

LESSON 12: December 3: THE STATE, who's law?

INTRODUCTION: What have you seen or read this week on worldviews? I spent most of the week in bed with the flu, but I was sent a booklet by our denomination entitled, "Resolution Against Torture. Human rights in a time of terrorism" Article 2 reads: The Church "opposes the use of torture and all forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading interrogation by all agencies, employees, or agents of the US Government, and all foreign governments and /or combatants and supports the application of the Geneva convention, etc." 1. Well does the Gov't have the right to use torture? 2. Does the Church have the right to tell the government what to do? 3. How is this connected to a Christian worldview?

Today we tackle a hot subject — the design, structure, and role of the state, its place in God's plan for human society, and the rightful extent and limits of its power. The State also has the potential to become the most abusive of all the social spheres if not kept in check. WHITEBOARD ON TOTALITARIAN STATES AND DEATH OF IT'S CITIZENS. [Death by the State: Joseph Stalin, 42.6 million; Mao Zedong, 37.8 mil; Hitler, 20.9 mil; Chaing Kai-shek, 10.2 mil; Lenin, 4 mil, Hideki Tojo (prime minister under Hirohito) 3.9mil; Pol Pot (ruler of the Khmer Rouge and the Prime Minister of Cambodia), 2.3 mil.] There are obvious implications here for the debate between proponents of "liberal" and "conservative" social policy (i.e., the "welfare state" and its opponents).

A. DEFINE POLITICS: back to Noah Webster 1828: "The science of government; that part of ethics which consists in the regulation and government of a nation or state, for the preservation of its safety, peace and prosperity; comprehending the defense of it's existence and rights against foreign control or conquest...and the protection of it's citizens in their rights, with the preservation and improvement of their morals." Part of ethics? •Does the state have any vested interest in ethics or morals?

B. DEFINE STEALING: What is stealing? Taking what is not yours. (hypothetical story)

1. Is it stealing if the state takes something? Can the state steal? What if it's a law that says the state can take half of a dead man's property. Is that stealing? According to God or our laws. does the state own everything?

2. Read 1 Kings 21:1-16. Naboth's vineyard, Ahab and Jezebel;

3. Can the state steal or murder? How does God see this? Then the word came to Elijah....
READ I Kings 21:17-19

God saw it as murder and theft. Can the state steal? YES IT CAN. **Human governments are capable of error and transgression and must be held accountable to a higher ethical law if they are to be prevented from wreaking havoc in the lives of the citizens entrusted to their oversight and care.**

4. Do you remember how King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which no one could interpret.

Daniel interpreted it to mean that God was displeased with the King and will punish the King. He advised him to repent and serve his citizens. Did Neb understand that God leads a nation? LET'S READ Dan 4:29-35

C. What is God's design for the state?

1. READ

Prov 16: 8 Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice. 9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps. 10 The lips of a king speak as an oracle, and his mouth should not betray justice. 11 Honest scales and balances are from the LORD; all the weights in the bag are of his making. 12 Kings detest wrongdoing, for a throne is established through righteousness. 13 Kings take pleasure in honest lips; they value a man who speaks the truth.,

Prov 21:1 21:1 ¶ The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.;

Dan 2:21 "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his. 21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.;

Ro 9:17 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

2. The Design of the State - God, King (the civil authority), and citizens

•What is in the sphere of the state? We talked about this before. Why does God put himself into this sphere? I'm convinced that it is because it can become the most horrible thing without God in this role, as we see in scripture and salvation history

God

King before kings they had? Judges

Citizens

•Why did Israel ask for a King? – 1 Samuel 8:1-7 ¶ When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. 3 But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice. 4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. 5 They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." 6 But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.

So, do away with Judges and get another form, but God warns them what will happen. READ verses 10 Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. 11 He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. 12 Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plough his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. 15 He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. 16 Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. 17 He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. 18 When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day."

IN VERSES 15 & 17: What does it mean when it says taking vineyards etc? FIRST FRUITS. Who gets the first fruits? God or the King? The kings will take what is rightfully God's.

