 5's own image is not confined to formal political engagement. It describes ordinary excellence and visible godliness in daily work, in public conduct, and in how a believer treats neighbors, coworkers, and civil authorities alike — the same pattern Daniel, Joseph, and Esther modeled inside governments that were never their own.

E. Guard Against Both Errors, Not Just One

This study's own dual thesis requires guarding two directions at once. Withdrawal — reading “my kingdom is not of this world” as license to disengage entirely from civic life — fails Jeremiah 29:7's own direct command just as clearly as fusion fails the administrations test of Chapter 7. A believer examining their own posture honestly should ask both questions: am I treating political power as the kingdom's own advance, reaching for authority scripture assigns to a different administration — and am I neglecting the real, commanded civic faithfulness scripture asks of me right now, in this administration, under whatever government I actually live under?

F. A Final Word

This study opened with two texts held together rather than played against each other, and it closes the same way. “My kingdom is not of this world” and “pray for kings, and for all that are in authority” are not, and were never, in tension. They are the same call, from two directions: do not mistake any earthly nation, however carefully its laws might be shaped, for the kingdom of God — and do not, for that same reason, withhold from the nation God has placed you in the real, faithful, prayerful, visibly godly citizenship scripture actually commands. Scripture set the record straight on both.

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Sources Consulted

This study is built directly from scripture; the sources below were consulted only for background, definitional, and historical corroboration, at the lower evidentiary weight this library's method reserves for extra-biblical material (Research-Method.md, principle 8), and none carries scriptural weight in the argument. Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry, *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (Oxford University Press, 2020), supplied the definitional spectrum and survey-based typology used in Chapter 1. Stephen Wolfe, *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (Canon Press, 2022), was consulted directly for Chapter 4's presentation of the strongest contemporary defense of Christian nationalism, and secondary reviews of that work (including coverage in *Christianity Today* and *The Gospel Coalition*) were consulted to confirm a fair and accurate summary of its central claims. Historical material in Chapters 2 and 3 — the Puritan and Reconstruction-era threads, the Cold War civil-religion period, the Religious Right, and the founding-era record including the Treaty of Tripoli's Article 11 text and the Massachusetts Body of Liberties — reflects standard, widely corroborated historical record rather than a single disputed source, cross-checked across multiple reference summaries. Background on the Seven Mountain Mandate and the New Apostolic Reformation in Chapter 8 draws on published critiques and descriptive summaries of that movement's own literature, including its origin with Bill Bright and its popularization by Lance Wallnau and Bill Johnson. Every doctrinal claim in this study has been tested directly against the text of scripture itself, in the King James Version.

Appendix A: “Let Every Soul Be Subject” — The Romans 13:1-7 Study in Full

Chapter 6 §B above states plainly that “ordained of God” claims the office's God-given reality, not the ruler's character — a distinction load-bearing enough, especially given how easily “the powers that be are ordained of God” can be misread as a blank check for any ruler's conduct, to deserve its own full, independent study rather than an asserted paragraph. What follows is that full study, reproduced here in its entirety: an open investigation into Romans 13:1-7, tested against its own Greek text, its own immediate context, and scripture's own established pattern of usage, reaching the same settled position Chapter 6 §B now states in summary.

Appendix A — Anchor Verse

Romans 9:17 *For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.*

Appendix A — Opening Question

A. Why This Has to Be Settled. Romans 13:1-7 is suspect on its face, and it is worth saying plainly why before doing anything else with it. Romans 1-11 is sustained doctrine — sin, justification, grace, Israel, the mystery of God's mercy. Romans 12 opens the letter's practical half with the highest possible register: presenting the body as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,” being “not conformed to this world,” loving without dissimulation, blessing persecutors, weeping with the weeping, refusing to avenge oneself because “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (12:19). Then, with no

announced change of subject, verse 1 of chapter 13 reads: “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.” Read in isolation, that sentence looks like a hard turn from the life of the church to the machinery of the state, and its flat claim — that the powers that be, as such, are ordained of God — looks like it could be stretched to cover any ruler who manages to seize and hold power, however he got there or however he governs. That is exactly the kind of stretch this library cannot let stand unexamined, because it is exactly the kind of proof-text worldly political movements reach for. Christian Nationalism Project’s own Chapter 6 already leans on this passage for civil government’s legitimacy, and reads it, on the whole, correctly — but it reads it briefly, largely at face value, without independently testing what “ordained of God” is actually built to claim. This study’s job is to do that testing directly, the way Sons of God - Genesis 6 Study tested “sons of God” and “Nephilim” before this library let either term keep functioning as a settled building block elsewhere.

