

## When a Nation Forgets God

*Lessons we must learn from Nazi Germany*

**A Bible Study utilizing the book by  
*Erwin Lutzer***

**Lesson One – *When God is Separated  
from Government, Judgment Follows***

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## **The Biblical Principle of God's Sovereignty**

- **A doctrine** - Genesis 1:1 – *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*
    - By definition God is the supreme sovereign, source of all that is
    - No individual, group or enemy can compete with His Sovereignty
  - **A principle** – Ge. 2:18 – *It is not good that man should be alone*
    - I will make a helper comparable to him – plan
    - ...for Adam there was not found a helper – judge
    - He took one of his ribs... He made into a woman – execute
- God's Sovereign transcendence is fundamental to all Truth**

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# The Deception of Secular-Sacred Dichotomy

## Christ's Kingdom "not of this world"

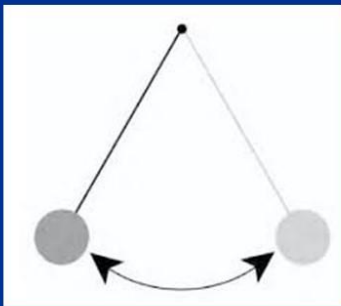
- Context of John 18:36 (parallel verses) – *His kingdom does not derive its authority from this world*
- The deception is that Christ's Kingdom has nothing to do with this world, so the believer should isolate
- Christ's Kingdom thus becomes spiritual only (church), awaiting His return when it becomes physical
- God is not Sovereign over all

## The Devil is "prince of this world"

- Context of John 14:30 and Ephesians 2:2 is that the devil is a *temporary sub-ruler of the world*
- The deception is that Satan rules the world and thus the believer ought to withdraw from it and isolate
- The Devil's kingdom thus becomes ruler of the "secular" and physical, especially of the State
- The Devil is sovereign over nations

