

Qualifications for Leadership in a Covenant Republic

Why a Republic in Covenant with God Requires Godly Leadership

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Abstract

This document establishes that leadership in a covenant Republic is not a matter of political preference, neutrality, or popular will, but a matter of covenant fidelity. Scripture consistently teaches that when a people enter into covenant with God, those who govern them must themselves be submitted to God's authority, capable of discerning His will, and committed to executing His law. Leadership in a covenant nation is therefore a stewardship under God, not a secular administrative function.

Drawing from Scripture, founding-era evidence, and early state constitutional practice, this work demonstrates that Christian leadership was understood as essential to republican durability, liberty, and justice. The Founders repeatedly affirmed that liberty depends on virtue, virtue depends on religion, and republican government cannot survive without moral restraint shaped by Christian faith. Biblical authority further establishes that unbelief disqualifies individuals from covenant governance, not as a punishment or insult, but as a spiritual incapacity to judge rightly under God.

The document concludes that requiring Christian leadership in a covenant Republic is neither oppressive nor exclusionary, but an act of honesty and alignment with covenant reality. A covenant people must be led by covenant keepers.

Purpose & Scope

Purpose.

To define, from Scripture and historical precedent, the qualifications required for leadership in a Republic that claims to exist in covenant with God, and to explain why such leadership must be Christian in belief, submission, and practice.

Scope.

This document:

- Establishes covenant as the determining framework for governance.
- Defines biblical qualifications for civil authority.
- Explains why unbelievers are inherently disqualified from covenant leadership.
- Presents founding-era statements affirming Christian leadership as essential to republican government.
- Examines state constitutional requirements for officeholding during the founding period.
- Clarifies the proper and limited meaning of Article VI's "no religious test" clause.
- Applies these principles specifically to the context of a restored or Re-Inhabited Republic.

What this document is not.

It is not an argument for forced belief, religious coercion, or theocratic domination. It is a covenantal and constitutional analysis of who may lawfully govern under God.

Foundational Premise

1. **Covenant determines governance.**
A Republic in covenant with God cannot claim neutrality toward Him. Covenant defines authority, law, accountability, and eligibility to govern.
2. **God delegates authority to those submitted to Him.**
Scripture is explicit that those who govern God's people must fear God, hate dishonest gain, and be capable of discerning His will. Authority without submission is illegitimate in covenant context.
3. **Spiritual capacity is required for covenant leadership.**
Unbelievers, by definition, lack the capacity to discern the Spirit of God, execute covenant justice, or uphold biblical law. This is a spiritual limitation, not a moral insult.
4. **Republican liberty depends on godly leadership.**
Historical evidence confirms that the Founders understood Christian faith as foundational to virtue, and virtue as essential to liberty and self-government.
5. **Neutrality toward God is covenant violation.**
Permitting unbelieving leadership within a covenant Republic constitutes a breach of covenant and undermines national standing before God.

I. Covenant Determines Governance

A Republic that claims to exist **in covenant with God** cannot be morally, spiritually, or lawfully neutral toward Him. Covenant is not symbolic; it is **binding**. In Scripture, covenant always defines:

- **Who governs**
- **By what law**

- **By whose authority**
- **With what spiritual accountability**

Scripture is explicit and non-negotiable on this point: **those who govern God’s people must themselves be subject to God.**

“Select from among you capable, God-fearing, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain.”
— *Exodus 18:21*

Leadership in a covenant nation is not a popularity contest, nor an ideological compromise. It is a **stewardship under God.**

II. Biblical Qualifications for Civil Authority

A. Righteous, Spirit-Filled, Competent Leaders

Biblical government is not secular; it is **delegated authority** under God.

“The government will be upon His shoulders.”
— *Isaiah 9:6*

This does not mean Christ personally occupies every civil office. It means governance rests on **His body**—those filled with His Spirit and submitted to His authority.

Throughout Scripture, rulers are repeatedly described as:

- The **righteous**
- The **wise**
- Those who **fear God**
- Those **filled with God’s Spirit**

A nation cannot remain in covenant with God while being governed by those who **reject Him, deny His Word, or refuse His authority.**

B. Why Unbelievers Are Disqualified from Covenant Governance

Unbelievers—by definition—cannot:

- Discern the Holy Spirit
- Hear God’s direction
- Execute covenant justice

- Resist satanic influence
- Uphold biblical law

This is not an insult; it is a **spiritual reality**.

“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them...”

— *1 Corinthians 2:14*

Because of this, **moral relativists, occultists, atheists, and Satanists are inherently disqualified** from governing a covenantal Republic. Governance under God requires **submission to God**.

III. Founding-Era Evidence: Christianity and Civil Office

A. Explicit Statements from the Founders

John Jay

John Jay, co-author of *The Federalist* and first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, wrote:

“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.**”

This statement does not merely recommend Christian morality—it affirms **Christian leadership as a national duty**.

Noah Webster

In an 1829 letter to James Madison, Webster wrote:

“The Christian religion, in its purity, is the basis, or rather the source, of all genuine freedom in government... I am persuaded that **no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable** in which the principles of that religion have not a controlling influence.”

Webster ties the **durability of a republic** directly to Christian faith.

Benjamin Rush

Rush wrote:

“Without religion there can be no virtue, without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments.”

