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Night of the Long Knives

- Adolf Hitler orchestrated the Night of the Long Knives in 1934 to eliminate Ernst Röhm and other leaders of the Nazi paramilitary Sturmabteilung (SA).
- The goal was to remove major military and political rivals and consolidate absolute power.



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Night of the Long Knives

- The SA (brownshirts) had 2 – 3 million members, while Germany's official army, the Reichswehr, had roughly 100,000 (Treaty of Versailles).
- President Paul von Hindenburg is close to death, so Hitler knows that he needs to move to consolidate power – bring the SA and official army, and chancellor and president into a single, all powerful "Führer."



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Night of the Long Knives

- Hitler presents himself and official military as respectable Nazi movement, while the SA are thugs using street violence and intimidation.
- For the sake of peace and the good of the German people, he will quietly purge Germany of 85 SA leaders and political opponents (e.g., Ernst Röhm, former Chancellor Kurt von Schleicher, and Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen).



5

Night of the Long Knives

- Hitler is **shrewd**. He paints his military and political opponents as enemies of Germany and the German people.
- His aggressive violence is *justified* for the sake of Germany – for peace and order.
- **Key:** The end (the good of Germany) justifies the means (murder). This is what we call a **utilitarian** or **consequentialist** argument.



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Night of the Long Knives

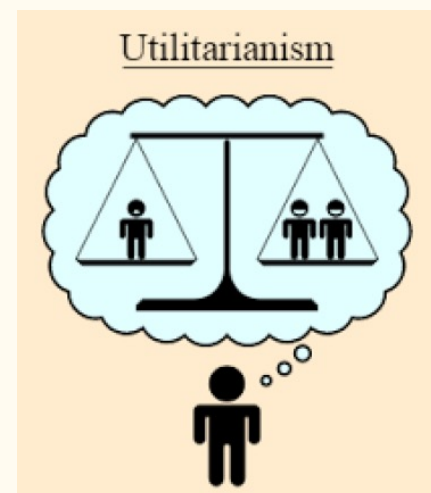
- **Utilitarian Theory:** The moral value of an action is determined solely by its consequences or outcomes.
- The greatest good for the greatest number of people. You can do whatever is necessary as long as the results outweigh the consequences.
- Morality is judged by outcomes.



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Night of the Long Knives

- It is necessary to eliminate the Jews and other *untermensch* ("sub-humans) for a purified Germany (blood and soil).
- It is necessary to eliminate a child in the womb so they can have a good life.
- **Key:** Under utilitarian theory, there are no intrinsic evils. Instead, *anything* can be justified by pointing to the benefits or outcomes of an action.



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Night of the Long Knives

“And why not say—as we are accused and as some claim we say—that we should do evil that good may come of it? Their penalty is what they deserve.”

~Romans 3:8

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Night of the Long Knives

- In Catholic teaching, a moral act requires three elements – all three must be good.
 - **The Object** (Act itself) – the object must be good or at least neutral in itself; some acts are always wrong (intrinsically evil) because they contradict fundamental human goods, regardless of intention or circumstance. Examples include murder, adultery, and rape.



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Night of the Long Knives

- In Catholic teaching, a moral act requires three elements – all three must be good.
 - **The intention** (the end in view) – the intention of the acting person must be good. Why is the person doing the act?
 - **The Circumstances:** Secondary elements of the moral act; Circumstances can increase or diminish the moral goodness or evil of an act, but they cannot make an intrinsically evil act good.



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Night of the Long Knives

- **The Object:** Hitler orders the murder of the SA leadership, rivals within the Nazi party, and political opponents. The object is evil.
- **The Intention:** He claims it is for Germany – peace and order – but in reality, his intention is to consolidate power by eliminating opponents of his regime.
- **The Circumstances:** The purge happens at night, without trial, under the cover of darkness on June 30 – July 2, 1934. The circumstances are evil.

Evil



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Nazi Aggression

- The Nazis became increasingly more aggressive in the second half of the 1930s with rearmament, territorial expansion, and the persecution of “inferior” peoples.
- Their aggression ultimately instigated the breakout of another worldwide war.



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Nazi Aggression (1935)

- The Nazis announce their intent to rearm their military. They had been doing this since 1933, but now publicly state their intention.
- They become more confident about breaking the Treaty of Versailles, which limited their military to 100,000 soldiers.