B. The Starting Frame, Stated Directly. Per this study’s own instruction, no proposed alternative reading is assumed in advance. This is an open investigation, testing the traditional civil-government reading against context, the Greek text, and scripture’s own established usage — not defending a preset conclusion. Three observations frame that test before a single outside commentary is consulted:

First, chapter divisions are not Paul’s own, and this one falls in a strange place if a real subject change is what is happening here. This library’s own method (Research-Method.md, Textual/translation caution) already holds that chapter numbers are a later, uninspired editorial addition (imposed roughly 1227 AD, centuries after Paul wrote) and are “useful for reference, never authoritative for interpretation.” Romans 12 closes by instructing believers not to avenge themselves, because vengeance belongs to the Lord (12:19). Romans 13 opens, in the very next sentence Paul wrote, with civil authority. Whether that is a real change of subject or a single continuous thought interrupted by an uninspired page-break is this study’s first and most basic question, and it has to be answered before anything else can be.

Second, scripture elsewhere records God explicitly raising up, setting up, and giving dominion to pagan and even tyrannical rulers for his own purposes, without that language ever functioning elsewhere as scripture’s endorsement of the ruler’s character or conduct. This study’s own anchor passage is Paul’s own earlier statement, in this very letter, that God “raised up” Pharaoh — scripture’s paradigm villain, the man who enslaved Israel and hardened his own heart against God’s own messenger — “that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth” (Romans 9:17). If Paul can say that about Pharaoh four chapters earlier in the same letter without anyone reading it as moral approval of Pharaoh, “the powers that be are ordained of God” in chapter 13 needs to be tested against that same pattern before it is read as a blanket endorsement of whoever presently holds power.

Third, scripture plainly limits civil obedience somewhere, and records that limit being kept, not merely discussed. “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29) is itself scripture, not a modern qualification imported into the text. Whatever Romans 13:1-7 establishes about civil authority’s legitimacy, it has to be read inside a whole-Bible pattern that already contains a real, scripturally-approved limit to civil obedience — not read as if it were the Bible’s only word on the subject, standing alone and absolute.

This study’s task is to work out what Romans 13:1-7 actually claims, without either forcing it past what it says or explaining away what it plainly does say.

Appendix A, Part 1: Not a Shift in Subject — Testing the Chapter Break Itself

A. The Whole Unit, Read Without the Break. Romans 12:1 through 13:14 is one sustained block of practical instruction following eleven chapters of doctrine, and it repays reading straight through before any of its internal divisions are treated as real breaks. Paul opens by grounding all of it in worship — “present your bodies a living sacrifice... which is your reasonable service” (12:1) — then moves through the use of spiritual gifts within the body (12:3-8), then a dense run of instructions on love: “Recompense to no man evil for evil... live peaceably with all men... avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord... Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (12:17-21). Verse 1 of chapter 13 follows immediately: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.” The passage then runs civil authority through to its own conclusion (13:1-7), pivots to “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another” (13:8), and closes by returning to urgency — “the night is far spent, the day is at hand” (13:11-12) — before the whole unit ends and Romans 14 opens onto a different question (food and disputable matters between believers). Read this way, civil authority is not an island in the middle of the letter’s ethical section; it is one panel in a continuous run of instruction about how a believer relates to other people — enemies, the state, and neighbors in general — bounded on both sides by the same vocabulary and the same underlying concern.

B. The Word That Bridges Both Directions. That bridging is not merely thematic; it is lexical, and Paul’s own word choice marks it. Romans 13:7 closes the civil-authority section with “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” — the language of debt and obligation owed. Romans 13:8 opens the very next sentence with the same debt-vocabulary turned toward a different object: “Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.” Paul does not close one topic and open an unrelated one; he takes the “owing” framework he has just used for civil obligations and extends it, in the same breath, to the debt of love owed every person. The chapter break falls in the middle of a single argument about obligation, not at a real seam.

C. The Root That Ties 12:19 to 13:4. The stronger link runs the other direction, from what precedes chapter 13 into it, and it sits in Paul’s own Greek vocabulary rather than in this study’s own inference. Romans 12:19 quotes Deuteronomy 32:35 in instructing believers not to avenge themselves: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” The Greek word behind “vengeance” is *ekdikesis* — Strong’s Greek 1557, “from 1556 [*ekdikeo*, to vindicate, retaliate, punish]; vindication, retribution:-(a-, re-)venge(-ance), punishment.” Three verses into the very next paragraph, describing the civil ruler, Paul writes: “he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” (13:4). The word translated “revenger” is *ekdikos* — Strong’s Greek 1558, “from 1537 and 1349; carrying justice out, i.e. a punisher:-(a (re-)venger” — built on the identical *ek-dik-* root as “vengeance” three verses of English (and one uninspired chapter-break) earlier. This is not this study’s own imported connection. It is Paul’s own vocabulary, doing the same work in Greek that an English reader crossing the chapter break has no way to see: having just told the Roman church that vengeance belongs to the Lord and they are not to take it themselves, Paul’s very next paragraph names the specific instrument through which that same vengeance is presently executed against evildoers — the civil magistrate, called by the same root word.

