



Lesson 2

The Imperfect State

Review the differences between the church and the state.

The church	The state
Established by	Established by
Governed by	Governed by
The church will last	Kingdoms of this world will
God's people distinguish themselves by	The rulers of this world seek
The church moves	The state moves

Introduction

In view of the differences between the church and the state, with one or two sentences, explain why it is wiser to look to the church rather than the state for our security.

Read Psalm 146.

1. Why are we not able to trust in the state and its leaders?
2. Why should we put our trust in God?
3. What are the things that God is concerned about?
4. What are some ways God accomplishes his purposes?

5. The state, which God has instituted, has a dual personality. The state does good work when it protects and provides for its citizens, but the state is an ally of Satan when it works to destroy the faith of God's people. How do the following passages describe the state as an agent of God or an agent of evil?
 - Acts 22:22-29 and Philippians 1:12-18

 - Luke 2:1-7 and Matthew 2:13-18

 - Ezra 1:1-11 and Daniel 3:1-12

6. How was God's agenda (that is, his desire to save us) evident even when governments persecuted the church? Give examples.

7. Can you think of examples of the same in recent history?

8. Read Acts 4:16-20. These verses clearly show us that when the state tells us to do wrong or forbids us to proclaim the gospel, we ought to obey God rather than man. Discuss which of the following would fall under that category.
 - In your role as a public school teacher, you are required to teach evolution. Can you do this, or should you refuse?

 - The state might say you must offer your services (like baking a wedding cake) to people regardless of their lifestyles or sexual identification. Can you do this, or should you refuse?

- Your local parent-teacher organization wants your public school to begin its day with prayer. On which side of the fence would you fall?

 - You are an official in the government office charged with issuing wedding licenses. A gay couple comes to you for a license. Should you oblige or refuse to provide the license?
- 9.** The book of Daniel gives us excellent examples of how God's people act when their government oppresses them or forces them to act against their consciences. In each story, tell what the faithful did not do and what they did do.
- Daniel 1

 - Daniel 3

 - Daniel 6
- 10.** Is the United States a Christian nation? Explain your answer.
- 11.** There is a deep divide in our political discourse today. We are subjected to false information, exaggerations, and angry rhetoric. What will guide a Christian's actions and speech in regard to political discourse?