

The Theology of Nations and Nationalism (Part 1)

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*
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This column is the first segment of a five-part series dealing with Christian perspectives on nations and nationalism.

The biblical idea of a *nation* is not analogous to the modern concept of a state. Yet many preachers have erred by forcing the modern scheme of states into passages dealing with nations (or peoples). It is quite impossible for preachers to square the spurious notions—(1) that Americans are the “people of God”, (2) that the territory of the United States is the “land” of God’s people, or (3) that America as a nation can “repent” and be “healed”—with what the Bible teaches. Indeed, to comprehend the United States of America as a “nation” in a biblical sense is to distort the teaching of the word of God.¹

If God is not bound by political boundaries, then how does He deal with nations? What is a nation in a biblical sense? Generally, a nation is an ethnic aggregate or a race. It is the swelling of the extended family over generations; an ethnic group identified by lineage, language, and culture—typically taking the namesake of a patriarch (e.g., the “nation of Israel”). Thus, a nation is a group of related people headed by single man (e.g., Abraham), composed of tribes, which are composed of clans, which are composed of families. A tribe becomes a nation when it grows sufficiently to have large subdivisions.

Accordingly, in Genesis 10:5 the Bible says “the coastland peoples of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.” In Genesis 25:16 we read that “the sons of Ishmael...[had] towns and their settlements [named after them], twelve princes according to their nations.” A man named Tidal was called the “king of nations” (Genesis 14:1, 9), probably referring to his rule over several undesignated peoples, as opposed to the kings of specified nations like Shinar, Ellasar, and Elam. Ethnic groups like the Geshurites, Girzites, Amalekites, Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Amalekites are called “nations” too (1 Samuel 27:8; 1 Chronicles 18:11), and some of these nations are mentioned as having controlled territory (denoted as their “country”) throughout the Old Testament. Abraham was told that he would become “a father of many nations”, “a great and mighty nation” that would bless other nations, and that “kings” would come from him (Genesis 17:4-5; 18:18; 17:16).

Sometimes in Scripture the word *nations* is used in a pejorative sense. It can be used to allude to the embodiment of evil represented by ungodly Gentile practices, or the place where evil kings arise to do mischief against God’s people, such as those arrayed against the Lord in battle (Lamentations 1:10; Isaiah 14:9; Revelation 14:8; Psalm 83:4; Isaiah 13:4).¹ Jesus tells us that “nation will rise against nation” (Matthew 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:10). However, ethnic groups are infrequently identified solely for a political attribute of aggression or by a trait of immorality. Their ethnic character remains paramount.

In Scripture, the word *country* is more analogous to the modern idea of nation or political jurisdiction of a government or a state. There are many such cases in Scripture: (1) Abraham was told by God: “get out of your country” and dwell in a “foreign country” (Genesis 12:1; Acts 7:3; Hebrews 11:9); (2) Joseph cannily accused his brothers of spying out the “country” of Egypt (Genesis 42:30); (3) the Israelites dwelt in the “country of Goshen” (Genesis 47:27); (4) the children of Israel “searched out” and conquered Canaan—also known as the “country which the Lord swore to our fathers to give us” (Deuteronomy 26:3; Joshua 2:2; 7:2) and to three tribes were given the “country of Gilead” (Joshua 22:9); (5) the Magi “departed for their own country another way” (Matthew 2:12); (6) a prophet is honored everywhere

