GOD IS JUST

A Defense of the Old Testament Civil Laws

Biblical Theocracy, Justice, and Slavery versus Humanistic Theocracy, “Justice,” and Slavery

STEVE C. HALBROOK
God is Just:

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Theonomy Resources Media
This book is dedicated to Jesus Christ, Lord of lords and King of kings.
“Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter.” (Isaiah 59:14)

“No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.” (Isaiah 59:4) (NKJV)

“Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just.” (Ezekiel 33:17)

“Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed speedily, the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil.” (Ecclesiastes 8:11)

“This city has aroused my anger and wrath, from the day it was built to this day, so that I will remove it from my sight because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah that they did to provoke me to anger—their kings and their officials, their priests and their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They have turned to me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction.” (Jeremiah 32:31-33)
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I also want to extend thanks to Buddy Hanson (of www.graceandlaw.com) and Daniel F. N. Ritchie (of Reformed Worldview Books, available at www.lulu.com). I am humbled and privileged to have two of the next-generation theonomic writers contribute a forward (Hanson) and an appendix (Ritchie). Their writings are important contributions to theonomic thought. Hanson’s motivational writing style is a tremendous asset, as it helps one see the need to actually live out God’s law, instead of just being content to learn about it. And Ritchie’s ability to research and systematize theonomic thought is taking theonomic scholarship to a new level.

In addition, I want to extend gratitude to Michael H. Warren, Jr. (of www.christianciv.com). It was an enormous blessing to have Warren, another important next-generation theonomic writer, critique Appendix
A. Moreover, some of his insights—which we incorporated into the book—were very helpful in appendices B and F.

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A special, special thanks to my wife, for making the cover design, assisting with the formatting, and most of all, for patiently standing by my side throughout the writing of this book.

Most of all, thanks to God (my heavenly Father, Lord and Savior, and Helper), to Whose grace I credit everything in this book that is in accordance with His Truth.
A DISCLAIMER REGARDING SOURCES

This book cites an abundance of authors, many of whom profess to be Christian. No citation however is necessarily an endorsement of any particular author’s theological view of the gospel.

This is because while some of those cited do hold to an orthodox view of Christianity—salvation by Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, apart from works—others hold to heretical forms of Christianity, such as Roman Catholicism, Arminianism, and the Federal Vision. (Let us be clear, however, that we don’t believe every single professing member of these latter groups is not a Christian; but one who truly affirms one of these heresies in his heart has denied the gospel, and therefore Christianity.) And so while we might recognize a particular author’s views regarding any given topic covered in this book, we do not necessarily agree with his views on the gospel.

Since this book advocates theonomy (i.e., God’s law applied to all areas of life, including the civil realm), our biggest concern is with the Federal Vision (FV), which has proponents in theonomic circles. Theonomy has at times been slanderously charged with promoting the FV heresy. This is a complete misunderstanding of theonomy, and while this book cites some FV proponents (e.g., Douglas Wilson and James Jordan), as well as works from a pro-FV organization (Covenant Media, although the author we cite, Greg L. Bahnsen, did not advocate FV theology), we unapologetically consider their Roman-Catholic-like system of works-based salvation as a damnable heresy.

For reading on the dangerous heresies of the Federal Vision, we recommend the following:


We also want to distance ourselves from another heresy fortunately embraced by some professing theonomists called “kinism.” While, physically speaking, there is only one race (Adam’s),¹ kinism holds that there are several physical races (which they distinguish on the basis of skin color) instead of one.

Thus kinism maintains that blacks, whites, and Asians should be geographically isolated from one another, and that social orders should be devoid of “racial” diversity. This is a direct attack on Christian fellowship between those of different skin colors and therefore a direct attack on church unity itself. As such, if any authors we cite hold to this heresy, we condemn their kinist views. To our knowledge, the closest any theonomist we cite that comes to this is Francis Nigel Lee, although we don’t believe he is fully a kinist.

¹ Spiritually-speaking, there are two races—the elect and the reprobates. As God told the serpent after the Fall: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (emphases mine) (Genesis 3:15). Thus the Fall didn’t produce racial division along physical lines, but spiritual lines. This is why the Bible forbids Christians from marrying non-Christians, but does not forbid blacks from marrying whites, or Hispanics from marrying Asians, etc. For Christians, when it comes to marriage the issue is whether the other person is a Christian, regardless of skin color.
For more on the kinist heresy, we recommend the following:

PREFACE

This book is a defense of God’s law, particularly, a defense of God’s law as applied to the realm of civil government (which is mostly found in the Older Testament). Thus it is a book on Christian apologetics, in an area much neglected in apologetical literature. Biblical theocracy, justice, and slavery are not areas Christian apologists tend to defend, let alone hold to.

These are areas that most professing Christians in America are simply embarrassed by. We suspect much of it has to do with the popularity of Dispensationalism, which denies that the Old Testament is a relevant standard of ethics for today.

Much of it also has to do with indoctrination by our humanistic culture. According to our culture, religious pluralism in the civil realm is good, but religious exclusivism in the civil realm—such as biblical theocracy—is evil. Also according to our culture, man is the ultimate standard of civil justice; God’s standard of civil justice as revealed in the Bible is considered outdated and primitive. And finally, our culture says that slavery in any context is absolutely evil and racist, with the result that the Bible’s endorsement of certain forms of slavery is considered evil and racist.

This book takes our culture and its attacks on the Bible to task. It defends each of the three areas we mentioned (biblical theocracy, justice, and slavery) and cuts humanistic opposition down to size by its own self-destructive foolishness, and, most importantly, by the sword of God’s word. When the smoke clears at the end of the book, humanism is but a rotting corpse; God’s truth and God’s truth alone remains standing. “Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Cor. 1:20).

In addition, we include several appendices that defend biblical civil law in other ways. In Appendix A, we make a case from the Bible for the abiding validity of the Older Testament civil code. In Appendix B, we answer common objections raised from the Bible against our view.
In Appendix C, we critique the argument that natural law alone is sufficient for civil government. Appendix D refutes popular American political philosophies, and Appendix E critiques the compromises of the Christian Right.

In addition, we have Appendix F, which addresses whether the Bible considers the rape of an unbetrothed virgin a capital offense. We address this since we argue in this book that the Bible considers rape in general to be a capital crime, although many believe that the Bible teaches that this death penalty only applies to one who rapes a brethrothed woman.\(^2\) Finally, Appendix G, by Daniel F. N. Ritchie, addresses misunderstandings of our position on biblical civil law; makes a biblical case for our position; and also demonstrates that our position is not a radical historical aberration.

Our position is often called “theonomy.” Theonomy technically means “God’s law” (theos means God, nomos means law). All true Christians are actually theonomists, since all true Christians uphold God’s law (while sometimes disagreeing on the validity of certain laws for today, such as the Older Testament civil code). All who are born again have the law in their hearts and thus will naturally love God’s law and seek to obey it (albeit imperfectly). Of course, it must be understood that works play absolutely no role in saving faith; rather, good works are the natural fruit in someone whom God has already granted saving faith.

While all true Christians are theonomists in the sense just described, those who identify themselves as theonomists (myself included) tend to emphasize the applicability of the Bible’s moral commands in both testaments in all areas of life, including the civil realm. Such Christians are most known for holding to the abiding validity of the Older Testament civil code.

Unfortunately, due to misrepresentations by some critics, the word theonomy carries a lot of baggage. Besides misunderstandings of what theonomists believe politically (much of which we clear up in this book), some wrongly believe that to be a theonomist is to hold to

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\(^2\) We are only speaking in the context of a man raping a woman. Those who believe the death penalty doesn’t apply to a man who rapes an unbetrothed woman would tend to hold that the death penalty does apply to a man who rapes another man on the grounds that the Bible considers sodomy a capital offense.
salvation by works. But while there are in fact professing theonomists who do hold to salvation by works—such as those in the Federal Vision camp—theonomy and salvation by works do not go hand-in-hand—they are two distinct issues.

An orthodox theonomist, such as myself, would simply hold that God’s law is a Christian’s standard of obedience—it is not a standard for becoming a Christian. A true Christian is saved through faith apart from the works of the law, and after becoming a Christian, he seeks to obey God’s commands out of submission and gratitude. But not only is God’s law a standard of living for the Christian, but God’s civil law is given to the state as a necessary means of justice and criminal restraint.
FORWARD
by Buddy Hanson
Christian Worldview Resources Center
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Has God indeed told us how to live?
Do His Rules Really Matter?

Steve Halbrook has written a very compelling book about the necessity to apply God’s revealed rules (His laws) to every aspect of our lifestyle. There are several unbiblical excuses for having a low regard for God’s Word, and the vast majority of American churches have used one or more of them throughout the 20th and into the 21st centuries. Even though church and denomination leaders can blow a lot of impressive sounding smoke for disobeying God’s instructions on how to live, work, play, raise our children, self-govern ourselves and worship Him, Steve’s book serves as God’s “huff and puff” to blow their self-serving house completely down. With God’s grace, *God Is Just: A Defense Of The Old Testament Civil Laws* will be used to bring American Christians to repentance and back to honoring God’s Word through their daily decisions.

Since I graduated from a football factory, instead of a seminary, and have the heart of a third base coach, instead of a pastor, I’m going to cut through all of the fancy-sounding theological jargon and get to the bottom line of why Steve’s book is necessary, and why it can help you, your family and friends to live a more consistent and God-honoring lifestyle. This brief introduction will assist you in answering several pivotal questions that relate to the way you live-out your faith. By thinking through these, you will be prepared for Steve’s explanation of why God’s Wisdom (His laws) is far superior to man’s wisdom. Of course, you already know this, but if you’re like the typical American Christian, it is probably comfortably nestled in the recesses of your brain. Hopefully, these points will assist you in bringing it to the forefront of your thinking and behaving.
• Should the rules by which we live be determined by God or man?
• Do we really want to model Eve’s behavior, instead of Jesus’ behavior?
• Do we live in God’s meaningful and orderly cause-and-effect universe, or in man’s imagined meaningless, random and chaotic universe?
• How do we get from where our culture “is” to where it “ought” to be?
• Are we living in the “last days,” and if so, what will living according to God’s laws accomplish?

Let’s expand the above title to: “Do the Rules Really Matter for Members?” Then, ask ourselves three basic questions:

• You’ve just been appointed coach for a youth sports team. Should you teach them the fundamentals of how to play the game, or let them figure it out, since they are members of the team?

• You’re going to serve as the Scout Leader for a Boy Scout troop. Should you teach them the fundamentals of being a Boy Scout, or let them figure it out for themselves since they are members of your troop?

• You’ve just been selected as Group Coordinator for your city’s annual United Way fundraising drive. Your team is made up of volunteers from across the community who will, in turn, contact the area’s businesses. Before they go out and begin making their calls, should you instruct them in which volunteer agencies the money will support, and how those agencies will use the money to assist people in your community? Or should you let them figure it out for themselves since they are members of your team?

In each of these scenarios, the answer is obvious, unless you want to have a very short career: “I must carefully, and systematically teach my team members what is expected of them.” You might add, “It would be foolish to imagine that my team members will automatically know how to perform their duties without clear instructions.”
• Why, then, do you think it is that once a person makes a profession of faith (becoming a member of God’s family and Christ’s Kingdom), his church doesn’t begin a continuing process of systematically instructing him how to “conform his lifestyle to biblical ethics?”

The usual answer goes something like: “He has been saved by God’s grace, not by keeping God’s laws, so there is no reason he should learn to conform his behaviors to God’s laws.” While it is true that each of us has been saved by God’s merciful grace, and that it is impossible for us to be saved by keeping His laws, it is a serious misunderstanding of Scripture to imagine that God’s laws are not important. For example:

• Which behaviors is the apostle Paul urging us to “put off” from our former non-Christian lifestyle, and which behaviors is he urging us to “put on” in our new Christian lifestyle, if he is not referring to God’s commandments?

Indeed, how are we expected to know that we should “honor our parents, not kill, cheat, steal, lie or covet,” without being instructed in Commandments five through ten? In explaining what it means to “love our neighbor as ourselves,” doesn’t the Apostle Paul expressly refer to the Decalogue, by saying that we should, “not commit adultery…not murder…not steal…not bear false witness, [and] not covet?” Does not Paul also instruct us to, “not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God”?

And how are we expected to know whose authority is absolute in establishing our daily ethics if we aren’t systematically taught the first four commandments? When Paul states that “the law is holy, and the

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3 Quote is a paraphrase of Romans 12:1-2.
4 Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3.
5 Exodus 20:12-17.
6 Quote is a paraphrase of Leviticus 19:18.
8 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.
9 Exodus 20:3-11.
commandment holy and just and good,”¹⁰ is he not agreeing with King David’s proclamations: “I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart.”¹¹ “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.”¹²

To cavalierly say, “We can figure out how to live by depending upon our own wisdom,” is to repeat Eve’s mistake when Satan approached her. Indulge me while I update her encounter with Satan:

And Satan said to twenty-first century American Christians, “Has God indeed said that you should not live exclusively by your wisdom? In this most advanced technological age, should you really confine your daily ethics to those on the pages of your Bible? Six thousand years ago, people didn’t even have cell phones, much less the internet. In this age of instant information, aren’t you capable of determining good and evil on your own?”

Excuse the paraphrase of the first three verses of the third chapter of Genesis, but the parallel fits, and surveys reveal that approximately seven out of ten adult Christians are making the identical error of Eve,¹³ when confronted with the same ethical question.¹⁴ Only three out of ten American Christians believe that the Bible is inspired and contains no errors. What this means is that seven out of ten American Christians live as though it is necessary to “help God out” by adding their wisdom to His! Have we forgotten that one of the main reasons Jesus came to earth was to pay our sin debt by living a perfectly obedient life, dying and then overcoming death for us because our sinful wisdom made us incapable of discerning the correct way to live?¹⁵

No wonder King Solomon cautions us to “Keep our heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”¹⁶

• Do we really want to model Eve’s behavior, instead of Jesus’ behavior?

¹⁰ Romans 7:12.
¹¹ Psalm 40:8.
¹² Psalm 119:97.
¹³ Genesis 3:4-6.
¹⁵ Genesis 6:5; 8:21; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-22.
¹⁶ Quote is a paraphrase of Proverbs 4:23.
As we all agree, the first thing we set out to do when we join an office or sports “team” is to find out the rules of behavior so we can put forth our best performance. Yet, when we become a member of God’s “team,” which is far and away the most important “team” we will ever be a member of, we apparently don’t give a second thought to giving our best efforts toward conforming our daily performance exclusively to His rules! To live in this manner is to imply that the only “performance” required in living out our faith is to evangelize our non-Christian neighbors, and then merely “show up” for life by living in quiet desperation as we keep our beliefs private by not imposing them upon our neighbors, or our civil rulers (legislators and judges)!

**God’s Grace vs. God’s Law, or God’s Grace and Law?**

Bring up the terms “God’s grace,” and “God’s law” and the typical twenty-first century American Christian will begin thinking in terms of conflict, instead of compatibility. Like Manchurian Candidates, they say, “We’re New Testament Christians who are ‘led by the Spirit,’ and are no longer ‘under the law.’” Or, they may say, “We are ‘not under law but under grace’!” Both of these statements are from the Apostle Paul, which is very curious in light of how we’ve seen that he “loved” God’s law, and urges us to keep it. Since we know that the Bible doesn’t contradict itself, the issue here is not that the apostle taught one group of Christians one thing, and another group something else, but is rather a matter of today’s Christians incorrectly defining his words.

When Paul teaches that we are no longer “under law,” he means that since we have been saved by God’s grace, we are no longer under the impossible requirement to perfectly keep all of God’s laws in order to be saved. Jesus has taken care of that for us, as Paul explains to the Corinthians: “You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” However, this in no way, shape or form means that God’s law is useless. Far from it, God’s laws provide us with His perfect blueprint for how we should live.

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17 See How to De-Program Yourself from All of the Blasphemous Ideas You Learned in Public School, Buddy Hanson (Hanson Group, 2009).
18 Galatians 5:18.
19 Romans 6:14.
20 Quote is a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 6:11.
out our faith. To put it another way, God’s laws reveal His will for how we should live, work, play, raise our children, self-govern ourselves and worship Him!

While we don’t “obtain our new life” in Christ by living according to God’s law, we do “live our new life” by keeping it!

Christianity differs from all false religions in many ways, but its primary distinction is that it is an objective, black and white religion. It includes no subjective elements that are based upon pure emotions, or exclusively personal instructions from God. If someone says, “I have a word from God that…,” “A strong feeling is leading me to…,” your reply could be, “That’s very interesting, would you mind showing me what portion of Scripture teaches that?” Whether or not their search of the Scriptures confirms the “message” they have received is truly from God, you will be reminding them of a truth they already know, which is that we should re-think God’s ethics before making our decisions since our heart is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.”

- How are we to live “in Christ” if we have no objective, black and white directions for how to do that?

The key to understanding that the terms “God’s law,” and “God’s grace” are compatible, instead of conflicting is to remember that we’re talking about holiness, not salvation, or, if you prefer, sanctification, not justification. The purpose of God’s law is to restrain us from sinning, by “tutoring” us in how to discern between godly and ungodly behavior. Keeping God’s law does not “keep us saved,” Jesus has already done that for us. In other words, the purpose of God’s law is to instruct us in how to live according to God’s will.

It is critical to recognize that to attempt to live without God’s law is, in effect, to live according to one’s subjective speculation, instead of according to God’s objective revelation. When the apostle John cautions us to “not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth,” his point

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21 Jeremiah 17:9.
22 Romans 8:1.
25 1 John 3:18.
is that we are to live according to God’s revealed ethics, not those we
make up! Jesus makes this very clear: “If you love Me, keep My
commandments.” 26 Jesus adds, “If you keep My commandments, you
will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments
and abide in His love.” 27 John chimes in at this point with:

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His
commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep
His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But
whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in
him. By this we know that we are in Him. (1 John 2.3-5)

**Do We Live in a Purposeful and Orderly Cause-and-Effect
Universe? Or do We Live in a Meaningless, Random and
Chaotic Universe?**

Positive pronouncements of receiving God’s blessings in return
for our faithful and consistent obedience are dotted throughout the Old
and New Testaments. Consider, for example, Jehovah’s promise to
Abraham that, “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,
because you have obeyed My voice.” 28 Another early example of God
blessing obedience to His counsel is when the Hebrew midwives
reverently and respectfully “feared Him and He provided households
for them.” 29 Jehovah commanded the Jews who were about to go into the
Promised Land to not live according to the ethics of the people of
Canaan, but to “observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk
in them: I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore keep My statutes
and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the
LORD.” 30

Non-Christians like to say, “knowledge is power,” because
according to their worldview people commit crimes, or are poor because
they don’t know better. In distinct contrast to their worldview, we
understand that even though knowledge is important, people sin because
they are sinners, and not because of a lack of education. We also know

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26 John 14:15.
27 John 15:10.
29 Quote is a paraphrase of Exodus 1:17-21.
30 Leviticus 18:4-5.
that in order for knowledge to be “powerful,” it has to be applied.\footnote{1 Corinthians 10:31.} This is why Scripture repeatedly commands us to take action by applying biblical ethics to our various situations.\footnote{Philippians 2:12-13.} Since Moses and the Apostle Paul tell us: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them,” the thought that should be at the forefront of our thinking and decision-making is “What will the end be of those who do not obey the Gospel of God?”\footnote{1 Peter 4:17.}

If a non-Christian were to ask, “Who are you?” meaning what makes you and your lifestyle different from me and my lifestyle, what would you say? Since he knows that you believe in a Creator God and in heaven and hell, and that you attend church regularly, he is probably looking for an answer that doesn’t include those facts. What he wants to know is why the lifestyles of many Christians in twenty-first century America are practically indistinguishable from those of non-Christians. Indeed, his question may be a nice way of saying, “Why do you worship a God that apparently is culturally irrelevant?” After all, who could blame a non-Christian for being puzzled at our desire to attend weekly worship services, small group studies, and take the time to carefully teach our children about a God whose importance apparently only applies to the time after we leave this earth?

Hopefully, your answer would point out that a Christian lifestyle should be distinctively different from a non-Christian lifestyle since God’s revealed Word provides specific ethics by which we are to live, work, raise our children, worship God, and self-govern ourselves.

In addition, I would hope that your answer would include that while it is logical for non-Christians to live according to their self-centered agenda, and seek to bring honor to themselves, so is it logical for Christians to live an others-centered agenda by seeking to bring honor to God in all we do.\footnote{1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17}

“How do you know how to live an ‘others-centered’ life?” could well be the next question you are asked. Your answer, of course, could

\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{1 Corinthians 10:31.}
\item \footnote{Philippians 2:12-13.}
\item \footnote{Galatians 3:10 and Deuteronomy 27:26.}
\item \footnote{1 Peter 4:17.}
\item \footnote{1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17}
\end{itemize}
center on the Beatitudes in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount,36 and Paul’s counsel on which behaviors to “put on,” and which to “put off.”37 In all, your answer could emphasize that since God’s Word is true and man’s word is false, the only way to achieve results that are successful is to make certain that we conform our lifestyle to biblical ethics. In this way, the non-Christian could understand that professing to be a Christian means much more than attending church, and being involved in various church projects. In other words, being a Christian means much more than adding a few “good behaviors,” to one’s lifestyle, and deleting a few “bad behaviors.” Instead of attempting to live with one foot in Christ’s Kingdom, and one foot in man’s kingdom, a Christian lifestyle should reflect that a person loves and serves His Lord, Savior and King, Jesus Christ with his “whole heart, soul and mind.”38

A person’s lifestyle can’t help but reflect the lord of his life: either he lives according to the expectations of the triune God of the Bible, or he lives according to the expectations of man. It’s an either-or situation. Either we spend our time on earth being slaves to God, and being recipients of His positive consequences for ourselves and our culture, or we will be slaves to Satan, and receive negative consequences for ourselves and our culture.39

When Jehovah delivered His message to Jeremiah of the impending destruction of Israel and Judah, He made clear the cause-and-effect connection of living in His universe. In dispelling the mistaken notion of the Jews that since they were God’s special people, He wouldn’t bring negative consequences on them for their idolatry and flagrant disobedience, Jehovah begins with “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?”40 He then tells them that they have “done only evil before Me from your youth?”41

What do you think God thinks about our sending our children to God-hating public schools, where if any mention is made of Him it is derogatory?

36 Matthew 5.
37 Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3.
38 Quote is a paraphrase of Matthew 22:37.
39 Romans 6:5-7 and 16-22.
40 Jeremiah 32:26-27.
41 Quote is a paraphrase of Jeremiah 32:30.
Jehovah next explains that they “have provoked Him to anger,”\(^{42}\) because their civil rulers and they have “turned to Me the back, and not the face.”\(^{43}\)

**What do you think God thinks about our not insisting that our civil rulers conform their legislation to His laws?**

Jehovah concludes His message by stating: “This city…shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.”\(^{44}\) This is certainly not a pretty picture, and it was brought about because of the ancient Jews’ refusal to live by God’s ethics.\(^{45}\) How about twenty-first century America?

We profess to believe that “the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,”\(^{46}\) but does our lifestyle reflect that we really believe, and trust in God’s rules?

- When has living according to God’s wisdom proved to be a disappointment to you?
- When has living according to your wisdom proved to be a disappointment to God?

Hopefully you are honest enough to answer these two questions with, “Never,” and “Frequently.” May each of us humbly recognize that we have been mercifully called into God’s family and Christ’s Kingdom to be *doers* of His Word, not *editors* of it by picking and choosing only those parts to obey that most easily conform to our former non-Christian lifestyle.

**How Do We Get From Where Our Culture “Is,” to Where It “Ought” to Be?**

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\(^{42}\) Quote is a paraphrase of Jeremiah 32:31-32.

\(^{43}\) Jeremiah 32:33.

\(^{44}\) Jeremiah 32:36.

\(^{45}\) Nehemiah 9:30, Numbers 14:18, and Romans 9:21-23.

\(^{46}\) Hebrews 4:12.
Rev. Joe Morecraft tells his congregation, “You can’t get to the ‘ought’ from the ‘is’ if you ignore God’s divinely-ordained laws!” Both Christians and non-Christians want to be successful. Each of us wants a safe environment to raise our children and go about our vocation. Yet, both of us (should!) approach our prescriptions for culture’s ills from opposite perspectives. Since non-Christians don’t believe in a Creator God who brought the universe, and us, into existence for a specific purpose, they believe they are biological accidents with no absolute truths to guide them in their daily decisions. This means that they can’t refer to past civilizations in order to learn from their mistakes, because for them, the concept of truth, if it exists at all, is only for the moment. According to their worldview, what “works” today, may or may not “work” tomorrow. While we (should!) turn to the pages of revelation for God-centered cultural prescriptions, their prescriptions for improving culture revolve around the speculation of their man-centered logic, common sense, and pragmatism.

They believe that they can legislate their way out of their cultural problems, while we believe that since we have lived our way into them through our ungodly disobedience, we should live our way out of them through godly obedience. They believe that the best way to subdue foreign enemies is through preemptive military might, or “chariots and horses” as King David writes.47 But we (should!) believe and trust in the power of God’s word to bring our enemies to salvation. This is not to say that we don’t believe in strong armies and effective police forces to protect us, but only that they should not be our first or only tactic for attempting to bring about lasting peace.

- Are you a part of our ethical solution, or part of its problem?

Non-Christians can’t be blamed for their ungodly cultural agenda. They are merely being consistent with the ethics in which they profess to believe. The problem with our culture is that we are not presenting and promoting God’s prescriptions with as much vigor and persistence as they are. Whereas we can point to numerous civilizations throughout history that have been able to successfully sustain themselves by living according to biblical ethics, the non-Christians can’t point to a single one. Regardless of how well-intentioned, their ideas have always failed, and

47 Quote is a paraphrase of Psalm 20:7.
will continue to fail because they are based upon man’s reasoning, which is false, instead of upon God’s reasoning, which is true.

God has served His theological tennis ball into the court of twenty-first century American Christians. The question is: “Will we repent before we fill up God’s cup of wrath against us, or will we continue in our distrust in and disobedience to His revealed counsel, until He destroys us and turns to another body of Christians to lead the charge in bringing about His will on earth, as it is in heaven?”

Are We Living in the “Last Days,” and If We Are, What Good Will We Accomplish by Living According to God’s Laws?

When historians look back upon twenty and twenty-first century American Christians, one of the things that will no doubt be discussed is our seemingly unlimited fascination on predicting when Jesus will return. Even though Jesus tells us that “of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only,”48 we are attracted to anyone who is blasphemous enough to write a book, or present a seminar about their insights on His return, as if they are smarter than Jesus! As they say, “Don’t let the facts get in the way of a good story.”

Since there is no revelation concerning either the timing, or the signs of Jesus’ return, I will address the broader question of whether we are living in the “last days.” The answer is “Yes” to the 6,171 people who die each day in America. One person dies every 14 seconds. This translates into 187,714 people per month, and 2,252,571 per year. As creatures of God, we can neither control how many days we have been given upon this earth, nor can we determine when Jesus will make His triumphal return. What we can control is whether or not we live by God’s successful ethics, or man’s unsuccessful ethics. Since each of us leaves home each day with the hope of having a successful day, that means that we will live according to the ethics in which we have the most confidence. If we really believe in God, we will do our best to live according to His ethics, but if we really believe in man, we will do our best to live according to his ethics.49

48 Matthew 24:36.
• How do we prepare ourselves to exit from the tunnel of our homes onto life’s playing field?

Before a game, both football teams exit from the tunnel that leads from their dressing room to the playing field. They run out onto the field with excitement, and an expectation of winning. Which team wins will ultimately depend upon three things:

• The quality of their game plan;
• How well they are prepared; and
• How well they execute the plays.

Unfortunately, many of us don’t exit from the tunnel of our home and onto life’s playing field with an expectation of victory. Neither have we done our homework in preparing ourselves for the common objections we will receive from our non-Christian neighbors. Needless to say, having a deficiency in these two areas means that, on most days, we won’t have a very good execution of our beliefs (God’s ethics). Even though there is no biblical justification for willfully disobeying God, perhaps the most common reason is, “What can I do? My behavior can’t change anything. After all, I’m just a regular person.” Anyone having such a thought should remind themselves that, as Christians, they believe that God created a cause-and-effect universe and called us into His family to “crush Satan’s head”50 with our daily obedience. As sports coaches like to tell their players, “It’s not how you are doing, but what you are doing.” Their point is that by executing their plays the way they practice them, they will be successful on far more occasions than they will be unsuccessful. For example, let’s say you were on the free throw line with a couple of seconds to go in the game and your team is trailing by one point. How would you approach shooting the free throw? The correct way is to approach it the same way you would approach it if your team were ahead by ten points. When Michael Jordan was asked how it was that he made so many game-winning shots, he said, “I simply shot them the way I always shot them. It was the other team that choked at the end of the game. Sometimes they would guard me too close, and draw a foul, or they would be so careful not to foul me that I would have a wide open shot.” The lesson for us in this is that we know how God prefers for us to live, and we should not get caught up in thinking about what people will

50 Quote is a paraphrase of Genesis 3:15 and Romans 16:20.
think, but just do what we know to do, and trust-in and rely-upon God to bring about His intended results according to His eternally perfect timing.

Let’s look back at the three things that determine who wins most football games, and relate them to winning the culture war.

* The quality of their game plan:
  God has revealed a perfect plan for us.

* How well they are prepared:
  How is your daily spiritual practice?

* How well they execute the plays:
  How consistently do you incorporate biblical ethics into your daily lifestyle?

May we not forget that we are in the obedience business, and that God is in the results business! Since we believe that we “reap what we sow,” what could be better than reaping results from faithful obedience to God’s Life Plan (His laws)?

Yes, God’s Rules Really Matter!

The answer to Satan’s 6,000 year old question to Eve still rings in our ears with every decision we make: “Has God indeed said…” comes to us in various tempting packages as we go about our daily duties. The Bible presents two distinct models of behavior: Eve is the foremost example of a person who is dedicated to following Satan’s will, and Jesus is the foremost example of a person who is dedicated to following God the Father’s will. Paul promises us by dedicating our lives to follow God’s will we will not “be tempted beyond what we are able, and with every temptation will come a way of escape.” Since we are not perfect, we will have some days in which we are much better at resisting disobeying God than other days, but by “pressing toward the goal” of perfect obedience, we will find that we will bring far more honor to God

51 Quote is a paraphrase of Galatians 6:7.
52 Genesis 3:1.
55 Quote is a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 10:13.
56 Quote is a paraphrase of Philippians 3:12.
with our lifestyle, than if we live in a mediocre hit-and-miss fashion. We, of course, know all of this, but have too often managed to repress it in order to follow our will, instead of God’s will.

Indeed, as members of His family, God even motivates us to want to follow His will by “working in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure!”57 Following is an ethical grid through which each of us can evaluate our daily decision making to make certain that we are bringing honor to God in all we think, say and do.58

It could also prove helpful in comparing your current presuppositions about the application of God’s laws to the various aspects of your lifestyle. To quote the sixteenth century French philosopher Montaigne, “Nothing is as firmly held as what man knows least.” And, unless you have the blessing of being in a unique church, you may have been taught to believe erroneous applications, or should I say misapplications, about God’s laws.

**Ethical Grid for Daily Decision-Making**

Does it conform to God’s revealed ethics (rules)? **If it doesn’t disregard it!**

Does it model Eve’s behavior, or Jesus’ behavior? **If it doesn’t model Jesus’ behavior disregard it!**

Does it reflect God’s will, or man’s will? **If it doesn’t reflect God’s will disregard it!**

Does it falsely set God’s law against His grace? **If it does, disregard it!**

Does it demonstrate that we are being editors of God’s Word, or doers of His Word? **If our daily behaviors do not demonstrate that we are doers of God’s Word, we should disregard them!**

Does our daily spiritual practice prepare us to get from the “is” to the “ought?” **If our daily spiritual practice is not preparing us to apply biblical ethics to our cultural issues, we should disregard it.**

57 Quote is a paraphrase of Philippians 2:12-16.
58 1 Corinthians 10:31.
Does it demonstrate that our ultimate trust is in God’s *revelation* on how to live, or do we ultimately trust in our *speculation* (pragmatism, common sense, natural law, logic) in how to live? **If our behaviors don’t demonstrate that our ultimate trust is in God’s revelation, we should disregard them!**

Does it enable us to approach Jesus with confidence in case this is the “last day” we will be able to serve Him on the earth? **If it doesn’t we should disregard it.**
INTRODUCTION

God is just. But this glorious truth has been lost on post-Christian America. Either consciously or unconsciously, the typical American believes that our nation has evolved to the point that it no longer needs God. Gone are the “harsh” days, the typical American says, of God’s eternal condemnation of those who reject Christ. And gone are the “harsh” days, he adds, of society being under God’s civil laws. As it turns out (or so the typical American thinks), it was not man who was unjust all along—it was God! Now autonomous, America has cast off the restraint of God’s justice for its own version of justice. The nation has said against the Lord and His Anointed, “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us” (Ps. 2:3).

It is this secular humanistic philosophy as applied to the civil realm that inspires this book. Today, Americans everywhere take for granted that the civil code God revealed in the Older Testament (O.T.) is “harsh,” “barbaric,” “tyrannical,” etc. We hear such irreverent sloganizing as, “We can’t impose our views on others like in the Old Testament!”; “We can’t go back to stoning people!”; “Those laws reflected a primitive culture!”; etc., etc. These attacks on God’s honor have persisted too long, and must be answered.

Answering these attacks is especially pressing now. Since September 11, 2001, secular humanists have upped their attacks on the O.T. civil code, likening it to Islamic extremism. Moreover, several strident polemics against God and the O.T. civil code have recently been published by a group of intellectually influential neo-atheists.

For example, there is the blasphemously titled The God Delusion [sic], where Richard Dawkins calls God an “evil monster” for sanctioning the O.T. death penalties.59 Dawkins writes that “The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist,

infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”


Hitchens in another chapter equates a theocracy with a totalitarian state. Sam Harris, in *Letter to a Christian Nation*, says there are “obscene celebrations of violence ... throughout the Old and New Testaments.” And in *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*, Daniel C. Dennett thanks heaven that only a “dwindling minority” now believes blasphemy and adultery are crimes deserving the death penalty.

Virtually the entire American church is helpless against these attacks. In fact, the repugnance towards the O.T. civil code is so pervasive that even professing Christians have been affected. When confronted by non-Christians about the O.T. civil code, they withdraw in silent embarrassment. And when asked whether all or even some of the O.T. civil code should be implemented today, they sometimes even go so far as siding with the humanists in attacking the code.

Indeed, sometimes it is hard to tell whether the O.T. civil code is being attacked by Christians or outright humanists. Gary North’s analysis is correct: Christians today “call Old Testament law tyrannical, and they praise Greece and Rome.” It is sadly ironic that they reject Jerusalem for Athens, God’s justice for pagan injustice.

Unsurprisingly, the more God’s justice is ignored and attacked, the more injustice is accepted and praised. Throughout American history,

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60 Ibid., 51.
62 Ibid., 232.
humanism has gradually supplanted America’s Christian-influenced institutions. While America’s laws have always been far from perfectly just (and therefore far from perfect adherence to God’s law), over the past few decades they are reaching the heights of unprecedented injustice. For example, less than 10 years after the Civil Rights Acts were passed—where minorities were supposedly given more rights—humanistic law sanctioned the extermination of unborn black children—as well as unborn children of all races—in *Roe v. Wade*.

Lately, humanists are pushing hard to legalize “euthanasia” of the elderly and the mentally handicapped. Violent criminals are given extremely lenient sentences. Minor criminals are given extremely harsh sentences. Those who shouldn’t be considered criminals at all are considered criminals, and those who should be considered criminals are not. The state kidnaps children five days a week in order to indoctrinate them in public schools. Taxation and inflation are out of control. Perverse lifestyles are imposed on society. And the state is cracking down on the mention of Christ in the public square while simultaneously cracking down on the mention of the state in the private church service.

Such imperious humanism cannot be defeated by mere opposition. “[I]t is not possible to restrain the power of a false creed unless one repairs to a true one.”66 While the Christian Right is to be commended for some positive contributions, it ultimately finds itself powerless to stop humanism. Because it does not look to the O.T. for its political platform but rather conservative humanism, it lacks any objective anchor upon which to distinguish liberty from tyranny (see appendices D and E).

Therefore, given the escalating attacks on God’s justice—and consequently, the declining state of justice in America—this book seeks to ethically defend the O.T. civil code against humanism. This book is not an exegetical defense from the Bible to prove that it is the duty of nations to enforce the O.T. civil code today. Rather, as an ethical defense, this book takes the obligation of nations to keep these laws for granted. However, we do attempt a biblical defense of the O.T. civil

code’s abiding validity in Appendix A, and we attempt to answer some objections to this in Appendix B.

It is beyond the scope of this book to explain how to adapt these laws, which were given to an agrarian society, to a technological society such as ours. Moreover, this book is not intended as a primer on all the details of the O.T. civil code. It is rather a basic defense of areas of the code most frequently under attack: the civil code’s theocratic nature, crime and punishment (especially capital sanctions and execution methods), and laws regarding slavery.

Much of the defense clears up misconceptions about these laws (e.g., the absurd legend that says God’s law requires a child who refuses to do such things as take out the trash to be stoned). And, since much of the attacks leveled against the O.T. civil code are against its fundamental concepts (e.g., theocracy), much of this book defends the concepts themselves. For instance, much of the argument against biblical theocracy stands or falls on whether religiously neutral law is possible. Therefore, much space is given to examining and refuting the possibility of neutrality. And, in order to give humanistic critics of biblical law no ground to stand on, much attention is given to critiquing humanistic notions of justice.

Moreover, this is a defense only of what we believe to be O.T. standing law—not commands for unique circumstances. By standing law, we mean

*policy* directives applicable over time to classes of individuals (e.g., do not kill; children, obey your parents; merchants, have equal measures; magistrates, execute rapists), in contrast to particular directions for an individual (e.g., the order for Samuel to anoint David at a particular time and place) or positive commands for distinct incidents (e.g., God’s order for Israel to exterminate certain Canaanite tribes at a certain point in history).

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Furthermore, we are defending the moral judicial laws that apply to civil government, not judicial laws unique to Israel that have been abrogated in the New Covenant era. And, some moral judicial laws apply to civil government, while some don’t. For instance, the law about leaving gleanings from the harvest for the poor and the sojourner (Lev. 23:22; cf. 19:9) is not accompanied by a penalty to be carried out by the state if this law is violated.

On the moral judicial laws, Brian Schwertley writes:

These case laws are based upon the Ten Commandments and are moral in character, and as such, are binding on all nations, in all ages. Laws that reflect God’s moral character are as binding and perpetual as the Ten Commandments themselves. The moral case laws flesh out the Ten Commandments. They apply the various commandments to different situations. For example, the command “Thou shalt not kill” (Ex. 20:13) involves more than just murder. The moral case laws that apply the sixth commandment to society set forth rules: to protect life from accidental death and injury (Deut. 22:8); to protect society from dangerous, incorrigible criminals (Deut. 21:18-21); to protect citizens from hatred and personal vengeance (Lev. 19:18), and so on. These laws are moral; they are applications of the sixth commandment. To ignore the case laws, or to argue that the case laws are no longer binding, is to gut the moral law. It is, in a sense, a severe limiting of the Ten Commandments themselves, for they were always intended by God to be a summary of the moral law.69

Again, the moral judicial laws, including those that pertain to civil government of all nations, are to be distinguished from judicial laws that were unique to Israel. Schwertley writes,

The judicial law not only contained case laws that applied the Ten Commandments to the family and society, they also contained some laws that were local and temporal, that were never meant to apply to the nations outside of Israel. For example, the New

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Testament teaches that the land of Canaan was but a type of the believer’s citizenship in heaven (Heb. 11:8-16). The kingdom of God has been taken away from the Jewish nation and given to the church (Matt. 21:43). Therefore, laws regarding political loyalty to Israel and defending Israel with physical means are not applicable today. Laws which dealt specifically with the land of Israel (e.g., the laws of jubilee, the cities of refuge) also do not continue. The judicial law contained regulations designed to protect the lineage of the coming Messiah (e.g., levirate marriage and the requirement to keep plots of land within family bloodlines); with the coming of Jesus Christ, these laws are no longer necessary.\(^70\)

We also want to be clear that this is not a defense of ceremonial laws, such as Jewish holy days and laws regulating temple worship, animal sacrifices, and separation between Jews and Gentiles (e.g., dietary laws). The ceremonial system has been abrogated with the coming of Christ (e.g., Col. 2:17; Heb. 9:23, 24; Eph. 2:11-16). This may have ramifications for the applicability of the O.T. civil laws today. For instance, because the sacrificial system with its priests is abolished, perhaps the capital sanction against a priest’s daughter for prostituting herself (Lev. 21:9) is abolished (unless the underlying moral principle applies to daughters of church leaders in general, in which case the law may apply today to daughters of church elders).

Thus, with the abrogation of local and temporal laws, as well as ceremonial laws, when we assume the abiding validity of the O.T. civil laws, we do not assume this without any qualifications made in the New Testament (N.T.). Indeed, the entire Bible is relevant for political ethics; however, the O.T. has much more to say about political ethics than the N.T., and as such is the Bible’s main source of political ethics.

Our concern here is to defend the O.T. civil code by presupposing God’s Word as the ultimate authority for truth and ethics, while exposing humanistic approaches to truth and ethics for the inherent foolishness that they are (cf. Rom. 1:18-32). On this two-fold apologetic procedure Greg L. Bahnsen writes,

\(^{70}\) Ibid.
In Proverbs 26:4-5 we are instructed as to how we should answer the foolish unbeliever—how we should demonstrate that God makes foolish the so called “wisdom” of this world. “Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly lest he be wise in his own conceit.” … In the first place, the unbeliever should not be answered in terms of his own misguided presuppositions; the apologist should defend his faith by working within his own presuppositions. If he surrenders to the assumptions of the unbeliever, the believer will never effectively set forth a reason for the hope that is in him. He will have lost the battle from the outset, constantly being trapped behind enemy lines. …  

But then in the second place the apologist should answer the fool according to his self-proclaimed presuppositions (i.e., according to his folly). In so doing he aims to show the unbeliever the outcome of those assumptions. … By placing himself on the unbeliever’s position and pursuing it to its foolish undermining of facts and laws, the Christian apologist prevents the fool from being wise in his own conceit.  

In light of this, this book defends the justice of the O.T. civil code by 1) presupposing it as just according to God’s divinely revealed truth in the Bible (cf. Heb. 2:2); and 2) reducing humanist objections and alternatives to absurdity. Humanism here is defined by Francis Schaeffer as, “the placing of Man at the center of all things and making him the measure of all things”, and by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn as, “the proclaimed and practiced autonomy of man from any higher force above him. It could also be called anthropocentricity, with man seen as the center of all.” By rejecting God and thereby His Word as the center and measure of all things, all non-Christian worldviews are humanistic.

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72 Ibid., 62.
While this book addresses various humanistic worldviews, it especially addresses the most prevailing worldview of the West: Enlightenment-based, naturalistic, rationalistic, evolutionary, secular humanism.

This book is not a mere academic endeavor. It is a wake-up call for the church to be true to its proclamation that Jesus is Lord of the universe by recognizing Him as Lord in all areas of life, including over the sociopolitical realm. Without recognizing Christ’s total lordship, the church cannot be salt and light to a culture, and the culture will experience moral decay. This is where we find ourselves now. In its conformity to the world, the American church has forsaken its uncompromising Reformation birthright for a pottage of compromises with humanism that are destroying the church—and society along with it. The following applies just as much to American churches as it does to the South African churches it addresses:

The inevitable results of humanism are seen in the totalitarianism and massacres of the communist East and in the permissiveness and decadence of the democratic West. Humanists have to take responsibility for the abortion holocaust, the pornography plague, the drug epidemic, the crime wave, and the proliferation of perversion. These disasters are the logical result of rejecting God’s law and promoting situation ethics, evolution, permissiveness and “alternative lifestyles.”

And that is the point where we find ourselves today. Our society is in desperate need of Biblical reformation and our churches need revival. While the Reformers, Puritans, Huguenots and Pilgrims were characterised by courage and uncompromising faithfulness to God’s Word, our generation is clearly full of cowardice, love of pleasure, and compromise.  

May our nation have the courage to repent and return to championing God’s truth and justice in all areas of life. And may God, by His grace, use this book as an instrument to this end.

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A depiction of one of the showdowns between Moses (along with Aaron) and Pharaoh, exemplifying the conflict between biblical theocracy and humanistic theocracy. After God liberated the Israelites, He had Moses deliver to them a law-code of liberty that stood in stark contrast to the tyrannical laws of Pharaoh.
Chapter 1:
What is Biblical Theocracy?

God is the sovereign ruler over all things: “The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all” (Ps. 103:19). God’s claim to universal rule is by virtue of being before all things (Jn. 1:1,2), Creator of all things (Jn. 1:3), Ordainer of all things (Is. 46:10), Sustainer of all things (Col. 1:17), the sole source of justice (Ps. 89:14), and the sole source of goodness (Lk. 18:19). All things, therefore, are in every way God’s property rights (Ps. 24:1, 2; cf. Rom. 9:20-23; Is. 10:15). God’s sovereign rule over all things is the starting point for biblical theocracy.

The basic meaning of theocracy is “rule of God.” It derives from the Greek words theos, meaning God, and kratos, meaning power, strength, or rule. In the first century, Josephus, the famous Jewish historian, coined “theocracy” and defined it as “placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God” (Against Apion, 2.164-165). While the word theocracy is absent from the Bible, from cover to cover its meaning is clearly taught: God rules over all.

“Theocracy” can be understood in different contexts. It can be descriptive of the reality of God’s rule over all things (Dan. 4:17; Matt. 28:18). It can also be prescriptive of man’s acknowledgement of God’s rule over all things (Prov. 3:6; Ps. 2:11-12).

Regarding the latter understanding, that theocracy requires the acknowledgment of God’s total rule, biblical theocracy begins with the individual, i.e., the conversion of the heart to Christ (Ezek. 36:27). A Christian’s theocracy then begins in a sphere of self-government. Since

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out of the heart “are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23, KJV), from self-
government a Christian’s theocracy naturally flows into other
government spheres under Christ’s rule, including family, church, and
state.

Since Christ is the head of all government spheres, no sphere may
exercise monopoly powers over another; they are each restricted by
Christ’s power and authority. Thus while their powers overlap in some
ways, neither the family nor the church is permitted to have authoritarian
control over the other. God is sovereign over both. The same concept
applies with church and state: each answers to God as its ultimate
authority, instead of one another.

It is these two points—the bottom-up nature of theocracy, and the
separation of church and state—where many are confused. Regarding the
former, one reason humanists dread theocracy is because of their own
totalitarian mindset: they project their view that society only changes via
top-down conditioning by the state onto Christians, who are seen as
competitors attempting a rival form of impositionalism.

To the secularist, the threat of theocracy is symbolized by the
enthronement of the Ten Commandments in a courthouse, school,
or public place. This is why they deem the removal of Judge Roy
Moore’s monument as a victory for the theocratic resistance
movement. However, theocracy is rather the enthronement of
God’s law in the heart of the believer as all human mediators,
whether in church or state, are removed and the direct rule of God
is placed over the self-governing man. Theocracy is not coming.
Theocracy is now! In my home, relationships, and work, I do not
function in terms of democracy, oligarchy, monarchy, socialism,
or communism. In all areas of life I must be governed by the
direct rule of God (theos-kratos) through the writing of His law
upon my heart and mind.77

Humanism, being a worldview that begins with fallen, sinful man,
does not understand bottom-up transformation because it does not
understand self-government (Rom. 8:7; Gen. 6:5). While God’s law
prescribes top-down, society must embrace this law bottom-up via

regeneration by the Holy Spirit. When this happens, a national theocracy naturally develops where “God’s revealed law is supreme over all human laws, and is the source of all laws.”\textsuperscript{78}

In rejecting God’s sovereign control of society—including His control over the hearts of regenerate men—humanism attempts to fill the void of sovereignty by attempting sovereign control of the hearts and actions of members of society via the sword of the state. So not surprisingly, when one mentions government in today’s humanistic society, one instinctively thinks of the state. Such thinking, by disregarding other forms of government, is “implicitly totalitarian.”\textsuperscript{79} The state is not to be thought of as the only form of government, and yet this is where our society is at; it looks to the state to govern the other government spheres (family, church, and individual).\textsuperscript{80}

By contrast, a biblical theocracy will naturally enact laws from the Bible, but contrary to humanistic fears, such a society is the only one that would not be tyrannical, since it is the only possible society prioritizing regeneration over coercion.\textsuperscript{81} And so while humanism sword-imposes top-down via a totalitarian state, biblical theocracy primarily self-imposes bottom-up, that is, via hearts in direct submission to Christ.

\textsuperscript{80} Liberal humanists are most consistent in viewing the state as “the government,” since they hold that everything is a product of the environment, and therefore it is the job of the state to produce the ideal environment by coercing with the sword (i.e., govern the behavior of) the family, church, and the self (i.e., the other government spheres). Bottom-up government is impossible in this view, since the environment is outside the individual.
Chapter 2:
Biblical Theocracy is not Ecclesiocracy

Many also confuse biblical theocracy to mean a church ruling over the state. Today, “theocracy” brings to the minds of many the Catholic Church’s sanctioning of the Inquisition, and the sanctioning by Islamic Mullahs of Sharia Law. But societal rule by the church is not biblical theocracy, but ecclesiocracy, with *ekklesia* meaning church, and *kratos* meaning power, strength, or rule. In ecclesiocracy, religious leaders such as priests and ministers control the state and have it enforce the dictates of a corporate church body.  

Such coercion by a church denomination differs radically from how a biblical theocracy acknowledges and submits to God’s rule. The biblically-based theocratic society sees all of its spheres (self, family, church, and state) *directly* subordinate to God as its head. Thus it holds to no separation of *God* and state; it affirms that magistrates must acknowledge God and rule in accordance with God’s law. But it does hold to a separation of *church* and state.

While an ecclesiocratic society likewise sees all of its spheres of power subordinate to God (or a false god), its spheres do not necessarily answer to God directly. All or most of its spheres (at least the state) answer to the church, which is considered God’s highest authority on earth.

Contrary to popular belief, the O.T. does not advocate the rule of the church over the state. Separation existed “between the civil ruler, Moses, and the priestly head, Aaron; between the offices of priest and king; between the temple and palace (1 Sam. 13:11; 2 Chron. 19:5-11; 26:16-21).”  

Moses “rendered general, civil leadership,” while Aaron “represented the people in distinctly cultic matters.”  

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82 DeMar, *America’s Christian History*, 207.
Jerusalem, Nehemiah served as “governor” and Ezra as “scribe.” Joshua and Eleazar, David and Abiathar, Solomon and Zadok, Hezekiah and Azariah, and Zerubbabel and Joshua all served in the distinct offices of supreme magistrate and priest, respectively. The church/state distinction is very explicit in 2 Chronicles 19:11a: “And behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the governor of the house of Judah, in all the king’s matters …” (emphases mine).

Not only does the Bible teach separation of church and state, but it condemns violations of it. In Kings Saul and Uzziah we find examples of God’s judgment on the state for usurping the church’s authority. When Saul acted as a priest by making a burnt offering, God took his kingdom away from him (1 Sam. 13:8-14). When Uzziah violated temple regulations and attempted to burn incense (a duty for priests consecrated to that task) and became angry with the priests upon being confronted, God struck him with leprosy and expelled him from the temple (2 Chron. 26:16-21).

Some believe the Levites (those of the tribe of Levi) and the Priesthood (those in the Aaron line of Levi) were identical entities, and therefore, Levite involvement in state matters meant Israel had no church/state separation. But, according to Greg L. Bahnsen, Levites and priests were just as independent from one another as Levites and rulers, judges, or the king. This is because the priesthood consisted of only one particular family of Levi. Non-Aaronic Levites performed other duties, having “no direct hand in the priesthood.” We find this distinction in “the conflict that could develop with the priestly line (e.g., Num. 16:8-11).”

Nonpriestly Levites, Bahnsen writes,

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85 Ibid. Bahnsen continues, “It is specifically because the civil governor could not regulate the religious life of the people that Nehemiah called for Ezra to return to Jerusalem.”
87 Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 391.
were involved in the things of the religious cult or the things of God’s law. They helped in the administration of the Temple services, and so forth (1 Chron. 15-16, 23-26; 2 Chron. 24:6, 11; 29:34; 31:11-15; 35:11). But they could be instructors in God’s law instead (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:10; cf. 31:9 ff.; 2 Chron. 17:8-9; 35:3; Neh. 8:7-9). It is in connection with this last function, and as experts in the law of God, that Levites were involved in the administration of justice as their only political function.\(^{88}\)

In political matters, priests could be consulted, or more specifically (with historical development) Levites could be consulted (1 Chron. 26:29-32) in matters of civil judgment that were difficult cases (Deut. 17:9, 12; 19:17; 21:5; Ezek. 44:24), matters of cleanliness (Lev. 10:10; 13-14; Hag. 2:11-13; Ezek. 44:23) or questions of ritual (Zech. 7:3)—that is, in cases which called for \textit{expertise in the law of God}.\(^{89}\)

The Levites’ association with the law of God explains their services in both cultic and political matters. First Chronicles 23-27 explains their advisory overlap. Chapters 23-26 discuss Levitical offices and chapter 27 discusses civil officials. Chapter 26:29-32 discusses the role of Levites participating in the civil realm, serving as scribes and judges (v. 29). Thus, as the available evidence demonstrates, Levites did not violate the separation of church and state since they were not all Israel’s religious leaders. They were teachers trained in the law who often worked with civic leaders—and not as their masters, but as aids and advisors.\(^{90}\) If giving legal advice to civic leaders violates the separation of church and state, then we would have to absurdly say that every single society—including the secular West—violates the separation of church and state.

And even in those difficult cases where an actual priest was required to interpret the law, “the distinction between judge and priest was sharp, for only then would the conjunction of the two be meaningful

\(^{88}\) Ibid.

\(^{89}\) Ibid., 391, 392.

\(^{90}\) Ibid., 392, 293.
The participation of priests in political matters was the exception, not the rule. For instance, priestly involvement prior to the battle of Jericho in the taking of the promised land was not normative, since it was not based on standing law, but “extraordinary law for the performance of God’s special purpose or judgment at a specified point in history” (emphasis mine).

Another example of an extraordinary circumstance is the priest Phinehas executing an adulterer (Num. 25:6-9). This, again, was not normative. Phinehas was an instrument of God’s wrath against the idolatry of the Israelites, and his action “was a specifically priestly act of intercession, securing atonement for the people (vv. 10-13).”

Finally, sometimes the priest was involved with establishing a king. But this was only when an illegitimate leader had come into power. Because of God’s unique manner of dealing with Israel, the priest was a means of indicating a leader’s legitimacy.

Thus, while the Jewish offices of Levite and Priest have been abrogated, we find in the O.T. important principles for biblical theocracies in the New Covenant era. Neither the church nor the state are to usurp one another. They are to remain distinct, and each sphere is to answer to God directly. Therefore, biblical theocracy opposes ecclesiocracy, which is an unbiblical usurpation of God’s delegated authorities.

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91 Ibid., 393.
92 Ibid., 394.
93 Ibid., 394, 395.
94 Ibid., 394.
Chapter 3:
Humanistic Church/State Fallacies

We now turn to some humanistic fallacies regarding church and state. Immediately we must point out that Enlightenment thought fuels much of the contemporary hostility towards actual or perceived mingling of church and state. Such thought emphasizes historical atrocities of the Christian-influenced West, yet fails to take into account the greater atrocities committed by other societies.

On the dark side the men of the Enlightenment rummaged through the trashbins and graves of the past to rediscover every crime and atrocity and placed all the blame at the doorsteps of Christianity and hereditary privilege. One would not have believed the Tartars existed, or that people were once thrown alive into the furnaces of Babylon, or that Aztecs had their hearts torn from their bodies in the temples of Yucatan. The men of the Enlightenment raked and clawed mostly their own ancestors, the men who had helped clear and civilize Europe, as though the entire population was descended from criminals.

Liberal humanists attack those in the Christian Right as theocrats who want to destroy the separation of church and state. It seems whatever part the Christian Right’s platform liberal humanists dislike (practically all), it’s a theocratic policy from Bible (for instance, legal protection for unborn children, prayer in public schools, and public display of the Ten Commandments).

Besides the fact that much of the Christian Right’s platform is more influenced by conservative humanism than biblical law, liberals engage in several fallacies in their crusade to uphold the separation of church and state. They engage in special pleading, because, at least ostensibly, some of their own doctrines align with those of the Israelite

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95 While the Bible opposes the rule of the church over the state, many secular humanists fallaciously confuse this as being identical with the rule of God over the state (i.e., the state ruling by the Bible), which the Bible supports.

theocracy, e.g., due process and laws against murder. They also engage in self-refutation. Liberals argue that laws based on the Bible are theocratic and hence violate the separation of church and state. But, as we have seen, separation of church and state is itself a law based on the Bible, and is therefore a theocratic law.

Moreover, while liberals on the one hand attack as “theocrats” conservative Christians who appeal to the Bible in political matters, liberals often do the same thing—and in such a way that does actually violate the separation of church and state.

Ironically, it is precisely those who do not acknowledge God’s law as their political norm who readily disregard and overturn the proper separation of church and state. They do so by taking ethical norms addressed to, and intended appropriately for, the church (a redemptive institution characterized by mercy and persuasion) and applying them instead to the state (a natural institution characterized by justice and coercion). Thus the moral obligations addressed to the church (e.g., to care for the poor and practice racial non-discrimination) are transferred to the civil state in general.97

Indeed, how often do we hear liberals appeal to the Bible to justify state involvement in societal redemption? They not only violate the separation between state and church—they want the state to become the church!

Humanists nevertheless consider ecclesiocracy and biblical theocracy identical because they cannot distinguish between separation of church and state and separation between God and state. This is because humanism does not understand submission to God, but only understands imposition by man. For humanists, man is law. As such, humanists conceive of rulers in a theocratic state to be taking their marching orders not from God’s law but from an impositional law-making clergy.

This speaks to the danger of humanism. Aside from the fact that humanists are certainly correct about the dangers of an actual ecclesiocracy (although within their morally relativistic worldview they

cannot prove that it is wrong), the humanist’s inability to understand anything but imposition reflects his radically impositional mindset.

Moreover, in denying God and thereby viewing man as the greatest power—with the most powerful embodiment of man being the state—humanism naturally works to drive the church under the state’s jurisdiction. Furthermore, humanists have a double standard regarding separation of church and state. If a magistrate today were to consult a pastor or theologian for advice on biblical law, humanists would be up in arms. For them, this is an unforgivable breach of church/state separation. But there is no equivalent difference between a magistrate seeking advice from a pastor about biblical law and a pastor seeking advice from a magistrate about the church’s legal rights. The fact that humanists don’t focus on “protecting” the church from this “infringement by the state” (i.e., a magistrate advising a pastor about the church’s legal rights), and yet do focus on “protecting” the state from “infringement by the church” (i.e., a pastor advising a magistrate on biblical law), makes one wonder whether their interest is not in equally protecting church and state from one another, but in protecting their humanistic monopoly over the state, and using the state to subjugate the church.
Chapter 4:
The Neutrality Myth

In defending biblical theocracy, neutrality is a crucial concept to address because one of the main reasons secular humanists oppose biblical theocracy is because it is not politically neutral. Politics and law, secular humanists say, must be religiously neutral so that the state is not intolerant of any particular group of people. Man supposedly achieves such neutrality by reason unaided by a priori preconceptions about religion, which enables him to objectively determine truth and thereby law equally fair to all religions.

First, we must distinguish between neutrality and objectivity, since people often confuse their meanings. “Neutral” means “not aligned with or supporting any side or position in a controversy.”98 “Objective” means “not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudice; based on facts; unbiased.”99 As we shall see, when it comes to discovering truth, one cannot assume a philosophically neutral approach.

One can, however, assume a philosophically objective approach in discovering truth, so long as one does not make himself or any other man the starting point for knowledge. This is because fallen man suppresses truths that deep down he knows about God (Rom. 1:18-25), and when truth is suppressed, so is objectivity. It is also because of man’s finitude. Unlike God—Who is the source of all things (Rom. 11:36) and Who knows all things (1 Jn. 3:20)—man does not have a bird’s eye view of the universe, and neither can he examine facts from an infinite number of angles.

This is why humanistic attempts to establish formulas for objectivity are self-defeating. When one suppresses the truth of God and attempts to attain knowledge as a finite being, one is given over to foolish contradictions. Consider the following statements that secular humanists base their criteria for knowledge on. “Truth is discovered only by the

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five senses”; but the statement “truth is discovered only by the five senses” itself cannot be discovered by the five senses. “Only science demonstrates truth”; but the truth of the very statement “only science demonstrates truth” cannot itself be demonstrated by science. (Even if we were to grant this for argument’s sake, observing what is tells us nothing about what ought to be.) “Society determines truth”; but when did society determine the truth of this statement? Moreover, this statement is impossible to maintain, since based on its own standard it can be self-defeating, since society could determine it to be true that society doesn’t determine truth.

Attempted humanistic negations of God’s Word as the objective standard of truth also collapse: “You can’t say the Bible is God’s Word just because the Bible calls itself God’s Word! That’s a circular argument, and you can’t make circular arguments!” But, the very argument that you can’t make circular arguments is itself circular and thereby self-refuting. The argument is taken for granted; it has never been proven by evidence.

Ultimately, circular reasoning is inescapable. If some things are not taken for granted, then it would be impossible to know anything. Imagine trying to prove something without taking anything for granted. One would have to prove “A” with “B,” then prove “B” with “C,” but then prove “C” with “D,” ad infinitum. This vicious infinite regress can be likened to sitting in a barber’s chair with one mirror in front of you and another behind you. The mirrors regress your image back and forth forever.

So then, some circular arguments must be legitimate; our concern is not whether circular arguments are ever legitimate, but which. And in fact, unlike the humanist arguments, the circular argument that the Bible is God’s Word just because the Bible calls itself God’s Word is not self-refuting, but rather self-authenticating.

Within the Christian worldview, an all-powerful and all-knowing God reveals the truth to us by verbal revelation. God, being what he is, authenticates his own claim. As the Scripture says, he can swear by no greater. The content of our first principle—that is, the entire Christian worldview – contains the
necessary element to render it self-authenticating, whereas empiricism and other secular theories fail to do so.\textsuperscript{100}

By the nature of the case, there is no authority above God; God is the \textit{ultimate authority}. Therefore, nothing can call His Word into question. Anyone who would attempt to measure whether God’s Word is authentic attempts to be greater than God Himself.

Humanists, in their rebellion towards God, will no doubt scoff at the thought that the Bible’s self-authentication is sufficient evidence that it is God’s Word. However, the humanists really have no grounds for scoffing when their own arguments don’t even reach the level of self-authentication, since their arguments are self-refuting and thereby self-destructive. If self-authentication is fallacious, how much more is self-refutation?

If humanism is true, there would be no way of validating this since the humanist’s ultimate authority (man) rests on finitude, and therefore he cannot come to know an absolute within the parameters of his worldview. “If you begin with that which is finite, no matter how far you project it, you can never come to an absolute—never.”\textsuperscript{101} But if Christianity is true (and it is), then its assumptions can be validated since its ultimate authority (God and His Word) rests on infinitude.\textsuperscript{102}

Back to our definition, which says that objectivity is “based on facts.” Since objectivity is “\textit{based} on facts,” and fact is another word for truth, and God is the source of Truth (Jn. 14:6)—then objectivity is found in God’s written revelation alone.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{100} Vincent Cheung, \textit{On Good and Evil} (Boston, MA: Vincent Cheung, 2002), 46.
\textsuperscript{102} To understand this better, consider this: “fact” is best understood as synonymous with truth—a thought, idea, or concept that God thinks to be true. Some of God’s facts are revealed in the Scriptures, which provide man with a framework for interpreting all facts. However, those who rebel against God reject the Scriptures, and attempt to create alternative fact-interpreting frameworks. But humanistic frameworks are futile. Since every fact must relate directly or indirectly to every other fact, one must know all actual and possible interrelationships between every fact in existence. In short, interpretive frameworks require omniscience—an attribute only God has.
\textsuperscript{103} While “fact” is often understood as strictly that which is verified by the senses, the fact of the matter is that such a view itself cannot be verified by the senses. That is,
God reveals himself naturally and supernaturally. Supernatural revelation is clearer to man because man suppresses natural revelation (Rom. 1:18-25; 7:7) and because supernatural revelation is more specific (see Appendix C). Therefore, the foundational basis for objectivity is the Bible. “Every fact is a God-created and God-interpreted fact, and this world exists only as a God-created and God-interpreted world.”

Thus to judge facts objectively we do not turn to autonomous man, but the fact-expert, God Himself, through Whom facts are made and properly understood.

The so-called “neutral approach” to truth, in not aligning “with or supporting any side or position,” is the opposite of objectivity because objectivity, as we have demonstrated, presupposes God’s truth. The neutral approach says, “Let’s suspend all presuppositions about knowledge, reality, and morality [including God’s revelation] so we can arrive at truth untainted by prior philosophical commitments.” This is the same approach by fallen man described in Romans 1, where fallen man attempts neutrality by not honoring God in his thinking. Man rejects assuming God as his source of knowledge (v. 18-20) (e.g., “suppress[es] the truth.”) Such results in foolishness (v. 21) and culminates in every form of wicked behavior (vv. 26-32) (and renders the goal of discovering truth—which is found only by assuming God’s revelation—self-defeating).

While humanistic man attempts to be neutral, taking a neutral stance on discovering truth is actually impossible. Everyone brings a worldview to bear on all data they analyze. A worldview is “a perspective in terms of which” we “see everything and understand …

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the popular understanding of “fact” is not even a fact by its own standards, and is thus self-refuting. “Fact,” then, must be understood as another word for truth.


105 Why then does the unbeliever know some truth? Because he borrows from the Christian worldview. For example, unbelievers who, given their worldviews, have no moral basis for opposing murder (e.g., evolutionary naturalism) often oppose murder anyway. Deep down, they know the Christian worldview to be true, and their own worldview to be false. On a more fundamental level, God’s common grace and restraining hand keeps the unbeliever from being as irrational and sinfully destructive as he otherwise would be (cf. Gen. 20:6).
perceptions and feelings.” 106 It “consists of a network of interrelated propositions the sum of which forms ‘a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world.’”107

These propositions divide into three main philosophical categories: epistemology, metaphysics, and ethics. Epistemology is the study of knowledge, and asks “how is knowledge acquired and justified?” Metaphysics is the study of being or reality and asks “what is the nature of reality?” Ethics is the study of morality and asks “how should I conduct myself?”

These three philosophical areas are unavoidable, even if one says he doesn’t “do” philosophy. Everyone knows something (even if one knows he knows nothing), everyone believes something about reality (even if one says, “I am not part of reality”), and everyone makes moral judgments (even if one judges moral judgments as immoral). Everyone regularly asks themselves, “am I sure about this?”, “what is this,” and “should I do this?” Moreover, one couldn’t make sense of (or at least think he has made sense of) moment-by-moment activities without making assumptions; how do I understand how to interpret and react to things if I don’t assume something about them and my moral duty towards them?

Therefore, assuming a neutral approach to interpreting data by bringing no assumptions to the table is impossible. One cannot interpret facts without epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical assumptions. Indeed, what constitutes a fact or what is allowed to be a fact is determined in advance by one’s presuppositions in these three areas. A timeline will be interpreted by a Marxist in light of his assumptions that history evolves; a Hindu in light of his assumptions that history is an illusion; and a Christian in light of his assumptions that Christ’s kingdom will advance until the second coming. The murder of a baby will be interpreted by a (consistent) naturalist as the rightful survival of the strong (the murderer) over the weak (the baby); a (consistent) Hindu as bad kharma that the baby brought on himself for his evil deeds in a previous life; and a Christian as wickedness on the part of the murderer.

106 Bahnsen, Always Ready, 119.
Not only this, but the neutral approach is self-refuting by smuggling in epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical assumptions in order to oppose them. Neutrality says “suspend your views on knowledge, reality, and ethics.” But for one to even hold to this, one must assume neutrality is possible (a metaphysical assumption) and moral (an ethical assumption); and that this very belief about neutrality is knowable (an epistemological assumption).

Such assumptions expose proponents of neutrality as being just as biased as those who admit their biases upfront. Neutrality is also self-refuting because it says we should discard all assumptions when interpreting data. But this itself is an assumption. So if all assumptions should be discarded, then so should the assumption that all assumptions should be discarded.

As applied to civil government, then, we see that neutrality cannot be achieved. It is impossible for civil rulers to govern neutrally. However, since objectivity can be achieved by looking to God’s Word, the state can be objective if it applies the O.T. civil code.

Nevertheless, the arbitrary, incoherent concept of neutralism—as championed by the new liberalism of Rawls, Ackerman, Dworkin, and others—is the dominate American political philosophy. The neutral approach to civil government justifies itself on the grounds that it is the only way to avoid being intolerant in a pluralistic society. Secularism and neutralism go hand in hand, since conventional wisdom says that the more secular one is, the less one will be biased towards or against any particular religion. One must keep in mind, however, that whether the secularist considers himself an outright atheist or not, secularism in all its forms is practical atheism. As such, secularism is based on a lie, a rejection of the Lordship of Christ. And lies produce intolerance in their worst form. As the French Revolution critic G. Groen van Prinsterer (1801-1876) observes:

Let us not forget: the lie is compelled to hate the truth and to proscribe it because it is in the nature of the truth to be exclusive,

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to be intolerant of the lie. The very presence of the truth is condemnation of the error. So the lie, when it is complete, embraces every remnant of the truth within the circle of its hatred. ... Atheism cannot tolerate the truth, because it cannot be tolerated by the truth. ... Its tolerance is not unlike that of a murderer towards his enemy, once the victim is dead.  

Intolerance is inescapable. Worldviews by their very nature are intolerant of other worldviews. Buddhism was a Hindu offshoot that rejected two fundamental Hindu doctrines. Later, each of these religions were in turn rejected by Sikhism. Baha’ism eventually comes along and, in attempts to be neutral regarding these other religions, finds itself intolerant of the distinctions that make these religions what they are. Atheism, by its namesake, excludes all forms of theism. Secularism excludes non-secularism. And so on.

So, to argue that “one group cannot impose its view on others!” is itself an imposition. It imposes the view on others that says views shouldn’t be imposed on others. Similarly, the neutralist is dogmatic about not being dogmatic. The tolerationist is intolerant towards the intolerant. In an “inclusivistic” political system, inclusivists exclude exclusivists.

So then exclusivity is inescapable, and a “neutral” civil government is not neutral at all. Rather, it is a pretext for professing inclusivists to lend credibility to their own positions while dismissing the opinions of others. Neutralists expect everyone to accept their views as true, but dismiss all other opinions as either judgmental or subject to interpretation. In wanting the right to be dogmatic while denying others that same right, neutralists reveal the inherent hypocrisy in their
worldview. In this sense, the neutralist is worse than the typical dogmatist, because at least the typical dogmatist is not as deceptive.

Regarding the “neutral” view that says Christ’s Lordship should be a private matter to avoid “imposing” religion on others, it is irrational (not to mention wicked) to consider the Lordship of Christ a private matter. Since Jesus is the King of kings (1 Tim. 6:15), He is greater than all other rulers. And if He is greater than all other rulers, but acknowledgment of Him should only be a private matter, than how much more a private matter should it to be to acknowledge other civil rulers—kings, presidents, congressmen, etc.? If we can’t acknowledge Christ publicly, then we can’t acknowledge other rulers publicly. This of course is anarchy, and so those who reject Christ’s Lordship are anarchists.112

Moreover, if acknowledging the world’s chief ruler (Christ) is imposing religion, then acknowledging any ruler is imposing religion as well. There is a vast difference between publicly acknowledging rulers and worshipping them. Acknowledgment of—and even outward obedience of—a ruler does not mean one acknowledges that ruler as lord and savior in his heart. (Of course, in the case of King Jesus, those who do not acknowledge Him as their sole Lord and Savior in their hearts before they die will suffer the worse capital sanction conceivable, eternal hellfire.)

And so “neutralists,” in their very argument that political affirmation of King Jesus denies neutrality, deny their own neutrality in that they selectively uphold political affirmation of other civil rulers. If it is not neutral to recognize the political rule of Christ, then it is not neutral to recognize the political rule of anyone.

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112 Politicians and rulers publicly affirm rulers higher than them out of respect and acknowledgment of their authority. Thus politicians and rulers who do not affirm Christ, the King of kings—Who has the supreme political office—neither respect Christ, nor acknowledge His authority. As such, those in the political realm who claim to be Christian but do not openly acknowledge Christ’s sovereign rule deny the respect and submission due to Him. They are not to be trusted.
Chapter 5:
The Tyranny of “Neutrality”

The ostensibly neutral civil government is potentially the worst tyranny of all. As opposed to civil governments where “toleration assumes a basic single culture embodying the ideal of toleration itself,” the multicultural, neutral state “has the higher project of abolishing prejudice, incorrect thinking.” The state’s role in society—and thereby its power of the sword—is drastically elevated.

Inherent in the concept of state neutrality is the idea that no religion possesses absolute values. Instead, the state defines what is absolute and what is acceptable religion. And one absolute of the state is its abstinence from Christian theism. Neutrality then does not result in expansive freedom, rather it restricts religious expression to the private realm and removes it from the public arena—thus rendering it ineffective as it relates to culture. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn in Leftism has written that once the state moves in the direction of adopting humanism as its religious and philosophical base, the result is “[e]ither complete hostile annexation of the Church or persecution of the Church by separation. Religion is then first removed from the marketplace and the school, later from other domains of public life”…. The position of the American state is increasingly that of pagan antiquity, in which the state as god on earth provides the umbrella under which all institutions reside. Religion is thus a department of the state as is all else.

Ancient Rome, in “accepting” all religions, was “neutral.” It was also one of the greatest tyrannies the world has ever seen, and persecuted Christians and others ruthlessly.

Humanists who impose privacy of Christianity impose an anti-Christian faith on Christians. This is because privatized Christianity

undermines the doctrine of salvation and denies the very God of the Bible. Mike Warren explains:

The idea of a Christianity that saves souls but leaves politics alone is a double-minded, unfaithful Christianity. First, a finite God, one that does not rule over the State, cannot guarantee eternal salvation for your soul, because if God does not rule over every area of life, then there would be nothing to prevent that area of life outside of God’s control from obstructing the salvation of your soul at some point during eternity. A finite God would be surrounded by a mysterious universe bigger than himself. Only an absolute ruler of the universe could guarantee the promise of eternal salvation. There is no guarantee that good will ultimately triumph over evil, if everything is not under God’s control. The mysterious chaos beyond God could overwhelm Him and end God’s very existence.

Second, salvation has no meaning unless God is absolute, because if God is not absolute, then there is no absolute standard of good to sin against. If there is no sin, then there is no need for salvation from sin. Subject to forces beyond himself, a finite god would be a standard of ethics in flux and subject to legitimate ethical challenge by forces outside of him.

The God of the Bible is not like the finite gods of the ancient pagans, who had one god for the seas, another for the trees, etc. Neither is the Biblical God like the finite gods of the modern world, ones that are merely gods of people’s private lives and the afterlife. “Religion is a private matter, not a public matter” is only true if God is finite. That is not the Christian God. Rather, “For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens” (Psalm 96:5). As Creator of the material world, His rule is not just over “spiritual” matters. He is the Lord of all. He is the great “I am” (Exodus 3:14), the source of all existence. “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). “For
from Him and to Him and through Him are all things, to Him be the glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36).  

Thus, “...”

The imposition of privatized Christianity on Christians by secular humanists is the furthest thing from religious tolerance; it is an imposition of atheism, and thereby spiritually dangerous. Vincent Cheung writes,

Indeed, every institution consists of people whom God holds accountable, so whether we are talking about individuals, the church, or the state, we are still talking about people who are required to believe and obey all of God's precepts all the time, and in whatever capacity they are functioning. You cannot preach like a Christian and then vote like an atheist. If you do, you are probably just an atheist. You cannot rally against abortion, and then support a law that grants unbiblical rights to homosexuals, regardless of whether you think it is the American thing to do. God will not hold you guiltless just because you are dealing with matters of the state. He might just “separate” you from the church.

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116 Ibid.

117 Ibid. Warren’s analysis refutes the argument of many Christians that politics is antithetical to evangelism.
altogether and send you to hell. There you can sort out your politics.\textsuperscript{118}

In contrast to the totalitarian “neutral” civil government which, among other things, seeks to unneutrally undermine Christianity, biblical law opposes the tyranny of neutrality. As Elton Trueblood writes of Israel:

The prophets of Israel gave terrific emphasis to the second commandment because it referred to the greatest single danger of their people. \textit{That danger was the danger of an easy tolerance}. The constant tendency of the people was to mingle with the local Canaanitish population and to adopt many of their ways. This tendency led continually to a compromise between the stern faith which the Israelites had brought from the desert and the lax or even obscene religion which was the practice of their neighbors. Their temptation was not the temptation to give up their faith in Yahweh, but rather the temptation to add to that faith in a tolerant manner, thus producing a syncretistic worship with various elements existing conjunctively.

The constant tendency of the people was in the direction of an easy and tolerant liberalism, while the great prophets were continual \textit{protestants} against this tendency. The great prophets were uniformly conservative in that they resisted, through three crucial centuries, the temptation to indulge in the kind of toleration which blurs all distinctions. … The characteristic prophet, from Elijah on, seemed a \textit{narrow} man, resisting the desire to make an easy accommodation between things that are fundamentally different.

The prophets barely won! Time after time, new fashions arose which included Baal worship (a form of nature religion) or the worship of the bull as part of a fertility rite (the golden calf) or the astrological worship introduced from Assyria. Why, the people asked, should they not be broad minded and include these apparently harmless rites along with the worship of Yahweh who required of men that they should do justly, love mercifully and

\textsuperscript{118} Vincent Cheung, \textit{The Bible, the Preacher, and the Spirit} (Boston, MA: Vincent Cheung, 2006), 7.
walk humbly? Why, they argued modishly, should they not say “both and” instead of “either or”? But one after another the prophets declared that the people must choose.\textsuperscript{119}

Biblical law then is not intended to mingle with other law systems in the name of neutrality. It is so far from the tyranny of neutrality that, as we see, strongly opposes one iota of integration—i.e., syncretism—with other law systems. Its only concern is biblical foundation—that is, God’s Word as the sole authority in sociopolitical matters.

Chapter 6:  
“Neutrality” Condemned by the Bible

The Bible rejects the notion of neutrality. “Neutral” thinking is one of the temptations that brought about the Fall. Satan told Eve she could be her own god, possessing knowledge autonomously from the one true God. This was in effect saying, “Let’s be neutral and arrive at truth untainted by a philosophical commitment to God’s Word.”

Eve was, in short, tempted to suspend her epistemological assumptions. She was also tempted to suspend her metaphysical assumptions, to be her own god and therefore take for granted a reality independent of God. And she was tempted to suspend her ethical assumptions by violating God’s command to not eat of the fruit, with the lure of determining good and evil on her own.

But the result was not Eve becoming some disinterested party, but God’s enemy. Thus, neutrality was condemned from the beginning. The inescapability of antithesis (God or Satan) was with us in the Garden of Eden and will be with us until the Second Coming, as God has ordained: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15).

Throughout the Bible we see the antithesis: Abel v. Cain, Noah v. the world, Lot v. the men of Sodom, God’s chosen nation v. the pagan nations, Israelites of the remnant v. the ungodly Israelites, Christ v. the Jewish leaders and the Gentile Romans, the Apostle Paul v. the Judaizers, etc. And the antithesis will continue between those who hate God and those who love Him (cf. Jn. 15:18, 19) until Christ “has put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25b; cf. vv. 20-28).

The First Commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3) is the mandated starting point for all thought, word, and deed. “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17a). “[T]ake every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5b). “In all your ways acknowledge him, And He will
make straight your paths” (Prov. 3:6). “The fear of the L ORD is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov. 1:7a) (all emphases mine).

Thus, in the words of Christ, “Whoever is not with me is against me” (Matt. 12:30a). One either chooses Jesus (the embodiment of Truth) or Satan (the embodiment of lies). It is either the seed of the woman or the seed of the serpent (Gen. 3:15); the wisdom of God or the wisdom of the world (1 Cor. 1:20, 21); the knowledge of Christ or empty deceit (Col. 2:3, 8); the Creator or the creation (Rom. 1:23); Jesus or Barabbas (Jn. 18:40).

This just as much applies to the sociopolitical realm as any other realm. There, one either chooses King Jesus or King Caesar (Jn. 19:15). Rulers will either impose God’s moral law, or man’s immoral lawlessness (cf. Prov. 8:15-16; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4).

