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My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, *my followers would fight* to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish [*Herodian*] leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world.

John 18:36

The purpose of this essay is to examine the compatibility of Christianity with nationalistic patriotism, and in this specific case, the identification of being an “American”.

1. The origins of the word “patriotism” stems from Greek *patris* (G3968: of one’s father). Similar words are *patriarches* (G3966: patriarch, a male founder of a tribe), *patria* (G3965: a nation with lineage to a male progenitor), or *patrikos* (G3967: paternal ancestor). The Greek origin of “patriotism” was a pejorative for an uncivilized barbarian who comes from a society based on nepotism and incestuous feudalism, which the Greeks considered in opposition to a meritocracy. Since then, the can be used in reverence for one’s “fatherland”. For example, in America, patriotic songs such as Samuel Francis Smith’s *My Country ‘Tis of Thee*, features the lyrics, “Land where my fathers died”, creating the connection between one’s country and the sacrifices of the preceding ancestors. Another familiar phrase may be “founding fathers”, revering the wisdom and sacrifices made by the men in leadership during the country’s founding.
2. The Jewish usage of the word “patriotism” refers to “father Abraham”, the patriarch of the 12 tribes of Israel. Strong’s Greek gives the definition as “founder of a tribe, progenitor of the twelve sons of Jacob, founders of the tribes of Israel.” Christian dispensationalism exonerates this terminology as the “Patriarchal Dispensation”, an early period of time in the Bible where law and order was maintained by the patriarchal family structure.
3. The Christian Church has many “fathers”. Paul begins by claiming to be the “father of the church” (1 Corinthians 4:15).¹ The “fathers of the western church” are Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Augustine of Hippo, and Pope Gregory the Great. The “fathers of the eastern church” are John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzen, and Athanasius. The pope (Latin: *papa*) is presently recognized as the ongoing father of the church by the Catholic Church.
4. Scripture does not support any of these definitions of patriotism: “and unto **Me** [Yahweh] you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). God clearly defines “patriotism” in terms of God the Father, *Patri*, Yahweh.
5. Starting with Moses, Israel operated under God’s rule, without a king, by following God’s commandments and making judgements according to God’s standards in the Torah, “So Moses chose capable men from all Israel and made them heads over the people as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. And they judged the people at all times; they would bring the difficult cases to Moses, but any minor issue they would judge themselves.” (Exodus 18:25-26).

¹ Paul uses the Greek word *egennesa* (G1080), which comes from *genos*, which means “to be the father”. Paul differentiates himself from being a “guardian” of the faith (G3807 *paidagōgous*) as being the Church’s father *pateras* (G3962).

6. This God-centered structure of order began to fall apart as the urgency and importance of God's commandments began to fade away, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). As the society became progressively lax, they began to blatantly disregard God's commandments; each man pursued what was good for himself. Israel was becoming increasingly wicked.
7. Chaos and the breakdown of law and order peaked under the evil sons of Samuel, "his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside toward dishonest gain, accepting bribes and perverting justice" (1 Samuel 8:3). In disarray, Israel looked for a secular system to restore order, "Give us a king to judge us [to restore order]" (1 Samuel 8:6). Just as Israel lacked faith in God and turned to the Golden Calf during the Exodus, now Israel lacked faith in God's recommended societal order and wanted a king, "**they have rejected Me [Yahweh] as their king.** Just as they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, **forsaking Me and serving other gods**" (1 Samuel 8:8). Exchanging God's ideals of societal order with a king was tantamount to idolatry², because a king replaces God as the source of order.
8. God declares nation-states presided by kings (human-appointed rulers, kings, emperors, presidents, prime ministers, etc.) would feature these hallmarks (1 Samuel 8:11-17):

He will **take** your sons and appoint them to his own chariots and horses, to run in front of his chariots.

He will appoint some for himself as commanders of thousands and of fifties, and others to plow his ground, to reap his harvest, to make his weapons of war, and to equip his chariots.

And he will **take** your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.

He will **take** the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his servants.

