

A Biblical View of Citizenship



Creation: Humans have a Dual Identity



“Creation”
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“Doric Hall” - Boston State House

Genesis 2:7

*And the Lord God formed man of the
dust of the ground...*

Our bodies from the Earth

*...breathed into his nostrils the breath
of life; and man became a living soul.*

Our spirit from Heaven

We are a soul spanning
heaven and earth

Biblical Jurisdictions of the Kingdom of God

GOD

INDIVIDUAL receives God-given rights and responsibilities

THE CHURCH

Foundation – Members

Fruit – Disciples

Discipline –
Excommunication

Voluntary Association of Churches to influence the culture

THE HOME

Foundation – Marriage

Fruit – Child Training

Discipline – Corporeal
Punishment

Voluntary Association of Families to produce businesses to serve others

THE STATE

Foundation – Law

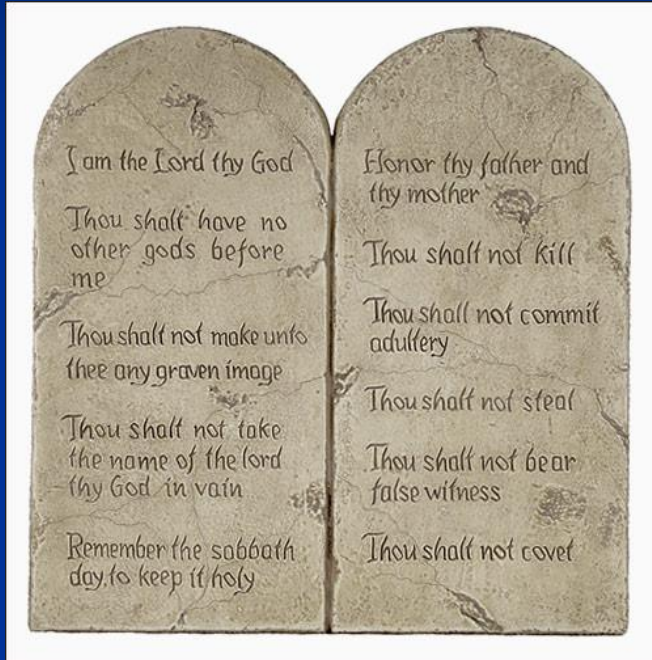
Fruit – Justice

Discipline – Capital
Punishment

Voluntary Association of Nations to defend the Law of Nations globally

Dual Citizenship in Heaven *and* Earth

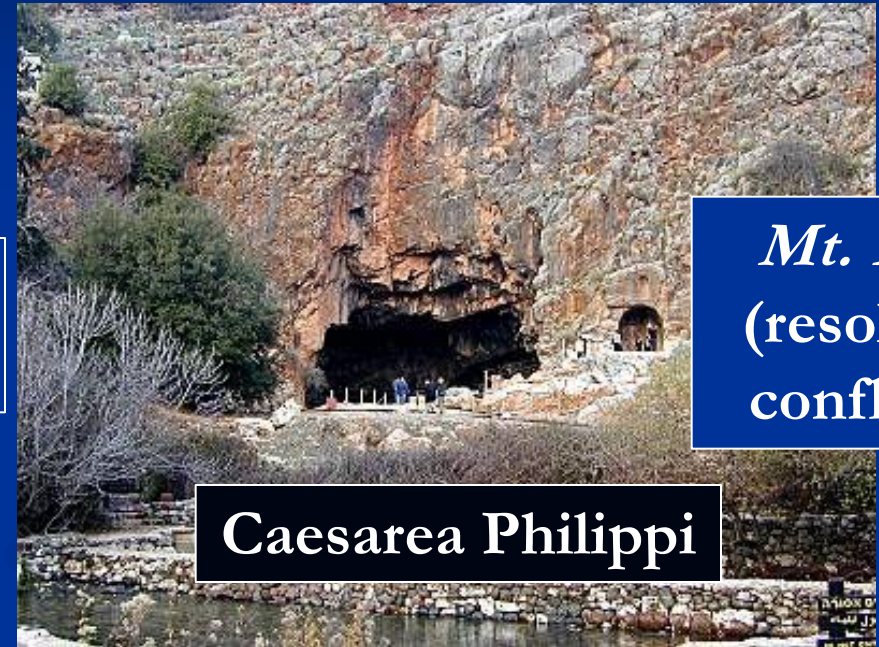
UPON THIS LAW



Ex. 19:5-6;
Deut. 6:4-9

Matthew
16:18

UPON THIS ROCK



Mt. 18:17
(resolving
conflicts)

Caesarea Philippi

LOVE GOD *with*
all your heart
(PRIEST)

LOVE NEIGHBOR
as yourself
(KING)

I will BUILD *My*
Church
(PRIEST)

gates of Hell shall
not PREVAIL
(KING)

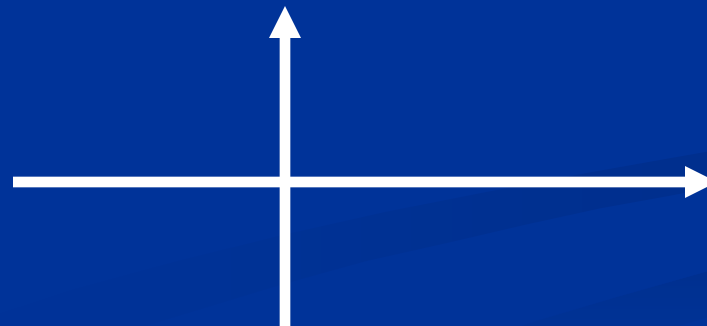
The Identity of the Church; *a Bride for heaven and a City on earth*

