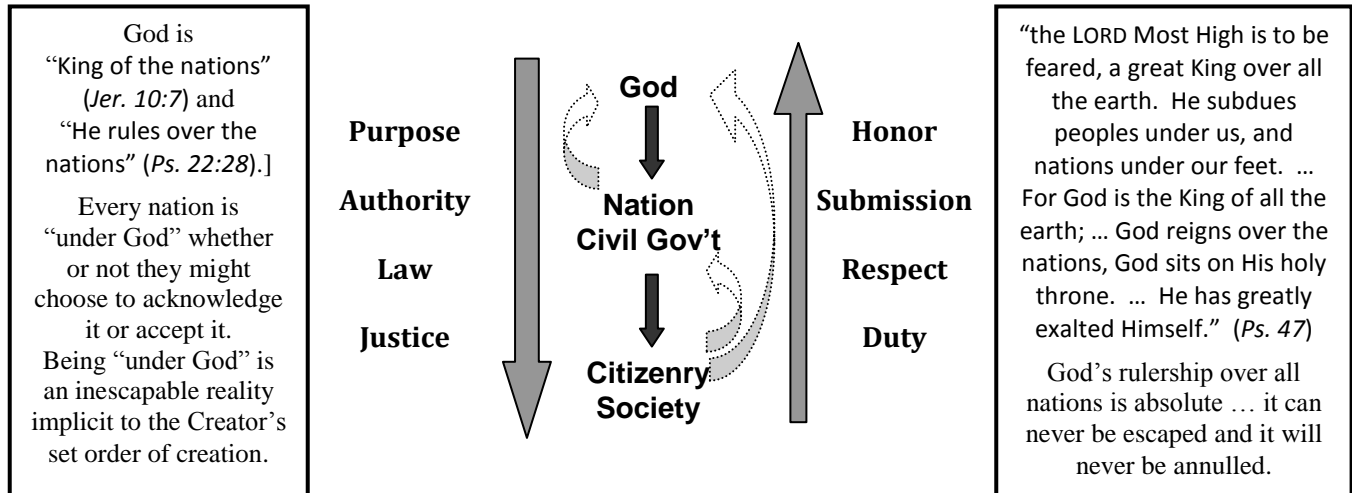


## Nations and a “Nation Under God”: Biblical Considerations

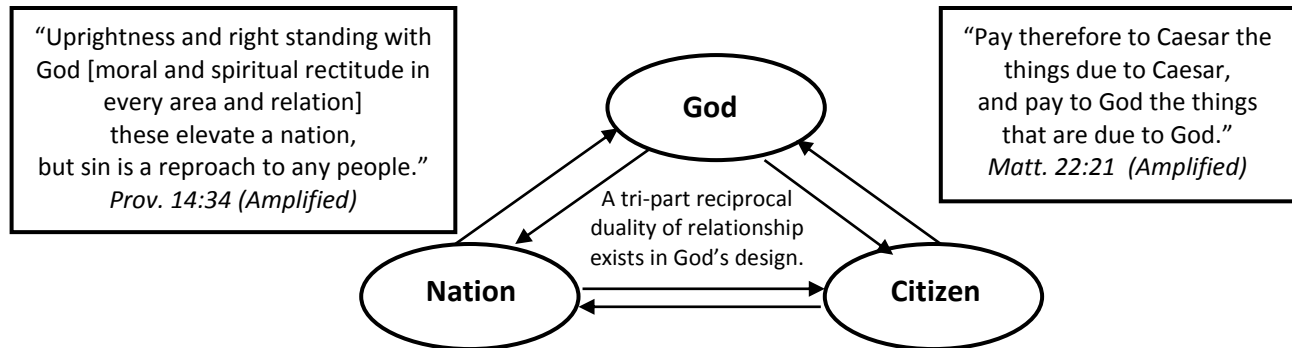
### 1. Basic Fact: Every Nation is a “Nation Under God”.

