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# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**Matthew 22:21 #2  
Lesson #26  
American Caesar  
01/31/2021**



## 1 Peter

*Operations Manual for Alien Ambassadors in a fallen world*

This is who we are "in Christ"

This is how we should express our identity

	Indicative	Imperative				
"chosen"	Salvation	Sanctification	In the church		Shepherding	
Introduction "aliens"	"salt and Light"	"Not conformed but transformed"	Submission	Suffering	"Spiritual Warfare"	Conclusion
	In the world					
	1:1-2	1:3-12	1:13-2:10	2:11-3:12	3:13-4:19	5:1-11
						5:12-14

Christians are called out of the world — and then sent back into the world. 1

### 1 Peter

**Lecture**

understanding the Alien life by Way of the Cross

**Lab**

application of what we have been taught

1. Avoid **Worldly Fears** to make Godly decisions.
2. Use **Kingdom Power** to make social peace.
3. Respect **American Caesar** to make cultural changes.
4. Some specific **cases** - abortion, social justice, religious liberty, socialism, etc.

2

Matthew 22:21

"Then render to


Caesar

the things that are Caesar's

"and to God


the things that are God's"

1. Jesus recognizes two different spheres of ethical responsibility.
2. Caesar and God were not always in sync.
3. How is it possible to both support an evil Caesar and serve a holy God?




3

## What does it mean to render to God and to Caesar as Christian Aliens living in America?



The N.T. Scriptures

1. Make DECISIONS without **FEAR**.
2. Make PEACE with Kingdom **POWER**.



The U.S. Constitution


3. Promote the **GENERAL WELFARE**.

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**"American Caesar" is not like Rome's Nero.**


1. We are the government.
2. We are also spiritual aliens.

But is America a "Christian Nation"?



The N.T. Scriptures





The U.S. Constitution

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



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*Four concerns I have for the way many Evangelical Christians relate to American political culture.*

1. We place too much hope & passion in **political systems & power**.
2. We confuse God's kingdom with **American Christian Nationalism**.
3. We are more **exclusive** than inclusive.
4. We have not appreciated the value of **our political diversity**.

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*We Render to American Caesar when:*

1. We respect the limits of its "sacred canopy".

*"We are a secular nation with the soul of a church."*

"We hold these Truths to be **self-evident**, that all Men are created equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator** with unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness;

*"American Civil Religion" (Bellah)  
or "Common Faith" (Dewey)*

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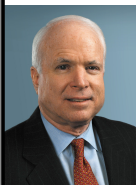
**Note:**

- All members of the U.S. **Supreme Court** are theists.
- We have never had an atheist **president**.
- Only one member of **U.S. House or Senate** is religiously unaffiliated.
- All sessions of congress are opened with prayer by a **chaplain** paid by the state.

**NOTE:** This affirms a respect for and a common, personal, theistic faith but it says nothing about a "Christian" nation.

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*We must be careful not to overstate our "Christian" roots.*



John McCain  
"the Constitution established the United States of America as a Christian nation."

**No mention of Christianity**



Mike Huckabee  
"Most of the fifty-six men who signed the Declaration of Independence were clergymen."

**Only John Witherspoon was**

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*The Capital buildings are full of Biblical symbols.*



In the chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives



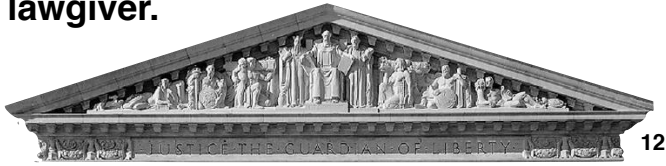
On the floor of the National Archives

*But they are not distinctively Christian.*

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## Religious symbols are only of MORAL LAW.

The east side of the Supreme Court Building pictures **Moses** as the supreme lawgiver.



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On the doors (both inner and outer) of the Supreme Court and above the bench of the Chief Justice, are displayed the **Ten Commandments**.