[Hard to believe that the state will take 10%, redistribute wealth to his chosen ones, and make the citizens slaves of the state!]

- Recognizing the evil inherent in human nature, the people should have been wary of placing too much power in the hands of any one man. By looking to a king to "go out before them," they were in effect handing over a huge portion of the sovereignty of other social spheres to the governing authority and expecting it to function as their "savior." In this way, they were aiding and abetting the "rise of the state" as a rival to God. As an alternative, they could have asked Samuel to discipline his sons or replace them with godly judges – a privilege and responsibility that resides within the hands of the people in a form of government in which the leaders are elected.

D. Sphere Sovereignty

1. Is the King/State Sovereign over the other spheres of family, church, labor, community?

Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) crafted a term "sphere sovereignty." [Dutch politician (prime Minister), journalist, statesman and theologian (pastor of Dutch reformed church)] If God crafted these other spheres (family, church, labor, etc.) according to the Trinity concept where each has their own purpose and design, then, each of these spheres have sphere sovereignty. So does the state have control over these spheres? No, says Kuyper. Sphere Sovereignty: God has designed each social sphere for a particular purpose with unique laws, roles and responsibilities to fulfill that purpose.

2. THE BREACH: That sphere has been given a sovereign charge to fulfill that purpose that another sphere should not breach. An example of the "breach" is found in the story of

Uzziah. 2 Chronicles 26 — saddest chapter in the bible: uzziah at age 16, as long as he sought the lord he had success; reigns for 52 years in israel; then verse 16ff; read>> courageous priests>> The King had no sovereignty over the Temple. He lost his rule. The king entered the temple to burn incense, a seemingly “good thing” – God afflicted him with leprosy because he crossed a sphere boundary.

Cowboy Movies – Churches did not sit on state soil, but on God’s soil

3. READ Matthew 22:21. Jesus said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” When Jesus said “Render unto Caesar ...,” He was not giving the Pharisees a straight answer to their question. Instead, in typical Jesus fashion, He was throwing the question back at His interrogators: “How do you see the relationship between the sovereignty of God and the authority of the ruler? Jesus was concerned about the BREACH.

4. Romans 13:1-6 – Submission and authority established by God
13:1 ¶ Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing.

5. Delegation of Authority & Submission – Divine Attributes stamped on social order.
The delegation of authority is bound up in the trinity in Jn 17:1-12 & 1 Co 15:24,27

Delegation – The Father delegated authority to Jesus; therefore, God delegated authority to the civil magistrate.

Subjection – The Son is subject to the Father; wives are subject to husbands; leaders are subject to God. The HS is subject to the father and Son; the children are subject to the father and mother; the citizens are subject to the King and God.

The State’s Purpose – To punish evil and condone good – Law is based on ethics

Bob Lovett: do you have a badge, uniform?

[Delegation of Authority: The formal grant of power, responsibility, and authority to someone else; this concept, like submission, is part of the triune nature of God. This grant is almost always carried out with a formal declaration (oath) and often with some mark of delegation (i.e. badge and uniform)

subjection >> 1 co 15;28 >> Titus 2 & 3 >> Subjection: The bringing of a person or people under the control of another. Like submission and delegation, this is found within God's social design because it is found within the Godhead (i.e. Jesus "subjected to" the Father).
duties>> honor the king, parents.

The basis of civil authority is therefore bound up in ethics which is expressed in laws.

E. The Rise of the State: who's law is it?

1. RISE OF THE STATE: Remember Maslow and Rogers who said there is no evil, evil comes from the culture, social institutions are responsible for evil. So if we believe this, then the state rises in power to breach the boundaries of the social institutions of church and family and communities. In the face of this trend, Bible-believing Christians must have the courage to resist.

When the state has no God it becomes the savior. State then takes care of the needy, what wages to pay, health care, the family, State begins to assume roles and responsibilities within the sphere of the family, the state is the savior, but not sufficient to save us. If the state can't do it then we need a global state, a world community, a world law, etc.