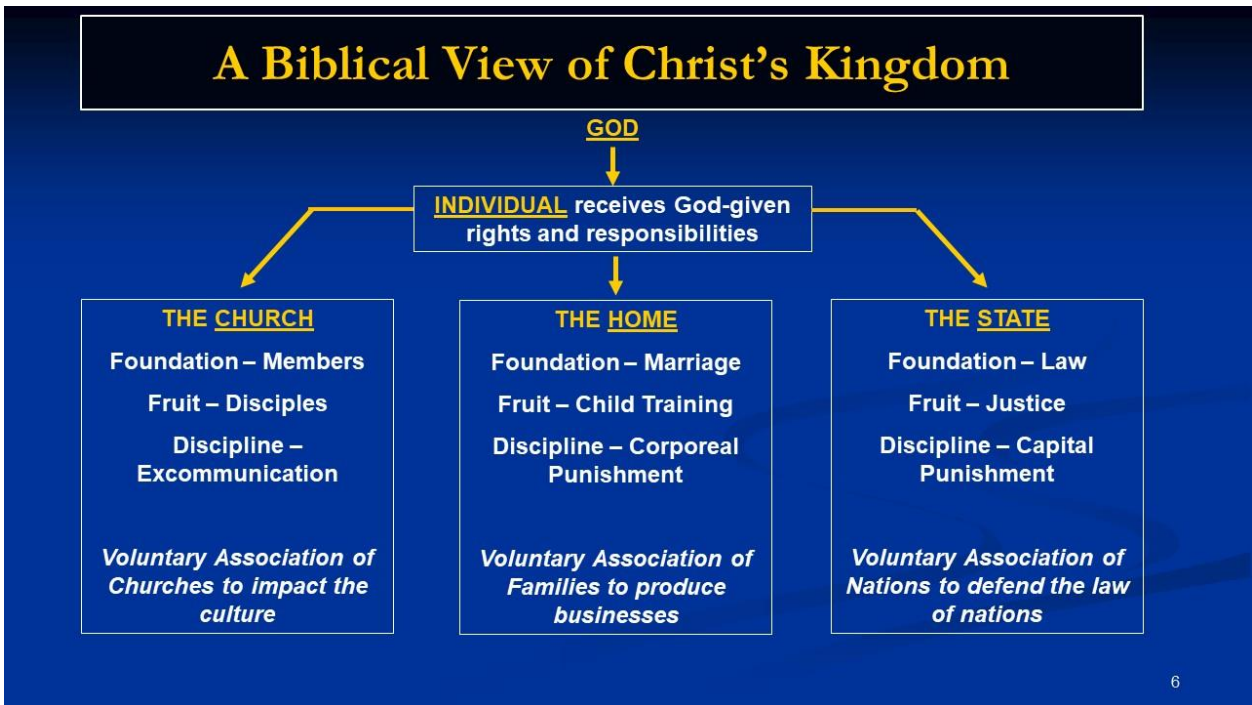
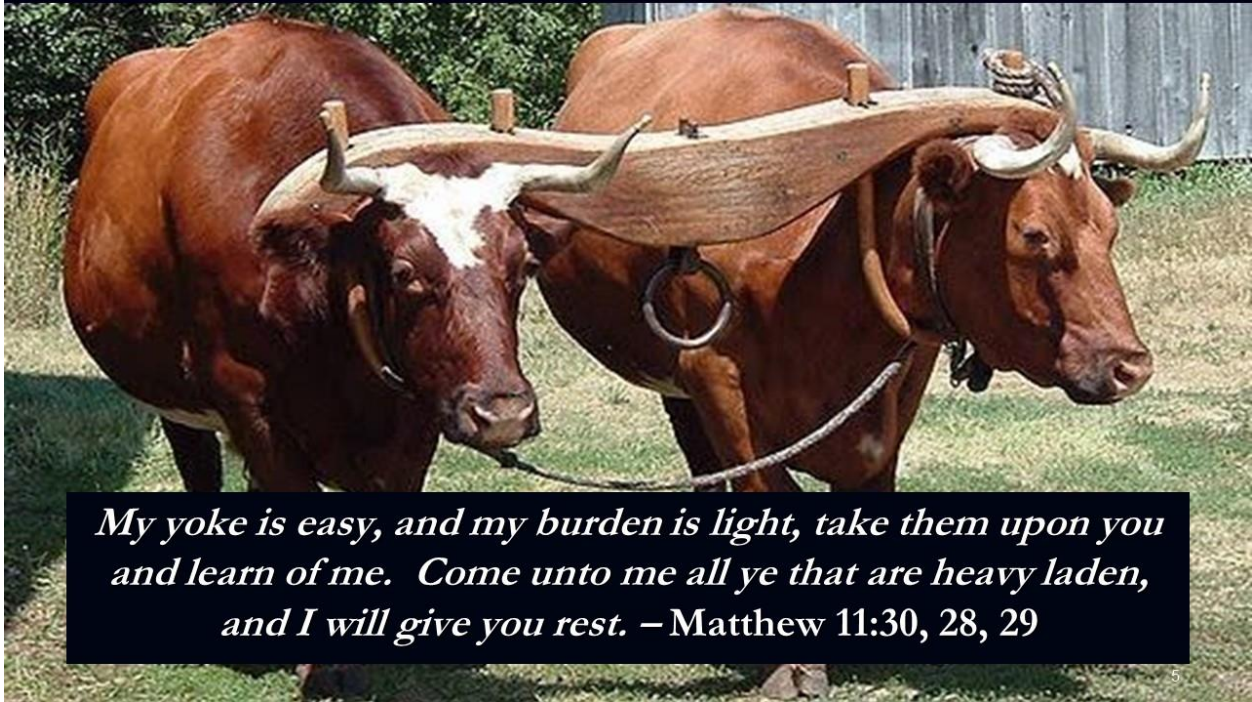
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# The Danger of a secular burden without Christ's yoke



- We often swing the pendulum from one side to the other
- Once we see that the "secular" is a domain over which God is Sovereign and we as believers have a responsibility...
  - We can often rely too much on the natural, picking up its burdens as our own...
  - We must learn to trust in God's Sovereignty while bearing Christ's yoke as easy and his burden as light - Matthew 11:28-30

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## The Nature of Deception

### Deception

- Doubt – Genesis 3:1 – *has God said?*
- Denial – Genesis 3:4 – *you shall not surely die*
- Discontent - Genesis 3:5 – *you will be like God*
- Disobedience - Genesis 3:6 – *she took of its fruit... also gave to her husband*

