



Review on the Function of the Law

- The Law reflects the character of God
- The Law reflects God's creation design
- The Law is intended to distinguish Israel as a geopolitical ethnicity and function as their constitution
- The Law was given to increase sin



Presuppositions

- The Law was inherently tied to the Mosaic legislation as part of God's covenant with Israel at Sinai
- Scripture is clear that the new covenant has replaced the Mosaic covenant (2 Cor 3:7–18; Heb 7:12, etc.)
- The Law stands or falls as a whole unit (James 2:10; Gal 5:3)
- So, if the Mosaic covenant has been abrogated, then it is plausible that the entire Law has been abrogated



**WHAT DOES THE
BIBLE SAY
ABOUT THE
LAW?**



The Law is Good (and Useful)

- Scripture unabashedly speaks positively about the Law in both OT and NT
- “My soul keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly” (Ps 119:167)
- “the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Rom 7:12)



Christians are not Under Law

Gal 3:24–26 – So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith

Gal 5:18 – But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law



Christians are not Under Law

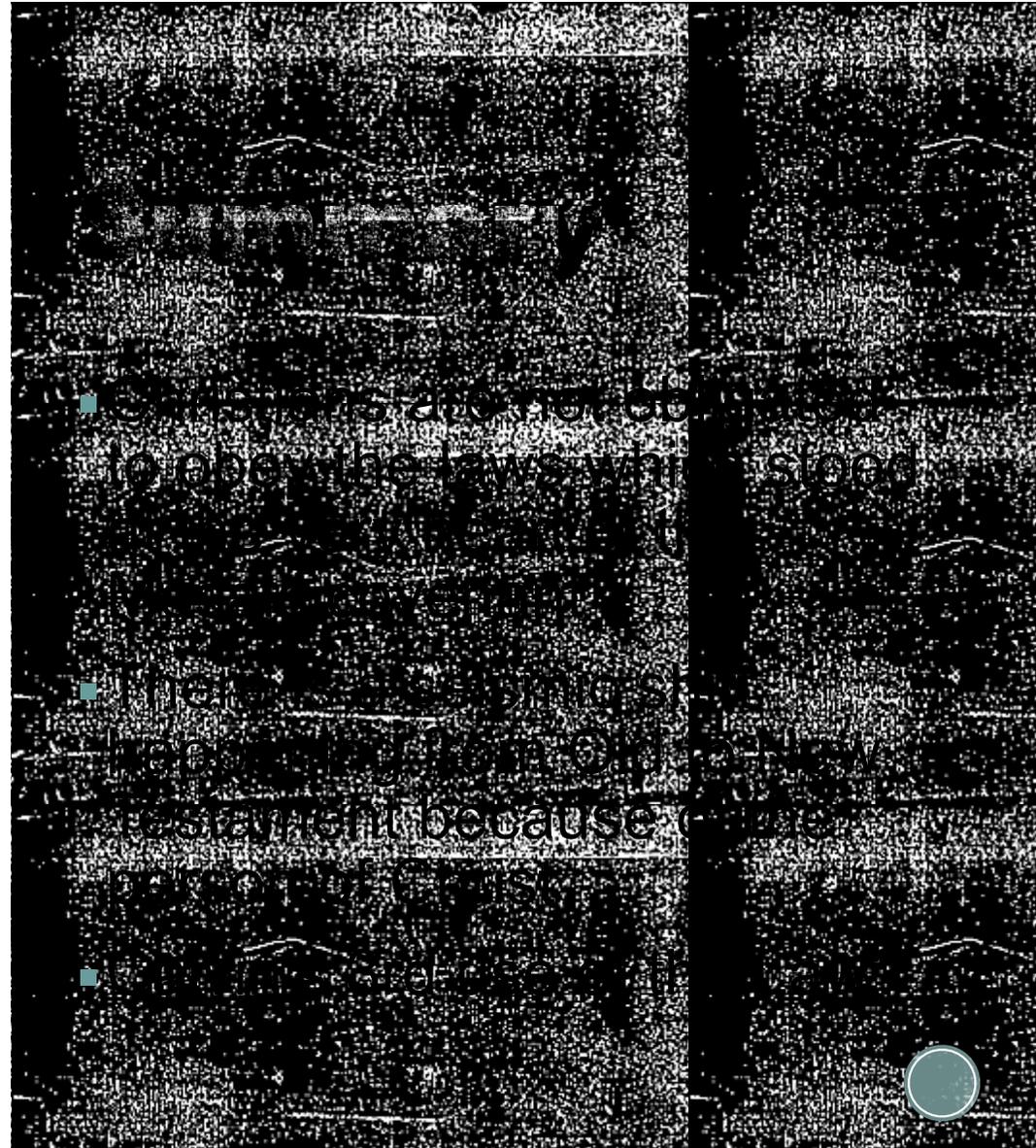
- “You are not under the law but under grace” (Rom 6:14)
- “But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code” (Rom 7:6)
- “Christ is the end of the law” (Rom 10:4)