2. BEARS THE SWORD. Might makes right.

Because the state holds the power of the sword, it has the capacity to become tyrannical and commit extreme atrocities. "totalitarianism," a form of government that has been responsible for more death, destruction, and misery than any other in the history of the world. Death by the State: Joseph Stalin, 42.6 million; Mao Zedong, 37.8 mil; Hitler, 20.9 mil; Chaing Kai-shek, 10.2 mil; Lenin, 4 mil, Hideki Tojo (prime minister under Hirohito) 3.9mil; Pol Pot (ruler of the Khmer Rouge and the Prime Minister of Cambodia), 2.3 mil.

3. DECLINE OF A CULTURE: This is what happens when you disconnect yourself from absolute truth. When truth is dead there is only power and we are vulnerable to manipulation and all the atrocities of government.

Social disorder in America is strikingly similar to that which marked the decline of Rome 5 attributes marked Rome at it's end: 1. a mounting love of show and luxury, 2. an obsession with sex, including homosexuality, 3. freakishness in the arts, masquerading as originality, 4. enthusiasms pretending to be creativity. 5. an increased desire to live off the state. Edward Gibbons, Decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

EXTRA MATERIAL:

Who's law is it?

(What is law? Where does it come from? How is it supposed to function? (Law is not an arbitrary concept. To use the Platonic language we picked up in Lesson 2, the particulars of any given nation's laws are supposed to reflect the universal ethical standard that has its roots in the nature and character of God. This means that human beings, including government authorities, are not free to "invent" laws on the basis of their own preferences. It also implies that the law of the state cannot be regarded as absolute – we must constantly re-evaluate it with reference to eternal truth and change it if it does not measure up to the higher ethical standard.)

How did we get to where we are? Nietzsche & Hefner

Is there a connection to Nietzsche "God is dead" (if god is dead then Muggeridge said that we will have a drive for power or sex) and Darwin's theory (no moral framework) and the rise of the state?

If there is no truth then there is only power. Then we are vulnerable to manipulation.

Is the welfare state a competitor to the family?

21:1 ¶ Some time later there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

2 Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth."

3 But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers."

4 So Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat.

5 His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, "Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?"

6 He answered her, "Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, 'Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"

7 Jezebel his wife said, "Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city with him.

9 In those letters she wrote: "Proclaim a day of fasting and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people.

10 But seat two scoundrels opposite him and have them testify that he has cursed both God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death."

11 So the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city did as Jezebel directed in the letters she had written to them.

12 They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth in a prominent place among the people.

13 Then two scoundrels came and sat opposite him and brought charges against Naboth

before the people, saying, "Naboth has cursed both God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death.

14 Then they sent word to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned and is dead."

15 As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead."

16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard.

17 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite:

18 "Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it.

19 Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?' Then say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood--yes, yours!'"

SECULAR HUMANISM: RELIGION whereas "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Psalm 19:1) so that the Creator's "invisible attributes are plainly seen" (Romans 1:20), mankind has nevertheless chosen to ignore the obvious truth, twisting scientific investigation into a vehicle for propagating a godless philosophy of human independence and self-determination.

Everywhere we look – whether up at the grandeur of the stars and galaxies or deep into the tiny and elegantly designed inner workings of a living cell – there is evidence that the cosmos is the handiwork of an intelligent, rational mind.

because of the effects of the fall and the polarizing influence of the Cosmic Battle, man shows a tendency to deny what is plain to the senses and to "exchange the truth of God for a lie" (Romans 1:25). Driven by this impulse, he transforms straightforward scientific inquiry, which properly concerns itself with particulars, into an all-embracing philosophy, which claims to establish universals on the basis of the "stuff in the box." The result is the propagation of a worldview that "scientifically" excludes the Creator, thus "freeing" mankind from accountability to a higher authority

DR. DAWKINS: "It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet someone who says that he DOESN'T believe in evolution that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that).

Conclusion: What is the appeal of evolution today? Michael's conclusion was: To me the reason is clear, believing in God means accountability and authority. Some people don't like this. My conclusion was: Is it not possible that the appeal of evolution is the elimination of God and the exaltation of man? Is man the master of all things?