“Neutrality” was the greatest injustice ever committed in the universe, and it was committed within the sociopolitical realm. During Christ’s trial, Pilate, in saying, “What is truth?” (Jn. 18:38b), attempted a neutral stance on truth. His original ethical assumptions on justice (“I find no guilt in him” v. 38c; Jn. 19:4) would be suspended, as he allowed a guilty man Barabbas to go free, and delivered Jesus, Who was innocent, to be crucified (Matt. 27:26). This injustice Pilate justified on the grounds of neutrality, washing his hands of the matter and proclaiming, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves” (v. 24b). At this moment, Pilate was the “neutral” ruler.

For the Israelites, it was supposed neutrality—including in the sociopolitical realm—that was destructive of their great nation. R.C. Sproul writes:

Perhaps the greatest threat to Israel was not the military might of foreign and hostile nations, but the dual threats of the false prophet within her gates and the constant temptation of syncretism. The two obviously went together. The favorite ploy of the false prophet was to obscure the antithesis between the ways of Yahweh and the practices of paganism. From the earliest days of conquest, Israel’s history was one of syncretism, by which pagan thought and custom were assimilated by the covenant community. It was compromise and idolatry that
destroyed Israel. Babylon was but the rod of punishment God wielded in chastising his people. Judgment fell on them (as canonical prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah had forecast) precisely because the Jewish people mixed the impurities of paganism with the faith delivered to them by God.\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{120} R.C. Sproul, \textit{Willing to Believe: The Controversy over Free Will} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 18, 19.
Chapter 7: 
All Law is Religious

By now it should be clear that neutral laws are impossible, and all law systems are exclusivistic. Not only this, but all law assumes someone’s standard of morality. (Of course, if it is not biblical morality, then it really is immorality.) It doesn’t matter how amoral any given law is said to be. Every law says “one ought or ought not to do this or that.” And all who support having a civil government believe that “the state ought to exist and laws ought to be enacted.”

The ought presupposes moral obligation, and what one considers a moral obligation depends on his non-neutral, ethically unique worldview. In Christianity, people ought to protect the unborn, the sanctity of marriage, and acknowledge God. In humanism, people ought to be free to kill the unborn, desecrate marriage, and to be their own gods. (Where any two worldviews share externally the same moral view [e.g., “don’t speed”], they still differ regarding the reason for holding to that moral view.) All law is moral, down to traffic laws (which protect life) and administrative details of the justice system that makes justice possible.121

So the humanist does not escape morality in politics just because he says “morals have no place in political and legal matters.” He smuggles in morality via holding to the self-refuting statement, “the state ought not to base laws on morality.” Moreover, without morality the humanist cannot even consider the laws he wants to enact as good; and if the laws the humanist wants to enact are not good, then there’s no good reason to adopt them.

Civil law by its very nature regulates conduct. Morality is the standard by which law discriminates good from bad conduct, and punishable from non-punishable actions. Thus civil law is concerned with opposing certain forms of immorality—and as such is—or at least professes to be—morality.

When people say, “You Can’t Legislate Morality,” they are ignoring the very nature of legislation itself. Legislation is merely the codification and law of someone’s standard of morality. This is right and this is wrong. If you violate these standards, you will get in trouble. If you adhere to these standards, you’ll be safe. The whole thing is a logical fallacy. If you can’t legislate morality, then you can’t legislate.\(^\text{122}\)

Before further progress, we must first deal with the utilitarian approach to law. This is important because utilitarians believe their philosophy to be morally neutral. Utilitarianism rejects the “ought” as moral obligation. It says “the rightness or wrongness of an act or moral rule is solely a matter of the nonmoral good produced directly or indirectly in the consequences of that act or rule.”\(^\text{123}\) In short, utilitarianism exchanges moral obligations that dictate what actions to take (regardless of perceived consequences) for whatever amoral actions produce “happy” consequences.

Utilitarian law then aims for the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. But there are several reasons why applying this philosophy to the sociopolitical realm is flawed. First, it undermines its very basis for existing. When considering whether one should hold to utilitarianism, one asks a moral ought: “Should I embrace utilitarianism?” And when one says a society should hold to utilitarian law, one says society is morally obligated to hold to utilitarian law.

Second, it “commits the naturalistic fallacy; it moves from the observation that all men seek happiness or pleasure to the dictate that men ought to do so.”\(^\text{124}\) Third, it lacks any basis for sustaining itself. Utilitarianism presupposes no moral absolute than can obligate society into accepting it. Moreover, society can repudiate utilitarianism on its own grounds by holding that its greatest happiness can come from a non-utilitarian philosophy. Fourth, in denying objective morality, there is no objective standard for happiness, and so determining happiness is arbitrary.

\(^\text{122}\) George Grant, *God’s Law and Society*, 27.


Fifth, without any moral absolutes to inform the sociopolitical realm, the utilitarian state makes no objective moral distinction between protecting the innocent and slaughtering the innocent. Each instance is weighed in terms of how much happiness it brings to the majority.125

Sixth, it assumes that men prioritize pleasure over all things. But some men do the opposite, such as those who adhere to religions of asceticism (e.g., Jainism). Seventh, the Bible refutes utilitarianism. The moral “ought” applies to all tasks, no matter how trivial they seem: “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17b) (emphasis mine).

With utilitarianism refuted, we return to the point that all law is moral. Since all law is moral, all law must be religious. Moral obligation presupposes faith in a higher power (someone or something) that makes morality obligatory in the first place (even the moral relativist has faith in an objective moral obligation that says men ought not to have objective moral obligations). Thus whoever or whatever is seen as the object of one’s faith is seen as one’s ultimate authority. One’s ultimate authority—whether it be God, nature, the state, the self—is, by the very nature of the case, what one’s ultimate allegiance is to. Therefore, one’s ultimate authority is one’s God, god, or gods.

Consider humanism. The Humanist Manifesto (1933) states that humanism’s ultimate authority, and therefore god, is man: “Humanism is faith in the supreme value and self-perfectability of human personality” (emphases mine).126

Indeed, ultimacy presupposes transcendence. If one doesn’t look to God as his transcendent authority, he will see himself and/or

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125 “[I]t is not hard to imagine circumstances in which murdering an innocent man might make all the others much happier than they were before. Utilitarianism, seeking the greatest possible total happiness, would require us to murder the fellow; nevertheless we do not, because we perceive that murder is plain wrong. So instead of discarding the man, we discard the theory.” J. Budziszewski, The Revenge of Conscience: Politics and the Fall of Man (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing Company, 1999), 24.
something else as his transcendent authority. Thus secular humanists in vain deny that they worship gods:

Modern western man wouldn’t think of making a golden calf, setting it up in his living room, and bowing down before it. What he does is much more subtle. Humanists are sophisticated idol makers. They are like the guy who carves an idol and worships it—they trust in their own handiwork. They create their own laws, think up their own value systems, form their own governmental and educational systems, and worship them, trusting in them to be “god” (that which is right and true).\(^\text{127}\)

Therefore, “The rejection of one god leads inescapably to the choice of another god. If any person, group, court, etc. establishes himself/herself as the final arbiter of right and wrong, he/they have assumed the attributes of a god” (emphasis mine).\(^\text{128}\)

This has always been the case. Since Eden, man was faced with only two choices: serve God, or try to “be like God”—i.e., the temptation for man to be his own god, worshipping himself. He would be his own ultimate authority and therefore the final arbiter of right and wrong (i.e., to “be like God, knowing good and evil” Gen. 3:5c). \textit{All}


Even should the most atheistic secular humanist still insist he is non-religious, what would such an argument prove, other than supposed non-religious societies are more tyrannical and genocidal than religious societies (see chapter 11)?

But even the atheist of atheists, Friedrich Nietzsche, acknowledged that faith in some god is inescapable. Alister McGrath notes that for Nietzsche, without God “people would transfer their old faith in God to something else. They had to believe in something. With precocious foresight, Nietzsche declared that, having lost faith in God, people would now put their trust in barbaric ‘brotherhoods with the aim of the robbery and exploitation of the non-brothers.’ For many, this was an alarming prediction—precisely because it was predictable—of the rise of the tribalism of the Nazis and other dubious groups. It is as if humanity has to have faith in and be loyal to some individual or group. If God is declared to be out of the running, Nietzsche argues, we turn to other absolutist groups and creeds—such as Adolf Hitler or the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The elimination of God from Western culture has its darker side, which regrettably has yet to be conceded and explored fully by those who urge it.” Alister McGrath, \textit{The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World} (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 262.
decisions are motivated for either the glory of God, i.e., to worship God, or for the glory of man, i.e., to worship man. To neglect the former is to choose the latter. To be one’s own god is to make oneself the ultimate measure of all things, which the religion of humanism is based upon. When man plays god by making himself the measure of all things, he within his imagination creates his own fantasy world *ex nihilo* (cf. Rom. 1:23; Jer. 10:14, 15; Ps. 115:4-8).

It is from this religious fantasy world of humanism that all non-Christian religions derive, whether it be polytheism, pantheism, agnosticism, naturalism, atheism, etc. But no matter the trappings of humanism—and no matter how secular those trappings—humanism is nonetheless religious since it premises itself upon a religious rejection of God and thereby a religious exaltation of man.

Religion then in any area of life, including civil government, is inescapable. “[R]eligion is not just a part of life, nor even the major part of life. Religion is life, and life is religion.” And so, “Man, in all his activities, manifests his faith.” Culture is “religion externalized. Man expresses his faith in his daily life, in his art, music, work, and play.”

God connects His worship with following His law: “You shall follow my rules and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God” (Lev. 18:4; cf. Matt. 15:1-9; 1 Jn. 5:3). This is not just the case in private matters, but public. When society rejects God’s law, it worships other gods. As Kenneth L. Gentry notes,

By the very nature of the case, the god of a society is that society’s source of law. It has been thus in the fallen world since the temptation of Eve to be as “God” by “knowing” (determining, legislating) good and evil (Gen. 3:5). Hence, the pagan tendency for political rulers to be deified, as illustrated in the Babylonian

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131 Ibid.
king (Isa. 14:4, 13-14), and the Roman emperor (Matt. 22:15-22; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:4ff).\textsuperscript{132}

And Gary DeMar writes,

All law, even law as it developed in pagan societies, is based on a belief that some god or god-force is behind it all. Consider the Code of Hammurabi. A stone tablet that depicts the Babylonian ruler Hammurabi, who ruled Babylon from 1792 to 1750 B.C., is shown receiving the law from the god Marduk. Babylonian law, like all law, is inherently religious (Dan. 1–3). Even religions like Buddhism and Hinduism, belief systems that do not affirm a personal god, claim that something greater than man is keeping ethical score. Shintoism, the national religion of Japan, was originally a form of nature worship that stressed the supremacy of the sun goddess and the divine descent of the emperor. Again, law is of divine origin; it is law because the gods say it is law.

Even atheistic regimes like communism are inherently religious. The State assumes the role of a god once it officially declares there is no god. Ethics and morality are determined by the State. For example, French King Louis XIV (1638–1715) declared, \textit{L’Etat, c’est moi}, “I am the State.”\textsuperscript{133}

The religiously pluralistic society isn’t exempt from assuming gods in its laws—it simply holds to the polytheistic philosophy, “\textit{many gods, many moralities, many laws}.”\textsuperscript{134} Indeed, religious pluralism is but a euphemism for polytheism.

And so the biblical society acknowledges God publicly, in all areas of life. John D. Currid writes:

Hebraic holiness laws … penetrated every aspect of life. Holiness did not consist of a separate part of life—private and “religious” in nature—but so pervaded all cultural activity that


\textsuperscript{134} North, \textit{Political Polytheism}, 112.
one must conclude that all of life is religious, not just certain narrowly defined cultic activities. The comprehensive notion of religion distinguishes the Hebrew world-and-life view. Covenantal demands reached into daily labor, legal matters, and economic transactions, thus ensuring that God’s sovereignty did not remain an abstraction but made concrete demands over the widest possible horizon. Yahweh’s sovereignty extended from his transcendent control of the cosmos to an immanent reign—a moral rule reaching down into everyday affairs that made the Hebrews accountable to God for their actions.135

Christianity then is a not dualistic religion outside the sphere of civil government. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mk. 12:17b) does not uphold a secular/sacred split between God and civil government. 136 The state must answer to God (Rom. 13:1). Since God is the standard of justice, if the state is not required to answer to Him, then the state is not required to be just.

Thus if God has nothing to do with civil government, men would “have no king but Caesar” (Jn. 19:15c) in legal matters, and the Roman authorities would not have sinned in putting Jesus, Who was innocent, to death. “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” does not mean render to Caesar innocent life.

In going from one sphere to another, a man does not move from the realm of Christ, to that of Mammon, Baal, Molech, or any other “god.” Similarly, neither the school, state, nor any other order of life can exempt itself from the catholic or universal sway of God’s rule and law. It is a sin to steal, bear false witness, or have other gods wherever we are.137

God forbids “god-hopping” from sphere to sphere: “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him;

136 See Appendix B.
but if Baal is God, follow him” (1 Ki. 18:21b, NIV). Since not acknowledging God in certain spheres is to have other gods, dualism is not Christian, but polytheistic. The politician who tells Christians to acknowledge God in their hearts but not in politics says, “Let us go after other gods, and let us serve them” (cf. Deut. 13:2). Therefore, law that is not based on God’s law is idolatry (cf. Deut. 9:16). Law either religiously presupposes God, or religiously presupposes a false god.

This antithesis is seen in Leviticus 18, where God contrasts a godly society with a pagan one. God identifies following Him with following His law (vv. 2, 4, 5), in contradistinction to following the ways of pagan nations (v. 3). “That is the only choice: pagan law or Christian law. God specifically forbids ‘pluralism.’”138 God rejects “deity egalitarianism.” He “is not the least bit interested in sharing world dominion with Satan”139 (cf. Is. 42:8; Ps. 94:20).

And neither is Satan interested in sharing world dominion with God. For instance, “Hitler, of course, did not think Germany had room for two gods. Initially content with two crosses hung in the churches, in the end he insisted there be only one. Neither the cross of Christ nor the swastika could tolerate dual allegiance.”140 (Not that the Bible approves of crosses for worship; the point is that the Nazis were hostile to Christianity, and saw crosses as representations of it.)

Individuals who reject God and His law for the laws of other gods are given over to foolishness and wickedness (Rom. 1:18-31). When entire societies reject God and His law for the laws of other gods, the sociopolitical realm likewise is given over to foolishness and wickedness:

Yet the LORD warned Israel and Judah by every prophet and every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, in accordance with all the Law that I commanded your fathers, and that I sent to you by my servants the prophets.”

But they would not listen, but were stubborn, as their fathers had been, who did not believe in the LORD their God. They despised

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139 Ibid.
140 Erwin W. Lutzer, Hitler’s Cross (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 139.
his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the LORD had commanded them that they should not do like them. And they abandoned all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made for themselves metal images of two calves; and they made an Asherah and worshiped all the host of heaven and served Baal. And they burned their sons and their daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger (2 Ki. 17:13-17; cf. Lev. 20:1-5, 23).

A more recent example of society being given over to foolishness and wickedness for rejecting God is the French Revolution:

The unbelief of the eighteenth-century mind appearing under the guise of the Age of the Enlightenment had come to its dreary conclusion with its temple of human knowledge lying prostrate in the dust from the impact of Hume’s savage and deadly attacks levelled [sic] against its foundations. Once again unbelief had come to naught, and the thinkers of the eighteenth century who had struggled to suppress the truth of the living God were brought to confusion by the conclusions of their own efforts. The tragedy of their efforts, and irrationalism was the correlative of their rationalism, had finally produced in the French Revolution the greatest political catastrophe yet experienced by the Western world. Those who had sought to escape from the control of the sovereign God had now become the political prisoners of a despotic emperor. The Age of Enlightenment was in shambles, religiously, philosophically, and politically.141

The foolishness and wickedness of humanism culminates in national suicide. Humanism is self-defeating; the very god of a humanistic society is the basis of that society’s destruction. The guillotine of the French Revolution symbolizes this. In the French Revolution, reason was god. And yet the consequence of the French Revolution was that, in the

141 C. Gregg Singer, From Rationalism to Irrationality: The Decline of the Western Mind from the Renaissance to the Present (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1979), 86.
name of reason, many lost their heads via decapitation and thereby their abilities to reason. In short, reason itself was decapitated at the altar of reason. The French Revolution was unreasonably self-destructive.

With humanism still with us, so too is the foolish cycle of idolatry and national suicide. In the West, legal protection is given for the offering of unborn sons and daughters to the god of Choice. Consequently, the West is obliterating its posterity, and thereby its future.
Chapter 8: 
All Law is Theocratic

Since all law is moral, all law is religious; and since every religion has a god, then all law is theocratic. Remember, theocracy means “rule of God.” So when God and His rule aren’t acknowledged, then another god and its rule is acknowledged in His place.

The choice then is between the true theocracy of Christ or a false theocracy of idols. Whatever reference point a society bases its law upon is that society’s god; thus a law-system’s reference point reveals the kind of theocracy a society holds to. For instance, if the law’s reference point is the Bible, then the law presupposes a Christian theocracy. If the law’s reference point is the people, then the law presupposes a humanistic theocracy.

Today’s secular humanists borrow much of their political philosophy from the ancient Greeks and Romans. For secular humanists, Greco-Roman civilization was happily non-theocratic, unlike Israel under God’s law. But as Rémi Brague points out, all of Western civilization has theocratic roots. While Brague doesn’t consider the theocratic nature of secular humanism, his point is well taken:

Although we modern Westerners commonly look down on “theocracies,” our systems of legislation are, or were, in some sense theocratic too. They are, or were founded in the last instance on assumptions that are theological in origin. And certainly, the idea of a divine law is not absent from our own Western tradition. On the contrary, it is emphatically present in both its sources—in Athens no less than Jerusalem, in Sophocles, Plato, Cicero, and many others, no less than in the Old Testament.142

Theocracy of some form or another is no less assumed in ostensibly religiously-neutral ideologies as it is in overtly theocratic

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ideologies, such as Islamic Sharia Law. Gary DeMar notes the theocratic assumptions in democracy and libertarianism. Democracy says, “vox populi, vox dei”—“the voice of the people is the voice of god.”\textsuperscript{143} Libertarianism says, “Each and every individual is a god unto himself.”\textsuperscript{144} A democracy’s transcendent authority for law is the majority. It is a majoritarian theocracy, a mobocracy. The libertarian society’s transcendent authority for law is man’s autonomy. It is an autonomous theocracy, or autonomocracy.

Then we have liberalism and conservatism, with their respective faiths in what man will accomplish, or what man has accomplished. Liberalism says, “Man is perfectible, and is making himself better all the time.” The liberal society’s transcendent authority for law is the bureaucracy, the representative embodiment of collective man and the mechanism for promoting human progress. Liberalism then is a bureaucratocracy.

Conservatism says, “Authority is found in the traditions of men.” The conservative society’s transcendent authority for law is the achievements of national ancestors. This amounts to ancestor worship, a heritocracy.\textsuperscript{145} And, there is pluralism, which says, “All religions and views are equally authoritative.” The pluralist society has several religious transcendent authorities for law. This amounts to a polytheistic theocracy, or, a polyocracy.

\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{145} We must be clear that this does not necessarily describe all whom identify themselves as liberals or conservatives. Since the political platforms of liberalism and conservatism change over time, their platforms at any given point in history might happen to line up more or less with biblical law. In an emerging Christian nation (e.g., Rome during the early church), those who hold to biblical law might identify themselves as liberals. And in a Christian nation in decline (such as ours), those who hold to biblical law might identify themselves as conservatives. What we consider a bureaucrat is one whose ultimate authority in political matters is the state and the bureaucracy, and what we consider a heritocrat is one whose ultimate authority in political matters is tradition. Finally, we distinguish political conservatism from Christian conservatism. We do not reject the latter, which is a term (when properly understood) for identifying orthodox Christianity over against liberal (false) Christianity.
Theocracy, then, is inescapable. Consider the French Revolution. While its pretext was building the first secular, neutral, non-theocratic society ever, it simply deified human reason in God’s place. Bent on building a Reason theocracy, the revolutionaries converted “the venerable cathedral of Notre-Dame into a ‘Temple of Reason,’ dedicated ‘to philosophy.’” Other church buildings were converted to “temples of reason” throughout the provinces. During a “Feast of Reason” in the Notre-Dame cathedral, the theocrats designated their messianic deliverer:

Madame Candeile, an actress and sometime opera singer, was carried in under the tremendous nave dressed in “an azure mantle garlanded with oak, holding in her hand the Pike of the Jupiter-People, heralded by young women in tricolor dresses.” The dignitaries of the Assembly in their medals and plumes cheered as the Goddess of Reason sat grandly on the high altar.

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147 Ibid.
149 Ibid., 208, 209.

During that time the press wrote, “Liberty, represented by a beautiful woman, came out of the temple of philosophy, and taking her seat on the green sward, accepted the homage of the republican men and women, who sang a hymn in her honour, whilst stretching out their arms to her. Then liberty descended to re-enter the temple, but stopping before her entry to turn and cast a look of good-will upon her friends. As soon as she entered, their enthusiasm broke out in shouts of joy and oaths that they would never cease to be faithful to her.” *Les Révolutions de Paris*, No. 215, 23-30 Brumaire, Year II (13-20 November 1793), 214-15. Cited in J. Gilchrist and W. J. Murray, *The Press in the French Revolution: A Selection of Documents taken from the Press of the Revolution for the Years 1789-1794* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press Inc., 1971), 118, 119.

Otto Scott paints a similar picture of a Jacobin Club meeting: “He [Robespierre] rose to speak inside the Club like one voicing the wishes of its gods, like a man who had visited the mountain. An observer wrote, ‘The nave of the Jacobin’s church is changed into a vast circus. The seats mount up, circularly, like an amphitheater, to the very groin of the domed roof. A high Pyramid of black marble, built against one of the walls—formerly a funeral monument—has been left standing, and now serves as a back to the office-bearer’s bureau. Here on an elevated platform sit President and Secretaries; behind them the white busts of Mirabeau and Franklin … In front is the Tribune, raised till it is midway between floor and groin of the dome, so the speakers’ voice may be in the center. The imagination … recalls those dread temples … consecrated to the Avenging Deities.” Scott, *Robespierre*, 140-141.
For the revolutionaries, Reason Incarnate had inaugurated her kingdom reign. Ironically, Jean Jacques Rousseau, a chief philosophical influence on the Revolution, said, “Never was a state founded that did not have religion for its basis.”

This ostensibly religion-less revolution was, to quote Edmund Burke, “Atheism by Establishment.”

Similarly, French Revolution critic G. Groen van Prinsterer calls the Revolution, “the religion, as it were, of unbelief.” He adds,

The principle of this vaunted philosophy was the sovereignty of Reason, and the outcome was apostasy from God and materialism. … I hardly need remind you that from the outset the supremacy of Reason was postulated as an axiom in philosophy. This supremacy rested upon a denial of the corruption of human nature. But where Reason was considered uncorrupted, Revelation could contain nothing beyond its reach, or at least nothing against its verdict. Thus reason became the touchtone of the truth. … Holy Scripture, to be holy, came to need the sanction of human approval. It cannot escape the Christian that at this very juncture the Divine prerogative is already violated as man seeks to be rid of God and to be deified in His place.

Reason for Revolutionary France was both god and holy writ. As opposed to a theocracy based on the “rule of God,” the French theocracy based itself on the “rule of Reason.”

Then there is the French Revolution’s philosophical heir, the Russian Revolution. (Lenin, four months prior to leading the Russian

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150 Cited in Charles B. Galloway, Christianity and the American Commonwealth; or, The Influence of Christianity in Making This Nation, 20. Galloway’s quote cited in DeMar, America’s Christian History, 47.
151 Cited in Burleigh, Earthly Powers, 121.
152 G. Groen van Prinsterer, Unbelief and Revolution, 17.
153 Ibid., 17, 18.
154 As Edward J. Young writes, “To reject external revelation and to regard the human mind as a law unto itself is not to become enlightened but to fall into the grossest of deceptions. … To exalt the human reason, as though it in itself were the final arbiter of all things, is in reality to substitute the creature for the Creator.” Edward J. Young, An Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), 21.
Revolution in November 1917, approved of the Jacobin revolt.)\textsuperscript{155} The atheistic Russian Revolution took the French Revolution’s materialistic philosophy\textsuperscript{156} to its logical conclusion and made its god, or basis for ultimate reality, matter.\textsuperscript{157} This revolution repeated a pattern from the first atheist revolution. Just as the French theocrats converted church buildings into “temples of reason,” Russia’s neo-atheist theocracy converted church buildings into “museums of atheism.”\textsuperscript{158} While the

\textsuperscript{155} Nigel Lee, \textit{Communist Eschatology}, 90. Lenin writes in \textit{Can ‘Jacobinism’ Frighten the Working Class?}: “Proletarian historians see Jacobinism as one of the highest peaks in the emancipation struggle of an oppressed class. The Jacobins gave France the best models of a democratic revolution and of resistance to a coalition of monarchs against a republic. … ‘Jacobinism’ in Europe or in the boundary line between Europe and Asia in the twentieth century would be the rule of the revolutionary class, of the proletariat, which, supported by the peasant-poor and taking advantage of the existing material basis for advancing socialism, could not only provide all the great, ineradicable, unforgettable things provided by the Jacobins in the eighteenth century, but brings about a lasting, world-wide victory for the working people” (Ibid., 90).

French Revolutionary philosophy influenced Marx and Engels, the chief philosophical influences of the Russian Revolution. Engels writes of Rousseau, “already in Rousseau, therefore, we find not only a sequence of ideas which corresponds exactly with the sequence developed in Marx’s \textit{Capital}, but we even find that the correspondence extends also to details, Rousseau using a whole series of the same dialectical developments as Marx used.” Nigel Lee, \textit{Communist Eschatology}, 87. Engels mentions the “Great French Revolution” as being the first bourgeoisie uprising to “entirely cast off the religious cloak” (Ibid., 88). Prince Lvov, head of two Russian provisional governments prior to the Revolution, wrote, “The spirit of the Russian people has shown itself, of its own accord, to be a universally democratic spirit. It is a spirit that seeks not only to dissolve into universal democracy, but also to lead the way proudly down the path first marked out by the French revolution, toward Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.” Cited in Stéphane Courtois et al., \textit{The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 44.

\textsuperscript{156} On the common French Revolutionary/Marxist views on materialism, Singer writes: “The empirical epistemology of Locke and his followers was no more successful than the rationalism which it replaced. Its major contribution to Western culture was to enhance the emergence of a secularism thoroughly embedded in materialism, a materialism which characterized the French Revolution and which ultimately produced Marxian communism and its philosophical satellites.” Singer, \textit{From Rationalism to Irrationality}, 408, 409.

\textsuperscript{157} Lenin, for instance, states “We may regard the material and cosmic world as the supreme being, as the cause of all causes, as the creator of heaven and earth.” Cited in Nigel Lee, \textit{Communist Eschatology}, 815.

cathedral of Notre-Dame supplied the fodder for the greatest “Temple of Reason,” Leningrad’s Kazan cathedral supplied the fodder for the greatest “Museum of Atheism”—“Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism.”

And, while the French theocrats worshipped “the goddess of reason,” the Russian theocrats worshipped the premier—Proletariat Incarnate, matter in its highest form. After the death of Lenin, the first communist premier, it was said: “Lenin lives in the heart of every member of our Party. Every member of our Party is a small part of Lenin. Our whole communist family is a collective embodiment of Lenin.”

In the tradition of ancient Egyptians who mummified their deified Pharaohs, an “Immortalisation Commission” mummified Russia’s premier. Stalin repeatedly said at the funeral they would “honour” “thy [Lenin’s] commandment.” Stalin then took over and became Russia’s new god. He was heralded as the “father of the people,” of whom it was said, “Thou art the greatest leader.”

A poem of that time reflects Stalin’s reputed god-like omnipresence and omniscience: “And so—everywhere. In the workshops, in the mines/In the Red Army, the kindergarten/He is watching … You look at his portrait and it’s as if he knows/Your work—and weighs it/You’ve worked badly—his brows lower/But when you’ve worked well, he smiles in his moustache.”

After Stalin’s death, his successor Nikita Khrushchev reminded the Twentieth Party Congress that

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159 Ibid., 48.
160 Michael Burleigh, Sacred Causes, 54.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid., 53.
163 Ibid., 73.
164 Ibid., 72.
165 Ibid., 74, 75.
they all had been taught to believe Stalin was “a superman possessing supernatural characteristics akin to those of a god.”

The Russian revolutionaries had rejected the Kingdom of God for a kingdom of matter. This kingdom of matter would be inaugurated by the proletariat, who, in the words of Lenin, were “to set up heaven on earth.” Under the pretext of irreligion the Russian theocrats could not conceal their religion. Even the anti-Christian philosopher Bertrand Russell identified communism as developed in Russia as “a political religion analogous to Islam.”

By their own speech, the Russian theocrats betrayed their professed irreligion. Lenin said, “Who plans whom, who directs and dominates whom, who assigns to other people their station in life, and who is to have his due allotted by others? These become necessarily the central issues to be decided solely by the supreme power.”

Like Adam and Eve, in rejecting God, Lenin inescapably exchanged the Supreme Power for another “supreme power,” man. As Khrushchev would later affirm, “the people” are “the creator of history and … the creator of all material and spiritual good of humanity.” (Similarly, the Chinese communist leader Mao Tse-Tung wrote, “Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people.”) The Russian theocracy had thus rejected a biblical theocracy based on the “rule of God” for a material theocracy based on the “rule of the people,” more specifically, “the rule of the Proletariat.”

And, let us not forget another philosophical heir of the French Revolution, American secular humanism. Like the French and Russian

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170 Cited in Bales, *Communism*, 34.

revolutions, secular humanism elevates reason\textsuperscript{172} and matter.\textsuperscript{173} Its god is humanity, the embodiment of these attributes. In 1933, the \textit{Humanist Manifesto} officially declared the humanists’ goal “to evaluate, transform, control, and direct all institutions and organizations by its own value system” (emphasis mine).\textsuperscript{174} This language clearly indicates a desire to dominate society with the religion of humanism—to establish a totalitarian humanistic theocracy. Humanists were already in the process of converting a school system that originally taught Christianity\textsuperscript{175} into temples of humanism. As early as 1930, the founder of the First Humanist Society of New York\textsuperscript{176} writes in \textit{Humanism: A New Religion}:

Education is thus a most powerful ally of Humanism, and every American public school is a school of Humanism. What can the theistic Sunday-schools, meeting for an hour once a week, and teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?\textsuperscript{177}

Secular humanists figured out long ago how to circumvent the Constitutional guarantee against a nationally-established church: Simply label national secular humanist churches with the euphemism “public schools,” and have the church service times weekdays instead of Sunday, the day America associates with attending worship services. Then, deflect attention away from the religiosity of these humanist churches by positing a false dichotomy between secular and religious education. Such legerdemain has to this day duped Americans into unwittingly embracing compulsive humanistic religious instruction.

The secular humanist political platform is consistent with its desire to impose a theocracy in all areas of life. R. J. Rushdoony writes,

\textsuperscript{172} The \textit{Humanist Manifesto II} (1973) states, “Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that humankind possesses.” Cited in McDowell et al., \textit{Handbook of Today’s Religions}, 467.
\textsuperscript{173} The \textit{Humanist Manifesto II} (1973) states, “We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural.” Cited in Ibid., 464.
\textsuperscript{175} DeMar, \textit{America’s Christian History}, 108.
\textsuperscript{176} Limbaugh, \textit{Persecution}, 65.
Our increasingly humanistic laws, courts, and legislators are giving us a new morality. They tell us, as they strike down laws resting upon Biblical foundations, that morality cannot be legislated, but what they offer is not only legislated morality but *salvation by law* … Wherever we look now, whether with respect to poverty, education, civil rights, human rights, peace, and all things else, we see laws passed designed to save man. Supposedly, these laws are going to give us a society free of prejudice, ignorance, disease, poverty, crime, war, and all other things considered to be evil. These legislative programs add up to one thing: *salvation* by law.

As Rushdoony observes, the secular humanistic faith pervades everything. Moreover, Rushdoony demonstrates that, despite secular humanism’s attempts to conceal its desire to impose a theocracy by appealing to neutrality, it is obvious that secular humanist policies are anything but neutral. They are all concerned with *salvation of humanity by humanity*; as the Humanist Manifesto II states: “No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”

Secular humanists thus deify humanity. They look to humanity as their lord and savior. Lordship and salvation come through the state, the most physically powerful reflection of humanity.

Secular humanism, in short, is as theocratic as any worldview gets. Even its religious pioneers could not escape repeated references to faith and religion:

*The Humanist Manifesto I* (1933) declares “to establish such a religion (of humanism) is a major necessity of the present,” and to “break with the past” in order to establish a “vital, fearless, and frank religion capable of furnishing adequate goals and personal satisfactions,” is the goal of humanism. *The Humanist Manifesto II* (1973) uses the words religion and religious some 19 times while stating that “Faith, commensurate with advancing knowledge, is also necessary,” among nontheists whose center of thought or worship is “nature, not deity.” Not only is there an influential journal entitled *The Religious Humanist*, but one of

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179 McDowell et. al., *Handbook of Today’s Religions*, 464.
the most prominent humanists, Julian Huxley, referred to his beliefs as “the religion of evolutionary humanism” while still another, Michael Kolenda, entitled his book on humanistic religion, Religion Without God. Of course, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized humanism as a religion in Torcasco v. Watkins (1961), and The Secular Humanist Declaration (1980) concludes that “Secular humanism places trust in human intelligence rather than in divine guidance.”

Secular humanism, instead of looking for salvation in Jesus Christ, looks to humanity for salvation. It rejects the theocratic “rule of God” for the theocratic “rule of humanity.”

The French Revolution, Soviet Communism, and American secular humanism are examples of how no matter how much man may try to not acknowledge any god, such attempts are futile, and therefore theocracy is inescapable. According to Romans 1:18-23:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Thus, “Knowing that God the Creator exists and that they are the creatures of this God and owe him obedience, they suppress this knowledge. Unable to obliterate this knowledge, they pervert it into an

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idol …”¹⁸¹—a statue, Nature, Mother Earth, the People, Reason, Matter, etc.

Thus in their suppression of the knowledge of God, non-Christian societies—no matter how secular they claim to be—evidence this suppression by assigning God’s divine attributes to other things. To assign any of God’s divine attributes to something else is to, by the nature of the case, see that something as a god. While all humanistic societies actually have many gods, we especially find them looking to the state as divine. The humanistic society assigns God’s attribute of sovereignty to the state, which is seen to possess sovereign powers to control a nation’s destiny; it has, for instance, the power to predestine economic prosperity.

Humanists also assign to the state God’s attribute of omniscience, as the state is seen to possess the ability to “enlighten” the citizen’s mind via public education. God’s attribute of justice is also mimicked as the humanistic society that rejects God looks to the state as the transcendent standard of justice.

And, humanism might assign God’s attribute of omnipotence to the state by seeing it as having the ability to save society (and in the case of the UN, even the world) via social programs. Thus the inescapability of theocracy is very clear when we consider that all societies that reject God nevertheless look to the state as a god by ascribing it with any number of God’s divine attributes.

Chapter 9:  
Is Biblical Theocracy “Christian Fascism”?  

Secular humanists often call Christians who attempt to apply the Bible to sociopolitical matters “Christian fascists.” And of course, those Christians who most fully advocate a biblical theocracy are considered as fascist as it gets.

But we would hold that a Christian theocracy is actually as far from fascism as it gets, and it is actually the secular humanists who are the fascists. Let’s test our assertion by examining the most wicked, oppressive regime ever associated with the word fascism: Nazi Germany.

Neither the Nazis nor the German church that supported them embraced biblical civil law. When Nazi Germany came about “biblical Christianity was no longer giving the consensus for German society.” It had been undermined by “a rationalistic philosophy and a romantic pantheism on the secular side, and a liberal theology (which was an adoption of rationalism in theological terminology) in the universities and many of the churches.” Thus Germany’s “liberal Christianity” was not Christianity at all, but humanism in Christian terms.

Karla Poewe, a specialist in new religious movements, writes about Jakob Hauer, a major influence on National Socialism, “There is no break between Hauer’s defense of liberalism and his National Socialism. The former flowed quite naturally into the latter. His liberalism found empathy in the left wing of National Socialism.” Hence, “Modern German theology was founded not on the Bible but on the human being: on ego-supporting human spiritual experiences and anthropological categories of Volk and Volksstum. Christ had been secularized many times over for the sake of political theology, racial science, academic fraud,

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182 Francis A. Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1976), 151.
183 Ibid.
new religions, and warring nations.” Sounds like American secular humanism.

But what about the argument that, despite the fact that by the twentieth century the church was secularized, Christianity somehow over the centuries helped pave the way for Nazi Germany? Well, we must point out that historically Germany may not have been as Christian as many might think. Lutheranism had an enormous influence on German churches since the Reformation, and conservative Lutheranism teaches the false (and thereby anti-Christian) gospel of baptismal regeneration, a doctrine that says that one receives forgiveness of sins via water baptism. Thus Lutheranism never broke fully from Roman Catholicism.

Since the doctrine of baptismal regeneration produces false converts, there must have been many professing Christians in Germany who were unconverted and therefore really humanists. In light of this it’s hard to argue that Christianity paved the way for Nazi Germany since there were potentially a large number humanists who merely professed to be Christians.

185 Ibid., 50.
186 See, for example, “The Large Catechism by Martin Luther: XIII: Part Fourth: Of Baptism.”

In the book of Galatians the Apostle Paul fiercely condemns adding sacraments (in this case physical circumcision) or anything else to the doctrine of salvation through faith alone (Gal. 3:1-6, 5:1-4; cf. 1:6-9, 3:10-14). While Paul’s opponents the Judaizers taught physical circumcision saves, historic Lutheranism teaches that water baptism—the replacement of circumcision—saves.

187 The Lutheran court preacher Polycarp Leyser, “Noting that the followers of Rome and Wittenberg both teach that holy baptism saves and that the true body and blood of Christ are distributed in communion, … concluded ‘that Lutherans have more in common with Romanists than with Calvinists.’” [“Calvinists” was the nickname given to the orthodox Reformers, those who truly brought about Reformation. S.H.] Edwin Sandys, the English traveller who visited Germany early in the seventeenth century, found that many Lutherans “professe openly, they will returne to the Papacy, rather than ever admite that Sacramentarie and Predestinarie pestilence.” Andrew Pettegree, The Reformation World (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002), 403. Citations from Polycarp Leyser, Christianismus, Papismus & Calvinismus (Dresden, 1602), sig. aiia, and Edwin Sandys, A Relation of the State of Religion (London, 1605), sig. Qiva, respectively.

The Reformed Christians (“Calvinists”) condemned traditional eucharistic vestments donned by Lutheran officiators “as leftover ‘papal dung.’” Ibid., 404.
Moreover, no matter how many genuine German Christians there have been since the Reformation, regarding the state Germany, since the Reformation, had been influenced by the humanistic idea of relegating Christianity to a private sphere. Luther separated religious ideas from secular life in his influential doctrine of the “Two Kingdoms.” Luther’s dichotomy between a private Christian morality and a public non-Christian morality has drawn criticisms of being “defeatist” and “quietist,” a social ethic logically leading Christians to either tolerate or to neglect to oppose social injustice. Consequently,

The way was opened to the eventual domination of the church by the state, which was to become a virtually universal feature of Lutheranism. The failure of the German church to oppose Hitler in the 1930s is widely seen as reflecting the inadequacies of Luther’s political thought. Even Hitler, it appeared to some German Christians, was an instrument of God.

Thus, for some time the German church was accustomed to a spirit/matter dualism separating Christian faith (“the spiritual realm”) from earthly concerns (“the material realm”). It should not be surprising that in 1934 several Lutheran bishops backed Hitler because “they had difficulty seeing how Christian faith could inform material action.”

189 Ibid., 226.
190 Ibid.

Abraham Kuyper writes, “In all Lutheran countries the Reformation originated from the princes rather than from the people, and thereby passed under the power of the magistrate, who took his stand in the Church officially as her highest Bishop, and therefore was unable to change either the social or political life in accordance with its principle. Lutheranism restricted itself to an exclusively ecclesiastical and theological character, while Calvinism put its impress in and outside the Church upon every department of human life.” Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 22, 23. Lord Acton called the Lutheran dependence on princes “that character of political dependence and that habit of passive obedience which it has ever since retained.” Cited from Otto Scott et al., *The Great Christian Revolution: The Myths of Paganism and Arminianism* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1991), 98.

Erwin Lutzer writes, “We have been introduced to the doctrine of the ‘two spheres,’ which, properly interpreted, means that Christ is Lord of the church, but the Kaiser (or the Fuhrer) is, in a manner of speaking, lord over the political sphere. Allegiance to the political sphere was a high and honorable duty just as was
They “found themselves unable to make distinctions between competing claims for allegiance.”¹⁹² (Regardless of the dualism within German churches throughout history, we must note, in fairness to Luther, that it is possible that he rejected the dualistic two kingdoms view later in life.¹⁹³ Our fundamental point has to do with the historical consequences of churches embracing civil dualism—not with what Luther himself ultimately believed.)

Not only this, but Nazi policies reinforced the church’s self-imposed privatization of faith. As former Hitler youth and German soldier Hilmar von Campe states, this privatizing of religion was a Nazi strategy for the purposes of expunging Christianity from society.¹⁹⁴

Thus Nazi Germany was far from a Christian theocracy. It was a thoroughly humanistic theocracy with little if any precedent over the preceding centuries of a conscious push by the church for biblical law in the sociopolitical realm. And actually, we find roots of Nazi Germany’s militant nationalism in the atheistic French Revolution:

As Lord Acton was to point out in his searching essay “Nationality,” the French Revolution had engendered a spirit of nationalism which was something new in the world. It was a doctrinaire idea divorced from history and it was at war, militarily and ideologically, with everything different from itself. Analytically considered, the important effect of the French Revolution upon France was as the breaking point of all intermediate structures, sometimes referred to as the feudal allegiance to God. And allegiance to God was best demonstrated by allegiance to the state.

“Thus the private values of honesty, sobriety, and compassion were not translated into public values. War was glorified; and the good of the state was exalted above that of the individual. And with the fervent belief that obedience to the state would produce a new society, Germans were willing to do whatever their Fuhrer demanded. Their duty to God was spiritual; their duty to the state was political.” Lutzer, *Hitler’s Cross*, 110, 111.

heritage, and the forging of the French people into a single entity, “the nation.”… Local prerogatives and loyalties were impeached, and something enthroned as the “general will” was made the supreme arbiter. In passion for liberty, equality, and fraternity, structure was sacrificed to a political unity of an extremely unrelenting kind. That this type of revolution was intended not just for France but for the world can be read in the statements of many of its leaders.195

Heirs in a large sense to the globally-intended French Revolution, Nazi Germany neither represented Christianity nor even wanted to accommodate it. Hitler repeatedly urged supplanting Christianity and Christian charity with “the ethic of strength over weakness.”196 During his rise to power, Hitler vowed, “Nothing will prevent me from eradicating totally, root and branch, all Christianity in Germany.”197 Hitler’s SS Chief Heinrich Himmler made the SS “a veritable occultic order” where “Christian names of SS soldiers were replaced with Teutonic names.”198 SA troops and Hitler Youth sang at the Nuremberg Party Rally, “No evil priest can prevent us from feeling that we are the children of Hitler. We follow not Christ, but Horst Wessel. Away with incense and holy water … The swastika brings salvation on earth.”199 (Not that the Bible approves of priests, incense, and “holy water”; again, the point is that the Nazis were hostile to Christianity, and saw these as elements of it.) Hitler’s theocracy was anti-Christian to the core: “One is either Christian or German,” he said.200

Finally, Nazi Germany engaged in mass extermination of professing Christians. Dr. Richard C. Lukas writes,

When it comes to the history of World War II, the American media has developed a black hole concerning the genocidal

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196 Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live?, 151.
197 Poewe, New Religions, 112.
200 Poewe, New Religions, 112.
policies of the Nazis against Christians. Everyone should know by now that not all of Nazism’s victims were Jews. Millions—we do not know and probably will never know the precise number—were Christians, mostly civilians selected for destruction for ethnic, religious, social, cultural, or political reasons. When Christians of that era are mentioned in the media, their victimization is either ignored, trivialized or distorted. Too often false generalizations about pandemic Christian collaboration with the Nazis against the Jews are made to deflect attention away from the huge numbers of Christian victims during the most destructive war in history.\textsuperscript{201}

Lukas adds, “Unlike the Jews, most of whom perished in gas chambers, Christians died in slave labor and concentration camps, were shot to death in individual or group executions, and died of hunger and ill treatment.”\textsuperscript{202}

Thus, fascism cannot be likened to a Christian theocracy at all. Fascism is anti-Christian and humanistic. And secular humanism itself employs Nazi-style fascism. Hitler once told German pastors, “I will protect the German people. You take care of the church. You pastors should worry about getting people to heaven and leave this world to me.”\textsuperscript{203} In arguing that Christianity is a private matter, so-called anti-fascistic secular humanists sound identical to Nazi fascists.

Moreover, like Nazis, secular humanists aggressively attempt to purge any mention of God’s name from the public square. Indeed, Hilmar von Campe, who grew up in Nazi Germany, compares Nazi tactics to eliminate mentioning God in school and society, and to confine the church to preaching only personal religion, with tactics of the ACLU\textsuperscript{204}—one of the most influential secular humanist organizations.


\textsuperscript{202} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{203} Cited in Buddy Hanson, \textit{The Christian Prince: Putting ‘Civil’ Back into Civil Government} (Tuscaloosa, AL: Hanson Group, 2007), 73.

\textsuperscript{204} von Campe, \textit{The Cultural War}.
And of course, just as the fascistic Nazi Holocaust resulted in the death of millions of Jews, Christians, and others, so there is a Secular Humanist Holocaust, which has resulted in the death of millions of unborn babies of every race (Jews included). Only the Secular Humanist Holocaust is on a much greater scale. An estimated 11 million died as a result of the Nazi Holocaust, while perhaps 50 million or more have died since 1973 as a result of the Secular Humanist Holocaust.\(^{205}\)

Moreover, von Campe favors a Christian theocracy to one degree or another on a global scale:

[T]he only sane road for America and humanity to take is to obey God’s commandments. … God’s commandments are obligatory for every last person on earth, regardless of what their religion is and whether they believe in God or not. … He [God] created the universe and all mankind, He laid down the rules for everyone to live by, regardless of what their background is, and in what they believe. His commandments must be put into place in all nations, beginning with ours. If we put our house in order, other nations will follow our example.\(^{206}\)

So much for a biblical theocracy being fascist. Hilmar von Campe lived in Nazi Germany and abhors everything it stands for. For one who experienced life in Nazi Germany, WWII as a German soldier, the destruction of his homeland, lost family members to the war, and life as a POW in Communist Yugoslavia,\(^ {207}\) and whose countrymen endured the unspeakable brutality of the Soviets,\(^ {208}\) von Campe should have a better idea than most that Christians keeping their political views private is “suicidal nonsense.”\(^ {209}\) Suicidal nonsense means denying biblical theocracy and embracing privatized religion—and thereby accommodating fascist, secular humanism.

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\(^{206}\) Hilmar von Campe, How Was It Possible? The Story of a Hitler Youth and a Vital Analysis for Today’s Times (Top Executive Media, 2006), 212, 213.


\(^{208}\) von Campe, How Was It Possible?, 96, 97.

\(^{209}\) Ibid., 214.
Chapter 10:
Faith and Imposition

When the humanist criticizes Christians for being theocrats, he engages in special pleading. He is, as we have seen, as theocratic as it gets. Not only this, but humanistic theocracies are even more guilty of the things that humanists fear in a Christian theocracy. Humanists oppose biblical law because it supposedly mandates imposition of a heaven on earth by using the sword to force conversions. To this we must ask, even if such a concern were true, the argument could be reversed to say that humanistic law orders want to impose with the sword a hell on earth (and in fact, humanism is the philosophy that resulted in a deadly, fallen world [cf. Rom. 6:23]).

Also, the humanistic argument is flawed from the start. The Bible teaches that the world has been fallen ever since Genesis 3. Until Christ’s second coming, any sort of heaven on earth is impossible.210 Moreover, biblical law in no way shape or form relies on the sword to convert. The Bible teaches that conversion does not come by the will of man, but by the will of God (Rom. 9:16). In a letter to a N.T. church, the Apostle Paul goes all the way back to the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and argues that this is the way salvation has always worked (Rom. 9:7-13). Moses is mentioned as well (v. 15), who initially brought the written law—including the sociopolitical laws—to the Israelites. Obviously, a God who saves by grace and doesn’t leave conversion to the realm of men has never needed the state to convert

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210 Sadly, many within the church also oppose applying biblical law in matters of the state on the grounds that it is an attempt to impose a heaven on earth. But this is not well thought out because an institution might not apply biblical law for reasons of imposing a heaven on earth, but for the sole reason that God commands the institution to. Moreover, if it is necessarily an attempt to build a utopia in society when the state acknowledges God and abides by His commands, then it also would necessarily be an attempt to build a personal utopia when the individual acknowledges God and abides by His commands. This, of course, is absurd. A utopia presupposes that no one is poor. But even in ancient Israel, a “land flowing with milk and honey” (Lev. 20:24), the poor would exist: “For there will never cease to be poor in the land” (Deut. 15:11a).
souls. (While Christians are God’s instrument to proclaim the gospel, only God can cause someone to believe the gospel [cf. Jn. 6:44]).

Thus the stereotype of a modern-day biblical theocracy necessarily becoming another Inquisition is unfounded. The Roman Catholic Inquisitors did not have a theology that salvation is a sovereign act of the Lord, but a theology of salvation by works, made possible by “freewill” (i.e., that man can choose God by his own will instead of by God’s will). In fact, among their main targets were Christians (“Calvinistic” Protestants), who believed salvation was a sovereign act of the Lord.

It is the view that assumes the sovereignty of man—i.e., that it all depends on man instead of the sovereignty of God, that, when logically played out, drives the state to coerce conversions. And this dangerous view of man’s sovereignty the Inquisitors of old and secular humanists of today have in common. Each, over and against orthodox Christianity, possess a high view of man’s goodness, what man can achieve, and man’s ability to save himself. Hence while the assumption of the sovereignty of man radically distances biblical civil law from the Inquisition, it does radically unite the Inquisition with secular humanism.

Again, the Inquisitors were Roman Catholic. By the time of the Inquisition Roman Catholicism was heavily influenced by Pelagius. Pelagius believed man had the ability to morally perfect himself; that is,

211 Foxe’s Book of Martyrs details that “In the time of Pope Innocent III the reformed religion had occasioned such a noise throughout Europe, that the Catholics began to fear their church was in danger. The pope was determined to impede as much as possible the progress of the Reformation and he accordingly instituted a number of inquisitors—i.e., persons who were to make inquiry, and punish the reformed heretics. Dominic and the other inquisitors spread themselves over various Roman Catholic countries, and treated the Protestants with the utmost severity.” Marie Gentert King, ed., Foxe’s Book Of Martyrs (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984), 58. The Cardinal Giovanni Caraffa singled out orthodox reformers (so-called “Calvinists”) by creating the following Inquisition rule: “No man must debase himself by showing toleration toward heretics of any kind, above all toward Calvinists” (emphasis mine). Leopold Ranke, History of the Popes, I, 159. Cited in Will Durant, The Reformation: A History of European Civilization from Wyclif to Calvin: 1300-1564 (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 925.

man could save himself via freewill. Alain Besancon links Pelagianism with Soviet communism, which is secular humanism taken to its logical conclusion:

Saint. Augustine [Pelagius’ antagonist] retorted that the Pelagians simply oppressed themselves without thereby improving themselves. The same might be said of the ‘positive hero’ of Bolshevik legend. In fact, the latter is worse: whereas the Pelagian intended to attain virtue according to the common meaning of the term, the ‘positive hero’ sought virtue as defined by ideology—which is to say, he sought vice. … The new kind [of Pelagianism] is collectivized. The transfer of the Pelagian idea to political power is more destructive: now it is the other (or all the others) who is to be corrected by education or, if necessary, by reeducation in a yard surrounded by barbed wire.

Today in the West, politicized Pelagianism—the legal recognition of the autonomy of the will—is seen in the pro-abortion movement. A woman’s salvation is found in her freewill “right to choose”; she has “sovereign rights” to her body. This inquisition is responsible for the deaths of countless unborn children.

The autonomy of the will also significantly fueled the Nazi inquisitors. As the historian Alan Bullock notes, “No word was more frequently on his [Hitler’s] lips than ‘will’.” And Joseph J. Carr observes, “The epic movie made of the great 1934 Nazi party rally in Nuremberg was titled *Triumph of the Will*, a title that amply illustrates the driving force behind Nazism.”

“Hate-crimes laws” is a new secular humanistic inquisition emerging to marginalize Christians. These laws are the secular humanistic versions of religious crimes. Those who offend sodomites—

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especially those who uphold the Bible’s teaching condemning sodomy—are according to the secularists guilty of heresy.

Protecting the pro-sodomite agenda is consistent humanism. Humanism is premised on rejecting God. According to Romans 1, God has revealed Himself to all men, but fallen (humanistic) man naturally rejects God (a rejection that can only be reversed if God converts him). One of the major consequences is God judging humanists by giving them over to sodomy (vv. 26, 27).

Thus sodomy is foundational to consistent humanism. Therefore to protect its identity, the humanistic social order must legitimize sodomy and oppose Christianity, which opposes sodomy. Thus in humanism, those who don’t approve of sodomy are considered subversive; they threaten to overturn the humanistic society’s rebellion towards God.\textsuperscript{216}

There are neo-atheists who are very overtly pushing to intimidate Christians to convert to atheism. As Gary DeMar notes, “[I]f atheists get their way politically, we might find some very bad laws passed. Here’s what prominent atheist Daniel C. Dennett wants to happen”:\textsuperscript{217}

If you insist on teaching your children falsehoods—that the Earth is flat, that “Man” is not a product of evolution by natural selection—then you must expect, at the very least, that those of us who have freedom of speech will feel free to describe your teachings as the spreading of falsehoods, and will attempt to demonstrate this to your children at our earliest opportunity. Our future well-being—the well-being of all of us on the planet—depends on the education of our descendants.\textsuperscript{218}

\textsuperscript{216} When it comes to official approval of sodomy, secular humanism is of course more consistent than the humanistic religion of Islam. But while sodomy is officially condemned in some Islamic nations, there are those who have visited the Middle East who attest that sodomy is nevertheless rampant.


The strident neo-atheist Christopher Hitchens considers religion child-
abuse, and the influential atheist Richard Dawkins writes, “So we
should no more allow parents to teach their children to believe, for
example, in the literal truth of the Bible or that the planets rule their lives
than we should allow parents to knock their children’s teeth out or lock
them in a dungeon.” DeMar comments:

Atheists rail against theocracy, but they don’t see that their
worldview is oppressively theocratic with no hint of restraint. Man is god, and man’s law must be imposed on every area of life in
the name of Darwin through the power of the State using reason and science as the twin authorities. These revelatory pillars of evolution—the old and new testaments of their man-centered worldview—are as infallible in their eyes as the Bible is in ours.

But while the theocratic secular humanists want to impose an inquisition (like the Roman Catholics once did), it was the theocratic Christian Protestants who played a crucial role in destroying the inquisition of their day:

The Reformation … separated the institutions of church and state. The state does not receive its authority from or through the
church—in Romans 13, Paul taught that civil governors received their authority directly from God, not from the pope … The sixteenth-century Reformation is best understood as the shattering of Christendom by Christianity. The superstitions and institutions of pagan and papal Rome were crushed by the stone not cut with hands.

Thus, biblical law does not impose faith. In fact, in Israel unbelief was not even a crime. Moreover, we find that the Israelites were to do just the opposite of imposing faith. Instead of forcing them to believe, Israelites were to prevent unbelievers from joining the religious

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219 DeMar, The Temporal Consequences of Atheism.
221 DeMar, The Temporal Consequences of Atheism.
222 John W. Robbins, Christ and Civilization (Unicoi, TN: The Trinity
Foundation, 2007), 43.
community: “Thus says the Lord GOD: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary” (Ezek. 44:9). The book of Ezekiel records that when Israel violated this rule, God indicted Israel as a “rebellious house,” committing “abominations” by “admitting foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in my sanctuary” (vv. 6-7). This is a restriction against unbelieving foreigners (hardly a punishment for someone who rejects God), but not against foreigners per se.

Foreigners were perfectly permitted to voluntarily join the religious community by belief and circumcision: “If a stranger shall sojourn with you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised. Then he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person shall eat of it” (Ex. 12:48).

Unbelieving foreigners were not second class citizens, and were not persecuted for mere unbelief. While open worship of false gods was not permitted, there is a world of difference between imposing an internal change in someone (something that only God can do) and forbidding someone from engaging in open idolatry, that is, the open worship of false gods (Deut. 17:2-7; 18:9-12; 1 Ki. 15:11-13; 2 Ki. 10:25-28; 11:17-18; 18:4-7; 23). There is absolutely no logical correlation between negatively prohibiting an external activity and positively coercing internally an entire way of life. Indeed, the forbidding of the open practice of false religions isn’t even the same as coercing external Christian actions, such as coercing one to engage in Christian worship services.

And, if the state does not suppress the open practice of false religions, then non-Christian parents will force their children to attend humanistic worship services and bow to false gods. Thus political polytheism doesn’t allow for religious freedom for all; although it does grant humanists freedom to impose their soul-damning religions on their children. Moreover, allowing for public idolatry brings God’s judgment on a nation, and what good is allowing total religious freedom if God destroys that nation?

There are Christians who argue that Christians should only forbid “non-religious crimes,” but all crimes are religious, since they are all
offenses against God—that’s what makes them crimes (although not all sins are civil crimes). Many Christians also argue that one cannot impose upon one’s freedom of conscience by denying one the freedom to worship a false god, but if freedom of conscience means freedom to act immorally, then denying one freedom to rob, rape, and murder imposes upon one’s freedom of conscience as well. In prohibiting wicked conduct, Romans 13:1-7 is all about the ruler’s duty to restrain the evildoer’s “freedom of conscience.”

Moreover, the forbidding of some kind of religious practices is inescapable. As Brian M. Schwertley writes,

[S]ome type of state persecution or intolerance toward religious practices is unavoidable and inevitable in every nation, even in secular pluralistic states. The United States does not presently permit human sacrifice or torture in religious rites. It does not permit the use of illegal drugs in “native American” religious rituals. Religious prostitution and child molestation also are not permitted.223

And it is biblical law itself that gives us the authority to forbid such heinous practices. Thus once one advocates legislating against such things, one has already imposed against non-Christian religions. And so to reject the Bible’s prohibition of worshipping false gods is to reject the Bible and thereby undercut the authority for prohibiting the aforementioned crimes. To the extent the Bible is not the standard for determining which religious practices should be forbidden, then the humanistic state will be the standard. The result is state-sponsored promotion of humanistic religions and assault on the Christian religion:

If Christians accept religious pluralism and refuse to apply the word of God to all areas of life including judicial and civil affairs, then the state will continue to use its power to promote false religion. Public (i.e., state) schools promote evolution, fornication, abortion, homosexuality, new age mysticism, native American animism, feminism, socialism and so on. Christians are portrayed in schools, universities, modern music, television and

movies as hate mongers, idiots, bigots, unscientific and anti-intellectual fools. If the radical homosexual ideas regarding marriage, the family and employment become law, then Christians will be persecuted by the state.\textsuperscript{224}

Forbidding the worship of false gods is not a matter of forcing someone to worship God, but a matter of punishing and preventing treason. Christ is King of kings, the highest political authority. To publicly acknowledge false gods is to publicly affirm Christ’s political rivals. Such a public denial of the highest authority in the land foments insurrection. And, it is an insult to God, Who does not share His glory with another (Is. 48:11). God does not permit rival deities to compete with His sovereign authority. (Not that rival deities, which are make-believe, can in any way threaten God’s authority.) The Puritan Nathaniel Ward writes:

God does nowhere in His word tolerate Christian States to give toleration to such adversaries of His truth, if they have power in their hands to suppress them\textsuperscript{225} . . . He that willingly assents to [toleration of false religions], if he examines his heart by daylight, his conscience will tell him he is either an atheist or a heretic or a hypocrite, or at best captive to some lust. Poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world. … Not to tolerate things merely indifferent to weak consciences argues a conscience too strong; pressed uniformity in these causes much disunity. To tolerate more than indifferents is not to deal indifferently with God; he that does it takes His scepter out of His hand and bids Him stand by. …[T]o authorize an untruth by a toleration of state is to build a sconce against the walls of heaven, to batter God out of His chair.\textsuperscript{226}

It is interesting how humanists support the state punishing those who commit treason against civil rulers who are mere men, but then humanists vehemently oppose the state punishing those who commit

\textsuperscript{224} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., 98.

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treason against King Jesus, Who is God and thereby the greatest civil ruler.

Open practice of false religions denies the obligation of unbelievers to publicly acknowledge Christ:

Why should a State government submit to Christ’s rule when everyone in that State is not a Christian? First, because even if they are not Christians, they are God’s creatures, whether they want to acknowledge it or not, and Christ is God. Second, even if all people and governments don’t acknowledge Christ as their Savior, they ought to: “every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth” (Phil. 2:10)—the word “should” signifies a moral imperative. And in the course of history, every knee will eventually bow, or else be destroyed: “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25).227

Hence, “All people in a nation are not related to Christ as their Savior. But all people are related to Christ as their Creator. And it is as creatures of God that all people have the obligation to submit to God’s law. There is no other legitimate source of law.”228

Ironically, humanists fair much better under biblical law than humanistic law. “God’s law is impartial and partial. It’s impartial in that all have equal standing before the law and benefit from it. In Israel, the stranger and alien were protected by the law (Ex. 12:49). But it is partial in that it protects Godly order and God’s people.”229

A partiality for godly order and God’s people actually works to protect society’s unbelievers (provided they aren’t criminals), since without godly order chaos and tyranny reign, and without God’s people, society lacks moral leaven for a just society. Applying this principle to the prohibition of open idolatry itself, by suppressing the moral overthrow of a just godly order, the prohibition of open idolatry protects the very rights of those who would otherwise engage in that very practice.

227 Warren, *Lord of Soul and State*.
228 Ibid.
We should here draw attention to how secular humanists link discrimination based on religious practices with “persecution.” But given their support for laws that persecute the unborn (abortion), the elderly (euthanasia), the mentally retarded (euthanasia), races (race warfare legislation), and classes (class warfare legislation), secular humanists have no credibility in moral judgments about persecution.

Moreover, persecution is an inescapable concept. Civil laws, by the very nature of the case, single out for persecution all in violation of those laws. Thieves, murderers, and rapists are frequent targets for persecution. And these are religious crimes as well, for as we noted in chapter 7, all law is religious. If the state deems law as religious, then the state deems law-breaking as religious as well. Thus all crimes are religious crimes.

Moreover, if the state does not hold to the Bible’s civil code—which requires the state to persecute those who engage in certain non-Christian religious practices—then the state can justify persecuting others simply due to their race, sex, nationality, age, or social class. This is because the Bible’s civil code does not authorize such persecution. But in humanism, where there are no absolute moral standards, anything is permissible.

Ultimately, there are only three basic forms of civil government, all of which are impositional: The biblical state, the pluralistic state, and the state premised on forced conversions (e.g., an Islamic state). But the Biblical state avoids the tyrannical extremes of the latter two in that the only religion that it publicly recognizes is Christianity, but at the same time does not require one to become a Christian. Thus it avoids Inquisitional-style forced conversions on the one hand (i.e., requiring all citizens to convert to a religion), and on the other the tyranny of the state that results from the moral anarchy of tolerating all religions (see our discussion of pluralism in chapter 19). Thus biblical law is by far the best of the three options.

It must also be said that whenever a society denies Jesus as Lord of that society, the state, by the very nature of the case, imposes worship of itself.
A government that seeks to act independently from God, from His Word, and from His law does not just merely become a wicked, rebellious humanistic government. … It becomes a rival god. How does it become a rival god? Because it makes its own laws and it forces its people to obey those laws contrary to God’s law. And it takes … the obedience and the honor from the people to itself—thus subverting the true worship and honor of the one true God.  

Moreover, regarding the humanist fear of biblical law imposing a heaven on earth by the sword, biblical law actually gives disincentives to forced conversion. In a fallen world, the closest a nation can get to a heaven on earth is through blessings given by God. Consider Israel. God offered the nation prosperity, security, peace, fruitfulness, and victory over its enemies on the condition that it walk in His statutes and observe and do His commandments (Lev. 26:3-13).

National blessings, then, can come from following God’s law (Prov. 29:18; Ps. 112:1). (But man first needs inward conversion so he can follow God’s law [Eph. 2:8-10].) But those who violate God’s law provoke God’s wrath upon their nation. Israel was warned that violating God’s commandments would result in poverty, sickness, fear, conflict, death, defeat and rule by its enemies, desolation, pestilence, and cannibalism of its children (Lev. 26:14-39).

Indeed, throughout the Bible Israel suffers God’s wrath for its sins, as did other nations (cf. Jdgs. 6:1; Gen. 6:5-7; Lev. 18:24, 25; 2 Pet. 2:6-8). Herein we see why forced conversions do not square with “heaven” on earth. Since they are acts of playing God and thus heinous violations of God’s law, forced conversions cannot bring blessings. Quite the contrary, a Christian theocracy that expects to avoid God’s wrath and survive should strive to avoid sins, especially major sins such as attempts to force conversions (since only God can force conversions [Jn. 6:44]).

A popular humanistic fallacy is that biblical law is illegitimate law since it is religious and supposedly imposes faith, while secularism is

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legitimate law since it is supposedly religiously neutral and therefore doesn’t impose faith. However, biblical law, being God’s law, is the only possible legitimate law. And as we pointed out, biblical law does not impose faith.

Humanists confuse imposing faith with imposing justice. The Bible’s civil code rejects the former and is based on the latter (“every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,” Heb. 2:2b). Rulers are to follow “Justice, and only justice” (Deut. 16:20a), and if they don’t, they bring a curse upon the land (Deut. 16:20c). Thus the Bible advocates imposing justice; and to reject imposing biblical justice (which is the only kind of justice)—as secular humanists do—is not to be without imposing something (contrary to secular humanists who proclaim, “We can’t impose our views on others!”), but rather to impose injustice—the only alternative to justice. After all, punishments for crime can only be just or unjust. And, law by its very nature is impositional; it says, “don’t do this or else!”

And so, “All law is a matter of imposing a view on others. If everyone agreed with the laws, lawbreakers would never have to be punished. The one who steals or kills does not want the prohibitions against those acts imposed on him.”231 This gives us some insight as to why humanists can’t stomach the idea of the imposition of biblical law. For according to biblical law, the state would threaten humanists with punishment for the criminal lifestyles that they now live. Just as thieves and murderers don’t want the law imposed on them, neither do those such as blasphemers, Sabbath-breakers, and sodomites.

The only way for the state to avoid imposition is to not punish crimes at all—in which case civil government would cease to exist, and their would only be anarchy. Granted, some humanists are so extreme that they do embrace anarchy, but anarchy is not without imposition. It simply exchanges orderly state imposition for chaotic mob imposition.

In contrast to Biblical law, secular (or any form of humanistic) law, being lawlessness, is not true law at all, and thereby merely a belief (and a false one at that). Being nothing more than belief, secular “law” by its very nature must be imposed faith.

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231 Warren, *Lord of Soul and State*. 
So biblical law is legitimate law, while secular law, by imposing a false, delusional belief, is illegitimate. We must also note that if the very act of the state recognizing God imposes faith in God (theism)—as many humanists assert—then the very act of the state not recognizing God imposes faith in man (atheism).

In America, the religion of humanism as enforced by the state engages in every ill that it holds the nation would suffer if it were in fact based on Christianity. First, there is compulsive religious indoctrination. The law requires parents, unless they can afford otherwise, to send their children to public schools, better described as temples of humanism. While there, children are taught the religions of naturalism, relativism, and paganism.

Second, there is the witchhunt. Secular humanism is intolerant of Christians, and constantly works to oppose them via the coercive power of the state in such ways as forcing Christians to privatize their faith. Those who don’t must be hunted down and silenced. Third, there is the Inquisition, where a mother can kill her unborn child if on the basis of humanist religious convictions she deems the child a heretic for attacking her body, which she considers her religious object of worship.

So ironically, in the name of society’s betterment, it is humanism that mandates the imposition of the sword for a heaven on earth. Even the less overtly utopian humanistic philosophies will gravitate this way, since humanism attempts to replace the sovereignty of God with the sovereignty of man. Such a mindset says all depends on man. When all depends on man, man becomes the instrument of his salvation. Thus, salvation by law and humanism naturally go hand in hand. In humanism, law—being the ultimate expression of sovereign power by humanistic man—is the instrument of mass conversion, that is, mass salvation.

In biblical law, the state’s main purpose is to restrain and punish evildoers (Rom. 13:4). Moreover, the state is only permitted to restrain a limited number of evil acts. “Christians believe that only Jesus Christ can save sinners. Only He can make people good. Humanists, on the other hand, do believe that the state can make people good by passing laws.”

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232 Morecraft, Liberty & Justice For All, 61.
The secular humanist state, in denying God, finds itself playing God. It attempts to convert 1) criminals to upright citizens via rehabilitation programs; 2) less than perfect citizens to ideal citizens via educational programs; 3) racists to non-racists via affirmative action programs; and 4) greedy rich people to generous people via high taxes.

But such humanistic efforts at salvation are self-defeating, since, “If a civil government refuses to obey and enforce God’s revealed laws, it degenerates into a minister of Satan.”233 For example, consider a Russian Baptist minister who lived under humanistic communism, the world’s most repressive ideology. Having endured a Siberian labor camp for six years, he said,

I’ll tell you how every true Christian in Russia understands Romans 13:1. We understand it to say that the governmental authority is ordained of God to do the will of God, but when the government denies the existence of God and persecutes the people of God, it is not of God, but of the devil.234

The civil government that does not impose God’s justice as revealed in the Bible serves the devil and attempts to impose a hell on earth.

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233 Ibid., 69.
234 Ibid.
Chapter 11: Only Two Theocratic Choices

Society always has and always will face only two theocratic choices: biblical theocracy or humanistic theocracy. In a biblical theocracy, the state is a minister of God’s justice. In a humanistic theocracy, the state acts as the nation’s lord and savior.

Thus humanistic theocracies are inherently tyrannical. Consider when the Israelites rejected the rule of God (1 Sam. 8:7) for the rule of man (v. 5; 20). Their rejection of one theocracy was the acceptance of another. This decision was symptomatic of idolatry (v. 8). God had Samuel warn the Israelites of their inevitable tyranny:

So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and olive orchards and give it to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day” (1 Sam. 8:10-18).

This arbitrary use of power Samuel warns about is inherent within the humanistic theocracy. It has no fixed anchor prescribing tyranny. Scripture says, “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind” (Num. 23:19a). While the civil laws of God are few and permanent, the civil laws of autonomous man are as
numerous as he is fickle. Compare God’s civil laws—recorded once for all in a few books of the Bible—with humanistic America’s civil laws—which are perpetually recorded in book after book after book. In its unending adaptation to “human progress,” humanistic law naturally progresses into totalitarianism.

God’s civil laws are reasonably few, and all of society is required to know them—everyone from kings (Deut. 17:18-20) to families (Deut. 6:6-7). Thus in the biblical theocracy citizens and rulers alike are informed of their rights and responsibilities. Therefore ignorance—a major contribution to tyranny—is discouraged.

But humanistic civil laws are too innumerable to know; not even the best lawyers come even close to mastering, let alone knowing, all of them. When this is a problem for the best lawyers, how much more of a problem is it for the average citizen? Such a large-scale ignorance of law fostered by humanism perpetuates tyranny.

Moreover, without the Bible’s civil code as the basis for judging whether something is tyrannical, society has no objective standard for knowing what tyranny is. Everyone is left to determine his own standard of tyranny. When this happens, society cannot collectively recognize tyranny—especially in its less blatant forms. How can society collectively recognize tyranny when thousands or millions of individuals each have their own subjective, different standard of tyranny?

Furthermore, when those of society with different standards of liberty and tyranny influence the legal system, society imposes tyranny on itself. This is because only one view (at best) of those countless standards of liberty and tyranny can possibly be right (and of course that view would conform to the Bible’s civil code). All of the countless wrong—and thereby tyrannical—views would easily drown out the one right view. The end result is the imposition of countless forms of oppression, a “free market of tyranny.”

Speaking of tyranny, by the twentieth century, the West had embraced the blasphemous so-called “God is dead!” [sic] movement fueled by such humanistic philosophers as Nietzsche, Marx, and Darwin. This self-conscious repudiation of God’s rule for man’s predictably culminated in unprecedented tyranny and bloodshed. Lest one charges
this statement with Christian bias, it must be noted that it finds support with Nietzsche himself. In a rather honest assessment of his worldview, he predicted two consequences of atheism on the twentieth century:\textsuperscript{235}

First, he prognosticated that the twentieth century would become the bloodiest century in history and, second, that a universal madness would break out. He has been right on both counts. More people have been killed because of ideological differences, and destroyed on the battlefields of geopolitical maneuvering, in the twentieth century than in any other century in history, and by some calculations, more than in the previous nineteen centuries put together.\textsuperscript{236}

Societies must choose this day their source of law. Jesus said, “Whoever is not with me is against me” (Matt. 12:30a). This antithesis extends to the sociopolitical realm, as even Adolf Hitler himself understood, who said, “One is either Christian or German.”\textsuperscript{237}

It is either God’s moral law, or man’s immoral lawlessness. God’s law brings blessings (Prov. 29:18; Ps. 112:1), and liberty (Jms. 1:25). For rulers to be lawful, they must acknowledge the rule of God by upholding the O.T. civil laws and whatever qualifications are made to them in the N.T. Otherwise, rulers will rule by lawlessness. Lawlessness is sin (1 Jn. 3:4), and the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, those who rule by lawlessness impose death on a society; the lawless state is a genocidal state. This is reality, and is thus unavoidable:

God’s law has to do with the nature of reality. For example, we cannot defy the law of gravity without serious consequences. We cannot jump out of a ten-story window without killing ourselves. God’s law deals with the realities of our moral and religious

\textsuperscript{235} Ravi Zacharias, \textit{The Real Face of Atheism} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 29.
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{237} Poewe, \textit{New Religions}, 112.
world. If we defy them, then we pay the consequences. And they are sin and death.238

Thus whatever theocracy (Christian or humanistic) a society chooses determines whether it will survive or be extinguished. Lester DeKoster writes that, “[T]he mysterious dynamic of history resides in man’s choice of gods. In the service of his god—or gods (they may be legion)—a man expends his energies, commits his sacrifices, devotes his life. And history is made.”239

The society that accepts God survives. The society that rejects God dies.

A reign of terror (like the one depicted here from the French Revolution) awaits societies that reject biblical theocracy


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The antithesis between God’s justice and man’s is exemplified in Ezekiel 33:17: “Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just.”
Chapter 12: Authority for Criminal Punishment

God, as the Supreme Authority, delegates to all earthly authorities. Thus the civil ruler must acknowledge and obey God (Ps. 2:10-12; Dan. 2:21; Rom. 13:1-4; cf. First Commandment, Ex. 20:3), acting as “an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:4c).

Judgment then belongs to God. Man is forbidden to execute his own wrath (Rom. 12:19; Deut. 1:17; 2 Chron. 19:6; cf. Prov. 29:26). The ruler, as Lex Rex’s Samuel Rutherford writes, “may not punish as he will, but by warrant of the Supreme Judge of all the earth.” So how does a ruler know whether the punishments he administers reflect God’s wrath or man’s? By looking, observes Westminster divine William Reyner, “to the rule of the Word, both for matter and manner.”

So the only infallible source for executing God’s judgment is God’s Word. And the only blueprint of criminal punishments in the Word is found in the O.T. (in addition to whatever qualifications there might be in the N.T.) “[T]he will of God concerning civil justice and punishments,” writes Westminster divine George Gillespie, “is nowhere so fully and clearly revealed as in the judicial law of Moses.” Only by the judicial laws’ penal sanctions can a ruler know which sins the magistrate is to execute God’s wrath upon; as well as how and to what degree God’s wrath should be poured out on those sins.

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Naturally, “the archetype of government is God Himself, His government over His creation. All other forms of government are derivative, including civil government.” Since civil government derives from God, and its function is to be an instrument of God’s wrath, then its punishments must derive from God. If a civil government rejects the punishments prescribed in the Bible, then that government works against the natural order of things. And, it becomes a rogue state by rejecting God’s government over the universe.

“The will of God concerning civil justice and punishments is nowhere so fully and clearly revealed as in the judicial law of Moses.” –George Gillespie, Westminster divine

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Chapter 13:
Eye for Eye

Criminal punishment in biblical law is based on the “eye for an eye” principle (Ex. 21:23-25; Lev. 24:19, 20; Deut. 19:21), called by theologians the *lex talionis*—the law of retaliation.²⁴⁴ It means that “punishment for criminal acts will be exacted in a fashion commensurate with the misdeed.”²⁴⁵ *Eye for eye* is not *tit-for-tat*, i.e., not repayment in *kind*, but repayment in *value*. The *lex talionis*, is “a penal principle rather than a rigid, literalistic requirement.”²⁴⁶

What is meant by value? G. E. Oehler explains:

> [T]he punishment is a retribution corresponding in quantity and quality to the wicked deed. But that the *talio* is not meant to be understood in a merely external sense is not only shown by various provisions of punishment, but by the fact that not simply the deed itself, but the guilt lying at the root of the deed, is often taken into account in determining the punishment.²⁴⁷

For example, Exodus 21:26, 27 reads, “When a man strikes the eye of his slave, male or female, and destroys it, he shall let the slave go


Contrary to popular belief, Jesus did not do away with “an eye for an eye” (Matt. 5:38-42) in the Sermon on the Mount. He was instead refuting the distortions of the law by the scribes and Pharisees—hence, “You have heard that it was said” instead of “It is written.” In fact, in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus upholds the *lex talionis* as it was originally intended (v. 5:17-20); i.e., to be carried out by civil government (cf. Deut. 19:18-21) instead of used as a justification for personal vengeance. For more on the Sermon on the Mount being about a refutation of distortions of the law, see Appendix B.


free because of his eye. If he knocks out the tooth of his slave, male or female, he shall let the slave go free because of his tooth.” Here, the criminal loses his slave, an important source of his livelihood. He does not lose his eye or tooth, which disproves the literalistic interpretation that says eye for an eye means mutilation. (With one possible exception, which we explore.)

Another example is 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.” The theft of one ox is not repaid with just one ox, but five, and the theft of one sheep is replaced with four. It is true that capital punishment for murder is literally life for life (Ex. 21:12). Nevertheless, like all the other punishments, this has to do with repayment of value, not of kind; in this particular case, the punishment just so happens to exactly match the crime.

In considering biblical criminal punishments, we must first note that all criminal offenses are punishable only on the evidence of two or three witnesses (Deut. 19:15). False witnessing is so serious that a proven false witness will receive the punishment that the innocent party would have received (vv. 16-21). Criminal punishments are mainly restitution, execution, or flogging.

Restitution is required for such things as theft (Ex. 22:1-4); damages (Ex. 22:5, 6); arson (Ex. 22:6); loss of borrowed property (Ex. 22:10-15); unjustifiable battery resulting in injury (Ex. 21:18, 19); causing, during a brawl, the premature birth of a baby where neither the baby nor the mother is killed (Ex. 21:22-24) (if either the mother or the baby dies, the death penalty is required, Ex. 21:23); causing the death of a neighbor’s animal out of carelessness (Ex. 21:33, 34); being the owner of an ox that gores another’s ox to death, if the owner was warned about the ox in the past (Ex. 21:35, 36); and being the owner of an ox that gores a person to death, if the owner was warned about the ox in the past (Ex. 21:28-31) (this sentence carries a maximum punishment of death when the ox goes a freeman to death, Ex. 21:29; cf. 21:31, 32). This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all passages dealing with restitution, but merely to give a large sampling. We will focus on theft, which is a deliberate, criminal act. Gordon Wenham comments on restitution for theft:
In cases of theft or misappropriation of property, restitution of the stolen property was demanded. Additional penalties vary with the degree of penitence shown by a thief. If he is penitent, he restores what he has stolen plus a fifth (Lv. 6:5, cf. H5:24). If he is caught with the goods on him, he restores double. If he has already disposed of the goods by sale or other means, he must restore four or fivefold.\(^{248}\)

Capital offenses in the Bible include human sacrifice (Lev. 20:2); sorcery and acting as a medium or necromancer (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27); sacrificing to false gods (Ex. 22:20); seduction to idolatry (Deut. 13:1-15); apostasy (Deut. 17:2-7); blasphemy (Lev. 24:16); false prophecy (Deut. 18:20); profaning the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14; 35:2); striking or cursing one’s parents (Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:9); incorrigible criminal behavior in a son (Deut. 21:18-21); presumptuous courtroom behavior towards God’s ministers of justice (Deut. 17:12); murder (Gen. 9:5-6; Ex. 21:12; Num. 35:16-21, 30, 31; Lev. 24:17); kidnapping and possession of a kidnapping victim (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7); rape (Deut. 22:25),\(^{249}\) adultery (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24); a wife not informing her husband that she lost her virginity prior to marriage (Deut. 22:13-21),\(^{250}\) bestiality (Ex. 22:19; Lev. 20:15, 16); sodomy (Lev. 20:13); incest (Lev. 20:11-12, 14); a priest’s daughter prostituting herself (Lev. 21:9) (this wouldn’t apply today, given the abrogation of the priestly system); false witnessing to a capital offense (Deut. 19:16-19); and being the owner of an ox that gores a freeman to death, if the owner was warned about the ox in the past (Ex. 21:29) (this sentence could be reduced to a ransom payment, Ex. 21:30).