¹ The Greek words translated as “nation” or “nations” in the New Testament also support the ethnic group understanding of the terms rather than the mistaken modern understanding based on the common vernacular. The roots of these words come through in English in a similar way to their usage in Greek: (1) **ἔθνος** (ethnos)—underlies the translation of nation or nations sixty-one times (or 93.9% of the occurrences) in the King James Version New Testament—from which are derived the English words ethnic and ethnicity; (2) **γένος** and **γένεα** (genos and gena)—underlies the translation of nation or nations three times (or 4.6% of the occurrences) in the King James Version New Testament—from which are derived the English words genus, group, and class (even genealogy); and (3) **αλλοφυλος** (allophulos)—underlies the translation of nation or nations once (or 1.5% of the occurrences) in the King James Version New Testament—meaning a foreign people or nation (e.g., a Gentile one). Accordingly, these words imply that people groups or ethnic aggregates are embodied in the words nation and nations. They certainly do not refer to the group of people living within the political confines of places like America. Furthermore, the few Hebrew words translated as nation or nations in the King James Version Old Testament likewise refer to people groups according to ethnicity rather than cohorts of people confined inside political boundaries or classified by political allegiance. Thus, it is evident that the idea of nation in the Bible does not carry the same significance as the word in our English vernacular.

“except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house” (Mark 6:4; Matthew 21:33; John 4:44); (7) businessmen and noblemen traveling abroad to other countries (Matthew 21:33; 25:14; Mark 12:1; 13:34; Luke 19:12; 20:9); (8) Mary “went into the hill country with haste” (Luke 1:39), and (9) the multitudes listening to Jesus sought lodging and provisions in “the surrounding towns and country” (Luke 9:12).

Further, the political significance of the word country is perhaps most plainly set forth by: (10) the prodigal son who “journeyed to a far country...and joined himself to a citizen of that country” (Luke 15:13, 15); and (11) Joses “a Levite of the country of Cyprus” (Acts 4:36), who was obviously of the nation of Israel. The word country usually refers to the political confines of some place.² Regrettably, many preachers have been misinformed and confused, assuming that the modern usage of “nation” is analogous to the biblical concept of *nation* rather than only being analogous to the biblical concept of *country*. As we will see, they have erred by transposing their vernacular onto the Scriptures, causing their hearers to stumble with them.

The Theology of Nations and Nationalism (Part 2)

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*
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This column is the second segment of a five-part series dealing with Christian perspectives on nations and nationalism.

In the Bible, a *nation* simply does not refer to a political apparatus demarcated by territory. When the Bible says, “Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled” (Isaiah 43:9), it does not refer to the inhabitants of the various political boundaries set by men throughout history but to the ethnic lineage of people groups and cultures. The Lord told Rebekah that, “Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23)—showing that one nation can become divided into many. Her son Jacob (Israel) was to become “the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people” (2 Samuel 7:23), as opposed to other ethnic groups and peoples.

Human rather than political attributes are ascribed to nations. More than metaphorically, nations have “eyes”, “mouths”, and “ears”. They can “drink” or be “drunk”, can “hear”, can bear a “yoke of iron”, can “shake” from fear, can “know” God, can be enraged, can “abhor” or “hate” others, and can “be ashamed” (Isaiah 52:10; Micah 7:16; Revelation 14:8; 18:3; Jeremiah 6:18; 25:15; 28:14; Ezekiel 31:16; 36:23; 38:23; Psalm 2:1; Acts 4:25; Proverbs 24:24; Matthew 24:9; Micah 7:16). They can “assemble and come” and “gather together all around”. They can be “deceived” and become “ungodly” (Joel 3:11; Revelation 18:23; 20:8; Psalm 43:1).³ Such traits can hardly be applied even figuratively to states.

In Daniel, the phrase “peoples, nations, and languages” is repeated five times (Daniel 3:4, 7; 4:1; 5:19; 6:25; 7:14). Similar phrases are engaged seven times in the book of Revelation—combining the words tribes, tongues, peoples, multitudes, and nations (Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15).⁴ The Apostle John is likely alluding to the prophet Daniel, and both writers make clear that people groups rather than political constituencies are signified by the word “nations”. The other words in these phrases also refer to individual human beings classified according to their ethnicity or culture, rendering any understanding of nation as a political structure incongruent with the immediate context.⁵ Accordingly, when the Bible states that, “men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his

² The word *country* can also mean “the countryside” as was the case when Jesus went “into the country near the wilderness” to avoid the Jews (John 11:54), or for Simon the Cyrenian who was coming “from the country” (Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26).