#### A Geometry of Relationships

“Thou alone, whose name is the LORD, art the Most High over all the earth.” *Ps. 83:18*  
 “the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind” *Dan. 4:17; 5:21*



“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne;  
 mercy and loving-kindness and truth go before Your face.”  
*Psalms 89:14 (Amplified)*



“Let every person be loyally subject to the governing (civil) authorities.  
 For there is no authority except from God—by His permission,  
 His sanction; and those that exist do so by God’s appointment.”

“Render to all men their dues. [Pay] taxes to whom taxes are due,  
 revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due,  
 and honor to whom honor is due.” *Rom. 13:1, 7 (Amplified)*

**“God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates,  
 to be under Him, over people, for His own glory and the public good;  
 and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and  
 encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers.”**  
*Westminster Confession*

## 2. Nation Fundamentals: Purposes Characteristic of a “Nation Under God”.

### Creation Purposes for all Nations

<p><b>The Dominion Mandate</b></p> <p>“And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’ ”</p> <p><i>Gen. 1:27-28</i></p>	<p><b>The Noahic Covenant</b></p> <p>“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ...”</p> <p>“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”</p> <p>“And surely I will require your blood of your lives; from the hand of every beast I will require it. And from the hand of man, from the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.” <i>Gen. 9:1, 5-7</i></p>	<p><b>The Universal Nation Duty</b></p> <p>“The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, ... made from one blood, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, <u>that they should seek God</u> ... for in Him we live and move and exist.”</p> <p><i>Acts 17:24-28</i></p>
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### Important ‘Nation-Purpose’ Perspectives:

- ◆ God’s purpose in creation is basic to His purpose for nations.
  - ◆ God’s purpose in creation is basic to His criteria for judging nations.
  - ◆ God’s purpose in creation should be prominently implemented in the governance and cultural fabric of a “nation under God”.
  - ◆ Since righteousness and justice are the foundation of God’s throne (*Ps. 89:14*), so also should these principles form the undergirding virtues of governance in a “nation under God”.
  - ◆ The fulfillment of God’s purposes in creation will always result in the magnifying of God’s glory and the enhancement of the public good (see *Westminster Confession* statement), plus the basis for God’s prospering a nation and its citizenry (“that it might go well with you”).
- **The Dominion Mandate:**
    - ◆ Promote and practice the sanctity of monogamous marriage and the welfare of the family.
    - ◆ Promote the orderly advancement of ‘citizenry welfare’ through engagement in science (investigation, discovery, etc.), technology (agriculture, engineering, medicine, etc.), education, commerce, the arts, etc.
  - **The Noahic Covenant:**
    - ◆ Uphold the sanctity of human life and enable a climate of civil order through a just suppression of violence and anarchy under just systems of legislative and judicial process.
  - **The Universal Nation Duty:**
    - ◆ Promote the free assembly of citizens for the purpose of worship, engagement in theological education, and the development of a God-centered worldview.

Note: The call for nations to “seek after God” is for the purpose of facilitating a pursuit of knowing God at an individual level, and a fulfillment of His commands (His will) in a ‘whole-life’ and a ‘whole-nation’ stewardship.

## 3. The Origin and Historical Development of Nations.

## 4. The Persistence, Decline, and Termination of Nations.

## 5. Ideals to be Functionally Evident in a Nation that Purports to be “Under God”.

Premise: A ‘nation under God’ should not only fulfill creation purposes for nations, but it should also manifest generalized parallels to God’s revealed principles of governance for Israel, the model “nation under God”.

Perspective: God covenanted with the patriarch Abraham early in the formative era of nations to form a “great nation” through his posterity (*Gen. 12:2a*). This ‘great nation-entity’, Israel, was peculiarly formed by God as a covenant people “under God” – a nation constituted under divinely communicated laws and statutes, and designed to function under theocratic rule. As such, the principles of governance set down for Israel by their King-LawGiver in their formation, and the warnings, rebukes and judgments delivered to Israel during times of apostasy and national decline, afford for all other nations a general basis for discerning what it means to be a “nation under God”. The following ideals are summarized principles gleaned from various Biblical accounts of Israel’s national history, accounts which provide the divine explanation for as well as the divine commentary pertaining to God’s dealing with this “elect nation under God”.