Biblical law sanctions the following methods of capital punishment: the sword (Deut. 13:15), burning (Lev. 20:14; 21:9), and stoning (Lev. 20:2, 27; 24:14; Deut. 21:21). Some believe hanging is a biblical form of capital punishment as well, while others believe the Bible


\(^{249}\) Many conclude that Deuteronomy 22:25 does not sanction capital punishment for the rape of non-betrothed women, but only of betrothed women. This is incorrect—see Appendix F.

\(^{250}\) Part of the crime may have also been, “whoring in her father’s house” (see v. 21).
only sanctions hanging the body after execution (cf. Deut. 21:22-23; Josh. 8:29; 10:26; 2 Sam. 4:12).

Besides restitution and the death penalty, flogging of one to forty stripes is prescribed for minor offenses.\textsuperscript{251} The Bible describes a case law where judges arbitrate between two men in a dispute. If the judges deem the guilty man worthy of flogging, the stripes must be proportionate to the offense. Stripes are limited to forty, and the punishment must be performed in the judge’s presence (Deut. 25:1-3).\textsuperscript{252}

Additionally, in the only possible punishment of mutilation in biblical law, some believe that a woman’s hand was to be cut off if, when two men are fighting, she attempts to mutilate the sexuality of her husband’s opponent:\textsuperscript{253}

When men fight with one another and the wife of the one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of him who is beating him and puts out her hand and seizes him by the private parts, then you shall cut off her hand. Your eye shall have no pity (Deut. 25:11, 12).

However, Jerome T. Walsh argues that one can infer that the text “means not ‘to amputate’, but ‘to cut or shave [hair]’,” thus the punishment “may

\begin{footnotes}
\item[252] Another punishment in Israel was to “be cut off.” It means the following, according to J. B. Shearer: “The extreme punishment inflicted by ecclesiastical law was excommunication expressed by the phrase, ‘He shall be cut off from his people.’ This phrase sometimes signifies the death penalty. But this sense is to be gathered from context, as in Ex. xxxi. 14. Several times the Lord says, ‘I will cut him off from among his people,’ and ‘I will destroy,’ as in Levit. xx. 3, 5, 6. These refer to his righteous judgment upon capital offences, and heinous sins.

“But in the administration of ecclesiastical and ceremonial law this phrase is used without any hint of capital crime or punishment by the civil arm. The punishment was exclusion from religious ordinances and sanctuary privileges so long as the offense continued.” Shearer lists several of the offenses, and cites the following passages: Ex. 30:33, 12:15, 19; Num. 15:30; Lev. 7:20, 21, 25-27; 17:4, 9, 14; 19:8; Num. 9:13. J. B. Shearer, \textit{Hebrew Institutions: Social and Civil} (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1910), 146, 147.
\item[253] Rushdoony, \textit{Institutes}, 189.
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well mean, ‘you shall shave [the hair of] her groin’.”254 “The idea of humiliating someone by exposing the person's genitals appears in a variety of formulations in the Hebrew Bible; see, for example, Isa. 3:17; 20:4; Ezek. 16:37. In most cases the Hebrew neither implies nor excludes shaving the pubic hair.”255

For reasons of interpretation, Walsh finds the most likely translation “you shall shave [the hair of] her groin.”256 This interpretation “obviates the odd image of trying to amputate the palm of someone's hand.”257 (For Walsh, if amputation was in view, the proper translation would seem to be, “you shall cut off her palm”258—not, “you shall cut off her hand.”) This interpretation also makes sense of the fact that two different Hebrew words are used for what translators commonly interpreted to mean the same thing—“the ‘hand’ the woman puts forth” and “the ‘hand’ that is to be cut off.”259 While the human hand is the most common referent to the latter Hebrew word commonly interpreted to refer to “hand,”260 it doesn’t always refer to it, and can also be “used in a sexual context.”261 Finally, “it resolves the anomaly of one and only one law in the entire Israelite corpus that imposes physical mutilation as a

255 Ibid., 56, 57. Walsh goes on to write, “In Isa. 7:20, however, Yahweh threatens to use the King of Assyria as a razor to shave the pubic hair (literally, ‘the hair of the feet’) of his people - in other words, to reduce them to the desperate and humiliated condition of prisoners of war. In 2 Sam. 10:4-5, Hanun of Ammon insults David's envoys by shaving off ‘half the beard of each’ and by cutting off their garments at their hips. At a literal reading, the treatment is humiliating enough; if ‘beard’, however, could be taken as a euphemism for the pubic hair, the cutting off of the garments would reveal the childish state to which Hanun has reduced his victims.

“Elsewhere in the ancient Near East, shaving a person appears as the punishment for false accusations of sexual impropriety in the Code of Hammurabi (paragraph 127), though it is unclear what hair is to be shaved. And a Sumerian document describes the punishment of an adulterous woman as including shaving her genitalia, boring a hole in her nose with an arrow, and leading her around the city in public humiliation.” Ibid., 57.
256 Ibid., 57.
257 Ibid., 58.
258 Ibid., 47, 53, 54.
259 Ibid., 52.
260 Ibid., 53.
261 Ibid., 54.
punishment—and that for an action hedged about with extenuating circumstances.”

Biblical law authorizes no prison system. Unger writes, “imprisonment was not directed by the law,” and “we hear of none till the time of the kings, when the prison appears as an appendage to the palace, or a special part of it (1 Ki. 22:27).” On the wilderness journey, the Bible twice mentions “in ward” (Lev. 24:12; Num. 15:34), a means to hold someone until a hearing. But this confinement is not called an act of punishment. Thus, “The prison appears in Biblical law only as a place of custody, pending trial.” In Israel, however, detention was required within a city of refuge in cases of accidental killings.

We now turn to the just results of biblical law. Deterrence and rehabilitation, while not the crux of the lex talionis, are side benefits of it. Both the threats of capital punishment and flogging deter major and minor crimes, respectively. On deterrence and physical punishment, J. B. Shearer comments, “[T]he critic objects to the ‘barbarity’ of corporate punishment in any form. He forgets that the shortest road to the soul (the real person) is through the body. Men imagine that they can bear any form of punishment provided that their precious bodies escape.” But even then, biblical flogging has its limits. Compare the moderation of biblical flogging (1-40 stripes) with that of humanistic societies. For instance, in ancient Egyptian law, criminals could be beaten with anywhere from one hundred to two hundred strokes—and “a one-hundred-stroke beating was the ‘mildest form of punishment.’” And Islam, depending on the crime, inflexibly requires 80 or 100 stripes (Surah 24:2, 24:4).

The sanction (whichever interpretation of the sanction is correct) against a woman attempting to mutilate the sexuality of one fighting her

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262 Ibid., 58.
264 Rushdoony, Institutes, 514.
266 Shearer, Hebrew Institutions, 138.
267 Paul Copan, “Are Old Testament Laws Evil?,” in God is Great, God is Good: Why Believing in God is Reasonable and Responsible, eds. William Lane Craig and Chad Meister (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 143.
husband not only deters the woman from destroying another man’s ability to reproduce, but also deters the woman from being harmed herself. Women get emotionally attached to their husbands, and can be prone to step in and intervene in their fights. And, if a woman does intervene, she is likely to resort to seizing the genitals of her husband’s opponent in order to compensate for her strength disadvantage. But she puts her own safety at risk when she intervenes, since the man she attacks could harm or kill her in retaliation.

Moreover, even if this sanction calls for the destruction of the guilty woman’s hand (we doubt this though, in light of Jerome Walsh’s analysis), the one whose genitals are seized may lose, in a sense, his own hands, since after the seizing he may not be able to reproduce and have “working hands” (children) to assist him in his occupation and in life in general. And if he is married, his wife might be harmed emotionally and possibly physically, since she may lose her future security in not being able to have any children. Both the man and his wife may lose the security of children taking care of them when they get older.

The threat of restitution—having to pay several times the value of the stolen property, and possibly having to work it off as a bondservant—deters other minor crimes. But working as a bondservant may also help rehabilitate the criminal. First, in getting him used to working with his hands, it may train him out of laziness, which may have contributed to his crime in the first place. Second, as a bondservant he may learn a trade that will financially sustain him and minimize temptations to steal.

On restitution’s rehabilitative effects, Gary North writes, “Restitution by the criminal to the victim is one way of restoring wholeness to the victim. It also reduces the likelihood of private attempts at vengeance. It is a way of dealing with guilt. In this sense, it is also a means of restoring wholeness to the criminal.” Flogging as prescribed in the Bible is likewise rehabilitative.

Stripes in moderation were given as a wholesome corrective, and the culprit was returned to his family to make an honest living for himself and them, in the face of a wholesome moral sentiment.

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around him. Surely we hardly need argue the futility of the penitentiary system in comparison with this.  

Not only does the *lex talionis* work to rehabilitate the individual offender but society as well. In purging hardened criminals from society, the capital sanctions purge evil from it, helping restore societal control to the righteous. The death penalties in biblical law play an important role in preventing the proliferation of a professional criminal class.  

The biblical punishments of execution and restitution combine to maintain a godly order, with the former purging from society the incorrigible, and the latter rehabilitating lesser criminals. This “serves to keep society when the law is kept in the hands of the godly. Wherever God’s law is set aside, the control of society shifts into the hands of the ungodly. God’s law is thus basic to a stable and virtuous social order.”

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270 Rushdoony, *Institutes*, 188.
Chapter 14: Questioning God’s Justice

God loves justice (Ps. 33:5): “righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne” (Ps. 97:2b); “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he” (Deut. 32:4). God, then, is the source of justice.

Man, by contrast, in his natural fallen state hates God (Jn. 15:18, 19). Man follows “the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2b). Natural man doesn’t accept the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14), since all of natural man’s intentions are only evil continually (Gen. 6:5). “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot” (Rom. 8:7). Consequently, man naturally hates justice. Separation from God is separation from justice; unlike God, Who is the source of justice, fallen man is the source of injustice. This explains the enmity between God’s standard of justice and man’s.

Ever since Satan’s temptation in the Garden of Eden, man considered God’s justice suspect. Falling for Satan’s ploy that they would not die, Adam and Eve attempted to circumvent the capital sanction for eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From the Fall onward all men, including rulers, have played gods by attempting to circumvent God’s justice and by inventing their own standards of justice. The antithesis between God’s justice and man’s is exemplified in Ezekiel 33:17: “Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just’” (cf. Prov. 28:5).

This explains man’s aversion to the O.T. civil laws, especially the capital sanctions. While these laws are just (Heb. 2:2; 10:28, 29), fallen man seeks to judge these laws—despite the fact that God’s law judges us, not the other way around. God is just, we are not, and this is why we judge His capital sanctions as extreme. The Puritan John Preston explains the futility of seeking a source of justice other than God:

In our judging of the ways of God, we should take heed of framing a model of our own, as to think because such a thing is
just, therefore the Lord wills it: the reason of this conceit is, because we think that God must go by our rule; we forget this, that everything is just because he wills it; it is not that God wills it, because it is good or just. … What God wills is just, because He is the rule itself.272

Since God is the source of justice, there is no basis for questioning God’s justice.273 Elniff writes, “There is no neutral standard behind God, as it were, whereby we may judge both God and the creation.”274 To question God’s justice on the basis of a standard of justice other than God is to assume there is a god higher than God Himself. This rejection of the one true God—the source of justice—is a rejection of justice entirely.

In addressing allegations that God was unjust to order Israel to wipe out the Canaanites, Joe Morecraft observes:

Does it seem to you that God is being unjust, and unloving? … If it does seem so to you, it says more about you than it does God. What you’re doing is you’re having certain standards, “Here’s what I think a loving God should do; God doesn’t meet those standards that I’m judging Him by; therefore, the Old Testament God is not as just and compassionate as the God of the New Testament.” Whenever we read anything in the Bible that seems to picture God in a bad light, ask forgiveness … The God who is a God of love is a God of justice.275

While wiping out the Canaanites was not an aspect of standing O.T. civil law, this admonishment nevertheless applies to objections against any O.T. civil law. Vern S. Poythress rightly explains today’s aversion to God’s civil justice: “The punishments are easy to accept once we deal with the perversions and misunderstandings in our own hearts.


273 Job 8:3 asks, “Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right?”


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Modern culture is averse to punishment because it does not understand God nor does it understand the seriousness of sin.”276 He also states,

We have swallowed so much of the modern humanistic thinking that our own judgments and emotional reactions are corrupted. We confuse mercy with vague good will, justice with tolerance, love with sentimentality. Like all sinners we have something in us that would like to be free from God’s standards altogether.277

Humanists want lawless love. But lawless love is unloving, a contradiction in terms. As Rev. A. H. Leitch declared,

There is a “new morality” abroad today, and it is based on the idea that in any situation one is directed not by Law but by love … Paul … said: “Love is the fulfillment of the Law”! We still need the control of the Law …, or the new morality can become just a new rationalization for the old immorality!278

The just should rejoice in God’s justice: “When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous but terror to evildoers” (Prov. 21:15). And,

For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:3, 4).

Those who do not rejoice at the thought of civil government enforcing biblical civil law, but rather tremble at the thought, should be asking themselves if they in fact are wicked.

277 Ibid., 315.
To the degree a culture is averse to God’s justice, that culture is unjust: “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel” (Prov. 12:10b) (KJV). We must not then fear those who uphold God’s law, but those who reject it. To quote Martin Bucer, “Who would approve of men wishing to be more merciful and just than God?”

It must be noted that if God’s civil punishments seem harsh, that’s because they are supposed to be! This is the whole point of punishment. If punishment doesn’t seem harsh, then it’s not really punishment; palatable punishment is a contradiction in terms. Terrifying the evil from pillaging society requires that they cringe at the thought of punishment. Better the wicked cringe at being punished by the state than the innocent cringe at being punished by criminals.

Perhaps one of the greatest reason humanists question and oppose God’s justice is that it reminds them of the eternal damnation that their wicked deeds deserve. Edward Donnelly writes:

[T]he punishment that today’s world will not tolerate is that which is retributive—punishment inflicted simply as recompense for evil done because it is just that wrongdoers should suffer; punishment that marks abhorrence of wrong and commitment to right. Such punishment is regarded as barbaric and immoral. This is not because people have become more humane or civilized, but because they are frightened by a dark specter. The shadow of hell haunts them. Disturbing whispers of judgment to come echo on the fringes of their consciousness. These intimations of God’s wrath so terrify them that they will do all in their power to airbrush any idea of retributive punishment from our society… For punishment in hell is retributive. It is not remedial. It does not make anyone better. Purgatory, the idea that humans will be cleansed and improved through their sufferings after death, is a myth. The pains of hell are of absolutely no benefit to those who are being punished. Nor is such punishment preventative, except insofar as hearing of it now may turn people from sin to Christ. When God opens the judgment books and proclaims the final

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destiny of all, the punishment pronounced will be what people hate and fear above all: retributive punishment, imposed because wrong is wrong and God is against it … 280

Unfortunately, even many professing Christians are averse to the justice of God’s O.T. capital sanctions. This is strange, since they also seem to have no problems with God destroying the entire city of Sodom and Gomorrah, wiping out practically the entire planet with the flood, and sending unbelievers to eternal torment in hell. If they have no problems with these forms of judgments, why should they have a problem with God delegating His wrath to the civil magistrate—wrath reflected in sanctions that take less lives than Sodom and the flood, and are less painful than hell?

A just nation must uphold the standard of justice that God has revealed to us in His Word. For Martin Bucer, “If a magistrate is appointed to punish the wicked, and appointed thus by God, how could he possibly discharge his duty more correctly than by punishing most rigorously what God has decreed to be offenses with the penalties he has likewise decreed?” 281 And for the High Puritan Thomas Manton,

The perfect discovery of man’s duty, God reserved to himself and his own writings, elsewhere there is but ficta rectitudo [fiction or approximation] of rightness and picta justitia [picture of justice], poor counterfeits in the laws of civil nations and institutions of philosophy. ... In short the less knowledge any nation or society of men have of this law, the more brutish and barbarous they have been. 282

The Puritan Thomas Watson, in discussing the Sixth Commandment’s prohibition of murder, observes:

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282 Thomas Manton, Several Sermons on the One-Hundredth Nineteenth Psalm, 8.459. Cited in Clauson, A History of the Idea of “God’s Law”, 153. Notice that the first end-bracket should have been after “rightness,” not “approximation.”
Though, however, this commandment forbids private persons to shed the blood of another, unless in their own defence, yet, such as are in office must punish public offenders, even with death. To kill an offender is not murder, but justice. A private person sins if he draws the sword; a public person sins if he puts up the sword. A magistrate ought not to let the sword of justice rust in the scabbard.283

We follow Watson’s sentiment to all of the capital sanctions the Bible requires today. Enforcing God’s justice is not an option.

We must understand that it is because God is righteous, just, and holy, that He requires what we consider harsh penalties. Many say a good God would never unleash His wrath. But it is precisely because He is good that He unleashes His wrath. For only a perfectly good God would find wickedness so heinous. Do not the world’s most righteous men (who are only so by God’s grace) get more angry at murder than the world’s most wicked men? How much more righteous is God than the world’s most righteous men? Indeed, the degree with which one is angered by evil is determined by the degree in which one is righteous.

Men should be careful what they ask for. If they really want an unrighteous god Who is not angered by sin, then they want an unjust system. In a world with an unrighteous god, all the injustices that humanists fear and more would be the norm, since, in such a world, the justice system would mirror the god of that system. (Not that we believe that a world without God is truly possible.) Humanistic societies that are extra lenient in punishments over time can become more barbaric than those that aren’t. After all, since the mindset of the state reflects the mindset of the people, if people should get away with murdering innocent people, why wouldn’t and shouldn’t the state, which is made up of people?

Humanists find God’s capital sanctions unfair. But for something to be unfair, a rule must be violated. God is the rule maker, and therefore His capital sanctions are fair by their very nature. Accordingly, it would be unfair not to enact the Bible’s capital sanctions. Humanists, by the

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way, can’t account for rules, much less uphold rules. For them, everything is relative—there are no fixed standards.

Humanists likewise consider God’s capital sanctions inhumane. But how we gauge the humanity of something is whether it is in accord with God’s law, since man is made in God’s image, and God’s law reflects God’s holy character. Thus, the only humane punishments are those in accordance with God’s law. This also speaks to the inhumanity of humanistic “humane” punishments which reject God’s law—and thereby the humanity of God’s image bearers.

Regarding God’s justice, we must keep in mind that the Lord declares: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Is. 55:9). God wouldn’t be God if His justice were palatable to man’s finite, fallen tastes. Therefore one would expect natural man to take offense at, and think he can improve upon, God’s justice. Far from casting doubt on God’s justice, the near universal hostility to a righteous God’s capital sanctions by an unrighteous humanity confirms God’s justice.

In making the punishment of the criminal the crux of punishment, the lex talionis avoids injustice. The criminal is punished in proportion to his crime. But humanistic philosophies to one degree or another reject the lex talionis, and therefore cannot avoid injustice. For example, two of the most prevalent humanistic justice philosophies are deterrence and rehabilitation, embraced by conservatives and liberals, respectively. While deterrence and rehabilitation (properly applied) are important fruits of the lex talionis, by making these the root of justice, deterrence and rehabilitation are unjust. The deterrence philosophy of justice—with its objective to terrorize future potential offenders into not committing crimes—punishes convicted offenders not for crimes they have already committed, but for future contingent crimes of others. And the rehabilitation philosophy of justice—with its objective to prevent convicted offenders from committing future crimes—necessarily punishes convicted offenders not for the crimes they already committed, but for crimes they may commit in the future.

Despite its plausibility, basing punishment exclusively on deterrence and rehabilitation is ultimately inhumane. As C.S. Lewis eloquently argues, the elimination of restitution and
retribution converts the offender into an object to be manipulated rather than a person responsible for wrongdoing. Moreover, no boundary remains between crime and personality problems. Why not deter people beforehand by shutting them up or operating on their brains before they have the temptation to commit a crime? In addition, rehabilitation becomes a code-word for unlimited bondage. The criminal is restored to society not when he has paid his debt, but whenever the therapist is satisfied that his personality has been sufficiently readjusted. No form of torture is excluded if the effect promises to be suitable to the rehabilitator.  

To the degree the state rejects the *lex talinois*, punishment is unjustly administered onto the accused, and/or some or all of the general population. There is no limit to the terror the state can inflict on society. If deterrence is the crux of justice, then why shouldn’t the state deter crime, for instance, via genocide of a group believed to be most likely to commit any given crime? Or if rehabilitation is the crux of justice, why shouldn’t the state rehabilitate the “crime of an unjust society” by controlling the minds of those believed to contribute most to society’s injustice?  

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285 The communist genocidal maniac Mao Tse-Tung, in a well known speech, upheld both humanistic philosophies of deterrence and rehabilitation. To deter was to “punish the past to warn the future”; to rehabilitate was to “save men by curing their ills”: “Past errors must be exposed with no thought of personal feelings or face. We must use a scientific attitude to analyze and criticize what has been undesirable in the past … this is the meaning of ‘punish the past to warn the future.’ But our object in exposing errors and criticizing shortcomings is like that of a doctor in curing a disease. The entire purpose is to save the person, not to cure him to death. If a man has appendicitis, a doctor performs an operation and the man is saved … we cannot adopt a brash attitude toward diseases in thought and politics, but [must have] an attitude of ‘saving men by curing their diseases.’” Mao Tse-tung, “Correcting Unorthodox Tenencies in Learning, the Party, and Literature and Arts,” in C. Brandt, B. Schwartz, and J. Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), 392. Cited in Robert Jay Lifton, *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of “Brainwashing” in China* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), 13, 14.

Lifton summarizes more of Mao’s speech: “the ‘old society’ in China … was (and is) evil and corrupt; this is true because of the domination of the ‘exploiting classes’—the landowners and the capitalists or bourgeoisie; everyone has been exposed to this type of society and therefore retains from it ‘evil remnants’ or
The punishment of the humanistic prison system is terribly disproportionate to the crime.

The man who has broken his baby’s bones with a club, the man who has forced the door of a warehouse, the woman who has collected two hundred pairs of stockings from the department store, and the adolescent who has set fire to an outhouse—all receive the same treatment, the same ‘punishment,’ varying only in duration. 286

The humanistic prison system is also a terrible liability for society. Such a system seems unavoidable without the combination punishments of execution, flogging, and restitution required by the lex talionis. While these punishments—when enacted in the prescribed manner—work to foster justice, the prison system fosters injustice. Instead of paying off or working off their debts, young thieves are sent to prison where they are sodomized and brutalized by those who should have been executed to begin with; upon release with the label “convict,” their dignity and reputations are forever scarred.

In prison criminals teach one another new methods of getting away with robbery, rape, and murder. The creation of the prison guard occupation creates opportunities for men to “indulge their tastes in brutality.” 287 Innocent citizens are forced to subsidize a permanent professional criminal class bent on pillaging society. Parolees, as well as the army of law enforcement officers necessary to deal with hardened parolees, together threaten society with criminal totalitarianism on one side and statist totalitarianism on the other. Prisons are also sodomite factories. Non-Christians are susceptible to having sodomite inclinations anyway (Rom. 1:18-27), and so prisons, where those of the same sex are segregated together, encourage those inclinations. Moreover, straight inmates who suffer sodomite rape might become sodomite themselves.


287 North, Victim’s Rights, 270.
And sodomites aggressively promote the overturning of society, as we shall see in chapter 22.

On the perversity of the prison system, Peter Hammond writes,

Under God’s law there would be fewer criminals, fewer victims and much less burden on the tax payer. Under our present humanistic system our prisons have become a higher institution of learning for criminals where they cross-train one another and work out how not to get caught—next time. And instead of the victim and his relatives receiving restitution they are forced to pay taxes which provide food, accommodation and entertainment for the criminals, while they languish in prison. The solution to this intolerable situation includes a return to the Biblical pattern of restitution.288

Indeed, how can one compare biblical flogging to the prison system? Better to be flogged in front of a judge with a limited number of stripes than to suffer potentially unlimited flogging by the nightstick of the prison guard or the shank of the fellow prisoner—not to mention the sexual flogging of the sodomite cellmate. In biblical flogging, after being flogged offenders return to support their families; women and children are not left without a provider and protector. Almost immediately after his punishment begins it is over with—he does not lose a large portion of his life in prison. He can go home and begin putting his life in order immediately. Better to receive twenty lashes and go home than to receive twenty years and spend much of one’s lifetime in prison.

Humanists enjoy pointing to the use of biblical sanctions in history to “prove” biblical law leads to tyranny. Somehow they fail to mention that Israel once had all the Bible’s sanctions on the books, and yet Israel survived, and, when it wasn’t apostate, even thrived. With the exception of those who were actually executed for their capital crimes, spouses survived the capital sanction for adultery; sons survived the capital sanction for incorrigibility; trial witnesses survived the capital sanction for false witnessing to a capital offense; and cities survived the capital sanction against city-wide apostasy.

Humanists love to point out the burning of “poor innocent” Servetus in Geneva, where the Protestant Reformer John Calvin had influence. Such criticism is agenda-driven, overlooking Servetus’ horrendous crimes against God. Historian Otto Scott writes, “Servetus holds a special status in anti-Calvinist legends. … But theologians know Servetus as a forerunner of Unitarianism, a pioneer in the ‘historical school’ of Biblical criticism, a spreader of Judaic criticisms of Christianity and as one of the great theological disturbers of all time.”289 The Geneva City Council (not Calvin, who was just a witness) found Servetus guilty of blasphemy. The trial was not in haste, and conformed to European legal standards.290 We must note that the Bible requires the death penalty for convicted blasphemers. If Servetus’ punishment was unjust, it must be established that what the Council considered blasphemy was not actually blasphemy according to the Bible.291

O.T. civil law did play an important role in Calvin-influenced Geneva. According to E. William Monter’s data for the year 1562—the peak year of Calvin’s influence—criminal records from Geneva’s state archives reveal crimes that violated “a good deal of the Mosaic criminal code.”292 During that year, thirteen executions occurred, some that require death under biblical law, and some that don’t. Still, “In the majority of these cases the penalty meted out was consistent with the Mosaic Code.”293 “Calvin advocated the principles, if not the details, of

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289 Scott et al., Great Christian Revolution, 133.
291 Even if it could be established that Servetus’ execution was unjust, the uproar against this execution would still be extremely disproportionate. During Calvin’s entire Geneva stay, Servetus alone was tried and executed for a crime under the broad category of heresy (particularly blasphemy, in Servetus’ case). In the neighboring city of Toulouse, within one year, 208 people were arraigned for heresy. David W. Hall, The Genevan Reformation and the American Founding (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 116, 117. This is to say nothing of the humanistic Roman Catholic Inquisition, which executed multitudes without trial. “Rather than blame Geneva … one should praise Geneva for enormous restraint.” Daniel, History and Theology of Calvinism, 26.
292 Clauson, History of the Idea of “God’s Law”, 106. It must be noted that Calvin’s influence cannot necessarily be blamed or credited for all of Geneva’s laws at the time, since Geneva had inherited much of its existing law from the Corpus Juris Civilis (Ibid., 106, 107).
293 Ibid., 107.
Mosaic Law as the only viable legal form for a properly governed society.”

Did biblical law result in a bloodbath? Hardly. As noted, only thirteen executions occurred in one year, some of which are not even sanctioned by biblical law. Moreover, men don’t flee towards a genocidal city. Calvin’s Geneva was a city of refuge. Here persecuted refugees from all European countries found shelter. The bishop John Bale, who visited Geneva after being ejected from Mary’s government, praised Geneva for its unique tolerance. He wrote,

Geneva seemeth to me to be the wonderful miracle of the whole world: so many from all countries come thither, as it were a sanctuary, not to gather riches but to live in poverty … Is it not wonderful that Spaniards, Italians, Scots, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, disagreeing in manners, speech and apparel, sheep and wolves, bulls and bears, being coupled with the only yoke of Christ, should live so lovingly and friendly, and that monks, laymen and nuns, disagreeing both in life and sect, should dwell together, like a spiritual and Christian congregation.

What is more, after being educated in Geneva, refugees would eventually return to their countries (alive!), armed with Reformation doctrine. This infuriated the Roman Catholic Francis de Sales, who wrote about Geneva being an asylum for Protestants of all nations and the foundational threat against the Catholic Church.

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294 Ibid., 109.
297 Cited in Ibid.
299 Francis de Sales wrote the duke of Savoy: “All the heretics respect Geneva as the asylum of their religion …. There is not a city in Europe which offers more facilities for the encouragement of heresy, for it is the gate of France, of Italy, and of Germany, so that one finds there people of all nations—Italians, French, Germans, Poles, Spaniards, English, and of countries still more remote. Besides, every one knows the great number of ministers bred there. Last year it furnished twenty to France. Even England obtains ministers from Geneva. What shall I say of its magnificent printing establishments, by means of which the city floods the world
Calvin’s Geneva—falsely accused as a city of bloodshed—was “the hub of the Reformation,” spreading liberty throughout the Western world. “Everywhere Calvinism spread, so did its views of putting government in its place. Calvinism ‘placed a solid barrier in the path of the spread of absolutism.’” According to Jacob Burckhardt in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860), biblical liberty sustained the “Calvinistic” Reformation countries in Northern Europe, while the superficial liberty of Renaissance humanism in Southern Europe degenerated into license.

The American Puritans—Geneva’s theological heirs—continued in the tradition of upholding biblical sanctions. For instance, the laws of the Massachusetts Bay Puritans as written in John Cotton’s *Abstract of the Laws of New England* conformed to the Bible even more consistently than Geneva, restating capital offenses “exactly from the Old Testament,” and usually patterning punishments of lesser crimes “after Mosaic norms.”

Of course, the humanists’ popular “refutation” of the Puritans is the infamous Salem Witch Trials of the 1690s. This is a classic historical argument used for discrediting the Puritan use of biblical law. However, this episode has been enormously blown out of proportion. In his piece on the Salem Witch trials, Kirk House describes an historical context

with its wicked books, and even goes the length of distributing them at the public expense? …. All the enterprises undertaken against the Holy See and the Catholic princes have their beginnings at Geneva. No city in Europe receives more apostates of all grades, secular and regular. From thence I conclude that Geneva being destroyed would naturally lead to the dissipation of heresy.” Vie de ste. Francois de Sales, par son neveu, 20. Cited in Boettner, *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, 409, 410.

300 Scott et al., *Great Christian Revolution*, 133.
303 Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*, 100.
which today is virtually unknown.\textsuperscript{305} He points out that during the tragic event—which resulted in the deaths of twenty-two or twenty-three people\textsuperscript{306}—not one of the accused likely had a fair trial.\textsuperscript{307} But he also raises some factors that refute the simplistic idea that the root cause was a Christian form of government.

Moreover, House raises the possibility that “demonic activity, up to and including possession, may have been involved.”\textsuperscript{308} He adds,

Such a diagnosis fits the facts as well as one of hysteria, so long as it is not rejected on presuppositional grounds. Indeed, some aspects of the case are more easily explained by demonic activity. Such a case is the \textit{levitation of Margaret Rule}. Taking place in Boston in 1693, the Rule case is not directly a part of the Salem situation. Seven men, headed by Cotton Mather, Fellow of the Royal Society of London and former medical student, testified that they had seen Margaret Rule lifted from her bed to the ceiling, and that the combined strength of several men was insufficient to pull her down.\textsuperscript{309}

Many objections to the Salem Witch trials stem from those with anti-supernatural, naturalistic presuppositions. Such objections are strange, since if the natural world is all there is, the Puritans were simply doing what was natural and acting on natural selection in killing the accused witches. The fact that Puritans were wrong about supernatural activities is evolution’s fault, not theirs.

While we don’t deny that witches exist, we do affirm that societies can have unhealthy, superstitious beliefs about them, which can result in the unjust deaths of those accused of witchcraft. But where do such unhealthy superstitions come from? Not Christianity, but humanism. “[T]he superstitions of magic and witchcraft began among

\textsuperscript{306} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{307} Ibid., 150.
\textsuperscript{308} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{309} Ibid.
the civilized nations of the earth, and prevailed even in Greece and Rome.”  

However,

In Europe the possibility of magical flights was strictly denied by the Christian Church. Laws in early medieval penal codes already forbade the belief in *strigae*, the term for owl-shaped flying creatures in Antiquity. In Greek and Roman times they were conceived as demonic creatures, capable of flying through the air, stealing children and devouring them. Classical authors like Apuleius or Ovid clearly did not believe in their reality, but refer to a widespread belief.

Those in pagandom believed to be witches often suffered the consequences. For example, the Saxons—who believed not only in witches, but werewolves—had a practice of burning alleged witches to death. But after being conquered by Emperor Charlemagne, Saxony instituted the death penalty against burning alleged witches. Thus Charlemagne decreed after conquering Saxony:

> If any dupe of the devil believes in the pagan fashion that any man or woman is a *striga* and eats men, and sets fire to her because of this or gives her flesh to be eaten, or if he eats her, he is to be punished with the sentence of death.

All of this refutes the accusation by humanists that historical Christianity is mired in superstitious witch-hunts. Witch paranoia is a product of pagan humanism, and the emperor and professing Christian Charlemagne threatened against such paranoia under pain of death. And to the extent that Christianity embraced absurd ideas about witches and promoted unjust persecution of those merely alleged to be witches, it obviously picked such ideas up from the pagan humanists. The Bible does threaten the death penalty against actual witches (but the Bible

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312 Ibid.

limits the definition of what constitutes a witch [cf. Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27]), but one must be proven to be a witch in a court of law—not by superstitious hysteria. Biblical law deters such hysteria in threatening the death penalty against false witnesses in capital cases. Moreover, Historian Paul Jehle comments,

Individuals came to me and said, “See, it’s Puritan laws that put the witches to death the way they did because they just copied the law out of the book of Leviticus.” The interesting part about that is the very same laws in the Old Testament require that you have to have an eye-witness of a crime in order to put someone to death; and without two or three witnesses you can’t put someone to death. … It is because the Puritans abandoned biblical law for nine months in New England that we had the Salem Witch Trials the way we did. If they had followed that [biblical law’s requirement of two or three witnesses], no one would have been put to death, even though there were two or three who were practicing in the occult.314

While biblical law possesses safeguards protecting the accused, humanism does not, for in humanism man arbitrarily determines law for himself. Thus Jehle adds, “Interesting to note in the Salem Witch Trials, if you … abandon God’s law, and you take up man’s law as a replacement, and [you are] not thinking the Bible has any indication for law, you pick up an hysteria—you are now guilty until proven innocent.315

Interestingly, according to Jehle, “ten of the twenty people put to death in New England were the leading Christians of that society. In fact, two of the older women were the leading prayer warriors in the town of Salem.”316 Since humanists hate God, if humanists consistently adhere to their worldview, all leading Christians would be put to death. So in light of the execution of leading Christians in Salem it’s difficult to understand how humanists would take issue with the Salem Witch Trials.

315 Ibid.
316 Ibid.
And beyond all this, the reaction of secular humanists to the witch trials are extremely disproportionate, considering the record of secular humanism itself. Michael H. Warren, Jr., writes,

Atheists are still outraged that several hundred years ago some Puritans in Salem unjustly killed about 20 people before the town repented of its actions. That’s barely worth noticing compared to the millions killed by Stalin, all with support of American Intelligentsia. Judging by the number of lives unjustly snuffed out, separation of atheism and State is much more urgent than separation of Church and State. 317

Puritan critics seem particularly slow to praise the Massachusetts colony Puritans for ending the long-standing capital punishment under English common law for certain theft offenses. 318 Herbert W. Titus writes,

The common law allowing for the death penalty for such theft offenses appeared to have been inherited from the Anglo-Saxon customary law in disregard of the restitutionary remedy provided for by the Bible. The 1641 Body of Liberties of the Massachusetts colony limited capital punishment to only those offenses (with one exception) that were punishable by death in Israel. 319

Thus it was the Bible that gave the Massachusetts Puritans the standard for ending unjustly harsh sanctions for theft. Capital punishment for theft of property is not authorized in the Bible. Instead, thieves must pay restitution. And so regarding the Puritans, the justice attained by ending a long-standing unjust penalty for theft outweighed the justice lost by temporarily engaging in unjust trials against those accused of witchcraft.

Indeed, according to the famous nineteenth century historian George Bancroft, “The Puritans … planted … the undying principles of

317 Warren, Lord of Soul and State.
318 Titus, God, Man, and Law, 286.
319 Ibid.
democratic liberty.”\footnote{320} Just like Calvin’s Geneva, liberty—not a bloodbath—was the fruit of biblical law. Lest one, by the way, regard the Puritans as some fringe colonial group in upholding multiple capital sanctions, we must point out that the average 18th century colony upheld 12 capital crimes—a number greatly exceeded in England.\footnote{321} The Constitution and Bill of Rights were ratified when “the death penalty was widely accepted.”\footnote{322} No bloodbath ensued, but national prosperity did.

But one place a major bloodbath did occur during the Reformation was France, a country not transformed by the Reformation, but dominated by humanism—particularly in the form of Roman Catholicism, which, due to its man-centered gospel, is simply humanism masquerading as Christianity. During and following the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre (August 24, 1572), Catholic mobs massacred tens of thousands of French Protestants, known as Huguenots.\footnote{323} Like Calvin and the Puritans, the Huguenots believed the state was to rule by the law of God.\footnote{324} France would undergo yet another major bloodbath during the French Revolution, which resulted from Enlightenment humanism. The French Revolution did not just persecute


\footnote{322} ibid., 167.


\footnote{324} The 1559 French Confession of Faith reads: “We believe that God wishes to have the world governed by laws and magistrates, so that some restraint may be put upon its disordered appetites. And as he has established kingdoms, republics, and all sorts of principalities, either hereditary or otherwise, and all that belongs to a just government, and wishes to be considered as their Author, so he has put the sword into the hands of magistrates to suppress crimes against the first as well as against the second table of the Commandments of God.

“We must therefore, on his account, not only submit to them as superiors, but honor and hold them in all reverence as his lieutenants and officers, whom he has commissioned to exercise a legitimate and holy authority.”” Cited in Philip Schaff, \textit{The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes: Volume 3: The Evangelical Protestant Creeds, with Translations} (NY: Harper & Brothers, 1877), 381, 382.
Catholics, but continued in the French tradition of persecuting French Protestants as well.  

France is an example of where bloodbaths did occur during and following the Reformation, and yet we see that the bloodbaths were not caused by biblical law, but directed against those who held to biblical law. Had the tens of thousands of Huguenots been spared the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre, one can see how in France, like in other countries, biblical law could have eventually transformed the sociopolitical realm. But instead, France got Enlightenment humanism. In consideration of the massive carnage in France caused by the Enlightenment-inspired French Revolution resulting in the tyranny and imperialism of Napoleon Bonaparte, and of the comparable peace in Reformation countries under biblical law, one can imagine how France would have been much more free and peaceful had it embraced biblical law instead of Enlightenment humanism.

Brownlee writes of the tyranny and bloodbath that followed the St. Bartholomew’s Massacre:

New tyrants add fresh injuries, and at the distance of about one hundred years from that massacre [St. Bartholomew's in 1572], in 1685, Louis XIV revoked the edict of Nantes, and let loose the fiends of persecution. By a succession of cruelties, massacres, and exiles, the great body of the faithful ministry of France was

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326 Lorimer writes, “[I]t should never be forgotten, that whatever may have been the instrumental causes of the Revolution—such as the anti-social influence of infidelity, and the return of soldiers from a country where republican principles had just been triumphant, and the gross mismanagement, abuses, and despotism of the Government at home—that the real and efficient moral causes are to be found in the protracted persecution, and almost destruction, of the Evangelical Church of France. Mere political writers may not enter into such views; but to those who make the Word of God their standard of judgment, they are the only sound ones. It was to be expected that the great Head of the Church would not allow the blood of so many hundreds and thousands of His saints to be poured forth without challenge—that He would punish the nation which, without reason, oppressed and massacred those dear to Him as the apple of His eye.” Lorimer, *An Historical Sketch of the Protestant Church of France*, 460.
destroyed. The rest, a melancholy remnant, pining in obscurity, fell by degrees a prey to the ignorance and the superstition of the age. The churches were shut up, the Gospel was not preached, the holy Sabbath was neglected and profaned over the kingdom. The decency of morals gradually perished with religion. Led on at last by Voltaire and his atheistic satellites, the frightful demon of infidelity filled France with its emissaries. These met with feeble opposition. Truth had fallen in the streets, and her faithful watchmen were gone! Vice, and crime, and atheism, covered France. This conspiracy against God and man burst forth in the old French revolution; and it buried the government, and religion, and morals, and the nation, in blood and havoc!\(^{327}\)

We must ask the humanist by what standard he objects to God’s justice. Humanism—being hostile to God, in light of Whom dignity is known—cannot account for human dignity. Take the evolutionary humanist. He takes such offense at the thought of being made in God’s image that he fantasizes about being made in the image of primordial slime. Since the effect is no greater than the cause, such thinking reduces man to valueless slime.\(^{328}\) And so do Darwinian-influenced societies.

Humanistic evolutionary theory played a large part in fueling twentieth century genocides. Charles Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* provided Karl Marx the legitimacy needed for his communist theory. Marx wrote to his *Communist Manifesto* co-author Friedrich Engels, “Although developed in a coarse English manner, this is the book that contains the foundation in natural history for our view.”\(^{329}\) The scholarly *Black Book of Communism* estimates that between 1914 and 1991

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\(^{328}\) Not even in primitive pagan Greece was man considered so worthless. In Greek mythology, “the gods do not make man out of the slime but beget him by union among themselves, or with their mortal offspring.” Will Durant, *The Life of Greece: The Story of Civilization: Part II* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 181.

international communism caused 100 million civilian deaths.\textsuperscript{330} This Darwinian-legitimized ideology bred such bloodthirsty tyrants as Josif Stalin, Vladimir Ilich Lenin, Mao Tse-Tung, and Pol Pot.\textsuperscript{331}

Darwinian evolution also inspired Nazism. Nazi Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler “stated that the law of nature must take its course in the survival of the fittest. The result was the gas chambers.”\textsuperscript{332} Hitler, in \textit{Mein Kampf}, also advances survival of the fittest. He writes that races have different values, which he felt obliges him “according to the eternal will that rules this universe, to promote the victory of the better, the stronger, and to demand the submission of the worse and weaker.”\textsuperscript{333} Nazi natural selection resulted in approximately twenty-five million civilian deaths alone, including six million Jews.\textsuperscript{334}

Secular humanists insist these instances were “abuses of evolution.” But if naturalism is true, no abuse of anything is possible. Whatever is is. Everything is simply matter in motion. If the natural realm is all there is, then all that occurs is natural. To call something unnatural (e.g., “abuse”) is to assume a transcendent realm outside of the natural upon which to judge something as unnatural.

If evolution is true, then why judge the Nazis and Communists? After all, they would have just acted on natural selection. There is no right or wrong in a naturalistic, materialistic world. Morality is not made of matter; it is immaterial. Thus matter in naturalism is amoral; it doesn’t care about right and wrong. Evolutionary humanists insist, nevertheless, good and bad exists. Let’s assume this, for argument’s sake. In an evolutionary worldview, the ultimate good would have to be natural

\textsuperscript{330} Courtois et al., \textit{Black Book of Communism}, 2, 4.  
\textsuperscript{331} Joseph Stalin “acquired a copy of Darwin’s \textit{Origin of Species}, when he was about 13. One day, he and some friends were talking about the injustice of there being rich and poor. Soso [Stalin] amazed them all by saying, ‘God’s not unjust, he doesn’t actually exist. We’ve been deceived. If God existed, he’d have made the world more just. I’ll lend you a book and you’ll see.’ He produced a copy of Darwin’s book.” Russell Grigg, \textit{Stalin: From Choir Boy to Communist Butcher} (Creation Ministries International, n.d.). Retrieved June 8, 2010, from \url{http://creation.com/stalin#txtRef5}. Grigg draws from and cites, Simon Sebag Montefiore, \textit{Young Stalin} (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: London, 2007), 40.  
\textsuperscript{332} Schaeffer, \textit{How Should We Then Live?}, 151.  
\textsuperscript{334} Courtois et al., \textit{Black Book of Communism}, 14, 15.
selection, since it is the evolutionary “author of life.” But if natural selection is good, *death is good*, since in survival of the fittest death *fosters* life. *Death is progress.* The consistent evolutionists—who consider themselves “progressives”—would praise genocide as the ultimate act of progress. After all, in survival of the fittest, genocide is the ultimate act of survival of the human race, as it eliminates on a large scale the weak, those who would hinder human progress, and thereby preserves the life of those best able to propagate the human species. Thus for evolutionary humanists, death and progress are inescapably linked. In his “Origin of the Species,” Darwin—the god of evolutionists—repeatedly links “extermination” with improvement of the species. For instance, he writes,

As in each fully stocked country natural selection necessarily acts by the selected form having some advantage in the struggle for life over other forms, there will be a *constant tendency in the improved descendents* of any one species to *supplant and exterminate* in each stage of descent their predecessors and their original progenitor. For it should be remembered that the *competition will generally be most severe between those forms which are most nearly related to each other in habits, constitution, and structure* (emphases mine).335

And so for Darwin, “extinction and natural selection go hand in hand.”336 Thus in Darwinian evolution there is perpetual struggle of “those forms which are most nearly related to each other in habits, constitution, and structure,” which in the case of humans implies perpetual struggle between races, ethnicities, classes, generations, etc. Mankind’s improvement results from “supplanting” and “exterminating” the weak until their “extinction.” (The mass-killer Lenin, by the way, like Darwin, also made frequent use of the term “exterminate.”)337

In other words, humans must prove themselves as “improved descendents of any one species” by *perpetual genocide* of the weak.

336 Ibid., 155. See also pp. 153, 159, and 168.
Genocide in a Darwinian worldview is not a matter of *morality*, but *superiority*—and is thus ultimately progress for the entire human race. This linkage of death and progress for evolutionary humanists stands opposed to the Christian worldview (which upholds the whole Word of God, the Bible’s *capital sanctions included*), where the *conquering of death* (via conversion) and progress are inescapably linked.

Finally, we should note that the humanist—in his hatred for God’s capital sanctions—should be grateful that God doesn’t unleash the full-force of His justice (i.e., eternal damnation) on humanists immediately. God is more patient with men (cf. Rom. 9:22; 2 Pet. 3:9) than men are with His justice. Moreover, even for those undergoing capital punishment, God’s hand is not unable to grant eternal life (cf. Lk. 23:39-43).

What humanist critics of God’s justice really want is not justice, but freedom to sin. Justice is beyond them; outside the intervention of God’s grace, they will every time choose the guilty over the innocent; death over life; Barabbas over Jesus. “[E]very hostility has as its counterpart a new area of sympathy. Those who are hostile to God and His law will be sympathetic and friendly towards criminals.”338 When the humanist cannot take life immediately, he will dehumanize his fellow man in order to facilitate future deaths, such as by popularizing myths that humans are nothing more than purposeless chemicals housed in soulless bags of skin.

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Above: A caricature of a Puritan “witch hunt.” “Atheists are still outraged that several hundred years ago some Puritans in Salem unjustly killed about 20 people before the town repented of its actions. That’s barely worth noticing compared to the millions killed by Stalin, all with support of American Intelligentsia. Judging by the number of lives unjustly snuffed out, separation of atheism and State is much more urgent than separation of Church and State.”—Mike H. Warren, Jr.
Chapter 15: Primitive Humanistic Injustice

The Israelites could account for justice. Their laws reflected God’s unchangeable holy nature. This stands against the pagan humanists of their day, who worshipped morally arbitrary gods while simultaneously holding, to a certain degree, to moral absolutes. Of the Greek laws, for instance, Aristides of Athens, who lived in the second century A.D.,\textsuperscript{339} writes,

For if their laws are just, then their gods must be unjust, since they transgress these laws by murdering each other and committing sorcery, adultery, robbery and theft, and sleeping with males, in addition to all their other misdeeds. But if these gods acted justly, then the Greek laws must be unjust (Aristides, Apol. 13.8).\textsuperscript{340}

The pagans then could not account for justice. In light of this it is ironic that humanists allege that biblical law is primitive,\textsuperscript{341} made for a

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\item \textsuperscript{340} Ibid., 207.
\item \textsuperscript{341} Chuck Colson experienced an occasion where a major aspect of biblical law was looked upon not as primitive, but innovative: “In addressing the Texas legislature, Chuck Colson told the legislators that ‘the only answer to the crime problem is to take nonviolent criminals out of our prisons and make them pay back their victims with restitution. This is how we can solve the prison crowding problem.’ A number of the legislators were amazed at this wisdom. They came up to Colson ‘one after another and said things like, “That’s a tremendous idea. Why hasn’t anyone thought of that?”’ Colson had the privilege of saying to them, ‘Read Exodus 22. It is only what God said to Moses on Mount Sinai thousands of years ago.’” Gary DeMar, “The Moon Has No Light of its Own,” \textit{Biblical Worldview Magazine}, December 2007, vol. 23, no. 12: 5. DeMar draws from Charles Colson, “The Kingdom of God and Human Kingdoms,” in James M. Boice, ed., \textit{Transforming Our World: A Call to Action} (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1988), 154-155.
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Many Christians today hold that biblical law is primitive based on Jesus’ disagreement with the Pharisees on the matter of divorce in Matt. 19:3-9. But here Jesus does not do away with the law of Moses (which would contradict Matt. 5:17-
backward, primitive people, while romanticizing “enlightened” Greece and Rome, with their backward pagan gods and their morally incoherent justice systems.

Besides looking with nostalgia to pagan Greece and Rome, modern humanism does so with the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Contrary to popular belief, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment were not days of human progress, but a return to the vomit of pagan superstition. During the Renaissance, “Italian scholars began to hail the pagans as wiser, and their times as superior to the Christian. ... Italians began to extol the pagans, revive their writings and customs and unearth their statuary, paintings and plays.” 342 Superstition proliferated: “Paganism deepened as the Renaissance extended. Cities appointed official astrologers. From the 14th to the 16th centuries, universities had official ‘star-gazers.’ Even the Popes relied on horoscopes.”343

Thus the superstitious Renaissance, a throwback to superstitious Greece and Rome, could no more account for justice than its pagan predecessors.

The violence of the Middle Ages was never free from obsession and cruelty, and above all the need to find a justification in invoking religious pretexts. The violence of the Renaissance did not for an instant seek to justify itself. The sentiment of guilt had disappeared, absorbed by that desperate “will to power” which will be given a name four centuries later.344

The Renaissance hatched the Enlightenment, which superstitiously deified Reason. Justice in the French Revolution—the culmination of the Enlightenment—was arbitrarily determined by those who possessed the power of the guillotine. (Thus the barbaric, pagan Enlightenment would be more aptly titled the Endarkenment.)345

20), but challenges the Pharisaical distortions of it. See Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 99-111.

342 Scott et al., Great Christian Revolution, 86, 87.

343 "Ibid., 88.


345 "To be morally and intellectually endarkened is the state of all humanists. As Paul addressed the church of Ephesus, "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that
We must attribute today’s humanistic affinity to paganism to the fact that modern humanism is pagan as well. As the historian Otto Scott writes, “We live at a time of pagan revival but are naïve about the realities of paganism.” Whether they are naturalists or postmodernists, today’s humanists are pagan polytheists without identifying themselves as such.

The naturalist denies the supernatural. But he sees areas of life isolated from one another. With no overriding frame of reference, all areas of life are fragmented realms of existence, each with its own ultimate authority(ies) to make sense of it. These ultimate authorities are the gods of different areas of life, just as the ancient pagans had gods in different areas of life. Just as the Greeks “raised altars to abstract principles such as Modesty and Piety,” so too do naturalists raise altars in one way or another to abstract entities such as Reason, Science, Choice, the Will of the People, etc. The “modern” altars of naturalists might take the form of such things as laws, institutions, and writings—anything used to exalt a naturalistic principle. For instance, a book...

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346 Scott et al., *Great Christian Revolution*, 83.
347 Such tunnel vision prevents humanistic specialists from seeing the big picture. For instance, because he divorces economics from national morality, the secular economist cannot see the impact a nation’s moral behavior has on economic prosperity and calamity. A nation can be blessed or cursed by God depending on its moral behavior. Similarly, the divorce of religion from politics blinds national leaders from seeing the possible connection between national calamity (e.g., wars) and God’s judgment on the nation.
348 For example, Will Durant writes that in ancient Greece, “Every craft, profession, and art had its divinity, or, as we should say, its patron saint.” Durant, *The Life of Greece*, 176. Another source notes that in ancient Rome, “In the cult of the farm, ceremonies were performed at the appropriate seasons in honor of the deities who presided over the various phases of agricultural life, such as sowing, reaping, wine-pressing, and the like.” A. E. R. Boak, Albert Hyma, and Preston Slosson, *The Growth of European Civilization* (NY: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1938), 92. Finally, Augustine of Hippo mentions that “the Romans assigned particular gods to particular spheres and to almost every single movement.” Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 2003), IV.16.
written by Darwin; a legal system making man the standard of justice; and a “highly prestigious” academic institution glorifying human reason.

Naturalists tend to approach economics, math, science, philosophy, history, politics, and religion as autonomous disciplines. (Hence the more naturalistic America becomes, the less of a university and the more of a multiversity academia becomes.) Each discipline has its own gods. And so the gods of science are Darwin and other popular scientists; the gods of economics are such men as John Maynard Keynes and Ludwig von Mises; and the gods of politics are such men as Thomas Jefferson and FDR. Such men are deified since they are looked to as the final authority in their respective areas instead of the Bible. In politics, for example, people might ask, “what would the Founding Fathers do,” “what would Ronald Reagan do,” or “what do the people want,” instead of asking, “what does the Bible require?”

The postmodernist theoretically believes all beliefs are true. If all beliefs were true, then all religions would be true, and many gods would exist. Postmodernists are therefore religious pluralists, modern-day polytheists. Like naturalists, they hold to a primitive, polytheistic multiverse—they just arrive there differently. But naturalists and postmodernists both are like the ancient pagan fertility cults. On these ancient cults, Anthony Esolen writes,

If your life comes from the earth and the sky, and if these are so often malignant, ruining your crops with hail and withering them with drought, then you must placate the gods by offering them your own fertility. … In Phoenicia and Carthage, economically savvy parents would make their children “pass through the fire to

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351 Abortion, promoted by naturalists and postmodernists, is primitive pagan human sacrifice. The child is sacrificed to the god of “choice.” Choice is considered a god since it is choice that determines a child’s value. The difference today is that this primitive pagan practice is performed with modern technology.
Molech” (cf. 2 K. 23:10), roasting them in the furnace-mouth of the idol, to ensure fertility to come.352

Naturalists and postmodernists—like the pagan ancient fertility cults—look to nature as their source of life. Naturalists do so on the basis of their “scientific” naturalism; postmodernists on the basis of their New Age earth worship. For both groups, “Mother Earth”353—“the source of life”—must be “saved” from such things as “global warming” and “exploitation” by man. This means human sacrifice in the form of regulations that prevent a portion of the world’s population from employing technology that would raise the quality of life, and that would even save life. Moreover, for both groups the earth must be saved from overpopulation, and this means human sacrifice in the form of killing “unwanted” humans such as unborn children and the mentally retarded. The gods of nature must be appeased.

Thus, humanistic America—with its predominating worldviews of naturalism and postmodernism—is a polytheistic nation. This was made clear following 9/11 at the prayer service at Washington D.C.’s National Cathedral:354

It was attended by five presidents, hundreds of national leaders, and it taught us that twenty-first-century America is a polytheistic, anti-Christian nation. Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and liberal Protestants participated in the service, and an Episcopalian prayed in the name of Abraham, Muhammad, and Jesus. And to add insult to injury, a Muslim Imam led the congregation in prayer in Arabic, and in English.355

One of the most popular contenders in the 2008 Republican presidential primary was Mitt Romney, who holds to the polytheistic religion of Mormonism. Also that year, the enormously popular Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama said in Berlín, “The

353 They do not want a heavenly Father, but want to worship Mother Earth. As fools they worship the creation and not the Creator (Rom. 1:18-25).
355 Ibid.
walls between races and tribes, natives and immigrants, Christians and Muslims and Jews cannot stand” (emphasis mine). It is only fitting that two days prior, Obama held a press conference in the polytheistic Temple of Hercules.  

In 1973 our humanistic judiciary made clear its primitive, pagan philosophy in Roe v. Wade. Justice Harry Blackmun justified abortion on ancient pagan grounds:

We are also told, however, that abortion was practiced in Greek times as well as in the Roman Era, and that ‘it was resorted to without scruple.’ The Ephesian, Soranos, often described as the greatest of the ancient gynecologists, appears to have been generally opposed to Rome’s prevailing free-abortion practices. He found it necessary to think first of the life of the mother, and he resorted to abortion when, upon this standard, he felt the procedure advisable. Greek and Roman law afforded little protection to the unborn. … Ancient religion did not bar abortion (emphasis mine).

The logical conclusion of a multiversal worldview is—as it was in ancient pagan times—to look to the state as the supreme god to unify the otherwise chaotic pantheon of gods. Such primitive statism held by today’s humanists—which historically has wrought the worst sort of injustices—hardly challenges the justice of biblical law.


358 Much of the affinity of American polytheistic humanism with Greco-Roman humanism is the latter’s man-centered polytheism. Given American polytheism’s secular humanist philosophy, its man-centeredness is obvious; but what about Greco-Roman polytheism? Durant touches specifically on Greek polytheism: “Liberated by local independence, the religious imagination of Greece produced a luxuriant mythology and a populous pantheon. Every object or force of earth or sky, every blessing and every terror, every quality—even the vices—of mankind was personified as a deity, usually in human form; no other religion has ever been so anthropomorphic as the Greek” (emphasis mine). Durant, The Life of Greece, 176.
Speaking of justice, modern humanists champion evolution (specifically, macroevolution)—a belief that radically affects one’s view of justice. As Herbert W. Titus comments,

Lawyers not only have been taught to think “scientifically,” to substitute man’s inductive reasoning for God’s revealed truth; but they have also been taught to accept without question the principles of “evolutionary” science. The doctrine of evolution when transferred to law rejects the notion of fixed and unchangeable laws. This destructive doctrine has been embraced not only by law teachers in the classroom, but by judges in the courtroom.359

While such humanists think evolution is a fairly recent “discovery” by “evolved” man who has progressed from the times of ancient pagan superstition, evolution is actually an ancient pagan superstition.

Evolution is not so much a modern discovery as some of its advocates would have us believe. It made its appearance early in Greek philosophy, and maintained its position more or less, with the most diverse modifications, and frequently confused with the idea of emanation, until the close of ancient thought. The Greeks had, it is true, no term exactly equivalent to “evolution”; but when Thales asserts that all things originated from water; when Anaximenes calls air the principle of all things, regarding the subsequent process as a thinning or thickening, they must have considered individual beings and the phenomenal world as, a result of evolution, even if they did not carry the process out in detail.360

According to fragments, Anaximander (c. 610-546 B.C.) believed “humans originally resembled another type of animal, namely fish.”361 In Anaximander, living beings developed gradually, beginning as

359 Titus, God, Man, and Law, 9.
moisture influenced by warmth. Over time they developed into animals, and then into humans. In Empedocles (495-435 B.C.), Epicurus (341-270 B.C.), and Lucretius (died c. 50 B.C.) we find Darwinism in its broader sense—its mechanical principle, where “the process is adapted to a certain end by a sort of natural selection.”

Given his view that the universe was created by randomly moving atoms, Epicurus denied the necessity of the existence of God or gods. There was Heraclitus (c. 500 B.C.), whom “the Stoics followed … in the main lines of their physics. The primal principle is, as with him, igneous air, only that this is named God by them with much greater definiteness.”

In Democritus (460-370 B.C.), an atomistic philosopher, atoms randomly produced bodies, and primitive man developed the ability to speak intelligible words over time. “Like his predecessors,” Democritus “deduces organic beings from what is inorganic-moist earth or slime.” Hence the god Chance was worshipped well before Darwin. As the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.) stated, “[W]e are so subject to chance that Chance herself takes the place of God; she proves that God is uncertain.” Moreover, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) likewise believed in evolution. He held that “the primeval slime” created the lowest organisms, which progressed into higher forms, with man at the top—and the ape as the “transitional stage between man and other viviparous animals.”

Some Greek evolutionary thought borrowed from Hinduism. For instance, the Hindu god Krishna—according to Bhagavad Gita, a sacred Hindu text—says “I am the source from which all creatures evolve.” There is the “Hindu belief … that Brahman (the Universe) spontaneously evolved by itself like a seed, which expanded and formed

363 James-Griffiths, Evolution: an ancient pagan idea.
365 Ibid.
366 James-Griffiths, Evolution: an ancient pagan idea.
370 James-Griffiths, Evolution: an ancient pagan idea.
371 Ibid.
all that exists about 4.3 billion years ago.” Hindus who hold to this belief had their own oscillating big bang theory, which said the Universe is eternal, and cycles in rebirth, destruction and dormancy.  

While primitive pagan Hinduism and modern Darwinism express themselves differently, inherently they are very similar. In Hinduism, the god of evolution is Krishna; in Darwinism, the god of evolution is Chance. Both religions believe the universe evolved over long periods of time. The Hindu doctrine of reincarnation says that if man does good deeds, he evolves (via reincarnation) from lower to higher forms. The Darwinian doctrine of natural selection says that if man has good genes, he likewise evolves (via surviving in his environment) from lower to higher forms. Thus, both views believe in the perfectibility of man as achieved by evolution.

Moreover, both hold that some groups of people are superior to other groups. In Hinduism, the “less evolved” are those considered lower in the caste system, such as the poor and the sick, who suffer as they do as punishments for not being as “good” as the prosperous and healthy. In Darwinism, the “less evolved” are the physically weak, the less intelligent—anyone “less advanced” physically. Finally, both views are racist.

Hindus believe that being born with dark skin is the result of bad karma, but being born with white skin is a sign of good karma. Just as evolution served to justify many whites’ persecution of Australian Aborigines (who were tagged as less ‘evolved’), so too reincarnation serves to justify the racial, social and economic stratification of the East.

The word ‘Aryan’, which Nazis used to refer to a ‘master race’, actually comes from a Sanskrit word meaning ‘noble’; as in *arya sat yani* in Sanskrit or *ariya sat see* in Thai, meaning the ‘four noble truths’. Adolf Hitler adopted his racist plans from two anti-Christian influences: evolution and Hinduism. Nearly all Hindus and Buddhists who believe in reincarnation desire to come back

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372 Ibid.
373 Ibid.
in the next life with whiter skin, as Aryans are at the top of the caste system.  

Darwinian evolution has much in common with animism, a primitive pagan religion that, in its most familiar form, says “spirits or gods reside in nature” — everything from inanimate objects such as stones to living things such as plants and animals. In this view life is “an enchanted forest”; “glens and groves, rocks and streams are alive with spirits, sprites, demons.” Darwinism is fundamentally the same. For it holds that some mysterious invisible force called natural selection inhabits all of creation and has enchanted inanimate objects to become alive and turn into animals and ultimately people. This invisible force has never been proven; it has only been presumed to exist for superstitious reasons.

Pantheism (nature is itself ‘god’ and worth worshipping) and animism have been helped along, not hindered, by the modern evolutionary ‘push’. If matter has really turned into people, then many will conclude that matter, dead chemicals, must have some mysterious creative essence. If chemicals in the sea billions of years ago mysteriously gave rise to complicated, programmed machines (living cells) bearing vast amounts of coded information (this blatantly anti-science notion is what evolutionists have taught their students) then how much more magical or ‘way-out’ is it to believe that, well, maybe the sea does somehow ‘know’ where ships are?

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As belief in evolution has increased, so has animism. Wieland writes about a survey given in 1954 to college students who had completed an introductory biology class. The survey, given by the *Scientific Monthly* journal, was given to determine if any of those students held animistic beliefs. And in fact, a surprisingly small percentage did express animistic beliefs. A participant in that survey, now-retired
Darwinian evolution also has much in common with the primitive “science” known as alchemy, which in its heyday “was a comprehensive theory of transmutation describing not only transformations of base into precious metals but also transformations of the soul up and down the great chain of being.”\textsuperscript{378} The scientific community—largely controlled by Darwinists—“rejects alchemy as superstition and commends itself for having successfully debunked it.”\textsuperscript{379}

However, like evolution, alchemy says, “nature is in process of evolution and the goal of evolution is upwards.”\textsuperscript{380} Alchemists sought to “speed up” the evolutionary process of baser metals into gold.\textsuperscript{381} William A. Dembski writes that Darwinian evolution follows alchemy’s logic in denying causal specificity,\textsuperscript{382} that is, “specifying a cause sufficient to account for an effect in question.”\textsuperscript{383} In alchemy, lead plus other unspecified things evolves into gold. In Darwinian evolution, unspecified “batches of prebiotic chemicals” evolve into organisms.\textsuperscript{384} As absurd as alchemy is, Darwinian evolution is even more absurd—and

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professor Bruce Stewart, gave an identical test in 1989 to 100 equivalent students. To his alarm, the “‘occult’ responses had actually increased dramatically.” For example, to the question of whether a pearl in an oyster shell could feel water moving over it, in 1954 only 50 percent of those surveyed rationally answered with “no.” But in 1989, only 35 percent did.

“For each of the questions, there was an option for an outright ‘yes’ answer (yes, the sun is alive, the tyre feels the blowout, the sea knows exactly where all the shipwrecks are). In 1954 (looking at the average for all questions) the number of such outright superstitious responses was only 5 per cent (though obviously there were many hedgers and waverers, since adding the number of partially superstitious answers brings it to 26.4 per cent). Thirty-five years later the average number of outright animistic responses had leapt to 22.4 per cent, more than fourfold!”

While this was reported in \textit{Creation/Evolution} (Vol. 12, No. 1, 1992), an anti-creation journal, “The result is not … what they would have expected. Those 35 years have seen a dramatic increase in awareness of science, particularly evolutionary science. How can such a result happen, they must wonder? To them, increased awareness of evolution should, logically, lead to increased materialism (the belief that matter is the only reality, there is no spiritual realm).” Ibid.


\textsuperscript{379} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{380} Rushdoony, \textit{Law and Liberty}, 45.

\textsuperscript{381} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{382} Dembski, \textit{Evolution As Alchemy}, 5.

\textsuperscript{383} Ibid., 2.

\textsuperscript{384} Ibid., 5.
therefore superstitious—than alchemy. Alchemy allows for intelligence in the evolutionary process. But Darwinism, through the work of natural selection, attempts to evolve non-life into life via non-intelligence.\(^{385}\)

In reintroducing superstitious and pagan beliefs then, Darwinian evolution—which by its very nature encompasses all areas of life—lacks any basis for being considered progressive, including in matters of justice. But we should not be surprised. The Bible says those who reject God worship the creature instead of the Creator (Rom. 1:25). “Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things” (Rom. 1:22, 23). This no less describes the creature worship by the pagans of old than the creature worship of evolving species by neo-pagan Darwinists. Such foolish idolaters naturally reject justice (Rom. 1:32) for injustice (Rom. 1:26-31).

And so Darwinism is not progressive, but \textit{regressive}. Biological evolution is a pretext for promoting moral devolution. The twentieth century, likely unsurpassed by previous centuries in its violence, marked a resurgence of primitive humanistic injustice with a vengeance. Just consider the radical injustices of Nazism and Communism, both of which were influenced by Darwinism.

For the most part today’s Darwinian secular humanists can only boast about certain technological advancements made by secular scientists (although such breakthroughs are impossible if truly based on assumptions of the irrational secular humanist worldview). But when in the hands of secular humanists—who reject objective morality due to their religion of science—technological advancements can be extremely dangerous. Gordon H. Clark writes,

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\(^{385}\) Dembski, on why “evolution is even more culpable than alchemy,” writes, “Alchemy sought to transform lead into gold, but left open the means by which the transformation could be effected (though in practice alchemists hoped the transformation could be effected through the modest technical means at their disposal). Evolution, on the other hand, seeks to transform nonlife into life and then organisms into very different organisms, but—when biased by materialism—excludes any place for intelligence or teleology in the transformation. Such a restriction is gratuitous given evolution's lack of causal specificity in accounting not only for the origin of life but also for the macroevolutionary changes supposedly responsible for life's subsequent diversification.” Ibid., 6.

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Secular science at best can discover what people do; but it cannot discover what people ought to do. From observational premises no normative conclusion follows. Any attempt to define morality by observational science is a logical fallacy. Science can invent new ways of killing people, but science can never determine who should be killed. It cannot determine who should not be killed. It can only invent more effective ways of doing what somebody for some other reason wants to do.\textsuperscript{386}

Perhaps this helps explain the unparalleled bloodshed made possible by technological breakthroughs during the twentieth century—the century of secular humanism.

Chapter 16: Purge the Land

Political conservatives generally consider deterrence to be the purpose of criminal punishment. But deterring criminals should be a secondary concern. *The greatest concern should not be deterring the wrath of the criminal, but the wrath of God.* Gary North explains:

Whenever we speak of deterring crime, we must speak first of the deterrence of God’s wrath against the community because of the courts’ unwillingness to impose God’s justice within the community. The civil government is required by God to seek to deter crimes because all crimes are above all *crimes against God.* An unwillingness on the part of civil magistrates to enforce God’s specified sanctions against certain specified public acts calls forth God’s specified covenantal cursings against the community. … Only when we clearly recognize the theocentric nature of deterrence—and when we are ready to seek to have it recognized publicly *in our civil and ecclesiastical statute books*—can we legitimately begin to speak about deterring criminal behavior for the protection of the community.\(^{387}\)

Indeed, if the state does not act in its God-ordained role as an enforcer of God’s wrath (Rom. 13:4), then can the community expect to escape God *personally* enforcing His wrath—not just on the criminals, but on society in general for failing to uphold God’s law?

When the magistrate does make deterrence of God’s wrath his primary concern by enacting biblical law, he *simultaneously* deters crime. He becomes a terror to bad conduct (Rom. 13:3). Applying biblical law’s capital sanctions causes the community to “hear and fear” (Deut. 13:6-11; 17:12, 13; 21:18-21). Those who don’t fear practicing wickedness can provoke God’s wrath on the entire nation, such as was the case with the Canaanites. According to the Bible, many of those practices for which God vomits them out of the land (Lev. 18:6-25), the magistrate is supposed to punish with death.

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\(^{387}\) North, *Victim’s Rights*, 220, 221.
Capital sanctions in biblical law thus help protect people from being vomited out of the land. The sanctions not only deter crime, but eliminate criminals. Biblical executions work to “purge the evil from your midst” (Deut. 13:5; 17:7, 12; 21:21; 22:21, 22, 24; 24:7). Commenting on what evil here means, Gordon Wenham writes,

“The evil” cannot refer to the offense itself, for it cannot be undone. Nor can it refer to the possible repetition of the offence. Rather it refers to the guilt that rests upon the land and its inhabitants. This concept, though foreign to our secular way of thinking, occupies an important place in the Bible. In Genesis 4:10f. the blood of Abel cries out to God from the ground, and the ground is accursed for his sake. In Leviticus 18:24-28 it is said that the offenses of the heathen cause them to be expelled from Canaan. Still clearer is Deuteronomy 21:1-9 where a rite is prescribed to atone for the crime of an unknown murderer. The attempt to discover the murderer has proved futile, and therefore a calf is killed by a stream and various rites are performed. This series of actions does not undo the murder, nor does it ensure that no murders are committed in the future, but it does atone for the blood guilt which rests upon those whose responsibility it is to execute punishment, and the whole people. The elders say: “Forgive, O Lord, thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and set not the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of thy people Israel” (verse 8).

No nation anywhere in the world is unaccountable to God for polluting the land by violating God’s moral law. God holds Jews and

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388 Kaye and Wenham, Law, Morality, And The Bible, 40.

On “So thou shalt put the evil away from you” (Deut. 17:7), C. H. Waller offers a different perspective: “The Greek version renders this ‘the wicked man,’ and the sentence is taken up in this form in 1 Cor. v. 13, ‘and ye shall put away from among you that wicked person.’ The phrase is of frequent occurrence in Deuteronomy, and if we are to understand that in all places where it occurs “the evil” is to be understood of an individual, and to be taken in the masculine gender, the fact seems to deserve notice in considering the phrase ‘deliver us from evil’ in the Lord’s Prayer. There is really no such thing as wickedness in the world apart from some wicked being or person.” C. H. Waller in Charles John Ellicott, ed., Ellicott’s Commentary on the Whole Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), II, 50, cited in Rushdoony, Institutes, 570.
Gentiles alike to the same law (Rom. 2:14-15; Eccl. 12:13). When the Israelites were about to possess the land of Canaan, God warns them not to engage in the same lawless deeds as the Canaanites, “lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you” (Lev. 18:28; cf. 19:29, 20:22, 23; Deut. 9:5). All men commit the same sins that pollute the earth: “The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant” (Is. 24:5). E. J. Young observes:

Just as Palestine itself, the Holy Land, had become profane through the sin of its inhabitants (Num. 35:33; Deut. 21:19 [should say Deut. 21:1-9]; Jer. 3:9; and Ps. 106:38), so also the entire earth became profane when the ordinances given to it were violated. … Transgression is against the law of God, and this is expressed by the terms law, statute, everlasting covenant. The laws which God has revealed to His people bind all mankind; and hence, the work of the Law of God written on the human heart, for example, may be described under such terms.389

To deter God’s wrath, a nation must implement God’s law, capital sanctions included. Consider, for example, the seriousness of ignoring the death penalty for murder:

If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. Moreover, you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death, but he shall be put to death. And you shall accept no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the high priest. You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I the LORD dwell in the midst of the people of Israel (Num. 35:30-34).

From the time that the sin of Adam polluted the entire earth (since it resulted in a fallen world) up to today, God has unleashed His judgment

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on nations. Biblical history alone chronicles judgment after judgment, whether it be on the entire earth with the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, Egypt, Israel, Judah, etc. “Leviticus 26 makes clear the curse which rests upon the land which despises God’s law: if the people will not cleanse the land of evil, God will cleanse the land of its people.”\textsuperscript{390} God’s “alternatives are clear-cut: either men and nations obey His laws, or God invokes the death penalty against them.”\textsuperscript{391} A nation that ignores God’s law forfeits its existence.

\textsuperscript{390} Rushdoony, \textit{Institutes}, 78.
\textsuperscript{391} Ibid., 237.
Chapter 17: Privacy “Rights”

The fact that God unleashes His wrath upon nations for their sins refutes the idea that one can privately engage in victimless acts. A nation that condones private sins risks public execution, with God as the executioner. This was the case with the Canaanites. As the civil libertarians of their day, the Canaanites engaged in all kinds of “private acts” that resulted in their destruction: incest, sex during menstruation, adultery, profaning God’s name, sodomy, bestiality, and child sacrifice (an equivalent to abortion) (Lev. 18:6-23).

Indeed, the civil libertarian’s only hope that “victimless crimes” do no harm to a nation is that there is no holy, sovereign God. Even the influential libertarian thinker F. A. Hayek understood this: “At least,” he comments, “where it is not believed that the whole group may be punished by a supernatural power for the sins of individuals, there can arise no such rules from the limitation of conduct towards others, and therefore from the settlement of disputes.”

One of the justifications for condoning private, harmless acts—no matter how depraved they might be—is that, being out of public view, they offend none. First, as far as God is concerned, no act is private: “For a man’s ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths” (Prov. 5:21). Sins committed away from the presence of men are nevertheless publicly flaunted in the presence of God. One therefore denies God’s presence when he justifies “private” sins.

Second, “[T]he earthly victim of a crime is always the secondary victim; God is always the primary victim.” Not only are private sins publicly flaunted before God, but they are a public assault on God’s holiness. This is the case with all sins. After David was confronted with his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, David said to

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393 North, Victim’s Rights, 16.
God, “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment” (Ps. 51:3, 4).

The civil libertarian’s denial of God’s wrath on a society’s “personal” iniquities doesn’t spare the libertarian from the truth of this matter any more than it spares him from inconsistency. It is not as if the so-called civil libertarian always believes privacy is the most fundamental right. The “right to privacy” is rather a pretext arbitrarily raised whenever he wants to sin with impunity. A doctor murdering an unborn child at a clinic is no more private than a doctor murdering a middle-aged man at a clinic; in either case, a member of the public has died in public.

Professor Louis Henkin refutes the Supreme Court’s justification of abortion in the name of privacy:

What the Court has been talking about is not at all what most people mean by privacy. … Ms. Roe sought her abortion openly, “publicly.” In a word, the Court has been vindicating not a right to freedom from official intrusion, but to freedom from official regulation. … [T]hey are, I think, different notions conceptually, with different philosophical, political and social (and, one might have thought, legal) assumptions and consequences; they may look different also if viewed as aspects of the confrontation of private right with public good.394

Many who justify abortion in the name of privacy not only seek an abortion in a public medical facility, but oppose legislation requiring female minors to privately counsel their parents on the matter. Moreover, “gay rights advocates occasionally combine a belief in private sexual liberty with support for the involuntary ‘outing’ of closet homosexuals

and, indeed, often demand that schoolchildren be exposed to highly public programs about homosexuality.”395

Not only this, but so-called public and private rights—both of which humanists claim to uphold—are often pitted against one another. Nagel notes, for example, the competition between the right to abortion and the right to picket.396 Thus, private and public “rights” are far from being autonomous categories of rights. At the very least they overlap, and they often clash. Everyone wants some “private” acts legally abolished; the only question is which. A society that upholds biblical law—which delegates to the state a minimal sphere of authority over people’s lives—only infringes upon some areas of “privacy.” But economic, educational, and other social programs of the totalitarian humanistic state—which infringes upon areas of life that according to biblical law should be left alone—makes virtually all areas of life a public matter.

“Seeing then that among philosophers religion holds the first place, and that the same thing has always been observed with the universal consent of the nations, Christian princes and magistrates may be ashamed of their heartlessness if they make it not their care. We have already shown that this office is specially assigned them by God, and indeed it is right that they exert themselves in asserting and defending the honour of him whose vicegerents they are, and by whose favour they rule.”
–John Calvin

396 Ibid., 135.
Blasphemy, according to Smith’s Bible Dictionary, “in its technical English sense, signifies the speaking evil of God and in this sense it is found Psal 74:18; Isai 52:5; Roma 2:24 etc. But according to its derivation it may mean any species of calumny and abuse: see 1 Kin 21:10; Acts 18:6; Jude 1:9 etc.”\textsuperscript{397} R. J. Rushdoony writes that “the word blasphemy in Hebrew is \textit{naqab}, to curse, revile, puncture, or pierce. It means to seek to destroy.”\textsuperscript{398} As such, “It is warfare against God and His covenant law.”\textsuperscript{399} And according to James Durham, “Blasphemy then against God (as the word beareth) is a wrongdoing of God's holy majesty by some reproachful speeches or expressions uttered to his disgrace; we say \textit{uttered}, because that which is in the heart is most part \textit{Atheism and Infidelity}, and so belongeth to the first Command.”\textsuperscript{400}

According to Greg L. Bahnsen, taking God’s name in vain is not necessarily always blasphemy:

The very concept of blasphemy is that of reprobating the name of God. And not all swearing, even using the Lord’s name in vain, is an effort to deprecate His character. … If somebody says “God damn,” that is simply taking the Lord’s name vainly, or for a purpose that is not given in the Bible. But to say that “God be damned,” would be blasphemy. To say “God damn this,” even though it is not your right to take God’s name upon your lips in that way, is certainly sinful. But to say that “God’s name be damned,” is to blaspheme Him, to reprobate Him. And consequently there is clearly a difference between lifting up

\textsuperscript{397} William Smith, \textit{Smith’s Bible Dictionary} (WORDsearch Corp., 2007) [Software: Bible Explorer 4].
\textsuperscript{399} Rushdoony, \textit{Leviticus}, 337. Cited in Ritchie, \textit{A Conquered Kingdom}, 302.
\textsuperscript{400} James Durham, \textit{The Law Unsealed: Or, a Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments} (Thomas Lumisden and John Robertson, 1735), 147.
God’s name—taking His name—in vain, and … mounting an attack upon the name of God. 401

God requires the state to execute those who blaspheme His name:

Now an Israelite woman’s son, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the people of Israel. And the Israelite woman’s son and a man of Israel fought in the camp, and the Israelite woman’s son blasphemed the Name, and cursed. Then they brought him to Moses. His mother’s name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. And they put him in custody, till the will of the LORD should be clear to them.

