

America: A Christian Nation?

By Justice David Josiah Brewer

God Blesses His Truth

Proverbs 14:34, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”

Ps 33:12, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”



God Blesses His Truth

Matt 7:16-18, “You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.”



A Christian Nation?

“Although...we have a very large Christian population, *we do not consider ourselves a Christian nation* or a Jewish nation or a Muslim nation; we consider ourselves a nation of citizens who are bound by ideals and a set of values” (italics added).



Cited in Lynn Sweet, “Obama and President Gul of Turkey Press Conference. Obama’s Islamic Outreach,” *Chicago Sun Times* (April 6, 2009).

A Christian Nation?

“Whatever we once were, *we’re no longer a Christian nation.* At least not just. We are also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, and a Buddhist nation, and a Hindu nation, and a nation of nonbelievers” (Italics added).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmC31evZiik> (2007).



America is a “Christian Nation”

“This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation...These are not the sayings, declarations of private persons: they are organic utterances; they speak the voice of the entire people...These and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.”

Church of the Holy Trinity v. U.S., 143 U.S. 457, 465, 470-71 (1892)



Preview



Early America's:



Settlements



Colonial motivations



Educational institutions



Support for the church



Requirement of Christian officeholders



Recognition of the Sabbath



Use of "God"

Preview



Early America's:



Absence of contrary declarations



Chaplains



Judicial opinions



Christian population



Acceptance of the Bible



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Conclusion

America is a “Christian Nation”

This republic is classified among the Christian nations of the world. It was so formally declared by the Supreme Court of the United States. In the case of Holy Trinity Church vs. United States, 143 U.S. 471, that court, after mentioning various circumstances, added, “these and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation.”

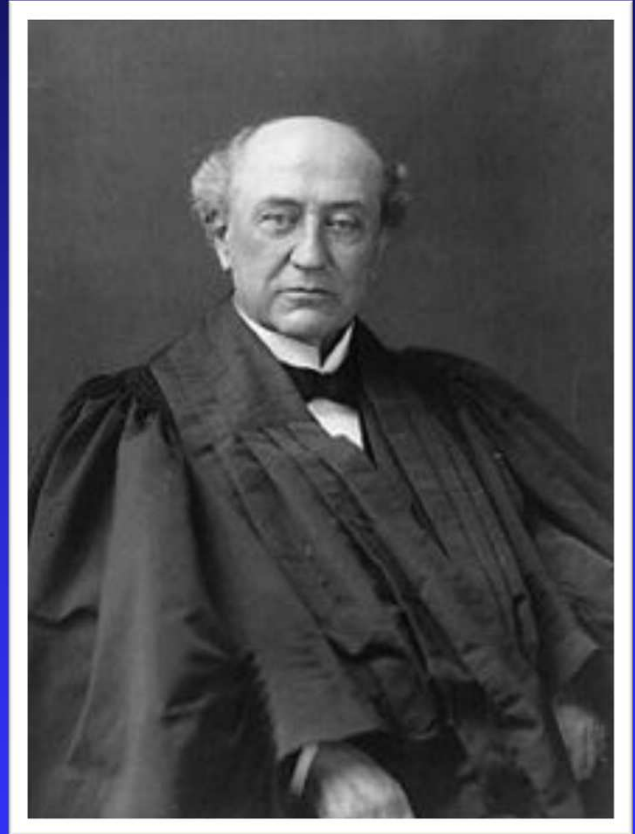
Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 11-12



America is a “Christian Nation”

But in what sense can it be called a Christian nation? Not in the sense that Christianity is the established religion or that the people are in any manner compelled to support it.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 11-12



Christopher Columbus

“Our Lord opened to my understanding (I could sense his hand upon me) so it became clear to me that the voyage was feasible...All those who heard of my enterprise rejected it with laughter, scoffing at me...Who doubts this illumination was from the Holy Spirit? I attest that He, with marvelous rays of light, consoled me with the holy and sacred Scriptures...”