D. Confirmed Independently by This Library’s Own Standing Tool. This reading is not a discovery unique to this study. This library’s own Treasury of Scripture Knowledge — consulted here per Research-Method.md’s “as used before” principle, before this study reached for the Greek text on its own

initiative — cross-references Romans 12:19's "Vengeance" directly to Romans 13:4, alongside Deuteronomy 32:35, Psalm 94:1-3, Nahum 1:2, and Hebrews 10:30. A standing reference tool built centuries before this study, working from the English text and its own cross-reference tradition, draws the identical link this chapter reached independently from the Greek root. Per this library's method (the same convergence standard already applied in Sons of God - Genesis 6 Study, where independent lines of evidence corroborating each other counted as real weight), two independent paths reaching the same connection is real corroboration, not coincidence.

E. What This Settles About the "Shift." The apparent shift from spiritual matters to secular government is not real. Romans 12:14-21 raises a live practical problem for the Roman believers: if a Christian may never personally avenge a wrong, and vengeance belongs to God alone, then what actually restrains evildoers in the meantime, and how does God's own repayment of evil actually reach the world in the present age? Romans 13:1-7 is Paul's answer to exactly that question, not a change of subject: God's own vengeance against evildoers is presently executed, in ordinary providence, through civil authority — called in the very next paragraph by the same root word Paul has just used for vengeance itself. Chapter 13 does not leave spiritual matters behind; it identifies the specific, God-ordained instrument through which one particular spiritual conviction Paul has just taught — leave vengeance to God — actually gets carried out in a fallen world. Civil government, on this reading, is not a topic Paul happens to insert; it is the answer already implied by what he has just finished saying.

Appendix A, Part 2: What the Text Actually Says, Word by Word

A. The Passage in Full.

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. 13:2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 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: 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. 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 13:6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 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. "Higher Powers" — Delegated Right, Not Raw Force. "Power" in verse 1 (used twice, plus "the power" in verses 2 and 3) translates *exousia* — Strong's Greek 1849, "from 1832 (in the sense of ability); privilege, i.e. (subjectively) force, capacity, competency, freedom, or (objectively) mastery (concretely, magistrate, superhuman, potentate, token of control), delegated influence:—authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, strength." This is a deliberate word choice. Greek has a separate word for raw might or force — *dynamis* — which Paul does not use here. *Exousia* names a *delegated* right to act, a legitimacy conferred from somewhere else, not brute capacity as such. Paul is not telling the Roman church to submit to whoever happens to be strongest; he is naming a category of *authorized* rule. "Higher" translates a participial form of *hyperecho* — Strong's Greek 5242, "to hold oneself above, i.e. (figuratively) to excel; participle... superior, superiority:—better, excellency, higher... supreme" — straightforward language for rank, not a claim about the source or character of whoever occupies that rank.

C. “Ordained of God” — Positional Language, Not a Moral Verdict. “Ordained” (verse 1) translates a passive participial form of *tasso* — Strong’s Greek 5021, “a prolonged form of a primary verb... to arrange in an orderly manner, i.e. assign or dispose (to a certain position or lot):—addict, appoint, determine, ordain, set.” This is administrative, positional vocabulary — the word for placing something in its assigned rank or order, not a word that carries built-in moral content about the person placed. This library’s own Treasury of Scripture Knowledge flags the same thing from the English side, glossing “ordained” at this verse with its own marginal alternative: “ordained. or, ordered.” “Ordinance” (verse 2) translates the related noun form of the same root, *tasso*’s own family, naming the arrangement itself rather than a judgment on it. The same root reappears at Romans 13:2 in “resisteth” (*antitassomenos*, “to set oneself against” the same *tasso*-arrangement) and, elsewhere in this library’s word-study work, in *hypotasso* (“be subject,” Strong’s Greek 5293, “from 5259 and 5021; to subordinate... be (put) in subjection”) — the verb Paul actually uses for what “every soul” is to do toward “the higher powers” in verse 1’s own opening command. The whole passage’s vocabulary is built on a single root meaning “arrange into position,” applied first to the ruler (arranged/ordained into office) and then to the subject (arranged/subordinated under that office) — a structural, positional claim about how authority is arranged, not a character reference for whoever fills the position.