Avoid the extreme of being complicit to join with corrupt govt. as a means to an end *for separation precedes influence*

“And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” – Revelation 21:2

Avoid the extreme of zealots who see all solutions as a political force for *solutions begin in the heart*

The Bride of Christ (heavenly)



Holy City
(earthly)

We are to be Citizens of Heaven and Earth

- Believers have a heavenly Citizenship
 - Phil. 3:20 – *for our citizenship is in heaven...*
 - Eph. 2:19 – *you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*
 - Heb. 12:23 – *to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven...*
- We are also to be Citizens on earth (in nations where we live)
 - Ex. 12:48 – *when a stranger... be circumcised... be as one that is born in the land (a citizen)*
 - Lk. 15:15 – *he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country*
 - Ex. Jer. 29:4-7 (Babylon); Mt. 17:27; Acts 16:38 (Rome); 1st Pt. 2:13-14

The Meaning of Citizenship

- Hebrew (citizen) – *stranger (temporary inhabitant); native (one rising from the soil)*
- Greek – (citizen) - *one joined to a state or commonwealth*
- Webster's 1828 – *1. The native of a city, or an inhabitant who enjoys the freedom and privileges of the city in which he resides; the freeman of a city, as distinguished from a foreigner, or one not entitled to its franchises.*
- *4. In a general sense, a native or permanent resident in a city or country; as the citizens of London or Philadelphia; the citizens of the United States.*

The Responsibilities of Citizenship

GOD

INDIVIDUAL is to be a conscious native citizen in their nation and receives spiritual citizenship upon conversion to Christ

THE CHURCH

Local church **membership** is distinct from temporary inhabitants (visitors)

Church members embrace **accountability** for their practice and are a court of **reconciliation** for discipline

Letters of Recommendation help inter-church **relations**

THE HOME

Marriage makes man and wife **joint-citizens**

Children are natural born **native citizens** of the home

Children are **trained** to fulfill duties of citizenship; household chores, economic productivity and stewardship training

THE STATE

Biblical citizenship involved *submission to **laws**, learning the **language**, receiving **private funding***

Original U.S. citizenship involved standards of age, *lawful entry, moral character, history of U.S. and English language*

Freedom of Conscience is Suffrage (voting)

- Webster's 1828 – Conscience - *Internal or self-knowledge, or judgment of right and wrong; or the faculty, power or principle within us, which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our own actions and affections, and instantly approves or condemns them... Conscience is first occupied in ascertaining our duty, before we proceed to action; then in judging of our actions when performed.*
- Suffrage - *A vote; a voice given in deciding a controverted question, or in the choice of a man for an office or trust. Nothing can be more grateful to a good man than to be elevated to office by the unbiased suffrages of free enlightened citizens.*

The Right of Suffrage in the Bible

- Old Testament – a Priesthood and Civil “Republic” in Israel
 - Priesthood (church) was an offering of the people to God (Num. 8)
 - Ex. 19:7-8 – *people answered... all the Lord has spoken we will do*
 - The people elected God to be their ultimate Sovereign (a wise move)!
 - Dt. 1:13 – *(choose) wise men... and I (Moses) will make them rulers*
- New Testament – Church and State should “rule by consent”
 - Acts 6:3 – deacons “chosen” to assist elders in meeting the needs
 - 2nd Cor. 8:19; Titus 1:1 – role of congregation in affirming leaders
 - Acts 14:23 – people/leaders “elect” – stretch the hand toward as seconding a motion – then leaders ordain by laying on of hands

For Whom should you Vote?

- OT Civil Qualifications – Ex. 18:21; Dt. 1:13; 16:18
 - Ability to govern, integrity, fidelity to law, piety (fear of God)
 - Local, personal knowledge more trustworthy than public rhetoric
- NT Church Qualifications – 1st Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9
 - The way a person lives in private is how they vote in public
 - Vote “for the best of the ideal” rather than the “lesser of two evils”
 - Don't let the idolatry of the perfect be the enemy of the best

...if we demand too much of a leader in order to vote for him, we help the worst leaders prevail. Almost never in Israel's Biblical history did they have consistently moral and perfect leaders (Mark Beliles)

Christianity's government is Self-rule by Consent

- Remnant churches maintained their self-government but were over-shadowed by the trend of centralization
- The early church was self-governing, no hierarchy
 - The church, by degrees, became centralized by 300 AD
 - Constantine copied the church government for the State
- Remnant churches maintained their self-government
 - They did so by refusing government / state support (funds)
 - Often facing persecution, they persevered in faith
- The recovery of Biblical self-governing congregations
 - England (890), the Reformation and Dutch (1550 to 1660 AD)
 - Culminated in England and then to the United States (1620-on)

Election Day in America – an Example

- Priesthood of the believer in the Reformation restored the responsibility of the *individual to exercise their conscience*
- Election Day began in 1633, by 1691 last day of May
 - An all-day holiday – celebrating the responsibility to vote
 - Parade, led by clergy – and a sermon preached to all candidates
 - Many colonial “election days” had 100% participation!
- But remember...
 - Believers were taught from the pulpit on voting responsibilities
 - Believers desired to advance the Kingdom in their culture – and one way this was done was by voting responsibly!