Christopher Columbus

...“they inflame me with a sense of great urgency...No one should be afraid to take on any enterprise in the name of the savior if it is right and if the purpose is purely for His holy service...And I say that the sign that convinces me that our Lord is hastening the end of the world is the preaching of the Gospel in so many distant lands.”

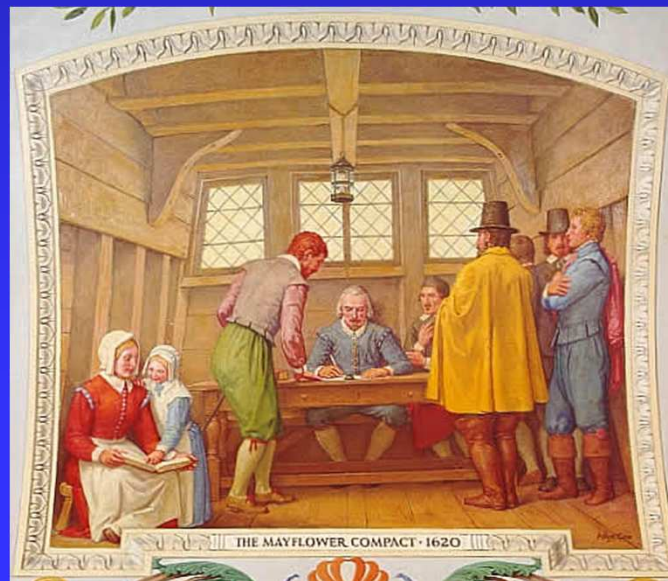
Columbus, *Book of Prophecies*, trans. Kay Brigham, 178-79, 182-83.



Mayflower Compact (1620)

Mayflower, in 1620, recites: “Having undertaken for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith and the honor of our king and country a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia.”

Brewer, *United States A Christian Nation*, 14



South Carolina Constitution (1778)

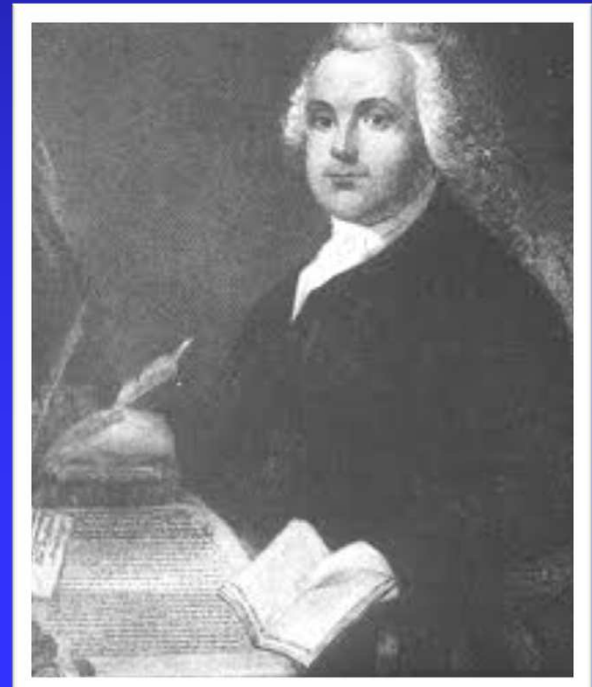
In the Constitution of South Carolina, of 1778, it was declared that “the Christian Protestant religion shall be deemed and is hereby constituted and declared to be the established religion of this State.” And further of which were “that the Christian religion is the true religion; that the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament are of divine inspiration, and are the rule of faith and practice.”

