

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

1 Corinthians 5:9-13
Lesson #27
Church & State
04/16/2023

Test case for Bereans

If the president is
“**pro-life**” personally
but “**pro-choice**” politically
is he hypocritical?



A Berean’s guide to Scriptural wisdom on Social Justice

1. **Context** - Are we reading and applying the **scripture and ourselves** in proper context?
2. **Orientation** - Are we **Aliens to American culture**, or Aliens to God’s Kingdom?
3. **Domain** - Are we to treat **the state** as though it were the church?
4. **Hope** - Are we expecting **Old Covenant promises**, or New Covenant challenges?

1. **Context** - Are we reading and applying the **scripture and ourselves** in proper context?

Ecclesiastes 10:2

“A wise man’s heart directs him toward the right, but the foolish man’s heart directs him toward the left.”

Proverbs 4:27

“Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil.”



“Commit yourself to follow the Bible in all business & political decisions.”

Bill Gothard



Jesus’ sensitivity to contextual application.

Matthew 19

“4 And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning *made them male and female*, 5 and said, ‘*For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.*’ ... 7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to *give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?*” 8 He said to them, “**Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives**; but from the beginning it has not been this way.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

“. . . (If) My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

The Puritans applied this to America believing that America had a **covenant relationship with God** as the New Israel?

All Scripture is written *FOR* us but not necessarily *TO* us or *ABOUT* us.

The O.T. model of church / state is **"Theocracy" - church and state are intertwined.**

- Biblical Israel was **not a democracy**. When Israel demanded to choose its own kings it was seen as rebellious. (1 Sam.8:1-22; 12:17)
- Every seventh year the land was to be **left for the poor by law**. (Ex.23:10-11; Deut.15:1-12)
- Gleaning rights were **required by Law**. (Lev.19:9-10)
- The Promised Land was a (**stewardship**) gift from God to Jews so long as they were faithful. (Deut.30:1-5)

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2. Orientation - Are we *Aliens to American culture*, or *Aliens to God's Kingdom*?

1 Peter 2:11

"Beloved, I urge you as **aliens and strangers**"

John 18:36

"my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would be fighting,"

Romans 12:18

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, **be at peace with all men.**"

Matthew 22:21

"Then **render to Caesar** the things that are Caesar's **and to God** the things that are God's."

7

If you want to acquire wealth, fame, and power in this life *avoid*:

1. Negativity
2. Dream killers
3. Losers
4. The teaching and example of Jesus and his Apostles



8

Some American values that have affected the church

1. **God will save me with my plans, toys, and crutches.**
2. **Growth and size define success and blessing.**
3. **If it produces tangible results it's of God.**
4. **God's plan is for my personal happiness.**
5. **Competition makes everything better.**



9



Many love Jesus, but only as a **means** to the "good life", not as the **model** of that life.

Jesus is NOT

"Chaplain of the American Dream"

10

How should Christians "render" to American Caesar?

In this world, we are to be Alien, Ambassador, Associates.

1. **Associate as Aliens like Jesus.**
2. **Place your hope in the world to come like Jesus.**
3. **Make peace not war like Jesus.**
4. **Follow the Way of the Cross like Jesus.**

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3. Domain - Are we to treat *the state* as though it were the church?

1 Corinthians 5

“9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 **I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world**, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. . . . 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges.”

- We have enough to do in **disciplining ourselves** let alone the world.

12

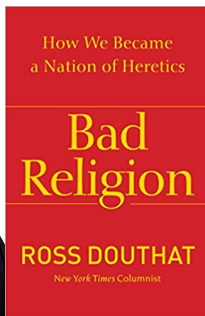
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- Christians are to be in the world without being of it or **demanding that it conform** to Christian moral standards.
- We have enough to do in **disciplining ourselves** let alone the world.

13

As Messiah, Jesus did not take a stand against the evil of the Roman Empire. What he did was go after the religious community for its hypocrisy.



Paul does the same thing in Romans 2 and is passive in resisting civic injustice in Romans 13.

14

Israel's Golden Calf

God's material gifts became an object of worship



15

Corinth's Golden Calf

Spiritual experiences become idols.



16

America's Golden Calf

Individualism & liberty are our "original sins."



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Christians on both political sides share more in common than they realize.

- They see American culture as key.
- They put their hope in this life.
- They seek worldly power.



They both neglect the Way of the Cross.

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4. **Hope** - Are we expecting **Old Covenant promises**, or **New Covenant blessings**?

Bane
Batman's foe in
"The Dark Knight"



"To seize control you need despair. To create despair you first need (false) hope."

When the church places its hope in politics and the American Dream, it is turning people away from the true Gospel.

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Satan doesn't want to take away our faith, hope, and love.

He just wants to control the **subject & object** of our faith, hope and love.



20

"Democratic capitalism may be a deeply flawed system, but it is better than the alternatives for broken people in a broken world."

But only to the extent its people treat its freedom as a responsibility for the "general welfare" (justice for all).



"Socialism has failed, wherever it has been tried."

Except in the areas where it has been very successful - Scandinavia, Singapore, etc.

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A socialist society

is willing to sacrifice individual liberty and material productivity for material and social equality.

A capitalist society

is willing to sacrifice material and social equality for individual liberty and material productivity.

A Christian society

views liberty and productivity as responsibilities more than rights - and competition as inseparable from compassion, cooperation, and community.

If Christians can "thrive" in Nero's Roman Empire they can also in both capitalist and socialist societies.

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"I'm not right wing or left wing. I am for the whole bird."



Rick Warren

23

Seven rules of engagement in shaping American culture through politics.

1. **Respect** one another as bearers of God's image.
2. **Work hard to listen** to those who see things from a different perspective.
3. **Built a 4G common sense OS** - common good, goal, ground, grammar.
4. **Clarify** the issues with truth not "speaking points."
5. **Prioritize** the issues with common not self interest.
6. **Fight fair** without destroying relationships.
7. **Compromise when necessary** with grace and forbearance.