D. “Minister,” “Revenger,” and the Sword — Concrete Civil Function, Not Abstract Theory. Verse 4 calls the ruler “the minister of God” twice, using *diakonos* — Strong’s Greek 1249, “probably from an obsolete *diako* (to run on errands...); an attendant, i.e. (genitive case) a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess):—deacon, minister, servant.” This is the same word this library’s own New Testament word-study work elsewhere applies to a church deacon — a servant of an office, not the owner of it. The ruler is “God’s minister” in exactly the sense a deacon is the church’s minister: functioning under an assigned task, answerable for how it is carried out, not possessing the authority as personal property. Verse 4 goes on to call this same minister “a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil” — *ekdikos*, examined already in Part 1 — and to name the concrete instrument of that function directly: “he beareth not the sword in vain.” “Sword” translates *machaira* — Strong’s Greek 3162, “probably feminine of a presumed derivative of 3163; a knife, i.e. dirk; figuratively, war, judicial punishment:—sword” — the same word Roman writers used for the *ius gladii*, a magistrate’s own recognized right of capital judgment. Verses 6-7 stay just as concrete: “tribute” (*phoros*, Strong’s Greek 5411, “a load... a tax (properly, an individual assessment on persons or property...)”) and “custom” (*telos*, Strong’s Greek 5056, in this specialized sense “an impost or levy... on goods or travel”) name actual Roman taxation categories, and “conscience” in verse 5 (*syneidesis*, Strong’s Greek 4893, “co-perception, i.e. moral consciousness:—conscience”) names an internal, personal motive for compliance distinct from mere fear of punishment.

E. Why “the Powers” Cannot Be Read as Unseen Spiritual Powers. *Exousia* and its plural, and related words like *archai* (“principalities”), do name unseen spiritual powers elsewhere in Paul’s own letters — “principalities... powers... rulers of the darkness of this world... spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12); “having spoiled principalities and powers” (Colossians 2:15). A reading that took Romans 13’s “higher powers” the same way — civil rulers as merely the visible face of an underlying spiritual authority-structure Paul is really addressing — deserves to be named and tested honestly rather than dismissed by assumption, the same way Sons of God - Genesis 6 Study gave Job’s angelic “sons of God” a full, honest hearing before setting it aside as the wrong referent for Genesis 6. But Romans 13 does not stay at that level of abstraction for even one verse; by verse 4 it is talking about a sword that executes actual wrath on actual evildoers, and by verses 6-7 it is talking about tribute, custom, and taxes — ordinary Roman civil administration, named in exactly the vocabulary a first-century taxpayer would have used for it. This library’s own method requires taking scripture literally

wherever the literal sense can be true to fact, and reserving figurative readings for places where the literal sense fails (Research-Method.md, “Literal-first, figures of speech second”). Nothing in verses 3 through 7 fails to be true to fact as an account of ordinary civil government; every specific detail Paul adds — praise for good works, fear for evil ones, the sword, tribute, custom — is a mundane, literal feature of first-century Roman administration. The passage supplies no textual signal calling for a figurative or spiritual-powers reading, and its own concrete details rule it out.

Appendix A, Part 3: What “Ordained of God” Does and Does Not Claim, Tested Against Scripture’s Own Pattern

A. The Question Precisely Stated. Part 2 established that “ordained” is positional, administrative language (*tasso*), not language that inherently carries a moral verdict. This part tests that finding against scripture’s own established usage elsewhere — per this library’s method, principle 3, “as used before” — asking directly: when scripture elsewhere says God raised up, set up, or gave dominion to a ruler, does that language ever function as God’s endorsement of the ruler’s character, methods, or specific conduct? If it does, “the powers that be are ordained of God” would carry real moral weight toward whoever presently holds power. If it consistently does not, Romans 13:1 is asserting something narrower and different: that the institution of governing authority exists under God’s own sovereign ordering of human affairs, not that God specifically approves of whoever presently fills it or what he does with it.

B. Nebuchadnezzar — A Pagan Tyrant, “Ordained” in the Plainest Terms Scripture Offers. Daniel’s own record could not state the principle more directly. Daniel himself declares of God: “he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Daniel 2:21). The same book records God’s own verdict on Nebuchadnezzar — the pagan king who destroyed Jerusalem’s temple and carried Judah captive — delivered while Nebuchadnezzar’s own pride was at its height: “This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men” (Daniel 4:17). The judgment that follows, humbling Nebuchadnezzar to eat grass like an ox for seven seasons, is explicitly aimed “until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (4:32). Scripture’s own point in Daniel 4 is not that Nebuchadnezzar deserved his throne or governed well; the whole chapter is God humbling him precisely because he did not. The point is that God’s own sovereign giving of kingdoms — the same act Romans 13:1 calls “ordained” — operates independently of, and is not a verdict on, the recipient’s character.

C. Jeremiah 27 — God Commanding Submission to a Foreign Tyrant, in Advance of Any Reform. The pattern goes further than Nebuchadnezzar’s own eventual humbling; it extends to God commanding other nations, including Judah, to submit to him while he was still at the height of his conquest, with no moral qualification attached: “I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant... And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand” (Jeremiah 27:5-8). God here calls a foreign, pagan, conquering tyrant “my servant” and commands submission to him on pain of judgment — the single closest Old Testament parallel to Romans 13:1’s own claim, and one in which the ruler in question is actively engaged in

conquest, not yet reformed, not yet humbled, and never scripture's example of a good king anywhere else it names him.

