



CHAPTER 4 – “When the State Becomes God”

September 27, 2023

Identify the Problem

The state/government is designed to protect its citizens and to enact laws that will help them to flourish, but living in a world directed by Satan and one that craves power and self-worship, it will drift from God into immoral and evil dictatorship. We see that in our society today in what we call “intimidation by collective demonization.” In other words, if you don’t celebrate some of the evils of society such as abortion, gay marriage, transgenderism, and more then you will be shamed, ostracized, and quite possibly imprisoned.

Listen to the following excerpt from Dr. Erwin Lutzer’s book No Reason to Hide (pp. 33-35). After listening to Pastor Dave read that excerpt, jot down and discuss how you see that happening in our culture and communities today.

Today, if you are to refuse to celebrate or applaud certain blatant evils such as abortion, homosexuality, or transgenderism you can and probably will to some degree have your reputation, livelihood, and future become a target of attack by modern day mainstream culture.

The message is clear from our evil generation, “If we can’t control you, we will do everything we can to destroy you.”

One such example is that of the ACLU coming after Christian schools that receive federal dollars that do not allow LGBTQ students admittance. In the ACLU's words they will fight to bring down any Christian school that "unconstitutionally discriminates against LGBTQ students."¹

Groups like the ACLU, who represent culture at large, are trying to force followers of Jesus to compromise on biblical teachings and Christlike behavior so that they can push their secular and evil agendas.

To further the problem, many in the church of Jesus have bowed to the state. This has happened for many different reasons but three abound. The first is fear of what may happen if we don't bow. The second is comfort, not wanting to have our comforts of this world taken away. The third is indifference, thinking that if we just ignore it maybe it won't affect us too much. In Dr. Lutzer's book When a Nation Forgets God he chronicles how this is exactly what happened with the church in Germany in the 1940's and it's a big part of why Adolf Hitler was able to rise up to power and wreak havoc. The question for us now becomes whether we will bury our heads in fear of being demonized and allow evil to take a hold or will we courageously and compassionately speak up about our Lord and Savior and what His Word says to an evil and dying world.

In wrapping up the problem we've identified, and before we discover the solution from God's Word, let's make sure we are clear what collective demonization is and then we will look at what we can and must do about it.

Dr. Lutzer writes the following very helpful definition in his book No Reason to Hide,
"What is collective demonization? It is the punishment of all who dare to disagree with those in power; it is the erasure of individualism by stigmatizing and punishing dissenters. And you don't even have to be a dissenter – you can be punished if you're friends with one."

Discover and Apply the Solution

¹ *Religious News Service*, April 5, 2021.

Dr. Lutzer finishes our fourth chapter with a great question for all of us, and one that will help us discover the solution to the problem as well as how to apply the solution in regards to our overstepping state and government when it begins to put itself in the place of God. The question is, “How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have the courage to remain true to their convictions when the government they were living under was playing God and had the power to kill them?” There are two answers that could and should transform our lives as followers of Jesus.

How to Stand Strong When the State Becomes God

1. Trust the PROMISES of God.

Read Isaiah 43:1-3.

No doubt our three teenagers at hand knew the words of the prophet Isaiah. While they knew this wasn't a blanket promise of physical safety, as many of their friends, family, and countrymen had been killed, they knew this was a promise that God would be with them and that if He didn't protect them in this life, He would ensure their safety and blessing in the next.

What are the promises God made to His people in the previous passage and how do those promises apply to us today? How should they encourage God's people?

Read Psalm 73:23-26.

Let's make this a prayer for our lives, especially when the world, Satan, state, government, or anyone else comes after God's chosen ones.

What specifically does Asaph derive his joy from according to this Psalm? How does this Psalm encourage you in the midst of an evil and oppressive generation?

2. Trust the PROVIDENCE of God.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had no idea what the future held for them, but they knew who held the future. They were committed to being faithful to God and trusted that His plan was far better than anything they could come up with, even if it meant giving up their lives.

Read Daniel 3:14-18

Below write down what it is that caused Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to trust the providence of God and why you and I should as well:

Recommended Resources

(The following resources are invaluable when it comes to digging deeper into the topics at hand just discussed in the previous section. The recommendation would be to read one book a month so as to have time to absorb it but not forget the material by taking too long to read through it.)

NCC Bible and Book Reading Plan (nccabq.org)

Your Daily Walk by Walk Thru the Bible (amazon.com or christianbook.com)

When a Nation Forgets God by Erwin Lutzer