He will **take** a tenth of your grain and grape harvest and give it to his officials and servants.

And he will **take** your menservants and maidservants and your best cattle and donkeys and put them to his own use.

He will **take** a tenth of your flocks, and **you yourselves will become his slaves.**

Here, God characterizes the nation-state to come: the government will draft children to support the military-industrial complex, take land using eminent domain, take wealth to create an elite ruling political class, and levy a tax on all that is produced³, essentially enslaving the civilian underclass to the dictates of the ruling class.

9. By rejecting rule of God and appointing rulers (kings, presidents, prime ministers, etc.), nation-states *by definition* are worldly, secular affairs, "**They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval**" (Hosea 8:4). Acting independently from moral compass of God, "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19b). Without reliance on God's commandments, nation-states are vulnerable to corruption, "that ancient serpent called the devil,

² Paul teaches the opposite, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment" (Romans 13:1-5). Paul teaches the governments are instituted by God, which is exactly opposite of 1 Samuel 8, where God says the formation of governments is *tantamount to idolatry*.

³ Oh, how we wish it was only a "tenth".

or Satan, *who leads the whole world astray*" (Revelation 12:9). Scriptures are clear *that governments are not set up or appointed by God*.

10. Every government is prone to devolve into hostility towards God's commandments, "The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One [*The Messiah*]" (Psalm 2:2 and requoted in Acts 4:26).⁴
11. The life of Jesus was bookended with hostilities from two coexistent governments: the local Jewish Herodian Kingdom and the invading Roman Empire.⁵ Mary and Joseph were on a journey for a government census (Luke 2:1-5). After Jesus was born, they were threatened by the regional governor (King Herod⁶) searching for their newborn baby (Matthew 2:12-18), which resulted in their temporary exile to Egypt (Matthew 2:12-23).⁷ The ministry of Jesus was kicked off when the local government arrested John the Baptist, "*After the arrest of John, Jesus went into Galilee and proclaimed the gospel of God*" (Mark 1:14). Jesus was executed under the supervision of a Roman governor (Matthew 27:2) under premise of accusations from Herodian law. The government plays a fundamental role in the story of Jesus. To dismiss the political and cultural influences of the government upon Jesus' ministry is a grave mistake.
12. Jesus engages in political slander⁸, referring to King Herod as a "fox" (Luke 13:32, *alōpeki* G258), which under Jewish understanding would represent "an unclean and inferior animal lacking the power and dignity of a lion, making up for his lack of strength by being sneaky".⁹ Jesus furthermore recognizes Herod's authority as "a reed blowing in the wind and a man dressed in soft clothing" (Matthew 11:7).¹⁰
13. Jesus acknowledges the world's kingdoms are ruled by evil, [When] "the time for judging this world has come, when *Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out*" (John 12:31). Jesus elaborates although the world's governments are vulnerable to evil and corruption, He is superior, "*the ruler of this world [evil] approaches. He has no power over me*" (John 14:30).
14. Jesus is tempted to become the Messiah-King over all nations, "Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 'I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,' the devil said, '*because they are mine to give to anyone I please*'" (Luke 4:5-6). *Jesus resists the temptation to get involved with the world's governments.*
15. Jesus teaches his disciples to not get involved in the systems of the world, "If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of

⁴ A present-day example is the increasing hostility in all of western society towards, to some extent, all of religion in general, in the media, academic, and political circles, compared to millennia of history, where religion was respected and considered part of the social fabric.

⁵ The Roman Empire would commonly let occupied areas retain their local leaders and governments, as long as they complied with their Roman overlords. This allowed more peaceful economic integration of diverse occupied territories stretching across an entire continent.

⁶ Herod the Great was an Idumean, converted to Judaism from Arab and Edomite heritage. Not being from the bloodline of David, Herod's claim to the throne was tenuous.

⁷ Many consider Hosea 11:1 a prophecy of this moment, "... and out of Egypt I call My son".

⁸ Jesus directly contradicts Romans 13:1-5.