D. Pilate — Authority “Given from Above,” at the Exact Moment of Its Worst Use. The clearest New Testament instance is closer to home, and it is Christ's own words. Facing Pilate's own claim to authority — “knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?” (John 19:10) — Jesus does not deny it or call it illegitimate: “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin” (19:11). This is decisive for the question this part is testing. The authority in view is not a hypothetical case or a past empire safely distant from the text; it is the specific power about to condemn the Son of God to death unjustly, named by Christ himself, in the same breath, as “given... from above” — and Christ's own conclusion is not that Pilate's authority is void because of how it is about to be used, but that greater guilt lies with those who delivered Jesus into it. Authority's source and its user's culpability are held apart, explicitly, by Christ's own words, at the single worst use of governing power scripture ever records.

E. Pharaoh — This Study's Own Anchor, Confirmed. This part's findings converge exactly where this study's own anchor passage already pointed. Paul himself, four chapters before Romans 13, writes of Pharaoh — the Exodus narrative's paradigm villain, a man scripture never once commends — “the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth” (Romans 9:17), itself quoting God's own word to Moses in Exodus 9:16: “in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.” Paul's own choice to build his case for God's sovereignty in Romans 9 on Pharaoh's own rise to power — the same letter, a handful of chapters before “the powers that be are ordained of God” — is scripture supplying its own internal cross-reference before this study ever had to reach outside it: being “raised up” or “ordained” by God for God's own purposes is language scripture already applies, without contradiction or later correction, to its most notorious tyrant.

F. What This Settles. Daniel, Jeremiah, John, and Paul's own earlier chapter in this same letter converge on a single, consistent pattern: scripture's language of God raising up, setting up, giving dominion to, or ordaining a ruler describes God's sovereign superintendence over the institution and course of governing authority in human history — never, in any of these instances, a character reference for the ruler who holds it. Applied to Romans 13:1, “the powers that be are ordained of God” claims that civil authority as such — the office, the institution, the fact that some structure of governance exists over every people — stands under God's own sovereign ordering of human affairs, and that no ruler holds power outside God's ultimate permission and purpose. It does not claim, and scripture's own established usage of this exact kind of language rules out reading it as claiming, that God morally endorses the specific character, methods, or acts of whoever presently occupies that office. Paul is making a claim about the reality and source of governing authority as a category; he is not thereby issuing a character reference for Nero, or for any other ruler, past or future.

Appendix A, Part 4: The Limit Scripture Itself Supplies, Taken Seriously

A. The Question This Part Answers. Part 3 settled what “ordained” claims about a ruler's authority. This part takes up a separate, equally necessary question: does “let every soul be subject unto the higher powers” (13:1) mean unconditional obedience to whatever a civil ruler commands? Scripture's own recorded pattern answers directly, and the answer does not weaken Part 3's finding — it completes it.

B. Acts 5:29 — Scripture's Own Explicit Limit. When the Sanhedrin — Jerusalem's own recognized governing authority, exercising exactly the kind of delegated civil-religious *exousia* this study has been examining — directly commanded the apostles to stop preaching Christ, the apostles' own recorded answer was not evasive: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). This is not a modern qualification read back into the text. It is itself scripture, spoken by the same apostolic company whose letters elsewhere command submission to civil authority (1 Peter 2:13-17; this study's own subject text), and it states the limit as plainly as Romans 13:1 states the command.

C. The Limit Already Kept, Not Merely Stated. Scripture's own narrative record shows this limit being kept, and blessed, well before Acts 5. When Pharaoh commanded Hebrew midwives to kill every Hebrew son at birth, "the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive" (Exodus 1:17) — and scripture's own verdict on their disobedience is not judgment but blessing: "Therefore God dealt well with the midwives... And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses" (1:20-21). When Nebuchadnezzar commanded worship of his own golden image on pain of death, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's answer named the same limit directly: "our God whom we serve is able to deliver us... But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:17-18). In neither case does scripture read the disobedience as a violation of some prior, unconditional submission-principle; in both cases it is the specific, expected response scripture commends, at the specific point where civil command required disobedience to God.

D. The Limit Is Built Into This Text's Own Terms, Not Only Imported From Elsewhere. The boundary is not merely asserted from outside texts; Romans 13:3-4 states its own condition for the very legitimacy it is describing. Paul's argument for submission rests explicitly on what rulers are stated to do: "rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil... he is the minister of God to thee for good... a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (13:3-4). The text's own job description for the "minister of God" it is describing is to reward good and restrain evil — and a command that inverts that job description, requiring what God calls evil or forbidding what God calls good, is a ruler acting outside the very function Paul has just used to ground his own legitimacy in the first place. This is not a qualification smuggled into Paul's argument from Acts 5:29; it is Paul's own stated basis for the submission he commands, read on its own terms.

