

The Myth of the so-called Separation of Church and State

Matthew 5: ¹³*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.* ¹⁴*You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.* ¹⁵*Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.* ¹⁶*In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

The *Separation* clause is an attempt to force believers to abandon the salt and light principle. But that phrase does not exist in *any* of our governing documents. It is a non-constitutional phrase that continues to gain widespread acceptance, but its modern application actually contradicts the original intent of the Framers of the Constitution.

Actual Law (First Amendment of the US Constitution): *Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”*

Founders’ Writings: It is well documented that religious faith was considered by our Founding Fathers to be the primary reason for the founding of America. Many of them wrote openly about how their political philosophies and decision-making were guided by their faith. For instance, in his farewell speech, President George Washington exclaimed, *“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.”* Then the second President and one of the most influential Founders, John Adams, also stated, *“The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity.”* And US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall noted, *“One great object of the colonial charters was avowedly the propagation of the Christian faith.”*

Constitutional Record: In Article 1, Sec. 5, §3, Congress is required to record all the official words and acts that occur in the congressional chambers. It is the minutes to the meetings, so to speak. For three-and-a-half summer months, ninety elected officials in the first federal Congress vigorously deliberated on a daily basis on such matters as religious freedom. They were seeking to prevent the national government from establishing a single denomination in exclusion of all others. When it was all said and done, the first half of the amendment, the “Establishment Clause,” prohibited the federal government from establishing a single national denomination. The second half, the “Free Exercise Clause,” prohibited the federal government from interfering with the people’s public religious expressions and acknowledgements. A major point to note is that the law placed restrictions on the actions of government, not the actions of the citizens. The Framers just expected Biblical values and principles to be present throughout public life and society.

Context of the Separation Clause: Soon after the First Amendment was ratified and published, the Danbury Baptist Association grew very concerned. So they appealed by letter to President Thomas Jefferson in the fall of 1801. They felt that religious freedoms were inalienable rights granted only by God Himself, and if the government even mentioned them in civil documents, then one day it might someday wrongfully assume the power to regulate religious activities. Promptly, the President responded to their letter. By the way, when he sat down to write this letter, he had just come from a Sunday church service that was conducted on the first floor of the US Capitol with a lot of other national officials – talk about the *integration* of Church and State! In his letter, Jefferson assured those pastors that he understood their concerns and agreed with them that people accounted only to God and not the government for their faith and religious practice. He promised them that the government would never interfere with public religious expressions. In that context, a private letter from one individual to a small group of others, Thomas Jefferson used the words “the wall of separation of church and state” to describe how the government would always be prevented from ever interfering with faith.