

apptoteach.org


THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**Matthew 22:21 #1
Lesson #25
God and Caesar
01/24/2021**

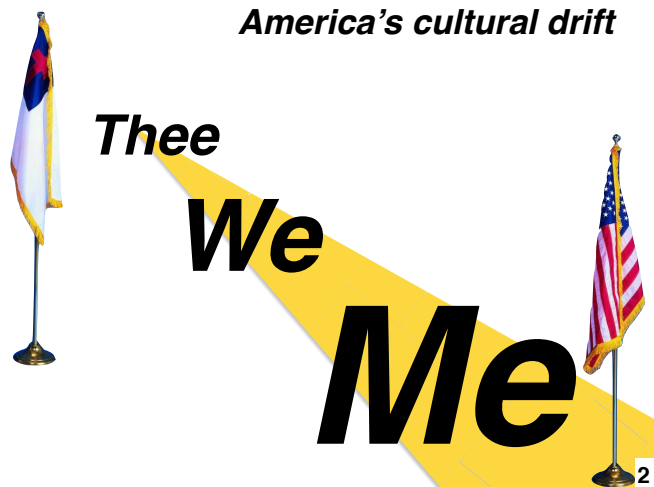
*America was once the
New Jerusalem*

**Is it becoming the
New Babylon?**




1

America's cultural drift



2

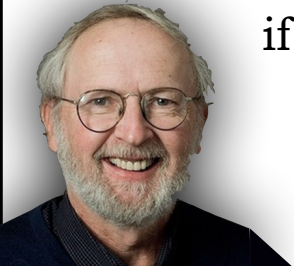
“We are certainly
seeing the collapse of
casual Christianity
and of religious
belief as a civic
assumption.”



Michael Gerson
(nationally syndicated columnist)

3


“Liberals have
learned that it’s
difficult for the
church to survive,
if there’s nothing
that makes the
church distinct
from culture.”



George Marsden
(historian)

4

**Some conservative Christians believe
they are called to take
back America in the
name of Jesus?**



5

**Christians live in differing realms
with differing responsibilities.**



**Citizens of the
Kingdom of
God**

Matthew 22:21
"Rendering
to God ..."

1 Peter 1:1
"chosen of God"



**Citizens of the
World of
humanity**

Matthew 22:21
"Rendering
to Caesar ..."

1 Peter 1:1
"To those who
reside as aliens"



**Citizens of the
Country of
residence**

6

**Three models
of the church's relationship with the state**

**Social-political
dominion**

Be salt & light
through legislation

*Old Covenant
Theocracy*

**Misleading
Impulse?**

*Ignores the
Spiritual nature
of the Kingdom*

**Social-political
influence**

Be salt & light
as individuals

*New Covenant
Democracy*



**New Testament
emphasis**

**Social-political
segregation**

Be salt & light
as a model

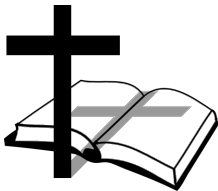
*New Covenant
Separatist*

**Misleading
Impulse?**

*Ignores the
Constitutional
mandate*

7

**Two guides for understanding
church / state relationships
in a constitutional,
democratic, republic.**



**The N.T.
Scriptures**



**The U.S.
Constitution**

8

What does the Bible say about Civic Ethics?

Parochial

The attention is given to the inner dynamics of the **covenant (faith) community** rather than the culture outside the church.

Pacifist

The posture before the outer (secular) political world is one of **peacemaking, and submission** rather than revolt or reform.

Personal

Ethics focuses on the **inner heart** of the individual soul, and interpersonal relationships rather than political reformation, movements, or systems.

9

**1. God's kingdom is not nation building
but kingdom building.**

John 18:36

"Jesus answered (Pilate), "My kingdom is not of this world. **If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting** so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

- Pontius Pilate (the state) was **fearful of a competing, temporal emperor**.
- As spiritual aliens we should expect to be **incompatible** with this world and not fighting to make it our home.

10

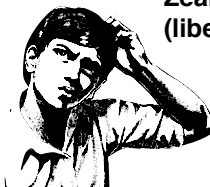
Matthew 22:21

"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

- The context of this statement was the (flat) **poll-tax to Caesar** (a day's wage for every adult, to fund the Roman gov.) which was especially punitive to the poor.

- It led to the clash of **two parties** - Zealots (conservatives) & Herodians (liberals).

- Jesus was challenging both groups to **"major on majors and minor on minors"**.



11

Acts 1

"6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are **restoring the kingdom to Israel?**" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall **be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**"

- New Covenant Christianity was not a call for "**Christian Nationalism**".
- Be a peacemaker IN the world **without making peace WITH** this world's values.

12

2. God's kingdom is **not superficial but authentic and from the heart.**

Jeremiah 31:33

"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "**I will put My law within them and on their heart** I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

- The ethic of the New Covenant of God's Kingdom is not legislated politically, forced militarily, manipulated psychologically or coerced socially **but developed naturally yet not fully in this age.**
- Real reform will come through spiritual conversion **not political coercion.**

13

2. God's kingdom is **not reforming but peacemaking.**

Jeremiah 29:7

"**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."

- As Christian aliens we are to seek the peace and general welfare of our host culture, **not to take it captive (to God's kingdom).**
- "**Stand down and stand by**" as salt and light.

14

1 Timothy 2

"1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, **so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.** 3 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,"

- Christians were called to be thankful for law and order, **even with Nero as emperor.**
- We are not called to socially reform or culturally retreat but to be **ambassadors of peace.**

15

In response to a question about paying taxes to Caesar, Jesus told Peter -

Matthew 17:27

"**But, lest we give them offense,** go to the sea, and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me."

- If we are citizens of heaven, **should we feel bound to the constraints of this world's kingdoms?**
- **We are to yield our rights for the sake of peace** because the tax is not to be an issue in our mission on earth.

16

3. God's kingdom is **not stalled within the church but starts there.**

Galatians 6

"9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, while we have opportunity, **let us do good to all men,** and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

- Social ethics start within the faith community and **like leaven spread throughout the whole loaf one cell at a time.** (Lk.13:20-21)

17

4. God's kingdom is **not** to give in to the spirit of this age but resist it.

John 17

"15 I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to **keep them from the evil one**. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. 18 **As Thou didst send Me** into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

Genesis 3



Matthew 4

18

Homesick aliens in a seductive world.

Romans 8:23

"And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves **groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly** for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

- Kingdom aliens who, like Eve, are seduced by this world **end up frustrated with both.**

Matthew 5:24

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and mammon.**"

19

1 Peter 2

"13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, 14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. 15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 16 **Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.** 17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king."

- Note we are talking about **Nero** here, and about **Peter** as the writer.
- Could **submission to EVERY human institution** be a way of demonstrating our faith and hope in Christ? Is it the way of showing the way? 20

God's kingdom is:

1. not nation building **but kingdom building.**
2. not superficial **but authentic and from the heart.**
3. not stalled within the church **but starts there.**
4. not to give in to the spirit of this age **but resist it.**

21

Questions

Acts 5:29

"We must obey God rather than man."

- ✓ When the state tries to force us to disobey we **willingly accept the consequences** of obedience to God.

Matthew 6:10

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

- ✓ The Kingdom will **not be forced** in heaven, it will be from the inside out and should be the same on earth.

22

Two guides for understanding church / state relationships **in a constitutional, democratic, republic.**

But wasn't America founded as a "Christian Nation"?



The N.T. Scriptures

Next Week



The U.S. Constitution

23