E. Precisely Locating the Boundary. Put together, Parts 3 and 4 draw a single, coherent line rather than two competing rules held in tension. Romans 13:1-7 addresses civil authority's general governing function — taxation, public order, restraint of ordinary wrongdoing, the sword against evildoers — and states plainly that this function is real, God-ordained, and owed genuine submission and honor, not grudging or merely strategic compliance. It does not address, and is not contradicted by, a different and specific case: a ruler commanding what God forbids, or forbidding what God commands. Acts 5:29, Exodus 1, and Daniel 3 all belong to that second, distinct case — scripture's own examples of disobedience are never disobedience to civil authority's ordinary governing function (paying taxes, keeping public order), but specifically to a command requiring sin. Romans 13:1's "every soul be subject" and Acts 5:29's "we ought to obey God rather than men" are not scripture disagreeing with itself; they are scripture answering two different questions, both correctly, in the same consistent pattern this part finds throughout.

Appendix A, Part 5: Historical Setting — Written Under Nero, Not Naive About Empire

A. Author, Audience, and Date. Paul wrote Romans to the church at Rome, a congregation he had not yet visited (Romans 1:10-13), most likely from Corinth near the end of his third missionary journey. Conservative and critical scholarship alike generally place the letter around A.D. 56-58 — this dating is extra-biblical and is held here, per this library's method (principle 8), at the reduced evidentiary weight reserved for such corroboration, not as scripture's own claim. What is not in serious dispute is the reigning emperor: Nero, who came to the throne in A.D. 54, meaning Romans was written within roughly the first three to four years of his reign.

B. The “Quinquennium Neronis.” This detail matters directly to how this study's findings apply, and it is worth stating carefully as historical corroboration rather than as scripture's own claim. Nero's early reign — guided substantially by the philosopher Seneca and the praetorian prefect Burrus — was widely regarded by Roman historians, including a report attributed to the later emperor Trajan, as a well-governed period, sometimes called the “quinquennium Neronis” (“Nero's five good years”). Nero's own descent into open tyranny, the murder of his mother in A.D. 59, the Great Fire of Rome in A.D. 64, and the brutal persecution of Christians that followed it — the persecution that would eventually claim Paul's own life — all lie after Romans was written, not before it. Paul is not writing a claim about civil authority's legitimacy in ignorance of what Nero would become, nor is he writing it after Rome had already shown the church its worst face. He is stating a general principle, under a government that was not yet visibly monstrous, about the God-ordained place of civil authority as an institution — precisely the “office, not the specific ruler's future conduct” distinction Part 3 already found scripture's own established usage to require.

C. Confirmed by a Later, Harder Case. 1 Peter makes substantially the same argument to a later, more explicitly scattered and pressured audience (1 Peter 1:1) and does not soften it: “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well... Fear God. Honour the king” (1 Peter 2:13-14, 17). Written to believers under the same imperial system Paul addressed, and closer in time to Nero's actual persecution than Romans itself, Peter's letter keeps “honour the king” and “fear God” as two distinct commands, in the same order Parts 3 and 4 already found: real, owed submission to civil authority as an institution, held apart from, and never substituted for, the higher fear owed to God alone. Titus 3:1 — “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work” — restates the same instruction in Paul's own later, compact form, again without qualification softening it and again without ever collapsing it into unconditional obedience regardless of what is commanded.

Appendix A, Part 6: What This Settles

The settled reading, stated plainly: Romans 13:1-7 is not a shift from spiritual matters to secular politics; the uninspired chapter break obscures a single continuous argument in which Paul answers a question his own prior instruction raises — Romans 12:19 forbids personal vengeance because “Vengeance is mine... saith the Lord,” and Romans 13:4 names the civil magistrate, using the identical Greek root (*ekdikesis/ekdikos*), as the specific instrument through which that vengeance is presently executed against evildoers, a link this study reached from the Greek text and found independently confirmed by this library's own Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. “The higher powers” (*exousiai hyperechousai*) names delegated, legitimate governing authority, not raw force and not unseen spiritual powers — a reading ruled out by the passage's own concrete run into taxes, custom, and the literal sword of capital

judgment. “Ordained of God” (*tetagmenai*, from *tasso*, “to arrange in an orderly manner... assign to a position”) is positional, administrative language, and scripture’s own established usage of this exact kind of language for Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:21, 4:17, 32), for Nebuchadnezzar again by name in Jeremiah 27:5-8, for Pilate at the very moment of his worst use of it (John 19:11), and for Pharaoh in this same letter (Romans 9:17) is never, in any instance, a moral endorsement of the ruler’s character or conduct — it is God’s sovereign claim over the institution and course of governing authority as such. Applied here, Romans 13:1 asserts that civil government as an institution exists under God’s own sovereign ordering of human history; it does not assert that God specifically approves of any particular ruler’s character or acts. That distinction is not imported from outside the text; it is scripture’s own consistent pattern, tested here against four separate instances spanning both Testaments. Submission to civil authority’s ordinary governing function — taxation, public order, restraint of evil-doing — is real, commanded, and owed for conscience’s sake, not merely from fear (13:5); but that submission has a limit scripture both states outright (Acts 5:29) and shows kept and blessed in practice (Exodus 1:17-21; Daniel 3:16-18), a limit built into Romans 13’s own terms, since the text grounds the ruler’s legitimacy in a stated function — rewarding good, restraining evil (13:3-4) — that a command to sin would itself violate. Written within the first several years of Nero’s reign, before his own descent into the tyranny and persecution that would eventually kill Paul, Romans 13:1-7 states a general principle about civil authority’s God-given place, not a specific verdict on any ruler’s future conduct — precisely the distinction its own vocabulary already requires.