⁹ Herod had several wives, including his own nieces and family members, and was responsible for executing John the Baptist.

¹⁰ Jesus is funnier than you think, because the Herod Antipas coin had a picture of a reed, similar to the oak branch or olive branch on the back of our dime. Jesus used Herod's own symbolism against him as an insult.

the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:19). If you don’t participate in the systems of the world (e.g. voting, choosing sides on political issues, being politically active), you are scorned by the system. Jesus teaches not to get involved, even when his life was at stake, “My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, **my followers would fight** to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish [*Herodian*] leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). **The followers of Christ were literally instructed to not fight within the political system on His behalf.**

16. Jesus issues a strong warning of who we choose to call *patris*, “do not call anyone on earth your father [*patera*], for you have one Father [*Patēr*], who is in heaven” (Matthew 23:9). The state asks of you to pledge allegiance to its flag, while Christ warns to call no other “patris” than Yahweh. Can one pledge allegiance to both? You know which one by who listens to you, “They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them” (1 John 4:5). If you pledge allegiance to the Father, “Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you” (1 John 3:13). If you are aligned with God, then your philosophies will be scorned by the political apparatus.¹¹
17. When Jesus was confronted to recognize the state, he was asked if he should *pay taxes to the government to fund corruption, wickedness, and oppression* (Matthew 22:19-21). The Pharisees were strongly opposed to paying taxes to their oppressors. They argued that taxes would be used to break Jewish Law (i.e. the tax money would be used to promote Caesar as a god, to murder Jews, etc.). They were trying to trap Jesus into agreeing to pay taxes (and therefore agree to fund the Roman Empire) or disagree to pay taxes (and therefore guilty of sedition against the government)¹². This was a lose-lose proposition:

So tell us what You think: is it lawful [Jewish Law] to pay taxes to Caesar or not?
But Jesus knew their evil intent and said, “Show Me the coin used for the tax.”
And they brought Him a denarius.
“Whose image is this,” He asked, “and whose inscription?”
“Caesar’s,” they answered.
So Jesus told them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

Jesus demonstrated that the government’s system was not his system. The coin (money) had a picture of their government father (Caesar), just as our coins have pictures of America’s founding fathers (i.e. George Washington)¹³. Jesus drew a clear distinction between *patriotism* and *Patri* (Yahweh). Jesus demonstrated that is not sinful to return to the government what was theirs (money), regardless of the Roman Empire’s corruption, oppression, idolatry, and anti-God policies;

¹¹ Nietzsche’s *Antichrist* is the prototypical example of the prophesied scorn. Nietzsche scorns Christ’s rejection of the top-down approach (achieving geopolitical goals with political, social, and economic power) in favor of a bottom-up philosophy (creating societal order by addressing individuals, the disenfranchised and the deprived). Nietzsche approves of the lead-from-the-top political method and disapproves of the scriptural method.

¹² The Roman taxation and oppression against the Jews was a huge issue that resulted in the deaths of Judas of Galilee and his followers in Acts 5:37.

¹³ The anticipated response would be, “But George Washington was a professing Christian! Therefore, we should pay him homage in the name of Christ!” Although it is true that Washington (or Lincoln, etc.) were more Christian than Caesar, America is still a secular state, with a military-industrial complex, military draft, eminent domain of land, taxation, etc. as predicted in 1 Samuel 8.

that tax money was going to be used by Caesar to suppress and enslave Jews and to fund Colosseum games, just as our tax money goes to Washington to subsidize abortions and weapons of war. Yet Jesus paid his taxes.