- 1) A nation under God will desire to know and accept His Law as its foundation for governance, ethics and moral values, and will *thereby* place itself in a position to experience His favor and care.
  - ◆ A nation under God will be governed by leaders who have a due regard for ruling as God’s representatives over the citizenry, and who function with a sense of bearing a solemn accountability before God.

“For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD your God whenever we call on Him? Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? ... So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.” *Deut. 4:7-8, 40*

- ◆ A nation under God will prefer to install leaders who have respect for God and His law – knowing that, in consequence, this will pay rich dividends in that nation’s well-being.

“When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, ... you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, ... Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or to the left; in order that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.” *Deut. 17:14-20*

- 2) A nation under God will be in a position of divine favor (blessing) *if* it is vigilant in fostering and upholding the God-honoring, fundamental principles (virtues) of truth, righteousness and justice.

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.” *Ps. 33:12*

“... And if you will put away your detested things from My presence, and will not waver, and you will swear, ‘As the LORD lives’, in truth, in justice, and in righteousness; then the nations will bless themselves in Him, and in Him they will glory.” *Jer. 4:1-2*

- ◆ A nation under God will place itself in a position of jeopardy *if*:
  - it is careless about truth;
  - it implements laws and policies that promote unrighteousness; and
  - it perverts the case of justice for all and debases the cause of equal justice under law.

“For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.” *Deut. 4:24*

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.” *Prov. 14:34*

“But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I commanded you, that it may be well with you’. ... Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did evil more than their fathers. ... And you shall say to them, ‘This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God or accept correction; truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth’.” *Jer. 7:23-28*

- 3) A nation under God will value and encourage religious expression and theological education – it will desire that all its citizens might “hear His voice” and, therein, learn to fear Him and obey Him.

“How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart.” *Ps. 119:1-2*

“Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!” *Deut.5:29*

- 4) A nation under God will value and encourage private and public prayer – being vigilant to invite God to manifest His wisdom, grace, protection and healing in all its affairs and pursuits.

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.” *I Tim 2:1-2*

“If ... My people [over whom My name is called] humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” *II Chron. 7:13-14*

- 5) A nation under God will use its resources to promote righteousness and justice in all civil affairs, and will consistently seek to advance the welfare and respect the dignity of all its citizens – even endeavoring to advance these same virtuous principles among oppressed peoples of other nations.

“For there is no authority except from God ... for it is a minister of God to you for good. ... for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.” *Rom. 13:1-4*

“For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality, or take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.” *Deut. 10:17-18*

## Discussion Questions

- How should godly citizens respond when echelons of national or local leadership in a “*nation under God*” choose to disregard, or even functionally despise, God’s law?
- How should godly citizens react when the broader citizenry of a nation that declares itself to be “*under God*” refuses to value, or even seeks to obstruct, the installation of godly leaders?
- What should godly citizens do when structures of government in a nation “*under God*” codify as law, or institutionalize as national policy, practices that are contrary to Biblical standards of moral, ethical & judicial righteousness?
- How should godly citizens relate to the privilege/responsibility to vote in a nation “*under God*”? And, what principles should guide the choices of godly citizens in voting for candidates and on civil/policy/monetary issues in a nation “*under God*”?
- To what degree is the phrase “*In God We Trust*” in our national motto respected by the citizenry? And, to what degree does it receive practical expression in our national life?
  - ◆ How might (how should) it find expression? Governmentally? Culturally?
  - ◆ What present-day, positive expressions of this motto might we note?
  - ◆ What specific declines in its expression might be noted in recent decades?
  - ◆ How might the church elevate valuing and expressing this motto on our national life?
- What is the meaning of our national motto (principal of ideal) “*E Pluribus Unum*”?
  - Ans. “Out of Many, One”, or “From Many, One”
  - ◆ What did this motto originally convey? Is the original, motivating sense of this motto being respected in our governmental and cultural contexts today?
  - ◆ Is this ideal based on Biblical foundations? If so, how would you compose your argument in support of this “motto-ideal”?
  - ◆ How was this “motto-ideal” applied in the earlier history of our nation?
  - ◆ What action-steps might advance the essence of this “motto-ideal” in our present context?