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Nazi Aggression (1936)

- Hitler orders troops into the Rhineland in a direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Treaties.
- It was Hitler's first major military risk that went unopposed by Britain and France. France had 320,000 soldiers stationed in mainland France.
- The troops were under secret orders to withdraw immediately if they met a military response from the French army.



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Nazi Aggression (1938)

- German aggression goes into full gear.
- **Anschluss** (March 1938): The annexation of Austria, signaling the first territorial act of aggression.
- Following the bloodless takeover, coercion and propaganda helped manipulate a plebiscite (public vote) resulting in 99.7% approval for the union.



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Nazi Aggression (1939)

- German aggression goes into full gear.
- **Sudetenland** (September 1938): Hitler demanded the mountainous border of Czechoslovakia (home to a significant ethnic German population).
- Britain, France, and Italy agreed to Germany's demands in the Munich Agreement without Czechoslovakia's consent. Hitler became more emboldened.



18

Nazi Aggression (1939)

- German aggression goes into full gear.
- **Czechoslovakia** (March 1939): The Nazis violated the Munich Agreement and invaded the remaining Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia, establishing a German Protectorate.
- Slovakia became a German-controlled puppet state. Other territories were annexed by Hungary and Poland.



• Nazi occupation of Prague

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Nazi Aggression (1939)

- Britain and France's policy of appeasement allowed the Nazis to become more and more bold.
 - Military expansion (1935)
 - Occupy Rhineland (1936)
 - Annex Austria (1938)
 - Occupy the Sudetenland (1938)
 - Occupy Czechoslovakia (1939)



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Nazi Aggression (1939)

- In St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Rules of Discernment*, he states in rule 12 that when the enemy (evil, evil one) is confronted with strength, like a spoiled child, he begins to *lose heart* and *flee*.
- However, if the enemy confronts *weakness*, he becomes *strong* and his intensity toward you *grows*. It is key, then, to resist the enemy *right away*. If not, he gains *momentum* and becomes more difficult to resist.



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Winston Churchill

- On May 10, 1940, Winston Churchill became Prime Minister.
- He had few real weapons, allied armies were in retreat before a full German army, and an invasion of Great Britain was likely.
- Churchill battled with *words*. His speeches were some of the most powerful ever given in the English language.



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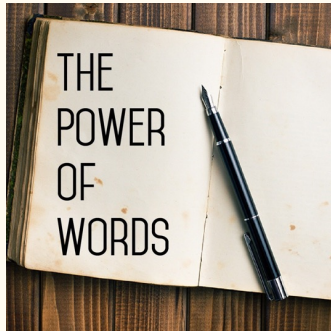
Winston Churchill

- Churchill mobilized the English language and sent it into battle.
- He radiated confidence and belief for an anxious and worried country to the point where they believed that they could win.
- **Key:** Churchill had to give the British people intestinal fortitude (win the battle within) before they could mobilize and begin to fight with all their might in the battle without.



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Winston Churchill



Interior Battle

Confidence
Belief, Hope,
Courage



Exterior Battle

Mobilize to
Defend Country

25

Winston Churchill

- Three elements make Churchill's speeches powerful:
 - **Choice of language:** Churchill uses powerful words like struggle, suffering, strength, victory, and survival ("Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat" – May 13, 1940).
 - **Rhythm:** Structures speech to create drama, using repetition (anaphora) for emphasis and emotional impact – "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight...builds to "We shall *never surrender*." (We Shall Fight on the Beaches" – June 4, 1940).

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Winston Churchill

- Three elements make Churchill's speeches powerful:
 - **Delivery:** Churchill's delivery had an almost performative quality. His voice gave reassurance and inspiration. He spoke slowly and carefully, giving proper emphasis to key words.
 - Rallying the British people and the Commonwealth to continue to fight against Nazi Germany, Churchill famously concluded his speech by saying, "Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, 'This was their finest hour.'" ("Their Finest Hour" – June 18, 1940).

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Winston Churchill

- Churchill's powerful speeches captured the imagination and the hearts of the British people.
- He reached out to the people and made them *believe* that winning the war was possible.
- If they did not surrender, but offered their blood, toil, tears, and sweat, they would be victorious.



