

Lecture 8-Gospel & Law**Prayer**

Almighty God, Thou hast willed to shew Thyself so intimately to us, and also daily chooses to confirm us in Thy truth. Grant we may turn aside neither to the right nor to the left, but depend wholly on Thy word and so cleave to Thee that no errors of the world may lead us astray. May we stand firm in that faith which we have learned from Thy law, from the prophets, and the Gospel, wherein Thou hast more clearly shown Thyself through Christ, that we may finally enjoy thy full and perfect glory being transfigured into it, at last attaining that inheritance acquired for us by the blood of Thine only begotten Son. Amen.

Gospel & Law

I. Review of Book I and Book II, 1-5

- A. The fact of the fall (2, 6, 1)
- B. The impossibility of a natural theology (2, 6, 1)
- C. The need for a redeemer (2, 6, 1)

II. The Redeemer (2, 6)

- A. Christ “comprehends all ages” (2, 6, 1)
- B. Gospel (law), Gospel

III. The Law (2, 7 & 8)

- A. The form of the law: accommodation (2, 7, 2)
- B. The unity of the law — commentaries on Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy arranged in the form of a harmony under the headings of the Ten Commandments
- C. Types of law
 - 1. Ceremonial law
 - a. The ceremonial law most effectively carried the Gospel
 - b. But empty until Christ is revealed
 - c. In NT times, it is abrogated not in regard to meaning of “effect” but in regard to “use” (2, 7, 16 and 4, 20, 15)
 - d. Encouraged piety, but was not piety
 - 2. Civil law
 - a. God’s laws for Israel
 - b. Abrogated not in their principles—love and justice/equity—but in their specific forms (4, 20, 14–16 and *Sermons on Ephesians* 6:5–9)
 - c. Civil laws for modern states are not to be based on the details of Old Testament legislation but on natural/moral law
 - 3. Moral law
 - a. “True and eternal rule of righteousness” (4, 20, 15)
 - b. For all people, everywhere and in all times
 - c. Summarized in the Ten Commandments; explained in the Sermon on the Mount
 - d. Abrogated not in content or observance but only in the sense that it may no longer bind the conscience of believers “with a curse” (2, 7, 14 & 15)
- D. “Uses” of the (moral) law
 - 1. Condemnation
 - a. Text: Romans 3:20; 5:20
 - b. Figure: “mirror” (2, 7, 7)
 - 2. Restraint (of society in general) and protection (of the elect)
 - a. Text: 1 Timothy 1:9, 10

- b. Figure: "halter" (2, 7, 10)
- 3. Guidance ("principal use") for believers — teaching, exhortation
 - a. Text: Psalm 119:105
 - b. Figures: "lamp," "whip" (2, 7, 12) — but not "a rigorous enforcement officer"
- 4. Calvin's third use of the law and the Calvinist tradition; cf. with Luther
- E. Explanation of the moral law
 - 1. The law is inward — "purity of heart" (2, 8, 6)
 - 2. Purpose of the law determines it's meaning (2, 8, 6)
 - 3. The opposite is included in the command or prohibition (2, 8, 9)
 - 4. There are two tables: love for God and love for people (2, 8, 11)
 - 5. The law is complete (2, 8, 5)

For Further Study

Holwerda, David, ed. "Law and Gospel in Calvin and Paul." *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin*.

Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976.

Author of the article is Andrew Banstra.

Barker, William & Godfrey, W. Robert, ed. "Calvin and Theonomy." *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*.

Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1990.

Godfrey summarizes Calvin's view as follows: "He believes that the moral law of God undergirds all specific laws and that the specific laws of Moses expressed that moral law for Israel in its unique historical circumstances. The civil laws of Moses as a whole are abrogated in the New Covenant; though the equity or moral foundation of those laws remains." pp. 299-311.

McKim, Donald K., ed. "Christ, the Law and the Christian." *Readings in Calvin's Theology*. Grand

Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.

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