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## Christians, Race, and Nation in the New Republic

In the 1780s, a group of black Methodists left their church in Philadelphia when white congregants refused to let them pray at the altar. The story of those black Methodists is notable for many reasons: it speaks to the growth of Christianity among African Americans, the rise of independent black denominations, and the desire on the part of some white Christians to delineate who really belonged—and who didn't—on the basis of race. In this episode, we will explore the growth of Christianity among African Americans and the ways that some Christian teachings could challenge racism. We will also see how other Christians created and enforced racial boundaries in both church and state.

### Key Questions:

1. What tendencies within American Christianity impeded its growth among African Americans in the colonies and early republic? What tendencies encouraged it?
2. How were the rise of African American denominations related to understandings of who really belonged in the United States?

### Reflection Questions:

1. What, in this episode, most surprised or challenged you?
2. Before watching this episode, how did you think about racially-distinct denominations and congregations in the United States? Has your thinking changed?
3. Think about your own corner of the Christian world (e.g. your church, your denomination, the people you follow etc.): what are the explicit messages they give about who “belongs” and who does not in terms of race? What are the implicit messages? Now think about the country. What are the explicit messages you hear about who most belongs? What are the implicit messages?
4. The white congregants at St. George’s Church did not want to treat black people equally, and did not want them to protest their unequal treatment, but also did not want black people to be independent of white people’s oversight. Do you see similar racial dynamics at play in churches today? What has changed? What has not?