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 19-20

Roger Williams

Roger Williams, exiled from Massachusetts because of his religious views, established an independent colony in Rhode Island.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 19

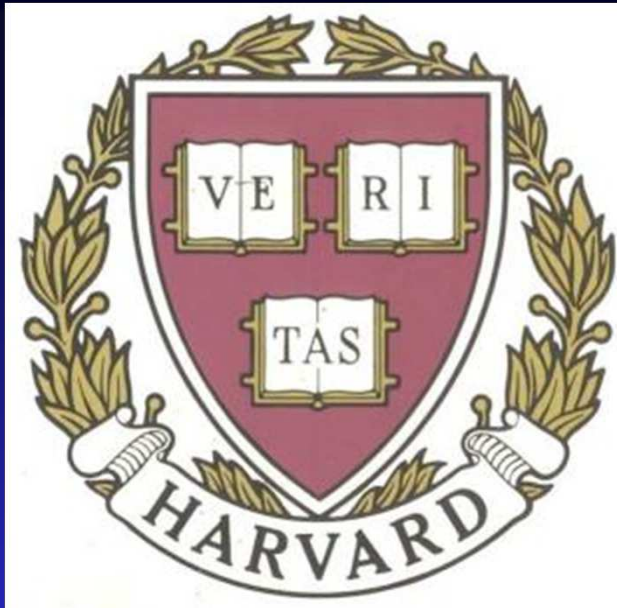


Declarations of America's Early Settlements

It is not exaggeration to say that Christianity in some of its creeds was the principal cause of the settlement of many of the colonies, and cooperated with business hopes and purposes in the settlement of the others. Beginning in this way and under these influences it is not strange that the colonial life had an emphatic Christian tone.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 19-20

Harvard

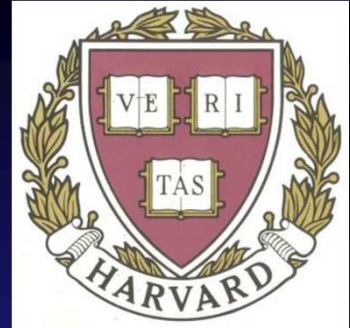


University

**The first seal used by Harvard College had as a motto,
“In Christi Gloriam,” ...**

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 20

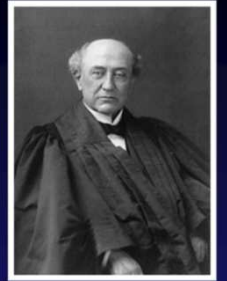
Harvard University



“Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let everyone seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of Him (Prov. 2, 3). Everyone shall exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein.”

Rules of Harvard in 1636; quoted in David Barton, *Original Intent*, 81

America's Early Schools



Think of the vast number of academies, colleges and universities scattered through the land. Some of them, it is true, are under secular control, but there is yet to be established in this country one of those institutions founded on the religions of Confucius, Buddha or Mohammed, while an overwhelming majority are under the special direction and control of Christian teachers.

Brewer, *United States A Christian Nation*, 37

Maryland Constitution (1776)

In Maryland, by the Constitution of 1776, it was provided that “the legislature may, in their discretion, lay a general and equal tax, for the support of the Christian religion.”

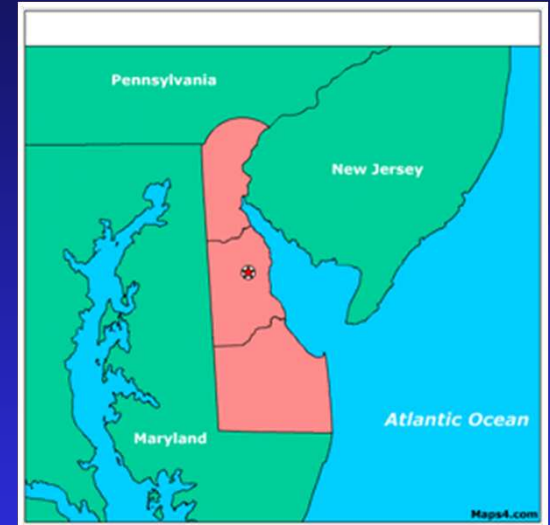
Brewer, *United States A Christian Nation*, 22



Delaware Constitution (1776)

In Delaware, by the Constitution of 1776, every officeholder was required to make and subscribe the following declaration: “I, A. B., do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His Only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed forevermore; and I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.”