³ The Israelites desired that Samuel would give them “a king to judge [them] like all the nations” so that they would be “like all the nations” (1 Samuel 8:5, 20)—not because they lacked the political boundaries that other nations had but because they wanted a territorial ruler akin to theirs.

⁴ These are: “tribe and tongue and people and nation”, “all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues”, “many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings”, “peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations”, “every tribe, tongue, and nation”, “every nation, tribe, tongue, and people”, or “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues”.

⁵ It might seem curious that the political word “kings” is once included in Revelation 10:11 except that the word also refers to an individual’s profession, making it congruent with the other synonyms in the set.

wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:34), it means that men from all races and ethnic groups, including those of high political office, learned from Solomon.

Such biblical usage of the word nation is exemplified elsewhere. First century Jewish elders acclaimed a Roman centurion as being one who “loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue” (Luke 7:5). They did not use “our nation” to signify that the centurion built it because he loved the political boundaries, citizenship rules, or dominion of the Roman authorities over Palestine. They meant that the centurion loved the Jewish people and therefore built them a synagogue. Likewise, when the Jews accused Jesus of “perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar” (Luke 23:2; cf. John 7:12), they did not mean that Jesus perverted the Roman political system or its constituency. They meant that He stirred up the Jewish people to disobey Caesar and not pay Roman taxes.

Similarly, the first century high priest had “prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad” (John 11:51-52). This prophecy did not indicate that Jesus was going to die for all the people within chosen political jurisdictions. Instead, it meant that Jesus would die for all of “His people”, from His “chosen generation” (Matthew 1:21; 1 Peter 2:9), snatched from every ethnic group on earth. Pilate also demonstrated this understanding when he said “Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me” (John 18:35), indicating that Jesus’ ethnic group—what Luke calls “the nation of the Jews” (Acts 10:22)—had delivered Him up. Jesus’ nation was neither Rome nor any Roman province. He was of the nation of Israel, in the country of Palestine, which was then being subjugated by the Roman civil authority. Paul too admitted his ethnic alignment with the Jews, twice calling them “my own nation” (Acts 26:4; Galatians 1:14). Thus, a biblical nation has *everything* to do with ethnicity and *nothing* to do with territory or political boundaries.

The Theology of Nations and Nationalism (Part 3)

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*
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This column is the third segment of a five-part series dealing with Christian perspectives on nations and nationalism.

God is not concerned about the repentance and salvation of America *as* a nation-state but rather the salvation of the nations *within* America. Jesus Christ used the term *nation* to mean His chosen people—the spiritual “seed” of Abraham (Galatians 3:29)—as opposed to Abraham’s physical lineage. “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it (Matthew 21:43). The Apostle Peter makes it clear that the church of Jesus Christ is now God’s “holy nation” and His “special people” rather than ethnic Israel. “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). And the Apostle John similarly esteems the work of Christ in redeeming His church from all racial and cultural groups: “For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Revelation 5:9).

Accordingly, Jesus “shall inherit all nations”, not in some political sense but in terms of gaining a people from all ethnic groups.⁶ The Psalms declare that Jesus Christ has “the nations” for His “inheritance”, and has become the “head of the nations”, where “all the families of the nations shall worship before” Him. God’s salvation is known “among all nations”,⁷ so that “all nations shall serve Him” and “all nations shall call Him blessed” (Psalms 82:8; 2:8; 18:43; 22:27; 67:2; 72:11, 17). Now “all nations shall flow to” the Lord’s house, “a house of prayer for all nations”, where “all the nations shall be blessed” (Isaiah 2:2; Mark 11:17; Galatians 3:8). The gospel is at the present “a witness unto all nations” that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations”, “for obedience to

⁶ This idea is likely implied in the apostolic discussion of the “firstfruits” from Achaia in Romans 16:15 and 1 Corinthians 16:15.

