





Texas v. Johnson (1989)

Burning the American Flag is Protected Symbolic Speech

Overview

In a political demonstration during the Republican National Convention in Texas, Gregory Lee Johnson doused an American flag with kerosene and set it on fire. He was part of a group protesting the policies of the Reagan Administration and of certain corporations based in Dallas. No one was hurt or threatened with injury, but some witnesses said they were seriously offended. Johnson was charged and convicted with the



Protesters burn a United States flag, 2022

My Responsibility
to
AMERICA

Jeremiah 29



Daniel 7:14

“And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, **and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.**”

John 18:36

Jesus answered, “**My kingdom is not of this world.** If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”

Colossians 1:13-14

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness **and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son**, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 11:13,16

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having **confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth**....But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

As **an exile** on the earth, the danger is always there for a Christian get too attached to the things of this life.



‘Build houses and live in them;
and plant gardens and eat their
produce. ‘Take wives and
become the fathers of sons and
daughters and take wives for
your sons and give your
daughters to husbands, that they
may bear sons and daughters;
and multiply there and do not
decrease. ‘Seek the welfare of
the city where I have sent you
into exile, and pray to the Lord
on its behalf; **for in its welfare,
you will have welfare.**’



Jeremiah 29:5-7

Even though I am
an exile in America,
we should create
the **best America**
possible.



Be A Good Citizen



1st Peter 2:13-14

Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

- Whether in the old or the new testaments, the people of God are *always respectful*
- We pay what is owed of us, we show honor to leaders, and we obey the laws of the land
- We can participate in the process of government, as that is within the law of the land
- Our higher allegiance is to God, so His laws trump those of any nation

Be An Influence For God



Proverbs 14:34

Righteousness
exalts a nation,
but sin is a
reproach to any
people.

- Patriotism can lead us to turn a blind eye to sin.
- The prophets God sent had plenty to say about the state of their nation (Amos 6:4-6)
- We act *outside of the political arena* to influence the culture around us.
- What things needs to be addressed in our nation? Our state? Our community?

Pray For God's Blessing



1st Timothy 2:1-2

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

- Do not *underestimate* the power of people who pray
- Acknowledge the sins we have committed and pray for forgiveness (Ezra 9:6-7)
- Pray for mercy on our country because of the righteous in it (Gen 18:24-25)
- Pray for the leaders to continue to show favor and freedom to religious people

Almighty God: We make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government, and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large.

And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation.

Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

- George Washington, 1783 (from Circular Letter to the States)