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 23



Vermont Constitution (1777)

The Vermont Constitution of 1777 required of every member of the House of Representatives that he take this oath: “I do believe in one God, the creator and governor of the universe, the rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked, and I do acknowledge the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be given by divine inspiration, and own and profess that Protestant religion.” A similar requirement was provided by the Constitution of 1786.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 25



John Jay

“Providence has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty, as well as the privilege and interest of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.”

*B.F. Morris, **The Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States**, 186.*



Sabbath

Article I, Section 7, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution says, “If any bill should not be returned by the President within ten days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the same shall be a law in like manner as if he had signed it.”

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 27



Exod 20:8-11

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Use of “God”



While the word “God” is not infrequently used both in the singular and plural to denote any supreme being or beings, yet when used alone and in the singular number it generally refers to that Supreme Being spoken of in the Old and New Testaments and worshiped by Jew and Christian. In that sense the word is used in constitution, statute and instrument. In many State Constitutions we find in the preamble a declaration like this: “Grateful to Almighty God.” In some he who denied the being of God was disqualified from holding office. It is again and again declared in constitution and statute that official oaths shall close with an appeal, “So help me, God.” When, upon

Use of “God”



inauguration, the President-elect each four years consecrates himself to the great responsibilities of Chief Executive of the republic, his vow of consecration in the presence of the vast throng filling the Capitol grounds will end with the solemn words, “So help me, God.” In all our courts witnesses in like manner vouch for the truthfulness of their testimony. The common commencement of wills is “In the name of God, Amen.” Every foreigner attests his renunciation of allegiance to his former sovereign and his acceptance of citizenship in this republic by an appeal to God.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 30-31

Declaration of Independence



“the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,”



“we hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal,”



“they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,”



“appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions,”



“with firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence.”

“Year of Our Lord”

Article VII, Paragraph 2 says, “Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the *Year of our Lord* one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth” (italics added).





“Year of Our Lord”



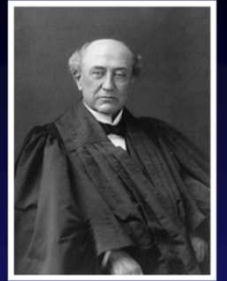
The Constitution for the emerging United States of America was signed by George Washington on September 17, “in the year of our Lord” 1787. To those who say that there is no mention of God or Jesus Christ in the Constitution, I ask this question: Which “Lord” was Washington referring to? Lord North? King George, Lord of England? Or was it Jesus Christ, who was born 1,787 years previously and whose birth became the point of reference for all Western calendars—those events “Before Christ” (BC) and those events “*Anno Domini*” (AD), the year of our Lord?



Pat Robertson, *The Ten Offenses: Reclaim the Blessing of the Ten Commandments* (Brentwood, TN: Integrity, 2004), 9.



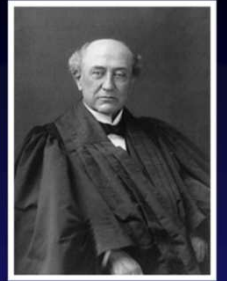
Absence of Contrary Declarations



...it is of still more significance that there are no contrary declarations. In no charter or constitution is there anything to even suggest that any other than the Christian is the religion of his country. In none of them is Mohammed or Confucius or Buddha in any manner noticed. In none of them is Judaism recognized other than by way of toleration of its special creed. While the separation of church and state is often affirmed, there is nowhere a repudiation of Christianity as one of the institutions as well as benedictions of society. In short, there is no charter or constitution that is either infidel, agnostic or anti-Christian. Wherever there is a declaration in favor of any religion it is of the Christian.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 31-32

Christian Chaplains



Notice also the matter of chaplains. These are appointed for the army and navy, named as officials of legislative assemblies, and universally they belong to one or other of the Christian denominations. Their whole range of service, whether in prayer or preaching, is an official recognition of Christianity. If it be not so, why do we have chaplains?

