

The Land Between

MINISTRIES

The mission of the LandBetween Ministries is to equip leaders to fulfill Christ's Great Commission of heart-focused discipleship in a broken world.

Newsletter

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LESSONS FROM MAUTHAUSEN

Few, if any, of the many places God has allowed me to serve and visit has impacted me like paying respects at the former Mauthausen, Austria Nazi concentration camps.

Located just south of Germany in north-central Austria, the series of Mauthausen concentration camps were located near the city Adolf Hitler called his hometown: Linz.

HITLER AND SPIRITUALITY

I've seen the building and floor in Linz where Hitler took catechism classes as a youth. Did taking these classes make Hitler a Catholic? No.

Yet, there are many in the world who believe the lie Hitler was a "Christian" because in his writings and speeches he self-identified as such. For example, in a speech in Berlin in 1936, he said, *"Providence has caused me to be Catholic and I know therefore how to handle this Church."*

— Yet, Providence (God) *does not force anyone* to submit to a religion, as God sovereignly oversees free will (Rev. 22:17); Hitler was wrong.

Besides his evil, murderous *actions* that proved he and Himmler, etc., were clearly **not** believers in Christ. Hitler's own *words* condemned him in a speech to the Reichstag in 1936. He said, *"I believe today I am acting in the sense of the Almighty Creator. By warding off the Jews, I am fighting for the Lord's work."*

These words are blasphemous, as they directly contradict the Life, Word, and example of Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not want any of His followers to be "*warding off*" (murdering) anyone, regardless of their religion, race, or any aspect of their life.

For example, instead of "*warding off*" His own people, Jesus *wept* when they did not recognize the shalom (peace) that only He could provide for them (Luke 19:41-43).

Further, one of Jesus' own disciples, Judas, became a paid informant for



the high priest and his servants and helped them find Jesus to arrest Him. One of Jesus' followers took out a sword to attack the priest's servant. Immediately, Jesus told him to put his sword away and stated that if He desired He could call down 120,000 angels to protect Him.

Jesus made it clear His Way was not one of the sword (violence/murder) but of His Spirit: Love, joy, peace, etc. (John 19:30; Galatians 5:22-23).

Excuse-making for violence and other sin goes back to the Garden of Eden. Adam used Eve as an excuse for *his* sin. Hitler blamed the Jews

and held the excuse: If they could just get rid of *those Jews* they would prosper. Today, hatred and violence against Christians is excused by made-up claims of "oppression."

I've seen first-hand overseas people kept in poverty while elite leaders use created conflicts as an excuse for their wealth and draconian control.

Further, a 4th century "church father" grossly misinterpreted Luke 14:23 as an excuse to kill dissenters. In this text, Jesus is giving a parable to "compel" people to come in to the banquet (Kingdom) of God. Yet, the Greek word for "compel" in the New Testament has absolutely nothing to do with killing those who reject joining a church or religion.

Also, a 16th-century reformer and others oversaw the deaths of "heretics" by cherry-picking Leviticus 24:16 out of the Old Covenant as an evil excuse for the killings. They refused to see Hebrews 8:13 in its proper context: *"When He (Yahweh) speaks of a new covenant He makes the first obsolete. Now what is growing obsolete and aging is about to disappear."* The Old Covenant and its temple were made obsolete in 70 AD.

These horrific examples of those who identified as "Christians" are why I make it clear I am not associated with certain "church fathers." Following these sinful men is misguided. Instead, the Word teaches us to unify in the mind of *Jesus* and to share *His* Gospel (1 Cor. 1:10-17).

Hitler's Nazi machine leveraged the anti-Semitic statements by Martin Luther and took his religious differences and made them political to justify evil...in the name of "god."

I firmly disagree with Martin Luther's writings that justified violence against Jews. It must be stated there were thousands upon thousands of evangelicals, Catholics, and Lutherans, such as theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who paid with their lives standing against the Nazis. I have served with multiple German and Austrian believers and they would *never* want harm of *any* kind to come to Jews or anyone else.

The point is that Hitler was not a Christian, but a pagan, political, son of the devil who replaced the cross with the swastika; he demanded worship of himself, not Jesus Christ.

Ironically, today in America, if one is a conservative Christian and expresses care about America's safety and sovereignty, they are often labeled racist, nationalistic, or a Nazi.

LESSON #1

Toward the end of my visit at Mauthausen's main camp a sobering thought came to mind:

"If this (evil) could happen in Austria, this could happen in America."

Yes, it could. It doesn't mean it will, but instead of focusing on Jews, the next target would be genuine followers of Jesus. With the increase in hatred against conservative Christians in the news media, movies, TV, Internet, etc., one would be naive to deny there are forces of evil in America who are methodically moving for "re-education centers" (death camps) or other forms of punishment for simply being loving, kind, followers of Jesus. There is a saying that you can tell who controls a nation by finding out

who you cannot criticize. It is obvious believers in Jesus do not control America. With the ever-increasing brazen, open hatred of followers of Jesus, the tide is turning against true free speech and religious freedom. In Jesus' day, the Romans were a small minority in number, but they ruled the Holy Land with an iron fist. The ancient Romans controlled the three M's: Military, Money, and Media. Today, it is concerning how few power brokers control America's three M's and their politicians.

LESSON #2

Mauthausen was a slave labor camp. The work was mainly in a large rock quarry. Prisoners were forced to cut stone with primitive tools and put the heavy blocks on their emaciated backs to carry them up the "Stairs of Death." The Nazis purposely had the stairs built unevenly to make them harder to climb. I climbed those same steps just fifty years after the United States Army's 11th Armored Division liberated Mauthausen and the remaining prisoners were set free. It was tough to climb the Steps of Death and think of how many thousands died on them only a few short decades ago. One day a prisoner could climb the steps, the next day they couldn't...they would never see the following day.

A lesson I learned from these stairs is that evil is often incremental, like steps, so as to not alert its intended prey. The Nazis did not take over Germany in a day. The prisoners did not die of starvation in one night.

Rather, evil was planned for the victims years in advance and incrementally implemented. It took years of speeches and financing to create the Nazi machine. Over time, German Liberal Protestant pastors

lent support to Hitler in the "German Christian Movement" founded in 1932, then the "Concordat" with the Vatican and the Third Reich was signed in 1933. By 1938, another major step was stripping the Jews of their right to citizenship. Strict gun control laws left the people with no recourse against National Socialism's dictator.

In 1935, three years prior to Germany invoking strict gun control laws, China removed the right to bear arms. Between 1948 and 1952 over 20 million Chinese were killed by their dictator. Prior to this, from 1939-1945, the Nazis slaughtered over 13 million. Repeatedly, from the Bolshevik Revolution to the Armenian genocide of Christians, etc., history proves that genocide follows the incremental erasure of the right to self-defense.

LESSON #3

There is a cringeworthy photo of Heinrich Himmler, in full Nazi uniform, climbing the Stairs of Death at Mauthausen...smiling. Himmler ran the teams who built the Nazi concentration camps similar to the ones used, and being built right now, in Asia. Himmler, and others who supported the Nazis, prove another lesson from Mauthausen: *Mass evil is never perpetrated alone.*

The history books imply "Hitler" did this or "Chairman Mao" did that, as if they acted alone. No, both Socialist dictators had very powerful people over them, operating their banks and material goods. Westerners on both sides of the Atlantic gained massive financial wealth as the innocent died.

Since the early 1900s, nations have promoted or ignored the extermination of tens of millions of Christians. *Satan never works alone.*