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## The American model (between England & France)

England

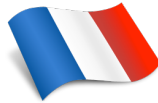


Union of one religious sect and the state



Separation from any one religious sect but not from a generic sacred canopy

France



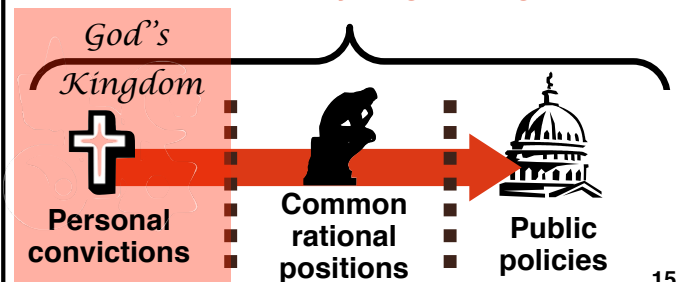
Separation of generic religion from public life

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## "separation of church and state?"

Separation of state from any one **religious sect** is not the same as separation from any notion of **transcendent spiritual authority**.

Sacred Canopy - a generic god



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**Freedom & Civility can be maintained only if they are controlled by personal virtue and discipline.**

**Freedom without personal virtue and discipline will invite external control in order to maintain civility.**

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Michael Novak  
The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism

The American System

Biblical ethical spirit



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## Without a Biblical ethical spirit:

**Capitalism** becomes the exploitation of the poor & weak by the rich & powerful.

**Democracy** becomes a marginalization of the minority by the majority and an endless litigation of rights.

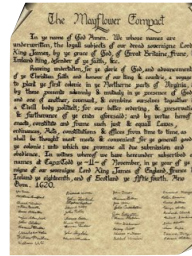
**Pluralism** dignifies every kind of divergence as an individual right.

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## We Render to American Caesar when:

2. We don't confuse God's kingdom with American Christian Nationalism.  
"We separate church from state."

### Mayflower Compact



A Christian nation based upon a covenant relationship with God was **never a part of our Constitution**.

What is overlooked is that the Mayflower Compact reaffirmed loyalty to the King of England; its framers **never intended to found an independent state**.

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## Puritan Christian Nationalism

- Old Testament Israel is our story.  
(The O.T. is to be applied directly to our situation.)
- Political freedom is a part of the Gospel.  
(There was a need to justify a break from England.)
- Providence is assurance of God's favor.  
(The success of the American Revolution is a sign of God's sovereign hand on America.)

**NOTE:** This was not the understanding of the authors of the American Constitution.

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## "Christian Nationalism"

The only Biblically sanctioned human government is **ancient Israel's theocracy**.

In the N.T. there is **no ONE sanctioned form** of human government.

R J Rushdoony

David Barton

D. James Kennedy

Tim LaHaye



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## The Declaration of Independence

"We hold these Truths to be **self-evident**, that all Men are created equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator** with unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness;

The framers started with a **"faith statement"** appealing to what is **"self evident"** in all humans (the "image of God").

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"Senator, when you took your oath of office, you placed your hand on the Bible and swore to uphold the Constitution. You didn't place your hand on the Constitution and swear to uphold the Bible."

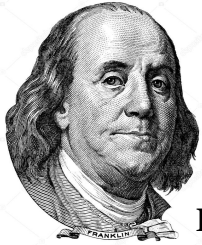


Jamie Raskin  
(Law professor, Congressman)

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“When a religion is good, I conceive it will support itself; and when it does not support itself so that its professors are obliged to call for the help of the civil power, it is a sign, I apprehend, of being a bad one.”



