

SEPARATION OF CHURCH
AND STATE
AND BEING BAPTIST
Matthew 22:15-22

Baptists believe that the church and the state both exist by God's sovereign design but that each has separate and distinct areas of function and responsibility.

Tonight we'll look into the Scriptures and see what God's Word teaches us about the separation of church and state.

I. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE

- Matthew 22:15-22

A. THE ACCOUNT

B. CHRIST'S CONCLUSIONS

1. Some things belong to the government
2. Other things belong to God

II. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCH AND STATE

A. STATE DIRECTIVES - Romans 13:1-7

1. The establishment of the state (1-2)
 - See also John 19:10-11
2. The purposes of the state (3-7)
3. The limits of the state
 - The state should not control the religious affairs of the church. - Acts 18:12-16
4. State and church interaction
 - When possible the church should cooperate with the state.

B. CHURCH DIRECTIVES

1. The purposes of the church
 - a. Make Disciples - Matt. 28:19-20
 - b. Teach Believers - Eph. 4:11-16
2. The limits of the church
 - The church should not control the political affairs of the government.
3. Church and state interaction
 - a. Christian citizens should seek to be influential in government, especially with regard to moral issues. - Eph. 5:3-14
 - b. However, Christian citizens are discouraged from using secular courts - I Cor. 6:1-6

C. STATE AND CHURCH DISASTERS

1. When either the church or the state has power over the other, neither functions as God intended - See John 18:28-32
2. When the church and the state form an unholy alliance of power, God is not in it. - See Rev. 17:1-6 and 18:1-3

III. CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT

A. PRAYER FOR LEADERS IS ENCOURAGED - I Tim. 2:1-4

B. RESPECT FOR LEADERS IS REQUIRED - I Peter 2:13-17

C. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IS SOMETIMES PRACTICED

1. When government directives violate God's direct commands - Acts 5:17-29
- Note that obedience to God supersedes obedience to the state. It does not, however, supersede the state's right to mete out punishment for that disobedience.
2. When government acts illegally - Acts 16:35-40

D. SEPARATION IS SOMETIMES PRACTICED

- Some chose to avoid the pledge to the flag, take oaths in court, run for political office or serve in military combat. (For example Mennonites and Amish)

E. SOME CHOOSE LIMITED PARTICIPATION

1. Some godly, biblical characters have served in the political realm
- Examples include Mordecai, Esther, Daniel and Nehemiah
2. John the Baptist did not tell tax collectors or soldiers to quit their government jobs
- Luke 3:12-16
3. Paul used his legal rights to appeal to Caesar - Acts 25:8-12

F. SOME ISSUES BRING TENSION

1. Non-discrimination policies
2. The Healthcare Reform Act of 2012
3. Religious displays on public property
4. Education issues
5. Property taxes levies
6. The malicious use of zoning laws

CONCLUSION:

Baptists believe God intends for the state and church to operate independently and separate from each other.

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