

STUDY NOTES

HONOR THE EMPEROR // A SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH
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The following content is based on the message “Who Would Jesus Vote For?” spoken on 11/06/16 by Brian Kruckenberg at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 PETER 2:9-17

RESIDENT ALIENS

As a group, you may be going through this together before, after, or on election day. The goal of this study will be to try to understand this scripture text. To rightly approach this text we have to understand this first: if we are Christian, this country isn't our home. Notice we are *resident aliens* committed to the new world.

- *As a Christian, do you **feel** like a resident alien in our country? If yes, explain how. If not, explain why not.*

LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE

This new race, this new “nation”, of people didn't fit into political categories. Let's look at some of the things these Christians stood for in their culture. See if you can label each statement as generally liberal or conservative.

1. Did **not** go to the bloodiest, gladiator tests as entertainment
2. Did **not** serve in war to advance Caesars conquest
3. Against abortion and infanticide
4. Had women in leadership
5. Against sex outside of marriage
6. Gave radically to the poor, way beyond Greeks and Romans
7. Mixed-races together
8. Believed that Christ was the only way

We are foreigners, resident aliens—not Republicans or Democrats. We don't fit!

There are different ways to approach our differences. Usually people either (1) dig in and boycott, or (2) say that all truth is relative and that we should trust the government to meet our needs. However, the Scripture seems to point us to a third option. Paul uses this option in Acts 17 (if you want to read, Acts 17:22-34). He went into the culture and started with common ground. He used that common ground to talk about how nothing other than Jesus can save us—even political legislation can't save us.

- *What do you think about hearing both liberal **and** conservative principles attached to the Christian name?*
- *Why do you think people can't find common group with these principles?*
- *What kind of witnesses would Christians be if we just fit in with cultural labels?*

KING JESUS

The day is coming when the state and the church will merge. This will happen when Jesus returns as the perfectly just ruler. However until then, “the relationship between the church (or we could say, the Christian) and the state will be at best conflicted, and at worst deadly.” - John Piper

So as a result, let's turn back to our passage to see how we should live.

*¹¹Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and resident aliens to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹²**Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable**, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of Jesus returns. ... ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.*

- *What other possible outcomes should we expect besides putting people to “silence”?*
- *Even if we don't always have freedom in our government, how can we bind together as a Christian community that is honorable?*
- *What can happen in our hearts when we truly believe that freedom in Christ is so much greater than freedom in our government?*
- *Pray for our group, and Christians as a whole, to live honorably this week.*