

When a Nation Forgets God

Lessons we must learn from Nazi Germany

A Bible Study utilizing the book by
Erwin Lutzer

Lesson Three – *That which is Legal
Might also be Evil*

Dr. Paul Jehle

1

The Biblical Principle of Self-Government

- Genesis 2:16-17 – *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...’*
 - God commanded (law) the man (and woman) to be free (liberty)
 - They were to govern themselves from within – self-government
- This Biblical principle, introduced in Genesis, contains:
 - Freely – *gratis (gratuity); redeem*
 - Govern – *direction, regulation, restraint*

*The more internal control you exercise,
the less external government you need!*

2

The Practice of Christian Self-Government

Internal Grace – Freedom in Christ

- Grace - the gift of His ability
- Living within the limits of God's Law – *the fruit of the Spirit*
- Internal restraint of passion
- *Christ in us the hope of glory*
- Self-restraint for the sake of others – leadership by example

External Law – Fulfillment in Christ

- Law – the direction for godliness
- Exercising liberty of conscience *against such there is no law*
- External fulfillment of one's life
- Power of Christ through us
- Righteous laws to restrain those who cannot restrain themselves

3

Deception of Anarchy and Tyranny

“...the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate.” – 1st Timothy 1:9

“the princes of the Gentiles... they that are great exercise authority...”

Matthew 20:25

Anarchy – no internal control - *“a state of society where there is no law”*

Tyranny – total external control – *“arbitrary despotic exercise of power”*

- Autonomy – submit to no one
- Chaos always leads to control
- Anarchy usually is instigated with the goal to exercise control

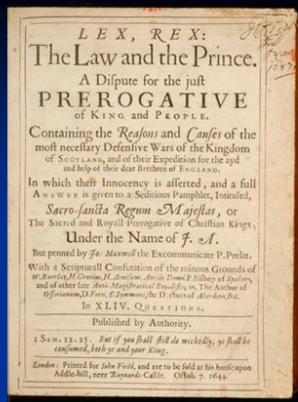
- Ruling beyond your limits
- Control fuels rebellion to resist
- Tyranny will eventually crumble when others want control

4

No Law is Neutral – it has a religious source

- R. J. Rushdoony – *if the source of law is the individual, then the individual is the god of that system... if source of law is our court then the court is our god. If there is no higher law beyond man, then man is his own god... when you choose your authority, you choose your god, and when you look for your law, there is your god.*
- Erwin Lutzer – *Laws reflect a nation's priorities, agenda, and values. In Nazi Germany where religion was privatized and god was separated from government, not even natural law was recognized as having validity... Look behind the law and there is your god!*

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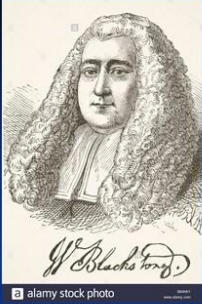


Rev. Samuel Rutherford *Lex Rex* - 1644

- *Law is King – answering Rex Lex – king is law*
- *“...power of government in general must be from God... (Rom. 13:1) ‘there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God.’*
- *“All civil power is immediately from God...”*
- *“We are to distinguish betwixt a power of government, and a power of government by magistracy.” (by consent of the people)*



6



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On the Nature of Law – *Commentaries on the Laws of England,* William Blackstone (1765-1769)

Law... signifies a rule of action... when the supreme being formed the universe, and created matter out of nothing, he impressed certain principles upon that matter, from which it can never depart, and without which it would cease to be.... But laws... of human action or conduct... the noblest of all sublunary beings, a creature endowed with both reason and freewill, is commanded to make use of those faculties in the general regulation of his behavior...

7



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- *as man depends absolutely upon his maker for everything, it is necessary that he should in all points conform to his maker's will... This will of his maker is called the law of nature... The doctrines... we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found only in the holy scriptures.*
- *Upon these two foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation, depend all human laws; that is to say, no human laws should be suffered to contradict these.*
- *Declaration of Independence: "the laws of nature and of nature's God"*

8

Alexis de Tocqueville - 1830

- *Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions.... In the United States the sovereign authority is religious... there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America.*
- *While I was in America, a witness... declared that he did not believe in the existence of God or in the immortality of the soul. The judge refused to admit his evidence, on the ground that the witness had destroyed beforehand all the confidence of the court in what he was about to say. The newspapers related the fact without any further comment.*

9

So how do we properly resist evil legislation?

- *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? – Psalm 94:20*
 - Those who legalize evil often “condemn innocent blood.” (v. 20)
 - The Lord is our defense (v. 21); “*he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut the off in their own wickedness...*” (v. 22)00
- Expose the faulty premise of proposed legislation
- It is legalized evil that could be the place where Christians must submissively yet actively disobey civil government
- Relational capital will be critical at the local level so that the remnant is as large as possible!

