

God's Law and the Christian, part 4

God's Law and
the Christian -
Message

**Obeying the law
of Christ out of
love for Christ is a
necessary pursuit
for the believer
who is under the
New Covenant.**

“Legalism”



- Legalism replaces grace with law where God has appointed grace to be the cause of change
- Adding the Law to salvation
- Sanctification by keeping the Law

Richard Sibbes

Notice the difference in the covenants, “between Moses and Christ. Moses, without any mercy, breaks all bruised reeds, and quenches all smoking flax. For the law requires personal, perpetual and perfect obedience from the heart, and that under a most terrible curse, but gives no strength. It is a severe task master, like Pharoah’s, requiring the whole tale of bricks and yet giving no straw. Christ comes with blessing after blessing, even upon those whom Moses had cursed, and with healing balm for those wounds which Moses had made”

Reconstructionism

“Theonomy—also known as “dominion theology” and “Christian reconstructionism”—is a worldview that foresees a progressive domination of world government and society by Christianity until God's kingdom on earth becomes a reality”

Robert Thomas, “Theonomy and the dating of Revelation”, *The Master's Seminary Journal*, 5/2 (Fall 1994), p. 185

Reconstructionism

“The theonomic postmillennialist sees the gradual return to biblical norms of civil justice as a consequence of widespread gospel success through preaching, evangelism, missions, and Christian education. The judicial-political outlook of Reconstructionism includes the application of those justice-defining directives contained in the Old Testament legislation”

Kenneth L. Gentry, in *The Millennium and Beyond*, Gundry and Bock, eds., p. 19

Reconstructionism

“The nations will be disciplined and will obey the Lord’s word (Matt. 28:18-20). The kingdom of Christ will come to dominate the kingdoms of this world (Rev. 11:15). And as God’s kingdom comes, his will shall be more and more done on earth (Matt. 6:10), both in the church (Mal. 1:11) and in the political realm (Ps. 72).”

Greg L. Bahnsen, “The Theonomic Reformed Approach to Law and Gospel”, in *Five Views on Law and Gospel*, p. 121

Questions for Reconstructionists

Is it our job to set up godly governments?

- The NT says nothing about how to set up a government.
- We don't have apostles today so who will decide what the new government should be like?



Questions for Reconstructionists



How can we have the kingdom without the King?

- The kingdom drew near when Jesus the King drew near (Lk 10:9-11; 21:25-31)
- The King will be present when His kingdom arrives (Isa 9:6-7; 40:11; Ezek 37:24; Zech 2:10-11; 6:12-13; 14:16; Mic 5:4; 7:14; Mt 2:6; Lk 1:32-33)
- We are citizens of that country and are His ambassadors

Questions for Reconstructionists

What about Jesus and the apostles' teaching that there will be a great tribulation before the return of the King?

- The great tribulation immediately precedes Jesus' return (Mt 24:21, 29-30, 36-39)
- Before Jesus returns "the apostasy comes first" (2 Thess 2:1-5)



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Questions for Reconstructionists



Is the harsh rhetoric of popular Reconstructionist teachers OK?

- R. J. Rushdoony
 - Lack of Christ-like character throughout his work, “The Institutes of Biblical Law”
 - calls people “antinomian” for simply raising a question
 - Said Calvin’s discussion of biblical love is a “vein of antinomianism” and close to liberalism
 - Scathing remarks about pastors who don’t teach what he teaches

John Frame, *Westminster Theological Journal*, review

Questions for Reconstructionists

Is it OK to evade parts of God's law?

- Mark 7:1-23
- Mt 23:23 “weightier provisions of the Law”
- What about mercy, love, fruit of the Spirit, the Beatitudes?



Weightier Provisions of God's Law

The “weightier provisions” of the law are more central to how we reflect God’s character in our attitudes and conduct. So, they carry more force in how we are to be holy as God is holy. Those must come first in our lives, then other parts of God’s timeless moral requirements must follow. Jesus said we must do both (Mt 23:23).

Timeless Moral Requirements	<u>Love</u> God and neighbor, “weightier” laws, worship Yahweh only, no idols, shall not take His name in vain, honor father and mother, shall not murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet, love enemies
Weightier Aspects	★ <u>Love</u> God and neighbor, justice, mercy, faithfulness, kindness, walk humbly with God
Heart of Law	“You shall <u>love</u> the Lord with all your heart and <u>love</u> your neighbor as yourself”
Requirement	“You shall be holy as I am holy”
Foundation	God’s Character: Holy, Just, Righteous, Faithful, Merciful, Love, Gracious, Forgiving

God's Law Over Time

	Old Covenant	New Covenant	Eternal State
Law in Time	Law of Moses: Moral law, ceremonial law, case law	Law of Christ: (Timeless moral requirements)	Law of Christ: (Timeless moral requirements)
Timeless Moral Requirements	Love God and neighbor, “weightier” laws, worship Yahweh only, no idols, shall not take His name in vain, honor father and mother, shall not murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet, love enemies		
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