Appendix A — Sources Consulted for This Study

This study is built directly from scripture and from this library’s own primary reference tools, per Research-Method.md’s instruction to use the library before the open web. Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance (Greek dictionary) supplied the definitions and root relationships for *exousia* (1849), *hyperecho* (5242), *tasso* (5021) and its family (*hypotasso* 5293, *diatasso* 1299, *epitasso* 2004, *prostasso* 4367, *protasso* 4384, *syntasso* 4929), *diakonos* (1249), *ekdikos* (1558), *ekdikeo* (1556), *ekdikesis* (1557), *dike* (1349), *machaira* (3162), *syneidesis* (4893), *telos* (5056), and *phoros* (5411), drawn from this library’s own Sources/Lexicons and Concordances/strong’s.txt. The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (Sources/Cross-References/Treasury-of-Scripture-Knowledge.txt) supplied the independent cross-reference tying Romans 12:19 to Romans 13:4, its own marginal note “ordained, or, ordered” at Romans 13:1, and the wider set of cross-references this study’s Part 3 built on at Romans 13:1’s own note on “power” (1 Samuel 2:8; 1 Chronicles 28:4-5; Psalm 62:11; Proverbs 8:15-16; Jeremiah 27:5-8; Daniel 2:21; 4:32; 5:18-23; Matthew 6:13; John 19:11; Revelation 1:5; 17:14; 19:16) — none of which this study located independently; all are this library’s own standing cross-reference tool doing the work principle 3 (“as used before”) calls for. Scripture text throughout is the King James Version, verified against kingjamesbibleonline.org and biblehub.com for Romans 12:14-13:14, 9:14-18; Daniel 2:20-21, 4:17, 4:32; Jeremiah 27:5-8; Exodus 1:15-21, 9:16; John 19:10-11; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Acts 5:27-29; 1 Samuel 24:6; Daniel 3:16-18; and Titus 3:1. General historical background on the dating of Romans and the “quinquennium Neronis” is held at this library’s reduced weight for extra-biblical corroboration and is not load-bearing for this study’s textual argument, which rests on Parts 1 through 4 alone.

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

This study's Introduction (§F) flagged why this appendix exists. Chapters 1 through 8 test Christian nationalism as an ideology, on its own textual and historical merits, and this study's own discipline — testing the ideology, not the individual (Introduction §D) — holds throughout every one of those chapters. But scripture supplies its own separate, explicit test for conduct rather than belief: “Ye shall know them by their fruits... a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:16, 18). That test does not require, or permit, a verdict on anyone's hidden heart. It requires only looking honestly at what is publicly, visibly done — and by the time of this study's final drafting, several of Christian nationalism's own most visible contemporary advocates had moved from written argument to organized, documented practice. This appendix sets out that record directly: named advocates, named places, dated public statements, and their own stated goals, drawn from mainstream and religion-press reporting current as of 2026. Nothing below is this study's own characterization of any individual's motives; every claim is sourced to that person's or organization's own public statements, or to documented institutional record.

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

RidgeRunner is a real-estate development company, led by Josh Abbotoy — a former corporate lawyer, now managing director of an investment firm called New Founding — that builds rural residential developments (“agrihoods”) marketed specifically to conservative Christians relocating from politically liberal states. In 2025, RidgeRunner purchased roughly 448 to 600 acres near Gainesboro and Whitleyville in Jackson County, Tennessee, and opened an office in the Gainesboro town center that houses a podcast studio (Word&Way, March 2025; NewsChannel 5 Investigates, 2026). Andrew Isker — a Minnesota pastor and co-author of *Christian Nationalism: A Biblical Guide for Taking Dominion and Discipling Nations* — is planting a church on the property, and C. Jay Engel, a podcaster who describes himself as a “Heritage American,” lives there as well.

Isker has stated the group's strategy openly, on the record. In a video posted August 29, 2024, he explained: “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” than the same people dispersed among the general population (quoted in NewsChannel 5 Investigates, 2026). Engel has separately discussed taking control of local Republican Party infrastructure and has questioned the constitutionality of the Civil Rights Act (Word&Way, March 2025). Local reporting describes the group's stated positions as opposing civil-rights protections, favoring the expulsion of naturalized citizens, and holding that women should not vote or attend college (NewsChannel 5 Investigates, 2026). At an impromptu town hall, Jackson County's own Republican Party vice chair, Diane Murphy, told reporters: “It scares me that they are very clear about taking over.” A local resident compared the group's arrival to the sinister incomers of Stephen King's *Salem's Lot* (NewsChannel 5 Investigates, 2026).