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Winston Churchill

- In Greek philosophy, *logos*, translates to “word,” “reason,” or “account.”
- In ancient Greek philosophy, *logos* represented the divine, rational principle that provides order and meaning to the cosmos. *Logos* is the underlying structure to reality.
- The cosmos is not chaotic, but has underlying *Rationality* – order, predictability, and structure that gives meaning to reality and governs it.

λόγος
logos / word

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Winston Churchill

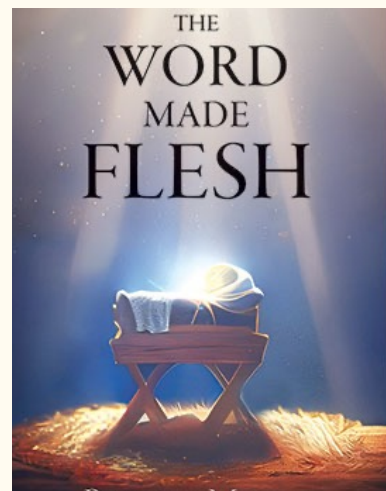
- There is inherent *creative power* in this *logos* or Word.
- For example, Genesis 1 reveals God's words not only brought the universe into existence, but also harmony, beauty, and a diversity of created things (rocks, plants, trees) and creatures (animals and human beings).



31

Winston Churchill

- In Catholic theology, particularly the Gospel of John, we are presented with a surprising revelation.
- The Word, which was in the beginning, which was with God, and was God, this Word *became flesh and made his dwelling among us* (Jn 1:14).
- Key: The Word has a face, Jesus Christ, who reveals the reason, or gives an account, for the meaning of the cosmos and our lives.



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Winston Churchill

John testified to him and cried out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.’”

~John 1:15

33

Winston Churchill

- John the Baptist, a voice crying out in the wilderness, points to Christ by his life and *words*.
- His words are *powerful* because they are an *echo* of the Word made flesh. The crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” (Lk 3:10)
- God’s word is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12).



34

Winston Churchill

- Winston Churchill was akin to a modern-day St. John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness, whose *words were powerful* because they *echoed* the Word made flesh (the Truth!).
- His speeches were not powerful not only because of emotive language, rhetorical devices, and powerful imagery, but also because they echoed the *truth* that good is more powerful than evil, light scatters the darkness, and courage dispels fear.



35

Winston Churchill

- His words, echoing the Word, had a *transformative power* in human hearts that inspired, unified, and rallied people from
 - doubt to belief
 - despair to hope
 - fear to courage



Key: With the battle won in the heart, the British people were prepared for the battles in the war.

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Churchill & Hitler

Hitler	Churchill
Began as quiet, reserved tone and built to an emotional wild crescendo; body language	Gave speeches with a slow and steady demeanor to encourage them to "think."
Externalized blame (scapegoating) as a target for public anger for national humiliation	Framed the war as a battle between good and evil, painting the enemy as a "monstrous tyranny" that must be defeated.
Portrayed Germans as victims of betrayal and foreign conspiracy; aggression brings peace	Used rhetorical questions to help listeners think critically about the gravity of things.
Used repetitive, rhythmic language and powerful slogans "One people, One nation, One Leader" for hypnotic effect	Used vivid imagery to help British visualize nation's struggles and purpose of fighting. We shall fight beaches, landing grounds, etc.
Repeat the lie, the bigger and more outrageous the lie, the more likely people were to believe it; redefined truth for narrative	Repeated key words and sentence patterns for clarity (truth) and to make his arguments more impactful and memorable.

37

Winston Churchill

- In short, the Lord worked through Winston Churchill, who was a deeply complex and flawed man.
- He was a cultural Christian, not battling necessarily for the Kingdom of God, but for the principles of Western Civilization touched significantly by the Lord.



Churchill is a reminder that the Lord works through our flaws, too, and that as Christians, we always place our ultimate hope in the Lord.

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Future Classes

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| • The Eastern Front Battles | October 21 |
| • The Jewish Question | November 4 |
| • The Holocaust | November 18 |
| • D-Day & the Atomic Bomb | December 2 |
| • Ending the War & Lessons Learned | December 9 |