

Lesson Nine – “The State: Whose Law?”

Introduction

The government can exert a tremendous power for good in the affairs of mankind. But it also has the potential to become the most horrendously abusive of all the social spheres.

In this tour, we explore this dual nature of the divinely instituted state. When and why does something meant for good become so bad? And how should Christians respond?

Quote Unquote

What did they say? Fill in the blanks as you watch this presentation.

1. This sphere can become the most _____ of all. And I think that is the reason why God continues to remind the king that he is subject to God. –Del Tackett
2. All around the world and throughout history, you can see the _____ that have been committed by this sphere. –Del Tackett
3. Darwin had said that if his naturalistic framework were taken as a scaffolding for metaphysical extrapolations ..., the _____ that would break out would be unparalleled. –Ravi Zacharias
4. Almost 170 million men, women and children have been shot, beaten, tortured, ...or killed in any other of a myriad ways [that] _____ have inflicted death on unarmed, helpless citizens and foreigners. –R.J. Rummel
5. Without truth, there is only _____. –Os Guinness
6. Experience leads me to believe that it is _____ which are the major factor in our evil behaviors. –Carl Rogers
7. If there is no _____ truth, if there are no _____ standards, then it's okay for me to live however I want to live. –R.C. Sproul
8. The welfare state has become the nanny state. And I think that is very sad, to see the state substitute itself for the _____. –Robert Sirico
9. We have reached the turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of _____. –Humanist Manifesto II

Notes or Questions

While watching the video, use this space to record your thoughts, any facts you want to remember, questions that arise, etc.

*“Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities.”
Romans 13:1*

TRUTH 1 – Render unto Caesar

The state (that is, government in general) is a social sphere established by God to exercise control under His authority.

1. Look around you. What are the benefits of government? How would you feel living in a society that had no laws or law enforcement? No building codes or maintained roads? No national defense?
2. The Bible tells us to “honor the emperor” (1 Peter 2:17). How do we obey that command while also facing the truth about who many of our leaders are today? What examples come to mind from Scripture?

TRUTH 2 – What is Caesar’s

God meant for the state’s authority to be limited, not extending into other social spheres such as the church or the family.

1. How would you describe or limit the sphere that the state is charged to manage? See Romans 13:1-7 and related passages. In what areas should we submit to the government?
2. What are some current debates in politics and society that stem from a disagreement over the scope of the state’s responsibilities?

*“We must therefore worship the State as the manifestation of the Divine on earth...
The State is the march of God through the world.”
George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel*

TRUTH 3 – In a Terrible State

When the state no longer recognizes God as its higher authority, it can (and often does) become a fearsome monster.

1. What historical examples come to mind in which the state expanded greatly beyond its appointed sphere? What happened as a result? Where is this still happening today, either in relatively minor or in serious, life-threatening ways? How can we help support Christians who live under the rule of a monster state?
2. When is it wrong to accept benefits or supposed protections offered by a “nanny state”? What should the church do when the state takes on responsibilities that ought to be handled by the church or other private institutions?
3. In what ways is the state a threat to the family? How has the growth of the state over time changed the way that families used to work?

Wrap-Up

The unfettered expansion of state power has reared its ugly head many times in the past, most notably in the 20th-century regimes of Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, and Pol Pot. It is raising its head again in our own time.

Without God, truth, or any higher moral standard, people are increasingly looking to the state as savior and the supplier of every human need. In the face of this trend, Bible-believing Christians must have the courage to resist the rise of the state.

Check It Out

For your reference and further review, here are some of the key Scripture passages that were mentioned in the video you just watched.

Exodus 22:28
Deuteronomy 17:16-20
1 Samuel 8:1-20
1 Kings 21:1-19
2 Chronicles 20:6; 26:1-23
Daniel 2:21; 4:29-36
Job 12:23
Psalm 2:1-3; 22:28
Proverbs 21:1
Luke 20:25
John 17:1-2
Acts 17:24-26
Romans 9:17; 12:17-21; 13:1-7
1 Corinthians 15:24-28
Titus 3:1
1 Peter 2:13-17
Revelation 13