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. Whoever blasphemés the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. …

So Moses spoke to the people of Israel, and they brought out of the camp the one who had cursed and stoned him with stones. Thus the people of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses (Lev. 24:10-16, 23).

We must keep in mind that “While this law is not calling for the death sentence to be applied to those who say bad words or use the Lord’s name lightly (Ex. 20:7), it does require that those who reprobate and violently attack the character of God be executed for their crime.” 402

A popular argument against executing convicted blasphemers is that rulers should only punish “non-religious” offenses, that is, actions committed against man, and not against God. But as we have seen in chapter 7, all law is religious. For one to justify rape as a criminal offense, for instance, one must appeal to a moral—i.e., religious—authority. So making rape a crime is no less religious than making

401 Greg L. Bahnsen, Covenant Media Foundation, Church/State Criticisms (MP3 audio file, 1980).
402 Ritchie, A Conquered Kingdom, 302.
blasphemy a crime. The difference between looking to God and to looking to man as a moral authority is the difference in whether someone can account for whether rape is wrong. Since God, not man, is the source of morality, only in religiously assuming God’s law can morality be accounted for. And since all other offenses likewise must be violations of God’s moral law in order to be legitimately considered offenses, all true criminal offenses are religious offenses.

Thus the state is intended to be God-centered, not man-centered. After all, “Ours is a theocentric universe, not anthropocentric.” To argue against blasphemy laws on the grounds that law cannot be theocentric is to undermine any moral basis for banning any immoral acts. Again, the reason offenses against man (murder, rape, etc), are offenses is that they offend God. Hence God gives the following reason for the first civil punishment recorded in the Bible:

And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image” (Gen. 9:5, 6).

Because man is made in God’s image, an attack on man is an attack on God.404 It is because God is the victim that the state is granted authority to punish murderers. (God is the victim in the sense that He is infinitely offended by violations of His law.) Thus the state can only value and protect man if it values God. To value God, the state must be theocentric and openly acknowledge Christ as its Lord and obey God’s civil laws. The theocentric principle in Genesis does not just apply in cases of murder. Since all acts that the Bible considers crimes are sins, God is the victim of all crimes.

It is self-defeating then, in the name of humane law, to oppose theocentric law. Man’s value is understood only in light of God. So when God is not considered the center of law, man’s dignity is undermined. Law becomes inhumane. Without God as the basis upon which the state forbids crimes, the state lacks a justification for defending

403 North, Victim’s Rights, 16.
innocent life. One’s humanity then becomes determined arbitrarily by the state.

In the *Institutes of Christian Religion*, John Calvin speaks of the necessity of theocentric law:

> That it [the magistrate’s duty] extends to both tables of the law, did Scripture not teach, we might learn from profane writers; for no man has discoursed of the duty of magistrates, the enacting of laws, and the common weal, without beginning with religion and divine worship. Thus all have confessed that no polity can be successfully established unless piety be its first care, and that those laws are absurd which disregard the rights of God, and consult only for men. Seeing then that among philosophers religion holds the first place, and that the same thing has always been observed with the universal consent of the nations, Christian princes and magistrates may be ashamed of their heartlessness if they make it not their care. We have already shown that this office is specially assigned them by God, and indeed it is right that they exert themselves in asserting and defending the honour of him whose vicegerents they are, and by whose favour they rule. Hence in Scripture holy kings are especially praised for restoring the worship of God when corrupted or overthrown, or for taking care that religion flourished under them in purity and safety.\(^{405}\)

Calvin raises several important points. We will touch on a few. While much of this commentary doesn’t deal with anti-blasphemy laws specifically, it does deal with the concepts behind enforcing it.

*First*, Calvin notes that the magistrate’s duty “extends to both tables of the law.” Of course, there will always be humanists who argue that laws should only deal with human rights and not recognize God, since enforcing laws that explicitly recognize God will lead to some kind of inquisition. But besides the fact that the Bible’s civil code does not sanction forced conversions—and besides the fact that the Bible’s civil code gives us the only objective authority to oppose forced conversions (since whatever the Bible doesn’t authorize is forbidden)—one can turn the tables on the humanists and argue that laws that only recognize

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human rights lead to the worst kinds of tyranny. It is in secular humanist/atheist nations where “women’s rights” allows mothers to murder their babies; “criminal rights” grants dangerous criminal lenient sentences; “individual rights” allows sodomites to spread fatal diseases; “society rights” allows murdering those deemed to be a drain on society (e.g., the elderly and retarded); and “equal rights” has allowed the poor to exterminate the rich.

Nevertheless, many, when it comes to the state, find enforcing commandments five through ten either palatable, or at least less offensive than enforcing commandments one through four (including anti-blasphemy laws), since the former explicitly deal with human-to-human behavior, while the latter—in overtly dealing with human-to-God behavior—are too “religious.”

This “common ground morality,” i.e., morality divorced from God, is generally preferred by political conservatives today. They want “moral laws,” but not godly laws. But the Protestant Reformer John Knox, in seeking to reform the state in his native Scotland, understood better. Buddy Hanson writes,

For a community to attempt to live exclusively by the second table (commandments 5-10), in Knox’s view is to travel a road whose destination is tyranny and repression. The first table is needed in order to provide an incorrupt and pure foundation for keeping the second. Knox puts it like this, “From a corrupt and venomed fountain can spring no wholesome water.”

Indeed, as Vincent Cheung writes, “the first table is the foundation for the second, that is to say, the fear of God is the only proper foundation for right relationships among men.” If men won’t sincerely fear God from the heart by the Holy Spirit, then they must be made to fear God from the

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406 For example, *Stone v. Graham* ruled that the state of Kentucky could not require the Ten Commandments to be posted on public classroom walls. The Court reasoned that the Commandments exceeded “secular matters” because the first Four Commandments, which acknowledge God, concern “the religious duties of believers.” *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39, 41, 42 (1980).

407 Buddy Hanson, “Choose This Day”: *God’s Instructions on How to Select Leaders* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Hanson Group, 2003), 80. Hanson cites Knox from Kevin Reed, *Selected Writings of John Knox: Public Epistles, Treatises, and Expositions to the Year 1559*, 427.

heart by the sword of the state. It is the Bible’s civil sanctions—which God decreed to “terrorize” the wicked (Rom. 13:3; Deut. 13:11)—that God has given to civil rulers in order to accomplish this very thing. It is the capital sanctions for violations of the first table of the law (e.g., blasphemy, public worship of false gods) that suppress the most potentially dangerous members of society. Without such a fear of God imposed by civil rulers, the wicked will impose upon the innocent the fear of man. As Martin Bucer writes about those who violate the first table of the law:

> Those who have become guilty of such impiety cannot help intruding it on others also, both by word and deed. For everyone brings forth from the treasure of his heart what has been stored there (cf. Matt. 12:35). And Satan, who keeps such persons as his captives according to his good pleasure, which is always intent on the ruin of mankind, uses them as weapons for inflicting all possible harm on men.\(^{409}\)

The lesson then is that the state must uphold the first table (loving God) in order to keep the second (loving one’s neighbor); the first table of the law protects the second. Thus of the two great commandments, the first (“you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” [Mk. 12:30b]) comes before the second (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” [Mk. 12:31b]). Ethics without God is precisely the philosophy that brought about the fall of man. Adam, being under the rule of God, lived under the first theocratic government ever. But Adam yielded to Satan’s temptation to divorce morality from acknowledging God and God’s commands. In ignoring the First Commandment, Adam inevitably ignored every commandment:

> The first sin actually committed consisted of a transgression of every one of the Ten Commandments as covenantally incorporated into the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For by partaking thereof, man defied God, fell into idolatry, dishonored God’s Word and Name, broke the sabbath rest of Eden, defied his heavenly Father, slew himself and

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all his descendants, committed adultery against the heavenly Bridemaid, stole God’s private property, unrighteously tried to make God a liar, and desired and coveted that which was not of his own goods.  

We cannot underestimate the consequences of Adam defying the first table of the law: Adam brought a curse upon the world, and brought death upon the entire human race. Mass destruction and denying the first table of the law are linked. Thus, it should not surprise us that that genocidal minister of Satan, Adolf Hitler, like Satan in Eden, appealed to a divorce between God and morality. For Hitler, political ideology must offer “higher ideals as the sole foundation of morality for the masses” (emphasis mine). In his appeal to “higher ideals” as the ultimate authority instead of God and the law’s first table, Hitler denied biblical theocracy.

History makes clear that Hitler not only violated the first table of the law with impunity, but the second as well. Ever since the fall, man has sought an excuse to sin. It always begins by violating the first table of the law. As Romans 1 tells us, man begins by rejecting God (vv. 21 and 22), and then degenerates into violating every commandment under the second table (vv. 24-32) (cf. Rom. 3:9-18). From this we see that the state that ignores the first table (which amounts to ignoring God) can likewise be expected to ignore the second table (which amounts to ignoring the rights of man).

Moreover, the Protestant Reformer Johannes Althusius, who contributed enormously to western thought, writes,

These precepts [of the first table of the Decalogue] are always, absolutely, and without distinction binding upon all, to such a degree that the second table of the Decalogue ought to yield precedence to the first table as to a superior law. Therefore, if a precept of God and a mandate of the magistrate should come together in the same affair and be contrary to each other, then God is to be obeyed rather than the magistrate … whence it is that

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411 Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf. Cited in Hanson, “Choose This Day,” 175.
412 Hanson, “Choose This Day,” 79.
these precepts of the first table can never be set aside or relaxed.\textsuperscript{413}

Hence, since commandments one through four acknowledge God as a higher authority than man, they put man (and when applied to law, the state) in his rightful place—under his Creator’s feet. This acts to temper human pride.

But whenever the state ignores and fails to enforce the first four commandments, the state ignores God and is therefore prideful. And a prideful state is an oppressive state. With pride comes self-deification (cf. Gen. 3:5), and consequently such a state is not without a first table of the law—it simply makes its own first table in its own image. The First Commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me,” the state changes to forbid any authority before the state. The Second Commandment, which forbids bowing down and serving any element of creation, the state changes to forbid bowing down and serving anything the state doesn’t authorize. The Third Commandment, which forbids taking God’s name in vain, the state changes to forbid mentioning God in political matters. To do so is to take the state’s name in vain. Finally, the Fourth Commandment, which requires a day of rest in God, the state changes to require man to find his rest in the services the state provides.

Back to Calvin’s statements. Calvin, second, says “no polity can be successfully established unless piety be its first care.” Indeed, when God is taken out of the equation, crimes become offenses against society

\textsuperscript{413} Althusius Johannes, \textit{Politica}, 141-142. Cited in Hanson, “Choose This Day,” 80.

Perhaps today’s aversion by so many professing Christians to the state enforcing the first table of the law is symptomatic of their own indifference to the first table of the law. Vincent Cheung writes, “[M]any who call themselves Christians, who would strongly react against traditional idol worship, nevertheless tolerate and even respect contemporary non-Christian thought and conduct. They are horrified by accounts of serial murder and child molestation, but relatively nonchalant when it comes to non-Christian religions and philosophies. They are greatly distressed over acts of racism and fraud, and some even weep over deaths caused by diseases and accidents as reported by the news, but they display no such reaction when someone introduces himself as a Mormon, when someone announces that she will marry a Muslim, or when someone uses the name of God with irreverence. Their morality is man-centered instead of God-centered, but biblical morality is centered on God, with right worship toward God as the foundation and prerequisite for right treatment toward man. Of course, many people care for neither God nor man.” Cheung, \textit{Presuppositional Confrontations}, 26.
Consequently one or both of these entities become deified and are thus handed totalitarian powers. After all, God imposes moral constraints on man. But man, left to himself, knows no moral boundaries. The autonomous state—whether in the form of autocrat king or king mob—is free to both condone violent and perverse criminal behavior and to commit acts of genocide.

Third, Calvin observes, “those laws are absurd which disregard the rights of God, and consult only for men.” Today’s Enlightenment fallacy is that the state only exists to protect the rights of men. Romans 13 tells us that the state’s fundamental purpose is to defend God’s rights. First, God owns the state because he created it (v. 1). If God owns the state, then the state is obligated to uphold God’s rights. Second, the ruler is to be a terror to bad conduct (v. 3). What makes bad conduct bad is that it violates the law of God. To violate God’s law is to infringe upon God’s holy rights to a sinless universe.

In sum, the purpose of civil government is not primarily to defend the rights of man, but the rights of God. God’s rights over the state entail the state’s requirement to recognize God as Lord over the state (i.e., the highest political authority), and the state’s requirement to execute God’s wrath in His prescribed manner. This in no way diminishes human rights, but increases them. As we can see from the necessity of theocentric laws that we discussed, to disregard God’s rights—which are the rights from which all human rights derive—is to disregard man’s rights. And what right of God is more fundamental than not to be blasphemed?

Fourth, Calvin holds that rulers must “exert themselves in asserting and defending the honour of him whose vicegerents they are, and by whose favour they rule.” Matthew Henry observes,

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414 For instance, of Communist Russia, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn writes that “the death penalty was re-christened ‘the supreme measure’—no longer a ‘punishment’ but a means of social defense.” Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago:1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation, Thomas P. Whitney, trans. (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers Inc., 1973, 1974), 436. This “measure” eventually “ceased to be some kind of incomprehensible ‘social defense.’ Even to the Stalinist ear the executions of 1937-1938 could hardly fit into any framework of ‘defense’” (Ibid., 438). Capital punishment was also justified in order to punish “traitors of the Motherland, spies, and subversives-diversionists” (Ibid., 439).
Those that lightly esteemed God's honour might think it hard to make a man an offender for a word (words are but wind); but God would let them know that they must not make light of such words as these, which come from malice against God in the heart of him that speaks, and must occasion either great guilt or great grief to those that hear.  

If God’s honor is not defended, the state will inevitably defend its own autonomous honor. We have already noted the calamity that comes from the autonomous state. That God’s honor should be defended we see in Romans 13:3, 4, which requires rulers to honor God by serving Him and by punishing bad conduct, i.e., conduct that dishonors God’s holiness. Rulers who do not do these things dishonor God and glorify themselves. We see an example of this in Herod, whom God struck down:

On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, ‘The voice of a god, and not of a man!’ Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last (Ac. 12:21-23).

Herod wasn’t struck down for not saying, “Don’t call me a god, we need to be religiously neutral in politics”; he was struck down because “he did not give God the glory.” Herod was only concerned with his own honor. This dishonored God. And as in the case of Herod, God’s wrath rests on all rulers who dishonor Him and refuse to enforce His law.

Compare Herod’s actions with Nebuchadnezzar’s. When God humiliated Nebuchadnezzar after the Babylonian king attempted a state-glorifying capital sanction against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Nebuchadnezzar resigned himself to a God-honoring capital sanction: “Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way” (Dan. 3:29). On this the Geneva Bible comments:

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If this heathen king moved by God’s Spirit would not see blasphemy unpunished, but made a law and set a punishment to such transgressors, much more ought all they that profess religion, take order that such impiety reign not, lest according as their knowledge and charge is greater, so they suffer double punishment.416

Many mistake punishment for blasphemy as imposing belief in God. But this is incorrect, since all men already believe in God. Those who don’t believe in God in the saving sense believe in God in the rebellious sense; in unrighteousness, they suppress the truth of God that God has made clear to them (Rom. 1:18, 19). Such men, with the work of the law on their hearts, also know that blasphemy is wrong (Rom. 2:15), so forbidding blasphemy itself is not imposing something that God has not already imposed on them. But many may oppose anti-blasphemy laws not because they believe such laws attempt to impose a general belief in God, but a saving belief. This is logically fallacious, and is equivalent to saying that preventing someone from playing football is imposing basketball on that person. While one who blasphemes outwardly surely lacks saving faith, the fact that someone restrains from outwardly blaspheming does not demonstrate faith, for that person may very well be unregenerate and blaspheme God in his heart every day. The purpose of the capital sanction is solely to prevent the outward manifestation of such a sin—not the inward.

In short, punishment for blasphemy does not impose saving faith. It merely punishes blasphemy, and that only in its outward expression. On anti-blasphemy laws and faith, Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), Protestant Reformer and Zwingli’s successor in Zurich, writes:

I grant and confess, that faith is God’s gift in the heart of man, which God alone doth search and know. But men are judged by

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416 1599 Geneva Bible (White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege Press, 2006-2007), 872. Moreover, John Calvin observes, “Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt. This is not laid down on human authority; it is God who speaks and prescribes a perpetual rule for his Church.” John Calvin, Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, rep. 1979), 78. Cited in Gentry, Theonomy & Confession, 9. Calvin also writes, “Some scoundrel or other gainsays this, and sets himself against the author of life and death. What insolence is this. … God has one pronounced what is His will, for we must needs abide by His inviolable decree.” Calvin, Commentaries, 78. Cited in Gentry, Theonomy & Confession.
their words and deeds. Admit, therefore, that the erroneous opinion of the mind may not be punished; yet notwithstanding, wicked and infective profession and doctrine must in no wise be suffered. Verily, no man doth in this world punish profane and wicked thoughts of the mind: but if those thoughts break forth into blasphemous words, then are those blaspheming tongues to be punished of good princes. And yet by this I say not, that godliness lieth in the magistrate to give and bestow. Justice is the very gift of God, which none but God doth give to men: but who is so foolish as to gather thereupon, that unjust men, robbers, murderers, and witches are not to be punished, because the magistrate by punishment cannot bestow righteousness upon unrighteous people? We must therefore make a difference betwixt faith, as it is the gift of God in the heart of man, and as it is the outward profession uttered and declared before the face of men. For while false faith doth lurk and lie hid within the heart, and infecteth none but the unbeliever, so long the unbelieving infidel cannot be punished: but if this false and forged faith, that so lay hid, do once break forth to blaspheme, to the open tearing of God and the infecting of his neighbors, then must that blasphemer and seducer be by and by plucked under, and kept from creeping to further annoyance. Not to suppress such a fellow as this, is to put a sword in a madman’s hand to kill unwise and weakly men.417

Indeed, who in society is more potentially physically and spiritually murderous than a blasphemer? In blaspheming God, the man executed in Leviticus 24 was obviously hateful, and, having fought with another man, very possibly prone to violence. Also, “What enmity against God must be in the heart of man, when blasphemies against God proceed out of his mouth.”418 If then the basis for the state avenging murder is because murder is an attack on God, how much more should it also avenge blasphemy, such a direct attack on God? Blasphemy is one of the greatest—if not the greatest—attacks on the Almighty. It is equivalent to attempted murder on God. Blasphemy is, as the early

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Covenanter David Dickson\(^{419}\) calls it, “a piercing through, or stabbing the name of the Lord.”\(^{420}\) If anti-blasphemy legislation is removed, the door is open to remove legislation forbidding murder. This is a logical progression; if society permits assaults on the greater (God), then how much more will it permit assaults on the lesser (man). Joe Morecraft, III, writes, “Because reverence for God lies at the very foundation of Christian morality (Rom. 3:18), the irreverent use of His holy name is high criminality to God, as well as destructive to a righteous moral order.”\(^{421}\)

And, having the maximum penalty for blasphemy, an attack solely against God (solely at least on the surface), reminds society and the state that they are not ultimate moral authorities but under God’s moral authority. This works to defend innocent citizens, since defending God’s image (man) presupposes defending God’s honor through anti-blasphemy sanctions. This destroys the notion that citizens are best protected by sanctions punishing crimes overtly against man only.

The Westminster Larger Catechism rightly acknowledges that “man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God.” This rule applies to all of man’s endeavors, the state included. And if everything is about God’s glory, then what on the part of the state glorifies God more than laws punishing blasphemy? Indeed, God-centered law presupposes having the maximum legal sentence against blasphemy, a crime which in every way stands against God-centeredness. Scottish divine John Brown of Haddington writes:

Magistrates are expressly represented in Scripture, as ministers of God for good to man—rulers deputed by, and under him (Rom. 13:4). But, how can they be ministers, deputies, or vice-regents of God without having power to restrain, and if proper and reasonable, to punish, that which openly affronts and horridly insults him,—blasphemously gives him the lie, basely misrepresents him, or demotes the worship due to him, to his adversary the devil, or any other crimes, which immediately

\(^{419}\) Ritchie, *A Conquered Kingdom*, 321.
strike against him?—If they are to be God’s ministers, they must transact all their magisterial managements in his name,—and how can God empower his own ministers as such, and acting in his name, to promote his highest dishonor, licensing, encouraging, and protecting gross heresy, blasphemy, and idolatry; —giving such encouragement to the vilest delusions of Satan, as to the New Testament in Jesus’ blood?422

Chapter 19:
“Controversial” Capital Sanctions:
Seduction to Idolatry

Before beginning this topic, we must point out that we do not believe this sanction should currently apply to America. We believe this sanction only applies to a Christian nation, and secular-humanistic America is anything but one. Nations should be transformed by the Great Commission before making this part of their legal code.

Seduction to idolatry is a capital offense in biblical law:

If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 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,” you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him. 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.

If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, “Let us go and serve other gods,” which neither you nor your fathers have known, some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. But you shall kill him. Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. You shall stone him to
death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. And all Israel shall hear and fear and never again do any such wickedness as this among you (Deut. 13:1-11).

The Bible recognizes the cancerous nature such an offense has on society: not only are scenarios given of individual involvement with such a crime (vv. 1-11), but collective involvement as well:

If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you to dwell there, that certain worthless fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known, then you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently. And behold, if it be true and certain that such an abomination has been done among you, you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword, devoting it to destruction, all who are in it and its cattle, with the edge of the sword (Deut. 13:12-15).

Most today would recoil at such legislation. However, contrary to how many would interpret it, this sanction is not a jihad against the “infidel,” nor is it even imposing religion upon others. It does not encourage vigilante-terrorism. And it does not give the state carte blanche to wipe out towns. It can only occur after due process—hence the command, “you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently.”

As Kenneth L. Gentry notes in his exegesis of Deuteronomy 13, the concern is “solicitation and seduction to idolatry” (v. 2, 6, 13)—not “personal unbelief or even personal rejection of faith in Jehovah God.” Gentry notes that unbelief in Israel was not a capital crime, but only meant exclusion from worship (Ex. 12:48; Ezek. 44:7, 9).

Deuteronomy 13, Gentry further observes, is essentially a law against treason—against turning from God, whose “Law was the constitutional basis of the nation of Israel.” Enticement to other gods works to undermine God’s law-order, since a society’s God or gods is a

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424 Ibid.
425 Ibid., 239, 240.
society’s source of law. Also, Deuteronomy 13 follows a discussion of Israel’s neighboring nations and their gods, and how these nations served those gods. Deuteronomy 12:29-30 reads:

When the LORD your God cuts off before you the nations whom you go in to dispossess, and you dispossess them and dwell in their land, take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.’

From this Gentry notes that the “Deuteronomic law is developed in such a way as to indicate the ultimate outcome of such apostasy. It is wholesale, treasonous rebellion against the lawful authority and integrity of the nation.” He draws attention to Deuteronomy 13:12-13, which says:

If you hear in one of your cities, which the LORD your God is giving you to dwell there, that certain worthless fellows have gone out among you and have drawn away the inhabitants of their city, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known …

Gentry cites an author, who notes, “In its implications, the crime would be equivalent to treason or espionage in time of war.” Gentry adds that this law in a certain respect recognizes national self-defense, “the right to wage defensive warfare.” Moreover,

[A]ny perception of idolatry as a quietistic unbelief is wholly mistaken. The very nature of idolatry involved the ancient worshiper in a number of capital crimes. Thus, the punishment for idolatry is a punishment for those particular crimes. As Mayes notes, Deuteronomy 12:29-32 is the “general introduction”

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426 Ibid.
427 Ibid., 240.
428 Ibid.
429 Craigie, Deuteronomy, 222. Cited in Gentry, Covenantal Theonomy, 240.
430 Ibid.
431 Ibid.
to chapter 13. This “general introduction” clearly speaks of certain “abominable acts” of idol worshippers.

These acts include burning children to death in a sacrifice to false gods. The nation that tolerates such practices guarantees self destruction. It will be overrun by arch-criminals and revolutionaries. We must note, though, that although idolatry can include or lead to other capital crimes, idolatry is a capital crime in and of itself. As Joe Morecraft, III comments about Exodus 22:20,

Anyone publicly sacrificing to or publicly worshipping any idol, or any other god but Jehovah is guilty of a capital crime. He must be placed under “herem,” i.e., devoted to destruction, Deut. 13:12f. ... The death penalty, administered by the civil government, is not for belief in idols, but for overt and public worship of idols, and for any attempt to subvert the godly social order by enticing others to worship idols.

Morecraft elaborates on the requirement in verses 12-18 of Deut. 13 to put the city to the sword. The men in this city are what we might call “urban revolutionaries”: “An underground network, here a city, an apostate town,” seeking to subvert society. The longer dealing biblically with treason is put off, the more it spreads. The more it spreads, the harder it is to handle.437

The more subversives you have and the better armed they are in a particular city, the harder it is to dislodge them and to kill them. And so Israel had to send its army against the urban revolutionaries in Gibeah, in the tribe of Benjamin [Judges 20]. Many good men died, many valiant soldiers of Israel died trying to treat these subversives as they should be treated. But

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433 Gentry, Covenantal Theonomy, 240.
434 Joe Morecraft, III, Exodus: The Redemption of God’s Covenant People (Unpublished notes from Chalcedon Presbyterian Church), 119, 120.
436 Ibid.
437 Ibid.

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eventually under God’s blessing these urban revolutionaries, these lawless apostates in Gibeah were finally destroyed. But it cost in blood. The longer you let things go, the longer treason goes unpunished, the harder it is to dislodge it, the more blood that has to be spilt.438

Verses 16 and 17 of Deuteronomy 13 require the city and all of its spoil to be destroyed by fire. No city can later be built in its stead. And, under threat of God’s wrath, no one may take any of the spoil for himself. R.J. Rushdoony observes that the command to burn the spoil eliminated incentives to attack a city for personal gain.439 We might add that since no city can be rebuilt where the previous city stood, this law destroys incentives to attack a city for the purposes of tearing it down and building a more economically profitable city.

The cancerous nature of idolatry is just as much a threat today as it was in ancient history. Not only is society at stake, but the salvation of individuals within society, as peddlers of false gods deceive others into eternal damnation. James Durham, a contemporary of Samuel Rutherford,440 writes,

The fathers of old were not to spare their children (Deut. 13), nor suffer them to teach or seduce to the dishonour of God, and hazard of souls. And can it be said that souls now are less precious or error now less infectious and dangerous, or these things less to be cared for now in the days of the gospel than formerly, that concern the glory of God, and edification or destruction of souls?441

A major objection to the law against seduction to idolatry is that it is not conducive to a free society. There can only be freedom, it is said, when men are free to worship and proselytize however they want, so long as they do not hurt anyone physically. This is fallacious, since, “If man is the creature of God, it follows that he can be free and enlightened only

438 Ibid.
440 Ritchie, A Conquered Kingdom, 331.
441 J. Durham, Concerning Scandal (Dallas: Naphtali Press), 201. Cited in Ritchie, A Conquered Kingdom, 331.
when he acts in accordance with the revelation which God has given him.”

Liberty must therefore be understood *theocentrically*, not *humanistically*. The Puritan John Winthrop, writes Terrill I. Elniff, observes two classes of liberty: natural and civil or federal.443 On natural liberty, Winthrop writes, “By this, man, *as he stands in relation to man simply*, hath liberty to do what he lists; it is a liberty to evil as well as to good.”444 In other words, man designates himself the criterion for liberty. As Elniff explains: “Natural liberty is an autonomous kind of liberty: it is liberty in man’s terms and on man’s terms, liberty relative to man.”445

The other class of liberty—civil, federal, or moral liberty446—Winthrop calls “a liberty to that only which is good, just, and honest.”447 This is theocentric liberty, what Elniff describes as “liberty in and on God’s terms, relative to God and to His appointed authorities.”448 True liberty, in short, is not freedom to do evil, but to do good; for God’s law is “the law of liberty” (Jms. 1:25b).

Elniff adds that Winthrop finds natural liberty “incompatible and inconsistent with authority.” Civil liberty, on the other hand, “is the proper end and object of authority”449—and is, in the words of Winthrop, “maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority.”450 For Winthrop, the course of the public realm will be determined by whichever view of liberty prevails:

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443 Elniff, “Non-Autonomy and Some Puritan Dilemmas,” 118.
446 Ibid.
448 Elniff, “Non-Autonomy and Some Puritan Dilemmas,” 118.
449 Ibid.
Even so, brethren, it will be between you and your magistrates. If you stand for your natural corrupt liberties, and will do what is good in your own eyes, you will not endure the least weight of authority, but will murmur, and oppose, and be always striving to shake off that yoke; but if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then you will quietly and cheerfully submit unto that authority which is set over you, in all the administrations of it, for your good.  

Therefore, when men promote liberty in any other way than liberty as God defines it, it is not liberty, but revolution—the undermining of the social order, which culminates in tyranny. Such revolutionary “liberty” the anti-idolatry legislation in Deuteronomy 13 guards against. So the philosophy that liberty comes by allowing unfettered worship and proselytizing, so long as no one is harmed physically, is ultimately self-defeating.

Moreover, such a philosophy smuggles in a naturalistic bias that says harming others spiritually is irrelevant. But there is nothing liberating in granting non-Christian (which are really anti-Christian) religions license to inhibit the church’s progress and destroy the church with spiritual snares, which can result when there is freedom to openly practice and propagate false religions.

We must remember that Christ is the source of liberty, and so the undermining of His church—which proclaims His salvation and His law of liberty—is the undermining of liberty itself. Freedom, then, to practice any religion is highly overrated. At best, as the saying goes, “Religious freedom is letting man choose his own way to go to hell.”

Still, many, even professing Christians, insist on the pragmatic approach that if we set up a pluralistic system where all religions are legally treated equally, then adherents of each religion will reciprocate by respecting the legal rights of all other religions. Besides this approach assuming an extremely utopian view of man, history reveals its futility.

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452 The pluralistic pretense of freedom of conscience is superficial, and does nothing to stop men from unofficially imposing their worldview from behind the scenes. On the Russian Revolution, Burleigh writes: “A liberal-sounding ‘Decree on
All worldviews are antithetical, and for survival’s sake war with one another. The antithesis between worldviews is especially pronounced between Christian and non-Christian worldviews, an *inescapable antithesis ordained by God* in Genesis 3:15.

Religious political pluralism consequently results in two outcomes: (1) it brings out the lowest, most wicked common denominator of all non-Christian worldviews; and (2) it provokes the state, or a revolutionary group that overthrows the state, to step in to bring order out of the pluralistic chaos with totalitarian measures. Either way, the innocent will be persecuted—either by the lowest common morality (which, for example, legitimizes abortion doctors and militant sodomites), or by a totalitarian state.

The equating by secular humanists of non-pluralistic societies with societies ruled by Islamic Sharia Law is self-defeating and hypocritical. Political pluralism denies God’s sovereignty over the state. And if God is not sovereign over the state, then the state is sovereign (by not being morally accountable to anyone); and if the state is sovereign, then the state is *morally free to impose* Sharia law or any other tyrannical law system. Hence to “have no king but Caesar” (Jn. 19:15c) in political matters is naturally tyrannical.

Moreover, pluralistic regimes are notorious for their Sharia-style jihads. One of the greatest persecutions of the church and the innocent was by pluralistic Rome. In our increasingly pluralistic America, the accommodation of secular humanists has so far resulted in *physical genocide* of countless unborn children, and *spiritual genocide* (due to secular humanism’s contagious philosophy of denying God) of countless individuals—including those within the church community.

And if this is not bad enough, pluralism also opens the door to being ruled by Sharia Law, since in pluralism there will always be a

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the Freedom of Conscience and on Church and Religious Associations’ separated Church and state and appeared to guarantee freedom of both religion and irreligion, although the power of the state was unevenly massed behind atheism. While individual religious communities were allowed to lease houses of worship, the Orthodox Church was deprived of any income, and its hierarchy was divested of authority on the ground that it was assumed to be counter-revolutionary.” Burleigh, *Sacred Causes*, 42, 43.

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militant group attempting to take advantage of the tolerant system in order to take over the country. Because of demographics, pluralistic Europe is in serious danger of being under Sharia Law in the years to come.\footnote{On the exploding Islamic population in Europe, see Adrian Michaels, “A Fifth of European Union will be Muslim by 2050,” Telegraph.co.uk (August 8, 2009). Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/5994045/A-fifth-of-European-Union-will-be-Muslim-by-2005.html. The sub-headline reads, “Britain, Spain and Holland will have an even higher proportion of Muslims in a shorter amount of time, an investigation by The Telegraph shows.”} Pluralistic Great Britain reveals how sympathetic to Sharia Law pluralism can actually be: the state has \textit{willfully} allowed Sharia Law in certain pockets of the country.\footnote{Abul Taher, “Revealed: UK’s first official sharia courts,” \textit{Times Online} (Sept. 14, 2008). Retrieved September 30, 2009, from http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/crime/article4749183.ece.} (They are, after all, being “pluralistic” and accommodating other religions—including those that want to impose radical Islam on the entire country!) So much for pluralism being antithetical to Sharia Law.

And, religious pluralism resulted in the greatest atrocity ever committed. It was the joint efforts of the religions of Roman paganism and apostate Judaism that brought about the unjust crucifixion of Christ.

And so Buddy Hanson is correct: “By not ‘imposing’ Christian beliefs on others, we allow them to ‘impose’ their beliefs on us.”\footnote{Buddy Hanson, \textit{The Christian Prince}, 63.} (This endorses imposing Christian beliefs about \textit{biblical law}—it does \textit{not} endorse imposing conversions.) Pluralism is no less impositional than other political system—and actually, it is potentially the most impositional. Being polytheistic and thereby lacking anything beyond the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{On the exploding Islamic population in Europe, see Adrian Michaels, “A Fifth of European Union will be Muslim by 2050,” Telegraph.co.uk (August 8, 2009). Retrieved March 25, 2010, from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/5994045/A-fifth-of-European-Union-will-be-Muslim-by-2005.html. The sub-headline reads, “Britain, Spain and Holland will have an even higher proportion of Muslims in a shorter amount of time, an investigation by The Telegraph shows.”}
  \item \footnote{Buddy Hanson, \textit{The Christian Prince}, 63.}
\end{itemize}
coercion of the state by which to unite others, pluralism naturally tends towards outright totalitarianism, and even imperialism.

Thus pluralists are polycrats who, in order to bring order out of chaos, seek to impose a pluralocracy on others by means of the sword.

The closest political pluralism comes to being based on more than one religion is as “a halfway house system that lasts only as long as no group or major coalition can take over politically and announce a specific new civil covenant. It is a stand-off, a temporary stalemate, a temporary cease-fire.” Those holding to the more militant humanistic worldviews tend to work their way through “tolerant” systems until they gain enough power to impose their own views on the whole of society.

On the state of France prior to the French Revolution, Alexis De Tocqueville writes,

Never had toleration in religion, never has mildness in authority, never had humanity and good-will to mankind been more professed, and, it seemed, more generally admitted, than in the eighteenth century. Even the rights of war, which are the last refuge of violence, had become circumscribed and softened. Yet from this relaxed state of manners a Revolution of unexampled inhumanity was about to spring.

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456 Rushdoony, Christianity and the State, 1.
457 North, Political Polytheism, 111.
Mark A. Gabriel, a former Muslim raised in Egypt who earned his Ph.D. in Islamic history and culture in Cairo, writes of the three stages of jihad. Every Muslim country in the world is in one of these stages. Muslims assume stage one, the “Weakened Stage,” in non-Islamic societies where they are numerically weak. “In this case overt jihad is not the call of the hour. Muslims submit to the law of the land, but they work to increase their numbers.”

Stage two, the “Preparation Stage,” occurs when Muslims ascend to the level of an influential minority. In all areas conceivable—financial, physical, militarily, mental—they make preparations for their “future goal” of “direct confrontation with the enemy.”

Finally comes the “Jihad Stage,” where the Muslim minority possesses strength, influence, and power. “At this stage every Muslim’s duty is to actively fight the enemy, overturning the system of the non-Muslim country and establishing Islamic authority.” Gabriel cites modern Lebanon as an example of the “three stages in practice,” where Muslims went from cooperating with a professing Christian majority to waging a twenty-year war against it.

Briefly we must also note how sodomites surreptitiously rise to power in the “tolerant” West. They begin with the strategy of sodomite strategists Kirk and Madsen: “Portray gays as victims, not as aggressive challengers.” The trend seems always the same: militant sodomites and their liberal allies take advantage of sodomite tolerance and begin seizing power, pushing through such intolerant measures as “hate-crimes” laws meant to silence their opposition, especially the church. (For more on how sodomites subvert society, see chapter 22.)

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460 Ibid., 86.
461 Ibid., 87.
462 Ibid., 88.
463 Ibid., 88, 89.
Intolerant legislation of some form is inescapable. “Law by its very nature is teleological, because it posits a certain order and penalizes all deviations from it.” All societies target some “revolutionary” groups for destruction for threatening to undermine the social order. Plato recognized this in his Republic, in which he writes:

As for the assertion that a god, who is good, is the cause of evil to anyone, great exertions must be made against anyone’s saying these things in his own city, if its laws are going to be well observed, or anyone’s hearing them, whether he is younger or older, whether the tale is told in meter or without meter. For these are to be taken as sayings that, if said, are neither holy, nor advantageous for us, nor in harmony with one another (emphasis mine).  

Plato considers certain criticisms of the gods—the source of “the good”—an attack on the social order. Against such things the state was to “be harsh and not provide a chorus.”

While Aristotle does not explicitly declare war on detractors of the state-sanctioned pantheon, he promotes the conditions for it. “[O]f primary importance” to a city-state’s self-sufficiency, he writes, is “the supervision of religious matter, which is called a priesthood.” Priests, along with officials, are part of the governing class. A distribution of “temples dedicated to gods” must populate the countryside. The state is empowered to coerce worship of its gods. The pantheon is of utmost importance, as “the entire city-state” must subsidize “expenses

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467 Ibid., c.
468 Ibid., 383.c.
470 Ibid., VII.Ch.12.1331b.1.
471 Ibid., VII.Ch.12.1331b.15.
472 For example, the legislator’s role in dealing with pregnant women: “Even pregnant women should take care of their bodies and not stop exercising or adopt a meager diet. The legislator can easily prevent them from doing these things by requiring them to take a walk every day to worship the gods whose assigned prerogative is to watch over birth.” Ibid., VII.Ch.16.1335b.10-15.
related to the gods.”473 From this it is clear that critics of such a society’s gods would be considered subversive of the state—as well as the entire social order. 474

To give some historical examples of how intolerant legislation is inescapable, we begin with the French Revolution. Historian Michael Burleigh summarizes the views of a German writer named Wieland who lived during the Revolution and who initially supported it: “Freedom and Equality had been perverted into idols, and those who refused them worship were being persecuted by Terror. A ‘new political religion’ was being preached by French generals at the head of revolutionary armies; they were as intolerant as ‘Mohammad or the Theodosians.’”475

Wieland observes, “Whoever does not recognize their notions of Freedom and Equality as the sole truth, is an enemy of the human race, or a despicable slave, who, bowed down by the narrow-chested prejudices of the old political idolatry, bends his knee before self-made idols.”476 Thus according to the French atheist worldview, seduction to idolatry was not worshipping the gods “Freedom” and “Equality.” The only remedy was “persecution by Terror.” The path had to be cleared for spreading the gospel of Reason. Jean Jacques Rousseau, a major influence on the French Revolution, writes, “There is therefore a purely civil profession of faith of which the Sovereign should fix the articles. … If anyone, after publicly recognizing these dogmas, behaves as if he does not believe them, let him be punished by death.”477

473 Ibid., VII.Ch.10.1330a.5.
474 We get a glimpse of just how important for Aristotle the pantheon is to society in his discussion on useful strategies for a democracy. He recommends that “private cults should be absorbed into a few public ones, and every device should be used to mix everyone together as much as possible and break up their previous associations” (emphases mine). Ibid., VI.Ch.4.1319b.20-25. Societal unity presupposes worship of only state-sanctioned gods. Of course, it is futile to hold that unity can come from worship of atomistic gods. In such a situation the social order cannot survive without the state stepping in to bring unity out of the ethical chaos resulting from the worship of gods with various ethical standards.
In the Russian Revolution, Christians were the natural enemies of materialistic atheism. Accordingly, the church hierarchy was seen as counter-revolutionary, a threat to building an atheist utopia. Lenin said, “Religion is not a private affair,” and therefore wrote, “We demand the disestablishment of the Church so as to be able to combat the religious fog.”

For Lenin, keeping Christianity out of civil government was only the first—but crucial—step in quelling the Christian anti-materialist insurrection. The Bolsheviks should not stop until Christians could no longer “seduce to idolatry.” For the Bolsheviks,

[T]here was no disagreement about how to deal with institutionalised religion. The Provisional Government had pursued policies that sought to disestablish the Orthodox Church. The Bolsheviks regarded this relative restraint as a form of ‘bourgeois’ inhibition, and resolved to eradicate Christianity as such. In 1918 the Churches were deprived of their legal personality and their lands and properties were nationalised. Ten Orthodox hierarchs were summarily shot, with the explanation: “Soviet power will keep shooting these lords until we smash and crush the criminal counter-revolutionary activity of Church leaders.”

(Note: We do not consider Russian Orthodox churches as being truly Christian. However, for non-Christians, any group that reminds them of Christianity [e.g., a church that claims to be Christian but has many heretical doctrines] is often enough for them to persecute that group as much as true Christians.)

For the same reasons as atheist Russia, Christians are the natural enemies of atheist China. A few years ago in this communist country, a Christian was forced into “two years of re-education through labor.” According to the atheistic civil government, his engaging in church

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478 Burleigh, Sacred Causes, 43.  
480 Burleigh, Sacred Causes, 42.  
activities unregistered by the state was “subverting the Chinese government and socialist order.”

The Christian’s sentence to a labor camp was mild compared with those “counterrevolutionary” Christians the Chinese civil government decides to beat to death. That Christianity is subversive in the eyes of Chinese communists is seen in the extreme antithesis between how each religion views what constitutes barbarism and an uncivilized society. For the Christian, atheism, torture and murder are barbaric and uncivilized. For the communist, barbarism and uncivilized behavior characterize the Great Commission. For example, a few years ago the Chinese civil government seized and deported two American pastors for so-called “barbaric” and “uncivilized” actions.

Today in the West, anything that threatens humanistic man’s autonomy threatens the social order. Accordingly, unborn children must be destroyed whenever they threaten their mother’s autonomy. Increasingly, the elderly and mentally handicapped are targeted for destruction. An autonomous social order cannot sustain itself if citizens are obligated to give up their independence by caring for the needy. And naturally, Christians are increasingly under attack (e.g., laws forbidding homeschooling and preaching against sodomy), since they uphold God’s sovereignty, which is the ultimate threat against human autonomy.

482 Ibid.
483 Ibid.
484 Germany has been trying to crush home-schooling, a Christian alternative to Germany’s depraved compulsory humanistic school system which began under Adolf Hitler’s watch. This system subjects students to the occult and even young children to pornography. There are even schools reported to have mixed locker rooms and mixed showering after swim class. Home-schooling parents are being imprisoned, and home-schooling children are being taken into state custody. On behalf of the German government, German Consul General Wolfgang Drautz said: “The public has a legitimate interest in countering the rise of parallel societies that are based on religion or motivated by different world views and in integrating minorities into the population as a whole.” CBN News Transcript, Germany Declares War on Home-Schoolers (Original Broadcast Aug. 11, 2008). Retrieved August 21, 2008, from http://www.cbn.com/media/browse_videos_info.aspx?s=/vod/DHU58v1. German government attacks on Christianity and the stealing of children from parents. Adolf’s spirit has returned.
At this point, many Western political conservatives might say they object both to the aforementioned forms of intolerance by Western liberals and the legislation in Deuteronomy 13. But this doesn’t get conservatives off the hook.

First, far from being the opposite of liberalism, conservatism by its very nature actually reinforces it. While conservatives are quick to fight the new liberal policies of today, they find themselves defending the liberal policies of yesterday (see Appendix D). Thus conservatives helped open the door for the West’s present state of affairs, including the attack on innocent life.

Second, today’s conservatives are often quick to justify massive indiscriminate bombings of innocent civilians in wartime, such as of Japan and Germany in World War II. The justification is based on defending America—i.e., preserving the American social order. Strange that they would oppose Deuteronomy 13, which for national preservation sanctions the destruction of evil men guilty of seducing others to idolatry, and yet for national preservation favor a policy sanctioning the destruction of the innocent.

To survive, societies must deal with those who would undermine them:

Basic to the health of a society is the integrity of its foundation. To allow tampering with its foundation is to allow its total subversion. Biblical law can no more permit the propagation of idolatry than Marxism can permit counter-revolution, or monarchy a move to execute the king, or a republic an attempt to destroy the republic and create a dictatorship.485

King Nebuchadnezzar went from into tolerance of those who wouldn’t worship his golden image to, upon being humbled by God, intolerance of those who speak against God (Dan. 3:8-29). King Darius, who was likewise humbled by God, went from intolerance of those who wouldn’t worship him alone to requiring all men to tremble before and fear God (Dan. 6).

485 Rushdoony, Institutes, 38, 39.

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Putting off dealing with revolutionaries doesn’t change the objective need to. Revolutionary groups are always seeking the right opportunities—opportunities multiplied in lawless societies: “Berlin in the Twenties became like Paris in the 1780s and Leningrad in 1910: a theater of vice, of political agitation and underground movements, a cockpit of ambition.”

Ultimately, “either the State will exercise the wrath of God against sin, or it will exercise the wrath of man against God and His people.” The only question then is who will the state destroy—and on what scale—in the name of self-preservation: the wicked, or the innocent?

The Deuteronomy 13 legislation, when followed swiftly and justly, purges from society convicted idolatrous revolutionaries. And this on a minimum scale, since it prevents revolutionary leaven from spreading, and also causes others to hear and fear. Of course, as we have already stated, this law by its very nature could only apply in an already Christian nation, so a society must first be transformed by the gospel.

Tolerating subversion is itself subversive. If a Christian society does not apply Deuteronomy 13, then that society should not be surprised to one day find itself overtaken by a humanistic revolution, whether by force of violence (as in the French and Russian Revolutions), or by assimilation (as in the modern Western world). Once overtaken, the state’s laws will then change to reflect that revolution’s worldview. On the French Revolution, Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) writes, “When a revolution has once begun, each event in it not merely sums up the events hitherto accomplished; it also contains the chief elements of what is to come.” The West—even the world—has felt the destructive chief elements of the French Revolution ever since.

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488 Rushdoony, Institutes, 89.
Plato (left) and Aristotle, both of whom are admired by humanists, promoted the conditions for intolerance of religions that do not conform to the state religion.
Chapter 20:
“Controversial” Capital Sanctions:
Sabbath-Breaking

The Fourth Commandment reads:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy (Ex. 20:8-11).

Work on the Sabbath is so heinous to God that it is a capital offense: “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” (Ex. 35:2). Some examples of work forbidden on the Sabbath includes gathering manna (Ex. 16:27), kindling fire in one’s dwelling place (Ex. 35:3), gathering sticks (Num. 15:32-35), carrying a burden (Jer. 17:21, 22), and commerce (Neh. 10:31; 13:15-18). 490

490 Many in the church today wrongly believe the New Testament does away with the Sabbath. For a comprehensive biblical defense of the abiding validity of the Sabbath, see Joseph A. Pipa, The Lord’s Day (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1997); Joe Morecraft III, “Did Paul do away with the Fourth Commandment?,” in How God Wants Us to Worship Him (San Antonio, TX: The Vision Forum, Inc., 2004); and Brian Schwertley, The Christian Sabbath: Examined, Proved, Applied (Lansing, Michigan: Brian Schwertley, 1997). Available at http://www.reformedonline.com/view/reformedonline/sabbath2.htm. Briefly, we will just mention that the Sabbath has abiding validity because it is a creation ordinance (Gen. 2:2-3, Ex. 20:8-11; cf. Matt. 19:3-9; 1 Cor. 11:8, 9; Eph. 5:31); it was made for mankind in general, not just for Jews (Mk. 2:27); and Isaiah 56:1-8 looks forward to Sabbath keeping in the New Covenant era. The change of the day is grounded on the fact that, just as God rested from His creation labors on the seventh day (see Morecraft’s exegesis of Heb. 4:9, 10), God the Son rested from His re-creation labors on the first day of the week, the day of Jesus’ resurrection (Jn.
However, the very act of engaging in these or other works is not the only factor to be weighed when considering whether someone should be put to death. *Intention* is considered. The Sabbath permits works of necessity and works of mercy.

Examples of works of necessity include plucking (not harvesting) grain when one is hungry (Matt. 12:1), serving the Lord (as the disciples did in Matt. 12), and necessary works for God’s people to worship (Matt. 12:5). Law enforcement and possibly public execution also apply (given the reading of Numbers 15:32-36, both of these works appear possibly to have been carried out on the Sabbath).

Works of mercy include rescuing an animal from a pit (Matt. 12:11) and helping the sick (12:13). These significant exceptions regarding work worthy of death refute the simplistic humanistic notion that the Sabbath penal sanction is an unrealistic, oppressive law that would wipe out all citizens who on the Sabbath happen to break a sweat.

We read of a Sabbath-related death sentence in Numbers 15:32-36:

While the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. They put him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him. And the LORD said to Moses, “The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.” And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Many find this extremely unfair. After all, they exclaim, the accused was *merely gathering sticks!* But a more than superficial analysis tells us the man was *not merely* gathering sticks, but in flagrant opposition to God.

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20:1). Hence from then on the New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the first day of the week (Jn. 20:26; Ac. 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2). Pentecost (Ac. 2:1) was also on the first day of the week (cf. Lev. 23:15, 16). The Sabbaths that have been abrogated were the ceremonial Sabbaths, not the one-day-in seven Sabbath.

491 Pipa, *The Lord’s Day*, 76.
According to Joseph A. Pipa, the priests could sustain the fire on the altar (Lev. 1), so simply maintaining fires on the Sabbath was not prohibited. But starting a fire from scratch, which involved kindling, is much more laborious than simple fire maintenance.  

The man in Numbers 15 was gathering wood either to sell it or to kindle a fire. If the latter, he had not paid attention to his fuel supply and had neglected his fire so it went out. Furthermore, he had no need to collect wood to kindle a fire since he could have borrowed wood and some live coals from a neighbor or used a neighbor’s fire. His wood-gathering was a public, flagrant disregard for God’s law. In order to make unmistakably clear the importance of the law regarding the Sabbath, God had him put to death.

Regarding the offender’s “flagrant disregard for God’s law,” it is interesting that this episode immediately proceeds from passages where God distinguishes between unintentional sins and flagrant sins (Num. 15:22-31). The flagrant sin is committed with a “high hand,” and is exercised by one whom “reviles the LORD” (v. 30). A flagrant sin is not when someone on the Lord’s Day by reflex accidentally picks up a piece of trash in his yard.

R. J. Rushdoony discusses how high-handed the act in Numbers 15 was. The man broke the Sabbath in the face of the providential and miraculous protection God gave the Israelites while they lived in the wilderness. This protection included a sufficient supply of manna to live on. The manna collected prior to the Sabbath remained unspoiled on the Sabbath. Hence, “The man referred to in these verses had no need for a fire on the Sabbath; he had manna prepared from the previous day to feed himself and his family. The fact that he had not built a fire indicates plainly his premeditation.”

We see then that the offender was under no threat of starvation. If there was any other urgent reason to need a fire, he could have, as noted

492 Ibid., 63.
493 Ibid.
494 R. J. Rushdoony, Numbers, 164. Cited in Ritchie, A Conquered Kingdom, 315.
earlier, made use of a neighbor’s fire. This act was nothing less than open defiance before a God Who made it dramatically clear day after day that He took care of the Israelites’ needs.

The man was without excuse—his iniquity was upon him (see Num. 15:31c). He fit the criterion for death upheld by the Puritan John Cotton, who writes of the Christian Sabbath: “Profaning of the Lord’s day, in a careless and scornful neglect or contempt thereof, [is] to be punished with death.” This was, writes Matthew Henry, a “sin designedly against God’s will and glory” (emphasis mine).

Thus, the underlying moral principle, writes Daniel F. N. Ritchie, is not that we stone someone for picking up sticks or lighting a fire on the Sabbath (especially if they are likely to die of cold, which may be necessary now in a way that it was not when Israel was in the wilderness Ex. 16:13, 22-31) but that high-handed Sabbath breakers, who publicly engage in work that is totally unnecessary, be punished (these must be carefully distinguished from works of mercy or necessity Matt. 12:11-12).

The enforcement to some degree of Sabbath observance, which has changed from the seventh day of the week to the first, served and still serves as a necessity for the health of society. For one, the practice of working nonstop is a detriment to one’s physical health. Working nonstop is a temptation for many, and without a strict law against such, many would die prematurely from the stress of overwork.

There are also moral consequences of Sabbath breaking. In the aptly titled book Working Ourselves to Death, the author captures the fallout of America’s nonstop work mentality, which is a natural fruit of violating the Sunday Sabbath. While we reject her humanistic treatment

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496 Henry, Matthew Henry Concise, Numbers 15:30-36.
497 Ritchie, A Conquered Kingdom, 315, 316.
of deliberate overwork as “addiction,” “workaholism,” and “disease,” instead of treating it as sin, we still find much truth in her words:

All addictions affect our morality: They result in spiritual bankruptcy. On a daily basis, work addicts are dishonest, controlling, self-centered, perfectionistic, and abusive to themselves and others. No wonder their morality is affected. You cannot lead such a life without losing your moorings. Your grounding in basic values is lost in the relentless pursuit of the addiction.

Spiritual bankruptcy is the final symptom of workaholism; it usually heralds a dead end. It means you have nothing left. Many workaholics have said, “I no longer knew right from wrong in any of my dealings. And I despaired there was a God out there who could help me.”

We could say then that anti-Sabbatarianism results in moral declension culminating in despair and atheism. An apt description of the West.

On that note, we turn to how Sabbath enforcement preserves society’s dignity. We begin with the dignity it gives the family. As noted, those inclined to work every day of the week are forced by Sabbath regulations to cease their self-destructive activities.

In discouraging the premature deaths of husbands and parents that results from overwork, Sabbath enforcement minimizes the number of widows and orphans in society fending for themselves. It also encourages husbands to guard the health of their wives and children: “On it [the Sabbath] you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter” (emphases mine) (Deut. 5:14b).

Sabbath enforcement also preserves the dignity of servants. Servants are granted the same protections under the law as their master’s sons and daughters: “On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant” (emphasis mine) (Deut. 5:14bc). Such a law discourages servants—whether

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499 Ibid., 64.
considered slaves or just employees—from being subjected to inhumane treatment and harsh labor.

Moreover, in being from God, the command presupposes that masters do not own their servants but are only stewards of them. Masters are not at liberty to treat their servants harshly. Thus in this Sabbath enforcement further promotes the dignity of servants.

Because the Sabbath is a creation ordinance,\(^{500}\) following it benefits all of God’s creation—not just humanity. It protects animal rights—“On it you shall not do any work … or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock” (emphases mine) (Deut. 5:14bcd). It also protects the environment. In a society with Sabbath enforcement, businesses would close (barring any circumstance that renders a business necessary for that day) and travel would be discouraged, protecting the environment from land and air pollution.

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500 Of the Sabbath being a creation ordinance, O. Palmer Robertson writes, “The institution of the Sabbath roots in the pattern of God’s creative activity. By following the order of six and one in his making of the world, God established a structural pattern for his creation.

“The significance of the Sabbath principle for the ordering of creation appears not only in the pattern of six days of creative activity followed by a day of rest. It also appears explicitly in the statement that God ‘blessed the sabbath day and sanctified it’ (Gen. 2:3).

“When Scripture records that God “blessed” the Sabbath day in conjunction with his creational activity, it obviously cannot mean that God spoke meaninglessly into a vacuum. His blessing of this day had a significant effect on the world. Furthermore, the reference to God’s blessings the day should not be interpreted as meaning that God blessed the day with respect to himself. It was with respect to his creation, and with respect to man in particular that God blessed the Sabbath day. As Jesus indicated pointedly, ‘the Sabbath came into being for the sake of man’ (Mark 2:27). Because it was for the good of man and the whole of creation, God instituted the Sabbath. …

“The fourth commandment of the decalogue appeals to the creational character of the sabbath-structure as the basis for its particular requirements. Because of the Lord’s work-and-rest pattern in creation, man must ‘remember the sabbath day to sanctify it’ (Exod. 20:8, 11). Even the beasts of the field are to participate in this rest (v. 10), indicating God’s intention to bless the whole of creation by this institution.” O. Palmer Robertson, The Christ of the Covenants (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1980), 68, 69.
Sabbath observance produces “social rest.” Consider the effect of Sabbath observance on believers:

The Lord has given us the Sabbath day to call us back to Him as our sovereign Master. This weekly punctuation of life that interrupts our work and pursuits of leisure and recreation, trains us to forget all else and look to Him. The Lord’s day brings us into the presence of the Lord God, reminding us, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.” The very practice of not pursuing our work and recreation and avoiding unnecessary thoughts and words about these things keeps us from becoming obsessed with them. It deals the death-blow to our becoming workaholics or to our being obsessed with our favourite recreation or activity. On this day God asks us to forget about everything else. Our propensity to idolatry is put to death. Thus the Sabbath sanctifies us in the negative sense.

Sabbath observance, however, also contributes positively to our sanctification. God promises in Isaiah 58, that if we keep the Lord’s day holy, we are going to delight in the Lord and have spiritual prosperity and victory. The Sabbath is a means whereby we grow and prosper as Christians.

Sabbath observance played a crucial part in the preservation of the nation of Israel:

When Jerusalem fell, in 586 B.C., and the leaders, their temple having been wantonly destroyed, were taken to Babylon in captivity, their chance of survival was slight. The northern kingdom had fallen more than a hundred years earlier and had never been revived. It has not been revived to this day. The southern kingdom would have gone the same way, and the whole of Western civilization would have been greatly impoverished thereby, if the prophet Ezekiel and others like him had not placed

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great emphasis on the Sabbath. The Sabbath observance became an external badge which held the people together as by a public witness. Once each week the people stood up to be counted in their alien environment and, though the weaklings naturally fell away, the faithful were consequently strengthened.\textsuperscript{503}

As God’s people sanctify, God’s law influences all of society. Such virtues as justice, hard work, and personal responsibility leaven society’s institutions. Consequently, even unbelievers—those who reject the Sabbath inwardly—are pressured to conform their outward behavior to higher moral expectations. Thus, Sabbath-observance produces social rest. As Arthur W. Pink writes, “the Sabbath was ‘made for man’ (Mark 2:27) and not simply for the Jew; made for man’s good.”\textsuperscript{504}

A society must keep in mind that consequences regarding Sabbath-keeping are inescapable. “The Lord makes the sacred observance of His Day of special blessing; and contrariwise, He visits the profanation of the Sabbath with special cursing (see Neh. 13:17, 18).”\textsuperscript{505}

Of cursings for Sabbath-desecration, New England Puritan Cotton Mather comments,

It was a thing once charged upon Sabbath-breakers in Neh. 13:18, “Ye bring wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath.” And have not [we] seen the wrath of God correcting profanations of the Christian Sabbath, with rebukes of thunder and lightening? And, indeed, some intelligent persons have noted it, that the dreadful storms of thunder and lightening, which have killed many among us from year to year, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; they have mostly happened on or near the Lord’s day; as an intimation, that breaches of the Lord’s day have procured the firing of the great artillery of heaven upon us, for the violations of the sacred rest which he has appointed for us. And the many disasters which happen on the Lord’s day among us,
may be so many judgments upon us for our not sanctifying the day unto the Lord.\textsuperscript{506}

Also regarding lightning, it is written in the American Tract Society’s Sabbath Occupations: “A number of persons appointed a certain Sabbath as a time to play at foot ball. And while two of them were tolling a bell to call the company together, they were struck with lightning, and both died.”\textsuperscript{507}

And, also regarding sports, Harmon Kingsbury cites “a distinguished foreign writer” who says:

Let the degradation, the disgrace, and at last the expulsion of the race of Stuarts from the throne of Britain, serve as a public warning to all Britons. For who, in the least acquainted with the history of his country, knows not, that from the time when James the sixth of Scotland, and first of England, set himself to establish iniquity by a law, by instituting the book of \textit{sports} in England, for the Lord's day, the judgments of heaven pursued that family with calamity upon calamity, till the line of princes in that house, to lay claim to the crown of Britain, is now no more?\textsuperscript{508}

We have noted positive effects Sabbath-keeping makes on following God’s commands. It is a means of sanctification. There is also a connection between Sabbath-breaking and rejecting God’s commands (cf. Rom. 1:28-32). As Sir William Blackstone notes: “A corruption of morals usually follows a profanation of the Sabbath.”\textsuperscript{509} In light of the following data, it appears Sabbath-breaking could be a major catalyst in turning to a life of crime. According to Cotton Mather:

I have been desired by many malefactors to be with them at their execution; and then, in those last and sad minutes of their lives, they have sometimes cried out, “This, this, is a judgment of God

\textsuperscript{507} Kingsbury, \textit{The Sabbath: A Brief History}, 124.
\textsuperscript{508} Ibid., 125.
\textsuperscript{509} Cited in Wilbur Fisk Crafts, \textit{The Sabbath for Man: A Study of the Origin, Obligation, History, Advantages and Present State of Sabbath Observance} (Baltimore: Authors’ Union, 1894), 240.
upon my Sabbath-breaking; I may thank my Sabbath-breaking for all this; it was for my misspending of the Sabbath with vain persons, and in vain actions, that God has left me to that wickedness which has brought upon me all of this horrible misery!”

And William Innes writes,

It has often been observed, that many of those who have been called to expiate their crimes against society by suffering the last penalty of the law, have dated their first departure from the right path to their early neglect of the Sabbath. Such cases I have met with, in visiting in their cells those condemned to death.

According to Wilbur Fisk Crafts,

Justice Strong, of the United States Supreme Court, has said: “Those who have observed the administration of criminal law or been familiar with prison discipline have often heard the sad confession of a convicted criminal, that his career downward commenced with Sabbath-desecration.” Judge Hale once said that of those who were convicted of capital crimes while he was upon the bench, he found very few who would not confess, on inquiry, that they began their career of wickedness by neglect of the Sabbath. S. Cutter, agent of the New York Prison Association, writes me: “Sabbath desecration is almost always connected with crime and is the forerunner of it.”

Of one hundred men admitted to the Massachusetts State Prison in one year, nine out of ten had been habitual violators of the Lord's-day and neglecters of public worship. The keeper affirms that hundreds of convicts have lamented their desecration of the Sabbath as the first and fatal step of their downward progress to

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ruin. The chaplain, Rev. J. W. F. Barnes, writes me, in response to inquiries: “When a man comes to prison who has been a church-goer, it makes a sensation. Why should it do so, saving for the reason that the idea of a church-goer and the idea of a criminal are so totally unlike? The overwhelming majority of criminals hereabouts are Roman Catholics. They have holiday instead of holy day after mass.”

Similar testimony as to the relation of Sabbathbreaking to crime is given by Rev. J. G. Bass, chaplain for twenty years of the King’s County Penitentiary, in Brooklyn, and many others.513

Rev. William Scoresby, in a book written in 1850, also links lawless criminality with Sabbath-breaking. Regarding the evidence submitted to the “Select Committee of the House of Commons on the observance of the Lord’s day,” Scoresby writes that the Sabbath’s “influence on the moral condition of men … is so decisive in its character.”514

Scoresby lists several examples. The keeper of Newgate prison, Mr. Wontner, testified that of his incoming prisoners, nine out of ten either rejected the Sabbath or did not regularly attend worship services. He added that many prisoners cautioned “their relatives and friends to observe the Sabbath,” and lamented that their own crimes traced “to their non-observance or breach of the Sabbath.”515

Benjamin Baker, who visited the Newgate prisoners for a twenty-year period, found among prisoners both an almost universal regret for Sabbath-breaking, as well as an almost universal acknowledgment of “Sabbath-breaking as the leading cause of their transgressions.”516 Baker attended at least 350 criminal executions. Of these, nine of ten “have dated the principal part of their departure from God to the neglect of the Sabbath.”517

515 Ibid., 16.
516 Ibid.
517 Ibid., 16, 17.
The Chaplin of the New Prison, Rev. David Ruell, recounts a similar experience. Of at least 100,000 prisoners under his care, prisoners generally mentioned Sabbath-breaking as a catalyst for their criminal acts. Again, many prisoners regretted disregarding the Lord’s Day. Ruell recalls that every capital offender was a Sabbath breaker. In fact, says Ruell, “in many cases they [capital offenders] have assured me that Sabbath-breaking was the first step in the course of crime!”

Prisoners sometimes requested that their Sabbath-breaking serve as a warning to others. Furthermore, nineteen of twenty “prisoners of all classes … have not only neglected the Sabbath, but all other ordinances of religion.” He adds, “So powerfully is my mind impressed with the subject, that I cannot forbear adding my conviction that Sabbath-breaking is not only a great national evil, but a fruitful source of immorality among all classes, and pre-eminently of profligacy and crime among the lower orders.”

Regarding the relationship between Sabbath-breaking and crime, the following from the Liverpool Courier, on August 11, 1847, is also helpful:

The closing of public-houses on the Sabbath-day is a measure which ought to receive the unanimous concurrence and support of all moralists, philanthropists, and true patriots. The statistics of criminal business for the borough of Liverpool show a regular increase in the committals to the borough gaol, commensurate with the increase of the population. In the year 1841-2, the prisoners in the borough gaol were 16,657; but in the next year, when the public-houses were partially closed on the Sabbath-day, the number sensibly diminished, instead of increasing with the increasing population; and even after two or three years they fell short of the above number; thus showing the beneficial effect of this merely partial restriction of the public-houses and beer-shops. The following shows the number of prisoners in the borough gaol for four years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total number of prisoners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841-2</td>
<td>16,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842-3</td>
<td>15,512</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

518 Ibid., 17.
519 Ibid., 17, 18.
These data are as convincing as figures can be. The decrease in the committals appears as the necessary and natural consequence of the reduced temptations held out to the lower classes by the vendors of beer and spirituous liquors. All we now require is to go one step further—close the public-houses altogether on that day of public rest.\textsuperscript{520}

In light of all this evidence, it is only fitting that Prime Minister William Gladstone of England said, “Tell me what the young men of England are doing on Sunday, and I will tell you what the future of England will be.”\textsuperscript{521} The future of a Sabbath-breaking society is one of moral decadence and rampant crime.

Given the evidence that criminality begins with Sabbath breaking, we see the importance of the Sabbath capital sanction. Fear of execution by the state deters many would-be criminals from embracing a life of crime and executing innocent people. Thus the more lax society becomes regarding the Bible’s penalty for Sabbath-breaking, the more society can expect to contend with crime. “[T]he wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), and so we shouldn’t be surprised that the wages of the heinous sin of Sabbath breaking on a societal level results in death on a societal level.

Some critics of the capital sanction for Sabbath desecration, nevertheless, both mock it, and point to abuses by New England Puritans. We must warn critics that God’s Sabbath justice will not be mocked. One does so at his own peril. According to the American Tract Society’s “Sabbath Occupations,”

A pious minister, in his sermon, once spoke of the man in the camp of Israel, who was stoned to death for gathering sticks upon the Sabbath. A thoughtless man present was offended; and to

\textsuperscript{520} Cited in Peter M’Owan, “Several Prevailing Forms of Sabbath Desecration Exposed,” in The Christian Sabbath: Considered in its Various Aspects, with a preface by Baptist W. Noel (Edinburgh: The Religious Tract and Book Society of Scotland, 1856), 149, 150.

show his contempt, left the house and began to gather up sticks. *When the congregation came out, they found the man dead, with a bundle of sticks in his arms*” (emphasis mine). 522

In regards to alleged abuses, we must remember that what constitutes abuse is going outside the boundaries of God’s law. The New England Puritans thus only abused Sabbath desecration laws to the extent that they actually went beyond the biblical criterion for punishments.

The law against Sabbath desecration is not only abused to the degree it *exceeds* the Bible’s prescribed sanction (e.g., criminalizing certain acts done on the Sabbath that the Bible *does not* criminalize) but to the degree it *falls short* of the Bible’s prescribed sanction (e.g., not criminalizing acts done on the Sabbath that the Bible *does* criminalize).

In today’s society, where not even blue laws are the norm anymore, the law against Sabbath desecration is abused violently.

Such abuse—being on a national level for years upon years—has been on a much larger scale than the alleged abuse confined to a local level for a small period of time by the Puritans. The argument, then, that the Sabbath penal sanction shouldn’t be enforced because it can be abused is a reversible argument.

Moreover, if one insists that “pro-Sabbath zeal” produces unnecessary bloodshed, how much more does “anti-Sabbath zeal”? History tells us that opposing the Sabbath—let alone its capital sanction—sets one up for abuse in the other direction, and in a far worse way. How does one compare Puritan New England with Nazi Germany and the French and Russian Revolutions?

By Hitler’s design, every Sunday between 1933-1938 Christian parents were pressured to send their children to Nuremberg, where the German youth attended huge Nazi rallies instead of church. The goal was to de-Sabbatize Sundays. 523 Hilmar von Campe mentions that while he was in the Hitler youth, “sometimes there were special events on Sundays, to prevent us from going to church.” 524 No doubt this was part of what von Campe calls the Nazi long-term ideological program for

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power. “They were out to destroy the family nucleus, to wrestle the children away from their parents, brainwash them, and make them Nazis. That meant removing God and making Hitler their idol.” Hitler understood that becoming a god required replacing the Lord’s Day with his own day.

The anti-Sabbath atheists of the French Revolution, too, understood that destroying Christianity required destroying the Christian Sabbath. “The French rushed to rationalize every aspect of life such as the calendar.” This included introducing “a 10-day week to override the Lord’s Day and thereby suppress religion entirely. Voltaire calmly predicted that it would be the death of Christianity. Churches could open only on the tenth day, one of rest, and people could not wear their finery on Sundays.” The Russian Revolutionaries followed their atheist predecessors, changing the calendar to destroy the Lord’s Day as well.

The Sabbath is opposed to tyranny because when kept, tyranny is threatened. For an entire day, man is set apart from pacifying influences such as entertainment, and is reminded that Christ—not Caesar—is King of kings. Being exposed to the Word of God throughout the day, man is given a solid foundation for discerning state propaganda, and is also given marching orders to take cultural dominion for Christ.

In short, on the Sabbath, the leavening effects of humanism and social conformity are potentially minimized. Sabbath-keepers are reminded Who their full devotion belongs to. This is unacceptable to godless tyrants, who have historically competed with Christianity for the affections of the people.

There are those who complain that forcing external obedience to the Sabbath on non-Christians is an infringement of their freedoms. However, this is a reversible argument, since not enforcing external obedience to the Sabbath induces societal decay, which infringes on the

525 Ibid., 28.
527 Ibid.
528 Ibid., 22.
freedoms of Christians, since decadent societies are hostile to Christians, and Christians consider decadence bondage.

Being a creation ordinance, the Sabbath is an immutable law of creation. This means all of creation is affected by how the Sabbath is kept; the created order can only know peace and harmony when man follows it (at least as far as peace and harmony can be attained in a fallen world). When man violates and thereby attacks the Sabbath, he becomes destructive since he attacks creation itself. This destruction includes destruction of life, since man is part of creation; in other words, an attack on the Sabbath is an attack on creation, which culminates into an attack on life itself.

Therefore, in attacking the Sabbath rest, France, Germany, and Russia would never find rest, but only death and destruction. “‘But the wicked are like the tossing sea; for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked’” (Is. 57:20, 21). The restless French and Russian Revolutionaries couldn’t kill man fast enough.529

In France, “The guillotine operated too slowly for the liking of some Jacobin terrorists so they used mass drownings to kill ‘enemies of the Revolution’ instead.”530

France, while she was observing her tenth day Sabbath, was one continued scene of commotion and bloodshed; and long ere this, had she not sought the aids of that religion which she had despised, and endeavored to abolish, and welcomed its return and the weekly Sabbath, she would have been beyond the reach of any human arm to save her.531

In Russia, “Trucks delivered people to be killed, impersonal mass executions were conducted in large basements by bullets to the back of the head; after the bodies had been removed, the next fleet of trucks

530 Burleigh, Earthly Powers, caption from insert between pp. 178 and 179.
arrived.” The people’s commissar of internal affairs, N. Petrovsky, “complained that despite the ‘massive repressions’ organized by enemies of the state against the working masses, the ‘Red Terror’ was too slow in its effects.”

Plagued by an insatiable desire to conquer, neither the Third Reich nor the Russian Revolutionaries could rest before achieving global domination.

Nazi Germany began by de-Sabbitizing Sundays. It ended by being nearly reduced to ash. “The firestorm unleashed on Dresden engulfed 95,000 homes. At the very least, 35,000 people died, including those who sought safety in the city’s fountains only for them to boil dry and others who were asphyxiated in the bomb shelters underneath the main railway station.”

For a time, much of post-war Germany came closer to realizing a completely de-Sabbitized Sunday. Instead of a day of rest under the Lord, it would undergo daily unrest under Satan’s minister Stalin. In East Germany, under atheistic Soviet rule, “the state began to interfere in religious instruction and to insist that people work on Sundays.” This attack on the Sabbath rest was followed by other forms of oppression, and the ensuing unrest provoked thousands to flee to West Germany.

The French Revolution began as a quest to destroy the Christian view of time—marked by the Lord’s Day—in order to establish an atheistic view of time. But if the atheistic timeline moved at all, it moved hurriedly to its own demise: The Revolution culminated in “a bloodbath and a rapid breakdown into the authoritarian rule of Napoleon Bonaparte.” Within 14 years of the ten-day atheist week, Bonaparte restored the seven-day-week.

The French Revolutionaries wanted freedom from a Christian timeline. What they got back was tyranny along with a Christian timeline anyway. As for the Russian Revolution, what began as a movement to

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532 Alain Besancon, Century of Horrors, 4, 5.
533 Courtois et al., Black Book of Communism, 74, 75.
535 Burleigh, Sacred Causes, 438.
536 Ibid.
537 Schaeffer, How Should We Then Live?, 121.
538 Ringwald, A Day Apart, 143.
liberate the working class from such “enslaving” religious practices as the Sabbath rest resulted in totalitarian enslavement of the entire country. And not just enslavement of Russia, but, with the expansion of the Soviet Empire, a large portion of the world.

Thus, in the end, Sabbath-related capital sanctions are inescapable. The society that rejects the one biblical Sabbath capital sanction will embrace multiple capital sanctions that result from Sabbath-breaking. These sanctions are self-imposed by those who work themselves needlessly seven days a week. They are also inflicted upon workers forced to work seven days nonstop. Criminal behavior seems to begin with Sabbath-breaking, and criminals relentlessly inflict the death penalty upon the innocent. Criminals who aren’t initially deterred by Sabbath sanctions often find themselves later put to death by others acting in self-defense, or even by the state.

Moreover, not just criminals, but some of the most criminal ideologies require Sabbath-destruction to succeed. Since to attack a society’s Sabbath is to attack a society’s social rest, the death penalty for Sabbath-desecration guards against those who would turn social rest into social destruction.

Harmon Kingsbury gives several important insights regarding the connection between social destruction and not enforcing the Sabbath capital sanction:

God also well knew, that if his people [Israel] would not religiously keep the Sabbath, as he had commanded, it would be impossible to preserve among them a knowledge of himself. The Sabbath, as an instrument in his hands to accomplish this object, was every thing. If he suffered one man to profane it, though in a very trifling matter, another would not only take the same, but greater liberties; and in a short time, as facts in other countries show, they would have had no Sabbath among them; or individuals, at least, would neither sanctify, nor care any thing about it. Further, if this and other breaches of the Sabbath were to go unpunished, the whole people might become lawless, and God might give them up to be destroyed.

Under these circumstances, should the man be put to death, that the law might be honored, and the whole people saved, or should
he go unpunished, the law be despised, and God compelled to give up the people to self-destruction? We should say, *Let the man be stoned to death*; and let not only Israel, but all *creation* utter a loud *amen* to it. Men who will continue, contemptuously, impiously, and wantonly, to profane that day, *for their own sakes*, and the *world's*, had better be put away from society, *every one* of them, than be allowed to go on, filling up the measure of their iniquities, until they shall have blotted out the institution among them, and thereby destroyed, not only themselves, but millions of others, in body and soul. So have thought all those wise men who have enacted laws touching Sabbath desecration. Then the Sabbath might be saved. Men would not, *for their own gratification*, continue to trample on the law of the Sabbath, if they knew that, as the price of their temerity and impiety, confinement was soon to be inflicted upon them. They would then pause and tremble. We should then have a way of preventing those men who fear not the divine threatenings from destroying *themselves* and the community. … But we take the *life* of the man who breaks the sixth commandment; and why not the *liberty* of the man who *perseveres* in breaking the fourth? God gave the example of taking life in *both* instances: and the Sabbath-breaker, *wilfully* and *habitually* so, is doing more injury to the morals of the community, than *ten* murderers; because we do not see so clearly the evil he is committing, and therefore make no provision to counteract it.

(While Kingsbury doesn’t go far enough by only advocating confinement for Sabbath breakers, his points are well taken.)

The Sabbath capital sanction, followed biblically, would not produce a blood bath, as if every sincere person who happened to break a sweat on the Sabbath would be executed. It would instead suppress high-handed haters of God. Likely just a few if any would be executed, and the rest would hear and fear and curb their lawless behavior. Who knows how many mass murderers and genocidal dictators began their lawless careers gathering sticks on the Sabbath in defiance of God?

Nations cannot afford such attacks on the Sabbath, since the Sabbath is crucial for man: “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mk.

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539 Kingsbury, *The Sabbath: A Brief History*, 125, 126.
To attack what is crucial for man is to dehumanize him, to destroy him. “As goes the Sabbath, so goes the nation.”

As Rev. G. Campbell Morgan writes, “The loss of the Sabbath is the necessary outcome of the dethronement of God; and all the degradation of humanity that always follows the sweeping away from national life of the seventh day of rest is the logical sequence of Atheism.” G. Campbell Morgan, *The Ten Commandments* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), 49, 50.

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Chapter 21:  
“Controversial” Capital Sanctions: Rebellion Against Parents

God’s law requires death for those who flagrantly disrespect their parents. The sanctions include: “Whoever strikes his father or his mother shall be put to death” (Ex. 21:15); and “Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death” (Ex. 21:17; see also Lev. 20:9, Matt. 15:3, 4).

In physically striking a parent, one shows “incontrovertible proof of repudiation of parental authority.” And, cursing one’s parents is a verbal equivalent to striking them. A society that tolerates such behavior cannot expect to last. One who rejects the authority of his parents is prone to reject any authority. The strikers and cursers of parents today are the arch-criminals of tomorrow (if not already). Apart from addressing this problem at its root by enacting the capital sanctions against such disrespect, society can expect tyranny of some sort, whether by the state in assuming vast authoritarian measures to deal with this in a roundabout way, or by simply allowing criminality spawned by parental hatred to proliferate.

Moreover, those who repudiate parental authority have already repudiated God. No society that persists in this can expect to escape God’s judgment. If a society hopes to survive, then parents must be honored. As the Bible tells us: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord,

541 In His indictment of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus affirms the death penalty against reviling one’s parents: “He answered them, ‘And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, “Honor your father and your mother,” and, “Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.” But you say, “If anyone tells his father or his mother, ‘What you would have gained from me is given to God,’ he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God’” (Matt. 15:3-6).


543 This was understood even by the pagan philosopher Plato, who describes a natural progression from striking one’s parents to becoming a tyrannical ruler. Bloom, Republic, IX.574b-575d.
for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ (this is the first commandment with a promise), ‘that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land’” (Eph. 6:1-3).

Another sanction is that against rebellious sons as described in Deuteronomy 21:18-21:

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, and they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

This penal sanction applies, as Kenneth L. Gentry notes, to “a son old enough to be a threat to the community through criminal activity. … This is not a ten-year-old who refuses to take out the garbage. The son in question has become an enemy and a curse to his parents.”544

Thus, the capital sanction does not require perfect obedience of a child under pain of death, as popularly misunderstood. Nor does it even apply to a young child.