Again, the chain is clear:

No Christianity → No virtue → No liberty → No republic

George Washington

In his Farewell Address:

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, **religion and morality are indispensable supports.**”

Washington did not advocate atheistic governance; he warned that removing religion would destroy the Republic itself.

IV. State Constitutions: Christianity as a Legal Qualification

While the federal Constitution prohibited a **federal religious test**, the **states—who formed the Republic—did impose them.**

Examples:

Delaware Constitution (1776)

Required officials to affirm belief in:

- God the Father
- Jesus Christ His Son
- The Holy Spirit
- Divine inspiration of the Old and New Testaments

Pennsylvania Constitution (1776)

Required belief in:

- One God
- Divine judgment
- The divine inspiration of Scripture

North Carolina Constitution (1776)

Explicitly barred anyone who denied:

- God
- Protestant Christianity
- The divine authority of Scripture from holding civil office.

Maryland Constitution (1776)

Restricted officeholding to Christians for decades.

A survey of early state constitutions shows that **9 of the 14 original states** imposed religious qualifications for office.

This is not revisionism—it is historical fact.

V. The Article VI Objection—Properly Understood

Article VI of the U.S. Constitution states:

“No religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States.”

This clause:

- Applies **only to the federal government**
- Was intended to prevent **denominational control**, not to exclude God
- Did **not** prevent states—or covenant bodies—from requiring Christian belief

The Founders assumed a **Christian moral population** and **Christian leadership**, even while preventing federal sectarian domination.

VI. The Re-Inhabited Republic Context

The Re-Inhabited Republic explicitly frames itself as a **covenant restoration**, not a secular reconstruction. Covenant requires:

- Shared faith
- Shared vows
- Shared submission to God’s law

An oath of office is not a formality—it is a **vow before God**. Allowing non-Christians to govern a covenant Republic while claiming neutrality on faith is equivalent to **opening borders to those who reject the covenant itself**.

A Republic cannot survive covenant violation at the leadership level.

VII. Summary & Conclusion

This document establishes that leadership in a covenant Republic must be exercised by those who are themselves in covenant with God. Scripture, reason, and history converge on this conclusion. Authority is not autonomous; it is delegated by God and conditioned upon submission to Him. Where covenant exists, leadership neutrality toward God is neither possible nor permissible.

Biblical law requires rulers who fear God, understand His law, and possess spiritual discernment. Founding-era evidence confirms that early Americans understood Christian leadership as essential to republican survival, even while rejecting denominational coercion at the federal level. Early state constitutions openly reflected this reality, requiring belief in God—and often explicit Christian confession—as a qualification for public trust.

The objection that Christian leadership constitutes oppression misunderstands covenant. No one is compelled to believe; all may live under the law. But only covenant keepers may govern under covenant authority. This is not tyranny—it is fidelity. A covenant Republic cannot be governed by those who reject the covenant itself.

The conclusion is therefore unavoidable:

A covenant nation must be led by covenant-keeping leaders.

Where this order is honored, liberty endures. Where it is violated, the Republic stands in breach, and its foundations erode.

APPENDIX A — SCRIPTURE AUTHORITIES FOR COVENANT GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP

This appendix lists **primary biblical authorities** establishing that **those who govern God's people must themselves be submitted to God**, able to hear Him, and committed to His law.

A. Qualifications for Rulers

1. Exodus 18:21

“Select from among you capable, God-fearing, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain...”

2. **Deuteronomy 1:13**

“Choose wise, understanding, and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you.”

3. **Deuteronomy 17:18–20**

Rulers must write, read, and obey **God’s law**, so that their hearts do not become proud or turn aside.

4. **2 Samuel 23:3–4**

“When one rules over people in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God...”

5. **Psalms 78:72**

“And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.”

B. Spiritual Capacity Required for Leadership

6. **1 Corinthians 2:14**

“The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God... and cannot understand them.”

7. **Romans 8:7–9**

“The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God... You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you.”

8. **Proverbs 29:2**

“When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan.”

C. Covenant and Authority

9. **Isaiah 9:6–7**

“The government will be upon His shoulders...”

10. **Psalm 2:10–12**

Kings are commanded to **serve the LORD**, or face judgment.

11. **Amos 3:7**

“Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.”

D. Separation from Ungodly Authority

12. **2 Corinthians 6:14–17**

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers...”

13. **Psalm 1:1–3**

Blessed is the one who does **not walk in the counsel of the wicked**.

Summary (Appendix A)

Scripture **never authorizes unbelieving governance** over a covenant people. Authority is delegated by God and requires **spiritual submission, discernment, and obedience**.

APPENDIX B — FOUNDING FATHERS’ QUOTATIONS ON CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

All quotations are **verbatim**, with historical sourcing.

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.**”

— Letter to John Murray, October 12, 1816¹

Noah Webster

“The Christian religion, in its purity, is the basis, or rather the source, of all genuine freedom in government... **no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable** in which the principles of that religion have not a controlling influence.”

— Letter to James Madison, 1829²

Benjamin Rush

“Without religion there can be no virtue, without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments.”

— *Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic*³

George Washington

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, **religion and morality are indispensable supports.**”

— Farewell Address, 1796⁴

Samuel Adams

“Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of a people whose manners are universally corrupt