

Review on the Function of the Law

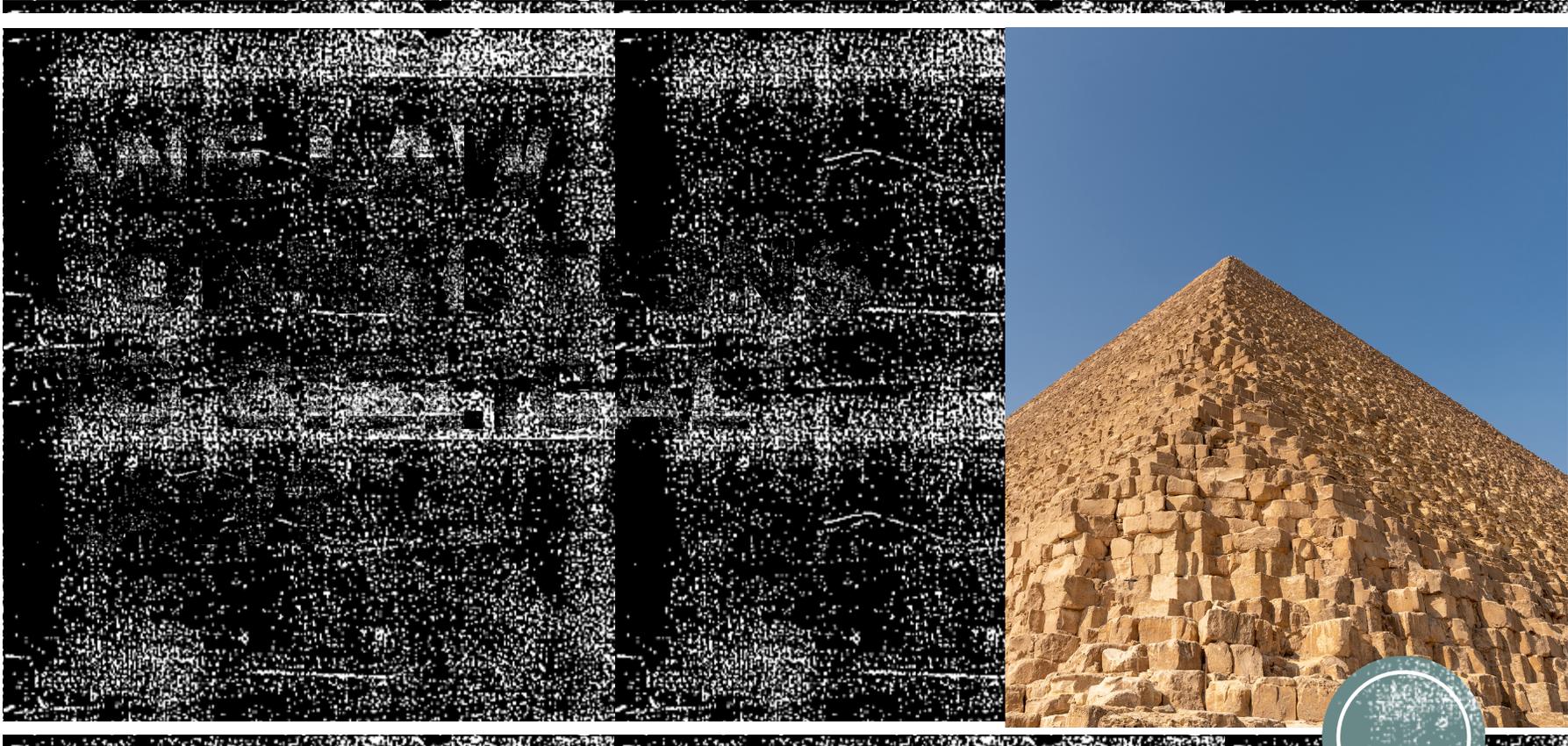
- The Law reflects the character of God
- The Law reflects God's creation design
- The Law is intended to distinguish Israel as a geopolitical ethnicity and function as their constitution
- The Law was given to increase sin



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







Hammurabi's Law Code

- Stele discovered in 1901 in Susa (modern Iran), but composed in Babylon in 18th century BC
- Many of the laws are similar to biblical prescriptions
- Some scholars have posited that the Bible “borrowed” from Hammurabi’s law code



Similarities of HLC and BL - 1

HLC, §1, 4

If a seignior accused a(nother) seignior and brought a charge of murder against him, but has not proved it, his accuser shall be put to death... If he came forward with (false) testimony concerning grain or money, he shall bear the penalty of that case.