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 32

South Carolina Supreme Court (1787)

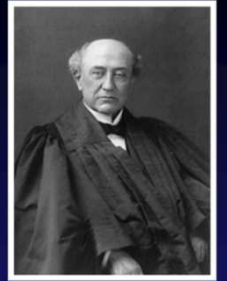


“It appears to have been long perfectly settled by the common law, that blasphemy against the Deity in general, or a malicious and wanton attack against the Christian religion individually, for the purpose of exposing its doctrines to contempt and ridicule, is indictable and punishable as a temporal offence.”

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 34



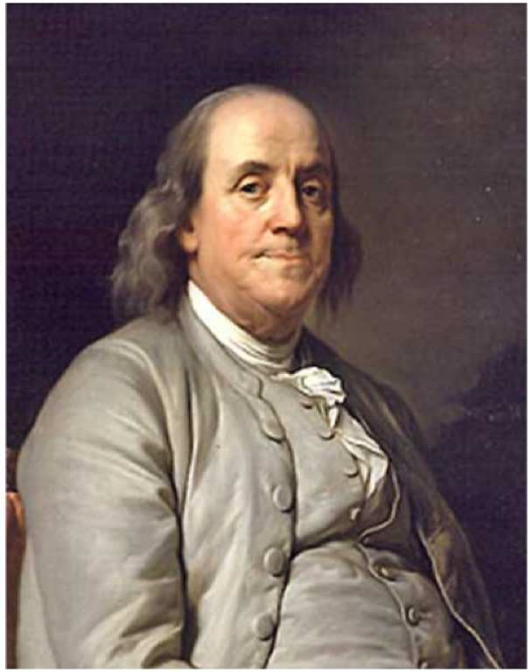
American Population (1890)



In other words, about one-third of the entire population were directly connected with Christian organizations... and yet it is clear that there is an identification of the great mass of American citizens with the Christian church.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 37-38

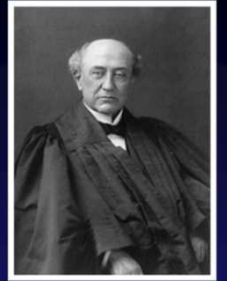
Benjamin Franklin



“Hence bad examples to youth are more rare in America... Atheism is unknown there, Infidelity rare and secret; so that great persons may live to a great age in that country without having their piety shocked by meeting with either Atheist or Infidel.”

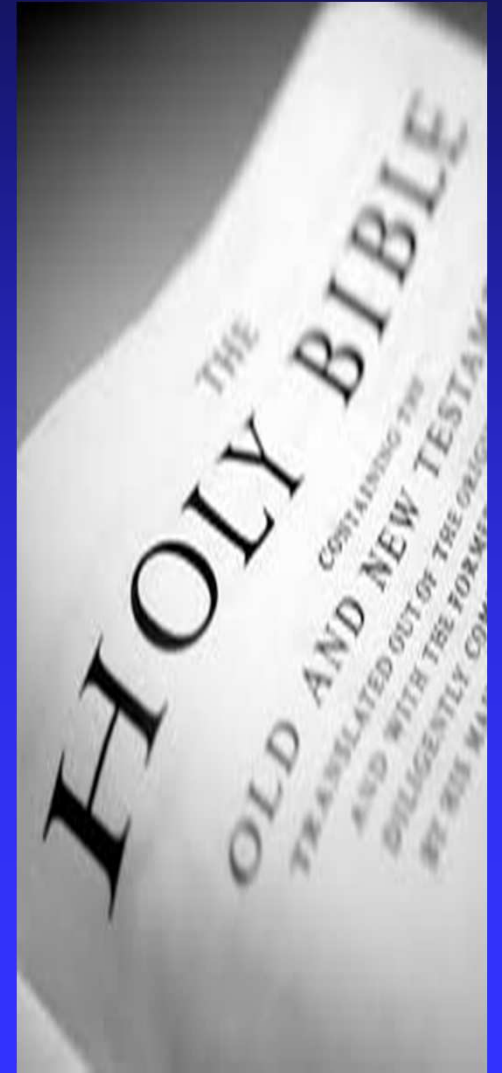
Benjamin Franklin, “Advice on Coming to America,” *America in Person*, ed. George D. Youstra, 109.