⁷ Under this blessed existence, “men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, ‘Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’” (Zechariah 8:23).

the faith among all nations for His name” (Matthew 24:14; Luke 24:47; Romans 1:5). Thus, Christians are called to “make disciples of all the nations” via the gospel which must “be preached to all the nations” (Matthew 28:19; Mark 13:10). As a result, “the glory and the honor of the nations” will be present in heaven (Revelation 21:26).

Clearly, God is interested in forming His church from the remnant of nations now confined in all countries worldwide. Capricious political boundaries are not in view in these verses—Roman or otherwise. The Bible is speaking of reaching all ethnic groups. In the end, Jesus will gather “all the nations” before Him for judgment (Matthew 25:32), speaking not of judging political authorities or constituencies but rather ethnic aggregates.

While “the nations rage”, it is the Lord that “makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations, and guides them” (Psalm 2:1; Acts 4:25; Job 12:23; cf. Psalm 118:10). God “destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan”; “the nations have perished out of His land” (Acts 13:19; Psalm 10:16). Indeed, “All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless” (Isaiah 40:17). God is speaking about the insignificance of people groups, not of political covenants.

Just think about the blessings that have been bestowed upon ethnic groups within Western Europe and America in recent centuries, stemming from revivals and widespread acceptance of the Gospel for many generations. Sometimes God will “grant...repentance” to masses of people (2 Timothy 2:25), such as He did in the case of Nineveh, Macedonia, and Corinth (Jonah 3:5; 4:2, 11; Matthew 12:41; Luke 11:42; Acts 16:9-10; 18:10). These good people, God’s elect, were not so much identified by their political allegiances as by their ethnic and cultural attributes. They retained their godly character even after being exiled to new political jurisdictions, as with the Puritans fleeing to America.⁸ Hence, the blessings of America are not the result of God favoring its political organization but rather the godly culture of the nations which have flowed into it.

Individuals repent and believe; political entities do not. Only individuals or ethnic groups are said to be judged in the Bible: “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” and “Let the nations be judged in Your sight” (Psalm 9:17, 19). “When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble? And when He hides His face, who then can see Him, whether it is against a nation or a man alone?” (Job 34:29). The idea of national repentance defined by non-ethnic, political boundaries is bogus.

The Theology of Nations and Nationalism (Part 4)

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*
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This column is the fourth segment of a five-part series dealing with Christian perspectives on nations and nationalism.

It is error to comprehend the United States of America as a *nation* in a biblical sense. America’s territory contains people from many nations, all falling under the political authority of the Constitution. Even though many of God’s people are also Americans it is incorrect to equate the American people with God’s people. Moreover, the territory of the United States is *not* the special or promised “land” of the people of God. Territory does not become sacred on account of some Christians inhabiting it.

Regrettably, many modern preachers have failed to grasp these facts. Two passages of Scripture commonly twisted in contemporary sermons are: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14) and “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance” (Psalm 33:12). These verses are inappropriately preached or interpreted as follows: “If Americans will humble themselves, and pray and seek God’s face, and turn from their wicked ways, then God will hear from heaven, and will forgive America’s national sins and heal the country.” Further, the God of the Bible is purported to be America’s God and, as a

⁸ Many other examples could be cited: the Huguenots fleeing from French papists, the Baptists fleeing from persecution in central Europe to the new world, or the early Roman Christians being exiled to the southern shores of the Black Sea by Nero (1 Peter 1:1).

result, many Americans presume that the American people have been chosen as God's inheritance. From these errors emerge the underlying specious idea that certain "national sins"—which occur within arbitrary and variable political boundaries (e.g., the United States)—will lead to divine judgment. Nonetheless, "national repentance" is possible when sought in earnest.