This law is not dealing with a ten-year-old child that is not very helpful in tidying up the house. … Nothing in this text says that this child is a young child. It says he’s a son. Hitler was a son. All the way up in his life he was the son of somebody. And he was a son who needed to be disciplined as a man. Murderers are sons as well, and they need discipline—indeed, capital punishment. The context suggests to us that rather than a young son being presented here, we have an older son. Notice in verse 20 he is a drunkard. How many ten-year-olds are drunkards? … He is someone who is both drunk and stubborn, and that is uncontrollable. … And, his actions are bad enough, that even his parents seek capital punishment. That shows just by itself that

544 Gentry, God’s Law in the Modern World, 29.
something really enormous is going on here, not something simple like not taking out the garbage.\footnote{Rev. Ken Gentry, SermonAudio.com, \textit{In Family We Live} (December 2004). Retrieved June 23, 2008, from \url{http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=12180421326}. Gentry believes this applies even to sons living apart from their parents: “Notice that it mentions the elders of \textit{his} city. Not the mother and father’s city, but of \textit{his} city. He is one who can live alone. He is one who is living alone and will still resist the direction that his parents offered him. This is one who is an adult living alone who is a drunken and rebellious man” (emphasis mine). Ibid.}

The basis for the death penalty is not \textit{any one} of the sins of the son mentioned. The Bible doesn’t consider, for instance, drunkenness to be a capital crime. Rather, it penalizes “a complex of immoral action”:\footnote{Ibid.} stubbornness, rebellion, disobedience, gluttony, and drunkenness.

This is a man who has inhering in his character a whole panoply of immoral activities. He’s reckless, he’s dangerous, he’s uncontrollable—this is one who is an incorrigible criminal. … Again, this one is so bad that even his own beloved parents say “officers of the city, capitally punish this one.” This is against all natural sympathy. His behavior is criminal. It’s provable in court. They take him to the elders of the city, so that they present their case and they prove it in court.\footnote{Ibid.}

This capital sanction is only warranted with compelling evidence. Most parents are extra lenient on their children when it comes to their criminal behavior. For both parents—not just one—to demand his execution, that son must be severely detrimental to society. Indeed, the \textit{incorrigible criminal} son, being “‘a glutton and a drunkard’ represented a parasite, someone who contributed nothing and took everything.”\footnote{David F. Payne, \textit{Deuteronomy}, John C. L. Gibson, general ed. (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1985), 123.} Such a parasite contributes nothing to society but its destruction.

Not only this, but biblical law provides safeguards if the son is wrongly accused. John Calvin raises this possibility:

It is true that the sentence is immediately subjoined; yet we must infer, nevertheless, that the judges pronounced it before the criminal was stoned, else it would have been ridiculous that they
should sit there like ciphers. The very mention of a trial, therefore, implies that the son was heard in his defence, so as to clear himself of the crime, if he was not guilty of it. … when he was to be stoned by the whole people, it was necessary that he should be first convicted; and on this ground he was brought forth publicly, that he might be allowed to plead his cause.\textsuperscript{549}

Modern humanists often employ distortions of capital punishments in the Bible such as this in order to discredit the whole of biblical civil law. But even if it were the case that the capital sanction applied against a child for not taking out the trash, why would today’s humanists object? After all, they laud ancient Rome. And Roman men had virtually total life and death powers over their children. As Calvin cites one author:

\begin{quote}
A father among the Romans had the power of life and death over his children. He could not only expose them when infants, but, even when his children were grown up, he might imprison, scourge, send them bound to work in the country, and also put them to death by any punishment he pleased, if they deserved it \textit{(Adams’ Rom. Antiq.)}.\textsuperscript{550}
\end{quote}

In the case of abortion, modern humanists, in their diversity, trade the father’s absolute power over life and death for the mother’s absolute power over life and death.

Ironic; the age of the child being aborted is much younger than even the age humanists interpret the son to be in any given passage the Bible requires a son to be capitaly punished. Not only this, but even though humanists mock these passages, it is not as if the humanistic state has discovered a better way to deal with juvenile delinquency. Our society testifies to this. In secular humanistic America, the treatment of children involves the extremes of allowing incorrigible children to run rampant, to punishing innocent or mild child offenders with harsh sentences. Consider the failures of juvenile detention centers:

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{550} Ibid., 15.}

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Youngsters sent to juvenile detention centers and training schools are likely to be brutalized rather than rehabilitated. “There are things going on, methods of discipline being used in the state training schools of this country that would cause a warden of Alcatraz to lose his job if he used them on his prisoners,” Austin MacCormick, the dean of American correctional officials, warned the members of the National Council of Juvenile Court Judges in 1950.

Alcatraz is no more, but juvenile court judges are still “placing” youngsters in institutions that make adult prisons seem almost benign. Uncontradicted testimony in 1974, in the case of *Morales v. Turman*, provided a sordid catalog of the kinds of physical and psychological torture used by members of the staff at the six state juvenile institutions run by the Texas Youth Council. Instead of denying that these methods were used, the state agency defended them as necessary to control the “violent” youngsters under their supervision. Yet fewer than 10 percent of the TYC wards had committed a violent crime; more than 25 percent had been committed for “disobedience,” a catch-all category for such offenses as running away from home, truancy, and being an “ungovernable child.”

We see here the absurdity of humanistic juvenile detention centers. They excel in punishing non-incorrigible youngsters. And in so doing, they influence the non-incorrigible to become incorrigible.

Moreover, while humanists punish non-incorrigible youngsters and even make some incorrigible in the process, their lack of appropriate sanctions for the incorrigible encourage crime waves of “Super Predators.” John Lofton writes,

> According to a report on the “CBS Evening News” (4/9/96), the “SPs” [Super Predators] are part of a “tidal wave of juvenile crime right over the horizon” that will make today look like the good old days. Because of a huge increase coming in 14-to-17-year-old boys, “the mother of all crime waves” is approaching and these young barbarians will be “more dangerous and more violent than anything we’ve ever seen in this country.”

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A Princeton University professor who is a member of The Council On Crime In America says: “The Super Predator is a young, juvenile criminal who is so impulsive, so remorseless, that he can kill, rape, maim without a second thought.” \(^{552}\)

Lofton discusses one of these Super Predators, and notes how if the state adhered to God’s command to execute him, society would have been spared much destruction:

We then see one of these punks, “Little Manny,” a member of a Miami, Florida gang, with his gold teeth and jewelry, 16-years-old, bragging about [how] he’s been involved in fights, stabbings, robberies and how he started using a gun when he was only 13! He says he will rob “anything” to get money. He calls robbing stores “getting paid.” He’s been picked up by the cops 40 times. Is he worried about getting killed? Nope. Because “we all gotta go someday.”

Well, now. God says this individual should have “gone”—been executed—a long time ago. But, of course, we don’t execute young thugs like this. In fact, we don’t execute a lot of folks God says are deserving of death. The result: The “Little Manny” are executing us. \(^{553}\)

Thus, “We will either obey God’s Law and execute them [Super Predators] (after a trial, witnesses and evidence, of course). Or they will murder us, as they are doing.”\(^{554}\)

And so in short, humanism excels at *producing* adolescent incorrigibility, while Biblical law excels at *eliminating* at. The Bible’s capital sanctions against adolescent criminal behavior encourages respect for authority on the part of those inclined to rebel. Secular humanism, on the other hand, encourages disdain for authority with its condoning of adolescent rebellion on the one hand, and its harsh punishment of non-violent adolescents on the other.


\(^{553}\) Ibid.

\(^{554}\) Ibid.
To all this we must add that capital sanctions for those who repudiate parental authority protect the family from treason. Many today would think capital punishment for treason against the family is extreme, but on the other hand, capital punishment for treason against the state is a necessity.

However, the family is the most basic institution of society. Without families, there can be no other institution, including the state. Society’s institutions are made up of family members. Therefore, one’s attitude toward the family will manifest in one’s attitude toward society in general and the state in particular. If you want to protect society and the state from treasonous criminals, you must begin by protecting the family from them. A building is more secure by a strong foundation than by a sturdy roof.

The reason secular humanists find capital punishment for treason against the family to be extreme is that they have a deficient view of the family. They do not realize its importance. Indeed, their naturalistic worldview prevents them from seeing how important the family is (to the point that capital punishment for treason against it is necessary)—let alone understanding the proper family structure.

Because of its deficient view of the family the secular humanist society results in a deficient view of the state. Since the family is the most basic institution, the secular humanist state will mirror the secular humanist family.

This is why the secular humanist state suffers from the extremes of totalitarianism and permitting anarchy. Any society that does not understand the proper, that is, biblical role of the family will not understand the proper role of the state. A dysfunctional family will sanction oppression or permissiveness, and consequentially so would the state, which reflects the family.

In America, parents are extremely permissive about the immoral behavior of their children, and this is reflected by the state, which permits hardened criminals to run free and allows mothers to murder their babies. On the other hand, American children attempt to usurp the authority of their parents, just as the state attempts to usurp authority from God, as well as the rights of the citizens.
Moreover, American men have surrendered their biblical authority as family leaders. Without its legitimate authority, the family looks outside of itself to the state for leadership; the rejection of patriarchy leads to statistarchy. But being a reflection of the family, the leadership of the state is no better than the “leadership” at home.

Thus America is subjected to the tyranny of women—whom God did not design to lead—and incompetent men who do not understand how to lead. Hence America is subject to the curse of Isaiah’s day: “infants are their oppressors, and women rule over them” (Is. 3:12b).

And, America’s individualistic, atomistic family structure guarantees state tyranny, since in an individualistic society the state becomes the only means to hold it together. Jacques Ellul writes:

It is believed that an individualistic society, in which the individual is thought to have a higher value than the group, tends to destroy groups that limit the individual’s range of action, whereas a mass society negates the individual and reduces him to a cipher. But this contradiction is purely theoretical and a delusion. In actual fact, an individualist society must be a mass society, because the first move toward liberation of the individual is to break up the small groups that are an organic fact of the entire society. In this process the individual frees himself completely from family, village, parish, or brotherhood bonds—only to find himself directly vis-à-vis the entire society. When individuals are not held together by local structures, the only form in which they can live together is in an unstructured mass society. Similarly, a mass society can only be based on individuals—that is, on men in their isolation, whose identities are determined by their relationships with one another. Precisely because the individual claims to be equal to all other individuals, he becomes an abstraction and is in effect reduced to a cipher.

As soon as local organic groupings are reformed, society tends to cease being individualistic, and thereby to lose its mass character as well. What then occurs is the formation of organic groups of elite in what remains a mass society, but which rests on the framework of strongly structured and centralized political parties, unions, and so on. These organizations reach only an active minority, and the members of this minority cease to be individualistic by being
integrated into such organic associations. From this perspective, individualistic society and mass society are two corollary aspects of the same reality.\footnote{Jacques Ellul, \textit{Propaganda, The Formation of Men’s Attitudes}, 90. Cited in Rushdoony, \textit{Institutes}, 96.}

All of this is to say that a biblical family structure and the civil enforcement of the Bible’s capital sanctions for those who repudiate parental authority (which help protect the family structure from destruction) is much more preferable to the secular humanist family atomism and the civil enforcement of tyranny and bloodshed.
Chapter 22:  
“Controversial” Capital Sanctions:  
Sodomite Acts

Before exploring this topic, we must note that Christians must evangelize sodomites. This in no way conflicts with the capital sanction against those convicted of engaging in sodomite acts, a sanction which helps protect potential sodomites from themselves as well as society, as we shall see, from suicide.

Leviticus 20:13 reads, “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.” Today’s humanists find God’s law requiring execution of those convicted of sodomite acts abhorrent. The humanistic justifications include: (1) sodomites can’t help being the way they are; (2) sodomy is a victimless crime; (3) anti-sodomite legislation is bigoted; (4) persecuting sodomites will lead to a holocaust, as it did in Nazi Germany; and (5) it’s only fair to give one group of people a right that everyone should have.

The first objection is easily refuted. The idea that sodomites can’t help being the way they are fallaciously assumes that sodomites are born sodomites. Behavior, the argument runs, is something one is born with; therefore it is immoral for people to try and change someone’s behavior.

However, since supporting capital sanctions for those convicted of sodomite acts is also a behavior, then by that same logic it’s wrong for pro-sodomites to try and change the behavior of those who support capital sanctions for those convicted of sodomite acts.

As we have already seen in chapter 17, justifying sodomy on the ground of it being a victimless, “private” act doesn’t work. No act is private—every act is done in front of God. Moreover, no sins are victimless—all are an assault on God. So-called private, victimless perversions can have enormous public ramifications, since they contribute to God’s judgment on entire societies. God lists sodomy as a reason for vomiting out the inhabitants of Canaan (Lev. 18:22, 24, 25). And there is the utter destruction of the city of Sodom:
Sodom was utterly destroyed because it was a city full of homosexuals who day after day practiced their impious, sensual debauchery. Unlike many Christians in this secular age, Lot was continually shocked and repulsed (“vexed, tormented”) by the lawless deeds of the Sodomites. … God’s inspired Word interprets the Sodom story for us, leaving no doubt that Sodom was devastated for violating God’s creation order. In Jude 7 it is precisely the unnaturalness of the vice practiced at Sodom that is stressed as the cause of divine wrath.\footnote{Greg L. Bahnsen, \textit{Homosexuality: A Biblical View} (Phillipsburg, NY: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978), 34, 35. Sodom being a city full of homosexuals is demonstrated in Gen. 19:4: “Young and old, from every end.” The city’s constant practice of homosexuality is described in 2 Pet. 2:6-8 (Ibid., 35).}

Many argue that anti-sodomy laws are bigoted. Those who hold such call those who want to ban homosexuality “homophobes.” Of course, if one is a “phobe” for opposing a behavior, then those who call others homophobes are actually by their own standards “homophobe-phobes.”

Moreover, pro-homosexuals are theo-phobes; they are anti-God bigots. This is self-evident by the very nature of homosexuality:

The human being who fails to acknowledge God and turns from him, who is the source of life and immortality, seeks rather a vicarious expression of it through the misuse of the natural procreative faculty. … Homosexual behavior is the sign of human rebellion against God, an outward manifestation of the inward and spiritual rebellion.\footnote{Joseph A. Fitzmyer, \textit{Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary}, 276. Cited in Bockmuehl, \textit{Jewish Law in Gentile Churches}, 130.}

The Apostle Paul makes clear that sodomy is symptomatic of a rejection of God:

\[T\]hey exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one
another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error (Rom. 1:25b-27).

The extreme enmity toward God characteristic of sodomites was symbolized recently when sodomites carried a pink upside-down cross while disrupting a church service.\(^{558}\) This is simply a sodomite variation of the upside cross employed by Satanists.

Liberal humanists attempt to link the pro-sodomite movement to the civil rights movement. \textit{First}, we must note that linking the skin color and struggles of blacks to the vile, anti-God behavior of sodomites and the movement to render such behavior acceptable is actually anti-black bigotry.

\textit{Second}, such a linkage is illogical. A news reporter once questioned Ravi Zacharias on the supposed inconsistency of Christians in opposing racial discrimination but supporting sexual discrimination, including discrimination against sodomy.\(^{559}\) Zacharias replied,

\begin{quote}
We are against racial discrimination because one’s ethnicity is sacred. You cannot violate the sacredness of one’s race. For the same reason we are against the altering of God’s pattern and purpose for sexuality. Sex is sacred in the eyes of God and ought not to be violated. What you have to explain is why you treat race as sacred and desacralize sexuality. The question is really yours, not mine. In other words, our reasoning in both cases stems from the same foundational basis. You in effect switch the basis of reasoning, and that is why you are living in contradiction.\(^{560}\)
\end{quote}

Thus, discriminating against sodomy does not parallel discriminating against race. It is just the opposite. Discriminating against sodomy

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\(^{560}\) Ibid.
parallels discriminating against racism, while supporting sodomy parallels supporting racism.

Many might raise the Nazi death penalties against sodomites to suggest that making sodomite behavior a capital crime (or even a minor crime) will inevitably result in another holocaust, both against sodomites, and other groups in society as well. However, biblical law requires execution of sodomites only on the testimony of two or three witnesses, meaning that they must be caught in the act. And, if a sodomite is ever executed, it would severely discourage other sodomites and would be sodomites from engaging in sodomy due to the “hear and fear” factor (Deut. 19:20; cf. Rom. 13:3) of biblical capital punishments.

Speaking of holocausts, we must point out the historically ignored facts regarding Nazis and sodomites. In The Pink Swastika, Scott Lively and Kevin Abrams masterfully refute the myths that Nazis were bent on destroying sodomites. The Nazis never “murdered ‘en masse’” or “ruthlessly eliminated” homosexuals; “relatively few homosexuals died in concentration camps.” (And lesbians were not even systematically prosecuted.) Of those interned in concentration camps, it is difficult to calculate just how many were actually sodomites and how many were falsely charged with sodomy. While in the concentration camps up to six million Jews died, probably less than 6,000 sodomites died.

Not only this, but many of the sodomites in the concentration camps were themselves Nazis. For instance, internal conflicts led to the internment of many former Nazi Storm Troopers, or “homosexual former SA soldiers.” Taking issue with the New York Holocaust museum’s misrepresentation of the Holocaust as a persecution of sodomites, Holocaust survivor Eugen Zuckerman wrote,

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561 An advertisement for the New England Holocaust Memorial read, “Homophobia and Antisemitism are part of the same disease.” Lively and Abrams, Pink Swastika, 181.
562 Lively and Abrams, Pink Swastika, 181.
563 Ibid., 181, 182.
564 Ibid., 246.
565 Ibid., 247.
566 Ibid., 245.
567 Ibid., 245, 246.
As a Jewish ex-inmate of several concentration camps, including Mauthausen, and as one who grew up in Berlin from the late 1920s until October 1939 and knows the history that led to the internment of gay men in concentration camps, I am opposed to a memorial to homosexuals ... The first thousands of homosexuals interned were all members of the Sturm Abteilung (SA), the Nazi Storm Troopers (New York Post, February 16, 1997).^568

Not only were many of the prisoners themselves sodomites, but so were many of the Nazi guards and administrators behind “the infamous concentration camp atrocities”^569 (emphasis mine). This was a unique circumstance. Unlike, for example, interned Jews, interned sodomites were the only interned group with Nazi counterparts. The New England Holocaust Museum’s founder Stephen Ross experienced firsthand Nazi sodomite crimes. Interned five years in Nazi camps, he suffered frequent sexual abuse at the hands of Nazi guards^570 “[T]hey would beat you and make you do that [perform oral sex],” he said. “To this day I am very angry about it.”^571 Ross estimates that around 20 percent of Jewish prisoners had sodomite guards.\(^572\)

Sodomy, in fact, infested the Nazi ranks. It was so rampant that it is accurate to say that the Nazi movement as we know it would never have existed without sodomites. Without Gerhard Rossbach’s Storm Troopers, “It is reasonable to suppose” that “Adolf Hitler and the Nazis would never have gained power in Germany.”^573 Rossbach himself was openly a sodomite,^574 and Rossbach’s Storm Troopers were “formed almost exclusively of homosexuals.”^575

The Hitler youth—the training ground for the next generation of Nazis—was likewise a sodomite training ground. A popular German newspaper warned of sodomy within the organization: “Parents, protect

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^568 Ibid., 246.
^569 Ibid., 231.
^570 Ibid., 233.
^572 Lively and Abrams, Pink Swastika, 233.
^573 Ibid., 84, 85.
^575 Lively and Abrams, Pink Swastika, 84.
your sons from ‘physical preparations’ in the Hitler Youth.”576 It is reported that Baldur von Schirach, the leader of the Hitler youth, was bisexual. Since most Youth supervisors were SA officers, and the SA was made up of almost all sodomites,577 most of the Youth’s supervisors could very well have been sodomites.

Some of the Founders of the Nazi Party were sodomites;578 many important Nazi emblems, including the swastika, were conceived by German sodomite occultists;579 several of Hitler’s aides and close friends were sodomites;580 and strong evidence suggests Hitler may have been a sodomite.581 So why did the Nazis sometime persecute sodomites?

Among other reasons, it was Nazi “Butches” (“masculine” sodomites) persecuting “Fems” (“effeminate” sodomites). For the Nazi Butch, a Fem was subhuman. Male effeminacy offended the Butch, whose “ideal society was the Maennerbund, an all-male ‘comradeship-in-arms’ comprised of rugged men and boys.”582 583

577 Lively and Abrams, Pink Swastika, 78.
578 Ibid., 32.
579 Ibid., 32, 33.
580 Ibid., 146-148.

Moreover, as Lively and Abrams note, that famous newsreel of the Nazis burning books—often used to equate Nazi book burnings with “Christian censorship”—relates to sodomy: “Even the enduring image of Nazi book-burning, familiar to us from newsreels of the 1930s, was directly related to the homosexuality of Nazi leaders. The first such incident occurred four days after Hitler’s Brownshirts broke into Magnus Hirschfeld’s Institute for Sexual Research in Berlin on May 6, 1933. On May 10 the Nazis burned thousands of books and files taken in the raid. The Institute had extensive records on the sexual perversions of numerous Nazi leaders, many of whom had been under treatment there prior to the beginning of the Nazi regime. Treatment at the Sex Research Institute was required by the German courts for persons convicted of sex crimes.” Lively and Abrams, Pink Swastika, 36.

582 Harry Oosterhuis and Hubert Kennedy, Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany: the youth movement, the gay movement and male bonding before Hitler’s rise: original transcripts from Der Eigene, the first gay journal in the world, 255. Cited in Lively and Abrams, Pink Swastika, 42.

583 Shedding further light on the Butch/Fem conflict, Lively and Abrams write, “the explanation for the paradox of the Nazi persecution of homosexuals” is “found in the history of two irreconcilable philosophies linked by a common sexual
The overwhelming evidence proves that not only is it invalid to equate Nazi persecution of sodomites with the Holocaust of Jews; but in fact, *Nazism was a sodomite movement*, and since one of its main targets were the Jews, then one must connect the Holocaust of Jews with sodomy. This persecution of Jews by sodomite Nazis was no coincidence. The sodomite Hans Blueher,⁵⁸⁴ the Nazi “apostle of social reform,”⁵⁸⁵ hated Jews mainly because of their historical rejection of sodomy.⁵⁸⁶ Frank Rector, a pro-sodomite author, writes, “Blueher’s case further explains why many Nazi Gays were attracted to Hitler and his shrill anti-Semitism, for many gentile homosexuals were rabidly anti-Semitic.”⁵⁸⁷

All of this ties into the final objection to prohibiting sodomy, namely, that if we are to have a society where everyone has the freedom to pursue his own lifestyle, then we must be willing to allow others to engage in “harmless” activities we disagree with. And so, it would seem fairness demands that in society heterosexuals should tolerate sodomite acts. (Even regarding heterosexuality, God only approves of heterosexuality in marriage.)

But as we have seen, justifying sodomy on the grounds of it being a private act doesn’t work, because it contributes greatly to a society’s cup of iniquity that can result in God’s destruction of that society. What good is it for a society to promote the freedom for all to participate in the lifestyle of their choice if a society isn’t around to promote it?

And, “playing fair” with sodomites in civil matters does not foster reciprocation. As in our examples of the Nazis, sodomites *do not* want a

dysfunction. The roots of this conflict extend back into the eighteenth century and span a 70-year period which saw the rise of homosexual militancy in the movement that gave Nazism to the world” (Lively and Abrams, *Pink Swastika*, 43, 44). For more on the Nazi treatment of sodomites, see chapters 5, “The Persecution of Homosexuals” (pp. 177-228) and 6, “Homosexuality in the Concentration Camps” (pp. 229-248).

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid., 73.
free society for all men. Being self-destructive, they seek society’s destruction. Sodomites are self-destructive because they hate God. (While all non-Christians hate God, sodomites are among the most extreme in their outward rebellion towards God.) Since man is made in God’s image, hating God is a hatred of one’s humanity. Therefore sodomites seek society’s destruction because their self-dehumanization renders them inhumane.

We can establish this line of thought about societal destruction biblically. As stated earlier, Paul says in Romans 1 that sodomy is symptomatic of rebellion towards God (1:25b-27). To war with God is to war with God’s moral law. Thus Paul mentions the “accompanying vices” of sodomites:588

They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them (vv. 29-31).

Society can only for so long endure sodomy without suffering destruction. On Romans 1, Greg Bahnsen notes,

In a sense, homosexuality is the cultural culmination of rebellion against God. It represents the “burning out” of man and his culture. Paul described accompanying aspects of a culture that reaches this stage in verses 29-31. The vices enumerated by Paul accompany the open practice of homosexuality and characterize a society in which homosexuality is practiced and tolerated. Therefore, homosexuality that is publicly accepted is symptomatic of a society under judgment, inwardly corrupted to the point of impending collapse. Paul the apostle regarded it as the most overt evidence of that degeneracy to which God in His wrath gave over the nations.589

589 Ibid., 59.
Because they war with God, sodomites will channel their wickedness against the righteous and innocent. It should not then surprise us that in our day, for those who are pro-sodomite there tends to be a corresponding desire to slaughter the unborn and to eliminate any mention of God in the public square.

A classic example of the tyranny of a sodomite society is Sodom and Gomorrah. Before God destroyed Sodom, every man in Sodom surrounded Lot’s house and tried to break down the door in the hopes of gang raping Lot’s guests (Gen. 19:4, 5, 9).

Apparently this is not an isolated sodomite tactic. Sears and Osten chronicle several occasions of sodomites in America persecuting Christians. One instance was in 1993 at San Francisco’s Hamilton Square Baptist Church. Because a popular pro-family advocate came to speak, “Radical homosexual activists stormed the church doors, pounding on them and screaming, ‘We want your children! Give us your children!’”590 Although the activists vandalized the church, the police said it was unable to “stop the rampaging homosexual activists.”591 As they told the senior pastor, “You have to understand, this is San Francisco.”592

In November 2008, in San Francisco’s Castro District a group of Christians singing and minding their own business were assaulted by hundreds of angry sodomite activists. It took a squad of police in riot gear to escort the Christians safely from the mob, which threatened to kill the Christians.593 This incident appears to be in retaliation to California’s Proposition 8, a measure passed by California citizens to prohibit sodomite “marriage” (Nov. 4, 2008).

After Prop 8, sodomite activists became increasingly bold in their defiance. Another one of the numerous incidents involved “a radical queer convergence,” believed to be promoted by the sodomite group

590 Sears et al., The Homosexual Agenda, 147.
591 Ibid.
“Bash Back,” where activists stormed a church in the middle of services (this also occurred in Nov. 2008). Among other things, the activists hollered at the church members, hurled fliers, flaunted sodomite kisses, and blasphemously called Jesus a homosexual.\(^{594}\)

Militant sodomites are increasingly subverting the social order, with intimidation and violence. These methods mirror the methods of the sodomite-influenced Third Reich. To be sure, there are differences in terms of the scale of intimidation and violence. But if the influence of American sodomite militants continues to proliferate, we should not be surprised to find America soon under a Nazi-like regime.

That militant sodomites are no longer a harmless fringe-group, but a group to take seriously, was made clear a couple weekends after Prop 8’s passage. On that weekend, thousands (made up of sodomites and sodomite supporters) throughout the United States engaged in pro-sodomite protests.\(^{595}\)

Scott Lively writes that he came to realize “that nearly every mention of homosexuality in the Bible is associated with violence and/or social calamity.”\(^{596}\) He mentions Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19), as well as the Canaanites, whose sin of sodomy contributed to being vomited out of the land (Lev. 18). Moreover, Judges 19 describes a situation similar to Sodom and Gomorrah. While Sodom culminated in destructive fire, the Judges account culminated in civil war. Baal worship, expressed in male and female cult prostitution (“dogs” refers to male prostitutes) and child sacrifice, recurs throughout the Old Testament (major examples include Ps. 106:34-41, Deut. 23:17, and the books of Judges). When Baal practices became prevalent in Jewish culture, the Jews suffered famine, pestilence, war, and enslavement.\(^{597}\)


\(^{597}\) Ibid.
Not only will sodomites not reciprocate the freedom they expect from others within their own society; if given the opportunity, they are prone towards robbing the freedom from those in other societies. Sodomy is a defining characteristic in ruthless empire after ruthless empire.

Sadly, idealization of perversion was not unique to the Hellenic culture. A myriad of sociological and anthropological studies reveal that other ancient civilizations almost without exception, reveled in promiscuity, homosexuality, and sensual abuse. Rome was a perpetual satyricon. Egypt, Persia, Carthage, Babylon, and Assyria were all steeped in pederastic tradition. And the ancient empires of the Mongols, Tartars, Huns, Teutons, Celts, Incas, Aztecs, Mayans, Nubians, Mings, Canaanites, and Zulus likewise celebrated depravity, degradation and debauchery.598

Plato, who taught Aristotle, who in turn taught the conqueror from sodomite Greece, Alexander the Great, wrote, “If it were possible to form a state or an army exclusively of homosexuals, these men would direct all their emulations toward honors, and going into battle with such a spirit would, even if their numbers were small, conquer the world.”599 It was also written of that “revival of Hellenic paganism,”600 the warlike Nazi Germany: “It remains characteristic of the Germans, that they, outwardly the most brutally masculine of all European peoples, are the most homosexual nation on earth.”601 And, “pederastic sexual license” was “not terribly uncommon during the French Revolution.”602 Finally, the Revolution’s atheistic (and by implication sodomite) heir the Soviet Union was at the legal forefront of the twentieth century pro-sodomite movement.603

600 Lively and Abrams, Pink Swastika, 56.
602 Grant et al., Legislating Immorality, 30.
603 “Dr. Grigorii Batkis, a section chief at the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene, wrote a tract in 1923 titled ‘Sexual Revolution in Russia,’ in which he explained the Soviet approach on matters sexual, including the decriminalization of sodomy:
And as if the aforementioned dangers sodomites pose to society aren’t bad enough, sodomites also aggressively promote dangerous diseases and crime in general. As Roger J. Magnuson observes, “Homosexual behavior leads to problems far beyond the circle of homosexuals themselves. As a group, for example, homosexuals release both disease and crime into society to an extent far in excess of their percentage of the population.”

The following data Magnuson discusses confirm this—but keep in mind, Magnuson’s book was published about twenty five years ago, and so we have every reason to think things have gotten worse since then, given America’s continual moral degeneration:

The medical community had long known the medical effects of homosexuality. Medical specialists knew the disproportionate impact on the homosexual community of diseases like gonorrhea, syphilis, hepatitis A, hepatitis, cytomegalovirus, amoebic bowel disease (“gay bowel syndrome”), and herpes. Although homosexuals may be as small as 5% (some estimate 10%) of the U.S. population, they carry over 44% of the nation’s cases of syphilis, 51% of the gonorrhea of the throat, and 53% of intestinal infections. Forty percent of homosexuals admit to a gonorrhea infection. One Amsterdam survey reflected syphilis in 34% of homosexuals attending saunas.

Because of their potential to infect the food supply, sodomites put all at risk. “Diseased homosexual food handlers in public restaurants have been responsible for major outbreaks of amebiasis and hepatitis A infections in San Francisco and Minneapolis; homosexuals have a rate of infectious hepatitis B 20 to 50 times greater than heterosexual males.”

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Ibid., 19, 20.

Ibid., 20.
The AIDS epidemic, once confined to sodomite circles, spread to innocent heterosexuals, and even children, who were born with the disease. Those who received blood transfusions became infected. Hemophiliacs “who depend on regular infusions of new blood for life” faced “an excruciating death” when they received infected blood. And so since we don’t threaten sodomites with execution, the AIDS epidemic is executing much of the innocent. So much for sodomy being a private matter.

Regarding crime, sodomites are 15 times more likely than non-sodomites to commit murder according to one study, which also notes that, outside of contrary evidence, police assume sodomites are behind gory murders. The report states: “It would appear plausible that those who are missocialized in an area as important as sexuality would also be more likely to be missocialized in their treatment of human life.” According to another report, in San Francisco, sodomite-sado-masochistic sex resulted in about 10% of the city’s homicides. And so sodomites level capital punishment against their own kind.

Sodomy and child molestation go hand-in-hand—both are extreme sexual perversions. If one is perverse enough to engage in one of these acts, one is perverse enough to engage in the other. “Since the decadent Roman wrote two millennia ago about the attractions of man-boy love, observers have noted linkages between homosexuality and pedophilia (child love).” Indeed, Psychologist Eugene Abel found that homosexuals “sexually molest young boys with an incidence that is occurring from five times greater than the molestation of girls.” A 1992 study by researchers K. Freud and R. I. Watson discovered that homosexual males are three times more likely than heterosexual males to engage in pedophilia and that the average pedophile has sex with 20 to 150 boys before he is caught. A 1988 study in the

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607 Ibid., 20, 21.
608 Ibid., 21.
609 Ibid., 23.
611 Magnuson, Are “Gay Rights” Right?, 23.
612 Ibid., 17.
Archives of Sexual Behavior found that 86 percent of pedophiles identified themselves as either homosexual or bisexual.\(^\text{613}\)

Samuel Rutherford thus was not arbitrary in writing that it is “the magistrates duty to take away their head for Sodomy … and that by the very law of nature.”\(^\text{614}\) Outside the fear of capital punishment, sodomites will rape society with crime and disease, and molest the future generation. They will work to consume and conquer their own society and possibly other societies as well. Violent sodomite military conquests are the logical outcomes of insatiable sodomite desires that crave dead flesh in one form or another (either organs of death or dead bodies).

As haters of God, the diseased fruit of the sodomites’ diseased labors are cursed, and so is the society that approves of it. A society that condones the exchanging of an organ that produces life for an organ that produces death and decay condones death and decay in society itself. Sodomites who come out of the closet will work to force righteousness into the closet. Capital sanctions against those convicted of sodomite acts are thus necessary for a society’s self-defense.

After conversion of sodomites to Christ, threatening sodomites with capital punishment is society’s best means of self-preservation from the threat of sodomite conquest. Society should not fear implementing the death penalty against sodomy, but the death penalty sodomite behavior implements against society—and, given the inclination sodomites have for conquest, even the entire globe.

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Chapter 23: 
Old Testament Capital Punishment Methods

Biblical law sanctions capital punishments in the forms of the sword, burning, and stoning (and possibly hanging, as noted in chapter 13). With the sword and hanging not considered nearly as barbaric and primitive as burning and stoning by today’s humanistic standards, there is no pressing need to currently defend these forms of punishment. We will briefly defend burning carried out biblically, and then turn our efforts to defending stoning carried out biblically. At the outset, though, we must note that “the Bible does limit the gruesomeness of capital punishment. Deuteronomy 21:23 says that a body was not to remain hanging overnight. There was not to be a morbid delight in death even if it was legal.”615

It is amazing how many consider burning to be too harsh an execution. Every single sin—no matter how small we think it is—deserves eternal burning. And violating God’s civil code is a sin. Thus execution by temporal burning for violating God’s law (insofar as it relates to an offense the state is biblically authorized to punish in this way) is actually extremely lenient compared to what the sin truly deserves.

And, it should be noted that such a punishment, if enacted today, would not nearly produce burning deaths on the level that many conservatives and liberals advocate. For what produces more casualties than war and abortion? Many hawkish conservatives support massive burnings of innocent civilians by their support for indiscriminate bombing of enemy nations. And many liberals support massive burnings of innocent unborn children by their support for unfettered abortion. C. Everett Koop, M.D. has noted that salt-poisoning abortion is one of the three most common abortion techniques. In this procedure (performed after 16 weeks of pregnancy), “a rather long needle is inserted through

the mother’s abdomen directly into the sac surrounding the baby and a solution of concentrated salt is injected into it.”

As the baby is poisoned by inhaling and swallowing the salt, “The outer layer of the baby’s skin is burned off by the high concentration of the salt. … It takes about an hour slowly to kill the baby by this method.” What method of burning is more cruel than slowly burning a four-plus-month-old unborn baby over the course of an hour?! We must finally point out that the burning deaths in the scenarios mentioned (abortion, bombing of innocent civilians) are against the innocent, while burning deaths in biblical law are against the guilty.

We now turn to stoning, an act almost universally despised today. Gary North writes:

What we find in our day is that Christians despise biblical law almost as much as secular humanists do. … The very idea of execution by public stoning embarrasses Christians, despite the fact that public stoning is by far the most covenantally valid form of execution, for God’s law requires the witnesses to cast the first stones, and it also requires representatives of the entire covenantal community to participate directly, rather than hiding the act in a sanitary room in some distant prison. The Bible is clear: “The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you” (Deut. 17:7).

While some may misunderstand biblical stoning to be an indiscriminate act of mob violence, Jean Kellaway, in The History of Torture and Execution, says this regarding stoning in ancient Israel: “There is a danger in viewing historic laws with modern attitudes, heightened by the risk of mistranslation and misinterpretation. In defense

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617 Ibid.
618 North, Victim’s Rights, 273.

Jesus does not do away with stoning, nor capital punishment in general, in John 7:53-8:11. See Appendix B.

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of ancient Israel’s laws, it should be stressed that the courts demanded overwhelming levels of proof before pronouncing the death penalty.\textsuperscript{619}

Not only this, but capital crimes are offenses against the entire community, since such crimes can bring God’s judgment on it. Therefore, stoning is a logical method of execution, since it—unlike most other execution methods—is carried out by members of the community.

Stoning carried out biblically is attacked for being primitive and barbaric. But the argument that such stoning is primitive is based on a humanistic, evolutionary assumption—an assumption implied in the incredulous objection, “You want to go back to stoning?!” It is an evolutionary assumption in either a moral or technological sense.

It is an evolutionary assumption in a moral sense in that it assumes man has morally evolved to the point that the death penalty is now immoral—especially in such painful death penalties as stoning. It is an evolutionary assumption in a technological sense in that in our evolutionary mindset, we tend to relate basic elements such as stones to so-called primitive caveman times. Only “primates” resort to basic elements when they could instead make use of great technological achievements developed over the course of evolution. So in the case of capital punishment, methods should conform to technological innovation.

Neither of these assumptions are rational. The assumption from moral evolution cannot object to stoning \textit{in the past}, since according to the moral evolutionary philosophy itself, past stonings were moral acts by the standards of natural selection at that point in time. And the assumption from moral evolution cannot object to stoning \textit{in the present}, since an always changing, evolutionary law lacks any objective moral basis for measuring whether stoning is even wrong at the present time. And who’s to say that sometime in the future, stones might be morally okay to use again? Evolution might reveal that stones were really okay to use all along—we were just not evolved enough in our thoughts to see it.

Regarding the argument from technological evolution, we must ask that in regards to state-sanctioned executions, why prefer sophisticated technology over basic technology? Technology has given the state such methods of “efficient” mass killings as gas chambers and

nuclear missiles. It has also given the state brutal methods of killing through the use of biological and chemical weapons, as well as doctors brutal methods of infanticide, such as the prolonged burning method detailed above.

And, it must be further noted that technology has not replaced stoning, but only given us a different form of it, and on a much wider scale. While the biblically prescribed method of using natural stones against convicted criminals is no longer used, we now use “technologically advanced stones” in everything from death penalties to total warfare. Hurling stones with the hand has been replaced by hurling stones (bullets) through the barrel of a rifle, or by hurling boulders (bombs) from cannons and airplanes. (This, by the way, “shows the madness of our times: we drop nuclear bombs on others, and attack stoning.”

One of the great blessings of biblical law is that it does not hand the state carte blanche over life and death. This is especially the case with biblical stoning. When one is convicted in a court of law of a crime punishable by stoning, the public carries out the execution. (Hence the balance of powers in executions: the state authorizes, the people execute: no pretrial mob violence, no secret state-sanctioned gas chambers and mass graves.) Mitigating the state’s power to take life mitigates the state’s power to take life arbitrarily; execution by the public reminds the state that its trade isn’t primarily in death, but in justice. And, stoning carried out by the community deters the state from creating a professional class of bloodthirsty executioners.

Public stoning contrasts with the genocidal state that would commit private executions behind closed doors or in far away concentration camps. Need we look further than the private twentieth century genocides? Gulag survivor Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, for example, writes of Communist Russia’s custom of “hiding executions in cellars under cover of night and of shooting the victims in the back of the

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620 Daniel F.N. Ritchie, e-mail message to author, June 9, 2010.
621 As Gary North puts it, “The Bible does not allow the establishment of a professional, taxpayer-financed guild of faceless executioners who, over time, inevitably either grow callous and impersonal toward their awful (full of awe) task, or else grow sadistic.” Gary North, Tools of Dominion: The Case Laws of Exodus (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), 45.
head.”  Former Hitler-youth and German soldier Hilmar von Campe writes that “most Germans did not know of the Holocaust until after the war.”

Stoning also reminds society of the seriousness of state-sanctioned executions. Unless a society is so depraved that it enjoys watching deaths—at which point it would be on the road to collapse anyway—the public and participatory nature of stoning teaches society to not be indifferent to state-sanctioned deaths. We need look no further at the human tendency to condone deaths committed out of sight than abortion.

Abortion is easy for many to accept because they cannot see what happens to the unborn child—out of sight, out of mind. So public stoning can help keep society from easily tolerating unjust capital punishments. Further, public stoning deters criminal acts. People—particularly participants in the stoning—see firsthand what could happen to them should they commit a capital crime.

Public stoning has an important sobering effect. Not only does it remind citizens of the death they could face for committing heinous crimes, but it reminds them of God’s final judgment. As Gary North writes, “Public stoning forces citizens to face the reality of the ultimate civil sanction, execution, which in turn points to God’s ultimate sanction at judgment day.”

Every instance of public stoning then reminds unsaved citizens to repent and turn to Christ, else they will suffer an eternal death penalty much worse than stoning. But not only does public stoning remind citizens of eternal damnation, but of the inevitable victory God’s people will have over evil and death itself, due to Jesus Christ. Again, North: “Stoning … faithfully images the promised judgment against Satan: the crushing of his head by the promised Seed (Gen. 3:15).”

Because of the public nature of stoning, those sentenced to death are able to address the public prior to their execution. Thus in cases

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622 Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, 300.  
623 von Campe, *How was it Possible?*, 36.  
624 North, *Tools of Dominion*, 44.  
625 Ibid.  
626 Ibid., 45.
where the Bible’s strict due process is followed627 and yet an innocent man is nevertheless stoned to death, that man can publicly proclaim his innocence and even indict those responsible for his unjust death. The impact such an outcry can have on the community can pressure the state to be very cautious in whom it sentences to death, and can deter future malicious witnesses.

Stoning wasn’t unique to Israel. Humanists who decry stoning sanctioned by biblical law conveniently ignore stoning carried out by other ancient civilizations. Consider Greece:

The Pharmakoi—persons considered worthless by Greek communities—were kept in Athens and other cities at public expense and used as sacrifices for annual events. “In Athens one of these was celebrated in the middle of summer, when two men were led out and stoned to death as scapegoats for the wrongs of others. If one of these Pharmakoi were to be killed, he would first be paraded around the city, in order that he should drain off the impurities of others and take them upon himself; he was then slain in a ceremony in which the whole population took part.” That was in the city which is hailed above all others as the birthplace of democracy.628

This incident, carried out in Athens—the darling of democratic humanists—is democratic humanism taken to its logical conclusion. These stoning victims did not commit any crimes but the majority nevertheless singled them out as inferior and worthy of death. This is the logical and inevitable outcome of rejecting God’s will for the will of the people. Stoning in Athens cannot be compared with stoning in biblical law because Athens sanctioned stoning of the innocent, while biblical law sanctions stoning for those guilty of criminal offenses (as determined by God) proven in a court of law under the testimony of at least two credible witnesses. Athens was a depraved society on the road to collapse, while

627 Conviction can only be on the testimony of 2-3 witnesses, and witnesses themselves are threatened with the same punishment as those they testify against should they be found to bear false witness (Deut. 19:16-19). Hence those who are false witnesses in a trial where the accused, if found guilty, would be stoned will themselves be stoned if exposed.

the Christian theocracy is sustained by a godly—albeit imperfect—society.

One might think that the real problem of secular humanists with stoning is not stoning itself, but with stoning sanctioned by the Bible. Strangely, secular humanists appear to have no problem with certain modern-day stoning riots. And when mobs of Palestinians attack Israel’s military with stones, a “barbaric tactic” becomes “heroic.” Whether or not Palestinians ever successfully stone a superiorly-armed Israeli soldier to death is beside the point; stoning is stoning. And do we really think there would be a secular humanist outcry if an Israeli soldier was actually stoned to death? Perhaps instead they would consider the assailants to be heroes.

Secular humanists have historically employed stoning; the difference between biblical law and secular humanists is that biblical law only permits lawful stoning, while secular humanists prefer unlawful stoning. For instance, mob violence in support of the French Revolution included the stoning of people to death.629 The early secret police for the Soviet Union, the Cheka, also stoned to death some of their victims.630 One tactic by Soviets was to use a piece of rock to dash out the brains of those who survived being shot.631

Should an abortion procedure ever be invented that is comparable to stoning—say, if a doctor injects the womb with a lethal chemical that, with a similar velocity to thrown stones, attacks the unborn child from several directions simultaneously until the child dies—would the secular humanist condemn this? Of course not—he would adamantly defend this procedure as another liberating breakthrough for “womens’ rights.”

We must also note that execution methods meted out by humanistic societies are much more severe than burning or stoning. A torture device employed by the ancient Greeks “hugged” victims to death

631 Ibid., 78.
with iron spikes. In the Ibo tribe in Nigeria, those caught in adultery were forced to have sex before a stake was driven through both of them. Afterwards, they were dragged to the water and thrown to crocodiles. The ancient Romans had people, particularly Christians, torn to pieces by animals such as bulls, half-starved dogs, leopards, bears, and lions.

Ancient China put people to death by the infamous “death of a thousand cuts.” Before being stabbed in the heart and beheaded, “The condemned was tied semi-naked to a rough wooden cross while slivers of flesh were cut from the breasts, arms, and thighs. Attention was then focused on the joints, followed by the amputation of fingers, toes, nose, ears, and limbs.” Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Japanese, Persians, and Phoenicians all employed the brutal sanction of crucifixion, and to this day it is an option under the Islamic code.

During the French Revolution, a mob went on a rampage, killing around 1,500. In addition to murdering prisoners that included priests and nobles, the mob, using swords, sliced to pieces 10-year-old girls and 12- to 14-year-old boys. The Commune of Paris, which shared power with the national leader Robespierre, proclaimed about the mob violence:

The Commune of Paris hastens to inform its brothers in the Departments that many ferocious conspirators detained in its prisons have been put to death by the people—acts of justice which seemed to be indispensable in order to terrorize the traitors concealed within its walls at a time when it was about to march on the enemy. The whole nation will without doubt hasten to adopt this measure so necessary to public safety, and all the French people will cry out as did the Parisians, “We will march

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632 Kellaway, The History of Torture and Execution, 12.
633 Geoffrey Abbott, Execution: The Guillotine, the Pendulum, the Thousand Cuts, the Spanish Donkey, and 66 Other Ways of Putting Someone to Death (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 83.
634 Ibid., 82.
635 Kellaway, The History of Torture and Execution, 28.
636 Ibid., 18, 19.
on the enemy, but we will not leave brigands behind us to murder our wives and children.”

Robespierre took no action against the violence.

Besides hacking people to death with swords, the French humanists executed people by beatings, hackings with knives and axes, burying them alive, and drownings. Before being killed, some women and children suffered mutilation, and some women were raped. A major execution method employed by the French humanists was the guillotine, which stunk up the city with streams of blood.

As opposed to the French Revolution’s guillotine, mass killings are much harder with biblical stoning. Stoning requires several people, and is tiring. The guillotine requires a single executioner who can at leisure lop off multiple heads in a short period of time. “The Republic’s executioner became very efficient at the guillotine: once 32 heads were chopped off in 25 minutes; a week later, a dozen heads were cut off in a mere 5 minutes.”

Many men, women, and children died brutally at the hands of the Soviet Cheka. Body count estimates for the period between 1918 and 1921 range between a few thousand to hundreds of thousands. One estimate stretching from the October Revolution to the death of Lenin posits one and three-quarters million deaths at the hands of the Cheka humanists. Cheka execution methods included hangings, stoning, burning victims gradually in furnaces or boiling water, tearing off the heads of victims after twisting their necks over and over again, hacking victims to pieces with axes, skinning victims alive, and crucifixions. The corpses of some Cheka victims were discovered to have earth crammed in their mouths, throats, and lungs. Often, Cheka victims suffered severe torture before death, including having their noses, ears, and tongues

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640 Ibid., 161, 162.
641 Ibid., 162.
642 Ibid., 161.
hacked off, and also endured blinding, sexual mutilation, dismemberment, and disembowelment.  

The following was reported about a major Cheka slaughterhouse, where victims appeared to be brained to death: “The whole of it was coated with blood—blood ankle deep, coagulated with the heat of the atmosphere, and horribly mixed with human brains, chips of skull-bone, wisps of hair, and the like.”

Biblical execution methods are premised on justice (Heb. 2, Deut. 16:20), which has the effect of terrorizing the wicked (Rom. 13, Deut. 21:21). Being premised on justice, biblical execution methods are not inhumane. But humanistic execution methods are premised on human sacrifice and terrorizing the innocent.

As such, humanistic execution methods are inhumane. Humanists seek human sacrifice because in their attempt to be their own gods, they attempt to supplant God’s authority. Since this is impossible, their only recourse is to murder humans, God’s image bearers. Humanists also seek human sacrifice because their gods are God’s rivals. Hence murdering God’s image bearers is their way of warring against God. Sacrificing humans to false gods and extreme brutality go hand in hand since sacrifices to false gods are really sacrifices to demons (1 Cor. 10:20)—and demons love brutality. Thus Cortés wrote in a letter to King Charles I of Spain:

They [the Aztecs] have another custom, horrible, and abominable, and deserving punishment, and which we have never before seen in any other place, and it is this, that, as often as they have anything to ask of their idols, in order that their petition may be more acceptable, they take many boys or girls, and even grown men and women, and in the presence of those idols they open

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645 Unlike humanism, biblical law has never sanctioned human sacrifice. And even animal sacrifice it only permitted for a certain period of time, that is, until the New Covenant era.
their breasts, while they are alive, and take out the hearts and entrails, and burn the said entrails and hearts before the idols, offering that smoke in sacrifice to them. Some of us who have seen this say that it is the most terrible and frightful thing to behold that has ever been seen. So frequently, and so often do these Indians do this, according to our information, and partly by what we have seen in the short time we are in this country, that no year passes in which they do not kill and sacrifice fifty souls in each mosque; and this is practised, and held as customary, from the Isle of Cozumel to the country in which we are now settled. Your Majesties may rest assured that, according to the size of the land, which to us seems very considerable, and the many mosques which they have, there is no year, as far as we have until now discovered and seen, when they do not kill and sacrifice in this manner some three or four thousand souls.647

Human sacrifice was integral to the French Revolution: Robespierre held, “Men are nothing, France is everything: it commands, you must obey.”648 Multitudes were sacrificed at the altar of Reason to the god France. Human sacrifice was likewise integral to the Russian Revolution: “Even if ninety per cent. of the people perish,” held Lenin, “what matter if the other ten per cent. live to see revolution become universal?”649 Multitudes were sacrificed at the altar of Materialism to the god of universal revolution.

As the Americas revert to paganism, brutal human sacrifices return. Technology has enabled Americans to perform human sacrifice methods that the pagans of old could only have dreamt of. Consider the brutality of the following abortion procedures, where babies are sacrificed to the god “Choice” by abortion doctors, modern-day sacrificial priests.

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In “Dilation and Curettage” (D & C) (usually performed on unborn children between seven and twelve weeks), the surgeon employs “the curette, a tiny hoelike instrument” to scrape “the wall of the uterus, cutting the baby’s body to pieces and scraping the placenta from its attachments on the uterine wall. Bleeding is considerable.”650

“Suction Abortion,” “an alternative to D & C during the same period of pregnancy,”651 employs “a powerful suction tube” which tears off the baby’s arms, legs, head, and other body parts. This method was, if not still is, used in more than two-thirds of the executions of unborn children in Canada and the U.S.652

We have earlier discussed “Saline Abortion,” a later-term execution method where over the course of an hour a baby slowly burns and is poisoned to death. There is “Hysterotomy,” a later-term execution method which653

is exactly the same as a Cesarean section with one difference—in a Cesarean section the operation is usually performed to save the life of the baby, whereas a hysterotomy is performed to kill the baby. These babies look very much like other babies except that they are small and weigh, for example, about two pounds at the end of a twenty-four week pregnancy. They are truly alive, but they are allowed to die through neglect or sometimes killed by a direct act.654

There also is “Dilation and Evacuation” (D & E) (an execution reserved for the unborn between 12 and 24 weeks), where a pliers-like device, or a sharp knife, slices the baby to pieces; and, “prostaglandin” (an execution for the unborn older than twelve weeks), where chemicals applied to the uterus muscle causes contractions forcing the baby out of

651 Beckwith, Politically Correct Death, 46.
652 Koop and Schaeffer, Whatever Happened to the Human Race?, 41. Cited in Beckwith, Politically Correct Death, 46, 47.
653 Beckwith, Politically Correct Death, 47.
654 Koop and Schaeffer, Whatever Happened to the Human Race?, 42. Cited in Beckwith, Politically Correct Death, 47.
the womb. In this process, babies have been born alive, and others have been decapitated.  

Besides human sacrifice, humanistic execution methods are premised on terrorism. This is because humanism, unlike Christianity, lacks the power of the Holy Spirit to temper man’s selfish desires. Hence, humanistic man must rely on raw manipulation and coercion. As such we can see how the humanistic social order naturally looks to terrorism in one way or another and in one form or another to survive.

Thus while secular humanists sometimes liken a Christian social order to an Islamic terrorist social order, it is actually the secular humanist and Islamic terrorist social orders that have much in common. Terrorism, which entails violence devoid of justice, was a tactic employed by the first two major secular humanist revolutions.

As noted previously, during the French Revolution the Commune of Paris approved of brutal mob violence, which the Commune deemed “acts of justice which seemed to be indispensable in order to terrorize the traitors concealed within its walls at a time when it was about to march on the enemy. The whole nation will without doubt hasten to adopt this measure so necessary to public safety …” (emphasis mine).  

The French Revolution is known for its notoriously bloody “Reign of Terror.” For Robespierre, “the first maxim of your policy must be to guide the people with reason and the people’s enemies with terror…. Terror is nothing other than justice, prompt, severe, and inflexible; it is therefore an emanation of virtue.” Throughout the French Revolution, violence devoid of justice reigned, as the innocent were terrorized by bloodthirsty mobs and kangaroo courts.

The Soviet Union is known for its “Red Terror.” A Cheka representative addressed to certain populations a proclamation which

655 Beckwith, Politically Correct Death, 47.
illustrates “better than anything else the state of things when those regions were held by the Bolshevists’ Don Army.” It included the statement

Should anything in the nature of mass opposition display itself in village, settlement, or town, we shall, in our turn, be compelled to employ mass terrorism, and to execute hundreds of the inhabitants for each soviet worker who may be murdered. For the soviet power is determined that its heavy, ruthless hand shall sweep away its every foe (emphases mine).  

Lenin, who defiantly said, “We have never renounced and cannot renounce terror,” left a legacy of “systematic government terrorism on an enormous scale for decades.” Lenin’s successor Stalin stated “we shall have to resort to terrorism,” and was one of the greatest terrorists ever in power.  

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659 Melgounov, *The Red Terror in Russia*, 86.  
660 Ibid., 86, 87.  
663 Melgounov, *The Red Terror in Russia*, 98.  
664 Paul Johnson writes: “Within a few months of seizing power, Lenin had abandoned the notion of individual guilt, and with it the whole Judeo-Christian ethic of personal responsibility. He was ceasing to be interested in what a man did or had done—let alone why he had done it—and was first encouraging, then commanding, his repressive apparatus to hunt down people, and destroy them, not on the basis of crimes, real or imaginary, but on the basis of generalizations, hearsay, rumours.” Johnson, *Modern Times*, 70.  

Johnson notes, “the ferocious Latvian M. Y. Latsis,” one of the most important Cheka officials, “came nearest to giving the Lenin terror its true definition” (Ibid.). According to Latsis, “The Extraordinary Commission is neither an investigating commission nor a tribunal. It is an organ of struggle, acting on the home front of a civil war. It does not judge the enemy: it strikes him …. We are not carrying out war against individuals. We are exterminating the bourgeoisie as a class. We are not looking for evidence or witnesses to reveal deeds or words against the Soviet power. The first question we ask is—to what class does he belong, what are his origins, upbringing, education or profession? These questions define the fate of the accused. This is the essence of the Red Terror.” Harrison Salisbury, *Black Night, White Snow: Russia’s Revolutions, 1905-1917* (London 1978), 565. Cited in Johnson, *Modern Times*, 71.
Indeed, prior to the formation of the Soviet Union, socialist terrorists, like Islamic terrorists, engaged in suicide bombings.\(^{665}\) Lenin himself encouraged terrorists attacks using guns, bombs, boiling water, and acid.\(^{666}\) When the Russian terrorists came into civil power, they were able to use the power of the state to intensify their brutal terrorist execution methods.

As for the terrorists, many of them slipped effortlessly into the apparatus of state terror that Lenin and his comrades established, beginning with the Cheka and from 1922 onwards the dread GPU. Kamo the Caucasian bandit re-emerged as a Chekist state terrorist, whose method of ascertaining the political loyalty of his Bolshevik subordinates was to torture them, to sort out the weaklings whom he then summarily executed. But even he was dispensable. In 1922, as the black joke went, the only bicycle in Tiflis, the one he was riding, was hit by the city’s sole truck. The Bolsheviks’ leading terrorist Leonid Krasin became their first ambassador to the Court of St. James; Maxim Litvinov, their chief arms procurer, was a Soviet foreign minister under Stalin, the former terrorist who erected a tactic into a system of government.\(^{667}\)

And so we see that humanistic execution methods—based on human sacrifice and terrorism—are far more brutal and on a much larger scale than the Bible’s controlled methods of stoning and burning. The Soviet Union could very well be second to none in brutal execution methods to any regime in history, perhaps closely followed by the West. With its technology the West has the ability to brutally murder unborn babies in ways the world has never seen.

Moreover, for one to be stoned under Biblical law, there must be at least two witnesses, \(\text{and}\) a conviction in a court of law. False witnesses are \textit{severely} deterred, because if they are proven false, they will be the ones to be stoned. But humanism, in being inclined to human sacrifice and terrorism, naturally opposes such safeguards.

\(^{666}\) Ibid., 63.
\(^{667}\) Ibid., 66.
As America regresses into secular humanism, it finds itself sacrificing to its pagan gods innocent unborn children, and, increasingly, the elderly and mentally disabled. Instead of stoning to death hardened criminals, the state allows them to inflict a reign of terror on innocent citizens. And we may be on the verge of a “Pink Terror.” Because of society’s approval of sodomite behavior, sodomites have become increasingly belligerent, terrorizing churches and others who would oppose them.

After all of this, many will still find biblical methods of capital punishment distasteful. But one must remember that they do not emanate from the mind of this author, but from the mind of a righteous, just, and holy God. If one finds these methods despicable, his argument is with God, not with this author. Moreover, such a person either (A) supports different execution methods or (B) supports no execution methods at all. If he supports different execution methods, then he must prove why those methods are not barbaric but God’s methods are.

Such an attempt is futile. And, to support no execution methods is ultimately self-defeating. Societies that prefer prisons to execution have criminals executing one another in prison, and many of those executed haven’t even committed crimes worthy of death.668

The death penalty will always be enacted against someone—the only question is whether it will be enacted against the innocent or the guilty. A “kind, compassionate” society that spares incorrigible criminals promotes the criminals’ enacting their own brutal methods of execution against the innocent. Numbered among these criminals are serial killers, whose barbaric methods of execution of the innocent are second to none.

Of course, one might argue, “I believe in the death penalty, but my preferred execution method [e.g., lethal injection] is much less painful. So I avoid the pitfalls of sparing incorrigible criminals and harsh

668 Silberman writes, “According to estimates for the country as a whole, intramural homicides more than tripled in a decade, from an annual average of 40 in 1964-65 to 120-130 in 1974-75. The estimates may be on the low side: in San Quentin alone, twelve inmates were murdered in 1974. And murder is but the tip of the iceberg: for every inmate who is stabbed to death—homemade ‘shanks’ are the principle weapon in prison—at least nine or ten others are stabbed and survive.” Silberman, Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice, 380.
execution methods.” But besides being an insult to the wisdom of a holy God, and denying a criminal his just deserts, such a rationalization only encourages incorrigible criminals. As Phillip G. Kayser writes, “[C]apital punishment is rarely gruesome any longer, and rarely fits the horribleness of the crime. If it were, it would inspire fear in the hearts of many (if not all). There is little fear in an injection that causes you to painlessly drift off to sleep.”

Indeed, the fact that people dread execution by stoning shows that stoning effectively terrorizes evildoers. Biblical stoning avoids on the one hand the extreme brutality of some humanistic capital sanctions, and on the other the extreme leniency of other humanistic capital sanctions.

In conclusion, far from protecting society from allegedly overly-harsh capital sanctions, removing God’s objective standard for what execution methods are permissible permits society to arbitrarily inflict any capital punishment it desires on any person—for any cause, and with little or no evidence whatsoever—in the most brutal ways conceivable. We defy any humanist to produce one example of any society that has been more humane than a society under biblical law would be.

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Chapter 24:
The Question of Abuse

Critics of God’s capital sanctions often argue that the sanctions shouldn’t be implemented since they can be abused to take innocent life. Therefore, the state should autonomously decide punishment.

But such thinking destroys justice. It is true that because man is fallen and finite, God’s penal justice will inevitably be abused. But to reject justice in the name of justice is self-defeating. A “justice system” opposed to God’s justice is by its very nature unjust—it is actually a criminal injustice system. Instead of making injustice the exception, the philosophy that says the state should decide justice for itself in order to avoid abuses of God’s justice says “let’s go ahead and make injustice the rule.” As Greg Bahnsen writes,

[E]ven with the mistakes that we may make in using God’s law today, I prefer it as the basis for ethics to the sinful and foolish speculations of human beings. It would be absurd for anyone to resign himself or herself to poison just because medical doctors occasionally make mistakes with prescription drugs!670

Civil penalties based on the sinful speculations of fallen man are therefore poison by their very nature. Moreover, God’s capital sanctions presuppose the lex talionis, which means they are perfectly proportionate to the crime. Is it just to enact penalties disproportionate to the crime? And yet without biblical law disproportionate penalties are what we will get. More than a century ago Rev. S.H. Kellogg wrote,

The modern penal codes vary as widely from the Mosaic in respect of their great leniency, as those of a few centuries ago in respect of their undiscriminating severity. In particular, the past few generations have seen a great change with regard to the infliction of capital punishment. Formerly, in England, for example, death was inflicted, with intolerable injustice, for a large

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number of comparatively trivial offenses; the death-penalty is now restricted to high treason and killing with malice aforethought; while in some parts of Christendom it is already wholly abolished.671

Outside the Bible’s civil code, there is no authority to determine what constitutes fitting punishments (nor for what even constitutes a crime, for that matter). Thus the state can embrace either extreme—it can kill with impunity, or it can be criminally pacifistic.

We must here note that no matter how pacifistic a country claims to be, there will be capital sanctions anyway. It is only logical that societies that reject God’s law inevitably embrace more death than if they accept God’s law, penal sanctions and all. (After all, “the wages of sin is death” [Rom. 6:23b], that is, the wages of violating God’s law is death.) This is the case regardless of a country’s ostensibly pacifism. A “pacifistic” country is not without killings; at the very least, it simply transfers killings from the state to the private citizen. Hardened criminals are free to employ their trade of death either in prisons or on the streets. Doctors are free to execute babies, the elderly, and the mentally disabled. In short, execution of the guilty is exchanged for the execution of the innocent.

Humanistic societies simply tailor their capital sanctions to suit their sinful priorities. For the Nazis, the Aryan white race was the highest priority, so they murdered Jews. For Americans, sex and egalitarianism are the highest priorities, so they murder unborn children.

The Protestant Reformer Martin Bucer spoke of the priorities and corresponding sanctions of his day. These sanctions may or may not have entailed capital punishment (by Bucer’s language they likely did), but they do drive home the point about punishments and priorities:

But what shall we say is the reason that theft is dealt with so fiercely, whereas all too many wink at rape and adultery, at offenses against divine worship, at the distortion of the heavenly doctrine in which both the present and eternal salvation of men is contained, and at blasphemy of the Divine Majesty? Why, unless it is because money and external wealth are so much more dear to

men than God himself, their eternal salvation, and decency and honesty?  

Again, removing God’s standard of punishment—no matter how harsh we might think it is—in no way shape or form preempts capital sanctions. Rejecting God as the standard of justice simply hands the state absolute power over life and death. While the law of God guarantees against genocide and killing the innocent, humanistic law has no such safeguard.

Commenting on Romans 13, one author writes:

*He* [the ruler] *must punish evildoers*. What is an “evildoer”? Again we must ask: Is the ruler free to decide the answer for himself? To answer *Yes* is to give a despot a blank check for statist absolutism: he may decide that all babies in Bethlehem are “evildoers,” for instance. King Herod was only doing his job, therefore, when he ordered the murder of the infants (Matthew 2:16). Clearly, God has given civil rulers the power of the sword: obviously, they are supposed to execute *somebody*. But whom? If your answer is based on anything but God’s law, I repeat: you’ve just handed the state a blank check—and God’s civil minister might add *you* to his hit list.

Such a blank check is possible since, without God’s law as the standard for criminal punishment, civil penalties do not presuppose moral absolutes. Without moral absolutes, what is left? Moral relativism? Immoral relativism? Immoral absolutes? The only absolute certainty is death and destruction—a far cry from “escaping the ‘dangers’ of biblical law.”

After all, to the extent the humanistic justice system is consistent with its relativistic philosophy, justice is merely a façade. Buddy Hanson writes, “Once we dismiss the idea of absolute ethics, the words in our law

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For example, in the courtroom, “winning the case becomes more important than bringing about justice. So lawyers (and judges) look for legal technicalities, rather than the rightness or wrongness of the charges.” In denying absolute moral standards, humanism lacks any standard for even knowing justice—let alone criticizing the Bible’s standards of justice.

Nevertheless, many still recoil against the idea of a society based on God’s law because of its plurality of capital sanctions. But there is another way to look at it. While God’s law does in fact require a plurality of capital sanctions, it also forbids an even greater plurality of capital sanctions. This is because God’s law forbids adding to (as well as taking away from) it (Deut. 4:2).

Thus it is the only legal system providing an absolute authority guarding against the following humanistic forms of state-sponsored killing: Genocide; ethnic cleansings; infanticide; indiscriminate bombings of civilians; human sacrifice; Jim Crow laws; mass drownings; throwing Christians to the lions; beheading of “infidels”; lethal torture of prisoners; liquidation of the mentally and physically handicapped; euthanizing the elderly; encouraging the spread of fatal diseases (e.g., AIDS); and any other unjust executions imaginable. So instead of sanctioning a bloodbath, God’s law safeguards against one.

We must realize, too, that the legitimacy of God’s capital sanctions are not based on whether or not they produce a greater amount of deaths than desirable in man’s eyes. Man’s sole purpose is to obey God’s commands, whatever the outcome: “The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (emphasis mine) (Ecc. 12:13).

“Political success” then is not measured by the humanistic utilitarian philosophy of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people (greatest happiness in this case being the least number of executions by the state). Rather, it is measured by the degree the state upholds God’s law.

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674 Buddy Hanson, How to De-Program Yourself from all of the Blasphemous Ideas You Learned in Public School (Tuscaloosa, AL: Hanson Group, 2009), xxxvi.
675 Ibid.
We noted in chapter 7 that utilitarianism cannot be coherently applied to politics. Utilitarianism is also a wicked philosophy, one reason being that it believes humanistic happiness is more important than fearing God. In any case, the utilitarian argument of minimal executions by the state used against God’s law collapses on its own terms, since we can say that on net balance, “Christian” states (whether actual or in the name of Christianity) have spilled less blood than humanistic states. In fact, we can make this case against secular humanistic states alone. Just compare the entire Inquisition, Calvin’s Geneva, Cromwell’s Britain, and Puritan New England with the French Revolution, the Soviet Union, Communist China, and the pro-abortion West. The body count differences are not even close.

Not that examples are necessary (at least for those reasonably acquainted with history), but we will give just one.

Organized irreligion in the twentieth century committed atrocities on a scale that the fiercest religious wars never approached. The scientific racism of Nazi Germany killed forty million and attempted genocide against Europe’s Jews. The scientific socialism of the Communist countries killed a hundred million (and still counting) people around the globe. As the Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky has noted, people in the West routinely invoke the Spanish Inquisition as an example of religious horror. And they are right to do so. But the Inquisition, in the course of three centuries, and after legal procedures of a

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676 While we condemn the Inquisition (and the heretical Catholic Church which sanctioned it), the humanistic Soviets were hypocritical to attack the inquisitors. Burleigh writes: “The medieval and early modern Inquisition played a part in the Communists’ demonisation of the Christian Church, with Young Pioneers chasing inquisitors from the state in a celebrated Bolshevik play. In fact, the modus operandi of the Communist Party itself bore a marked similarity to the Spanish Inquisition, an arm of the Spanish monarchy rather than the Church, with the important differences that torture was an acknowledged and legal part of the latter’s proceedings, whose overarching objective was to induce heretics to seek forgiveness for the sake of their souls. Only unrepentant heretics were ceremonially burned. In the Soviet cover version, torture was frequently used but never publicly acknowledged, and confession did not bring forgiveness, but rather either a swift death or disappearance into the camps.” Burleigh, Sacred Causes, 81.
sort, killed fewer people—probably around three thousand—than the Soviet Union killed on an average day.\(^{677}\)

We might add that none of the twentieth century’s nine greatest mass murderers were Christian or even part of a Christian regime, and five of the nine held to the outright atheistic religion of Communism.\(^{678}\) Far from being the persecutors, Christians numbered among the greatest victims of last century’s genocides.\(^{679}\)

We can’t address the question of whether a particular law code will lead to a bloodbath without addressing the rate of taxation that law code permits. On the surface it sounds insignificant, but it makes an enormous difference. What you subsidize, you get more of. So the more you subsidize the state (and thereby its sword), the more power you give the state to take lives. This is a major reason why humanistic law codes have led to bloodbaths.

But the Bible, by contrast, only permits a taxation rate of less than ten percent of one’s income (see 1 Sam. 8, where ten percent taxation was considered tyranny). In this way “the Bible restrains the State,” since “it’s impossible to run a ruthless dictatorship on such a small tax rate.”\(^{680}\) It’s harder for the state to commit genocide without significant cash reserves for bankrolling such things as influence, weapons, and manpower. And so it hard for humanists to argue that biblical law, which limits taxation, can be “abused” to further a bloodbath, while humanism—where man arbitrarily decides all things for himself—cannot justify any taxation limits.

Arguments from abuse are absurd on their face. The question is whether something is good, not whether it can be abused. In a fallen world, all things are abused. (Maybe we should reject the argument from

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\(^{680}\) Warren, *Lord of Soul and State*. 

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abuse itself for its own abuse). But if we remove all good things because of abuse, bad things are all we are left with.

God’s moral law is often abused by false teachers to promote damnable heresies (e.g., salvation by works) resulting in eternal damnation. Eternal damnation is far worse than physical death, which can result from the abuse of God’s moral law in the civil realm. But does it follow that we reject personal morality (personal obedience to God’s law) because of false teachers? Of course not, and as such, then it also doesn’t follow that we should reject God’s law in the civil realm. We no more reject Christ’s Lordship over the state than His Lordship over individuals.

And what would we have left by eliminating good law that is abused? “If abuses of law by the magistrate are corrected by removing any law to abuse, then there will be no law for the magistrate to enforce except his own, arbitrary will—which is the surest way to achieve tyranny!”681 The conflict is not between biblical law along with its abuses versus humanistic law. The conflict is between biblical law and humanism, period. Humanistic law bases itself on sin; it is any law outside the boundaries of biblical law. So when the state abuses biblical law by ignoring it, it behaves equally sinfully and therefore equally humanistically as when it adds to biblical law (cf. Deut. 4:2).

And so we cannot blame abuses of biblical law on biblical law at all, but on humanism. (This gives, in the case of the horrible, humanistic Inquisition, all the more reason to enact biblical law—which gives us the only moral basis for opposing humanistic inquisitions.682)

681 Greg L. Bahnsen, By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1985), 337.
682 On the Inquisition and the need for the magistrate to uphold God’s law, Bahnsen writes, “But of course God never commanded these abuses in his law (for example, He did not grant the magistrate the right to judge heretics in the first place), and so this argument [against unsaved magistrates abusing God’s law] is actually an argument in favor of our thesis.” Bahnsen, By This Standard, 336. The Inquisition, moreover, is not an example of what happens when Christians are involved with civil government—it is an example of what happens when actual Christians are not involved in civil government, and humanists, and counterfeit “Christians” (humanists masquerading as Christians) are involved in civil government. The Roman Catholic Church was and is an apostate church, not a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
While biblical law can possibly be abused to further tyranny, humanistic law not only definitely can lead to tyranny—by the very nature of the case, it is tyranny! So where is the logic in eliminating biblical law because it is sometimes or even often abused (occasional imposition of humanism) and replacing it with a whole system of legal abuse (perpetual imposition of humanism)?

However bad the legal system under biblical law would be, it can only get worse under outright humanistic law. When a doctor makes a mistake, we don’t tell him to always make mistakes in order to never make mistakes. We tell him to take extra precautions in the future.

Similarly, the abuse of biblical law should not motivate society to get rid of biblical law—a self-defeating approach—but to be ever more vigilant to keep biblical law. The answer, in short, is not to fight occasional humanism (abuses of biblical law) by a stricter adherence to humanism (no biblical law at all), but to fight occasional humanism by a stricter adherence to biblical law.

Moreover, the rejection of the Bible’s capital sanctions undermines the authority of all of biblical law, since to reject the sanctions’ authority (God) is to reject the same authority for the other civil laws. Thus rejection of the capital sanctions is a package deal. To reject the death penalty for blasphemy is to theoretically reject the principle of innocent until proven guilty (Deut. 19:15). To reject the death penalty for the incorrigible son is to theoretically reject the principle of impartial judgment (Lev. 19:15). To reject the death penalty for Sabbath-breaking is to theoretically reject the civil distinctions between murder (Ex. 21:12), manslaughter (Deut. 19:4, 5), and self defense (Ex. 22:2, 3). In fact, to reject the capital sanctions is to reject the lex talionis (Ex. 21:23-25), and to thus repudiate any basis for a just system. Such gives ammunition to Supreme Court Justice Kennedy’s perverse reasoning that “We cannot dismiss the years of long anguish that must be endured by the victim of child rape. It does not follow, though, that capital punishment is a proportionate penalty for the crime.”683

Many who argue that biblical sanctions should be ignored simply because of potential abuse also dismiss biblical sanctions as being

“utopian,” i.e., an unrealistic attempt to create “heaven on earth.” The irony is that the idea of eliminating biblical sanctions that can be abused is itself utopian. Holding to civil sanctions is inescapable, and so those who reject biblical sanctions simply replace them with their own humanistic sanctions.

In light of this, those who reject biblical sanctions simply because they can be abused must believe that their own humanistic sanctions cannot be abused. Such a scenario—where a society has laws that cannot be abused—is almost as utopian as it gets.

It is such utopian humanists—those who exalt human nature, support eliminating the law of God, and imagine the possibility of a civil paradise on earth with no laws being abused—who should be kept from civil power. History tells us over and over again that those with such a mindset not only support eliminating God’s law, but eliminating people—whatever it takes to usher in their utopian order. Thus when asked how long he would kill people, Stalin replied, “The process would continue as long as was necessary”684—i.e., until the establishment of a communist utopia.685

We must add that unlike humanistic law, biblical law provides a dual-system of deterrence. Not only is there a harsh penalty for serious criminal acts, but there is a harsh penalty for false witnesses. Those exposed as false, or “malicious” witnesses must suffer the penalty the accused might have otherwise suffered:

If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. 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. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot (Deut. 19:16-21).

684 Rummel, Death by Government, 79.
685 Ibid.
Thus biblical law, unlike humanistic regimes, does not disproportionately threaten the accused without threatening the accusers. And unlike humanistic regimes, neither does it disproportionately threaten the accuser without threatening the accused. Biblical law is balanced and impartial towards accused and accuser alike. Threatening false witnesses with the punishment the accused would have received minimizes illegitimate convictions and unjust punishments. Threatening the accused with punishment proportionate to the crime if proven guilty maximizes just punishments. In short, in biblical law just punishments are maximized while illegitimate convictions and unjust punishments are minimized.

Therefore, biblical law provides inner-safeguards against abuse. By contrast, what safeguards against abuse does humanism have? If God doesn’t decide morality, man does. If man decides morality, then there are no objective standards for morality. Man makes himself out to be his own god and determine right and wrong for himself.

Thus in the humanistic society, morality is decided by the one (the tyrant), the few (the oligarchy), or the many (the mob).686 In any of these cases everything from extreme torture to genocide can be justified. Moreover, when man rejects God’s authority, “the mind of man not only is its own ultimate authority, but also replaces God as the intelligent planner and creator of the experienced universe.”687 Thus the humanistic state treats life as fodder for its deadly metaphysical assumptions. “Making widespread use of the Darwinian term ‘selection,’ the Nazis sought to take over the functions of nature (natural selection) and God

686 The idea of the state being the ultimate standard of morality—and therefore law—was characteristic of twentieth-century totalitarianism. In 1939, Dr. William Burdick, a firsthand witness of Nazi Germany’s legal operations, wrote, “It is a necessary part of the machinery of dictatorships that the law and the courts shall be subservient to the ruler. In 1933, it was officially declared in Germany that the final authority as to the principles of the State and the law is the National Socialistic German Workers’ Party; that no other political party could be formed; and that the Fuehrer should make its laws. Does this declaration differ in principle from the decree of Soviet Russia stating that the ‘Socialist Conscience’ shall be the final arbiter?” W. L. Burdick, The Bench and Bar of Other Lands, 422. Cited in John Warwick Montgomery, The Law Above the Law (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1975), 22, 23.

Western humanism deifies reason. In such humanism the greater one’s education, the more valuable one is considered. One’s level of education reflects one’s closeness to the god Reason, or how close one has advanced in becoming his own god. Thus man lacks any intrinsic worth; his value is not based on being in God’s image, but on his ability to reason.

Hence in the French Revolution, those considered unreasonable were considered subhuman and had to be guillotined. And in our day, liberal intellectuals hold that the unborn are not cognitively developed enough to reason, and hence can be executed. Such was their justification for murdering Terri Schiavo. And such was the justification for the Nazis murdering the so-called “useless eaters.”

We see, then, the futility of rejecting God’s capital sanctions in the name of abuse. To reject God’s capital sanctions in order to achieve justice is equivalent to saying, “Justice demands that we replace occasional injustice with continual injustice.” And, rejecting God’s capital sanctions in the name of abuse is itself an abuse. It is equivalent to keeping the bath water and throwing out the baby.

In the end, it must be remembered that whatever the result of following God’s law—whether it fosters a bloodbath or not—we must follow God’s penal sanctions because God said so. Man’s only job is to obey God, not to rebelliously speculate about calamities that could occur for obeying Him. To quote William Perkins, one of the original great

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689 Kevin Clauson turns the argument that Biblical sanctions would lead to a bloodbath on its head: “If this were so, if this could even be so, and assuming the law was being used correctly, it would only prove that many law-breakers deserve their just punishment.” Clauson adds that such would be unlikely, since biblical law wouldn’t be established outside a societal consensus anyway, and because of the law’s deterrent effect (“the ‘hear and fear’ factor”). Kevin Clauson, “The Great Law-Book of the Nation,” in *Explicitly Christian Politics*, ed. Einwechter, 162.
Puritan theologians,\textsuperscript{690} “We must doe that which we find to be the will of God: and the events of things must be left to God.”\textsuperscript{691}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image}
\caption{The Bible restrains the sword of the state. But when the state ignores the Bible, there are no limits to how far it can go in using the sword.}
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\textsuperscript{690} Clauson, \textit{History of the Idea of “God’s Law”}, 141.
PART THREE

BIBLICAL SLAVERY VERSUS HUMANISTIC SLAVERY

A depiction of the humanistic Tower of Babel. The more ambitious humanistic societies become, the more they require slave labor, in one form or another. In rejecting God, the humanist is enslaved to sin, which manifests outwardly in a slave-mentality that the humanist imposes on others.
Chapter 25:  
Old Testament Slave Laws

Whenever the word slavery is mentioned, most Americans immediately think of America’s enslavement of Africans. Let us be clear: while the Bible does not condemn slavery per se, the Bible does condemn slavery based on kidnapping, for according to biblical law kidnapping is a capital offense (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7). Thus the kidnapping of Africans in order to enslave them in America would never have occurred had Africa and America both taken biblical law seriously.