Christians are not Under Law

- An analysis of Rom 14:1–15:6 indicates the law is no longer normative for the believer
 - Law forbids eating certain foods (Lev 11:1–44; Deut 14:3–21)
 - Rom 14:2 indicates only weak believers obey those stipulations
- Circumcision and the Sabbath (the Heart of Israel's Covenant Existence) are Obsolete in the NT
 - Circumcision no longer necessary (Rom 4:9–12; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:2–4, 6; 6:15)
 - Sabbath no longer necessary (Rom 14:5–6; Col 2:16–17)







**WHAT IS THE
BELIEVER'S
RELATIONSHIP
TO THE LAW?**

Why does it seem
some laws retain
their authority in the
NT?

How can Paul and
Jesus quote the Law
authoritatively?

How can we as
Christians use the
Law?

3 Primary Views on the Christian and the Law

- Traditional Reformed Approach (Tripartite)
- Theonomy (Christian Reconstructionism)
- Principlism



Traditional Reformed Approach

- Tripartite view of the Law (moral, civil, ceremonial)
- Moral Law remains binding
- Civil and ceremonial laws are done away with in Christ
- Ceremonial laws include: **Cleaning house of leper** (Lev. 14:33-57; Num. 5:2), **Festivals** (Lev. 23:1-25; Nu. 29:39), **Laws on animals for food** (Lev. 11:1-47), **Law of Atonement** (Lev. 16:1-28;17:1-16), **Offerings** (Num. 29:39), **Priest, consecration of** (Ex. 29:1-46), **Priestly duties** (Lev. 7:1-37), **Regulations for Priests** (Lev. 21,22), **Various sacrificial offerings for sin** (Lev. 1,2,3,4,5,6)



Tripartite Critique

- Threefold division of the law not systematized until Aquinas (13th)
- James, Paul, and Jesus all describe the individual laws as being a part of the whole (James 2:10; Gal 3:24–25; 5:3; Matt 5:19)
- The structure of the law code itself argues for a holistic view of the Law
- No one living under the law would have recognized the threefold division of the law (e.g., Acts 10)
- Practical problem of dividing the law: e.g., Sabbath



Theonomy

- Tripartite(ish) view of the Law (moral + civil, ceremonial)
- Civil laws remain applicable, only the ceremonial laws are done away with
- Transition in recent years from traditional “Christian Reconstruction” to “General Equity Theonomy”
- Individuals and Governments “bound” by God’s law



Theonomy's Rule of Operation

“We should presume that Old Testament standing laws continue to be morally binding in the New Testament, unless they are rescinded or modified by further revelation” (Bahnsen)

“We must affirm that *unless* the New Testament explicitly announces that the *former application* of a *still morally binding law* has been changed by God, we should still honor it in its Old Testament details” (North)



Bahnsen on the Law

“The theonomic principle is objective and Biblical in character. Its policy for Old Testament interpretation and for application of the laws found there is that the moral standards revealed by God are all beneficial and continue to be binding unless further revelation teaches otherwise (Deut. 4:2; 10:13; Ps. 119:160; Matt. 5:19; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). As a result, the theonomist concludes that *most of the judicial laws* of the Old Testament, having not been modified or canceled by Scripture later, *continue to be binding according to the principle which they teach or illustrate. . .*” (italics added).