Acceptance of the Bible



No other book has so wide a circulation or is so universally found in the households of the land. During their century of existence the English and American Bible Societies have published and circulated two hundred and fifty million copies, and this represents but a fraction of its circulation. And then think of the multitude of volumes published in exposition, explanation and illustration of that book or some portion of it.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 39



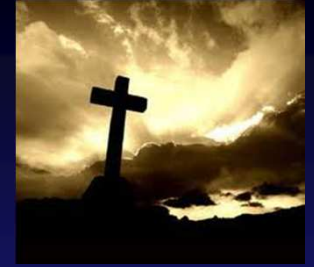
Beyond Dispute



You will have noticed that I have presented no doubtful facts. The quotations from charters are in the archives of the several States; the laws are on the statute books; judicial opinions are taken from the official reports; statistics from the census publications. In short, no evidence has been presented which is open to question.

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 39

Unofficial Declarations



- † “trend of public opinion”
- † “our laws and customs are based upon the laws of Moses and the teachings of Christ”
- † “Bible is appealed to as a guide of life and the authority in questions of morals”
- † “Christian doctrines are accepted as the great comfort in times of sorrow and affliction”
- † “on every hilltop towers the steeple of some Christian church”

Unofficial Declarations



- † “Annual Thanksgiving proclamations”
- † “Days of fasting and prayer”
- † “the universal celebration of Christmas”
- † “the gathering of millions of our children in Sunday Schools”
- † “Countless volumes of Christian literature”

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 39-40

Conclusion



“But I must not weary you. I could go on indefinitely, pointing out further illustrations both official and non-official, public and private...This is a Christian nation, and we can all rejoice...”

Brewer, United States A Christian Nation, 40

Review



Early America's:



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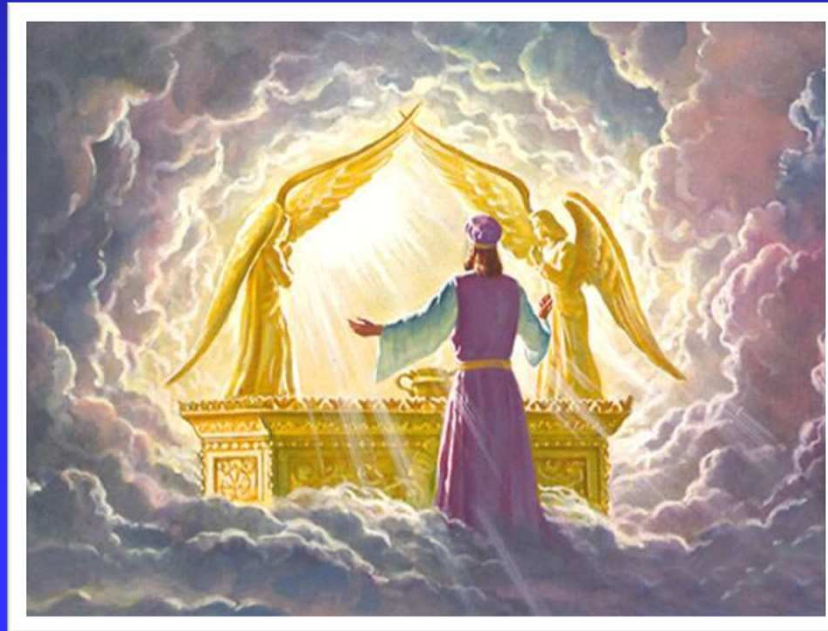


Conclusion

So What?

Points of Application!

1. God deserves glory for what He has done – doxological purpose



So What?

Points of Application!

2. Repent (Rev 2:5)

Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.



So What?

Points of Application!

3. God gives us the potential for greatness