B. A Working Prototype: Doug Wilson and Christ Church, Moscow, Idaho

Isker's framework draws directly on the writing of Pastor Douglas Wilson of Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho, whom Wilson's own fellow pastors describe as working to build a genuine “prototype” of a Christian nation within the church itself (Religion News Service, April 2026). Reporting current as of 2026 documents specific proposals: restricting voting to heads of household, which would remove the vote

from married women living under male headship (a widowed or divorced woman heading her own household would keep it), with Wilson stating openly that he wants the 19th Amendment repealed; reinstating laws criminalizing sodomy; and ending no-fault divorce in favor of mandatory fault-based proceedings with legal penalties for adultery (Religion News Service, April 2026).

Wilson has gained renewed national attention through his relationship with U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who has named Wilson as a mentor and pastoral influence (Religion News Service, March 2026). In August 2026, Wilson stated publicly that he would have fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War (LGBTQ Nation, August 2026) — consistent with a position he has held since at least 1996, when he co-authored the pamphlet *Southern Slavery As It Was*, defending the treatment of slaves in the antebellum South as relatively benign, a work that drew sustained criticism both for its historical claims and for passages later shown to closely follow an earlier Confederate apologist's own writing.

C. When the Fruit Turns Inward: A Documented Pattern of Shielding Abuse

The clearest test of any movement's own fruit is how it treats the vulnerable within its own walls, and Christ Church's institutional record here is directly documented, not alleged. In the cases of Steven Sitler and Jamin Wight — two men convicted of child sexual abuse with direct ties to the Moscow congregation — survivors and outside observers, including Wilson's own denominational federation, the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, found in its own presiding ministers' report that Wilson's pastoral handling of both cases minimized the abuse, pressured toward leniency in sentencing, and prioritized the congregation's and the abusers' own standing over the safety and support of the victims. Separately, in 2022, a deacon of Christ Church was indicted on charges of possessing child pornography (Julie Roys Report, 2022; BishopAccountability.org, 2022).

D. Reading the Fruit

None of this appendix's content requires, or offers, a verdict on any named individual's standing before God — Introduction §D's own discipline holds here as everywhere else in this study. What it offers instead is exactly what Matthew 7:16 says a tree's fruit can be known by: visible, documented, public conduct. And the fruit documented above is not incidental to the ideology Chapters 4 through 8 tested; it is that ideology already at work, past the page. Concentrating a movement's own people for the stated purpose of seizing "far, far more political power" is Chapter 7's category error — reaching for the Grace administration to do what only the Mosaic or the future kingdom administration were ever given to do — no longer as a theory to be tested, but as a stated plan. Wanting a household-based franchise that removes the vote from married women, and wanting the 19th Amendment gone, is Chapter 9's positive pattern of godly patriotism inverted rather than followed. And a documented institutional pattern of shielding abusers rather than protecting victims is about as far from Matthew 5's own "salt and light" — visible goodness that draws people toward Christ rather than away from him — as a movement's own fruit can get. Scripture names this same underlying temptation directly, and by its oldest example: Israel's own demand for "a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5) was not, in God's own verdict to Samuel, really a demand for a king at all — "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel 8:7). The desire to secure by concentrated human power and control what scripture calls believers to entrust to God directly is not a new temptation. It is one of scripture's oldest, and this appendix's own documented record shows it wearing a Christian name in the present moment.

Sources for Appendix B

NewsChannel 5 Investigates (Nashville), “Christian nationalists moving into Jackson County, Tennessee, focus on ‘far, far more political power’” and “Aiming to ‘radicalize Main Street,’ Christian nationalists set sights on tiny Jackson County, Tennessee” (2026); *Word&Way*, “In the Hills of Tennessee, a Developer Hopes To Offer Blue State Christians a Refuge” (March 31, 2025); *Rolling Stone*, “Inside the Battle Over RidgeRunner’s Communities for Right-Wing Christians”; Religion News Service, “Hegseth mentor Doug Wilson’s vision for a Christian nation means married women can’t vote” (April 10, 2026) and “For Doug Wilson’s neighbors, CNN documentary a reminder Moscow is Christian nationalism’s ground zero” (March 24, 2026); *LGBTQ Nation*, “Pete Hegseth’s pastor says he would have fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War” (August 2026); Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, Presiding Ministers’ Report on the Sitler and Wight Sex Abuse Cases; Julie Roys Report and BishopAccountability.org, coverage of a 2022 child-pornography indictment of a Christ Church deacon. Consulted at the lower evidentiary weight this library’s method reserves for extra-biblical material (Research-Method.md, principle 8) — none of it carries scriptural weight in this study’s argument; it documents conduct, not doctrine.