### Temptation

- Blame – James 1:13 – *Let no one say I am tempted of God...*
- Drawn – James 1:14 – *drawn away by his own desires and enticed*
- Desire – James 1:15 – *when desire conceives, it gives birth to sin*
- Spiritual death – James 1:15 – *sin when it is full-grown, brings forth death*

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## Marxism and Hitler's Deception

### Classic Marxism

- Blame – clash struggles – *you are a victim*
- Drawn – thesis – *your oppressors are parents, employers, leaders*
- Desire – antithesis – *rise up and overthrow your oppressors!*
- Death – synthesis – *promise of a utopia but the cure becomes worse than the disease*

### Hitler's Nazism

- Blame – you are victimized – *life should be much better*
- Drawn – thesis – *Jews must be blamed for the ills in society*
- Desire – antithesis – *Jews must be eliminated to purify German race*
- Death – synthesis – *extermination of Jews as well as all who resist but the Third Reich was much worse*

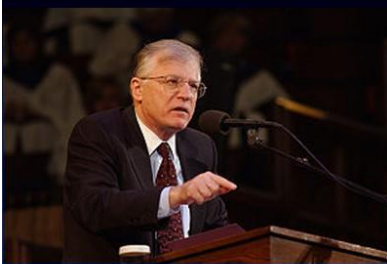
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## Quotes from Dr. Erwin Lutzer in the Introduction

- *It is said that after God died in the nineteenth century, man died in the twentieth. – “God is dead” is the false premise*
- *...the true nature of a totalitarian state is always hidden and always couched in the language of morality, progress and liberty. – Equivocation (changing the meaning of words)*
- *..Francis Schaeffer told us that one day we would wake up and discover that the America we once knew was gone. That day is here.*

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## Who cares? Isn't Christ about to Return?

On page 12 Erwin Lutzer makes the following comment:

*“What are we to do? Wring our hands and wait for the return of Christ? The return of Christ is a cherished dream of every Christian, but meanwhile we have a job to do. And rather than fearing what is to come, we need to see the unfolding future as an opportunity to bring glory to God through our steadfast commitment to what will never pass away.”*

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## On the Doctrine of Eschatology (last things)

- The “end times” began at the Ascension – Acts 2:17
  - The phrase “last days” can mean the end of the sacrificial system
  - The “last days” is not to be an excuse for apathy or escapism
- We are to “occupy” until He comes – Luke 19:13
  - This means we “do business” – keep working – until He comes
  - Let us seek to influence and occupy every area of life for Him!
- Regardless of one’s end-time theory... - Luke 18:8
  - When the *Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*
  - We maintain hope but not allow distractions from our responsibility

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## Lesson One: When God is Separated from Government, Judgment Follows

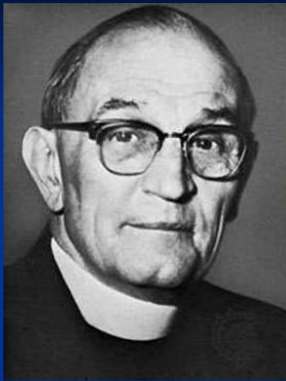
- *Hitler did not discourage people from attending church. He was a baptized Catholic who had long since abandoned his faith, but he did not mind if others continued to attend church as long as it did not affect the way they lived or the values they held. In fact, he explicitly said that he would not interfere with the specific doctrines of the church, just so long as the churches were teaching those things that were in harmony with the good of the German people. He called this “Positive Christianity.”*
- *Because Germany had a state church, the pastors were dependent on the good graces of the government for their income...*

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## The Dangers of Pietism: *heavenly minded but of no earthly good*

- *Pietism, with its emphasis on personal devotion to Christ, was used to inject spiritual life into the mainstream Lutheran Church. But by insisting that their faith was private and should not be brought into the political sphere, pietism had scant influence in stemming the Nazi tide.*
- *These pious Christians thought that if they left Hitler alone, he would leave them alone. But they discovered that was not possible.... Before Hitler moved to destroy the church, he decided to make peace with it and use it for his own ends.*

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### Martin Niemöller (1892-1984)

- A meeting January 25, 1934 in Hitler's Study
- Hitler: *"Peace between Church and State."*
- Niemöller: *"My only object is the welfare of the church, state, and the German people."*
- Hitler: *"You confine yourself to the Church. I'll take care of the German people."*