18. The people who recognized the authority and power of Jesus wanted to make him their king to fulfill their desire for a ruler-messiah. When this happened, Jesus departed, “When the people saw the sign that Jesus had performed, they began to say, ‘Truly this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.’ **Then Jesus, realizing that they were about to come and make Him king by force**, withdrew again to a mountain by Himself.” (John 6:15). Jesus resisted the temptation to flip his ministry and lead politically from the top of an earthly kingdom.
19. When Jesus is brought before the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate for trial, Jesus initially has nothing to say. Jesus regarded the governor as a representative of a corrupt nation-state, and therefore, not authoritative in his worldview. This was a demonstration of his absolute resolve, because Pilate held his life in his hands. Pilate didn’t *want* to crucify Christ and was looking for a way out, but Jesus would have needed to recognize Pilate’s earthly authority:

Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who handed Me over to you is guilty of the greater sin.” From then on, Pilate tried to release Him (John 19:10-12a)

A simple conversation with Pilate would have released Jesus. Unbelievably, this was too much of a compromise for Jesus, for it would have been an acknowledgement of Pilate’s earthly authority and government position of the Roman Empire. Instead, Jesus responded by crediting authority to Yahweh, leaving Pilate to his own devices. Pilate ultimately folded to the local Herodian Jews, to the detriment of Jesus.

20. The Jews in Jerusalem blatantly turned against Yahweh when petitioning Pilate to execute Jesus; the Jews shouted “**We have no king but Caesar**” (John 19:15), in unabashed violation of the First Commandment. This is a reversal of the high priest’s previous position of “We are Abraham’s descendants. We have never been slaves to anyone.” (John 8:33), claiming ceaseless allegiance with God regardless of their historical oppression and contemporary occupation by the Roman Empire.¹⁴ When talking to Jesus, the Herodian Jews boasted their lineage, the benefits of the Abrahamic Covenant, and their commitment to God. However, when appealing to the Roman Empire, they quickly changed their tune and ***pledged allegiance to Caesar***; a terrible and egregious sin. They quite literally turned their backs against their previous declaration of allegiance to God. This verse is one of the most shocking in scripture.
21. Jesus taught that his disciples should not regard kings and rulers as authorities, but instead, they should submit to the commandments of God as their authority, “You know that the rulers of the

¹⁴ This was a very bold comment, because the Jews historically had been enslaved by Egypt, Assyria, Babylonians, Persia, and now the Roman Empire. The High Priests likely mean that despite their political enslavement, the Jews continued to seek spiritual freedom in the Kingdom of God, therefore never being truly “enslaved” by a worldly kingdom. In effect, they were boasting about their spiritual independence from their current-day oppressors, the Roman Empire: “despite being occupied, our oppressors have not enslaved our souls and devotion to God”.

Gentiles lord it over them, and their superiors exercise authority over them. ***It shall not be this way among you.*** Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave” (Matthew 20:24b-27). Government rulers impose power from the top-down, meting out resources as they see fit for political benefit and denying resources to their political enemies; the Jesus model was to operate from the bottom-up, leading as servants without coercive power, a campaign designed to benefit the community by upholding justice and charity without having to compromise for political concerns.

22. The prophet Daniel put this into practice. When the king set up pagan temples and idols for the local populace, Daniel denied the king’s authority, “be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up” (Daniel 3:18). He did not regard his nation-state’s government overriding God’s commandments.
23. So what does that mean to an American Christian? First, loyalty should not be *patriotism*, but *Patri*. Faith should not be placed in how well the nation-state upholds the commandments of God, for there will always be compromises to maintain the political system. Faith should be in Yahweh, where the only way his commandments can be followed *is at the bottom*. As Christ teaches, you will be treated as a *persona non grata* for the position necessary to not compromise your ethics, “**You will be hated by everyone because of My name**, but the one who perseveres to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22). The higher the societal position, the more compromises must be made to fit into system. The Pharisees were religious men of very high political position, and Jesus declared “You snakes! You brood of vipers!” (Matthew 23:33), for their compromises were great. Yet Jesus stood up for the condemned prostitute, “let the one among you who is without sin cast the first stone!” (John 8:6-7). His worldview is completely upside-down to secular understanding.
24. How would Jesus vote? ***It seems he wouldn’t participate in such a system.*** Prophecy states “in that day you will cry out because of your king, ***whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the LORD will not answer you in that day***” (1 Samuel 8:17-18). It is clear that things ultimately go badly when a nation chooses for itself its rulers. ***God will not intervene in politics and rescue the nation from itself.*** Jesus would have no part in a voting system for rulers that inevitably, according to scripture, result in a military-industrial complex, military draft, loss of freedoms, eminent domain rights to land, taxation, the creation of a wealthy political elite class, and the serfdom of an underclass. We might placate ourselves that we are “representing Christ” by voting for the most “moral” candidate in elections, determined by our measure of abortion, social justice issues, or nuclear weapons, but there are compromises in those decisions, compromises that impinge upon God’s commandments. *We are called to leadership from the bottom-up*, not to promote leaders who will rule from top-down. Our part is in the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of men (Matthew 6:31-33):

Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ***For the Gentiles strive after all these things***, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.

25. Does that mean we should not vote? That is up to the individual conscience. But putting faith in the nation-state to protect you from danger, maintain your freedoms, and secure your economic future

is not what Jesus calls from his followers. If you are voting as an act of faith in the government, perhaps you should reconsider.¹⁵

26. A practical example: the immigration crisis, which is ongoing in both America and Europe. Should we cast votes for politicians who campaign with certain ideas of border security or openness? This is not what Christ calls his followers to do; casting votes for this reason is in vain. Christ did not try to change the political system of his day, regardless of the oppression and brutality of the Roman Empire (that ultimately presided over his own crucifixion). Instead, Christ ministered to those at the bottom, the marginalized and outcast, at his own expense. **Jesus didn't seem to care that his Jewish homeland suffered a hostile occupation by a foreign government while also being overrun by Samaritan immigrant refugees.** Jesus was tempted to intervene, but he declined.
27. Why did Jesus not intervene against the evil of both the Herodian Kingdom and the Roman Empire? He was certainly capable of attacking the evil at the heads of the beast: regionally with King Herod and nationally with Caesar. Instead, Jesus believed in the ministry of *tzedakah* (righteousness), “He executes justice for the fatherless and widow, and He loves the foreigner, giving him food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:18) and “Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (Psalm 82:3-4). *Tzedakah* appears hundreds of times in scriptures and is practiced by Jesus and summarized in James, “Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27).
28. One could argue that by toppling Caesar and converting the Roman Empire into a godly empire, evil would be reduced and widows and orphans would benefit.¹⁶ Jesus did not take this political route; he ministered to the destitute *directly*, in person.
29. Jesus was concerned about individuals, specifically, the ones at the bottom. The earliest recorded teaching of Christ, in Nazareth, he said what most people would regard as incomprehensible,

“Yet Elijah was **not sent to any of them**, but to the widow of Zarephath in Sidon. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet. **Yet not one of them was cleansed**—only Naaman the Syrian.” On hearing this, **all the people in the synagogue were enraged.**”
Luke 4:26-28 (Berean)

Why were the people enraged? Because they knew their history. In the days of Elijah (around 850_{BC}), the land of Israel was fighting dual immigration crises of refugees on two fronts: from Sidon (Lebanon) to the North and Syria to the East. Elijah and Elisha, two of the three most respected prophets in all of history¹⁷, **ignored their own Israeli citizens but healed illegal immigrants instead** (Zarephath of Sidon and Naaman the Syrian). This infuriated the current-day audience, who were

¹⁵ And you don't get to hide under the “I'm doing my civic duty” explanation.

¹⁶ This actually happened. On December 25, 800_{AD}, Charlemagne reconstituted the Holy Roman Empire (*Sacrum Romanum Imperium*), which created centuries of warmongering starting with the Crusades (kicked off by Pope Urban II), the Hussite War, the Peasant Revolt and Protestant Reformation, with the last Crusade officially ending in 1684-1699 with the Holy League. The Roman Empire is prophesized to arise yet once again.

¹⁷ Moses is the most regarded prophet in Hebrew history, followed by Elijah and Elisha.

fighting a crisis of occupation (Roman Empire) *and* illegal immigration (Samaritans). They were enraged that Jesus suggested to act similarly: ignore the pleas of Israeli citizens and minister to their oppressors and illegal immigrants instead.