Critique of Theonomy

- Many of the critiques of the Reformed approach apply to Theonomy (arbitrary division of the law, etc.)
- Inconsistency in understanding the interrelationship of the covenants of Scripture
- Misunderstanding the NT teaching on not being “under the Law”
- What is binding? (“most of the judicial **laws** of the Old Testament ... continue to be binding according to the **principle** which they teach or **illustrate**”)





3 Steps of Principlism

1. Determine the original meaning, significance, and purpose of the law in question
2. Trace the theological significance of that law, drawing connections from Law structure
3. Determine appropriate application and implication for the theology of that law in contemporary context



Law Structure – Exodus

Historical Prologue	Exod 19:1-4
Preamble	Exod 19:5-6
General Stipulations	Exod 20:3-17
Specific Stipulations	Exod 21:1–23:19
Provisions for Reading	Exod 24:4-7
Blessings and Curses	Exod 23:20-23



Law Structure – Deuteronomy

Preamble	Deut 1:1-5
Historical Prologue	Deut 1:6–4:49
General Stipulations	Deut 5:1–11:32
Specific Stipulations	Deut 12:1–26:19
Blessings and Curses	Deut 27:1–28:68
The Witnesses	Deut 30:19; 31:19; 32:1-43





CASE STUDY

Exodus 22:1

“If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he shall repay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.”

Tracing Exodus 22:1

God created man and has given him real ownership

- “You shall not steal” (i.e., recognize other’s possessions) (Exod 20:15)
- “Make Repayment for Theft” (Exod 22:1)

App: Theft is wrong, and restitution for theft is important.

Creation Principles

- General Application
- Specific Application

Genesis 1–3

- Ten Commandments
- Specific Commandments





CASE STUDY

Deuteronomy 23:19

“You shall not charge interest on loans to your brother, interest on money, interest on food, interest on anything that is lent for interest.”

Commandment/General Stipulation	Deuteronomy Text
Commandment One – No other gods	Deut 12:1–31
Commandment Two – No images	
Commandment Three – Do not take name in vain	Deut 13:1–14:21
Commandment Four – Keep Sabbath	Deut 14:22–16:17
Commandment Five – Honor father and mother	Deut 16:18–18:22
Commandment Six – Do not murder	Deut 19:1–22:8
Commandment Seven – Do not commit adultery	Deut 22:9–23:14
Commandment Eight – Do not steal	Deut 23:15–24:7
Commandment Nine – Do not bare false witness	Deut 24:8–25:4
Commandment Ten – Do not covet	Deut 25:5–26:15



Tracing Deuteronomy 23:19

God created mankind with ownership and obligations

- “You shall not steal” (i.e., don’t withhold what is owed) (Exod 20:15)
- “Don’t charge interest to your brother” (Deut 23:19)

App: Pursuit of wealth at the expense of what is important is immoral

Creation Principles

- General Application
- Specific Application

Genesis 1–3

- Ten Commandments
- Specific Commandments





CASE STUDY

Deuteronomy 22:8

“When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it.”

Law Structure – Deuteronomy

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Tracing Deuteronomy 22:8

God Created Man in His Image

- “You shall not murder” (i.e., value life) (Deut 5:17)
- “Make a fence around roof” (Deut 22:8)

App: Value life and protect it by taking precautions against danger

Creation Principles

- General Application
- Specific Application

Genesis 1–3

- Ten Commandments
- Specific Commandments