Deut 19:18-19

The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother.

Similarities of HLC and BL - 2

HLC, §8

If a seignior stole either an ox or a sheep or an ass or a pig or a boat, if it belonged to the church (or) if it belonged to the state, he shall make thirtyfold restitution; if it belonged to a private citizen, he shall make good tenfold. If the thief does not have sufficient to make restitution, he shall be put to death.

Exod 22:1-4

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.... He shall surely pay. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

Similarities of HLC and BL - 3

HLC, §14

If a seignior has stolen the young son of a(nother) seignior, he shall be put to death.

Exod 21:16

Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.

Similarities of HLC and BL - 4

HLC, §209-11

If a seignior struck a(nother) seignior's daughter and has caused her to have a miscarriage, he shall pay ten shekels of silver for her fetus. If that woman has died, they shall put his daughter to death. If by a blow he has caused a commoner's daughter to have a miscarriage, he shall pay five shekels of silver.

Exod 21:22-25

When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.



Example 1: Sabbath Law

Six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire in all your dwelling places on the Sabbath day.

Exodus 35:2–3



Sabbath Violation (Num 15:32-36)

32 While the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. ... 36 And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, as the LORD commanded Moses.



Example 2: False Prophets

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. ... 5 But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has taught rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you out of the house of slavery, to make you leave the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from your midst (Deut 13:1–5)



False Prophets (1 Kings 18:40)

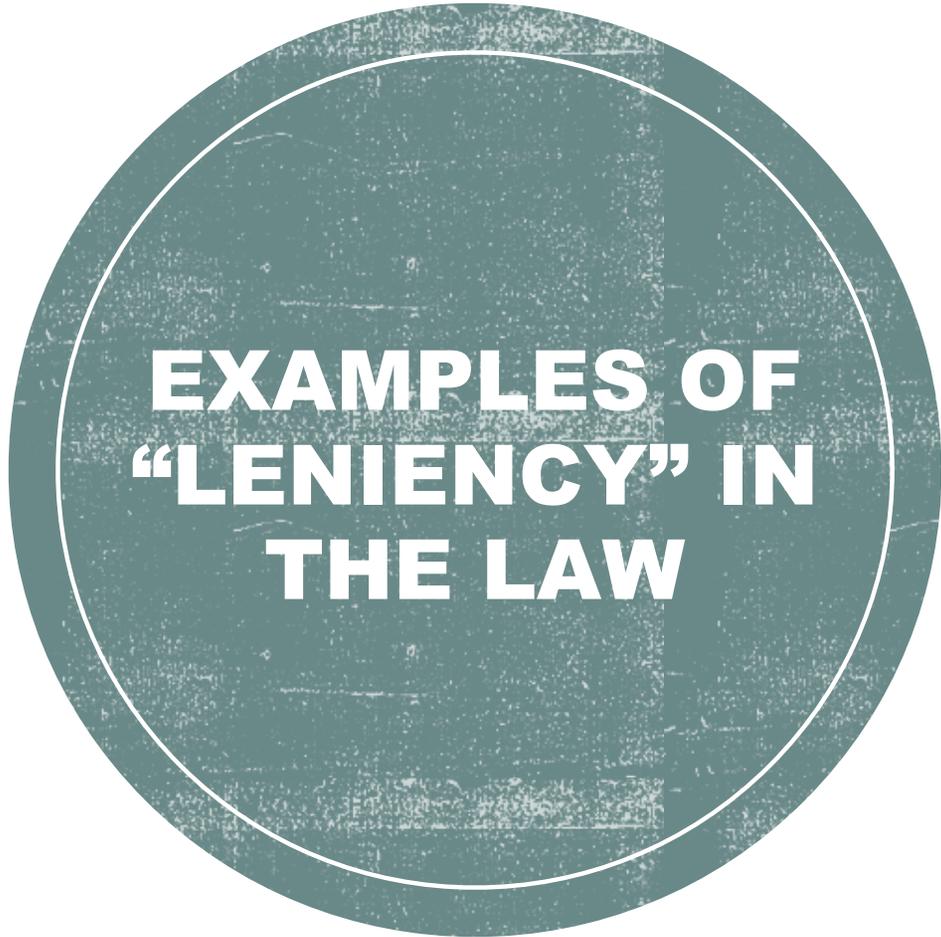
And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape.” And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slaughtered them there.