Moreover, to whatever extent that Americans had racist attitudes towards African slaves, Americans were, biblically speaking, engaged in heresy. Jesus, by His sacrifice, ransomed people equally “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9c) (emphasis mine). Racism perverts this truth and thereby the gospel of Jesus Christ by denying the unity that Christians from all races have in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

Despite these truths, because humanists have hijacked the schools and churches—and thereby the study of history and the English language—today the word “slavery” is understood in terms of the word’s present connotations and not for its objective meaning. Many who hear the word “slave” can’t seem to shake off images of brutality, kidnapping, the slave trade, one man having absolute property rights over another, and, most of all, racism. Emotion clouds the general meaning of slavery itself—that of a man under obligatory service to another.

To be sure, one in obligatory servitude may suffer these things. But these things are no more necessary aspects of slavery than exploitation is a necessary aspect of business. There are different forms of slavery, some good, some bad. The criterion for discerning whether slavery is good or bad is whether a particular form of slavery is sanctioned by the righteous, holy God, or by an unrighteous, sinful man. David Chilton writes,

The Bible permits slavery. This statement will come as a shock to most people. The laws in the Bible concerning slavery have very seldom been studied, much less preached upon. But the
biblical laws concerning slavery are among the most beneficent in all the Bible. The biblical institution of slavery has as its basic purpose the elimination of poverty and its foremost cause, the slave mentality. … Many people, when they think of “slavery,” think of the pre-Civil War South, where certain aspects of slavery were in violation of biblical law. Thus many know only of an abused, unbiblical form of slavery. But since the Bible allows for slavery, it is clearly unbiblical to speak of slavery as being wrong or sinful. … If slavery were a sin, God would not have provided for it. Indeed, since God is the Standard of right and wrong, the fact that He gives rules for the proper management of slavery shows that to disregard the laws of slavery is a sin. For example, since fornication is a sin, God does not give directions for the right management of a brothel. Nor does he offer instructions about successful methods of murder or theft. Slavery is not a sin, but the violation of God’s slavery laws is.692

Thus, biblical slavery does not stand or fall upon whether American slavery was right or wrong.

Before continuing, a warning is necessary: do not impose your prejudices about slavery onto God’s holy word, and do not question God’s justice for sanctioning certain forms of slavery. To call biblical slavery racist or evil is to call racist or evil He Who established biblical slavery—God.

This is why abolitionism (by this we mean the view that says private slavery in all circumstances is inherently evil) is itself evil. Indeed, the Apostle Paul teaches slaves to honor their masters, “so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled” (1 Tim. 6:1b). And, those with believing masters “must serve all the better since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved” (v. 2b). Paul adds,

Teach and urge these things. If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and

692 Chilton, Productive Christians, 59, 60.
constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain (1 Tim. 6:2c-5).

This passage serves as a warning to those who teach a different doctrine than that taught in verses one and two. These verses recognize the legitimacy of slavery, and even encourage slaves to respect and work hard for their masters, to protect God and His Word from being reviled. But abolitionists encourage the reviling of God and His Word, since according to verses three through six, abolitionists do teach a different doctrine, a doctrine that denies the legitimacy of slavery and the respect slaves owe to masters.

Thus, according to the text, abolitionists are controversial and quarrelsome, which produces all kinds of evils. Moreover, abolitionism is premised on coveting the slaves of others, contrary to the 10th commandment, which reads, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s … male servant, or his female servant …” (Ex. 20:17).

As we shall see throughout this section on slavery, abolitionism—which today’s secular humanists embrace—is not genuine in its claim to oppose slavery. It simply discards biblical slavery and embraces slavery in its most oppressive forms. Abolitionism’s real agenda is becoming god. Gary North writes,

The humanist abolitionist tries to put God in the dock. He tries to put the State on the judgment throne of God. What he hates is the Bible, not slavery as such. The question is never slavery vs. no slavery. The question is: *Who will be the slave-master, and who will be the slave?* Autonomous man wants to put God and His law in bondage. On judgment day, this strategy will be exposed for the covenant-breaking revolution that it has always been. The abolitionists will then learn what fulltime slavery is all about. It is a lesson that will be taught to them for eternity.693

As we discuss the O.T. slave laws, we must put them within their proper context. The laws dealing with slavery are inherently good.

However, the laws do presuppose the unfortunate reality of a fallen world. Stephen K. McDowell explains:

When God gave the law to Moses, slavery was a part of the world, and so the law of God recognized slavery. But this does not mean that slavery was God’s original intention. The law of Moses was given to fallen man. Some of the ordinances deal with things not intended for the original creation order, such as slavery and divorce. These will be eliminated completely only when sin is eliminated from the earth. God’s laws concerning slavery provided parameters for treatment of slaves, which were for the benefit of all involved.\(^694\)

As we look to what the Bible has to say about slavery, we must be careful not to impose prejudiced definitions of the word “slave” onto the text. Gary North writes,

This following fact may astound some readers; it certainly astounded me. The word “slave” appears only once in the King James Bible: “Is Israel a servant? Is he a homeborn slave?” (Jer. 2:14a). The word “slaves” also appears only once, in reference to the wealth of mystery Babylon: “…horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men” (Rev. 18:13b). The world “slavery” does not appear anywhere in the King James Version. The words “servant” and “servants” appear repeatedly throughout the King James Bible. The Hebrew and Greek terms do not distinguish grammatically or etymologically between indentured servitude and permanent slavery. We must therefore look at the various contexts in order to discover what information the Bible’s authors intended to convey.\(^695\)

Throughout this section we use the term “slave” flexibly. It can have either a good (biblical) or bad (humanistic) meaning, depending on the context.


\(^{695}\) North, *Tools of Dominion*, 120, 121.
Under Israel’s slavery code,\(^{696}\) Israelites, in order to escape poverty or debt, could willfully sell themselves as slaves (Lev. 25:39, 40) (although technically in these circumstances Israelites were to be treated better than other slaves; they were to be treated “as a hired servant and as a sojourner”); thus, servitude was frequently voluntary. However, for enslaved Israelites, *freedom* was the goal.

Israelites could not be enslaved permanently. Masters were required to release them after six years of service (Ex. 21:1, 2). The *only* exception was when slaves *volunteered* to serve their masters permanently (Ex. 21:4-6; Deut. 15:16, 17). But in these cases, slaves thought they had good reasons to stay with their masters. A slave would stay because he loved his master, and his wife and children, who live under his master’s roof (Ex. 21:5); or because he loved his master and his master’s household, “since he is well-off” with his master (Deut. 15:16). In the event the master attempts to manipulate the slave into permanent servitude, judges are in place to protect the slave’s rights (Ex. 21:6).

Suppose the slave decides to remain in bondage? If so, he must say so plainly, and before the judges of Church and state at the Tabernacle. This is what it means for the master to bring him to God, for the judges at the Tabernacle-Palace are God’s officers, and as mature men are called “gods” as far as their office is concerned (see Ps. 82:1, 6: Ex. 22:8, 9). This is for the protection of the slave, so that he is not forcibly reduced to a permanent condition of servitude.\(^{697}\)

Besides the maximum six years of service, slaves had other opportunities for freedom. The one who sold himself into slavery in order to escape poverty could purchase his freedom, or his freedom could be purchased by a relative (Lev. 25:47-49). If he couldn’t afford his freedom, he still had the year of Jubilee (v. 54)—which “occurred every

\(^{696}\) Technically, much of Israel’s slave code is social, and not civil, but social and civil laws overlap to one degree or another. For instance, an Israelite who willingly sold himself into slavery in order to escape poverty was not required to do so by the state. Rather, he made a voluntary social contract with his new master. But this overlaps with civil law in that the state allowed for this, and also because the state served to protect the slave from abuse by his master (such as the law punishing the master with death if he beats his slave to death).

fifty years and included with the general discharge a nation wide release of [Israelite] slaves.”

While many today associate slavery with economic oppression, for the Israelites it was a means of escape from economic slavery. We mentioned the code’s provision that the Israelite can seek slavery to escape the bondage of poverty. Since the provision states the slave may purchase his freedom “if he grows rich” (Lev. 25:49), the slave might receive more than adequate wages.

Husslein, agreeing that slaves drew wages of some amount, writes that Deuteronomy 15:18 implies that “the Hebrew servant also drew a wage.” And, when the slave is freed, the master is commanded: “You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him” (Deut. 15:14).

Thus the slave laws “provided for ‘upward mobility.’” From the outset, the code provides for an escape from poverty. While working for his master, the slave may have a means of building a savings to the point that he becomes rich. But even if he doesn’t, by the time he is freed, the slave is provided with enough for a new start, in a much better position economically than before becoming a slave. And should the slave anticipate that freedom would ultimately result in enslavement to poverty (i.e., that he wouldn’t be able to provide for himself while being free), he has the option of requesting permanent slavery (i.e., permanent economic security) with his master. As Stephen K. McDowell notes, “The law recognized that some people want the security of enslavement.”

But not only does biblical slavery provide for upward mobility upon release, it allows for upward mobility while being a slave. H. B. Clark explains:

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700 Chilton, Productive Christians, 63.
701 McDowell, Building Godly Nations, 211.
[A]s between several servants, in the same household, the eldest was entitled to the rank of seniority—the “eldest servant” of Abraham’s house “ruled over all that he had” [Gen. 24:2]. And in some cases, a servant might achieve the status of a son—“a wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren” [Prov. 17:2].

Making restitution is an exception to voluntary servitude. The thief who cannot afford to pay restitution must make restitution by work (Ex. 22:3). (Given Matt. 18:25, this may have also been the case with the debtor as well.) However, while for the convicted thief unable to pay restitution servitude is mandatory, the servitude is ultimately voluntary, in that the thief volunteers to commit a crime that he knows is punished with mandatory servitude.

Like impoverished Israelites who sell themselves into slavery, the goal here is freedom. Making restitution helps liberate the thief from sliding into a lifetime slavery to crime. It (in theory) preempts this slide by (as mentioned in chapter 13) the rehabilitative effects of working with his hands, and possibly even in teaching him a trade that can, upon release, sustain him financially and reduce his temptation to steal. And it can restore the offender’s dignity in the eyes of the community as well, instead of, in the case of prison, forever tainting him as an irresponsible, hardened yardbird. So from beginning to end, the thief goes from rehabilitation to a fully restored member of the community.

Biblical slavery was designed to teach people to be personally and financially responsible. And what God is assuming is this: that after serving a capable man for six years, the man has learned

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703 Joseph Husslein believes the Israelite’s only compulsory form of servitude is theft. He adds: “Modern authors frequently mention debt as a second cause of compulsory servitude, but there is no adequate proof of this in the written law, as the passages quoted are merely those in which a man sells himself because of his impoverished state” (Husslein gives the example of Lev. 25:25-39). He believes it is more probable that Jesus’ parable in Matt. 18:25 refers to Roman, rather than Israelite, law. Husslein, *Bible and Labor*, 92, 93.
While the Bible does not condemn slavery per se, the Bible does condemn slavery based on kidnapping, for according to biblical law kidnapping is a capital offense (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7). Thus the kidnapping of Africans in order to enslave them in America would never have occurred had Africa and America both taken biblical law seriously.
something, and he is responsible, and now the one who had him as a slave enables him to make a fresh start.⁷⁰⁴

Further, Gary North draws on Matthew 18:23-35 to hold that matters of restitution are not even mandatory. The victim has full discretion. He might accept a smaller payment, or even cancel the payment entirely.⁷⁰⁵

Another exception to Israel’s system of voluntary servitude is a law allowing a father to sell his daughter as a wife (Ex. 21:7-11). Husslein writes, “The purpose of the Hebrew law was to insure that the daughter should be duly married either by the master or by his son.”⁷⁰⁶ This law provides impoverished families a means of getting back on their feet. When the daughter is sold as a wife, the father is provided with funds to sustain the rest of his family. In addition, having one less mouth to feed further diminishes the family’s poverty.

Similarly, in marrying, the daughter has economic security. And several protections are given to prevent abuse of the arrangement. First, she is protected from complete severance of her family ties (v. 7). “The servitude laws that govern female bondservants are tied directly to the laws governing marriage. … a Hebrew woman could not be permanently purchased; she could only be adopted. She could not go out of her father’s household ‘as the menservants do.’”⁷⁰⁷

Second, the daughter is protected against living a miserable life with her master. If she displeases him, he must allow for her redemption. And, he cannot in his displeasure resort to selling her to foreign people (v. 8). Third, if he gives her to his son to marry, the master must treat her as his own daughter (v. 9).

Fourth, if the master’s son takes another wife instead, there was not to be a diminishing of the daughter’s food and clothing, nor of her right to marry another (v. 10). Fifth, if food, clothing, and marital rights

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⁷⁰⁵ North, Victim’s Rights, 34.
⁷⁰⁶ Husslein, Bible and Labor, 93, 94.
⁷⁰⁷ North, Tools of Dominion, 248.
are diminished, she shall leave with no obligation of payment (v. 11). “[T]he religion of the Hebrew, as is again plain, did not fail to throw safeguards about woman, so that even in servitude she might be protected against the caprice of man.”

The final form of slavery we turn to is involuntary, permanent slavery. This applied only to non-Israelites. Israelites could purchase male and female slaves from the surrounding nations, as well as from the strangers living amongst them (Lev. 25:44, 45). This would seem to preclude purchasing kidnapped slaves and thereby enriching a sinful practice, since the Bible condemns kidnapping (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7). (Conceivably, a Gentile could have sold to an Israelite legitimately-acquired slaves from the Gentile’s own household instead of slaves who were kidnapped.) Israelites could keep the slaves in the family, bequeathing them to their sons (Lev. 25:46). There were also circumstances in which the Israelites could enslave prisoners of war (Deut. 20:11, 14, 15; 21:10-14; cf. Num. 31:32-35). Gary North believes there was a sunset clause for foreign slaves. If a slave’s family lived in a household for ten generations, that slave became treated legally as a Hebrew bondservant—a position where he could attain freedom.

While these two forms of slavery were involuntary and permanent, they were actually a blessing in disguise. It isn’t likely that the enslaved foreigners lived freer in their former lives of pagan statism. But more importantly, permanent enslavement served to remove individuals “from bondage to foreign gods and to place them under lifetime slavery as a means of evangelism. Foreign heathen adults and the children of resident aliens were to be redeemed—bought out of bondage to demons and placed under the authority of godly households (Lev. 25:44-46).”

Thus, a lifetime of enslavement to sin, followed by an eternity of enslavement to punishment in hell, could be thwarted by a lifetime of enslavement to a godly family—which could lead to the slave having eternal freedom with Christ from the time the slave believes the gospel to throughout the afterlife.

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708 Husslein, *Bible and Labor*, 94.
709 North, *Tools of Dominion*, 147-149.
710 Ibid., 138.
We should especially note God’s merciful justice here. Heathen slaves who were purchased or captured in war were actually favored by this law, since it placed them in contact with believers. They received the relatively lenient treatment of the biblical slavery regulations, and they were also able to hear the liberating message of the gospel.\footnote{Chilton, \textit{Productive Christians}, 61.}

The question arises as to whether permanent servitude is modified in the New Covenant era. David Chilton writes that it is allowable regarding unbelievers: “Unbelievers are slaves by nature, and there is no reason to free them as long as they remain in their spiritual bondage.”\footnote{Ibid., 63.} Gary North, on the other hand, argues,

\[\text{[T]he lifetime slave-holding provisions of Leviticus 25 were an integral aspect of Israel’s jubilee land tenure laws, and therefore when God annulled the latter, He also annulled the former. By transferring legal title to His kingdom to the gentile world (Matt. 21:43), and by visibly annulling Israel’s legal title to the land of Palestine at the time of the fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, God thereby also annulled the Hebrew land tenure laws. What had been a God-approved spoils system for a unique historical situation—the military conquest of Canaan by Israel—became a dead letter of biblical law after the fall of Jerusalem.}\footnote{North, \textit{Tools of Dominion}, 145.}

We cannot address the matter of freedom and slavery without discussing the Sabbath. With some exceptions, the O.T. civil code forbids working on the Sabbath under pain of death. As noted in chapter 20, this sanction—deemed by modern humanists as unreasonably harsh—preserves the dignity of slaves by granting them \textit{equal protection} with freemen to rest one day of the week (cf. Deut. 5:14bc). This discourages slaves from suffering inhumane treatment and labor. And as also noted

\footnote{711 Chilton, \textit{Productive Christians}, 61.} \footnote{712 Ibid., 63.} \footnote{713 North, \textit{Tools of Dominion}, 145.}

So the question becomes: now that the whole world is the promised land (Matt. 28:18-20) for Jewish and Gentile Christians alike, is lifetime slavery now annulled, as North argues, which would mean Gentiles, like Jews, cannot be enslaved for more than six-year periods at a time; or, since National Israel is no longer the visible manifestation of the church, but the New Covenant-era church is, is lifetime enslavement of heathens (whether Jew or Gentle) permissible by New Covenant-era believers (whether Jew or Gentile)?
in chapter 20, this sanction presupposes slaves are not owned by their masters, but by God (Deut. 5:6a).

By mandating one day of rest per week, God’s law effectively *manumits slaves one day per week*. It frees them from labor; it makes them freemen one-seventh of the time. One could say, then, that slaves under biblical law are actually one-seventh freemen. Thus even the lifelong Gentile slave in Israel could actually enjoy freedom from slavery during a significant portion of his life.
Chapter 26:
The Rod and Abuse

A case law pertaining to slaves in Exodus 21 reads:

“When a man strikes his slave, male or female, with a rod and the slave dies under his hand, he shall be avenged. But if the slave survives a day or two, he is not to be avenged, for the slave is his money” (vv. 20, 21).

What are we to make of this? Does this law condone a master beating his slave, and even allow the master to get off the hook should the slave die a day or two after a beating? According to Anthony Phillips:

To constitute murder, the death of the slave must occur during the actual beating or on the same day. While the master had every right to chastise his slave, it is presumed that if the slave died in these circumstances, then the rod, which normally caused no harm (Prov. 23:13), must have been used with intent to kill. If the slave died after the day of his beating, then his death is attributed to his own internal weakness, and no charge of murder can be brought against the master. The law presumes that no master would want to deprive himself of his own property.714

As Phillips notes, the biblical rod is not intended for abuse, but for discipline. Proverbs 23:13, 14 reads, “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol.” And if a child can handle the rod, certainly a grown slave can. Unlike freemen, slaves might lack economic incentives to work. While there are some reasons why slaves can be self-motivated to work (e.g., for reasons of conscience), the rod is one of their few motivators: “By mere words a servant is not disciplined, for though he understands, he will not respond” (Prov. 29:19, cf. 10:13).

However, the threat of the rod is a deterrent against becoming a slave to begin with. It ingrains in men’s minds the fact that slavery is not to be seen as an easy way to avoid a life of responsibility, but rather something to avoid, if possible.

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714 Phillips, Ancient Israel’s Criminal Law, 87.
Obviously, the slave is not regarded as having equal rights as a free man. But this very fact would keep a man from entering slavery too hastily. Slavery has certain benefits (job security, etc.), but it has serious drawbacks as well. Slavery was not allowed to become irresponsible welfare or paternalism.\textsuperscript{715}

Despite the threat of the rod, the O.T. code has important safeguards for protecting slaves. Should the owner beat his slave to the point of abuse, but the slave survives, the owner could very likely lose his slave, considering the damage inflicted upon the slave’s body. Just a few verses after the case law under discussion, another case law reads: “When a man strikes the eye of his slave, male or female, and destroys it, he shall let the slave go free because of his eye. If he knocks out the tooth of his slave, male or female, he shall let the slave go free because of his tooth” (Ex. 21:26, 27). This law provides the slave with physical protections way before the point that physical abuse becomes life threatening. “The loss of a tooth is very incidental—especially if you got a mouth full of them.”\textsuperscript{716}

Thus, the O.T. civil code clearly recognizes the slave’s humanity. Threatening the master with death protects the slave’s life (Ex. 21:20). Threatening the master with the slave’s freedom protects the slave’s limb (vv. 26-27). And, Sabbath enforcement protects the slave’s physical health, and, if he is a Christian, his spiritual health as well.

Finally, by living in a household of believers, a slave can be evangelized. In short, slavery under biblical law truly balances freedom, \textit{first} in deterring people from becoming slaves, and \textit{second} in minimizing the loss of freedom for those who have already become slaves, who might also gain eternal freedom by hearing about and believing in Christ while in their masters’ households.

\textsuperscript{715} Chilton, \textit{Productive Christians}, 62.

Another slave-related case law exists regarding the owner of an ox who has been warned in the past about his ox’s dangerous goring behavior. If this ox kills somebody, the owner appears to receive a lenient penalty (the ox’s death and a fine of 30 shekels of silver) when the ox kills a slave, as compared to the penalty (the ox’s death and anywhere from a ransom fee to the death penalty) when the ox kills a freeman (Ex. 21:28-32). The potential workplace hazard that comes from this less strict penalty for the death of a slave poses a further disincentive to becoming a slave.

\textsuperscript{716} Weaver, \textit{Where We Are & How We Got Here}: \#4 of 14.
Can there still be abuse in a master-slave relationship? Yes, but no more than any other relationship. As pastor and theologian John MacArthur states,

It is a little strange that we have such an aversion to slavery because historically there have been abuses. There have been abuses in marriage; we don’t have an aversion to marriage, particularly, because there have been abuses. There are parents who abuse their children; we don’t have an aversion to having children because some parents have been abusive. Of course, you can have any kind of situation where abuse can be involved. … So to throw out slavery as a concept simply because there have been abuses I think is to miss the point. In any kind of human relationship there can be abuses. There can also be benefits. For many people, poor people, perhaps people who weren’t educated, perhaps people who had no other opportunity, working for a gentle, caring loving master was the best of all possible worlds. If you had the right master, everything was taken care of. So we have to go back and take a more honest look at slavery and understand that God has in a sense legitimized it when it’s handled correctly, by saying, “this is the way you are to view your relationship to Jesus Christ—the perfect, all wise, all loving, all compassionate, all beneficent, Lord, and you [are] willing to be His slave because of such unique care provided by Him.”

While slavery can be abused, so can freedom. Among the greatest evils the world has ever seen have been committed in the name of freedom, including the mass killings that resulted from the French Revolution, twentieth-century communism, and abortion. Communism—which argues for the greatest freedoms of all men—has resulted in the most oppressive forms of physical slavery (via state sponsored slave-labor camps) the world has ever known. Shall we then end all freedom—especially since freedom can lead to oppressive slavery?

Chapter 27: 
Humanistic Criticisms of Biblical Slavery

We noted earlier that for Americans, the word slavery—no thanks to humanistic propaganda—automatically brings to mind extraneous things such as brutality, kidnapping, the slave trade, one man having absolute property rights over another, and racism. None of these evils, however, characterize biblical slavery. We will now briefly address these, except for racism, which we later address in-depth.

We pointed out how biblical law rejects brutalizing slaves with the rod. To do so may result in the slave’s freedom or the master’s death. Not only is murdering a slave a capital offense, but so is kidnapping someone in order to enslave or sell him: “Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death” (Ex. 21:16; cf. Deut. 24:7). This law undermines much of the slave trade, which relies heavily on kidnapping.

Finally, biblical slavery does not presuppose ownership of a person. “The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1). All men belong to God. Slave-masters do not ultimately own their slaves, but are only stewards of slaves. Masters are consequently restrained by God’s rules.

Nonetheless, egalitarian humanists will claim to oppose slavery of any kind. It seems that in their ostensible disdain for anything that remotely sounds like slavery, they would certainly take exception to the O.T. code permitting one to sell himself into slavery—regardless of it being a temporary and voluntary means of escaping and rectifying the harsh conditions of poverty.

Here the humanist pits his professed disdain for slavery against his professed disdain for poverty. When impoverished and with nobody to bail him out, one cannot produce income out of thin air. He must choose between poor health at best and starvation at worst, or agreeing to become someone’s servant. (The humanist might propose the welfare state, but this, as we shall see, is public slavery.) As undesirable as the latter might be, it is inhumane for the humanist to insist on the former.
Outside of finding a job as a hired employee (which itself is a form of servitude), those who are impoverished can work off economic slavery through working off debt via biblical slavery. As we have seen, biblical slavery entails just regulations that protect slaves from oppressive masters while allowing slaves to work their way out of debt.

Besides biblical slavery, what other options do the impoverished have? Oppressive humanistic slavery. There might be an unbiblical, humanistic system of private slavery which, in being inherently unjust, offers the poor man who sells himself into slavery no assurance of working off debt. And if he is ever freed, he might find himself under severe physical debt due to experiencing hazardous working conditions.

Such evils could be pronounced if he opts to enslave himself illegally. Societies that ban slavery entirely also ban all regulations protecting slaves. In such societies, desperate poor people might seek black market slavery with absolutely no legal protections.

Or, a poor man might enslave himself financially and ultimately physically (through working off the debt) through borrowing or credit. The interest rates could easily enslave him for a lifetime. He might turn to a loan shark. This could result in at best financial enslavement for the rest of his life—provided the loan shark doesn’t exact payments with the borrower’s life or limb. Finally, a poor man might resort to a life of crime, enslaving in one way or another those he preys on, and enslaving himself in prison if he gets caught.

Humanists likewise would take issue with a father selling his daughter to be a wife. The sentimental humanist might find it cruel for parents to sell their children. Certainly this is the case in any situation other than what is permitted in the Bible, which does not, in the case of the father selling his daughter as a bride, equate “selling” to “giving ownership to.” And, would it not be crueler to let the daughter and the rest of her family starve, should the family need the money?

In addition, where the extreme inconsistency arises is that secular humanists also want mothers to have the right to murder their unborn children. So while the father should not be able to exchange his daughter for money, the mother should be able to exchange her child for a death certificate.
Assuming the worst that the father sells his daughter because the daughter is unwanted, in biblical law the unwanted go to a household that wants them. In humanism, the unwanted (unborn child) goes to the grave. We might add that liberal humanists advocate such things as freedom of sexual choice for children of all ages, as well as children hiding their sexual behavior from their parents (e.g., anti-parental notification laws). Thus while liberal humanists would object to a father selling his daughter to be a *wife*, they would have no problem with a daughter (who is much wiser than her father, right?), outside of her father’s knowledge, selling *herself* as a *prostitute*.

Furthermore, biblical law encourages binding relationships between husbands and wives. It is not easy for a man to pack up and abandon his family for another woman. Adultery is a capitaly-punished crime. Meanwhile, secular humanism—in its celebration of human autonomy—encourages non-binding relationships between consenting adults, as well as easy divorce. Any parent at any given time can pack up and abandon the family. Only unlike the O.T. law where an “abandoned” daughter finds material security with another household, the humanistic approach potentially leaves abandoned children penniless.

It is also harder for a father to “abandon” his daughter under O.T. law, since he must find someone willing to pay. But in humanism, a parent can abandon not just the daughter, but the *entire* family *anytime*.

Certainly egalitarian humanists would take issue with the O.T. allowing Israelites to enslave POWs. But this actually served to the POW’s benefit. Shearer writes, “Family slavery was in its origin a merciful system. … Captives taken in war were spared from slaughter and lodged in families where they were protected from national antagonisms, first by the master’s interest, and then by his affection.”\(^{718}\) This arrangement not only protects POWs from death and national antagonisms, but it also protects the victors of a just war from bloody uprisings, since dividing POWs into numerous households inhibits their ability to organize a revolt.

Besides this, the humanist isn’t left with many other options regarding POWs acquired in a just war. Other than extermination, he can

\(^{718}\) Shearer, *Hebrew Institutions*, 158.
opt for occupation, mass imprisonment, economic sanctions under threat of force, or let POWs go and trust them to never retaliate.

The last option (possibly barring rare circumstances) is irresponsible. Occupation, as we know from our own history, can result in massive resentment and mass casualties on both sides. Mass imprisonment is simply mass enslavement, and can result in prisoner abuse and violent revolts. Economic sanctions can enslave the defeated nation to poverty to one degree or another. When pressed too far, they actually provoke a nation to war, such as was the case with post World War I’s Nazi Germany.

Then, finally, the humanist would take issue with lifetime enslavement of the heathen. Whether or not the Bible sanctions lifetime slavery today, one thing is for sure: to be enslaved for a lifetime but to come to know eternal liberty in knowing the Lord Jesus Christ by hearing the gospel in the master’s household is much better than to live a lifetime of freedom, never hear the gospel, and burn in hell for eternity.

We must add that humanism, since the very beginning (Gen. 3:3-5), has sought to perpetually enslave man—first in this life (by bringing curses that require hard labor [Gen. 3:17-19]), second in the next (since humanism results in eternal damnation [cf. Gen. 3:15, 22-24]). How then can the humanist object to lifetime enslavement when humanism itself caused slavery by causing the world to be fallen (slavery is a post-fall circumstance), and also by causing eternal enslavement to hellfire in the next life?

We must understand how God’s judgment relates to slavery. Sin of every kind is subject to God’s wrath. This includes the sins of unbiblical slavery and abuse of slaves. Thus the nation that mistreats its slaves does so at its own peril (cf. Jer. 34:9-22). This threat, when the Word of God is foundational to society, serves as an extremely important protection for slaves. And yet, humanism, in denying the fear of God, undermines such a crucial protection in the minds of slave masters. It provides slave owners a justification to abuse their slaves whenever they can get away with it.

Regarding today’s secular humanistic criticisms of biblical slavery, we must note that at least Christianity has a basis for recognizing
that the existence of slavery presupposes that there is something wrong. In Christianity, slavery is a *unfortunate* but in *certain humane contexts* a necessary institution, due to the unnatural state of affairs of a fallen world. But the fact that slavery is unfortunate gives Christians a basis for minimizing slavery as much as possible.

In secular humanism, however, there is no good and evil; the world is not fallen, but evolved. Nature is all there is, and thus all things are natural, including the existence of slavery. In finding slavery to be natural, secular humanism finds enslavement of others—in its *most inhumane contexts*—natural, as we shall see in upcoming sections.
Chapter 28:  
Slavery Inescapable

Today’s secular humanists are often quick to attack biblical slavery, and then turn around and laud ancient humanistic civilizations. But slave labor was the very means upon which the great humanistic civilizations of Greece, Rome, Babylon, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, as well as all the African and Central American civilizations, were built.719

The Babylonian Code of Hammurabi does not consider kidnapping a serious offense—unless the kidnapping is within affluent circles. Only when an aristocrat kidnaps another’s young son is kidnapping a capital offense.720 But biblical law requires any kidnapper to be put to death. It does not make affluence the basis of dignity. This difference in priorities over a slave’s humanity affects the two codes’ priorities regarding slave rights in general:

The particular verses in Exodus [dealing with slaves] are concerned almost exclusively with the slave’s privileges or the reparations that fall upon the owner if the slave is in any way abused or mishandled (21:1-11, 20-21, 26-27, 32). Surely it is not insignificant that laws on slavery in the Covenant Code come toward the beginning of that code, while those on this subject in the Code of Hammurabi come at the end (278-82).721

Modern humanists are especially sympathetic with ancient Greece and Rome. This is not surprising, since, as we have seen in chapter 15, modern humanism is repackaged Greco-Roman paganism. Greece and Rome were overwhelmingly slave civilizations. The Greek philosopher Plato based his Republic “firmly … on slave labour.”722 A rich man’s

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722 Hammond, Slavery, Terrorism and Islam, 3.
possessions, said Plato, consist of 50 or more slaves. The Greek philosopher Aristotle held, “From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule.” Aristotle, incidentally, also believed Greeks were racially superior to all other races.

Being part of a pagan system, slaves in Greco-Roman society possessed virtually no recognized rights. As Jennifer Glancy explains, “Although we do have documentary evidence for manumissions, we encounter still more bills of sale and wills, which consider slaves not as persons but as things, as ta somata doulika, slave bodies.” Roman law classed slaves with “stock or stone or beast”: “Pro nullis, pro mortuis, pro quadrupedibus.”

It was not uncommon for Greek and Roman slaves to be branded. Professor James H. Breasted observes that slaves on great Roman plantations “were branded with a hot iron like oxen to identify them forever.” Hence contrary to biblical law, which recognizes the human dignity of slaves, slaves in the Greco-Roman world were considered mere property—and often disposable property at that. In Greece masters could torture their slaves, and even the state, when given the master’s permission, could torture slaves as a means of extracting legal testimony. The torture of slaves by masters and the state alike was also practiced by Rome. Husslein writes:

In contrast to all these restraints placed upon the Hebrew master was the complete power of life and death usually given by paganism over the slaves. Until the second century of our era the Roman master might still torture, mutilate or kill his slave for any
reason or none. He was butchered to make a Roman holiday for
the plebian rabble. He was put to death upon the stage to add a
tragic realism to the scene. He was cast into the pond of some
luxurious epicure to give a flavor to his eels. He was hung in
bloody torture on the cross, with tongue plucked from this [sic]
throat, that a Roman matron might feed her spite on him. The
shining plaything in the hands of the proud Roman mistress was a
cruel stiletto, with which to stab in blind fury at the trembling
maid that in some trifle failed to serve her whim. 733

As a means to “protect” a master from his slaves, Roman law required
extermination of all of a master’s slaves if only one slave killed his
master. So in 61 A.D. when a slave killed his master, Pedanius
Secundus, every single one of Secundus’ 400 slaves were executed. 734
And let us also not forget that in Rome multitudes of enslaved gladiators
were forced to labor—literally to the death. “The victims’ lives were
held cheap by rulers and masters who enjoyed absolute power. Romans
not only tolerated, but delighted in, the death of slave gladiators by the
thousands.” 735

Contrary to slaves under biblical law, slaves under humanistic law
have throughout history been subject to cannibalism. Gary Hogg
observes:

The amount of information that was thus collected in the
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was enormous; and the
variety of authenticated detail was perhaps even more
remarkable. The practice of eating human flesh was noted in
almost every part of the world, except Europe, as a recognised
ingredient of the accepted social order. 736

It doesn’t seem a coincidence that Europe at that time was both the
continent most influenced by the Bible, and practically the only part of
the world that didn’t practice cannibalism.

733 Husslein, Bible and Labor, 99.
734 Meltzer, Slavery: A World History, 177 (Volume One).
735 Ibid., 176.
736 Garry Hogg, Cannibalism and Human Sacrifice (New York, NY: The Citadel
Press, 1966), 15, 16.
This is further confirmed by the fact that pre-Christian Europe practiced cannibalism. The anthropologist A. P. Rice observes that “Cannibalism … is a custom which has not been confined exclusively to any particular part of the world. The Greek classics refer to it; the Ancient Irish ate their dead; the Saxons had a word in their language that stood for all that is horrible.”

He goes on to note the state of Mexico and Peru prior to the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors: “[I]n Mexico and Peru, before the Spanish Conquest, the lust for human flesh was so great that wars were declared in order that victims for these feasts might be procured.”

Secular humanists who like to criticize the Christian West’s stance and involvement with slavery and the slave trade (some criticism is valid, some invalid) have historical amnesia regarding the involvement of outright humanistic nations. Long before white Europeans began trading African slaves, “a thriving intracontinental slave trade existed within Africa itself.” The main way Europeans acquired slaves was not by kidnapping, but by African slave traders. Kidnapping free men for slavery, however, was a means employed by West Africans themselves—especially as regards to the kidnapping of those of other tribes. (This, of course, in no way exonerates Europeans from indirectly increasing kidnappings in Africa via their financial support of the African slave trade.)

Muslims of Arabia partook in Africa’s longstanding slave trade. Whereas the participation of Europe in the slave trade (Trans-Atlantic) to the Americas lasted a little more than three centuries, the

737 Ibid., 38.
738 Ibid.
740 Ibid.
741 Dwyer et al., War Between the States, 107.
participation of Arabs in the slave trade has been for fourteen centuries—and counting. Even today, parts of the Muslim world are involved in the trade. According to Peter Hammond, conditions for slaves in the Islamic slave trade were much more horrendous than conditions for those in the American trade. The Islamic trade had a vastly higher mortality rate, and a much greater proportion of female slaves. The purpose of American slaves was generally agricultural labor, while the purpose of Muslim slaves was mostly for military service and sexual exploitation. Hammond, who has served for several years as a Christian missionary to Muslims in dangerous regions of Africa, says “there are persistent, credible reports, that slavery persists in Mauritania, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and even that slaves from Sudan are ending up in Saudi Arabia.”

The more we uncover history, the less we see that slavery was a practice peculiar to Christian civilization.

During the Middle Ages, Slavs were so widely used as slaves in both Europe and the Islamic world that the very word “slave” derived from the word for Slav—not only in English, but also in other European languages, as well as in Arabic. Nor have Asians or Polynesians been exempt from either being enslaved or enslaving others. China in centuries past has been described as “one of the largest and most comprehensive markets for the exchange of human beings in the world.” Slavery was also common in India, where it has been estimated that there were more slaves than in the entire Western Hemisphere—and where the original Thugs kidnapped children for the purpose of enslavement. In some of the cities of Southeast Asia, slaves were a majority of the population. Slavery was also an established institution in the Western Hemisphere before Columbus’ ships ever appeared on the horizon.

742 Hammond, Slavery, Terrorism and Islam, 1.
743 Ibid., 17.
Slavery was practiced by the American Indians. It was also practiced by their continental neighbors, the Aztecs. We can go on and on. Far from being particular to the Bible and Christian civilization, slavery has existed in all nations. It is an inescapable historical fact.

And, it is an enormous stretch to pin the worst atrocities associated with slavery on the Israelites and the Christian West. One could actually pin the worst atrocities on the non-Israelite and non-Christian world, given comparisons alone between Jerusalem and the Greco-Roman world, and the Christian West and the Islamic world. Moreover, it was civilizations built on Christianity—not on humanism—that ended slavery and the slave trade.

Slavery did not die out quietly of its own accord. It went down fighting to the bitter end—and it lost only because Europeans had gunpowder weapons first. The advance of European imperialism around the world marked the retreat of the slave trade and then of slavery itself. The British stamped out slavery, not only throughout the British Empire—which included one-fourth of the world, whether measured in land or people—but also by its pressures and its actions against other nations. For example, the British navy entered Brazilian waters in 1849 and destroyed Brazilian ships that had been used in the slave trade. The British government pressured the Ottoman Empire into banning the African slave trade and, later, threatened to start boarding Ottoman ships in the Mediterranean if that empire did not do a better job of policing the ban.

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745 Hammond, Slavery, Terrorism, and Islam, Ibid., 3, 4.
746 When Hammond spoke at Minnesota university campuses about the history of the slave trade, a Mexican declared, “My ancestors were the Aztecs. We were the biggest slave traders, and the slavers were used for human sacrifice—to make the sun rise each day! Our Aztec priests ripped out the beating hearts from living slaves who were sacrificed in our temples. Men were enslaved and sacrificed like that. I don’t like it. I am not proud of it, but it is a fact. It is part of our history. We have to face up to it. And the slavery and human sacrifice in Mexico only stopped when Christianity came and brought it to an end.” Peter Hammond, Slavery Today and the Battle Over History (Cape Town, South Africa: Frontline Fellowship, n.d.). Retrieved July 31, 2008, from http://frontline.org.za/news/slaverytoday_battleoverhistory.htm.
747 Sowell, Black Rednecks and White Liberals, 116, 117.
As bad as slavery in the Christian-influenced South was, it was much worse in Africa, where America’s slaves originally came from, and in Brazil and Haiti, where slaves not purchased in the Christian-influenced South ended up. (This is not to justify all of southern slavery, but to show that slavery in outright humanistic countries is much worse in comparison, because humanism is inherently inhumane.)

Much of slavery in Africa has been premised on cannibalism. For instance, “In the Congo, slaves were deliberately fattened for sale as food in the markets.” In the early twentieth-century a traveler named Herbert Ward visited the Congo where he encountered several slave-markets for cannibals. Ward writes,

Probably the most inhumane practice of all is to be met with among the tribes who deliberately hawk the victim piecemeal whilst still alive. Incredible as it may appear, captives are led from place to place in order that individuals may have the opportunity of indicating, by external marks on the body, the portion they desire to acquire. The distinguishing marks are generally made by means of coloured clay or strips of grass tied in a peculiar fashion. The astounding stoicism of the victims, who thus witness the bargaining for their limbs piecemeal, is only equalled by the callousness with which they walk forward to meet their fate.

In the U.S. slaves not purchased in the South were sent to Haiti or Brazil, where they were doomed to horrendous conditions and treatment. In Brazil, for example, less Africans survived slavery than in the U.S.—despite Brazil obtaining six times the number of Africans. This was due in large part to the brutality of Brazilian slave life. Some of the ways Brazilian slaves died were by being whipped to death, boiled alive in oil, or hurled into pools of piranhas.

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748 Hogg, Cannibalism and Human Sacrifice, 16.
749 Ibid., 107, 108.
750 Ibid., 108.
751 Dwyer et al., War Between the States, 118.
Another reason why humanistic slavery has historically been more oppressive than Israelite and Christian slavery is because of humanism’s hatred for the Sabbath, which requires masters to give their slaves a one-day-in-seven rest. Consequently, humanism undermines the moral foundation for condemning non-stop slave labor.

For example, Meltzer writes: “What a slave’s life was like in the mines can be gathered from what the historian Diodorus wrote in the first century B.C. of conditions in the gold and silver diggings of Egypt and Spain, at opposite ends of the Mediterranean.” Of slaves in the Egyptian mines, Diodorus writes: “There they throng, all in chains, all kept at work continuously day and night. There is no relaxation, no means of escape … All alike are kept at their labor by the lash, until, overcome by hardships, they die in their torments.” And of slaves in the Spanish mines, he writes: “The workers in these mines produce incredible profits for the owners, but their own lives are spent underground in the quarries wearing and wasting their bodies day and night. Many die, their sufferings are so great. There is no relief, no respite from their labors.”

While in these cases working seven days in a row was not the sole cause of suffering for the slaves, it was nonetheless one of the main causes. It is the Sabbath that keeps slaves from toiling day and night without rest.

Thus secular humanists who mock and reject the death penalty for working on the Sabbath undermine one of the most effective laws against working slaves (or even just hired employees) to death. It would seem that in the case of a master forcing his slave to work on the Sabbath, the death penalty would not be applied to the slave, but to the master himself. But in humanism, threatening to execute masters for working their slaves on the Sabbath is worse than executing slaves themselves via nonstop work.

With Enlightenment humanism came the notion that it is possible to establish an egalitarian, slave-free society. The first major experiment failed miserably. The French Revolution led to mass executions (perhaps

754 Cited in Ibid.
755 Cited in Ibid., 151.
the thinking was that if enough people were killed, there would be no one left to enslave) and culminated in national slavery under the tyranny of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The Enlightenment and the French Revolution did not make the world safer for equality. What followed more than a century later was one of the most—if not the most—oppressive chapters of mankind.

Slavery, if imposed “in the name of the People”—Volk, Fuhrer, or Party—had again become acceptable. The slave societies of national socialism (Nazi Germany) and international socialism (Communism) have dwarfed all previous slave societies. The spirit of Pharaoh has been reincarnated in modern totalitarianism—societies built on the model of the concentration camp.756

_Private_ slavery was replaced by an extremely oppressive public slavery. The atheistic Soviet Union, a direct heir of the Enlightenment and French Revolution, “turned out to be a new, expanded slave society.”757 Slaves were forced to work hard labor in extremely harsh or dangerous conditions.758 Russian slave camps became so overcrowded by 1938 that slaves were reduced by mass extermination.759 Russia’s prisons set historical record-levels. And even those outside the prisons the state enslaved. Not even so-called free laborers had a work ethic satisfactory to the state. Farm directors and local party activists, moreover, forced peasants working on collectivized farms into serfdom.760

Such conditions were not unique to Soviet Russia; they are inherent to atheistic communism in general. G. K. Roginsky, who served in 1937 as Prosecutor in the Moscow trials,761 well articulates atheistic communist philosophy: “What does slavery or even the annihilation of one or two generations mean, if by that sacrifice new permanent values

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756 North, _Tools of Dominion_, 201.
759 Ibid., 107.
760 Ibid., 108.
761 Bales, _Communism: Its Faith and Fallacies_, 189.
can be created for the benefit of humanity and countless generations to come?”

Communist China certainly followed this philosophy; Mao Tse-Tung’s China had “the biggest penal system of all time.” This system enslaved each year between 1-2 percent of the population, and is the site of possibly around 20 million deaths. To this day, China’s “system of ‘re-education through labor’ detains hundreds of thousands each year in work camps without even a court hearing.” And China has one of the worst human rights records in the world.

A concentration camp is the ultimate in totalitarianism, with political decisions determining such routine things as eating and sleeping, as well as personal relations (dehumanization) and death (extermination). Slave plantations in the antebellum South have been analogized to concentration camps, but their paramount nonpolitical objective of economic gain meant that slave owners had to make far more concessions to slaves than concentration camp commanders ever made to their inmates.

The previous information about atheistic communism’s slave camps, along with this comparison of those camps to the antebellum South, poses a major embarrassment for secular humanists. They pride themselves in their atheism, boasting in its supposed moral superiority to Christianity. They like pointing to the Christian-influenced South of the nineteenth century to “prove” the Christian state leads to oppressive slavery. (Although given the south’s race-relations, some would hold

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763 Courtois et al., The Black Book of Communism, 498.
764 Ibid.
766 Ibid.

Sowell’s explanation, while helpful, is incomplete. First, given the influence of Christianity in the South, we can reasonably conclude that many Southerners were not motivated (or not motivated solely) by economics, but by Christian love for their slaves. Moreover, the Christian ethics of southern slaveholders would certainly lead them to treat their slaves much better than unregenerate, immoral atheists would have treated slaves in the concentration camps.
that the south was not very Christian at all.) They conveniently forget the enslaving legacy of atheism.

And, in fact, American humanism itself—another heir of the Enlightenment and French Revolution—has its own legacy of public slavery. Today’s humanists like to identify with the humanistic northeast abolitionists of the nineteenth century. And yet, at the very time and place where the anti-chattel slavery movement began—during the 1820s in the northeast—“new state prisons were also being implemented.” (These replaced local jails and public flogging.) The entire Western world would look to this new, extreme form of humanistic slavery as its penal model.

We are now at a point where state prisons are so entrenched in society that we don’t recognize them as the blatant form of public slavery that they are. In chapter 14 we mentioned the horrors of America’s prison system. This system is an attempt to “image hell-on-earth”—a nightmare-system that progressively gets worse. The following data, while gathered some time ago, nevertheless speaks to the humanistic prison system’s escalating violence:

• In California, 4 inmates in every 100 were seriously injured in 1974—a fourfold increase in just four years.

• From 1969 through the end of 1972, there were 211 reported stabbings, 11 of them fatal, in Louisiana’s Angola prison. During the first eleven months of 1973, there were 137 stabbings, 9 of them fatal; in the eighteen months that followed, there were 213 stabbings and 20 deaths.

• From early 1972 until January, 1975, 15 inmates at Massachusetts’ Walpole Prison were murdered, and hundreds

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769 North, *Victim’s Rights*, 127, 128.

770 Ibid., 7.

were stabbed, assaulted with pipes, and beaten by a group of prisoners who roamed the 500-inmate facility.

- In all four Alabama prisons, U.S. District Court Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr., found in a January, 1976, ruling, “robbery, rape, extortion, theft and assault are everyday occurrences among the general inmate population. Rather than face this constant danger, some inmates voluntarily subject themselves to the inhuman condition of prison isolation cells.”

One detailed example of the system’s many atrocities will more than suffice here. The findings in a 1968 report on the Philadelphia prison system revealed:

In brief, we found that sexual assaults in the Philadelphia prison system are epidemic. As [jail officials] admitted, virtually every slightly-built young man committed by the courts is sexually approached within a day or two after his admission to prison. Many of these young men are repeatedly raped by gangs of inmates. Others, because of the threat of gang rape, seek protection by entering into a homosexual relationship with an individual tormentor. Only the tougher and more hardened young men, and those so obviously frail that they are immediately locked up for their own protection, escape homosexual rape.

Guards refused to protect inmates from sexual assaults, and in one account, “One victim screamed for over an hour while he was being gangraped in his cell; the block guard ignored the screams and laughed at the victim when the rape was over.” Let us not forget that this study is 40 years old. Considering how much America has soared in depravity since, how much worse are prisons now?

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774 Lockard, Perverted Priorities of American Politics, 199.
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Consider the terrible injustice the prison system exacts upon thieves. While in biblical law thieves simply work off their debt if they cannot afford to pay restitution, the humanistic prison system forces them to live like caged animals, living under the ownership of the state, brutal prison guards, and brutal inmates.

The prison system enslaves both (1) the criminal, who is locked up in a cage instead of working restitution; and (2) the citizen, who is forced to labor to subsidize the prisons, and who is often enslaved by fear of the violent criminals the prison system turns out. Some humanists see the failure of the prison systems, so they implement a supplementary form of slavery called “rehabilitation.” Thus not only are the bodies of prisoners enslaved like caged animals, but their minds enslaved like laboratory rats.

The American humanistic system has several other forms of slavery. The welfare state keeps citizens dependent—and thereby subservient—to the state. High taxes to support the humanistic state enslave taxpayers by forcing them to labor for the state. High taxes also work to enslave the entire nation, in that what you subsidize, you get more of. So when you subsidize the sword, i.e., the state, you subsidize coercion. When you subsidize coercion beyond the civil government’s biblically-limited sphere, you subsidize public slavery—in all the various totalitarian forms the humanist state can conceive of. The humanistic state manipulates the people to enslave themselves under the guise of compassionate socialism; but “socialism is an age old ploy of governments to bribe the people for power”\(^\text{776}\)—and the more power the people give the state, the more enslaved they become.

Another form of American humanistic slavery is the public school system. Unlike in biblical law, where parents are charged to educate their children (Deut. 6:6-7; Prov. 1:8; 22:6; Eph. 6:1-4), and the state is given no authorization to be involved in education, in humanistic America parents unable to afford alternative forms of education are forced by law to surrender their children to state custody five days a week. And even those who can afford alternative forms of education must still pay an ongoing “ransom fee,” a tax used to fund compulsory education (i.e., kidnapping and enslavement) of other children.

\(^{776}\) We have heard this quote attributed to Marshall Foster.
In public schools, children are segregated from their parents, and owned physically and mentally by the state. The lack of discipline in public schools exposes children to harsh environmental conditions; children prey on one another, and even shoot and kill one another. Not only this, but public schools are a training ground for *lifetime* enslavement to the state: “The schools are providing indoctrination into dependence upon state-provided benefits and services, and are, in effect raising ‘wards of the state’ who are incapable of governing themselves or thinking for themselves.”

Thus, in our secular humanist society, we have conception-to-grave slavery. At the moment of conception until birth, a person is considered the property of his mother, since she can legally murder him so long as he is in the womb. Not long after birth, the child becomes the property of the state, being forced to attend atheist (public) schools. Once out of these schools, he must either spend the rest of his life laboring to fund the federal government’s socialist policies, or refuse to work and enslave himself to “welfare” stipulations. And even in the grave, he may still be forced to “labor” for the state to pay the estate tax, also called the death tax.

Worst of all, children in public schools are enslaved spiritually. The humanistic educational system teaches children to hate God through the many humanistic philosophies that it promotes: atheistic science, hedonistic sex education, relativistic values, polytheistic religious observances, etc.

This constitutes nothing short of child abuse. It leads children down into a pit, making them just like their humanistic teachers: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:39b-40). If *fully* trained, the public school graduate becomes a God-hating criminal.

Throughout history, the public school system has been a tool of the God-hating humanistic state to enslave the youth—mind and body—to do its bidding. “A revolution in educational thought accompanied the French Revolution. The radicals of the movement would establish a

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universal, free, compulsory and secular system of elementary education for the moulding of citizens of the new social order.”

In Fascist Italy, “All teachers were state officials, and were carefully trained to mould Fascist minds, and prepare youth for service to the state.” Regarding Nazi Germany,

Nazi theory found its summation in the often reiterated and officially approved view that the purpose of education is to bring every individual will into complete, submissive, harmonious accord with the will of the Nazi state of which the Führer is the living embodiment. Integration was the magic word in the educational formula, and the individual was to be integrated with his political society not for his own sake but for the well being of society, to which alone he owes loyalty and for which he must sacrifice his life, if needs be; for society was said to have given him even his life.

And in Soviet Communism:

Education, officially viewed as extending from birth to death, must be closely integrated with the changing ideals, practices and needs of the régime. The aims of the government and the school must always be the same. When the government embarked on its Five-Year Plans, so did the school. When the government struck at the kulaks, so did the school. The morality approved by the state must be inculcated in youth by the school. The whole system of state-approved economic, social, political, ethical, philosophical and other forms of ideology must be promoted by the school.

American public schools share the core tenet of these tyrannical regimes: to transform children into slaves of the state. This has been the case for some time. For example, the National Education Association

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779 Ibid., 587.
780 Ibid., 560.
781 Ibid., 591, 592.
the most influential teacher’s union today, stated back in 1951 in the report “Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools” that “this report will encourage in homes, churches, and schools a nationwide renaissance of interest in education for moral and spiritual values.”

“By moral and spiritual values,” it continues, “we mean those values which, when applied to human behavior, exalt and refine life and bring *it into accord* with the standards of conduct that are approved in our democratic culture” (emphases mine).

Of course, “standards of conduct” must be determined by state-approved “specialists.” For example, much of the “values clarification” program—a relativistic view of ethics ultimately designed to brainwash children to deny the Word of God (which is the easiest way to conform

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782 Way before this, the NEA worked with the socialist Bellamy cousins to combine using public schools and the pledge of allegiance as a means of brainwashing. (Francis Bellamy authored the Pledge, and his cousin, Edward, penned *Looking Backward* [1888], a famous socialist novel.) Thomas J. DiLorenzo, *Pledging Allegiance to the Omnipotent Lincolnian State* (LewRockwell.com, October 17, 2003). Retrieved December 7, 2009, from http://www.lewrockwell.com/dilorenzo/dilorenzo54.html. DiLorenzo writes, “The public schools must be used to teach blind obedience to the state, the Bellamys reasoned, and the National Education Association was pleased to help them accomplish this goal. They planned a ‘National Public School Celebration’ in 1892, which was the first national propaganda campaign on behalf of the Pledge of Allegiance. It was a massive campaign that involved government schools and politicians throughout the country. The government schools were promoted, along with the Pledge, while private schools, especially parochial ones, were criticized.

“Students were taught to recite the Pledge with their arms outstretched, palms up, similar to how Roman citizens were required to hail Caesar, and not too different from the way in which Nazi soldiers saluted their Führer. This was the custom in American public schools from the turn of the twentieth century until around 1950, when it was apparently decided by public school officials that the Nazi-like salute was in bad taste.” Ibid.

The pledge itself has roots in the humanistic French Revolution: “Bellamy considered the ‘liberty and justice for all’ phrase in the Pledge to be an Americanized version of the slogan of the French Revolution: ‘Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.’ The French revolutionaries believed that mass killing by the state was always justified if it was done for the ‘grand purpose’ of achieving ‘equality.’ In an 1876 commencement speech Francis Bellamy praised the French Revolution as ‘the poetry of human brotherhood.’” Ibid.


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children to the state)—comes from psychologists, such as the psychotherapist Carl Rogers.  

And so what we have today is public schools churning out minions who look to civil government as the Great Master with solutions to practically all things, and as the great lawgiver that decides man’s code of ethics (sodomy and abortion “rights,” socialism, etc.). Life and death revolve around the state, as evidenced in our cultural acceptance of working one’s entire life to finance the state’s perpetual debt, and in our cultural acceptance of the state’s sanction of executing the unborn.

Unlike in humanism, in biblical law—where parents, not the state, are supposed to educate their children—no national enslavement of the youth is possible. When countless separate authorities (i.e., sets of parents) do not answer to the state regarding the education of their own children, the state lacks a centralized means of brainwashing children to do its bidding.

Not only this, but homeschooled children are less likely to blindly go along with other means of national enslavement, such as socialism, since—as evidenced in homeschooled children today—homeschooled children tend to have better critical thinking skills, a better grasp of economics and history, and, most importantly, a better grasp of the Bible than state educated children.

Humanistic America doesn’t lack for oppressive forms of private slavery, either. In legalized abortion, a pregnant woman has the right to do whatever she wants with “her body” (meaning she supposedly owns the child), so the child is her disposable property. The child is a slave, subservient to the mother’s “choice.”

In addition, the U.S. Department of State has approximated that every year, 15,000-18,000 people living in the U.S. become enslaved to the human trafficking industry. Two major forms of human trafficking are forced labor and domestic servitude. Moreover, Mark Kadel, director of a relief organization (the High Point affiliate of World Relief) which aids human trafficking victims throughout the world, “says forcing or

coercing women and girls into the sex trade is a common form of U.S. human trafficking.\textsuperscript{786}

In California, officials discovered in 2004 that Lakireddy Bali Reddy, a Berkley businessman, ran a sex and labor exploitation ring for 15 years. In 2005, three men pleaded guilty in a New York City court to running a human-trafficking operation for 13 years, smuggling Mexican women into the city and forcing them to work as prostitutes.\textsuperscript{787}

Lisette Arsuaga, director of development for the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, reports that “human trafficking is well hidden,” and \textit{occurs in almost all cities and towns across the U.S.}\textsuperscript{788}

This underground form of slavery—which relies on kidnapping and fraud—is fueled by the secular humanist philosophy of naturalism, which promotes (1) materialistic greed; (2) hedonism, including sexual indulgence; and (3) a Babel-like brotherhood of man, which promotes unfettered open borders. (We do not oppose biblically controlled, legal immigration, but we oppose allowing just anyone to cross the borders.) Regarding the latter, just as the “open borders” between America and Africa (via the slave trade) resulted in Africans being subjected to forced labor, today’s open borders between America and Mexico results in Mexicans being subjected to forced labor at best, prostitution at worst. While humanistic legal policies condoning virtually every kind of sexual sin create a vacuum for the sex-slave trade, biblical law’s capital sanctions against various sexual sins create a disincentive for this trade.

Given all this, we see that secular humanism—contrary to the rhetoric of its proponents—is far from opposing slavery. Not only this, but contrary to the rhetoric of its proponents, secular humanism is far from opposing racism, as we shall now see.

\textsuperscript{787} Ibid.
“The victims’ lives were held cheap by rulers and masters who enjoyed absolute power. Romans not only tolerated, but delighted in, the death of slave gladiators by the thousands.”— Milton Meltzer
Chapter 29: What About Racism?

Although racism and slavery are not identical, secular humanists nevertheless refuse to distinguish between the two. This is often a pretext for smearing Christians, the Bible, biblical slavery, and God. As such, we must address the alleged connection between racism and biblical slavery.

First we must note that we really do not like the term “racism,” in that, physically speaking, there is only one race, as all men descended from Adam. (However, there are two spiritual races.)

“Racism” then can imply that there are several non-related races—a black race, a white race, an Asian race, etc. But all men regardless of skin color are related.

Hence when we use such terms as “race” and “racism,” we do not do so to deny that all men are related by Adam, but are simply assuming the existence of people groups with unique skin colors. Thus what we mean by the term “racist” is someone who hates, or has a sense of superiority to, those of different skin colors.

The Bible is as far from racism as possible. All races are made in the image of God and are therefore equal. “Indeed, all forms of race hatred or racial vainglory are forms of rebellion against God. Such should be vigorously opposed because the Word of God opposes them from start to finish. God has raised up all nations from one man (Acts 17:26). All are cousins.”

All of mankind, in short, shares one blood: “And [God] hath made of one blood all nations of men …” (Ac. 17:26a) (KJV). And the bond is even deeper for men of various nations who know Christ: “Jesus Christ has purchased men from every nation and

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789 Spiritually-speaking, there are two races—the elect and the reprobates. As God told the serpent after the Fall: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (emphases mine) (Genesis 3:15). Thus the Fall didn’t produce racial division along physical lines, but spiritual lines. 1 Peter 2:9 refers to Christians as “a chosen race.” Unbelievers are of the race of Satan, as they are “of the devil” (1 Jn. 3:8; cf. Jn. 8:44; 1 Jn. 3:12; and Matt. 13:38).

790 John J. Dwyer ed., et al., The War Between the States, 106.
tribe with His own blood, and His blood necessarily provides a stronger bond than ours does.”

In their hatred for those of other races, racists violate the Bible’s command to love one’s neighbor. Racism then is heresy.

Moses himself, to whom God first announced Israel’s slave laws, was married to a Cushite woman (Num. 12:1). According to J. Daniel Hays,

Cush is a fairly common term in Egyptian literature. It also appears over fifty times in the Old Testament, and is attested in Assyrian literature as well. It is used regularly to refer to the area south of Egypt, above the cataracts on the Nile, where a Black African civilization flourished for over two thousand years … Thus it is quite clear that Moses marries a Black African woman.

Indeed, “there is a strong argument that Cushites were part of the ‘mixed crowd’ that came out of Egypt as part of Israel.”

“[E]arliest Israel was not an ethnic community”, “Included with the biological descendants of Jacob were other Semitic peoples (probably Arameans, Amorites, Canaanites, etc.) as well as Black Africans from Cush.”

From the beginning of Hebrew history, circumcision (as applied to males) united all members of the household, regardless of race or social status (Gen. 17:12). God’s covenant, applied unconditionally to master and servant alike, implies a great boon for the servant: “He was not only recognized as his master’s equal before God, but was endowed with the same religious rights.”

Thus, in Slavery: A World History, Milton Meltzer observes,

791 Wilson, Black & Tan, 38.


793 Ibid., 68.


795 Hays, From Every People and Nation, 68.

796 Husslein, Bible and Labor, 89.
No stigma, racist or other, seems to have been attached to being a slave. It … could befall any man. The pagan slave often became partly Jewish, if he observed certain of the Jewish laws and customs. When freed, pagan slaves who converted and married Jews in time became absorbed by the Jewish people.”

And to those who liken biblical slavery to racist whites who want to enslave blacks,

The biblical story is full of different people of different ethnicities—and none of those in the Torah are Caucasian. As God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 (blessing to all peoples) unfolds, numerous different ethnicities are melded into the people of God in fulfilment of this promise. In the Torah, part of this melding process occurs through interracial marriage. Moses, the hero of the Torah, marries a Black woman with God’s approval. Marriage across theological lines—that is, marrying unbelievers—is prohibited, but marriage to another of God’s believing children, regardless of race, is affirmed.

And, it is the law of God in all its aspects—including its laws sanctioning slavery itself—that is completely colorblind. Joseph Morecraft, III, writes,

God who is Lord of heaven and earth has ordained that the human race should live in accordance with His law. Legally, morally and spiritually the races of the world have been given a common law—God’s law in the Bible—by which they are to live, and obedience to which binds them together and determines all their relationships.

Thus “all people are equal before the Law of God that judges all people justly and ‘blindly,’ i.e., without regard for race, sex or status.”

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797 Meltzer, Slavery: A World History, 44 (Volume One).
798 Hays, From Every People and Nation, 86.
800 Ibid., 4.
Contrary to Christianity and biblical law, secular humanism is premised on, and perpetuates, racism. Secular humanism is largely a cocktail of Enlightenment and Darwinian thought; it holds to the ostensible rationality and egalitarianism of the former, and the evolutionism and naturalism of the latter. Each philosophy naturally propagates racism.

As discussed in chapter 24, secular humanism deifies reason, which results in viewing a man’s worth on the amount of (secular) education he receives. This gives races that are, at least ostensibly, more educated than others a pretext to consider other races as inferior. The Enlightenment popularized the deification of reason. The natural outworking was that Enlightenment thinkers considered “non-enlightened” groups “irrational.” This included racial groups, such as Africans, as well as Native Americans, whom Enlightenment humanists called “savages.” In other words, in the Enlightenment worldview, some races are smarter than others and thereby superior to others. (It is true that Christians are more enlightened than non-Christians concerning spiritual truth [Eph. 4:17, 18], but this has nothing to do with skin color, but with the grace of God, and God saves and therefore enlightens certain individuals from every race.)

For instance, the anti-Christian Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire, who posited two different Gods in the Bible—one in the Old, one in the New, and considered the former cruel—was anti-Semitic, and pitted reason against Jews, since they supposedly represented intolerance and religious fanaticism. Voltaire also held that Africans lacked in intelligence, and as such distinguished them as an inferior human species. For the comte de Buffon—considered “the greatest of Enlightenment naturalists”—Africans tended to be “simple and

801 Phil Neisser, *United We Fall: Ending America’s Love Affair with the Political Center* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 147.
stupid”—intellectual inferiors to Europeans. Buffon’s writings greatly influenced French Enlightenment thinkers, including Diderot, Raynal, and Rousseau.

The Enlightenment not only made reason racist, but science as well:

By the late eighteenth century, the Enlightenment was in full swing, and efforts were made for the first time to assure a scientific understanding of race. Biologists, building upon the pioneer studies of Linnaeus and Buffon, turned to the classification of races. Animals, as well as human beings, were arranged in systematic hierarchies. Distinctions were made between “higher” and “lower” races. European whites were placed at the summit in the hierarchy of races.

Thus, “The scientific thought of the Enlightenment was a precondition for the growth of a modern racism based on physical typology.”

Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish naturalist, considered Europeans, Asians, American Indians, and Africans different varieties of humanity. Blacks he dismissed as “crafty, indolent, negligent. … Governed by caprice,” while Europeans he praised as “acute, inventive. … Governed by laws.”

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who produced the “most authoritative classification of the races” of the Enlightenment, considered Caucasians the first human race. All other races, he held, had, as George M. Fredrickson writes, “diverged or degenerated.” “Whatever their intentions, Linnaeus, Blumenbach, and other eighteenth-century ethnologists opened the way to a secular or scientific racism by

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807 Fredrickson, Racism: A Short History, 58.
810 Fredrickson, Racism: A Short History, 56.
811 Ibid.
813 Fredrickson, Racism: A Short History, 57.
considering human beings part of the animal kingdom rather than viewing them in biblical terms as children of God endowed with spiritual capacities denied to other creatures.”

(Correction for Fredrickson’s statement: While his point is well taken, only Christians are children of God [Jn. 1:12], via adoption. However, all men, Christians and non-Christians alike, are creations of God and, unlike animals, are made in God’s image.)

The secular humanistic legacy of scientific racism continued under Charles Darwin, considered a god by secular humanists for his views on evolution. Darwin’s evolutionary worldview caused him to view some races as naturally superior to others, including in areas of morality and the intellect. In The Descent of Man, Darwin writes:

Nor is the difference slight in moral disposition between a barbarian, such as the man described by the old navigator Byron, who dashed his child on the rocks for dropping a basket of sea-urchins, and a Howard or Clarkson; and in intellect, between a savage who uses hardly any abstract terms, and a Newton or Shakespeare. Differences of this kind between the highest men of the highest races and the lowest savages, are connected by the finest gradations.

Darwin posited an extreme distinction between Europeans and blacks. He writes: “Some of these [sub-species], such as the Negro and European, are so distinct that, if specimens had been brought to a naturalist without any further information, they would undoubtedly have been considered by him as good and true species.” For Darwin these distinctions were more than skin deep. He believed that whites were civilized but blacks were not, and that “civilized” races were intellectually superior:

814 Ibid.
816 Ibid., 678.
817 Darwin writes, “But the sense of smell is of extremely slight service, if any, even to the dark coloured races of men, in whom it is much more highly developed than in the white and civilised races.” Ibid., 35.
The belief that there exists in man some close relation between the size of the brain and the development of the intellectual faculties is supported by the comparison of the skulls of savage and civilised races, of ancient and modern people, and by the analogy of the whole vertebrate series.\(^{818}\)

Darwin held that inferior races are inevitably exterminated. He subtitled his *Origin of Species*, “By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life.” He writes in *The Descent of Man*,

Do the races or species of men, whichever term may be applied, encroach on and replace one another, so that some finally become extinct? We shall see that all these questions, as indeed is obvious in respect to most of them, must be answered in the affirmative, in the same manner as with the lower animals.\(^{819}\)

Later in the book, Darwin writes,

At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes, as Professor Schaaffhausen has remarked, will no doubt be exterminated. The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilised state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla.\(^{820}\)

In short, for Darwin, according to the laws of evolution blacks and other races deemed “savage” must be exterminated, whether by Caucasians, or by another even more civilized race that may evolve in the future.

Between writing *Origins of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, Darwin’s ideas would be embraced by numerous scientists, who took

\(^{818}\) Ibid., 74.

\(^{819}\) Ibid., 22.

\(^{820}\) Ibid., 183, 184.
them to their logical conclusions and began the movement called “Social Darwinism.”

Social Darwinists believed that such processes of selection were at work within contemporary societies: it was in the long-term interests of the human species that competition and war should ensure the reproduction of the strongest and most intelligent individuals and the most biologically superior race-nations.

The twentieth century, with its unprecedented violence, was the logical outcome of Darwinism: “The language of Darwinism became an expression of growing militaristic aggression and economic tension between states, a contest for power and domination both within the European continent as well as overseas in Africa and elsewhere.”

The militaristic Nazi Germany, for instance, was fueled by a sense of racial superiority.

The racism of Darwinism not only promotes war, but persecution and genocide. Its scientific racism provided the “moral” justification for the Holocaust. Darwinism’s racist legacy reached America around the time slavery was abolished. Darwinism fueled anti-black racism, as well as “the elimination of ‘savage native tribes’ who hindered westward expansion in the name of ‘manifest destiny.’” Moreover, Ken Ham, founder of the Creation Museum and native of Australia, observes:

The fruit of Darwin’s theories was (and is) being reaped in my homeland of Australia, which was involved in a gruesome trade in “missing link” specimens fueled by early evolutionary and

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822 Ibid., 35.
823 Ibid., 38.
824 “Darwinism by itself did not produce the Holocaust, but without Darwinism, especially in its social Darwinist and eugenics permutations, neither Hitler nor his Nazi followers would have had the necessary scientific underpinnings to convince themselves and their collaborators that one of the world’s greatest atrocities was really morally praiseworthy.” Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 233.
racist ideas. Documented evidence shows that the remains of perhaps 10,000 of Australia’s Aborigines, many murdered, were shipped to British museums in a frenzied attempt to prove the widespread belief that they were the “missing link.”

Evolution, in short, naturally fuels racism, as well as conceivably the persecution of any group of people. Marx, who used Darwin to justify his philosophy, made the rich the object of evolutionary persecution. Likewise, for Hitler evolution favored the Aryan race over Jews, and was a pretext for seeking the genocide of the Jews.

Moreover, unlike Christianity, which holds to what many call the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12), evolution holds to the survival of the fittest, a law that requires the subjugation of the weak by the strong. Thus the evolutionary view of man held by secular humanists fuels racism and slavery in their most oppressive forms. Unlike Christianity—which holds that all men are equally human since all men are made in God’s image—evolution denies this, and says all men are simply animals at various evolutionary stages.

When society affirms evolution, any race can be deemed less evolved—and thereby inferior—than another. The more inferior one is, the more one can be considered worthless slime, since evolution considers the first life form to be primordial slime. Thus we should not be surprised that the racist science and survival of the fittest mentality of Darwinism is the same philosophy behind the current American Holocaust, to which we now turn.

The genocide of unborn children—a secular humanist blood ritual—was popularized in America by Margarate Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood. Sanger set out to use her abortion clinics to exterminate non-white races, including Jews, Hispanics, Native Americans, and blacks.

In 1939, Sanger’s Planned Parenthood launched a “Negro Project” in the South. The project proposal read: “The mass of

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826 Ibid.
828 Ibid., 97.
Negroes, particularly in the South, still breed carelessly and disastrously, with the result that the increase among Negroes, even more than among Whites, is from that portion of the population least intelligent and fit.”  

“Public Health statistics,” the proposal added, “merely hint at the primitive state of civilization in which most Negroes in the South live.”

In a strategy to exterminate blacks, the Planned Parenthood project sought to enlist a few black ministers to spread birth control propaganda at black enclaves. On this, Sanger would later write,

The most successful educational approach to the Negro is through a religious appeal. We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population and the Minister is the man who can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members.

On this George Grant notes, “The entire operation then was a ruse—a manipulative attempt to get Blacks to cooperate in their own elimination.”

The project was quite successful. Its genocidal intentions were carefully camouflaged beneath several layers of condescending social service rhetoric and organizational expertise. Like the citizens of Hamelin, lured into captivity by the sweet serenades of the Pied Piper, all too many Blacks all across the country happily fell into step behind Margaret and the Eugenic racists she had placed on her Negro Advisory Council. Soon clinics throughout the South were distributing contraceptives to Blacks and Margaret’s dream of discouraging “the defective and diseased

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831 Grant, *Grand Illusions*, 97.
elements of humanity” from their “reckless and irresponsible swarming and spawning” was at last being fulfilled.834

Planned Parenthood’s genocidal strategy not only entailed birth control, but outright infanticide. This racist strategy has had enormous success. The percentage of the black population lost to abortion climbed from just over one percent by 1975 to four and a half percent by 1992. Abortion has been so rampant in black communities that by 1992 most black communities suffered as many as three abortions to every birth.835

According to BlackGenocide.org in 2009, the number of blacks executed in under three days via abortion exceeds the number of blacks lynched (an estimated 3,446) between 1882 and 1968. Today approximately three out of five black children are aborted. There has been over 13 million deaths since 1973.836 Hence one black mother argued after her daughter returned from school with Planned Parenthood literature:837

I never realized how racist those people were until I read the things they were giving Dedrea at the school clinic. They’re as bad as the Klan. Maybe worse, because they’re so slick and sophisticated. Their bigotry is all dolled up with statistics and surveys, but just beneath the surface it’s as ugly as apartheid. It’s as ugly as anything I can imagine.838

Ericka Anderson wrote in April 2008,

Last month, a pro-life student newspaper in California placed phone calls to Planned Parenthood clinics across the nation posing as donors requesting their money be designated for a “black baby” because, he said, “there are too many.” When at least four operators at different locations accepted the money, assuring the donors it would be used for an African-American

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834 Grant, Grand Illusions, 97. Citation from Margaret Sanger, The Pivot of Civilization (New York: Brentano’s, 1922), 108.
835 Grant, Grand Illusions, 99.
837 Grant, Grand Illusions, 98.
838 Ibid., 98.
woman’s abortion, the pro-life paper leaked their recorded calls to the media. 839

The promotion of black infanticide by liberal humanists legitimizes the fears of black Puritan and abolitionist, Lemuel Haynes (1753-1833). The concern of Haynes and his fellow black abolitionists was not only for the black slaves of their time, but also for black freemen in the future. 840

Liberal religion and politics [each forms of humanism] — freedom of the will and atomistic social relations—would have struck Haynes and his peers not only as sinful but also as dangerous when accepted by abolitionists. Indeed, insofar as the first black abolitionists comprehended liberal religion and politics—Haynes’s encounters with Jeffersonianism and Universalism are the clearest examples—they did consider them evil and parlous for blacks. 841

Today’s abolitionists have taken the notions of atomistic social relations and freedom of the will to their logical conclusions. The sovereignty of God, which is a doctrine that binds a nation together under one God, humanists reject, and such a rejection has indeed fostered atomistic social relations (which discourages moral accountability) and promoted freedom of the will, which exalts “a woman’s right to choose.” This deadly cocktail has destroyed the lives of many more blacks than slavery ever has. Abolitionism in secular humanism thus now means “destroy the posterity of those who were freed in the past.”

So as we can see, it is not biblical slavery that is inherently racist. It is humanism. Whether it is a slave society, or an ostensibly free society, humanism promotes anti-Semitism, black infanticide, etc. This is because humanists hate God, and because they hate God, they hate God’s moral law. And so, since God’s moral law forbids murder and

841 Ibid.
racism, humanists love murder and racism. Whenever they want to pretend they aren’t racist murderers in order to justify murder and racism, humanists simply redefine what constitutes a human being. For today’s secular humanists, redefining humanity is done in accordance with Enlightenment and Darwinian thought. This strategy of redefinition has aided secular humanists well in exterminating unborn children of all races, whom humanists consider non-persons, “just a mass of cells.”

The irony of secular humanism is that it claims to have paved the road for abolishing racism. But as the social commentator Thomas Sowell writes about the early twentieth century, a century when America became more entrenched in humanism,

Ideologically, the turn of the century was the high tide of racism in America. The doctrine of Manifest Destiny was exemplified in the Spanish-American War and the creation of the first overseas American empire. Social Darwinism was at its peak among intellectuals, and biological theories of racial differences reached new heights of scientific respectability. Leading historians began to glorify the antebellum South and to rationalize the existence of slavery there. The rising new fields of sociology, psychology, and economics were, in America, firmly in the hands of men committed to racist theories. These doctrines permeated the popular press as well.842

We must also note that it is anachronistic to project racism onto the Bible’s laws about slavery. Race-based slavery is, generally speaking, relatively new. Prior to modern times, the norm was for Europeans, Africans, Asians, etc., to enslave one another. Slavery then “was not based on race, much less on theories about race.”843 (It is in Darwinism where we find the most oppressive racial theories.) In Slavery: A World History, Milton Meltzer writes that in the ancient world, one’s color when it came to slavery was irrelevant: “Warriors, pirates, and slave dealers were not concerned with the color of a man’s skin or the shape of his nose.”844

843 Sowell, Black Rednecks and White Liberals, 113.
844 Meltzer, Slavery: A World History, 6 (Volume One).
And so to say that all slavery (including biblical slavery) is racist because American slavery was racist is as absurd as saying all civil governments want to exterminate Jews just because Nazi Germany did. How does it follow that since the civil government of Nazi Germany wanted to exterminate Jews, that all civil governments—past, present, and future—want to exterminate Jews?

And given this, how does it follow that since American slavery was allegedly racist, that all forms of private slavery—past, present, and future—are racist? Indeed, to be logically consistent, one who would say all forms of slavery are racist just because some forms of slavery have been racist, must also say all forms of civil government are racist and thereby unnecessary because some forms of civil government have been racist. No humanists—except for maybe some anarchists—would hold to this position.

Moreover, attacks on the O.T. civil laws are implicitly racist. The same God who sanctions certain forms of slavery is the same God who opposes racism. So to reject the God Who sanctions certain forms of slavery is to also reject the God Who opposes racism. In short, to reject biblical slavery is to embrace racism.

It is actually biblical slavery that gives us a standard for opposing race-based slavery. Whatever the Bible doesn’t sanction is forbidden (Deut. 4:2); thus, the Bible doesn’t sanction race-based slavery—therefore, it is forbidden. But humanism does sanction race-based slavery, since humanism denies moral absolutes.

Given that they pride themselves on opposing racism against blacks, it is ironic that secular humanists call slavery inherently racist. Africa has a long history of slavery, which continues to this very day. Moreover, the reason we had slavery in the U.S. is because Africans sold their fellow Africans into slavery.

So when white American secular humanists call slavery inherently racist, they imply that Africa has been, and still is, an inherently racist continent—and that the predominately white America is morally superior to black Africa since in America slavery is illegal. Thus if secular humanists want to be quick to argue that biblical slavery is
racist, one could in turn argue that secular humanism is racist due to its implying that Africa is racist.

In fact, in American history there was a significant number of blacks owning black slaves. Many do not know the story of a Virginia landowner named Anthony Johnson. In the 1640s Johnson acquired a servant from Africa named John Casor. Casor eventually filed in court, claiming Johnson tried to enslave him for life, violating their agreement that Casor would serve for a certain number of years. But the court on March 8, 1655 ruled against Casor, and he became a slave for life. What is interesting about this is that Johnson himself was black—a former slave who enslaved another black man. And Casor wanted to leave Johnson to work for a white man named Robert Parker. But even more ironic is “that since this is the first case in the history of American slavery to have been settled in the American judicial system,” Anthony Johnson has become “known as the ‘Father of American Slavery.’”

By the early eighteenth century the Johnson family had disappeared from the historical record. But in the hundred and fifty years that followed, many other black slaveowners imitated Johnson’s example, and for a variety of reasons. According to 1830 U.S. census records, 3,775 free blacks—living mostly in the South—owned a total of 12,760 slaves. Though the vast majority of these owned no more than a few slaves, some in Louisiana and South Carolina held as many as seventy or eighty. Nor was the South the only region to know black slaveowners. Their presence was recorded in Boston by 1724 and in Connecticut by 1783. As late as 1830 some blacks still owned slaves in Rhode Island,

Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York, as well as in the border states and the District of Columbia.

We should not be surprised that this data—unknown to most Americans—has been purged from our history books. Secular humanists want to call slavery inherently racist in order to discredit the Bible. They attempt this by (1) equating facts and myths about American slavery with biblical slavery and (2) portraying American slavery as a racist system where all slave owners were white.

But not only are there differences between American slavery and biblical slavery, but, as we have seen, blacks—regardless of whether they had good or bad intentions—were often no less willing to enslave their fellow blacks than whites. Thus it is extremely simplistic and naïve to generalize (not to mention slander) all American slavery as inherently racist. And in light of the data given, if secular humanists still insist on calling American slavery racist, then they must call the thousands of black slave owners racist. This is very unlikely, given that secular humanists consider criticizing blacks to be racist.