Nevertheless, there are no such national sins, and no national repentance. The Bible does not indicate that God any longer deals with nations as He did under the Old Covenant. He used to deal uniquely with the nation of Israel (i.e., the "people" and the "inheritance" referred to in 2 Chronicles 7:14 and Psalm 33:12), often violently opposing and dispossessing the Gentile nations. For instance, it was said that "the Lord strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:18). Certainly, Gentiles could abandon their pagan ways and join Israel, as was the case with Rahab the Canaanite, Ruth the Moabitess, and those Jews who heard Peter preach in Jerusalem described as "devout men, from every nation under heaven" (Joshua 6:25; Hebrews 11:31; Ruth 1:22; Acts 2:5). But these individuals were the exception rather than the rule under the Old Covenant.

Now God deals with nations by calling out his elect from every nation—forming a new and holy nation called the church—and abandoning the rest to eternal condemnation. Thus, passages like 2 Chronicles 7:14 and Psalm 33:12 have no more application to the political constituents of America than they do to political constituents of largely Muslim Indonesia, largely pagan New Guinea and Madagascar, or largely Roman Catholic Paraguay and Argentina.

A similar critique may be leveled at the abuse of the infamously mistreated verse: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). This verse should *not* be interpreted that the political realm America will be exalted when its decrees are righteous. It means that blessing will follow when a family is converted to Christ, and then a clan follows suit, and finally over time (perhaps encompassing several generations), an entire tribe or larger ethnic aggregate "nation" may be depicted as faithful. At that point, the righteousness of those people exalts them both temporally and eternally. One may see examples of this blessing (or imperfect tendencies toward it) in the people of Judah under Josiah and the people of Nineveh, as well as the households of Moses, Samuel, David, Lydia, and the Philippian jailor (2 Kings 23:4-24; Jonah 3:5-10; Hebrews 3:2, 5; 1 Samuel 2:35; 1 Samuel 22:14; Acts 16:15; Acts 16:34). Widespread good character and habits among any ethnic group have an uplifting effect.

Conversely, sinful habits and proclivities are a snare to any ethnic group: "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits'" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Remember how Paul warned Titus about the character of the people of Crete: "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12), and how God debilitated Pharaoh on account of Sarai: "But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife" (Genesis 12:17). Modern America contains many ethnic groups—nations—which have many bad habits. But the true Christian nation in America is no more implicated by the evils of its neighbors than Lot was in Sodom, Israel was in Egypt, Judah was in Babylon, or Christians were in Rome. It is not the fault of Christians that their neighbors practice sin. Of course, individual Christians may fall into the sins of the nations around them (2 Kings 17:15), but they can and should remain holy (Romans 6:1; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 12:14).

The Theology of Nations and Nationalism (Part 5)

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*
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This column is the fifth segment of a five-part series dealing with Christian perspectives on nations and nationalism.

If the Christian "nation" is comprised of every nation, how can it be right for Christians to be *nationalists* in the common sense of the term? Regrettably, modern cultural dynamics have led many Christians to embrace the sin of nationalism. The dictionary defines nationalism as "a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture

and interests as opposed to those of other nations”.⁹ Absent a theocracy, the New Testament clearly stands out against nationalism. Christians are “strangers and pilgrims” in this world and are comprised of brethren from “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Hebrews 11:13; Revelation 5:9b).

The Christian’s King is Jesus and his “country” is a heavenly one where ethnicity is not important and all speak the same, delightful language of “Beulah” (Hebrews 11:16b; Isaiah 62:4b). That fact implies, in short, that nationalism is a prideful sin that is deleterious to Christian thinking, to missionary endeavors, and to personal sanctification. Indeed, the tightest loyalty a Christian should have in this world is to other believers—no matter what political realm they belong to. The moment a believer is more American, British, Argentine, Peruvian, Chilean, Czech, etc. than he is Christian, he is guilty of nationalism. At any time a Christian favors the people of “his country” (e.g., fellow Americans) more than Christians in other countries he is guilty of the sin of nationalism. Are we loyal to Jesus and His church first and to our fellow citizens only secondarily? Or have we succumbed to nationalism?