30. Jesus did not see the Roman occupation as a nation-state. He saw them as individuals. When a roman military official of high rank (a centurion) approaches Jesus, he responds accordingly,

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, **a centurion** came and pleaded with Him, “Lord, my servant lies at home, paralyzed and in terrible agony.”

“I will go and heal him,” Jesus replied.

The centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy to have You come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell one to go, and he goes; and another to come, and he comes. I tell my servant to do something, and he does it.”

When Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those following Him, “Truly I tell you, **I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith**. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west to **share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go! As you have believed, so will it be done for you.” And his servant was healed at that very hour.

This is an incredibly provocative passage: Jesus declared a *high ranking military official of a hostile occupying army* as more faithful than “anyone in Israel” and granted him Jewish benefits!¹⁸ At the same time, Jesus damns Jews to darkness for their lack of faith.

31. Finally¹⁹, Jesus tells a parable about the nations. Because of the length of the parable (and the complexity), only the introductory lines will be repeated here (Matthew 25:31-36):

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. **All the nations will be gathered before Him**, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you visited Me.’

When *all the nations* are gathered, the people will not be sorted by “where are you from” (group identity with political-governmental ideology or national patriotism) but “what have you done”

¹⁸ Offering the “banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” meant the centurion – a gentile foreigner! – would inherit the birthright of the ethnic Jews.

¹⁹ I could have also written about the Parable of the Good Samaritan, or the Samaritan woman at the well.

(individual accountability of works). The list of works are all at the bottom of society: feeding the hungry, providing for the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and empathy for the imprisoned. This is not a novel list; these works *pervade* scripture. None of the qualifying list of works require being in a high-level leadership, societal, or political role.

32. One could argue that winning a high-level political office could fund and promote soup kitchens, thrift shops, homeless shelters, charity hospitals, and prison programs (and therefore satisfying scriptural objectives). Wouldn't that be far more valuable to facilitate these objectives from the highest societal, political, and economic levels to spread them over the widest possible audience? Jesus didn't seem to think so. His audience was the *person right in front of him* at the moment. And he did it without any social, political, or economic power.
33. Jesus never suggested political reforms such as recruiting righteous Pharisees to replace the wicked ones, advising the High Priest about corruption, or campaigning for worthy Sadducees to be appointed to the Sanhedrin. Jesus never suggested to his followers to serve in Pontius Pilate's court or to appeal to Caesar on the Jew's behalf.²⁰ There were plenty of political opportunities for Jesus and he never took that route.
34. Participating in a nation-state violates several of the tenets put forth in this essay: entrusting faith in a political system; faith in a top-down approach; knowingly comprise God's justice in exchange for social or political positions; attempting to influence a nation-state situation through voting; economic investment of resources in top-down strategies instead of personal investment in bottom-up strategies; and pledging allegiance to *patriotism* instead of *Patri*. Despite the elaborate façade of appearances we have worked centuries to build²¹, it doesn't seem that one can do both.
35. SUMMARY: Voting for a "Christian" candidate is an attempt to install a **proxy messiah** to restore order from chaos. Because Christ declined the temptation to become king (John 6:15), we are dissatisfied. So we cast votes for somebody to *represent* Christ. Nothing has changed since two millennia ago, **"they were about to come and make Him king by force"** (John 6:15). Since we can't force *Christ* to be king, we'll settle for a *Christian*; a proxy for the guy who ironically chose to reject the job.

²⁰ Almost in satire to the way Jesus dealt with Pontius Pilate, Paul explicitly appealed to Caesar, "I am standing before the judgement seat of Caesar ... I appeal to Caesar!" (Acts 25:10-12)

²¹ i.e. putting the phrase "under God" in the pledge of allegiance to the United States of America. This was an enormously deceptive move to conflate *patriotism* with *Christianity*, and it works well. The pledge is to our nation-state with an *implied* directive from God. That way we feel that God is being included in our allegiance.