Niemöller: *"You said that 'I will take care of the German people.' But we too, as Christians and churchmen, have a responsibility toward the Germany people. That responsibility was entrusted to us by God, and neither you nor anyone in this world has the power to take it from us."*

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## *Why Germany? Why the 1930's?*

- *What seeds were sown that could have led to the Church's impotence and Hitler's rule?*
  - The Church retreated from service to their culture – Statism filled the void so that the Church was under government, not God
  - Church gave her children to the State to educate, adopted “private Christianity”; didn't resist Hitler until it was too late
  - The Church adopted the secular-sacred dichotomy
- *All this happened under the code words of freedom, peace, fairness*
  - Be sure to define the terms that are being used in our day
  - We have trends similar to Germany such as *pietism, secularism, and 'separation of church and state' (God out of government)*

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## *Drawing a Line in the Sand at the Alamo*

*When do we tolerate the curtailment of our freedoms and at what point should we speak and act?*



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## Trends in America...

- *Our social planners who are dedicated to reshaping America according to purely humanistic values agree with Hitler that God and religion must be removed from government.*
- *Thus with the so-called public square free of any hint of religious values, the vacuum is then filled with secular values*
- *Just as Germany had Christian holidays paganized, just so, we have witnessed the systematic removal of religious symbols from public places.*
- *When God is ousted from government, transcendent values are placed by the raw use of power, eroticism, arbitrary judicial rulings, the morality of personal pragmatism*

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## What is going on Today?

- What is truly behind the riots in our streets?
  - The Great Reset – *World Economic Forum, the United Nations, Council on Foreign Relations, Royal Institute for Int. Affairs...*
  - Though the cry is for “social justice” – it is social unrest for control
- The age-old Marxist / Communist steps (Gramsci socialism)
  - *Demoralize* – an ideology of hatred for the nation and patriotism
  - *Destabilize* – enhance antagonistic clashes – divide and conquer
  - *Crisis* – chaos, riots bring a demand for someone to control it
  - *Normalize* – a new society with centralized control / less liberty
- Ultimately, however, it is a *spiritual war*, and each believer must put on the armor of God / He is Sovereign!

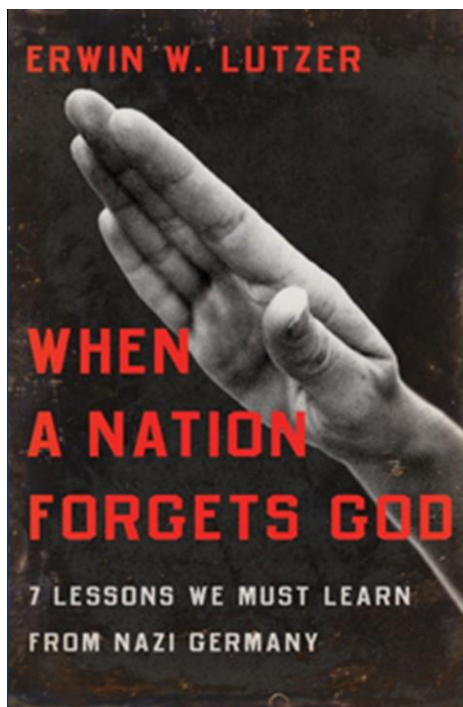
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## So how do we apply God's Sovereignty?

*When confronted with these challenges we are tempted to do the wrong thing – to react with judgmental anger which will only entrench those who are on the other side in this culture war. We must do the opposite: to respond with humility, love, and gracious courage. – Erwin Lutzer*

- Submit our plans to God, evaluate them by His Word, and act in concert within the sphere of our influence
- Embrace grace for those who do not understand...
- Share with others when applicable that civil government is an institution ordained by God to administer justice on earth

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## Suggested Reading from Lesson One

- Read the Introduction (pgs. 9-13)
- Read Chapter One (pgs. 15-34)
- Ponder the following:
  - *Let us calm our fears of what is happening with the truth that God is Sovereign – and He is working out His plan to advance His Kingdom*
  - *Lord, as I ponder your Word, where must I draw the line in civil disobedience?*

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