Summary

- There are many examples of carrying out the Law to the letter
- Many narratives assume you know the Law and can evaluate and track the story (e.g., Ruth)
- There are also just as many narratives which demonstrate Israel failed to follow the Law





**EXAMPLES OF
“LENIENCY” IN
THE LAW**



Example 1: After Strange Fire

16 Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering, and behold, it was burned up! And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the surviving sons of Aaron, saying, 17 “Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary, since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? 18 Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You certainly ought to have eaten it in the sanctuary, as I commanded.” (Lev 10:16–18)



Example 1: After Strange Fire

19 And Aaron said to Moses, “Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and yet such things as these have happened to me! If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the LORD have approved?” 20 And when Moses heard that, he approved. (Lev 10:19–20)



Example 2: Eating Holy Bread

Then David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David, trembling, and said to him, “Why are you alone, and no one with you?” 2 And David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, ‘Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.’ I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. 3 Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here.” 4 And the priest answered David, “I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread—if the young men have kept themselves from women.” (1 Sam 21:1–4)



Example 2: Eating Holy Bread

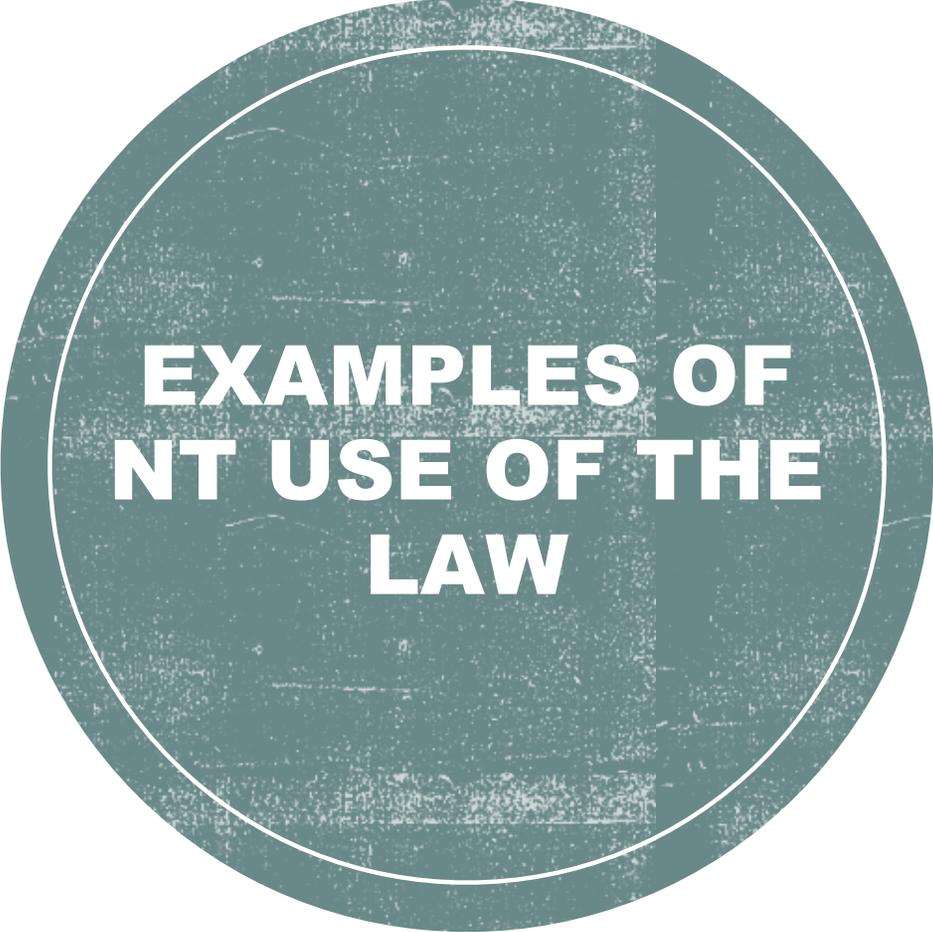
8 Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange [the bread] before the LORD regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever. 9 And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the LORD's food offerings, a perpetual due." (Lev 24:8–9)