10

Tyrannical “laws” framing Mischief

- British Parliament – 1760-1776
 - By the Royal Charters of 1606 and 1609, their rights came from God
 - Each Colony had its own “parliament” – English self-government
 - By written law, *the British Parliament had no jurisdiction over them*
 - When attacked, they were bound to the “higher law” – God’s law
- Fugitive Slave Acts – 1850
 - Though “constitutional” in accord with Art. IV, Sec. 2 and 1793 it violated the “higher law” articulated by the Declaration, that “all men are created equal” – Southern State’s Rights claim invalid...
 - It justified the “underground railroad” – civil disobedience

11

The Laws of Germany in the 1930’s

- *“If God does not exist... there are no transcendent laws... without a belief in God, nothing is unconditionally wrong.”*
- The Jews are not human persons... - framed as early as 1923
- Nuremberg laws of 1935 *deprived the Jews of German citizenship, confining them to the status of ‘subjects.’*
- Treason laws were *defined as anything that was contrary to the will and the purposes of the Reich (Hitler).*
 - *Criticism was treason; freedom of the press was treason; a failure to further the agenda of the Reich was treason.*
 - *The People’s Court (1934 - five judges, three appointed by Hitler)*

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Quotes from Dr. Erwin Lutzer in Chapter 3

- *With Hitler's power to make laws, he could mock his powerless opposition. Without a law in their favor, opponents had no defense against the accusations made*
- *Pastors... could be tried for 'hate crimes' such as 'abuse of pulpit' or 'treason' and if accused they had no recourse but to accept their fate... Hitler belittled pastors 'they are insignificant little people, submissive as dogs...'*
- *He who creates the laws, wins...*

13



Quotes from Dr. Erwin Lutzer in Chapter 3

- *After Hitler was defeated, war crime trials were held in Nuremberg to judge the guilt of Hitler's henchmen.*
- *But a dispute arose as to what laws should be used to try the accused. After all, Hitler's cronies argued... that they had not broken any laws...*
- *Moral relativists who believe that laws are nothing more than the result of social conditioning... would have to agree*
- *By what laws then, should the Nazis be tried?*

14

Lessons on Law from Nazi Germany

- *If God does not exist, no transcendent laws exist*
- *If all laws are relative... there is no universal standard by which laws can be judged...*
- *Today abortionists claim they are not breaking any laws*
- *Christopher Langdell, in 1870, applied the theory of Evolution to the decisions of the Supreme Court...*
 - There is no “higher law” above the text of the Constitution (essentially isolating the Declaration from the Constitution as well as the intent of the founders when interpreting the document)
 - The law is what the majority of justices say it is in each case...
 - Case (precedent) law came to replace the constitution’s text

15

- *John Warwick Montgomery summarizes how this said state of affairs came about by pointing out that in the eighteenth century the Bible was killed... in the nineteenth century God was killed... in the twentieth man has been killed.*
- *“This generation is not accidental; each step logically follows from what has preceded; the loss of the Bible leads to the loss of God, for in the Bible God is most clearly revealed; the loss of God leaves Man at the naked mercy of his fellows, where might makes right.”*
- *A student of the history of law in the United States should have been able to predict that human life would soon be reclassified as unworthy of special protection.*

16

Once God is removed

We will trade self-government for centralized control

“If the day should ever arrive (which God forbid) when the people of the different parts of our country shall allow their local affairs to be administered by prefects from Washington, and when the self-government of the states shall have been so far lost as that of the departments of France, or even so far as that of the counties of England, - on that day the progressive political career of the American people will have come to an end, and the hopes that have been built upon it for the future happiness and prosperity of mankind will be wrecked forever.”

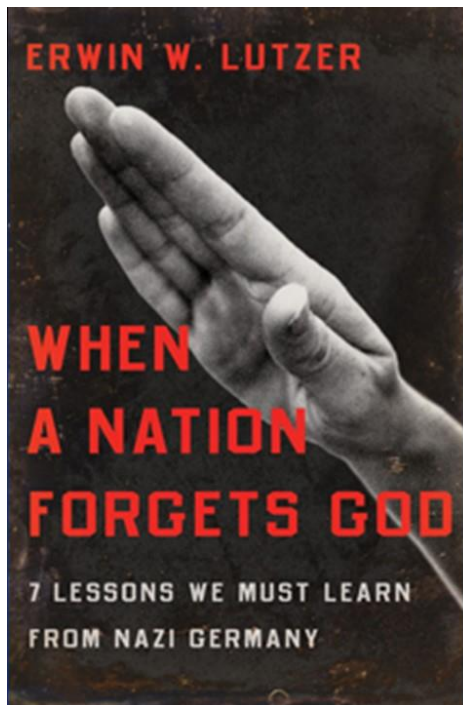
Historian John Fiske, 1888

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So what should we do?

- Share we what we have learned with all who will hear us
- Discern the premises of law from mere pragmatism (process)
- Get involved with your local town government – participate in town meetings, get to know town office holders
- Support local candidates for office who share as many of our premises and presuppositions as possible
- Pray like never before that God would have mercy on us
- Serve our town and do all we can to stand for righteousness!
- Remember, it is not necessary to have freedom to be faithful

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Suggested Reading from Lesson Three

- Read Chapter Three (pgs. 57-74)
 - *How might you draw a parallel to America legalizing what is evil?*
- Consider the *Constitutional Law* high school course by Paul Jehle, on one flash drive – 110 audio files, notes, homework / quizzes / answer keys – all for \$199 plus s/h = \$210

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