
Two Kingdoms, One Calling

Christians, Spiritual Warfare & the Ballot Box



THE TWO KINGDOMS — WHAT ARE THEY?

Lutheran theology has long distinguished two distinct spheres through which God governs His creation — known as the **Two Kingdoms Doctrine**. These kingdoms differ in their instruments, their citizens, and their purposes, yet both remain fully under God's sovereign rule.

Dimension	✚ Right-Hand Kingdom (Spiritual / Kingdom of God)	△ Left-Hand Kingdom (Civil / Kingdom of the World)
How God Rules	Directly — through the Gospel, Word, and Sacraments	Indirectly — through reason, law, and human structures
God's Instrument	The Church	The State and civic institutions
Concerns	Salvation, grace, forgiveness, eternal life	Justice, peace, protection, care of neighbor
Citizens	All believers	All people — believers and unbelievers alike

These kingdoms are distinct but not separate. God is Lord of both. Christians live simultaneously in both kingdoms — as redeemed children of God and as citizens with earthly vocations and responsibilities.

OUR TRUE ENEMY — SPIRITUAL POWERS, NOT FLESH AND BLOOD

We Don't Fight People — We Fight Powers

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)

- Our ultimate enemies are **not** political opponents, neighbors, or opposing parties — however much we may disagree.
- Christians engage the left-hand kingdom *without* treating political opponents as ultimate enemies to be destroyed.
- The real enemy is the spiritual power that twists truth, inflames hatred, and tempts Christians to trust earthly kingdoms more than Christ's.
- These spiritual forces corrupt creation and human institutions and endanger our neighbor.
- The full armor of God (Eph. 6:10–18) equips us for the spiritual battle that underlies all earthly conflict.

Political conflict is never ultimately about defeating human opponents, but resisting the spiritual forces that manipulate human sin, fear, and division.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD

"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, so that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.'" John 18:36 (ESV)

- Jesus clearly distinguishes His kingdom (right-hand) from earthly political power (left-hand).
- The Church does not seek to impose Christ's kingdom through political force or legislation.
- Political victories do not *build* the Kingdom of God — only the Gospel does that.
- Christians can engage civics freely and without anxiety precisely because our ultimate hope is not in any government or party. We know that God rules over all.

GOD ORDAINS GOVERNMENT FOR OUR GOOD

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God... For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer." Romans 13:1–4 (ESV)

- Government is not the enemy — it is a **God-ordained instrument** of order and justice in the left-hand kingdom.
- Even imperfect governments serve God's purposes for restraining evil and protecting the vulnerable.
- Christians submit to and participate in government as a form of *service to God and neighbor*.
- Civic participation — including voting — is a responsibility to our neighbor facing the evils of the world, not merely a political right.

SALT AND LIGHT — WHY CHRISTIANS VOTE

Satan destroys moral values in society by tempting people to abandon God's created order, redefine good and evil, and trust earthly powers instead of Christ. *"The whole world lies in the power of the evil one"* (1 John 5:19). Satan's strategy is simple:

Corrupt hearts → corrupt culture → corrupt laws → corrupt generations.

We Vote for Love of Neighbor

"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden." Matthew 5:13–14 (ESV)

- **Salt preserves and flavors** — Christians in civic life slow moral decay and bring wisdom shaped by God's Word.
- **Light illuminates** — Christians bring clarity, truth, and values into the public square.
- Voting is not about building a "Christian nation" by force — it is an act of **loving our neighbor** who is facing the temptations and evils of this world.
- When we vote, we exercise the vocation God has given us in the left-hand kingdom to promote justice, protect the vulnerable, and serve the common good. Scripture calls us to **love our neighbor** by advancing policies that protect and serve them
- We vote informed by **Scripture and conscience**, not by party allegiance alone.
- Non-participation is itself a choice — withdrawal from civic life is not neutrality; it is the abdication of a God-given responsibility.

PRACTICAL SUMMARY — A LUTHERAN APPROACH TO VOTING

✓	Engage civic life as a vocation — a calling to serve your neighbor through the left-hand kingdom.
✓	Your political opponent is not your ultimate enemy — spiritual powers are. Treat all neighbors with dignity.
✓	Vote according to God's Word, conscience, and the good of your neighbor — not fear, anger, or tribalism.
✓	Do not place ultimate hope in any candidate, party, or political system. Christ alone is Lord. God's Will ultimately prevails.
✓	Pray for all governing authorities — regardless of party (1 Timothy 2:1–2).
✓	Speak truth, pursue justice, protect the vulnerable — salt and light in action in God's world.

Satan attempts to destroy **moral values in the left-hand kingdom** by corrupting the *moral imagination* of the people who live under those governments. Confessional Lutheran theology is very clear: the devil cannot conquer Christ's kingdom, so he focuses his attacks on the earthly kingdom—where fear, pride, and idolatry are easier to inflame.

"The Christian votes not to save the world — that work belongs to Christ alone — but to love the neighbor God has placed before us."

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