Slavery can actually be a means of protecting others from racism. It was Oskar Shindler who famously employed slavery as a means to protect Jews from the racist Holocaust. Every Jewish slave he acquired was one less Jew facing execution. For their work, his slaves were

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rationed food and housing—nothing more. But they had their lives (no thanks to self-righteous abolitionists who see nothing more than racism when it comes to slavery). Thus slavery here was a means of opposing racism (i.e., racist genocide). This is also a classic example of how slavery can be a means of protecting persecuted races and other groups from those who would otherwise exterminate them. The defenseless have no personal resources (money, influence, etc.) at their disposal to protect themselves from oppressors. But they can benefit from the resources of the affluent (even affluent slaveholders) by serving them and thus being under their protection.

While secular humanists pride themselves on opposing racial segregation, their preference for prisons (public slavery) over biblical punishments promotes one of the worst kinds of racial segregation: “protective custody,” or “segregation from the rest of the prison population, usually in cramped quarters with little or no chance for recreation or work.” Silberman writes that “segregation units have come to be seen as refuges from the random violence that prevails in the regular cellblocks.”

For instance, “At New York’s Green Haven prison, with an inmate population of about 1,700, 195 men were sent to segregation for disciplinary reasons in 1976, and another 115 were placed in protective segregation—74 of them at their own request.” Racial minorities number among the victims of this extremely harsh form of segregation, which wouldn’t be necessary if biblical law was followed. Ironic: secular humanists claim to oppose American racial slavery and racial segregation, then turn around and support this very thing (on a harsher level) via the prison system.

To the extent the secular humanists refrain from segregation, they employ the racist policies of assimilation. Joseph Morecraft, III, observes,

851 Silberman, Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice, 380.
852 Ibid., 381.
853 Ibid..
The solution most preferred by apostate white humanists today is total racial, religious, ethical integration and assimilation into a common culture known as “the American way of life.” This common culture is one where Biblical Christianity is viewed as divisive. It involves the forced assimilation of whites and non-whites. In this process all Christians are required to give up their distinctively Biblical Christian worldview, and the black man and woman are required to give up their identity and integrity as black people, to destroy all ties of loyalty to one’s family, history, and locality.

Such assimilation requires the black man to become a carbon copy of the white man. He must become a white black man to be absorbed into a supposedly “color-blind” society. However, to be color-blind in this sense is to be anti-God, for God is not color blind. He gave the human race its vast array of colors because He thinks they are all beautiful colors … To be color-blind is to deprive a man of his color, thereby making him white in your own eyes. That is racism.854

Chapter 30: 
Enslavement to God versus 
Enslavement to the State

By now we should see clearly that slavery is an inescapable reality. In a fallen world—where the ground is cursed (Gen. 3:17-19)—resources are not abundant enough for all men to live a subservient-free life.

Not only this, but ever since the Fall, man has been spiritually dead, separated from God and thereby enslaved to a sinful nature. This internal enslavement produces desires that inflict external enslavement upon himself and his fellow man, desires such as selfishness, greed, hate, hunger for power, pride, idolatry, atheism, etc.

Again, such desires are literally enslaving. For instance, those too lazy to either work or work hard find themselves subservient to others—family, friends, the state, loan sharks, or even slave traders—for sustenance. This applies also to the covetous man who recklessly spends his money or gambles it away. It is these kinds of mindsets that also promote theft, leaving others often penniless and reliant on others for sustenance. The hateful and power hungry will exert their will upon others by manipulation and/or coercion, often leaving their victims subservient to others. And God-hating idolaters invite God’s wrath, leaving individuals or even entire nations enslaved in one form or another (provided they even survive God’s wrath).

In short, enslaving behavior often reflects enslavement to sin. Social and civil expressions of slavery are natural concomitants to spiritual slavery. Whittaker Chambers, after rejecting communism—the world’s greatest slave-state ideology ever—wrote, “External freedom is only an aspect of internal freedom.”\(^{855}\) With slavery being a natural fact of a post-Fall world, the only question becomes how a nation deals with

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Society can either regulate slavery righteously or unrighteously; the totalitarian expression of internal, sin-induced slavery can either be minimized by liberating slave regulations, or be exacerbated.

The O.T. civil code, which acknowledges the inescapable reality of slavery, provides liberating slave regulations. The benefits of these regulations are reinforced by the rest of the O.T. civil code. Thus all of the laws of the O.T. civil code work interdependently to minimize totalitarian slavery. Most fundamentally, a society must be willing to be enslaved to God, that is, to be under His theocratic rule—first, as individuals, from the heart; second, collectively, as a nation.

Therefore, the society that chooses service to God strives to uphold slave laws in accordance with the Bible. These laws work against totalitarian external slavery. They sanction slavery for private citizens in a very limited and controlled manner. They do not sanction state slavery, but do empower the state to protect slaves from oppressive masters. These laws have the liberating effects of getting the poor out of debt, teaching minor criminals responsibility, and even exposing unbelievers to masters who will teach them the gospel, which produces internal freedom for those who believe the gospel. “Thus, there is an upward thrust to the Biblical laws concerning slavery. It is the goal of slavery to eliminate itself by producing responsible free men.”

However, since rejecting God’s rule is symptomatic of being enslaved to sin, societies that reject enslavement to God will naturally eagerly enslave themselves to a totalitarian state. Thus, during Christ’s trial, His accusers stated, “We have no king but Caesar” (Jn. 19:15c). For them, subjugation by Caesar was preferable to submission to Christ. Long before this, the Israelites often yearned to return to slavery in Egypt when they thought their security was threatened (Ex. 14:10-12; 16:1-3; 17:1-3; Num. 14:1-4). Instead of wanting their security to be in the hands of the Sovereign God, they wanted their security in the hands of a sovereign (and thereby tyrannical) state.

In another example, the Israelites rejected God’s rule and plead to be ruled like the other nations (1 Sam. 8:5-20). Stiles J. Watson writes, “By studying 1 Samuel 8:5-20, we can get a clear understanding of

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exactly what the Israelites were asking for; they were asking to be made slaves.” Stiles explains from the text:

1. The Israelites wanted a king to rule over them like all the other nations (v. 5). 2. God said their desire was a rejection of Him as their King (v. 7). 3. God tells Samuel to warn the people about what they are about to do (v. 9). 4. Samuel tells them all the ways in which they would be enslaving themselves to a human king and that they will cry out to God because of the oppression, but God will not listen (vv. 10–18). 5. The people refused to listen and demanded to be given a king to rule over them so they could be like all the other nations and so that the king would fight their battles for them (vv. 19–20).

The consequence of rejecting God was enslavement to the state. The Israelites eagerly embraced this. Enslavement to sin often deceives one into believing subjugation by man is freedom. As far as the Israelites were concerned, the following consequences of their choice to be under a king’s rule were “freedoms” compared to being under God’s rule: (1) military conscription and forced labor of their sons (v. 11, 12); (2) servitude of their daughters (v. 13); (3) confiscation and redistribution of property (v. 14); (4) high taxes (vv. 15, 17); (5) enslavement of their servants and young men (v. 16); and (6) seizure of labor resources (v. 16). Samuel finally warned, “and you shall be his slaves” (v. 17). The enslavement to the state would be so oppressive that the Israelites would severely regret their decision, but by then it would be too late (v. 18).

858 Ibid.
Chapter 31: Humanists Seek to Enslave Others

The American legislator Robert Winthrop states (1809-1894):

All societies of men must be governed in some way or other. The less they have of stringent State Government, the more they must have of individual self-government. The less they rely on public law or physical force, the more they must rely on private moral restraint.

Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them, or a power without them; either by the word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible or by the bayonet.\textsuperscript{859}

This is why secular humanists naturally support totalitarian slavery. In not being regenerated by the Holy Spirit, they lack any internal moral strength and thus promote the control of the bayonet.

Moreover, while secular humanists claim to morally oppose racism and slavery, they undermine this very claim in their denial of God. God is the source of morality, so without God, there is no basis to condemn something as immoral. And to the extent we reject any portion of the Bible (God’s Word), we legitimize immorality and thereby tyrannical slavery, which results from immorality.

Therefore, to the extent we reject any aspect of biblical slavery, we perpetuate tyrannical slavery. In short, those who reject biblical slavery do not in fact embrace no slavery—they embrace unbiblical, or tyrannical and sinful, slavery. Thus rejecting biblical slavery in the name of freedom is irrational, wicked, and self-defeating. The ultimate outcome of egalitarianism—regardless of what egalitarian humanists

the choice between slavery to man and service to God. It is therefore the question of representation: Who is represented by the State, God or autonomous man? When autonomous man is represented by the State, then tyranny or impotence is the result. Autonomous man seeks to enslave others, for he seeks to imitate God, just as Satan imitates God. The State becomes the primary agency of this enslavement process.  

Indeed, the humanist egalitarian/abolitionist, by his very nature, does not seek the equality of all men at all. This is but a pretext for what he really seeks: equality with God (Gen. 3:5)—the power to enslave others. Like all unregenerate men, he perverts the mandate to subdue the earth into a mandate to subdue his fellow man. He does not want liberty for his fellow man, but liberty for himself to subjugate his fellow man. Humanism seeks liberty in order to destroy.  

This is because humanistic notions of equality deny or diminish functional superiority, that is, that God has granted some superior roles over others (man over woman, boss over employee, parents over children, masters over slaves, etc.). Functional superiority understood biblically does not say that those of superior functions are superior in worth, because the Bible considers all men and women of all ages to be of equal worth.  

But when functional superiority is denied, equality of worth is thereby denied because when men do not submit to one another based on a natural, recognized hierarchy, then the only basis for submission becomes manipulation and power. This is because functional superiority is built into the natural order of things.  

For instance, the head of God the Son is God the Father, and God the Son is the head of man, just as the husband is the head of the wife: “But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God” (1 Cor. 11:3). (Although of course God the Father, God the Son, and God the

860 North, Victim’s Rights, 127.
Spirit are not just superior to man in function, but in worth.) There is even a hierarchy of angels (1 Thess. 4:16; Jude 9). And so to attack the natural order of things is to produce chaos, violent disorder, and tyranny.

Thus humanists can talk all they want about equality, but their actions belie their rhetoric. “Everyone in communist societies addressed one another with the egalitarian term ‘comrade.’ But some comrades had the arbitrary power of life and death over other comrades.” In the West females are said to have equal rights with males. But females on one side of the womb have the arbitrary power of life and death over males and females on the other side of the womb. During the French Revolution (“Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”), women were granted equal opportunity with the guillotine: “A spot is still shown near the Notre Dame in Paris, where women were as busy in the use of the guillotine as men; and the only difference between the two was, that the women tucked up their sleeves for the work of blood.” But such women had the arbitrary power of life and death over men and women on the other side of the guillotine. Equality in humanism thus cannot be realized until all perceived unequals—whether of higher or lower status—are exterminated. Danilevsky writes,

Here could be seen the same spirit already manifested in the night of St. Bartholomew and the French Revolution. In earlier times, the interests of “freedom” demanded the September massacre and the unrestiting work of the guillotine. The interests of political equilibrium and the salvation of civilization—which is supposedly threatened by someone—demand the preservation of the barbarity of the Turks; and the freedom, life and honor of Slavs and Greeks are sacrificed for this Moloch.

Humanists realize that their vision of equality cannot be achieved without the power of the state, so they seek to impose equality on society. Such attempts are self-defeating: “A society of natural equals then needs

862 Lorimer, *An Historical Sketch of the Protestant Church of France*, 459.
government of unlimited scope, that is, an enormous inequality of political power, in order to protect its equality."\(^{864}\)

Similarly, Thomas Sowell writes: “[T]he very processes created to do so [reduce or eliminate forms of inequality] generate other inequalities, including dangerous inequalities of power caused by expanding the role of government.”\(^{865}\) And Milton Friedman writes,

A society that puts equality—in the sense of equality of outcome—ahead of freedom will end up with neither equality nor freedom. The use of force to achieve equality will destroy freedom, and the force, introduced for good purposes, will end up in the hands of people who use it to promote their own interests.\(^{866}\)

Thus, with its totalitarian powers accumulated in the name of equality, the humanistic state creates an enormously unequal gap of power between itself and the citizens, enslaving society to do its bidding. Individuals (assuming they survive) become “the slave-labor force for some grand federal plantation.”\(^{867}\) In America slaves on this grand federal plantation include all races, including blacks, whose liberty secular humanists claim to support. So the difference between a racist private slaveholder and the secular humanist egalitarian abolitionist ruler is one of scale: a racist slaveholder’s slavery is confined to his own land, while the abolitionist ruler’s slavery entails the entire nation.\(^{868}\)


\(^{868}\) 1 Samuel 8 gives us some insight regarding the latter point: the tyrannical ruler depicted in this chapter takes several things from his people, including “your male servants and female servants” (v. 16). National slavery is the outcome; as the chapter goes on to read, “you shall be his slaves” (v. 17). Thus the very act of rulers taking away the slaves of their people contributes to national slavery. (Of course the state does have a right to free the slaves of those who do not have a lawful claim to their slaves [e.g., kidnapped slaves], or who mistreat them.)
(Notice the contrast between voluntary slavery under biblical law and compulsory slavery under humanism: in the former, debtors can voluntarily sell their services as servants; in the latter, the state sells the whole country into debt to ostensibly get certain people out of debt, building a permanent slave society in the process.)

In sum, to deny biblical (natural) hierarchy is not to be equal and without hierarchy, but to assume an unnatural, oppressive form of hierarchy in its place. Humanism trades biblical masters for tyrannical masters.

Keeping the tyranny of humanistic slavery in mind, we see the utmost importance in that the Biblical theocracy is designed to be a safe-haven for runaway slaves from humanistic nations. According to Deuteronomy 23:15, 16: “You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you. He shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place that he shall choose within one of your towns, wherever it suits him. You shall not wrong him.” John Weaver comments:

Slaves were not to be returned to pagan masters if they escaped to Israel. … So if a heathen slave got away from a heathen master and got to Israel, he could live wherever he wanted to. He was free when he got there. Now, what God is forbidding by that of course is the selling of slaves. Because even a foreign slave was not to be returned to his master. 869

Thus, Deut. 23:15, 16 not only provides a refuge for runaway slaves, it forbids a biblical theocracy from selling slaves to other nations, an important means of protecting slaves from the oppressive slavery of humanistic societies.

The differences in the slavery promoted in humanistic societies versus the slavery promoted in biblical societies are far from insignificant. In biblical societies, slavery of the body—with humane regulations—is restricted to certain circumstances, while liberation from slavery of the soul is encouraged by the promotion of the gospel.

869 John Weaver, Where We Are & How We Got Here: #4 of 14.
But in humanistic societies, slavery of the body—no matter how inhumane it might be—knows no boundaries, and the continued enslavement of the soul is encouraged by the denial of the gospel and the promotion of false religions. For instance, regarding the humanistic societies of ancient Greece and Rome, Fustel de Coulanges writes,

The city had been founded upon a religion, and constituted like a church. Hence … its omnipotence and the absolute empire which it exercised over its members. In a society established on such principles, individual liberty could not exist. The citizen was subordinate in everything, and without any reserve, to the city; he belonged to it body and soul. The religion which had produced the state, and the state which supported the religion, sustained each other, and made but one; these two powers, associated and confounded, formed a power almost superhuman, to which the soul and the body were equally enslaved.870

The philosophy of enslaving both body and soul can be said of America, where the religion of humanism dominates all spheres of life: family, education, business, state, and even the churches, many if not most of which are really humanistic but sometimes employ Christian terminology. Americans thus are trained to work, interact, think, and pray for society and the state as if they are gods. Humanism is totalitarian rule over body and soul.

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Part Three Epilogue: The One True Liberator

The Lord Jesus Christ’s Great Commission is the means by which to gradually free nations from the bondage of slavery throughout history. Thus, although “Wherever there is sin, there must remain some traces of the institution of indentured servitude,” “there is progressive release from the visible manifestations of this system as men and societies progressively conform themselves to the ethical terms of God’s covenant.”

Those serious about freeing slaves must themselves first be freed by Christ, the one true liberator. Otherwise, they will never have freedom—let alone understand it. Unsaved men are totally and incorrigibly enslaved to sin (sin is violating God’s law, 1 Jn. 3:4). They are neither able to seek God, nor do they desire to (Rom. 3:9-12; 8:7, 8; 1 Cor. 2:14). As such they seek self-imposed slavery. And their sin-nature naturally drives them to seek to enslave others; the unregenerate are brutal slave masters by nature. Not only this, but the enslavement of eternal hellfire awaits them in the next life (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Mk. 9:47-48), and they labor to bring others into this eternal enslavement with them.

But Jesus, the one true abolitionist—God Who came in the flesh—came to set free even the worst of sinners (Jn. 8:34-36). He lived in perfect obedience to God’s law and suffered and died on the cross (1 Pet. 3:18; 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Thess. 5:10) to credit His righteousness to (Rom. 4:1-12)—and to pay the penalty of sin for—all who believe that He did these things in their stead (Jn. 3:16). Those enslaved to sin then must repent of their sins (1 Jn. 1:9; Ac. 3:19), confess Jesus is Lord, and believe God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10:9-10; 13). Since unbelievers are enslaved to their sin nature and unable to turn to God on their own, it is God through His irresistible grace Who causes certain individuals—those whom God has predestined for salvation (Eph. 1:5)—to believe in Christ (Jn. 6:44).

871 North, Tools of Dominion, 124.
And all those predestined by God for salvation have also been predestined by God to serve Him in obedience (albeit imperfectly in this life) (Eph. 2:10)—to live in the freedom of being His slave. Only in this way of becoming slaves to God can men know true liberty, an eternal liberty beginning in this life—even if they suffer physical enslavement while on earth.
CONCLUSION

The problem with civil injustice is not God, but man. The reason man views God’s ways as unjust is because man is by nature unjust. And this explains why man considers living under God and the O.T. civil code to be harsh and barbaric. But as we have seen, what is harsh and barbaric is really the civil code of autonomous, humanistic man. As the Scripture says, “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel” (Prov. 12:10c) (KJV). For humanistic man, God’s law is counterintuitive: “Were I to write for him my laws by the ten thousands, they would be regarded as a strange thing” (Hos. 8:12).

Humanistic man hates biblical theocracy, civil punishments, and slave laws. But those who reject biblical theocracy become their own gods and thereby demand their own theocracy, where they will seek to enslave their fellow citizens so they can demonstrate their “omnipotence” over others. The humanistic power state’s ultimate means of subjugation is through cruel civil punishments. T.S. Eliot writes, “If you will not have God (and He is a jealous God) you should pay your respects to Hitler or Stalin.”

But all unrepentant humanistic states Christ will subjugate: “Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him” (emphasis mine) (Ps. 2:10-12).

America cannot rest its hope on an autonomous tripartite judiciary, legislature, and executive. Rather, it must look to a sovereign Triune judiciary, legislature, and executive: “For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us” (Is. 33:22). God is our transcendent basis for justice. As Francis Schaeffer writes,

[Justice is] based on God’s written Law, back through the New Testament to Moses’ written Law; and the content and authority

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872 T. S. Eliot, Christianity and Culture (Eliot Press, 2008), 50.
of that written Law is rooted back to Him who is the final reality. Thus, neither church nor state were equal to, let alone above, that Law. The base for law is not divided, and no one has the right to place anything, including king, state, or church, above the contents of God’s Law.\(^{873}\)

Just as King David, who, when faced with either God’s punishment or man’s after sinfully taking a census, said, “Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man” (2 Sam. 24:14b), America must come to see that it is God’s civil justice that is merciful, not man’s. America must, like King Josiah, rediscover the Book of the Law.

And just as Josiah upon reading it stamped out idolatry, so Americans must stamp out idolatry in all of its spheres—starting individually from the heart and ending collectively with the state. (This of course would require mass conversions to Christianity by means of God’s sovereign grace.) God’s infallible word tells us that “if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). Thus God is merciful.

And, God is just.

APPENDICES
Appendix A:

The Biblical Basis for the Old Testament
Civil Code’s Abiding Validity

The sovereign rule of King Jesus extends throughout all of heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18b). He is “the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15b; cf. Eph. 1:20-22), and so all earthly rulers are to submit to His rule (Rom. 13:1-4; cf. First Commandment, Ex. 20:3). Psalm 2:10-12 gives a stern warning: “Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” Herod refused to do this, and God struck him down (Ac. 12:22, 23).

Submitting to God’s rule entails obedience to God’s law—otherwise, the idea of submission would be a mere abstraction. King Jesus says, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (Lk. 6:46). Notice that the aforementioned Psalm commands rulers to “Serve the LORD,” and one does not serve without obedience. Thus, “Kingship and law are inseparable. A king rules by his law. Law is the expression of the will of the king.” And so rulers demonstrate they serve God by obedience to God’s law, which entails enforcing God’s civil law.

So from here it is settled that rulers must enforce God’s law. However, many hold to a revealed law/natural law dichotomy, which says that some (Jews) are accountable to one civil law, while others (Gentiles) are accountable to another. For the former, it’s special revelation (the Bible’s civil code); for the latter, it’s natural law.

However, not only is natural law by itself insufficient for civil government (see Appendix C), but Christ fulfilled the law, not laws, i.e., one law each for Jews and Gentiles (see Matt. 5:17.). He fulfilled every

874 John Weaver, The Sovereignty of God and Civil Government (Linden, IN: Linden Baptist Church, n.d.), 81.
iota, every dot (v. 18, cf. v. 19)—and He did so to save His elect, which includes Jews and Gentiles alike (Rom. 4:1-12). Since every iota and dot includes the Bible’s civil code,\textsuperscript{875} and since Christ fulfilled every iota and dot for certain Gentiles, then Gentiles are required to obey the Bible’s civil code (cf. Rom. 1:32; 2:15).

As such, God does not have different standards of civil justice for different nations. Israel had “the same rule for the sojourner and for the native” (Lev. 24:22b; cf. vv. 16-23). “In Israel, the sojourner or stranger was the Gentile who lived in the midst of God’s people.”\textsuperscript{876} Some Gentile strangers joined the covenant community, while others didn’t (Ex. 12:48; Ezek. 44:9). But whatever the case, in Israel the same civil law applied—whether it was to God’s covenant people the Israelites, Gentiles whom joined the covenant community, or Gentiles outside the covenant community.\textsuperscript{877}

Nations require God’s special revelation to avoid casting off restraint (Prov. 29:18), and God demands nations to be exalted by righteousness (Prov. 14:34a). God’s moral laws given to Israel, including its moral civil laws (the only civil code based on special revelation ever) provides the standard for both obligations, being the divinely revealed

\textsuperscript{875} George Gillespie discusses the theologian Piscator’s view on how Christ fulfilled the judicial law:
“(2.) Christ’s words (Matt. 5:17), Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill, are comprehensive of the judicial law, it being a part of the law of Moses. Now he could not fulfill the judicial law, except either by his practice, or by teaching others still to observe it; not by his own practice, for he would not condemn the adulteress (Jn. 8:11), nor divide the inheritance (Luke 12:13-14). Therefore it must be by his doctrine for our observing it.” Gillespie, Wholesome Severity Reconciled With Christian Liberty.

\textsuperscript{876} Pipa, The Lord’s Day, 51.

\textsuperscript{877} Some argue that the O.T. civil laws were given just to the Jews because God covenanted with them specifically. But as we have pointed out, in Israel the non-covenanted stranger was held to the same civil law as the covenanted Israelite. Moreover, the laws given to Israel were the model for other nations to follow (Deut. 4:5-8). Thus it doesn’t logically follow that a unique covenant with a group necessarily translates totally into a unique law-code with that group of people (whether or not there are in fact certain unique laws within that covenant). The laws under the Mosaic covenant no more necessarily applied only to Israel anymore than the Epistles written to those under the New Covenant necessarily apply only to the N.T. Church. We certainly cannot hold that because the Ten Commandments were given to Israel, the Ten Commandments applied only to Israel. And the moral O.T. civil laws are the application of the Ten Commandments to the state.
standard of righteousness for the nations. Deuteronomy 4:5-8 teaches that Israel’s moral laws were a model for other nations to follow:

See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

Indeed, as Daniel F.N. Ritchie observes, Paul described “the Jews as instructors of the foolish (Rom. 2:20),” and “the reason why he said this was because they were entrusted with the law that was also meant to be a guide for the Gentiles as to righteous conduct (Rom. 3:1-2, 31).”

Moreover, as Isaiah 24:5 reads, “The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant” (Is. 24:5). On this E. J. Young observes:

Just as Palestine itself, the Holy Land, had become profane through the sin of its inhabitants (Num. 35:33; Deut. 21:19 [should say Deut. 21:1-9]; Jer. 3:9; and Ps. 106:38), so also the entire earth became profane when the ordinances given to it were violated. … Transgression is against the law of God, and this is expressed by the terms law, statute, everlasting covenant. The laws which God has revealed to His people bind all mankind; and hence, the work of the Law of God written on the human heart, for example, may be described under such terms.

Perhaps David had in mind to proclaim even Israel’s civil law when he wrote, “I will also speak of your testimonies before kings and shall not be put to shame,” (Ps. 119:46). The non-Israelite pagan king

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878 Ritchie, A Conquered Kingdom, 254.
Nebuchadnezzar, after being humiliated by God, decreed blasphemy to be a capital offense (Dan. 3:29)—a sanction harmonious with the law of Moses (albeit with a different execution method, and with the added penalty of destroying the offender’s house).

And had the Canaanites kept the statutes and rules of the Israelites (which included civil laws), then they would not have been vomited out of the land (Lev. 18:24-30, 20:22-23). God commanded the Israelites to “not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you …” (Lev. 20:23)—which caused God to detest the Canaanites—but to instead keep God’s statutes and rules (Lev. 20:22). Within this context, specific civil laws are mentioned as examples of laws the Israelites were to keep. Listed is the requirement for the man who lies sexually with a slave woman assigned to another man to make compensation (Lev. 19:20, 21), and the requirement of the state to execute those guilty of child sacrifice (Lev. 20:2); cursing one’s father or mother (v. 9); adultery (v. 10); incest (vv. 11, 12, 14); sodomy (v. 13); bestiality (vv. 15, 16); and sorcery (v. 27).

The O.T. civil code remains the specially revealed standard of righteousness for the nations: in Matthew 5:17-20, Christ upholds the entirety of the law, which remains in effect “until heaven and earth pass away.” He also warns “whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same,” and says of the

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880 Some argue that the O.T. civil laws were culturally unique to Israel. According to their logic, the O.T. civil laws are not obligatory, and so a nation’s justice system should conform to the culture. It is true the law addressed certain obviously unique situations to certain cultures (rooftop railings, goring ox, etc.). However, the addressing of obviously unique cultural conditions by certain laws does not grant one license to dismiss the underlying moral principle behind those laws, nor does it grant one license to arbitrarily dismiss those laws that obviously do not address unique cultural conditions, such as the capital sanctions for violating portions of the Ten Commandments. (Since the Ten Commandments apply to all men at all times, why would punishments for violating these commandments be culturally unique?) This would have the effect of dismissing Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:17-20.

Moreover, if a nation’s justice system should conform to culture, then a pro-statist culture would justify the state having totalitarian powers, and a brutal culture would justify the state engaging in torture and genocide. Conforming justice to culture amounts to moral relativism. But Christ is not to conform to culture, but culture to Christ. As such, His law is not to conform to culture, but culture to His law.

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scribes and Pharisees—those who had an extremely low view of God’s law—“For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Only God has the right to add or take away from His commands, not man; hence, Christ’s warning against “whoever [referring to man] relaxes”; man is not authorized to make void a single jot or tittle of the law. Unless there are Scriptures abrogating the O.T. civil code, we must assume that it remains in effect. As Deuteronomy 4:2a teaches, “You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it” (emphasis mine) (cf. Deut. 12:32).

We by no means argue every single detail of the O.T. civil code applies today. For instance, because the sacrificial system with its priests is abolished, perhaps the capital sanction against a priest’s daughter for prostituting herself (Lev. 21:9) is abolished (unless the underlying moral principle applies to daughters of church leaders in general, in which case the law may apply today to daughters of church elders).881 We simply argue that, in light of such passages as Matt. 5:17-20 and Deut. 4:2 (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16, 17), every civil law that cannot be shown to be abolished must be assumed to be in effect today, and cannot be nullified by man. As George Gillespie notes: “Though we have clear and full scriptures in the New Testament for abolishing the ceremonial law, yet we no where read in all the New Testament of the abolishing of the judicial law, so far as it did concern the punishing of sins against the moral law …”882

We see an example of Jesus indicting the scribes and Pharisees for nullifying God’s command to honor father and mother, as well as the command “Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die” (Matt. 15:1-9). (Notice that this command entails a civil penal sanction.) Jesus elsewhere indicts the scribes and Pharisees for neglecting the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt. 23:23). Since justice is a weightier matter, the O.T. civil code is a weightier matter,

Similar to the cultural argument against the O.T. civil laws is the argument that nations are free to uphold these laws, but they are also free to reject them as well. In short, God’s law is optional. This argument has the same problems as the cultural objection, and also misses the fact that law (particularly God’s) by its very nature is not optional, but obligatory.

881 In light of the abrogation of the sacrificial system, how can Matt. 5:17-20 uphold the entirety of the law until heaven and earth pass away? See Appendix B.
882 Gillespie, Wholesome Severity Reconciled With Christian Liberty.
since this code is just. Hebrews 2:2 reads: “For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution …”

When the tax collector Zacchaeus repented of his sins, he acknowledged the requirement of restitution according to the O.T. civil code. He told Jesus, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold” (Luke 19:8b; cf. Ex. 22:1). Jesus didn’t reply by telling Zacchias, “Don’t worry about restitution, since the O.T. civil laws are done away with.” Rather, Jesus said, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:9b-10).

Also in His earthly ministry, Christ said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4b). Here Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy, one of the very books of the Bible that details the O.T. civil code. In using the generic word “man”—which includes Jew and Gentile alike—the truth that man shall live by every word of God applies to all mankind (past, present, and future). Hence, all civil governments are bound by the Bible’s civil laws, since these laws are part of every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

The Lord’s Prayer reminds us to pray that God’s will (i.e., His law) be done “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10b). Earth encompasses all civil governments. This affirms the requirement of civil governments to uphold biblical law as it does in Deuteronomy 4:5-8, where the law given to the Israelites was a model for other nations to follow—i.e., the law was a light to the nations.

Indeed, the Lord’s Prayer is from the Sermon on the Mount, the same sermon where Christ’s disciples are commanded to be a “light of the world” (Matt. 5:14b) by doing “good works” (5:16b), defined as obedience to God’s law (including its civil laws) (5:17-20)—which is required “until heaven and earth pass away”—that is, until God’s will is done “on earth as it is in heaven.” And we can expect God’s will to be done on earth, for Isaiah 51:4 reads: “Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.” Indeed, Christ “will not grow
faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the
coastlands wait for his law” (Is. 42:4b; cf. Is. 9:6-7).

And then there is the Great Commission, given by Christ prior to
His ascension:

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on
ey earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all
nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have
commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of
the age” (Matt. 28:18-20).

As we pointed out earlier, the fact that Christ has all authority in heaven
and on earth means that His sovereignty extends to every area of
creation—civil government included. This fact alone logically implies
rulers must obey God’s civil laws.

Not only this, but Christ commands all nations to observe all that
Christ has commanded the apostles. These commands are not only those
that Christ gave on His earthly ministry. Being a person of the Trinity,
Christ is God, and therefore the laws God gave to Moses—including its
civil code—are also Christ’s commands (as well as God the Father’s and
God the Spirit’s). “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and
forever” (Heb. 13:8); He did not change His moral standards during His
earthly ministry. Quite the opposite: during His earthly ministry, Christ
upheld the moral standards—including the moral civil standards—that
were given to Moses (Matt. 5:17-20; 15:1-9).

The Apostle Paul upheld aspects of the O.T. civil code in Ac. 23,
when, after being struck by orders of the high priest, he says, “God is
going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me
according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be
struck?” (v. 3b). Paul is angered because the high priest’s violation of the
O.T. civil code; in this case, the judicial case law against punishing
someone before he is found guilty (Deut. 25:1, 2; Jn. 7:51).

And, upon realizing that it was a high priest whom he called
God’s judgment upon, Paul repents, due to the validity of Exodus 22:28,
an O.T. case law that relates to the O.T. civil code: “And Paul said, ‘I did
not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, “You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people”’’ (Ac. 23:5).

And then in Acts 25, Paul, while on trial, recognizes the O.T. civil code’s capital sanctions in particular. Paul states, “For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die” (v. 11a, KJV) (emphases mine). The term “worthy of death” is also used in Deuteronomy 21:22 in regards to any capital sanction authorized by God (see KJV). Moreover, the offenses Paul refers to as being worthy of death are offenses against the Jews, for in verse 10 Paul says during his trial, “To the Jews I have done no wrong …” Thus, Paul affirms the O.T. civil code’s abiding validity, since the law of the Jews was the O.T. civil code, and Paul acknowledges that violating it is worthy of death, not unworthy of death, which would be the case if these sanctions no longer apply.883

If in the New Covenant era the O.T. civil code has been annulled, this would have been the perfect opportunity for the outspoken Apostle to denounce its capital sanctions as being murderous, and hence unlawful (just as John the Baptist denounced Herod’s immorality in Mark 6:18 as being unlawful). Indeed, “Had Paul deemed capital punishment evil, he would not have urged its consideration.”884 We must also note that the word “any” (in “any thing worthy of death”) implies a plurality of capital sanctions, not just one. This refutes the view that says in the New Covenant era, only one capital sanction (for murder) is sanctioned.

Romans 1:28-32, speaking of the Gentiles who reject God, also uses the phrase “worthy of death”:

“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are

gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

On this text Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., writes:

the Greek word *dikaioma*, which Paul employs in the phrase “although they know the *ordinance* of God,” is properly translated: “regulation, requirement, commandment, statute.” The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* calls such a rendering “the most common” sense of the word in the New Testament, as do Arndt-Gingrich, Abbott-Smith, and Thayer. It is the very word mentioned by Paul just a few verses later as a stipulation from God’s Law: “Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements (*dikaioma*) of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?” (Rom. 2:26). It occurs again in Romans 8:4: “… that the righteous requirement (*dikaioma*) of the law might be fulfilled in us” (Rom. 8:4). In fact, it is frequently used of the specific requirements of God’s Law (Luke 1:6; Heb. 9:1; extra-biblical: Barnabas 4:11; 1 Clement 2:8; 35:7).

Thus, *TDNT* observes that in Romans 1:32, “the reference is to the knowledge of God’s statutes or ordinances which obtains among men.” 885

Some argue that “worthy of death” in Romans refers not to a capital sanction, but eternal condemnation, since the O.T. civil code doesn’t punish some of the sins mentioned, such as envy, insolence, unlovingness, and boastfulness. However, Gentry argues that “‘such things’ in the statement ‘those who practice such things are worthy of death’” should not be viewed individualistically, but distributively.

Paul’s main focus here is on idolatry. It is because of idolatry that God reprobates these men (Rom. 1:23-24; also note the specific reference to idolatry in the discussion of God’s Law in 2:17-23). Also, it is common in Scripture to associate wide-ranging immorality as a concomitant of idolatrous worship (cf. Lev. 18; Deut. 12:29-13:18; 18:9-14; Rom. 1:20ff).

Surely the idea impressed upon the readers is not that some idolaters are merely “whisperers” (Rom. 1:29). These sins are found clumped in idolatrous communities. And as a complex of moral behavior involving specific capital crimes (e.g., homosexual conduct, murder, etc.), these multiple sins/crimes merit capital sanctions. These people are “filled [Gk. perfect passive participle] with all unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:29) and are justly subject to capital sanctions, as they “know” (Rom. 1:32; cf. 2:14-16).886

Romans 12:19 and 13:1-10 includes statements we would expect if the O.T. civil laws are required today. First, personal vengeance is prohibited: “Beloved, never avenge yourselves …” (Rom. 12:19a). (Compare with Ex. 23:4, 5; Lev. 19:17-18). Second, vengeance belongs to God: “leave it [vengeance] to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord’” (Rom. 12:19b). (Compare with Deut. 1:17; 2 Chron. 19:6).

Third, civil rulers answer to God: “For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” (Rom. 13:1b; cf. 13:2, 4, 6). (Compare with 1 Sam. 12:14). Fourth, civil rulers are granted the sword to kill the wicked: “But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer” (Rom. 13:4b). (Compare with the O.T. capital sanctions.) That rulers do not bear the sword in vain demonstrates the state’s authority to kill.887

887 Some deny that the term “sword” here symbolizes the authority to take life. However, swords are not intended for backrubs, but for cutting heads off with. And Bahnsen writes, “The civil leader ‘does not bear the sword in vain’; this reference cannot possibly be restricted to lesser forms of punishment but expressly authorizes the most extreme penalty: death. The ‘sword’ properly symbolizes the death penalty (cf. for what the ‘sword’ represents: Matt. 26:52; Acts 12:2; Heb. 11:37; Rev. 13:10; 340
Fifth, multiple capital sanctions are authorized. Many hold that nations are only bound to the Noahic covenant, with its single death penalty for murder (Gen. 9:6), and so Romans 13 does not authorize additional capital sanctions of the law of Moses. However, if this is the case, why doesn’t Rom. 13 specify that rulers wield the executing authority of the sword for murders? Instead, rulers are granted authority to kill evildoers in general; the ruler is “an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer” (v. 4b). Indeed, the text mentions a plurality of evil works subject to the terror of the sword of the state: “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil” (v. 3a) (KJV). So there are several evil works subject to capital punishment. (Compare with the plurality of O.T. capital sanctions).

Sixth, the sword of civil rulers deters the wicked from committing evil: “For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad” (Rom. 13:3a; cf. Rom. 13:4). (Compare with Deut. 13:11; 19:20; 21:21). Seventh, the purpose of taxes are to maintain justice: “Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing” (Rom. 13:5, 6). (Compare with the O.T. civil code, which too is focused on justice instead of such things as socialism [cf. Heb. 2:2], which implies the main purpose of taxes in the O.T. was for justice as well.)

Eighth, God’s law defines what constitutes punishable behavior (i.e., bad conduct): “For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad” (Rom. 13:3a; cf. 13:4; also consider 13:8-10). (Compare with the O.T. civil code, which distinguishes which sins constitute crimes). The only possible standard for measuring good and bad conduct in the civil realm is God’s law, since God’s law, by the very nature of the case, informs us of what is good and what is evil.

888 However, if we reject the applicability of the O.T. civil laws today, we are left wondering just what sins constitute bad conduct in the civil realm. As such any interpretation of Romans 13 that rejects the abiding validity of the O.T. civil code would allow for rulers to either arbitrarily pick and choose which sins to punish with the sword, or to strive to punish all sins with the sword.

Ulpian, Digest 1.18.6; Tacitus, Hist. 3.68; Dio Cassius 42.27).” Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 428.

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Ninth, rulers are required to rule by biblical law. This is seen in light of Romans 13:7, 8, which discusses what people owe one another, and Romans 13:8-10, which upholds God’s law. Greg L. Bahnsen writes,

In Romans 13:7 “that which is due” has the same root as “to owe” in verse 8. Verse 7 says to render to each his due, and verse 8 says nothing is due to anyone except love—that is, the fulfilling of God’s law (v. 10). The conclusion should be that what is due to the state is obedience to God’s law, and if this is what is its due, then the law of God is the area of the state’s assigned function. What Caesar must render unto God as the things which are God’s includes his obedience to, and enforcement of, God’s law within the nation.889

Thus, civil rulers are indirectly obligated to enforce God’s civil law because citizens owe the state obedience to God’s law, which includes the civil aspects of God’s law. Not only this, but since the command “Owe no one anything, except to love each other” applies to all men, it also applies directly to civil rulers, who love by enforcing biblical civil law.

Indeed, “the fulfilling of the law” (v. 10) is equated with the command “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 9)—a command which, along with the great commandment, Christ said “all the Law and the Prophets” depend on (Matt. 22:37-40). Moreover, “the fulfilling of the law” (v. 10) is what Christ upholds in Matthew 5:17, a law which remains in force “until heaven and earth pass away” (Matt. 5:18b). Here again, the Law and the Prophets are in view (Matt. 5:17). The important point here is that the Law and the Prophets are still binding in the New Covenant era, and since the Law and the Prophets includes the O.T. civil code, the O.T. civil code remains binding in the New Covenant era as well.

Tenth, the state’s authority is limited. (Compare with the O.T. civil code, which only permits the state to punish certain sins.)

The idea of rendering unto the state the things which are its due (e.g., honor and tribute) in Romans 13:7 has as its background the

statement of Jesus to “render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). This definitely implies a restriction of state authority within certain prescribed limits. Thus the state has a specifically assigned task.\textsuperscript{890}

Some final words on Romans 13: The text teaches that the civil magistrate is not granted autonomy as an avenger for his own wrath, but as a servant for God to execute God’s wrath (v. 4). Judgment—wrath—belongs to God. Man is forbidden to execute his own wrath (Deut. 1:17; 2 Chron. 19:6; cf. Prov. 29:26). Right before Romans 13, we are told “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord’” (Rom. 12:19).

The O.T. civil law’s penal sanctions detail which sins the magistrate is to inflict God’s wrath upon, as well as how, and to what degree, God’s wrath should be inflicted upon those sins. Only by consulting God can a ruler know that his punishments are just: “I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly” (Prov. 8:14-16).

When we reject the applicability of the O.T. civil laws, rulers are left without an objective basis for knowing whether their punishments reflect God’s wrath or man’s. Man’s punishments can be extremely disproportionate; for example, petty thieves might have their hands dismembered, while murderers might get three-year prison sentences.

We not turn to 1 Timothy 1:8-11, which reads:

But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious

\textsuperscript{890} Ibid., 366. We address Matthew 22:21 in Appendix B.
gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust (NKJV).

Many hold that this text speaks of the civil use of the law, since it mentions sins that are considered crimes in the Mosaic law: murder (Ex. 20:13; 21:14), manslaying (Ex. 21:22–25), fornication (Deut. 22:29), sodomy (Lev. 20:13), kidnapping (Ex. 21:16), and perjury (Deut. 19:15–21). (Adam Clarke believes that murder of father and mother might not be in view, but striking father or mother, which is also a crime [Ex. 21:15].) Also, the text mentions the sin of lying. While this is not always a civil crime, it can be. Lying can be perjury, and, as Gary North writes, “Lying is not a crime unless it accompanies fraud or slander, where an identifiable injury to a third party takes place. Fraud in general is prohibited by the law prohibiting false weights and measures (Lev. 19:35–36).”

The terms that precede these, “lawless,” “insubordinate,” “the ungodly,” and “sinners,” might be understood as the general character of criminals. Gary North considers the terms “un holy and profane” as the general category of crimes, that is, “sins that are lawfully punished by the imposition of civil sanctions on convicted perpetrators.” “An unholy person has violated a moral boundary. A profane person has violated sacred space or sacred property. This would include murder: destroying the image of God in men (Gen. 9:6). Certain crimes represent unholy behavior.”

Alternatively, some terms that precede murder, kidnapping, etc., might describe offenses against the first table of the law. For James R. Willson, while “The lawless and insubordinate” could be a general

891 “But I think the original does not necessarily imply the murder of a father or of a mother; patralwv comes from patera, a father, and aloiaw, to strike, and may mean simply beating or striking a father or mother: this is horrible enough; but to murder a parent out-herods Herod.” Adam Clarke, Adam Clarke’s Bible Commentary. Retrieved July 28, 2010, from http://www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarke.htm.

892 Gary North, Hierarchy and Dominion: An Economic Commentary on First Timothy (Harrisonburg, VA: Dominion Educational Ministries, Inc., 2006), 43.

893 Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., e-mail message to author, March 29, 2008.

894 Ibid.

895 Ibid.
statement about those who need to be restrained by the law’s civil penalties.\(^{896}\)

By “the ungodly and sinners the unholy and profane,” he [the Apostle Paul] evidently designates profane swearers and Sabbath breakers. He who takes the name of the Lord in vain, is a profane man, and he is an unholy man who does not remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Can any man doubt that the Apostle considered Sabbath violation, ungodly, sinful, unholy and profane? For it, then, the penal laws were enacted. That by “the ungodly, sinners, unholy and profane,” he does not intend those who violate the second table is certain, for these he enumerates in the subsequent clauses.\(^{897}\)

Finally, we see a presumption of continuity with the O.T. in Paul’s statement, “and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” Given this presumption, one might understand Paul to be urging the reader to presume the abiding validity of all other moral civil laws in the O.T. not mentioned (besides any particular O.T. civil law that might be abrogated elsewhere in the N.T.).

One part of the text in 1 Timothy is similar to the Romans 13 discourse on the duties of magistrates. Compare “the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate,” with “For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad” (Rom. 13:3a). In each case, the use of the law is not for righteous behavior, but for wicked behavior.

Some believe that another use of the law is in view in 1 Timothy 1:8-11 other than the civil use. For instance, some might hold that the use of the law in view is the pedagogic use, where, “By providing conviction of sin and creating a sense of spiritual need in the sinner, the law was a tutor which brought him to Christ.”\(^{898}\) Or, some might hold


\(^{897}\) Ibid.

\(^{898}\) Bahnsen, *By This Standard*, 202.
that the use of the law in view is the didactic use, where “the law supplies a rule for life to believers.”

Daniel F.N. Ritchie, however, argues that since the use of the law discussed in 1 Timothy 1 is restricted to the unrighteous (“the law is not made for a righteous person”), these two uses of the law are ruled out. This is because in both the pedagogic and didactic uses of the law, the law is of use to the righteous. As such 1 Tim. 1 can’t refer to the pedagogic use, since, while the law can be used in evangelizing the unrighteous to show them their need for Christ, “the law still shows believers their need of Christ.” Neither can 1 Tim. 1 refer to the didactic use, since “the law is still of use to the righteous [Christians] as their way of life.” “Thus it must refer to the political use of the law—the law's function in restraining the wicked.”

However, even if it is the case that some other use of the law is in view other than the civil use, it seems the civil use of the law is at least implied. First, even if the text is focused on a non-civil use of the law, no one would dispute that the text lists sins (e.g., murder, kidnapping) that were crimes in the O.T. And, keeping this in mind,

If the crime is still a sin [e.g., if kidnapping, which was a civil crime, is still sinful-S.H.], you have a major argument eliminated for annulling the sanction. For example, if it were still disgraceful not to serve as a kinsman-redeemer, you would assume that wearing only one shoe would still be a sanction. We say that the sanction doesn't apply today because the violation is no longer a violation.

In short, the requirement of one who refuses to serve as a kinsman-redeemer to wear one shoe is annulled since the O.T. requirement to be a kinsman-redeemer itself is annulled. Such refusal is not a sin, and thus it cannot be a crime. But by that same token, the civil sanction against convicted kidnappers is not annulled since the O.T. law against kidnapping remains in force. As 1 Timothy 1:10 indicates, kidnapping is

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899 Ibid.
900 Daniel F. N. Ritchie, e-mail message to author, July 26, 2009.
901 Ibid.
902 Ibid.
903 Michael H. Warren, Jr., e-mail message to author, April 3, 2010.
still a sin, and thus it seems it would still be a crime as well. And so since the several acts mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:8-11 are still considered to be sins in the New Covenant era, then it seems the O.T. criminal sanctions against those sins should be considered crimes in the New Covenant era as well.

Second, after listing several specific sins, the Apostle Paul writes, “and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” “Sound doctrine” cannot be limited to doctrine explicitly stated in the New Testament, since “sound doctrine” has in view the law itself; the phrase is mentioned in light of the law. That is, prior to mentioning “sound doctrine,” the sentence reads (v. 8), “But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully …” Thus O.T. law is still lawful to use. And so even if 1 Timothy 1:8-11 directly has in view another use of the law than the civil use, it would still seem to indirectly affirm the law’s civil use, since the civil law is part of O.T. law. The text’s upholding of O.T. law in general would uphold O.T. civil law in particular.

So, for example, if the text has in mind the didactic use (which provides the standard for Christian obedience), then the text would imply that O.T. civil law (along with any N.T. modifications to it that there might be) is God’s standard of obedience for Christian civil rulers.

Or, if the text has in mind the pedagogic use, that is, showing someone his need for Christ due to his falling short of perfectly following the law, then the laws pertaining to civil crimes could be understood as a means to show someone his violation of these laws by his denial of these laws as the proper standard of civil government. Or, if he is or was a civil ruler, then the laws pertaining to civil crimes could be understood as a means to show him his violation of these laws by his refusal to strive to have these laws enforced. In short, it would be to show him his falling short of God’s perfect standard of civil justice. Since sin is the transgression of the law (1 Jn. 3:4), it is just as much a sin to violate a civil law (which includes rejecting its use in the civil sphere) as it is to violate laws related to the individual, family, or church. The civil laws do not merely dictate the actions of civil government; along with all of God’s laws, they are God’s perfect, holy standard of righteousness which show man his need for Christ.
But our major point is this: if in fact 1 Timothy 1:8-11 does not have the O.T. civil code directly in mind, the text’s presumption of continuity nevertheless seems to uphold the code.

Second Timothy 3:16, 17 continues Paul’s theme of presumption of continuity with the O.T.: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” Note how it says “All Scripture” is relevant to “every good work”—Scripture is relevant for every area of life. This means then that good laws for societies must be based on the civil laws of Scripture. Hence to deny the abiding validity of the O.T. civil code is to deny the force of this passage.

One might object and argue that since we no longer are required to make animal sacrifices and obey the dietary laws, then we can’t really know for sure that this text upholds the Bible’s civil code either. But the only way to non-arbitrarily interpret the text is to assume all scriptures are binding except those that the Bible itself abrogates. (And the Bible abrogates the sacrificial system and the dietary laws, but not the civil code.) Otherwise, everyone could arbitrarily decide for themselves what “all Scripture” means by picking and choosing those laws in the Bible that they desire to obey. Such a reading would destroy any objective meaning of the text.

We move on to Hebrews 2:2-3a (NASB), which reads: “For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” This is an a fortiori argument (from the lesser to the greater) establishing the abiding validity of the O.T. civil code.

The greater, apostasy (“if we neglect so great a salvation”), justly deserves eternal punishment (hell), with no hope of this punishment being set aside (“how will we escape”). This builds on the foundation of the lesser—the violation of O.T. civil sanctions (“every transgression and disobedience”), which justly deserves temporal punishment (“received a just penalty”), with no hope of this punishment being set aside (“if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable”).
In short, the argument for the unalterable, just punishment for the greater offense (apostasy) grounds itself on the unalterable, just punishment for the lesser offense (violation of the civil sanctions); since the justice of the civil sanctions are unalterable, how much more unalterable is the justice for committing apostasy. Therefore, the justice and abiding validity of the O.T. civil sanctions remain in force.

To deny the abiding validity of the civil sanctions (the lesser) is to destroy the foundation that the greater builds itself on. This is because if the sanctions no longer apply, then they have no abiding justice. If they have no abiding justice, then the justice for apostasy (hell) may likewise be mitigated—which is an unacceptable interpretation, in light of the full counsel of God.

Similar to Hebrews 2:2-3a, Hebrews 10:28, 29 is also an a fortiori argument establishing the abiding validity of the O.T. civil code:

Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

An a fortiori argument in Hebrews that most explicitly shows the lesser existing alongside the greater is found in Hebrews 12:25, 26, which reads, “See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.’” Notice how the greater, the warning from heaven (“but also the heavens”) exists alongside the lesser, the warning on earth (“not only the earth”).

In Matthew 12:11, 12, Christ argues from the lesser to the greater to show how much more valuable people are than animals: “He said to them, ‘Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.’” That animals are less valuable than people does not mean animals should be neglected, but only that people are to be given greater priority than animals.

One might argue that since the a fortiori argument in Hebrews 9:13, 14 deals with replacing animal sacrifices, then the a fortiori arguments in Heb. 2 and 10 deals with replacing the O.T. civil code. We deal with this argument in Appendix B.
The greater, apostasy (“the one who has spurned the Son of God …”), justly deserves eternal punishment, with no hope of escaping it (“How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved”). This builds on the foundation of the lesser—the violation of O.T. civil sanctions (“Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses”) justly deserves temporal punishment, with no hope of escape (“dies without mercy”). And so here again, the lesser-to-the-greater argument demands the O.T. civil code’s abiding validity. 906

Indeed, consider the statement “How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God.” Since all who apostatize deserve “much worse punishment” than for violating the law of Moses, then logically all who violate the law of Moses deserve to be punished as well.

After all, that something deserves less punishment than another doesn’t mean that the lesser punishment should not be enforced—it simply means it deserves less punishment relative to the greater punishment. A man who commits theft deserves to be punished, only to a lesser degree than a man who commits murder. We could say that if a thief deserves to be punished, how much more does a murderer.

Indeed, since Hebrews 10:28, 29 applies to all who apostatize, then it applies to Jew and Gentile alike—which means the O.T. civil code as well applies to Jew and Gentile alike, since, again, the justice for all who apostasize assumes the validity of the lesser justice for all who reject the O.T. civil code. Not only this, but the word “dies” indicates the O.T. civil code’s validity in the New Covenant-era:

For our present purpose, the integrity of the Law and its continuance … seems to be underscored by the use of the present tense: “Anyone who has rejected Moses’s law … dies.” Dies here is apothneskei, which is a present indicative verb and of which Vincent writes: “Lit. dieth. According to the ordinance as it now stands in the law.” Westcott notes of this verb: “The Law is valid and effective.” The clear impression here is that the writer

906 For more on how the a fortiori arguments in Hebrews demonstrate the O.T. civil code’s abiding validity, see Greg L. Bahnsen, No Other Standard: Theonomy and Its Critics (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991) 179, 180.
considers the Law still binding (even if not capable of enforcement under Rome). 907

The Apostle Paul takes for granted the abiding validity of non-ceremonial judicial laws when he states in 1 Corinthians 9:9a: “For it is written in the Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.’” This in and of itself logically implies that the moral judicial law for civil government remains in force.

Moreover, why would judicial laws for the occupation of farmers (such as in 1 Cor. 9:9) remain in effect but not judicial laws for the occupation of civil rulers? Just as farming is still a legitimate occupation, so is being a civil ruler. Moreover, unlike the occupation of priest (which was tied to the ceremonial law), the occupation of civil ruler has not been abrogated in the New Covenant era (Rom. 13:1-7).

As a church, Christians are obligated to uphold the O.T. civil laws, because the church is Israel (Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 3:7; 28, 29; 4:24-29; 6:16; cf. Eph. 2:14, 15). “This Church is one with the Jewish forefathers, being grafted into the Abrahamic root and partaking of its sap (Rom. 11:17-18).”908

The N.T. church is under a new covenant, but a new covenant is not the same as a new law. The following Scripture, looking forward to the New Covenant era, states, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer. 31:33; cf. Ezek. 11:19, 20). Given that this was written in O.T. times, the moral law revealed to the Israelites is the law that would be internalized by Christians in the New Covenant era (“I will put my law within them”). This includes the moral civil laws, which are part of the moral law in general. Thus the church

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This is not to deny that God has a plan for the Jewish people, but the plan is neither a different plan of salvation, nor a reconstitution of the sacrificial system. The plan is for the Jewish people to someday be (re)grafted into the church. See Romans 11:11-24.
must uphold the O.T. civil code by teaching its abiding validity and holding the state accountable for enforcing it.

Finally, Christians are required to be holy in all their conduct (1 Peter 1:15), “since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:16). This New Testament passage quotes from Leviticus, where similar terminology is used in the context of citing laws that include civil laws (Lev. 19:2; 20:7; 26). Thus if Christians want to be holy in all their conduct, then Christian civil rulers need a holy standard of conduct, and, as the book of Leviticus demonstrates, the O.T. civil code provides that standard.
Appendix B:

Answering Objections to Keeping the Old Testament Civil Code Today

Many objections are raised from the Bible to discredit the notion that the Old Testament civil code is binding for nations today. Here we address several of those objections.

Objection 1: “The O.T. civil code is no longer binding because it is part of the abrogated ceremonial law”

This view is incorrect, for first, ceremonial laws are about redemption. They typified the saving work of Christ (cf. Heb. 10:1) or taught the redemptive community principles of separation from unbelievers (cf. Lev. 20:22-26). On the other hand, the civil laws are about justice. They punish crimes according to what they deserve (Ex. 21:23-25; cf. Heb. 2:2).

And so, one category of ceremonial laws pointed forward to the eternal redemption in Christ which sinners do not deserve, while the civil laws inflicted temporal punishments against what sinners do deserve. Another category of ceremonial laws taught principles of holiness, while the civil laws punished unholy behavior.

Second, keeping in mind that the civil laws are just, Proverbs 21:3 distinguishes matters of justice from ceremonial laws (in this case sacrifices), and considers the former superior: “To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice” (emphases mine). Third, matters of justice are weightier matters of the law (Matt. 23:23), and we certainly cannot consider weightier matters to be abrogated.

Fourth, in the Garden of Eden the principle behind civil justice was already in place, with God, as the King, threatening Adam with capital punishment for eating from the forbidden tree (Gen. 2:17). But ceremonial laws, which pointed to redemption or taught holiness to the
covenant community, weren’t possible until after the Fall; after Adam was killed spiritually, and even physically (albeit gradually). Only then could such laws have any purpose.

Fifth, the strangers in the land of Israel were required to abide by the civil laws (Lev. 24:22b; cf. vv. 16-23), but not by the ceremonial laws (unless they converted) (Ex. 12:48). Sixth, the Bible distinguishes between civil duties of rulers and ceremonial duties of priests (1 Sam. 13:11; 2 Chron. 19:5-11; 26:16-21).

Seventh, while ceremonial law is no longer necessary, nations still need to enforce civil laws, since the sword is still necessary to restrain evil. If civil laws are still necessary, why wouldn’t O.T. civil law (along with whatever qualifications there might be in the N.T.) in particular still be necessary for civil governments to enforce?

Eight, while abrogating ceremonial law (Heb. 7:10, 12), the book of Hebrews affirms the O.T. civil code (Heb. 2:2 and 10:28, 29; see Appendix A). Ninth, attributes of the O.T. civil code are harmonious with the attributes of civil government as discussed in Romans 13:1-7 (see Appendix A)—and no one would say that the latter, written for the New Covenant era, pertains to ceremonial matters.

Objection 2: “Jesus did away with the O.T. civil code when he refused to condemn the woman caught in adultery”

First, this text deals only with the specific case of adultery, so even if Christ here did away with capital punishment for adultery, that would only mean He annulled one particular O.T. crime. Second, according to Greg L. Bahnsen,

The primary thing that must be said about John 7:53-8:11 is that it is of very doubtful authenticity. It is omitted by the majority of ancient Greek manuscripts and by the oldest representatives of every kind of evidence; … Several manuscripts of those which include this passage bear asterisks or obelisks, indicating some doubt about the passage. It appears in at least three other positions: after Luke 21:38, after John 7:36, and after John 21:24. The passage itself contains large numbers of variant readings, its
style is not characteristically Johannine, and even stichometric information about John’s gospel implies its absence. Every line of thought casts grave doubt upon the authenticity, and hence authority, of the passage.\textsuperscript{909}

But, as we shall see, even if the text is inspired, it in no way does away with the capital offense for adultery.

Third, we must consider the context to understand why Christ probably didn’t answer explicitly with “stone her according to the law of Moses.” The scribes and Pharisees, as usual, were attempting to entrap Christ. If Christ simply told them they should stone the woman caught in adultery, then they would have a basis for telling the Roman rulers that Christ was defying Roman authority. Since Rome was an occupying power during this time, it claimed the exclusive right to put others to death—Jews were not legally authorized to do so (Jn. 18:31). But then, had Christ told them they shouldn’t stone the woman caught in adultery, then they would have a basis for accusing Christ of abolishing the law\textsuperscript{910}—something Christ did not come to do (Matt. 5:17-19).

Indeed, fourth, Christ was not even an official civil judge; consider Luke 12:13-14, where He refused to judge in regards to a man’s inheritance.\textsuperscript{911} Thus Christ was not in a position to sentence the woman.\textsuperscript{912}

Fifth, in saying “in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women,” the accusers twisted the law itself. The law commands both the woman and the man to be executed (Lev. 20:10), not just the woman.\textsuperscript{913} The accusers thus “were in high-handed violation of God’s law.”\textsuperscript{914} “[A]dultery is not a solitary act! Where was the man? The Pharisees

\textsuperscript{909} Bahnsen, \textit{Theonomy in Christian Ethics}, 228.
\textsuperscript{910} Ibid., 229.
\textsuperscript{911} Ritchie, \textit{A Conquered Kingdom}, 263.
\textsuperscript{912} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{913} Ibid., 264.
\textsuperscript{914} Ibid.
and scribes showed their own false standard clearly. There were condoning in the man what they would not excuse in the woman.”

This brings us to sixth, the possibility that one or more of the woman’s accusers were actually the ones who committed adultery with her, and perhaps this is why they eventually dropped the charges. Perhaps they were guilty and they suspected Christ knew it and would expose them. R. J. Rushdoony writes of the accusers, “As themselves guilty men, they suspected secret evidence on His [Jesus’] part against them. They were busy trying to collect evidence against Jesus; this made it easier for them to believe that Jesus had done the same to them.”

Seventh, in saying, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her,” Jesus actually upheld the law’s requirements. Witnesses are supposed to cast the first stone (Deut. 17:7). Jesus only demanded that he who casts the first stone be a witness “without sin.”

“Without sin” cannot mean “without sin whatsoever,” since all men are sinners—and such an interpretation would mean that rulers would be disqualified from carrying out capital punishment. But this would contradict Romans 13:4, which requires rulers to carry out capital punishment, as the ruler “does not bear the sword in vain.”

The sin described here would seem to be either the sin of adultery itself, the sin of favoritism, or the sin of not being witness to the woman’s act of adultery. Perhaps requiring one to be without sin was Christ’s way of challenging the accusers to produce a single witness who was not guilty of committing adultery—either with the woman, or with someone else.

Or, perhaps one or more of the accusers did witness the woman’s adultery, but they refused to reveal who the guilty man was (perhaps the guilty man was one of the woman’s accusers). This is the sin of favoritism (Lev. 19:15). Or, the sin was bearing false witness. Regardless of the innocence or guilt of the accused, an accuser is required

916 Rushdoony, Institutes, 704.
917 Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 229.
to have *witnessed* the very act—otherwise, he is “with sin” for bearing false witness and, in capital cases, can be executed (Deut. 19:16-19).\footnote{Unlike using the words, “stone her according to the law of Moses,”—which we noted earlier might be used by the religious leaders as a basis for telling the Roman authorities that Christ was undermining their authority—the words “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” would seem to make it harder for the religious leaders to use Jesus’ words against Him. For in calling attention to the sins of the religious leaders, Jesus gave the leaders a reason to fear being accused before the Roman authorities themselves. It would have been easier for them to drop the matter than to pursue it and risk Jesus exposing their civil crimes.}

Thus, it would make no sense for the accusers to walk away in defeat if Jesus annulled the punishment against adultery, or the O.T. civil code in general. On the contrary, it would have accomplished for them what they initially set out to do—to attain grounds to condemn Jesus for abolishing the law.

Not only this, but if Jesus abolished any aspect of the civil law, He would have contradicted Himself elsewhere for saying that He came not to abolish the law (Matt. 5:17). He would also contradict the Apostle Paul who upheld the Bible’s capital sanctions (Ac. 25:11; Rom. 13:1-7). Finally, why would Jesus condemn those who *uphold* the Bible’s capital sanction for adultery but then condemn those who would *nullify* the Bible’s capital sanction for reviling one’s parents (Matt. 15:1-9)?

**Objection 3: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s’ means civil government has nothing to do with God”**

*First*, the mere fact that Christ distinguishes “things that are Caesar’s” and “things that are God’s” does not prove that civil government has nothing to do with God. In 2 Chronicles 19:11a we find a distinction using similar language: “And behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all *matters of the LORD*; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the governor of the house of Judah, in all the *king’s matters …*” (emphases mine). No one would dispute the fact that civil rulers in the O.T. theocracy were to acknowledge God and rule by His law. The language (“matters of the LORD”; “king’s matters”) is clearly not used to
show civil government has nothing to do with God, but to distinguish church and state—two distinct spheres under one common authority, namely, God.

Second, it would be absurd to read Matthew 22:21 as saying God has nothing to do with civil government. Do we really want to say that it is a sin for rulers to acknowledge God? Do we really want to say that God commands rulers to disobey Him? Moreover, if the state is not obligated to acknowledge—and thereby obey—God, then the state is not obligated to obey a command from God to abstain from obeying God: for if God has no authority over the state, He cannot even command us to not obey Him.

Thus the view that Matthew 22:21 teaches that rulers must obey God by disobeying Him is self-refuting. Either God is to be obeyed or He isn’t. If He is to be obeyed (and of course He is), then we do have grounds for applying Matt. 22:21 to civil government. But this would mean also that the separation of God and state interpretation is fallacious.

Third, if God has nothing to do with civil government, then there is no moral law binding on civil government. Neither theft, torture, nor genocide on the part of the state could be considered evil. If there is no king above Caesar, Caesar has no moral accountability. Indeed, the view that “We have no king but Caesar” (Jn. 19:15c) in the civil realm was responsible for the greatest injustice ever committed—the crucifixion of Christ. Here the King of kings Himself was rejected for Caesar as the standard of civil justice; the view that God and Caesar rule two distinct realms was taken to its logical conclusion.

Fourth, regarding the statement, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,” the text neither states nor implies that Caesar is not to submit to God. It rather teaches that citizens are to submit to Caesar (when of course it does not conflict with submitting to God). A

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919 To the argument that rulers must not enforce the civil aspects of the first table of God’s law, Daniel F. N. Ritchie replies: “This is an amazing deduction! It means (if the argument is accepted) that because Jesus drew a distinction between the things that were God’s and the things that were Caesar’s, that it is now unlawful for Caesar to acknowledge the first commandment in his role as a civil magistrate. On this logic, Caesar would be sinning by obeying the first commandment, and he would be obeying God by breaking his law.” Ritchie, A Conquered Kingdom, 128.
requirement to submit to Caesar is vastly different than a requirement for Caesar not to submit to God.

*Fifth,* the passage actually requires Caesar to submit to God and thereby rule by God’s law. Jesus was asked if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar (Matt. 22:17). Jesus then asked whose likeness was on the coin for the tax, to which his questioners replied “Caesar’s” (Matt. 22:19-21). It was to this Jesus replied “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Caesar is required to render to God those things which belong to God; this includes the life and service of Caesar to God since the person of Caesar bears the “image of God,” just as citizens must render their taxes to Caesar because their coins bear the image of Caesar (cf. Matt. 22: 20).920

*Sixth,* the Bible clearly teaches that Caesar must submit to Christ. Christ has all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18) and is therefore head over all things (Eph. 1:22b), including civil government. Thus since Christ is the King of kings (1 Tim. 6:15), rulers are warned to serve Him (Ps. 2:10-12) by terrorizing evildoers (Rom. 13:1-5) in accordance with God’s law (Matt. 5:17-20; 15:4).

**Objection 4: “Christ said, “My kingdom is not of this world,” therefore, God and Christianity has nothing to do with civil government”**

Those who hold this view believe that Christ’s kingdom is narrowly confined to such things as heaven, the individual, and/or the church; as such Christ’s kingdom has nothing to do with kingdoms in this world. But besides such a view having several of the problems in the previous objection, it has several other problems.

*First,* there is no reason to insist “of this world” means “nothing to do with the world.” Christ’s disciples are in the world but “are not of the world” (Jn. 15:19b). Thus “of the world” in John 15 does not exclude Christ’s disciples from being involved with the world. Neither does it

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mean they are not to work, by God’s grace, to transform the world—and in fact, the Great Commission requires that Christ’s disciples attempt to do this very thing (Matt. 28:18-20).

Second, while Christ’s kingdom is not of this world, it is over it: “The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all” (Ps. 103:19) (emphasis mine). Christ thus is King over the world (1 Tim. 6:15; cf. Eph. 1:20-22).

The same Christ who told Pilate “My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn. 18:36b) also told Pilate “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above” (Jn. 19:11b). The kingdom of men is subordinate to the kingdom of Christ:

“The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men” (Dan. 4:17).

The Great Commission acknowledges that Christ’s kingdom is over the world: “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me’” (Matt. 28:18).

Third, “of this world” has to do with a source of power. “Christ’s kingdom does not derive its origin from the world”921—so Christ’s kingdom is not of the world in the sense that it is not from the world. In fact the very verse that says “My kingdom is not of this world” goes on to say that very thing—“my kingdom is not from the world” (Jn. 18:36d). “[O]n the contrary, His kingdom has been given to Him by His Father (Dan. 7:14),”922 and therefore, God has everything to do with civil government.

Fourth, John 18:36 also reads, “If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews.” Some interpret this as meaning rulers can not use the sword to enforce God’s civil laws. But we must reject this from the outset, since rulers are required to use the sword to punish evildoers in accordance with God’s requirements (Rom. 13:4). It’s just that Christ’s servants “do not ‘fight’ in order to establish His kingdom, or

921 Ritchie, A Conquered Kingdom, 92.
922 Ibid.
indeed to spread His kingdom on the earth.” 923 Christ’s kingdom advances “by the Holy Spirit regenerating sinners as the gospel is proclaimed: “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit” says the Lord of hosts’ (Zech. 4:6).” 924 “This however, does not mean that the state is not to protect the kingdom of Christ from attack, because civil magistrates are to ensure that God’s people can live ‘a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence’ (1 Tim. 2:2).” 925

We must add that had Christ’s disciples prevented His crucifixion with an armed revolt, there would have been no basis for the kingdom to advance at all, since kingdom advancement depends on Christ’s saving work. Moreover, those who consistently press the idea that Christians should never have anything to do with the sword must be pacifists in every conceivable situation. This would absurdly mean there is no moral basis for Christians to be involved with civil government, just warfare, self-defense, and defending others.

Objection 5: “The *a fortiori* argument in Hebrews 9:13, 14 is a replacement argument; therefore, the *a fortiori* arguments in Hebrews 2 and 10 do not uphold, but replace the O.T. civil code”

*First*, we have argued (in Appendix A) that the very nature of the *a fortiori* arguments in Hebrews 2:2, 3 and 10:28, 29 uphold the O.T. civil code. Of course, there is the question of how this rule applies in light of Hebrews 9:13, 14, which reads:

> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:13, 14).

923 Ibid., 93.
924 Ibid.
925 Ibid.
Animal sacrifices are done away with in the New Covenant era, so this passage clearly argues for replacement of animal sacrifices by the blood of Christ—animal blood cleaned a little, but Christ’s blood, which actually removes sin, cleans so much more. The lesser, the shadow (animal sacrifices) are completely unnecessary with the coming of the greater (the shadow’s object, Christ and His sacrifice). And so in this case the greater replaces the lesser, without destroying the foundation that the greater builds itself upon.

The shadow presupposes its object; in the presence of its object, it offers nothing the object doesn’t already have. Just as man being with his wife has everything and more than a picture of his wife, the real thing (Christ’s sacrifice) has everything and more that the representation (animal sacrifices) has.

However, while the Bible tells us that Hebrews 9:13, 14 deals with a shadow (see Heb. 10:1), we see nothing in the Bible to indicate that Hebrews 2 and 10 deal with shadows. We believe the a fortiori arguments in these texts are not replacement arguments, but rather argue that, if crime “X” deserves punishment “A,” then a more severe crime (crime “Y”) deserves a more severe punishment (punishment “B”).

This differs from the Hebrews 9 text, which argues that “A” is greater than “B” in every respect; therefore, “B” is unnecessary. Moreover, Hebrews 2 implies the abiding validity of the O.T. civil code since it describes it as “just,” and justice, unlike ceremonial cleanliness, is a weightier matter of the law (Matt. 23:23).926

Second, indeed, the matter of justice is why Hebrews 9 is a replacement a fortiori argument, while Hebrews 2 and 10 are not. Animal sacrifices could never meet the demands of God’s justice: “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). But Christ did meet those demands: “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).

But the O.T. civil code did meet the demands of God’s justice in the civil sphere: “For since the message declared by angels proved to be

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926 Special thanks to Michael H. Warren, Jr., for providing us with helpful insights in this matter. Much of the above arguments are either his own insights, or drawn from them.
reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution …” (Heb. 2:2) (emphasis mine). Thus it is impossible for Heb. 2 and 10 to replace the O.T. civil code on the basis of its justice, for if this were the case every transgression would have received an unjust retribution. Justice—by the very nature of the case—is perfect, and cannot be replaced. Thus the Hebrews 2 and 10 passages cannot be equated with Hebrews 9, where animal sacrifices are replaced because they couldn’t satisfy God’s justice.

Moreover, third, Hebrews 2 and 10 argue from God’s civil justice (a temporal form of justice) to God’s justice in the afterlife (an eternal form of justice). Matters of civil justice are still necessary in the New Covenant era, and matters of eternal justice were with us in the Old Covenant era; from Genesis on, eternal punishment began for those who died without believing in Christ. And while matters of civil and eternal justice have coexisted throughout the Old Covenant era and will throughout the New Covenant era, animal sacrifices and Christ’s sacrifice do not share such coexistence. Christ’s sacrifice has always been and always will be the only way of salvation, and is thus necessary throughout both covenants. But animal sacrifices ended with the coming of Christ. They are not to be practiced in the New Covenant era. As such, it is hard to see how a replacement argument in Hebrews 2 and 10 would make sense.

We must keep in mind that “the equity of that eschatological judgment [Hell] is supported by an a fortiori appeal from the equity of the Mosaic penal system.”927 In light of this statement about equity, if God’s eternal justice is perfect and thereby unchanging, we should also expect God’s civil justice to be perfect and thereby unchanging.

And, fourth, those who might argue that the penalties of the civil code given to Moses simply foreshadowed Christ or the Final Judgment and are thereby now abrogated have the following theological difficulties:

Did the death penalty for kidnapping foreshadow the redemptive work of Christ or the sacramental fellowship of His church? If it rather foreshadows the Final Judgment (where all sin is punished

927 Bahnsen, No Other Standard, 224.
with death), what is the “redemptive typology” of the penalty of restitution for theft? If the Mosaic civil penalties were simply meant to foreshadow the Final Judgment, should not all crimes (indeed, all sins) have been punished by death?928

If the Mosaic civil penalties were to foreshadow the Final Judgment, it’s hard to imagine why they would now be abrogated, since the Final Judgment has not arrived yet. Furthermore, the argument that the O.T. civil laws foreshadowed Christ but are now abrogated might prove too much even for some who argue this. Many who reject the abiding validity of the civil laws given to Moses nevertheless hold that nations are bound to the death penalty for murder, since it is part of the Noahic covenant (Gen. 9:6). But since the Mosaic code has the same civil sanction, the death penalty for murder—according to the foreshadow view—would have to now be considered abrogated. And given that Romans 13:1-7 teaches that civil rulers are supposed to use the sword to kill evildoers, who are they now authorized to kill? If it can’t be murderers, blasphemers, and kidnappers, should they be thieves, jaywalkers, and those who spit on the sidewalk?

Finally, if rulers are no longer to enforce the O.T. civil penalties, are they still to enforce the O.T. prohibitions, but invent their own penalties? For instance, should they punish all these crimes—whether it be idolatry, adultery, or petty theft—with public slavery, i.e., imprisonment? Or, are the prohibitions foreshadows too, in which case murder, theft, kidnapping, and rape should no longer be illegal?

Objection 6: “Deuteronomy 4:5-8 did not obligate other nations to the O.T. civil code, but was simply ‘wisdom and … understanding in the sight of the peoples’”

First, if these laws are not universally binding, how can the other nations even discern these laws to be wise? They can indeed if the written law is consistent with “the work of the law … written on their hearts” (Rom. 2:15a). (It seems Rom. 1:32 affirms that the work of the law includes the moral civil laws given to Israel. See our discussion of this text in Appendix A.) Naturally, the Gentile nations were obligated to follow the work of the law written in their hearts; and if this law is

928 Ibid., 123.
consistent with the written law, then they were obligated to follow the written law as well. While through sin nations suppress the law in their hearts, the written law given to Israel helps nations to see the righteous laws that they are suppressing (cf. Rom. 7:7)—thus they could call Israel “wise” and “understanding.”

*Second*, verse 8 anticipates the nations saying, “And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?” The fact that the other nations’ laws were *not as* righteous as Israel’s tells us that Israel’s moral civil laws were and are universally binding. To sin is to fall short of God’s *perfectly* righteous requirements. Since the civil laws of the Gentiles *needed* to be *more* righteous, and the civil laws of the Israelites were in fact more righteous (in fact, *perfectly* righteous), then the Gentiles were required to enforce the Bible’s civil code. If A (Israel’s civil laws) is the perfect standard, and B (the Gentiles’ civil laws) falls short of this standard (since the Gentiles’ laws were *less* righteous than Israel’s), then B must conform to A.

And, *third*, it does no good to argue that the civil laws of the Israelites were merely suggestions for the Gentile nations to follow. Law—especially God’s law—by the very nature of the case is not optional, but mandatory. And Daniel F.N. Ritchie writes,

> While it has been argued that Deuteronomy 4:5-8 only means that there is some wisdom in the Mosaic law for Gentile nations to glean from (rather than being obligated to follow it), this cannot be the case because the text explicitly says that the laws in Israel were “righteous judgments” and therefore must be universally applicable as all other judgments are, by implication, unrighteous judgments—not being given by the God of righteousness. \(^{929}\)

*Fourth*, neither does it do any good to try and say that the Gentiles were only supposed to view the laws given to the Israelites as being righteous for the Israelites but not for their own nations. The text considers the laws of Gentile nations less righteous *relative to* the laws of the Israelites: “And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules *so* righteous *as* all this law that I set before you today?” (Deut. 4:8)

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(emphases mine). The laws of the Gentile nations to one degree or another fell short of the *perfect justice* of Israel’s civil code, which perfectly distinguished which sins should be crimes, and also, being based on the *lex talionis* (eye-for-an-eye), punished crime neither too harshly nor too leniently. Therefore, the Gentile nations would see the righteous perfection of Israel’s civil laws and thereby the lack of righteousness in their own civil laws.

**Objection 7:** “It is irrational to say Matthew 5:17-20 upholds all of the law (including the civil laws) until the Second Coming since the Bible has clearly abrogated some aspects of the law after Christ’s resurrection”

Those who argue this reason that since some laws (e.g., animal sacrifices) were abrogated after Christ’s earthly ministry, then Matthew 5:17-20 cannot be relevant for today. Instead, Christ in this passage is said to only uphold the whole law until somewhere between His sacrifice and resurrection.

*First*, however, some believe Matthew 5 is only speaking about the Ten Commandments and the moral case laws (including moral civil laws), given that the surrounding context deals with ethics and not ceremonies (cf. Matt. 5:13-16, 5:21-7:26). And in fact, we believe this is correct. In Matthew 5:17-20 Christ says that He came not to abolish the Law or the Prophets (v. 17), and, as Kenneth L. Gentry observes,

The very next mention of “the law and the prophets” as an ethical summation occurs later in the same Sermon: “Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12). This clearly speaks of ethical conduct: the Golden Rule involves how we treat people. Several commentators note that Matthew 5:17 forms an *inclusio* with Matthew 7:12. For instance: 930 “Mention of ‘the law and the prophets’ takes the reader back to 5.17 and thereby establishes an

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And so Gentry notes that for William Hendrikson, “Therefore” (in Matt. 7:12) serves to “link the present passage with the entire large division introduced by 5:17.”932 Thus since Matthew 7:12 identifies the Law and the Prophets as ethical conduct and not ceremonial, it seems that within the context of the Sermon on the Mount—including Matthew 5:17-20—the Ten Commandments and the moral case laws are in view.933 As such, the text would seem to uphold the abiding validity of the Ten Commandments and the moral case laws until the Second Coming, but not the ceremonial laws.