Benjamin Franklin

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**We Render to American Caesar when:**  
**3. We are more inclusive than exclusive.**  
*“We champion civil rights.”*



***Our wealth lies in our respect for all humanity, even the least among us.***

“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

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**America’s roots shape its political culture.**

**Enlightenment  
ideals of reason  
and individual  
freedom**



**Common  
Biblical moral  
values and  
worldview**



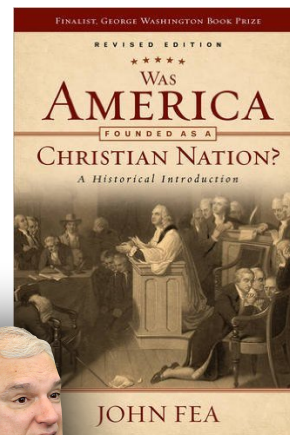
**Classical  
Representative  
Government**



**European  
religious wars  
heritage**



26



**John Fea**  
 Historian  
 Messiah College.

*America was not founded  
**constitutionally** as a  
 Christian nation.*

*Its **culture** was generally  
 labeled as “Christian” until  
 the mid 19th century.*

*He calls into question  
 Christian Nationalism.*



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***So Was America founded as  
 a Christian nation?***

**Constitutionally NO!**

- the Christian faith is NOT mentioned while enlightenment ideas of reason & freedom from external authority prevail.

**Culturally YES & NO!**

- 80% profess Christian faith and many of our core values have been shaped by BIBLICAL ETHICS,  
**(But this is not the same  
 as orthodox Christianity)**



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***In what sense can it be said that  
 American is a “Christian Nation”?***

- ✓ A sacred canopy
- ✓ Biblical common law ethics
- ✓ Moral accountability to God
- ✓ Divine calling and favor
- ✓ Dignity and depravity of humanity



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## What is the best model of American Civil Religion?

### Freemasonry



Geometry (reason)  
God (religion)  
Gnosis (righteousness)

The essence of which is  
**rational, moral, theism.**  
virtue, courage, loyalty, prudence,  
truthfulness, compassion, etc.

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## What are the roots of the American system?



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**If the USA derives its powers from heaven it is only through its citizens.**

“We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, & the Pursuit of Happiness: — That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, **deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the governed;**”

*The Declaration of Independence*

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**We Render to American Caesar when:**

**4. We respect (listen to & Learn from) citizens who differ with us.**

*“Our nation’s greatness lies in its unified diversity.”*

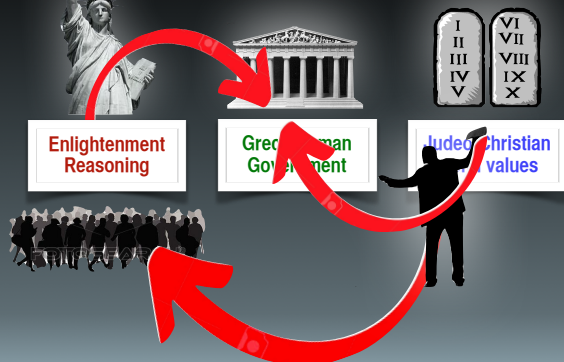
**We don’t demonize as enemies team members who disagree with us. We work with them.**

*Matthew 5:9*

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”*

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## Protocol for moral legislation



**In other words Read and Heed 1 Peter.**

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## The Political landscape

Socialist	Liberal	Conser.	Libert.
Gov. control of economic issues	Gov. control of economic issues	Gov. free of economic issues	Gov. free of economic issues
Gov. control of social issues	Gov. free of social issues	Gov. control of social issues	Gov. free of social issues

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*Tension is built into our system of Government.*



*We see community as a bigger calling than just defeating our political rivals.*

36

**If you want to bear witness to and be identified with the Son of God **be a peacemaker.****

*Matthew 5:9*

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

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*How should Christians "render" to American Caesar?*

1. **Respect the limits of its "sacred canopy".**
2. **Don't confuse God's kingdom with American Christian Nationalism.**
3. **Be more inclusive than exclusive.**
4. **Respect (listen to & Learn from) citizens who differ with us.**
5. **Be a fearless, alien, peacemakerCaesR.**

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