Is it right for Christians to oppose immigration of foreigners through public policies? Legal immigration is probably not a concern for Christians, but what about *illegal* immigration? By now it should be clear that the only true outsiders to a Christian are the unbelieving “dogs” of this age—especially those political and wealthy figures who revel in ungodliness (Matthew 7:6; Philippians 3:2; Revelation 22:15). Christians around the world are superficially separated by language and political boundaries but are unified by the Holy Spirit—even though many Christians apparently ignore this fact. Sadly, at times they enthusiastically advocate the bombing of other countries, adversely impacting other Christians. How many Christians were killed or injured by the American bombings of Tokyo, Hiroshima and Baghdad? Does the perceived necessity of bombing a country override our obligation to protect innocent human life—especially the lives of our brethren, the poor, and the oppressed? A Christian foreign policy should be distinct from that of unbelievers because it is influenced by biblical principles.

Christians are pilgrims in this world who seek a heavenly country (Hebrews 11:6). They are told by Christ to “flee” persecution (Matthew 10:23; 24:16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:21), as Joseph and Mary did (Matthew 2:13)—along with countless other believers throughout history. Such obedient fleeing might entail a Christian having to enter another country, perhaps violating the country’s immigration policies. But so what? Christians are remiss if they make the well-being of their country the primary focal point for deciding the veracity of immigration policy rather than the well-being of God’s beloved people.

On the one hand, a Christian’s nationality is irrelevant and Christians should welcome believing immigrants with open arms—whether they are legal or illegal in the state’s eyes. For Christians, borders and the legality of migration are trivial or extraneous when it comes to obeying Christ’s command to flee persecution or to love and prefer one another in Christ (Philippians 2:2). How can Christians who financially and prayerfully support national pastors and church members living under tyrannical regimes hinder those same people from fleeing to America (or freer countries) by any means? The sanctimonious divine right notion that Christians may only flee when it is legal to do so—and then only immigrate to America after they have clearance from state bureaucrats—is fallacious, hypocritical, and unbiblical.

On the other hand, a Christian may support the limited government where he lives, procuring better self-defense of life and liberty. A Christian is called to steward his private property too (Proverbs 27:23-24).¹⁰ To those ends, Christians may justly back *reactive* public policy to safeguard national borders, oppose any migration that undermines the common defense of life, liberty, and property, and even (by default rule) oppose the illegal immigration of ordinary unbelievers. Such reactive immigration policy will be most efficiently and effectively carried out through market-based solutions rather than clumsy and venal attempts by government enforcement.

But an American Christian must always be a Christian first and an American second. He must *think* and consider each issue on its own merits before supporting or rejecting any particular migration

⁹ That is, “nations” in the modern sense of the word. I have covered issues regarding the sin of nationalism more extensively in *Bible and Government: Public Policy from a Christian Perspective* (Alertness Books, 2003), pages 41-48.

¹⁰ “Be diligent to know the state of your flocks, and attend to your herds; for riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations” (Proverbs 27:23-24), along with many other verses promoting good stewardship.

policy. He must avoid jumping on an absolutist bandwagon that opposes *any and all* illegal immigration *out-of-hand* that would cause him to shirk his biblical responsibilities or trammel his brethren.¹¹ He must prefer Christians of any nationality over unbelieving Americans. And he should “do good” to poor or oppressed unbelievers when possible too (as Galatians 6:10 mandates) by facilitating their migration. Thus, in the final analysis, a Christian should oppose any *proactive* immigration or foreign policy that curtails his biblical obligations, and only support proper reactive immigration and foreign policies.

¹¹ A biblical understanding of nations leads us to embrace a theology of public policy that differs widely from that advocated by many Christians—especially in America. Christians should not *absolutely* oppose illegal immigration. Christians should not obey men rather than God.