Summary

- The Law was not meant to be blindly followed without consideration of context (“letter of the law” vs. “spirit of the law”)
- The Law was not exhaustive, but mean to be instructive on how to live in a variety of scenarios
- Laws and principles were often combined to help work through scenarios





**EXAMPLES OF
NT USE OF THE
LAW**



Changes from OT to NT

- Mosaic covenant gives way to new covenant
- Believers are no longer “under the Law” but are guided “by the Spirit”
- If Principlism is correct, we should see the principles behind the laws have continuing validity, while at the same time the applicability of the law changes based on the covenantal and contextual situation



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



Example 1: Jesus in Matt 5

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.

Matthew 5:21–22



Tracing the Principle

God Created Man in His Image (Gen 1:26-27)

→ “You shall not murder” (i.e., value life) (Deut 5:17)

→ “Don’t get angry with or mistreat your brother” (Matt 5:22)

App: Because man is made in the image of God, he is to be respected

Creation Principles

→ General Application

→ Specific Application



Example 2: Paul on Incest

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. (1 Cor 5:1–2)



Paul's Source for Morality

Lev 18:7a	Lev 18:8	1 Cor 5:1c
<p>ἀσχημοσύνην πατρός σου καὶ ἀσχημοσύνην μητρός σου οὐκ ἀποκαλύψεις, μήτηρ γάρ σου ἐστίν. (LXX)</p> <p>You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father and the <u>nakedness of your mother</u>, for <u>she is your mother</u> (my translation).</p>	<p>ἀσχημοσύνην <u>γυναϊκὸς</u> <u>πατρός</u> σου οὐκ ἀποκαλύψεις, ἀσχημοσύνη πατρός σου ἐστίν. (LXX)</p> <p>You shall not uncover the nakedness of the <u>wife of your father</u>; it is the nakedness of your father (my translation).</p>	<p>ὥστε <u>γυναῖκά</u> τινὰ <u>τοῦ</u> <u>πατρὸς</u> ἔχειν. (NA²⁸)</p> <p>That someone is having the <u>wife of his father</u> (my translation).</p>



Connections between Lev and 1 Cor

Incest	Lev 18:6–18; 20:11	1 Cor 5:1–13
Homosexuality	Lev 18:22; 20:13	1 Cor 6:9
Idolatry	Lev 18:21; cf. 19:4	1 Cor 10:7; cf. 6:9
Imitating God	Lev 19:2	1 Cor 11:1
Not Causing Stumbling	Lev 19:14	1 Cor 8:9
Warning Against Spiritual Prostitution	Lev 20:5	1 Cor 6:12–20



Similarity but with Change

- Paul still derives his moral ethic on sexuality from the laws
- There is no mention of the death penalty associated with the law, but rather excommunication from the church (not society)
- Paul's language still appeals to Leviticus as helping define morality (cf. 1 Cor 6:9)
- The Law retains a didactic function while no longer holding a normative function



Tracing the Principle

God Created Male and Female for Marriage (Gen 2)

→ “You shall not commit adultery” (i.e., respect marriage) (Deut 5:18)

→ “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife”
(Lev 18:8)

App: Because God designed marriage between one man and woman of “different flesh” man is not to pervert it

Creation Principles

→ General Application

→ Specific Application



Example 3: Muzzling an Ox

Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? 9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Does he not certainly speak for our sake? (1 Cor 9:8–10)



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



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 the Principle

God created work and the compensation for work (Gen 1–3)

- “No False Witness” (i.e., ensure justice for one another) (Deut 5:20)
- “Ensure fairness for even an ox” (Deut 25:4)
- “Fairly pay the minister” (1 Cor 9)

App: Because God designed work and the compensation which comes from it, animals and people should be granted due compensation for their work—that is fair

Creation Principles

- General Application
- Specific Application



Further Study

- My Blog/Podcast – biblesojourner.com/petergoeman.com
- David A. Dorsey, “The Law of Moses and the Christian: A Compromise,” *JETS* 34, no. 3 (Sept 1991): 321–334.
- Thomas Schreiner, *40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2010).
- Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013).
- Roy Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians* (2017)