But even if ceremonial laws are in view in Matthew 5:17-20, there would be nothing necessarily irrational about maintaining that this passage has force until the Second Coming. Some might argue that the text assumes that the word “fulfill” is multifaceted in its meaning, so that ceremonial law is fulfilled in one sense, and moral law in another.934

932 Gentry, Covenantal Theonomy, 60. Gentry cites Hendrikson, Matthew, 365. See also Daniel F. N. Ritchie’s exegesis of Matthew 5:17-20 in Appendix G.
933 Michael H. Warren, Jr. touches on the word “fulfill” as used in Matthew 5:17: “Greg L. Bahnsen argued that ‘fulfill’ in Matt. 5:17 should be interpreted in the sense of ‘confirm.’ That fits the context, but I don’t think that it is the normal meaning of the word. An interpretation that would be preferable would be one that uses the normal meaning of the word and fits the context. The non-thenomist argument that ‘fulfill’ means that Christ fulfilled the Messianic prophecies, so the law is abolished after the cross, does not fit the context of requiring us to keep the law. My view is that ‘fulfill’ must refer to the O.T. prophecies about the Messiah bringing about universal obedience to God’s law (e.g. Isaiah 2, Jer. 31:31-34). This retains the normal meaning of “fulfill” and still fits the context requiring our obedience.” Michael H. Warren, Jr., e-mail message to author, December 19, 2009.
934 Brian Schwertley writes the following about what laws Matthew 5:17-20 has in view:

“[T]he expression, ‘law or prophets,’ points us in the direction of a multifaceted understanding of the term ‘fulfill.’ The reason behind this statement lies in the obvious fact that prophecy and the law of God in all its variations (e.g., moral, civil and ceremonial) cannot be fulfilled in the exact same manner. While there is a similarity between fulfilling prophecy and the typology of the ceremonial laws relating to sacrifice and purification, moral laws are fulfilled in a different manner. Therefore, the old Puritan approach to this passage which says that Jesus fulfills the entire Old Testament (the law and the prophets) is the right approach in a number of
Furthermore, the fact that there is no *explicit* qualification in the surrounding context specifying that all O.T. laws are binding until the Second Coming except laws abrogated later in the N.T. (e.g., the sacrificial system) does not mean there is no *implicit* qualification. All of the abrogated laws in question, i.e., ceremonial laws, are actually *self-qualifying*. They were never intended to remain in effect in their outward form “until heaven and earth pass away,” but pointed to Christ and thus fulfilled in Him. And so Matt. 5:17-20 could have the force of binding the observance of each and every law until either “heaven and earth pass away,” or, in regards to self-qualifying laws, until later revelation specifies an abrogation.

It is not as if the Bible doesn’t have implicit qualifications elsewhere. For instance, the Bible, discussing the rule of Christ, says, “For ‘God has put all things in subjection under his feet.’ But when it says, ‘all things are put in subjection,’ it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him” (1 Cor. 15:27). Here the Bible states a qualification (“it is plain that he is excepted”) that it expects to be implicit to the reader. Moreover, the Bible tells us that man in general will see death before judgment (Heb. 9:27), and yet this is qualified by texts where God allows Enoch (Heb. 11:5) and Elijah (2 Ki. 2:11) to bypass death.

Furthermore, the Sixth Commandment forbids killing (Ex. 20:13), and yet the *death penalty* is prescribed for certain crimes (e.g., Ex. 21). And, the Sixth Commandment permits killing in self defense (Ex. 22:2, 3). (Incidentally, without the O. T. civil code, which is where these qualifications are found, we would have no objective means of knowing whether justifiable killing in the O. T. is justifiable killing today. If different ways. As noted above, attempts to restrict the phrase ‘Law or Prophets’ to only the predictive element in the Old Testament or only the law aspect of the Old Testament are arbitrary. The audience to whom Christ was speaking would certainly not have understood such a clever and narrow distinction.”

capital punishment is even now permissible, what sins should be capitally punished? Is killing in self defense now permissible, or should it be a capitally-punished crime?)

And, one might argue that even the underlying principles of Israel’s ceremonial and culturally unique judicial laws remain in effect “until heaven and earth pass away.” In addressing John W. Robbins, a critic of theonomy, Greg Bahnsen writes:

In his review Mr. Robbins acknowledges that I teach that it is the underlying principles of the judicial and ceremonial laws which are valid today—rather than the literal or cultural details by which those principles are expressed and illustrated. (We do not bring animal sacrifices today, but the principle is still valid that there is no atonement without shedding of blood—indeed is at the heart of gospel proclamation. We do not build railings around our housetops, but the principle of providing for the safety of others is still valid, etc.) He then turns around and with shameless artificiality says that this approach contradicts my assertion that the law is binding in "exhaustive detail" (or that "every stroke" is confirmed).

But come now. Isn't this the naive mistake made by many dispensational fundamentalists? To assert the authority of every single word of God's law is not at all to assert that those words may only be interpreted in a literal manner. (The professor who requires his students to pay attention to "every line" in a Shakespeare play is not thereby claiming that Shakespeare never used figures of speech!) And remember: Jesus is the one who declared that every "jot and tittle" of the law remains valid until heaven and earth pass away. Does Mr. Robbins now accuse Jesus of self-contradiction because that to which He holds us accountable (evident from other texts of Scripture) are the principles of the law—both ceremonial (Heb. 9:11-14, 22) and judicial (1 Cor. 9:9-10)? When Jesus ended the story of the Good Samaritan by saying “Go and do likewise,” does Mr. Robbins really believe this means all believers are to walk the Jericho road with a donkey and flask of oil? Presumably Mr. Robbins believes that all of the New Testament has moral validity. Does he then literally practice the giving of a kiss in salutation (1 Peter
Second, the stated objection to the theonomic interpretation of Matthew 5:17-20 (that Christ in this passage is said to only uphold the whole law until somewhere between His sacrifice and resurrection) reduces to absurdity, because Christ ended the dietary laws prior to the cross (Mark 7:19). So if it is irrational to interpret Matthew 5:17-20 as applicable to Christians today, then it is equally irrational to interpret Matthew 5:17-20 as only in force until Christ’s finished work on the cross; by their own standard, critics must explain how every jot and tittle must remain until the cross, and yet not every jot and tittle (i.e., dietary laws) remained until the cross. Theonomists, on the other hand, can in fact explain why the dietary laws were abrogated in a way where there is no contradiction: the moral principle behind the dietary laws (i.e., the requirement of holy living) continued from the time they were abrogated, and remain in effect until the Second Coming. In upholding the moral principle, for theonomists there is no contradiction—“every jot and tittle (whether applied literally and/or by underlying moral principle) remains until the Second Coming.”

Moreover, third, if the critics insist the theonomic interpretation of Matthew 5:17-20 is irrational, then logical consistency demands that they consider the theonomic interpretation of 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 irrational as well. Like Matthew 5:17-20, these verses at face value uphold all of the O. T. law. The verses state, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (emphasis mine).

Since this revelation was given after Christ’s earthly ministry, theonomic critics cannot say this passage—which, in affirming “All Scripture” upholds O. T. law—is not applicable to Christians today. They are forced into either 1) a theonomic interpretation of this passage (that is, all O.T. laws apply today unless abrogated in the N. T.); 2) arbitrarily determining for themselves which O. T. laws apply today; 3) holding that we must practice all O. T. laws today in their

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outward form (e.g., sacrifice animals), which is most consistent with their rigid position on Matt. 5:17-20; or 4) ignoring the text completely. Clearly the only acceptable position is the theonomic position, but if they embrace that, then logical consistency demands that they cannot consider the theonomic interpretation of Matt. 5:17-20 necessarily irrational.

Fourth, regarding Christ’s words, “until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Matt. 5:18b), some theonomic critics understand “all is accomplished” as being fulfilled when Christ said on the cross, “it is finished.” Therefore, all or much of the O.T. law (including the civil law) ended then.

However, such an interpretation doesn’t make sense of the parallel clause, “until heaven and earth pass away,”936 which will not happen until at least the Second Coming. But beyond this, what is considered finished in Christ’s words “it is finished” does not necessarily have to be all of “all is accomplished,” but a part of “all” (although a

936 Some critics argue that the clause “until heaven and earth pass away” can still make sense within the context, even if “until all is accomplished” is understood as the end of Christ’s earthly ministry. Against one such critic Greg L. Bahnsen argues:

“Finally, it should be noted that Fowler’s interpretation creates a contradiction within Matthew 5:18, for it portrays the saying of Jesus as specifying two conflicting points of termination for the law’s validity—one at the end of history, and the other sometime within history (when the law is perfectly kept or realized by Jesus). Fowler’s reply is that the second temporal clause is intended to specify more narrowly the termination point which is more broadly indicated in the first temporal clause; the first clause offers a framework, and the second sets the specific limit. This is really far-fetched! Why would the first temporal clause—laying down an alleged “framework”—be mentioned at all? (Why would the mortgage company write to you and say that within the framework of the next century your house payment is due on the first of next month?) Fowler’s claim that the second temporal clause is “more exact” than the first is patently mistaken to anyone who will compare “until all things come to pass” with “until heaven and earth pass away.” The “all things” clause utilizes much broader, less specific Greek words than the “heaven and earth” clause. Finally, we can note that Fowler’s interpretation of Matthew 5:18 would demand some kind of coordinating or subordinating conjunction in the verse, giving the relation between the two temporal clauses (if they are not taken as parallel to each other). To say, “Until the end of the game Riley will remain the quarterback, or until he is injured” makes perfectly good, grammatical sense. But the statement makes no sense with the word “or” removed. Since no such connective stands in the Greek for Matthew 5:18, we must judge that Fowler’s suggested way of treating the verse leaves it grammatically senseless.” Bahnsen, No Other Standard, 281, 282.
most important part). And in fact, not everything by Christ has been accomplished. He is still in the process of conquering His enemies until the Second Coming:

But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:23-25).

Hence, “until all is accomplished” parallels “until heaven and earth pass away.” The events occur simultaneously. Indeed, the Second Coming and the passing of heaven and earth are described simultaneously in Revelation. Christ returns and the wicked are judged (cf. Rev. 20:9-15), and then there is “a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more” (Rev. 21:1b).

Fifth, moreover, the Lord’s Prayer—in the very next chapter after Matthew 5—reads, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:9b-10). God’s will in this context means God’s law, which certainly includes O.T. law since this comes right after Christ upheld O.T. law in the previous chapter. Now, it’s hard to imagine that O.T. law was abolished after Christ’s sacrifice if we are to pray that O.T. law is to be followed on the entire earth.

Sixth, no serious Christian would dispute that Matthew 28:18-20 (the Great Commission) applies to Christians today, and one would think all Christians would affirm that Matthew 6:5-15 (the Lord’s Prayer) applies to them today as well. And yet, consider how these passages parallel with Matthew 5:17-19. Besides all the passages mentioning heaven and earth, they all emphasize or imply obeying God’s commands and teaching others to do so:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations … teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:18b-19a, 20a).

“For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.
Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:18, 19).

“your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10b).

Moreover, all the passages point to the consummation of history:

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20b).

“For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (Matt. 5:18).

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). (While we believe this text has implications for the present, we believe it also reaches towards the consummation of history, when inhabitants of the entire world will in fact obey God’s will at all times. Remember, at that point all unbelievers will be cast into hell, and believers will no longer be able to sin.)

In light of these parallels, it seems hard to argue that it is irrational to affirm the relevancy of Matthew 5:17-20 for Christians today, unless we want to hold that it is equally irrational for Christians to affirm the relevancy of the Lord’s Prayer and the Great Commission for Christians today as well.

Seventh, just two chapters after Matthew 5, Christ says, “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12) (emphasis mine). If the critics’ interpretation of Matthew 5:17-20 means the Law and the Prophets were abolished after Christ’s earthly ministry, then so would the command to do unto others what we would have them do unto us.

Moreover, Christ in Matthew 22:37-40 upheld the two great commandments, and “On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” Certainly we can’t hold that the two great commandments are now abolished. And if we can’t do this, then neither
can we say the Law and the Prophets are abolished. The two commandments summarize the Law and the Prophets, and a summary presupposes that which it summarizes. A summary is meaningless without its contents.

And, the second great commandment is upheld specifically in Romans 13:8-10 and Galatians 5:14, both of which teach that love fulfills the law. That this law even entails the details of the moral case-law applications of the law of Moses is evident in the Apostle Paul’s favorable citation of the following law: “For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain” (1 Cor. 9:9a; cf. Deut. 25:4) (see also Jms. 5:4 and Deut. 24:15).

Finally, eighth, those who argue that all of O.T. law was abolished after Christ’s earthly ministry are themselves engaged in irrationalism, for the Bible has clearly not abrogated some aspects of the law after Christ’s earthly ministry. From the time of Acts onwards, the Bible affirms the abiding validity of specific O.T. laws—laws from the Decalogue as well as the moral case laws (Rom. 2:24; Eph. 6:1-3; 1 Cor. 9:9; Jms. 5:4; Rev. 22:15).

Not only this, but, given its language, it seems that Matthew 5: 18 doesn’t necessarily insist that all of the law would be abolished when heaven and earth pass away, but only some of the law: “For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” The language seems to allow for at least an iota and a dot to pass away after heaven and earth pass way, but it doesn’t say every iota and dot would pass away. Thus those who argue that Matt. 5:17-20 points to abolishing the entire law after Christ’s earthly ministry have no basis for doing so. Given this—and especially the fact that the Bible affirms specific O.T. laws from Acts onward—the argument that all O.T. law was abolished after Christ’s earthly ministry cannot stand.

On the other hand, our critics who argue that Matt. 5:17-20 points to abolishing some (but not all) of the O.T. law (including the civil code) after Christ’s earthly ministry likewise face a problem. To avoid being arbitrary, they must demonstrate exegetically which jot and tittles were abolished. This forces them back onto the theonomic hermeneutic—which says all standing O.T. laws are mandatory unless modified in the
N.T. But once they adopt this hermeneutic, then they will come to the same conclusions as theonomists—that the Decalogue and the moral case laws remain in force at least until the Second Coming.

**Objection 8: "Spiritual Weapons oppose Old Testament Civil Law"

Some argue that Christians cannot advocate the enforcement of Old Testament civil law via the sword of the state because Christians are to only advocate spiritual weapons, not physical weapons.

*First*, such a view contradicts Romans 13:1-7, which *requires* rulers to enforce God’s law with the physical sword.

*Second*, indeed, if one’s concern is for spiritual weapons, then one should insist on the enforcement of O.T. civil law, since the Bible says “For we know that the law is spiritual …” (Rom. 7:14a). Since the law is spiritual, even the Bible’s capital sanctions—which require the use of physical weapons—are ultimately spiritual weapons.

Thus when rulers enforce God’s law, they are not ultimately only employing physical weapons, but are carrying out God’s wrath (Rom. 13:4; Deut. 1:17). But when God’s law is rejected, rulers employ nothing but physical weapons (in a sinful manner, we might add). Ironically then, those who reject O. T. civil law find themselves advocating the sinful use of non-spiritual weapons via civil government.

*Third*, if one thinks physical weapons are always antithetical to Christianity, then one has a hard time explaining Hebrews 11:32-34:

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens (KJV).

On this John Weaver comments:
How does one subdue kingdoms? The Word of God tells us it is “through faith.” Yet, faith does not negate the use of weapons. Evidently our fathers used their weapons in faith. How do we know? Because God said they were “valiant in fight,” they “escaped the edge of the sword,” and they “turned to flight the armies of the enemies.”

Fourth, let’s not forget David, who slew Goliath using a sling. Prior to killing Goliath, David proclaimed an antithesis between physical weapons and God, the source of spiritual weapons: “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied” (1 Sam. 17:45b).

Did David mean that God’s people are not to employ physical weapons? Obviously not. It’s just that David didn’t put his faith in his weapon. God was the determining reason for David’s victory. However, David’s weapon was still a means for slaying Goliath.

Similarly, Psalm 44:3, speaking of the Israelite conquest of the promised land, reads, “for not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face, for you delighted in them.” Here again, there is no denial that the Israelites did in fact employ the sword; it’s just that God, not the sword, was the determining force of their victory.

Fifth, if weapons cannot be employed in any context, then not only would civil government be inherently sinful (since it relies on the power of the sword), but so would just warfare and defending others. It would be sinful, for instance, to protect a child from being tortured. Such a view is absurd, wicked, and must be rejected.

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Objection 9: “The Bible’s capital sanctions no longer apply because the Apostle Paul didn’t say the man guilty of incest in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 should be executed, but excommunicated. The penalty of excommunication has replaced the penalty of death.”

First, at best one could only argue from this text that the death penalty for incest—and perhaps other sins later mentioned in the context (see verse 11)—do not apply. Paul is not dealing with, for instance, a sorcerer or Sabbath-breaker. To move from thinking this text teaches the abrogation of the death penalty for certain offenses to thinking that this text teaches the abrogation of all death penalties is a major logical leap. It is like saying, “Crows are black birds. Therefore, all birds are black.”

Second, this is an argument from silence. Why assume that the O.T. capital sanctions no longer apply just because Paul didn’t say the state should execute the man guilty of incest? Why not rather assume that Paul took for granted that the man deserved to be executed by the state? Especially in light of such texts as Deuteronomy 4:2, Matthew 5:17-20, Romans 13:1-6, and Hebrews 2:2? Furthermore,

One could just as fallaciously argue that since the church is given direction about disciplining thieves (e.g., I Cor. 5:11; Eph. 4:28) and is not encouraged to turn over converted thieves to the state for punishment (I Cor. 6:10-11), therefore the New Testament repeals Old Testament authorization for the state to punish those who steal.\[938\]

Moreover, in Ephesians 5:25 Paul commands husbands to love their wives, but the surrounding context doesn’t say what to do with husbands who abuse their wives. Do we then assume Paul’s silence means that the church cannot excommunicate abusive husbands?

Third, this text deals with the sphere of the church, not the state. It is perfectly logical within a context to focus on the duties of one sphere without focusing on the duties of another.

\[938\] Bahnsen, No Other Standard, 227.
If I happen to be an elder of a church as well as a manager for a company which employs members of my church, I can in certain contexts discuss how my company should discipline dishonest employees without discussing how the church should discipline dishonest employees who are part of the church. My silence in those situations doesn’t necessarily mean I oppose church discipline.

*Fourth*, the Corinthian church lived in a pagan society. Thus according to R.J. Rushdoony, incest was not a capital crime.\(^{939}\) Had this been a biblical society, perhaps Paul might have mentioned the state’s duty to execute the man guilty of incest if it could be proven by 2-3 witnesses.

But in the context of a pagan culture where the state tolerates incest, Paul was giving the church instructions relevant to their situation. Such instructions are actually always relevant: the church is to excommunicate unrepentant members, *regardless* of the state’s policies towards acts that according to the Bible deserve death.

*Fifth*, the state objection has Paul contradicting Paul, since Paul upheld the authority of rulers to enforce the Bible’s capital sanctions in Romans 13:1-6, and was *even willing to undergo those capital sanctions himself* at the hands of the state in Acts 25:11.

This brings us to *sixth*, Paul’s argument in Romans 13:1-6 that rulers are to terrorize and kill certain evildoers. The context doesn’t mention any requirement of churches to excommunicate evildoers. But if we were to conclude that Paul’s advocacy of excommunication and silence on capital punishment in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 means that capital punishment cannot be inflicted (by the state) on evildoers worthy of death but excommunication can, then logical consistency demands that we conclude that Paul’s advocacy of capital punishment and silence on excommunication in Romans 13:1-6 means that excommunication cannot be inflicted (by the church) on evildoers worthy of death, but capital punishment can.

This of course makes 1 Corinthians 5 and Romans 13 contradict one another, and cannot be accepted. Instead of contradicting Scripture,

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\(^{939}\) Rushdoony, *Institutes*, 399.
we must harmonize Scripture, and understand 1 Corinthians 5 to be teaching about the church’s role towards disciplinary sins, and Romans 13 to be teaching about the state’s role towards punishable sins.

*Seventh,* some argue that because Paul uses the term “purge the evil person from among you” (1 Cor. 5:13b) in the context of excommunication—a term which the O.T. uses in the context of capital punishment—excommunication by the church has replaced capital punishment by the state. This argument has a number of problems.

For starters, why would it be impossible for a biblical principle (purging evil) to be common to more than one sphere? Does not the command to not steal apply to church and state settings as well? And, we could just as well argue that to “purge the evil person from among you” in the setting of the church is valid *because* it is an abiding principle carried over from the O.T.—in which case the principle still applies to the state in the form of capital punishment as well.

Moreover, it’s hard to argue for excommunication replacing capital punishment, when each exists in both testaments—the O.T. sanctioned excommunication (e.g., 2 Chron. 26:21), and the N.T. sanctions capital punishment (e.g., Rom. 13:4). We must add that N.T. churches appeal to Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:15-20 as authoritative for excommunication, and yet Jesus Himself didn’t hold that excommunication and capital punishment were antithetical—just three chapters prior to those verses, Jesus upheld the capital punishment for those who curse their parents (Matt. 15:4).

And, if the commonality of the phrase “purge the evil person from among you” between the O.T. state and the N.T. church means excommunication has replaced capital punishment, then logical consistency demands that only the church can abide by the rule that charges must be established by two or three witnesses. After all, this phrase is common to the O.T. state (Deut. 19:15) and the N.T. church (Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1) as well.

This of course would result in serious injustice in the civil realm. If judges required only the testimony of one witness to find the accused guilty, the innocent would be more frequently punished. Or, if judges
required no less than the testimony of four witnesses, the guilty would more likely go free.

*Eighth*, it’s also hard to argue N.T. excommunication has replaced O.T. capital punishment because the two cases are not parallel. The former applies only to the church, those within the covenant community. It does not apply to those outside. As Paul said regarding N.T. excommunication: “For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. ‘Purge the evil person from among you’” (1 Cor. 5:12, 13). However, under O.T. civil law, purging evil applied not just to members of the covenant community, but to pagan sojourners in Israel who were not part of the community (Lev. 24:17-22; cf. Deut. 21:18-21).

Another problem, *ninth*, with equating N.T. excommunication with O.T. capital punishment is that the former is a matter of discipline, while the latter is a matter of punishment. Church discipline seeks repentance on the part of the guilty party, while civil punishment seeks to bring the guilty party to justice.⁹⁴⁰ As far as the church is concerned, someone who is purged from among them (excommunicated) can be eventually restored if they repent. But if one is purged from society in the context of capital punishment, then obviously restoration is impossible.

**Objection 10:** “Only O.T. saints had to follow God’s law. N.T. saints are not required to obey God’s law, since they are ‘not under law but under grace’ (Romans 6:14)”

*First*, at the outset we must point out that this understanding of Romans 6:14 reduces to absurdity. The verse reads: “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” Note the connection between being under law with being under the dominion of sin. Greg L. Bahnsen writes that “‘under law’ is equivalent to being under the dominion of sin. We cannot credibly say that all those saints who lived under the law of Moses were under sin’s dominion.”⁹⁴¹ Neither can we credibly say that saints who lived under the law of Moses

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⁹⁴¹ Bahnsen, *No Other Standard*, 82.
were not under grace. All the saints who ever lived were saved by grace (Rom. 11:1-5) through faith (Rom. 4:1-12).

Second, for what the text means about being under law, we will offer two perspectives. The first is from Bahnsen, who writes,

[T]o be technically precise, one should observe that Paul there does not speak of being under “the law”—but rather to being "under law" (generically, without any definite article). He teaches that those whose personal resources are merely those of law, without the provisions of divine grace, are for that reason under the inescapable dominion of sin. The “dominion of law” from which believers have been “discharged” is forthrightly explained by Paul to be the condition of being “in the flesh [the sinful nature], “being “held in” by “sinful passions which bring forth fruit unto death” (7:1-6). From this spiritual bondage and impotence, the marvelous grace of God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has set the believer free. It has not set him free to sin against God’s moral principles.942

Brian Schwertley, giving another perspective, writes,

When Paul says ‘If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law’ (Gal. 5:18), or ‘Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law but under grace’ (Rom. 6:14), he is telling believers they are not under law as a condition of salvation or as a curse”943 (cf. Gal. 3:13 and 4:5.)

There is a world of difference between being under law in the context of a curse or condition for salvation and being under law in the context of a rule for obedience.

Third, those who have been saved by grace through faith receive the Holy Spirit, who causes them to obey God’s laws—not on their own strength, but by the Holy Spirit’s power. Having the Holy Spirit and desiring to keep God’s law go hand-in-hand:

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942 Ibid., 81, 82.
943 Schwertley, God’s Law for Modern Man.
In Ezekiel 36:27 the Holy Spirit is promised in order that we might obey the law: “And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (NASV). Galatians 5:18-23 explains that to be led by the Spirit is not to be under the curse, bondage, impotence, and death of the law (which had been described in the preceding sections of Galatians); the demand of the law remains [not for salvation, but as a rule of obedience-S.H.], but now the power needed to obey is provided by the Spirit of God. The law could not be against those who walk by the Spirit, for they are fulfilling the law (see vv. 14, 23). Far from detracting from the law, the Spirit enables us to observe the law as we should. Instead of being condemned and held in bondage by the old letter of the law, we now serve in the newness of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 7:6); we are released from guilt and set free to obedience. The letter of the law without the power of God’s Holy Spirit is a word of condemnation and death to us, but the Spirit gives life and ethical ability. Here we find the proper contrast between the law and the Spirit: namely, the law is not a quickening Spirit.  

Indeed, we must consider the fact that the Bible defines sin as lawlessness (1 Jn. 3:4), that is, law-breaking. As such, we could rephrase “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace” as, “For law-breaking will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.”

Thus it is impossible to understand “not under law” to mean freedom to break God’s law. Being under grace releases one from the dominion of law-breaking, that is, unrepentant sinning. Otherwise, instead of saying, “For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace,” it might read, “For sin [law-breaking] will have dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.” To not be under law is to be empowered to obey the law, since God puts one under grace so that he will not be dominated by sin—in short, he will not be a habitual, unrepentant law-breaker. As Ephesians 2:8-10 reads,

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944 Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 171, 172.
For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (emphasize mine).

Fourth, to argue that Paul opposes the law as a standard for obedience in Romans 6 is to force Paul to contradict himself. For in the very same epistle Paul says “you are not under law but under grace,” he upholds the law—which he “says faith establishes (Rom. 3:31), sanctification needs (Rom. 7:12, 14), and the Holy Spirit prompts (Rom. 8:3-4)”945 us to obey.

Fifth, Paul, in order to avoid any charge of being opposed to the law, states in the very next verses:

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? (Romans 6:15-16).

As noted, sin by its very definition is lawlessness (1 Jn. 3:4), and so we must obey God's law in order not to sin. (Obey by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, of course.) Thus according to Romans 6 Christians are “slaves of … obedience, which leads to righteousness.” Indeed, “Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law” (Rom. 3:31).

Sixth, those who insist that Christians are not “under law” in any sense have a problem when it comes to 1 Corinthians 9:20, 21, which reads:

To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being

945 Gentry, God’s Law in the Modern World, 44.
outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might
win those outside the law. (emphases mine)

In giving different meanings to “under the law,” this text rejects the
simplistic notion that one cannot be under the law in any sense. Paul first
denies he is under the law in the sense of being required to obey its
abrogated ceremonial regulations, but then goes on to affirm being under
the law in the sense of being required to obey the abiding moral law (not
to earn salvation, which he already had, but to serve his Lord). Lest one
thinks “the law of Christ” is opposed to the O.T. moral commands, keep
in mind that Christ affirmed O. T. law “until heaven and earth pass away”
(Matt. 5:17-20). (And so O. T. law is the law of Christ.)

This only makes sense—Christ is concerned with doing the will of
His father (Jn. 6:38). Christ is not a rogue member of the Trinity—“God
is one” (Rom. 3:20), and so “There is only one lawgiver” (Jms. 4:12).
Moreover, in the very chapter the Apostle Paul affirms the law of Christ,
Paul cites as authoritative the Law of Moses: “Do I say these things on
human authority? Does not the Law say the same? For it is written in the
Law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the
grain.”’ (1 Cor. 9:8-9a).

Objection 11: “Jesus changed the law from being external to
internal in His series of “you have heard that it was said”/“but I
say to you” arguments in Matthew 5. Therefore, O. T. law—
including its civil laws—are done away with.”

First, in these arguments, Christ refutes the oral traditions of the
religious leaders of his day—not God’s written law. The religious leaders
would either a) focus on only keeping the law externally (e.g., in the case
of adultery [Matt. 5:27]), or b) make up new laws entirely (e.g., they
would teach “hate your enemy” [Matt. 5:43], contrary to Proverbs 25:21
and Exodus 23:4, 5).

In these antitheses Christ is contrasting what has been said and
heard by someone to His own teaching. Note the emphatic, “But I
say to you” which points toward a contrast of persons. In verses
17-18 Christ is definitely referring to the written law (“jot and
tittle”), but in verses 21-48 He refers to what has been said; what
is written and what is orally spoken have different referents. Christ does not set Himself against the word of God written, but to the word of man spoken. The person of Christ and that of the Pharisees clash in these antitheses (at the end of the discourse the people are astonished because Christ taught as one having authority and not as the scribes, Matt. 7:28 f.). What Christ says is opposed to what the Pharisees say, but it confirms what is written in the jot and tittle of the law. Jesus is contrasting the law of God to the tradition of the elders (as in Matt. 15:2 f.).

In using the phrase “it was said by them of old,” Jesus opposes “the scribal interpretations of the law (the halacha) and not the law itself”; “It is not the contents of what was written of old but those persons of old that Jesus opposes.”947 Indeed, when Christ refers to God’s law in the Gospels, He doesn’t begin with, “You have heard that it was said,” but, “It is written.” “It is written” is equivalent to Christ saying “but I say to you,” since Christ is God and it is God from Whom the written law comes from.

Second, the O.T. itself writes that “The law of the LORD is perfect” (Ps. 19:7a), and as such the law never needed an “upgrade.” It was always required to be kept in the heart. As God commanded the Israelites, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart” (Deut. 6:5, 6; see also Deut. 11:18; 32:46).

The Older Testament saint had God’s law in his heart: “The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip” (Ps. 37:31) (cf. Is. 51:7).948 And so the psalmist wrote: “Oh how I love your law! It is my

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946 Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 95.

947 Ibid.

948 Not only did O.T. saints have the law in their hearts, but even non-saints in both the O.T. and N.T. eras have “the work” of the law on their hearts, which is a basis for their condemnation:

“They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.” (Romans 2:15, 16)

The evil in man’s hearts was a basis for God flooding the earth:
meditation all the day” (Ps. 119:97). Did this law in the heart restrict itself to inward obedience? No. No one would dispute that outward obedience is an aspect of Older Testament law. Thus the Psalms should be a lesson to Christians in the N.T. era: we must keep God’s law in the body (i.e., word and deed) and in the heart.

Third, consider one of the “you have heard that it was said”/“but I say to you” arguments Jesus employs. Many think the following statement by Jesus means that Jesus changed the law from external keeping to internal keeping: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28). But Jesus is not pointing out that the commandment was once only to be kept externally. Rather, he points out the scribes’ neglect of the internal keeping of this command.

The scribes had not been as true to the intent of the seventh commandment as this. They had no excuse for overlooking the sin of lust, for it was plainly prohibited in the Older Testament (e.g., Prov. 6:25, “Lust not after her beauty in thy heart” ASV; cf. Job 31:1) and specifically in the Decalogue (“thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife,” Ex. 20:17). Thus Christ introduced here no new standard of morality; He simply reinforced the norms of the Older Testamental law. In both of the first two antitheses Christ affirms what the Older Testament had taught: evil comes from the thoughts of man’s heart (Gen. 6:5), and thus the law of God touches upon the inner disposition as well as outward behavior (cf. Ex. 20:3, 17 which show God’s concern for inner purity). Christ brings no radically new teaching; He forcefully confirms the old.949

Fourth, Christ not only condemned the religious leaders of His day for not keeping the law in their hearts, but also for not practicing the

949 Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 98, 99.
law outwardly. The religious leaders made void the law externally as well for the sake of their traditions. They nullified the law to engage in the physical act of taking care of one’s parents (Matthew 15:1-9); and were thus indicted by Christ for worshiping God in vain.

This lack of keeping the law externally was symptomatic of their hearts being far from God. They did not practice what they preached (Matt. 23:3); they laid heavy burdens on others but they themselves were not willing to move a finger (Matt. 23:4); and they neglected justice and mercy (Matt. 23:23). And so those who use the requirement of inward law-keeping as an excuse to deny keeping the law outwardly are just as condemned as those who attempt to keep the law outwardly but reject keeping the law inwardly. Obedience begins from the heart, but ultimately manifests itself outwardly in the body.

A man who refrains from physical adultery while cherishing lustful thoughts is self-deceived if he thinks that he has obeyed the Lord’s commandment. On the other hand, a man who thinks that he has a pure attitude and motive, even though he engages outwardly in an act which transgresses God’s law, is just as self-deceived. God’s law does not place a premium upon inwardness and attitudes of the heart at the expense of overt obedience to His requirements.950

Christians must glorify God in the heart and the body. Not only are they to be transformed by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:2), but they are to present their bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). We must not only avoid the heresy of legalistic externalism (i.e., keeping God’s commands outwardly but not inwardly), but also of Gnostic internalism (i.e., holding that inward obedience is important but physical obedience isn’t).

Fifth, if a professing Christian holds that it doesn’t matter what Christians do outwardly, then he denies that God cares about such things as Christian fellowship, hard work, physical intimacy in marriage, water baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. Sixth, if the law should only be internalized, what are the ramifications for this position on civil government? When it comes to convicted murderers, for example, should

950 Bahnsen, By This Standard, 33.
civil rulers only execute them in their hearts and not physically? Should the trial itself just take place in the judge’s heart? No, in order to avoid injustice, the Bible provides civil laws that must be carried out in the body.

**Objection 12:** “Since Christians have the law in their hearts, they don’t need written law for instruction, not even for civil government.”

*First*, one might base this on Romans 7:6: “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.” However, passages such as this do not abrogate the believer’s requirement to keep the law, but focus on the empowerment the believer has in keeping the law. See objection 10.

*Second*, Vincent Cheung observes,

If their position is that the specific contents of the laws are now written in their hearts, and in such a fashion that they can consciously recall and articulate them, then, they will have to recall the whole Bible (or at least all those propositions considered moral laws) without first reading any of it (except those portions required for their conversion, after which the laws are supposedly written in their hearts in the sense they describe).\(^{951}\)

Thus, if the claim is true that written law is unnecessary for instruction, then the law in the heart of the Christian must be as clear to that Christian as the written law itself. Otherwise, such a claim is false. And such a claim must be false, for if the law in the heart was just as clear as written law, then every Christian from the time of his conversion would be able to articulate every written moral law in the Bible, and Christians wouldn’t bother studying much of the Bible that they do in fact study.

Now, one might argue that the law could be in one’s heart in such a way that, even if he cannot articulate all of it, he would still have the

\(^{951}\) Vincent Cheung, e-mail message to author, February, 27, 2010.
ability to intuitively or instinctively obey it. But this of course would have to be established by careful exegesis, and even if somewhat true, it cannot be true to the exclusion of the need for written law, in light of the arguments given throughout this appendix. Moreover, the question becomes, how does one know for sure whether he is properly obeying the law in his heart via intuition or instinct? Written law is the only objective standard for such knowledge.

Third, the objection overlooks the fact that O.T. saints had the law in their hearts as well (Ps. 37:30, 31; Is. 51:7). As the psalmist wrote: “Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97). And no one would hold that O.T. saints were to ignore God’s written law. They were “to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, turning aside from it neither to the right hand nor to the left …” (Josh. 23:6b).

Fourth, the objection also overlooks the fact that N.T. saints need written law as well. They are to hold to and teach others to keep God’s written law “until heaven and earth pass away” (Matt. 5:18, 19). Thus the N.T. appeals to O.T. written law many times (e.g., Ac. 23:5; Rom. 12:19; 13:9; Gal., 5:14; Eph. 6:1-3; Jms. 2:10, 11; 1 Tim. 5:18). Christians are to regularly appeal to written law for the sake of other Christians, for 2 Timothy 3:16-17 reads: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

Thus whatever it means for Christians to have the law in their hearts, it can’t mean that they aren’t required to learn and obey the written law found in both testaments. The written law is profitable for “every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17b) (emphasis mine).

Fifth, while God’s law is perfect, the heart of the Christian is not. Christians still sin. We must not confuse having the perfect law in one’s imperfect heart with the notion that the law somehow perfects the heart. As a sinner, the heart of the Christian is still deceitful (and thereby unreliable for discerning the law in one’s heart without the aid of the written law): “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9).
Therefore David, who had the law in his heart, was self-deceived, and thus did not come to terms with his sins of murder and adultery until he was rebuked by Nathan (2 Sam. 12:1-13; cf. Rom. 7:7). Besides, what true Christian, when struggling with how to deal with a certain situation, says, “I’m going to go home and listen to my heart” instead of “I’m going to go home and seek guidance in the Bible.” “Listen to your heart” is the slogan of anti-Christian humanism.

**Sixth**, even non-Christians have the law in their hearts in a sense: “They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts …” (Rom. 2:15a). And yet, they are “futile in their thinking”; their “foolish hearts” are “darkened” (Rom. 1:21b).

This state of immoral confusion on the part of unbelievers should be sufficient to show that one has to do better than assume that simply having the law in one’s heart necessarily means one can discern the law without written revelation, since, again, unbelievers, who have darkened minds, have the work of the law written on their hearts. For a Christian, to have the law in his heart does not mean that he has no need of written law, but rather that he delights to keep the written law: “I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8).

**Seventh**, how would the argument that Christians don’t need God’s law in written form apply to civil government? If God’s written civil law is rejected, we are left with two choices. Should civil governments reject the law of God for written humanistic law—which is blatantly anti-God? Or should they accept the law of God but refuse to have it written since Christians supposedly don’t need written law?

If the latter, how are non-Christians—who do not have the law in their hearts in the sense that Christians do—able to ascertain which civil laws are in accordance with God’s law? And, what do we do when two professing Christians disagree on whether a certain civil law is in accordance with God’s law or not? Without written law, there is no objective standard for settling such a dispute.

**Objection 13:** “In Matthew 5:19, 20 Jesus is not upholding the law’s abiding validity, but showing that if one thinks he can enter the kingdom of heaven by works, he must keep the law
perfectly, or else he will fall short like the scribes and Pharisees. The impossibility of this is meant to drive someone to not rely on law-keeping for salvation, but to Christ’s perfect righteousness. Thus these verses do not uphold the O.T. civil code.”

It is true that one cannot be saved by law-keeping. Indeed, one must reject works as having any basis in salvation and instead believe in Christ and His perfect righteousness alone. (One does not do good works in order to be saved, but those who are saved will naturally produce good works after being saved, since God has changed their nature.) Though it is certainly true that Christ alone saves, we do not believe that this is what Matthew 5:19, 20 teaches.

First, though, even if this objection is right, this wouldn’t annul the law’s abiding validity. If verses 19 and 20 are meant to show one’s inability to abide by God’s perfect moral obligations, that wouldn’t change the obligatory nature of God’s moral laws. One’s inability to keep the law doesn’t nullify one’s requirement to keep the law. No true Christian would argue that he can keep God’s commands perfectly; and yet, he still strives to keep God’s commands. And no one would dispute that O.T. saints were obligated to uphold God’s law, and yet they were also unable to keep God’s law perfectly. When we argue that the O.T. laws (including its civil laws) must be upheld today, we are not arguing for perfectionism, but that we must strive to keep them.

Second, in this text “Christ is reflecting upon the criterion of personal standing within the kingdom (not the way of entrance into the kingdom) and says that a person’s relation to the kingdom of God is determined by meticulous observance of the least details of the law.”952 Those who have been saved by God’s grace will to varying degrees take God’s law seriously (v. 19), since their hearts have been transformed by the Holy Spirit. But those who are not saved, such as the scribes and Pharisees in this example (v. 20), constantly make void God’s law for the sake of their traditions (cf. Matt. 15:1-9), since the Holy Spirit has not given them a heart to follow God’s law.

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952 Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 87.
Regarding the latter point, this is why in “the subsequent verses of Matthew 5 Christ goes on to attack the Pharisees for their ‘unlawful’ legalism.”953 “The mistake of the Pharisees was not concern for detail; it was externalism, humanistic traditionalism, and hypocrisy. Their kind of concern for detail led them to miss the whole genius of kingdom righteousness; hence they made God’s law void by their own traditions.”954

Again, while one cannot enter the kingdom of heaven by law-keeping (and the Bible condemns attempts to do so [cf. Gal. 5:2-4]), when one lives in disdain for, and nonstop rebellion against, God’s law, one is evidencing the fact that he does not have the Holy Spirit dwelling within him, and thereby is not saved. As Romans 8:5-7 reads,

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.

Third, to those who argue that in Matt. 5:19, 20 Jesus is not discussing one’s standing within the kingdom, but is demanding perfect obedience to the law in order to enter the kingdom (which is meant to drive someone to look to Christ’s perfect righteousness for salvation), we must point out that their argument is contradicted by Jesus’ statement that “whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:19b).

Notice how the class of people Jesus is talking about will be called least in the kingdom—not excluded from the kingdom. It’s just that their standing in the kingdom is not as great as “whoever does them and teaches them” (Matt. 5:19c) (i.e., whoever practices and teaches even the least of the commandments).

Those excluded from the kingdom are not those who fail to a certain extent to uphold God’s law (i.e., “whoever relaxes one of the least

953 Ibid., 88.
954 Ibid., 87.
of these commandments and teaches others to do the same”) (and in fact all Christians fall way short of God’s perfect standard), but those who distort God’s law to the level of the scribes and Pharisees: “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20).955 (Such distortion is symptomatic of having an unregenerate heart.)

In short, Matthew 5:19 and 20 describes three classes of people: (1) those in the kingdom who relax one of the least of the commandments and teach others to do the same; (2) those in the kingdom who practice and teach even the least of the commandments; and (3) those outside the kingdom who distort God’s law to the level of the scribes and Pharisees. Thus the argument that Jesus in Matthew 5 is demanding perfect obedience in order to enter the kingdom of heaven cannot stand, for to do so, Matthew 5 could not include the first class of people who are in the kingdom of heaven, and yet clearly obey the law imperfectly. And since we know that no one except Jesus Himself can keep the law perfectly, we can thereby infer that not even those in the second class are those who keep the law perfectly, either—they just keep the law better than those in the first class.

Fourth, further confirming the argument that Matthew 5:19, 20 is not about law-keeping in order to enter the kingdom but about law-keeping as a duty is the surrounding context. In verse 17 Jesus twice denies that He had come to abolish the law; and in verse 18 Jesus upholds the law “until heaven and earth pass away.” In verse 13 through 16, Christ requires His disciples to be salt and light to the world.

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good

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955 Special thanks to Michael H. Warren, Jr., for providing us with helpful insights in this matter.
works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (emphasis mine).

Thus the verses immediately before verses 17-20, which is about the law, refer to good works. Certainly the context can’t be “showing that if one thinks he can enter the kingdom of heaven by works, he must keep the law perfectly.” The text addresses those who are already saved, for Jesus says, “You are the salt of the earth,” and “You are the light of the world.” Only the converted can be salt and light.

And Jesus takes for granted that those who are light do good works—just as Jesus takes for granted in verse 19 that those in the kingdom of heaven keep the law (at least to a greater degree than those outside the kingdom of heaven, see v. 20). In fact, since good works are obedience to the law, verse 19 explains the good works that those who are the light of the world are supposed to do—obeying the law and teaching others to do the same.

Not only this, but verse 20 reads, “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” Immediately following this is several verses where Christ upholds particular laws and corrects the distortions of them by the scribes and Pharisees (vv. 21-48).

Since such verses immediately follow verse 20, and since they do give examples of unrighteous, law-breaking behavior of the scribes and Pharisees, then clearly verses 20 and 21-48 are contextually linked. And so, verses 17-20 (verses 17-19 are part of verse 20’s context) state the law’s abiding validity in general, while verses 21-48 state the law’s abiding validity by example. Thus to deny that verses 19 and 20 uphold the law in the New Covenant era is likewise to deny that the particular laws in verses 21-48 apply to the New Covenant era as well.

If logically consistent, then, those who deny that verses 19 and 20 uphold the law’s abiding validity would also hold that it is okay for Christians to do such things as be angry with their brothers, to look at a woman lustfully, and to hate their enemies (examples from verses 21-48). Ironically, those who teach that verses 19 and 20 deny the law’s abiding validity are engaging in the very law-twisting behavior that Christ, in the following verses, rebukes the scribes and Pharisees for.
Objection 14: “Romans 13 is merely discussing God’s use of rulers providentially; as such, it is not prescriptive for rulers to enforce God’s law, but descriptive of how God sovereignly uses rulers”

First, even if this were the case, Romans 13 would by implication still be prescriptive of the duties of rulers. As the book of Romans itself earlier points out, men are responsible to God because God is sovereign. Romans 9 gives the analogy of God being the potter, and of man being the clay. Just as the potter is sovereign over the clay, God is sovereign over man, and thereby it is immoral for man to rebel against God (the text gives the example of the sin of talking back to God, verse 20), for as the potter has complete ownership of the clay, so God has complete ownership of man.

Since man is God’s property, God has the right to dictate to man whatever he wants. Therefore, if Romans 9 teaches that man must answer to God because God is sovereign, then certainly Romans 13, if it teaches that God is sovereign over rulers, requires civil rulers to enforce God’s law because God is sovereign.

Consider King Nebuchadnezzar’s experiences. Upon discerning God’s providential rule over civil affairs, Nebuchadnezzar understood the need to submit to God. After God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fiery furnace that Nebuchadnezzar had them thrown into, Nebuchadnezzar decreed that those who blaspheme God should be executed. Nebuchadnezzar’s reason? Because “there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way” (Dan. 3:29b); quite simply, God’s absolute sovereignty taught Nebuchadnezzar of his obligation to acknowledge God and thereby enforce God’s law.

Nebuchadnezzar refused to consistently practice this, however, and so he was again taught a lesson in the connection between God’s providence and the affairs of state. God took Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom away from him and drove him from the presence of men until he knew “that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will” (Dan. 4:25b), that is, until he recognized God’s sovereignty over all men including civil rulers (cf. Dan. 4:28-37). Recognition of this sovereignty necessitated “practicing righteousness” and “showing mercy to the oppressed” (Dan. 4:27b) in the civil sphere.
Indeed, Psalm 2 requires all rulers to rule by God’s law on the basis of the Lordship of Christ. Verses 8 and 9 prophecy Christ’s providential subduing of the nations. It is on this basis that rulers are told to “Serve the LORD with fear” (Ps. 2:11b), and to serve the Lord is to rule by God’s law. And so in a purely providential interpretation of Romans 13, rulers would still be taught that they are the clay (servants of God) and therefore must serve in the only way possible—by enforcing God’s law.

Second, the verses in Romans 13 about civil rulers are part of an overall discourse in ethical instruction, which would seem to make Romans 13 prescriptive of the duties of civil rulers to enforce God’s law. According to Greg L. Bahnsen,

Romans 13:1-7 arises in a context of ethical instruction (note the long list of moral exhortations in chapter 12 and the discourse on love and law in 13:8-10), and for Paul Christian ethics is directed by God’s law (cf. Rom. 3:31; 7:12; 8:4; etc.). Thus when he has instructed believers to avenge not themselves because vengeance is God’s (12:19), it is not unnatural that he should go on to explain how God’s vengeance is expressed in social relations by means of the state’s sword (13:4) and also what the Christian’s relation is to that state (13:1-2). In both these areas Paul’s teaching is from the law of God.956

Third, the text tells believers to “be subject” to civil rulers. On this Bahnsen writes,

The ordination of God puts the magistrate under moral obligation to the Lord and His prescriptions. This might also be inferred from the fact that Paul tells believers to “be subject” to the magistrate, for elsewhere when the New Testament admonishes a class of people to “be subject” to someone else the writer turns around and also calls upon these masters, husbands, and parents to demonstrate equal responsibility (e.g., Eph. 5:22-6:9). Thus it would not be unreasonable to expect that Paul, having told believers to be subject to rulers, would turn around and expect

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956 Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 362.
responsible obedience of rulers—indeed, this is precisely what we find in verses 3 and 4.957

Fourth, for more evidence of the prescriptive nature of Romans 13, consider the following: “For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then *do what is good*, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good” (Rom. 13:3, 4a) (emphases mine).

Rulers are to terrorize bad conduct, but not good conduct. And, by the nature of the case, good and bad conduct is defined by God’s law. Thus the text prescribes rulers to enforce God’s law. And so, people must “do what is good”—that is, obey God’s civil law as enforced by civil rulers—so that they can “receive his [the ruler’s] approval” and thus avoid being punished by him.

Fifth, it also seems hard to argue that Romans 13 is not prescriptive for rulers, given that the text, after mentioning that rulers are God’s instruments to terrorize and kill evildoers, states, “For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing” (Rom. 13:6). Thus we are given the purpose of taxes—to subsidize the civil government’s divinely appointed role in terrorizing and killing evildoers.

In giving the purpose of taxes, Romans 13 is prescribing rulers to fulfill those particular purposes. Just as it is a sin to deny the purpose of marriage (cf. Matt. 5:32) and the Sabbath (cf. Mk. 2:23-28)—or *any purpose* God has established—so it is to deny the purpose of taxes. The ruler who does not fulfill what he is paid to do is like the hired hand who does not fulfill what he is paid to do. In each case, the parties have committed theft.

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957 Ibid., 364, 365.
Appendix C:

What About Natural Law?

Many Christians reject a form of civil government based on God’s written, special revelation for a form of civil government based solely on natural law, i.e., God’s revelation in conscience and nature. However, besides the fact that the state is required to follow the O.T. civil laws as revealed in Scripture (see Appendix A), when it comes to discerning God’s will, natural law is at best second best to special revelation.

On the superiority of written to unwritten revelation, William Blackstone, author of *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, writes, “The revealed law is of infinitely more authority than what we generally call the natural law. Because one is the law of nature, expressly declared to be by God himself; the other is only what, by the assistance of human reason, we imagine to be that law.”

Gary DeMar, moreover, asks, “Should those who rule trust the fallen ‘light of reason’ or the Word of God that ‘is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path’? (Ps. 119:105).” DeMar explains biblical law’s superiority to “principles of reason”:

First, the Bible has them all written in one place. The “laws of nature” must be hunted down by finite, fallible, and fallen creatures. While it is true that these same finite, fallible, and fallen creatures must interpret the Bible, at least the hunting process is taken care of. The laws are there for all to see. Second, the “principles of reason” are not specific enough. The Bible is a detailed ethical blueprint.

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960 Ibid., 29.
The Apostle Paul notes that the knowledge of sin comes through the written law (Rom. 7:7). With this being the case, could we not say that because of the written law’s clarity there comes a better understanding of how to govern, of the proper size of the state, of what sins the state can criminalize, and of what penal sanctions are just, etc? Indeed, we can. This is implied in Leviticus 18, where God warned the Israelites not to engage in the sins that caused other nations to be vomited out of the land. These nations had natural law; but God gave His chosen nation Israel written law.

If natural law is clearer, then why did God bother giving His chosen nation written law—which included a civil code—instead? And, if natural law is superior, why only after discovering the Book of the Law in the temple, did King Josiah realize his people’s national sins, and work for social reform (2 Ki. 22, 23)? Indeed, so important was written law that it was absolutely necessary for Israel’s kings to daily immerse themselves in it in order to fear God, keep God’s commandments, and avoid arrogance and injustice:

And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel (Deut. 17:18-20).

Notice it doesn’t say rulers must meditate on natural law in order to fear God, keep God’s commandments, and avoid the arrogance and injustice that comes from one’s heart being lifted up above one’s people. Natural law alone is insufficient for godly rule. Moreover, as Moses told the Israelites:

See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely
this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what
great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our
God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation
is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that
I set before you today? (Deut. 4:5-8).

As the passage demonstrates, man benefits more from God’s
written law than natural law. Israel’s moral laws—including its civil
code— are the model laws for all other nations to follow (“Keep them
and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the
sight of the peoples”). Israel’s laws were superior to the laws of the
surrounding nations that only had natural law (“what great nation is there,
that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you
today?”).

Regarding the preference for natural over written law in civil
government, Greg Bahnsen writes:

This either amounts to preferring a sin-obscured edition of the
same law of God or to denying the unity of natural and special
revelation (and being willing to pit the one against the other). Not
only this, but in fact natural revelation is suppressed in
unrighteousness by the sinner, and this should dissuade us from
thinking that it can be the recognized, functional measure of his
[the civil magistrate’s] ethical obligation.961

Indeed, if one were to suggest an antithesis between even some of natural
and special revelation, he would have to find a biblical example. Where
does the Bible say or imply that one can find in natural revelation a
contrary law to special revelation? In fact, Romans 1 and 2—which
treats natural revelation extensively—does not raise any laws contrary to
those revealed in special revelation (see, for example, Rom. 1:26-32).

William O. Einwechter points out that even prior to the Fall, man
could not properly follow God without special revelation (Gen. 1:28-29;
2:16-17). Natural revelation was an insufficient guide even when man
was sinless and the creation was not under the curse.962

962 William O. Einwechter, *Ethics and God’s Law: An Introduction to Theonomy*
If sinless man needed the Word of God and could not be guided solely by natural law, how much more must fallen man stand in need of the Word of God to teach him the knowledge of good and evil? If natural law was insufficient before the fall, it is doubly inadequate now because man’s ability to discern natural law has been greatly affected by the fall. First of all, the creation itself is now under the curse of sin (Gen. 3:17-19; Rom. 8:19-22). Therefore, although creation still does witness of God’s glory and power (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-20), it can no longer serve as an infallible revelation of ethical standards. 963 Secondly, man is now a sinful and rebellious creature who seeks to suppress the truth of natural law in his unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). It is certainly true that “the work of the law” has been “written in their hearts” (Rom. 2:14-15), but man’s defiled conscience is absolutely not a trustworthy guide for discerning what is just, good, and right (Prov. 16:25; 1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15; Heb. 9:14; 10:22). Can we trust the conscience of fallen man whose “heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. 17:9) to be the final judge of what is good and evil? 964

Indeed, while God’s natural law is not flawed, the hearts of men are: “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot” (Rom. 8:7). What natural, unconverted man does know of God, he suppresses (Rom. 1:18); he is unable to understand “the things of the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:14).

In short, man in his sinfulness exchanges natural law (Rom. 1:19-20) for unnatural lawlessness (Rom. 1:21-32). And because the regenerate man still sins, he, too, often thinks like the natural man. Moreover, and this is very significant, regenerate Christians themselves vary in what their consciences tolerate. There are those with weaker consciences who cannot tolerate what those with stronger consciences can (1 Cor. 8:7-12, Rom. 14:2, 13, 14). Thus when one takes the Bible out of the equation and defers only to natural law, he often can’t tell when biblical law ends and humanistic law begins.

963 Einwechter gives the example of how the post-fall creation contains violence and death, and asks, “Should we conclude from this that violence and death are good?” Ibid.
964 Ibid., 21, 22.
The most seemingly right laws in man’s eyes might be tyranny according to God’s law, for “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes …” (Prov. 21:2a).

As such, rulers interested in upholding justice and opposing tyranny must be guided by special revelation. Philosopher Gordon H. Clark writes,

It is instructive to note that political theorists who were untouched by the Christian revelation, almost without exception, advocate totalitarianism. If Plato was a communist, Aristotle was a fascist. Private parental education is forbidden because education has as its aim the production of citizens for the good of the state. The number of children a family may have is controlled by the government, and surplus children are to be fed to the wolves. And everybody must profess the state religion. [Jean Jacques] Rousseau is equally totalitarian: “There is therefore a purely civil profession of faith of which the Sovereign should fix the articles. … If anyone, after publicly recognizing these dogmas, behaves as if he does not believe them, let him be punished by death.” 965

When those who hold to the Bible’s civil code criticize natural law as not being a sufficient guide for civil government, the reply by natural law proponents might be that critics of natural law just don’t understand natural law. But of course, this undermines their very position; for if natural law can’t be understood, then how can it be a sufficient guide for civil government?

Moreover, if natural law sufficiently reveals a detailed ethical blueprint for civil government, has anyone discovered it yet? By blueprint we mean, for example, what particular sins the state should punish, and in what way those sins should be punished? Yes, there are particular commonsense things we know a magistrate should punish, such as murder and theft (although it may not be so clear how murder and theft should be punished). But a few particulars here and there are much different than a detailed ethical blueprint. (But then again, nations that reject special revelation as the standard of law can’t even get laws against

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965 Clark, Essays on Ethics and Politics, 158.
If it is the case, as the natural law theologian says, that civil rulers are only obligated to uphold natural law, then he is under the burden of proof to tell us which laws in the Bible’s civil code are unnatural. This shouldn’t be hard for him, since if we can clearly discern all natural laws, then we can equally clearly discern all unnatural laws. Maybe some laws in the Bible’s civil code are natural? If so, rulers would be required to enforce those particular laws.

But then, do we really believe that any two natural law theologians can sit down and honestly discern from nature the naturalness of the exact same civil laws from the Bible? On the other hand, if all of the Bible’s civil laws are not natural, then that would mean rulers sin when they adhere to separation of church and state (2 Chron. 19:11), forbid the kidnapping of people for slavery (Ex. 21:16), uphold the principle of innocent until proven guilty (Deut. 19:15), uphold the principle of impartial judgment (Lev. 19:15), exact punishments proportionate to the crime (Ex. 21:23-25), and even, God forbid, acknowledge God (1 Sam. 12:14).

Even as a believer, I still cannot discern via nature a detailed ethical blueprint for civil government—and a general ethical blueprint can even be hard enough to discern. Whether the problem is that what remains of my sinful nature suppresses a naturally-revealed civil code, or nature is not specific enough, or whatever—if I haven’t discovered civil government blueprints in nature at this stage of my life, I don’t believe others have discovered it either.

A quick way to test the intellectual honesty of someone who says natural law alone is sufficient for civil government is to simply ask, “Have you discovered a civil code in nature?” If intellectually honest, he would answer “no.” Then ask him by what standard he really determines what civil code the state should hold to.

His only choice besides the Bible’s civil code is to arbitrarily determine a civil code on his own authority (and be his own self-appointed philosopher king), and/or to appeal to the authority of others (and have his own, appointed philosopher kings). Regarding the latter, it
might be contemporary politicians or judges, or it might be any number of political philosophers—Plato, Aristotle, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Russell Kirk, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, John Rawls, etc.

But whether his standard of authority is himself or others, he has chosen the traditions of men as his standard, and consequently has adopted a humanistic view of the state. Hence, to theoretically adopt a natural law-only ethic of the state is to in practice default into a lawless humanistic ethic of the state.

Thus a society that adopts a natural law only ethic culminates in tyranny. This might come about in a couple different ways. The first possibility is that everyone will ultimately determine law for themselves, which would mean citizens and magistrates alike would lack any consistent, dependable standard for law. Justice would be subjective, not objective, and with no objective standard of liberty, there would be no reliable discernment of—and hence safeguard against—tyranny. Moreover, where everyone determines law for themselves, there are countless views of law. With countless views of law comes countless laws, and with countless laws comes tyranny.

The second possibility is that citizens would get frustrated with not being able to discern a civil code in nature and demand philosopher kings à la Plato’s Republic who can figure out natural revelation for them. The only major difference is that tyranny would come from an elite which would take advantage of the citizenry’s ethical ignorance and impose whatever laws serves its interests.

Thus, in matters of the state the only way to properly serve Jesus Christ is to hold to the civil code in the Bible, the basis of civil liberty. We either then find liberty under the King of Kings, or tyranny under the philosopher kings.
Appendix D:

Conservatism, Liberalism, Libertarianism, and Moderatism

To object to the view that the state should enforce the Bible’s civil code is to assume that there is a superior philosophy of civil law to that in the Bible. Given that the prevailing humanistic political philosophies in America are conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, and moderatism, we can assume that one who rejects the Bible’s civil code likely holds to one of these philosophies. (Even those holding to a natural law-only philosophy of civil government will naturally slip into one of these or another humanistic political philosophy, given that a detailed blueprint of the state is not discernable via natural law. See Appendix C.)

But these philosophies can hardly be considered superior to biblical law if they are immoral and internally incoherent. We will examine whether this is the case. We must qualify at the outset that we do not dispute that certain policies within any of these given philosophies are biblical. Some policies held by conservatives and libertarians, for instance, line up with biblical law. This critique is not of particular policies per se, however, but of the philosophies which in turn are used to justify certain policies.

The Garden of Eden

Morally speaking, conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, and moderatism are all repackaged philosophies employed in mankind’s initial rebellion against God in the Garden of Eden. Satan assumed the libertarian philosophy when he told Eve, “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). Libertarianism’s adoption of Satan’s philosophy is unequivocal. Libertarianism says, “Each person through

966 By this we mean secular libertarianism, not to be confused with Christian libertarianism.
reason can decide their own morals, their path in life, and how to optimize their liberty through rational and voluntary decisions.” ^967 And so Satan tempted Eve to become a libertarian, to be her own god and thereby know good and evil, i.e., to decide her own morals and path in life.

Eve thought she could achieve wisdom autonomously from God’s revelation, as the tree “was to be desired to make one wise” (3:6b); thus, she thought she could, as libertarianism says, “optimize” her “liberty through rational and voluntary decisions.” ^968 The libertarian view of human autonomy comes from Eve’s temptation to be her own god, her own person—or, in libertarian terms, her own property right, as opposed to God’s property right. ^969 Just as libertarians hold to “privacy-rights,” i.e., autonomous rights to be left alone to engage in sin, so did Adam and Eve. After rebelling, Adam and Eve sought privacy and “hid themselves from the presence of the LORD.”

When Eve yielded to Satan’s temptation, she assumed a liberal philosophy: she became “progressive” and attempted to improve upon God’s commands. The “tree was to be desired to make one wise,” and so human progress demanded that Eve eat of the tree. Adam and Eve’s rebellion was also a liberal egalitarian revolution: they wanted equality with God in yielding to the temptation to “be like God.”

And if both were to be gods equally, then they were to have equal roles in relation to one another—hence, Adam shirking his headship responsibilities by just standing there and recognizing “women’s rights”—allowing Eve to deal with the serpent on her own. Finally, Adam and Eve decided with liberalism that man is inherently morally good, and therefore the environment—not their hearts—was to blame for bad behavior. When God questioned them for their actions, Adam blamed Eve, as well as God for giving him Eve; and Eve blamed the serpent.

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^968 Ibid.

^969 All men are God’s property, whether they acknowledge it or not: “The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” (Ps. 24:1).
We also see in the Garden the prevailing conservative approach to natural law. (We do not mean biblical natural law, but rather a natural law which says that nature alone is the basis upon which moral common ground can be found between those of any religion. Since nature alone is sufficient, one’s views of God are irrelevant to finding such common ground.) Eve was tempted to look outside of God’s revelation (e.g., God’s command to not eat the forbidden fruit), and instead look to nature (the forbidden fruit) as a standard for ethics.

The conservative philosophy of making tradition, or the previous actions of men, the standard of right and wrong is seen in Adam eating of the fruit just as Eve did, and later Eve blaming the environment for her sin just as Adam did. (While it is hard to tell whether in either circumstance Adam and Eve consciously copied each other’s bad example, the point should be clear: our standard of obedience ought to be God’s commands—not the actions of those who came before us).

Finally, there is moderatism. Among the serpent’s temptations was, “Did God actually say …?” (emphasis mine) (Gen. 3:1). Casting doubt on the truth of God’s objective commands is the crux of relativism. Relativism is inherent to moderatism in that moderatism’s concern is not truth, but “being in the middle of two extremes”—regardless of what is true or false. We could say then that in its very de-emphasis of truth, moderatism, like Satan, casts doubt on the truth of—and the need to follow—God’s objective commands.

Hypothetically, an application of moderatism in the Garden would have been Adam eating half the fruit that Eve did. He would have “been in the middle of the two extremes” of God’s command and Eve’s sin. But anything less than full obedience to God’s commands is sin, and so such a halfway-measure would still have been sinful and would have brought the full weight of God’s judgment.

We now turn to address whether conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, and moderatism are internally coherent. From the outset, we should not expect such, since anti-God philosophies are naturally foolish (Rom. 1:18-32).

Liberalism and Conservatism
American liberalism is based on the notion of “progress.” The metaphysical conception “progress,” Richard M. Weaver writes, “calls only for magnitude and number.” Therefore, since “progress” “is becoming without a goal, it is not a source of distinctions in value.”

Progress, then, in and of itself is meaningless. Weaver adds:

The mere notion of infinite progress is destructive. If the goal recedes forever, one point is no nearer it than the last. All that we can do is compare meaninglessly yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Aristotle noted that the concept of infinity makes impossible the idea of the good. If a series of things is hierarchically ordered, it is conditioned from top to bottom and so cannot be infinite. If it is infinite, it cannot be conditioned from top to bottom, and there is no higher and lower.

Thus in denying moral absolutes, liberalism lacks any attainable ethical goal. It seeks progress for the sake of progress. In such an amoral approach, anything can be considered progress, irrelevant of its morality or immorality. Mao’s “Great Leap Forward” was as “progressive” as it gets, but between 1959-1961 it resulted in the deaths of an estimated 20 to 43 million. Moreover, the notion of progress for the sake of progress is really self-defeating. If everything progresses and ultimately becomes primitive, then so does the humanistic notion of progress itself.

If liberalism is meaningless, so is conservatism. Conservatism at best is “liberalism lite.” Harvey C. Mansfield writes, “Conservatism is a correlate of liberalism; it follows upon liberalism; it is liberalism’s little brother.”

Douglas Wilson observes, “[T]he terms left wing and right wing come from the seating of the revolutionary legislature in France following the Revolution. Those seated on the right were the moderate revolutionaries. Those on the left were the fire eaters, the radicals.”

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970 Richard M. Weaver, Ideas Have Consequences (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 51.
971 Ibid.
972 Courtois et al., The Black Book of Communism, 464.
974 Wilson, Black & Tan, 20.
Mansfield inquires into conservatism’s philosophic inconsistency: “Is it [conservatism] the alternative to liberalism or does it make liberalism work better than it would on its own? … Does conservatism go back or does it go slow?"975 Whatever the arbitrary choice, conservatism either defends the liberal gain of yesterday (by “going back”), or slowly accommodates the liberal proposals of today (by “following liberalism”).

And so, conservatives tend to possess a “courageous reticence” when liberal policies mainstream.976 During the sixties conservatives fought premarital sex and adultery tooth and nail. Now that these behaviors have become America traditions, conservatives are either desensitized to, or concede, these issues. They thus accept these behaviors as a given and battle the newest perversions introduced by liberals—sodomy and abortion.977

Moreover, even if it were to “undo” old liberal policies, conservatism would merely restore older liberal policies. Conservatism, or better called paleoliberalism, might at best be the difference between Claudius and Caligula—two Roman tyrants, with the former being more fiscally “conservative.”978 979

975 Dunn, *Future of Conservatism*, 44.
979 Back in the 1800s R.L. Dabney recognized the folly of American conservatism: “It may be inferred again that the present movement for women’s rights will certainly prevail from the history of its only opponent, Northern conservatism. This is a party which never conserves anything. Its history has been that it demurs to each aggression of the progressive party, and aims to save its credit by a respectable amount of growling, but always acquiesces at last in the innovation. What was the resisted novelty of yesterday is to-day one of the accepted principles of conservatism; it is now conservative only in affecting to resist the next innovation, which will to-morrow be forced upon its timidity, and will be succeeded by some third revolution, to be denounced and then adopted in its turn. American conservatism is merely the shadow that follows Radicalism as it moves forward towards perdition. It remains behind it, but never retards it, and always advances near its leader. This pretended salt hath utterly lost its savor: wherewith shall it be salted?” R. L. Dabney, “Women’s Rights Women,” *The Southern Magazine*, vol. 8 (January, 1871): 327.
Ultimately, conservatism and liberalism—each of which looks to the past and the future, respectively, without any objective moral criterion—are arbitrary distinctions. If conservatism is repackaged liberalism, then liberalism is repackaged conservatism. Thomas Sowell writes:

[T]he broad label “conservative” is itself virtually devoid of content, however much specific content there may be in each of the groupings and individuals to whom that label is loosely applied. … The status quo in the United States and throughout much of Western Europe is a liberal-left status quo, entrenched for at least a generation. Alternatives to this are arbitrarily called ‘going back,’ even when these alternatives refer to social arrangements that have never existed (the monetary proposals of Chicago economists, for example), while proposals to continue or accelerate existing political-economic trends are called “innovative” or even “radical.”

Conservers of liberal or socialist institutions are never called by the pejorative term, “conservative.” Neither are those who espouse the ideals, or repeat the very phrases, of 1789 France. In the broad sweep of history, the systematic advantages of decentralized decision making are a far more recent conception than the idea that salvation lies in concentrating power in the hands of the right people with the right principles. Adam Smith came two thousand years after Plato, but contemporary versions of the philosopher-king approach are considered new and revolutionary, while contemporary versions of systematic decentralization are considered “outmoded.”

In both liberalism and conservatism, tyranny is the natural outcome. Arbitrary philosophies beget arbitrary laws.

**Libertarianism**

Libertarianism, while having a more or less developed platform unlike conservatism and liberalism, nevertheless is also internally

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incoherent. A perfect example is in how Joseph M. Hazlett II, in describing libertarianism, contradicts the philosophy on its own grounds from one paragraph to the next:

This freedom from coercion is essential to man’s personal and economic well-being. Man has a natural right to life, liberty, and property, just as Locke had stressed, and the libertarians utilize this as a basis for their philosophy. Anything that infringes upon these rights through coercion and or threat, whether it be a man or a government, must be opposed on moral and political grounds.

The individual is considered to be a rational creature. In other words, each person through reason can decide their own morals, their path in life, and how to optimize their liberty through rational and voluntary decisions. Libertarians are therefore laissez-faire in individual, religious, and economic matters.981

Hazlett says libertarianism is based on the belief that man is free from coercion, having a “natural right to life, liberty, and property.” Any threat to this “natural right” must be morally opposed. Hence at first it seems that libertarianism holds to an absolute, unchanging moral law.

But in the next paragraph, Hazlett turns around and says everyone should be free to decide morality for themselves; religion should be “laissez-faire.” Now it seems that morality is no longer absolute, but relative.

So libertarianism contradicts itself by being simultaneously absolute and relativistic. On the one hand, it teaches moral absolutes: that man has absolute moral rights to life, liberty, and property. In this case, man would have no right to decide his own morality, since moral absolutes cannot be subjectively determined; man’s rights to life, liberty, and property are absolute. On the other hand, libertarianism teaches moral relativism: that man can subjectively decide morals for himself. In this case, though, man is not morally bound to recognize moral rights to life, liberty, and property, and can in fact oppose such rights.

Thus, libertarian moral rights undermine libertarian freedom, and libertarian freedom undermines libertarian moral rights. If morality is relative in a libertarian sense, then society is not morally obligated to affirm a libertarian philosophy. If morality is absolute in a libertarian sense, then society is morally obligated to deny a libertarian philosophy.

Besides libertarian moral rights and libertarian relativism contradicting one another, the concept of “natural rights” in a godless, libertarian universe is illogical. How are rights possible without God? Where are these rights in nature? Can we touch them, taste them, see them, smell them, or hear them? Does an impersonal, amoral universe care about rights?

And, while libertarianism is an anti-statist philosophy, its emphasis on man’s moral autonomy undermines its opposition to statism. State policy reflects the decisions of individuals who make up the state.

Therefore, when civil rulers hold to the libertarian view of man’s moral autonomy, the state itself becomes morally autonomous. And when the state is morally autonomous, it neither answers to God, nor the people. Rulers are neither guided nor constrained by any moral absolute to keep them from oppressing the people. Every law is based on whatever best resonates with whatever libertarian moral path the rulers have chosen. Libertarianism’s end result is tyranny.

**Moderatism**

The moderate prides himself on not being “extreme.” A noble sounding philosophy indeed, until we realize it sacrifices truth in the process. The moderatist would rather be part of the mainstream of society than on the fringes of society, no matter how true the views of a given fringe might be. Acceptance by the world is more important than dogmatism. Accordingly, regarding politics the moderatists is eclectic, arbitrarily borrowing from various political philosophies.

Charles Spurgeon, preaching on the theological compromises of his time, said, “The glorious charity of the present day is such, that it believes lies to be as good as truth; and lies and truth have met together and kissed each other; and he that telleth truth is called a bigot, and truth
has ceased to be honourable in the world!”⁹⁸² This captures the spirit of moderatism and its aversion to dogmatically upholding truth: moderatism is dogmatic about not being dogmatic (and therefore self-refuting).

Many moderatists might object and claim that truth is the central concern of their moderate philosophy; the middle of two extremes is how they arrive at truth. This approach—inspired by the golden mean philosophy of pagan Greece—is as morally syncretistic as pagan Greece was.

This golden mean approach to truth cannot account for how some happy median between two extremes constitutes truth. Also, it offers no objective barometer for knowing exactly when someone arrives at a median—let alone, for recognizing exactly what constitutes the extreme. And, it is an inherently relativistic approach to truth, since what society considers extreme (and therefore the middle of two extremes) is constantly in flux. Today’s conservatives would have been considered liberal by yesterday’s standards.

Finally, the argument “truth is found in the middle of two extremes” cannot stand by its own criterion. If we must embrace a compromise between two conflicting (extreme) positions, then we must accept a compromise between the positions “truth is found in the middle of two extremes” and “truth is not found in the middle of two extremes.” And from there, we must then compromise between that compromise and that compromise’s antithesis, ad infinitum. Thus moderatism violently self-destructs within a vicious infinite regress.

Moderatism is ultimately powerless to keep society “moderate.” It is not moderates who ultimately make revolutionary impact upon society. As R. J. Rushdoony has said, “History has never been dominated by majorities, but only by dedicated minorities, who stand unconditionally on their faith.” “Extremists” for the faith—men whom stand unconditionally upon God’s word (Sola Scriptura)—make lasting change.

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Thus, the early church turned the world upside down (cf. Ac. 17:6). And the Protestant Reformation, which began with just a few dogmatic men on the “fringe” (e.g., Wycliffe, Hus, Calvin), produced one of the greatest spiritual and sociopolitical revolutions in world history.

Whenever society lacks strong men of faith (Christian “extremists”), society doesn’t “moderate,” but viciously swings to the other extreme of lawlessness. Thus Western societies have surrendered their Reformation heritage to a fringe of atheists and militant sodomites who have come to dominate their nations’ spiritual and sociopolitical directions.

In America, for example, a “moderate” professing Christian majority finds itself politically subordinate to a strident sodomite minority. Previously, in Germany, Nazi radicals swayed the nation to the Third Reich.

**Conclusion**

In short, the philosophies of conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, and moderatism were behind the fall of man, but their pretext was freedom. But instead of freedom, they gave man the statist yearning to unify under global government in the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-4). From then up until today, tyranny has been the norm for civil government.

Libertarianism, where everyone does what is right in his own eyes (Jdgs 17:6; 21:25) was the philosophy prior to Israel being judged with a tyrannical ruler (1 Sam. 8). Conservatism nullifies the Bible’s civil code for the sake of the unjust traditions of men (cf. Matt. 15:4). Liberalism, in the name of progress and change, unjustly denies that the Bible’s civil code remains in effect until heaven and earth pass away (cf. Matt. 15:17-20). And moderatism is “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Eph. 2:14b)—including deceitful political schemes.
Appendix E:

The Christian Right

The Christian Right—the largest group of politically-active Christians in America—rejects the Bible’s requirement of the state to uphold the O.T. civil laws. Instead, it embraces political conservatism. But conservatism, as pointed out, lacks an unchanging moral anchor (see Appendix D). Thus the Christian Right is handicapped by its marriage with political conservatism.

Without getting into whether we agree with all of the Christian Right policies mentioned below, but to point out how unstable the Christian Right is politically and ethically, consider the following from The Changing Nature of Christian Right Activism: 1970s-1990s, by Christian Right scholar Matthew C. Moen. In this chapter, Moen lists several social issues where the Christian Right has softened. Its leaders stopped pushing for a ban on sodomite teachers, for the quarantining of AIDS patients, and for the “Family Protection Act.” Regarding Christian education, many religiously conservative homeschoolers began embracing state standards and accreditation, and the idea of tuition tax credits for solely private religious schools gave way to “school choice”—a universal educational voucher program. Public school prayer stopped being as major an issue as “equal access” for all religions in public schools. Moreover, there was “some shift toward the societal consensus” on the matter of abortion. No longer a black-and-white issue, most Christian Right leaders made “room for the standard exceptions (rape, incest, or the life of the mother).”

That was during the 1990s. The Christian Right’s leftward shift has continued ever since. Without endorsing the Republican Party, we draw attention to the following written in 2009 by Paul Gottfried:

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[A]s the last election showed, evangelical younger members [of the Religious Right] are sliding leftward, in the direction of the antiracist- and socialist-obsessed editors of Sojourners magazine and the faculty and administration of the leftward-trending evangelical Wheaton College. … [I]n 2008 evangelical support for the GOP had slid from 55 percent in 2001 to 40 percent. According to Pew Research poll conducted in July, 2008, only 61 percent of evangelicals backed the very centrist Republican presidential candidate John McCain; while 25 percent were behind Obama. Moreover, on immigration, some evangelicals are leaning left, as VDARE.COM showed as early as December 2006. Evangelicals in Central Pennsylvania sport a red bumper sticker produced by Sojourners with the slogan “God Is Not A Republican.” This is true, of course, but the slogan indicates to me that these putative members of the Religious Right have the same electoral preferences as the New York Times.  

The Christian Right’s inability to maintain a consistent political platform stems from ignoring the Bible’s civil code; thus platform-wise, those in its movement are “tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (Eph. 2:14b). Thus the Christian Right is easily duped into supporting statism. A case in point is when the Christian Right supported the statist neoconservative agenda during the Bush Administration.

[Irving] Kristol [the “godfather of neoconservatism] got what he wanted because the Religious Right made themselves into willing tools of neoconservative purposes—in return, incidentally, for pitifully little. While the neoconservative master class and W’s GOP, as it came ideologically under neocon control, mobilized evangelicals to support their Wilsonian foreign policy and Near Eastern politics, they compensated their happy foot-soldiers by merely refusing to give public funding to stem-cell research and abortion.  


985 Ibid.
Republican humanists have the Christian Right figured out. Just tell them you are pro-life (whether or not you act on it)—the closest thing to a core issue the Christian Right has—and you can get almost whatever you want from them.

The Christian Right should not support the Republican Party. The Republican Party not only ignores most of God’s laws, but it is officially polytheistic, since it does not acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and considers all religions to be equal. Christians cannot expect to join hands with the Republican Party and expect freedom. Being humanistic, the Republican Party is not an acceptable alternative to the Democratic Party.

An important principle behind 1 Samuel 8 is that the rejection of a civil government based on God for a civil government based on man results in tyranny. Thus it doesn’t matter whether the Republican Party officially supports more freedom than the Democratic Party. As long it rejects the King of kings, it is just another path to tyranny. “As long as Christians ... become water boys for the Republican Party, we're not going to get very far. Neither the Republican Party nor the Democratic Party represent a distinctively Christian approach to the political and civil issues that are tearing our country apart.”

Some in the Christian Right realize the Republican Party’s serious failings, but nevertheless support the party for pragmatic reasons. The thinking is that not enough people will vote for a more explicit Christian party, and so in order to defeat the Democratic Party, Christians should support the lesser-of-two evils, the Republican Party. But where has political pragmatism gotten us?

A good example of the failures of political pragmatism is the following commentary on the Republican Party by Ricardo Davis, State Chairman of the Constitution Party of GA. While upholding his political party’s commitment to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, he observes:

Some argue that such a political party dooms itself to failure in today’s culture, for such a political party will never attract enough

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support to accomplish its purpose. The fallacy in such a view is in how success is defined. This view defines success by adjusting the principles or policy of the party to include as many voters as possible to achieve electoral victory. The recent history of the Republican Party is an instructive example. Note how the leadership of the party intentionally disregarded the stated platform of the party in order to “cut in” as many voters as possible—almost always at the expense of the taxpayer. Conservatives in the party who hold to the previous principles gripe and complain; those who had a vested interest in the party supported the variance and are rewarded by party leadership. The Republicans used this strategy and gained electoral victories to the point that from 2000 to 2006 they had control of the federal legislature and executive. A majority of the federal Supreme Court’s justices serving during this period were nominated by Republican administrations; this means that the Republican’s victory was complete at the federal level. But far from the reversal of the Democrat’s failures, the Republican’s failures were greater still. Our constitutional and religious liberties have suffered more damage, our federal government has sunk deeper in debt yet creating more welfare subsidies to individuals and corporations, our military stretched thinner as our troops are dispatched to more international police actions and our borders remain minimally defended against foreign invasion. This is not victory; this is failure on a grand scale!987

This should be a lesson: God doesn’t bless pragmatism, but curses it: "Thus says the LORD: ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD’" (Jeremiah 17:5). The Christian Right’s adopting of the humanistic strength-in-numbers fallacy will never bring about justice; ignoring or diluting God’s Word in order to be with the winning party does not work.

The more the Christian Right tries to combat the nation’s secularization by making void the Word of God, the more secular and tyrannical the nation becomes. Despite all of the Christian Right’s

efforts, our nation now suffers under the tyranny of Democratic president Barack Obama.

Obama, with his radically polytheistic, pro-sodomite, pro-abortion, and pro-socialist views, is possibly the most wicked and anti-Christian president the nation has ever had. In its pragmatism and ignoring of the Bible’s civil code, the Christian Right promotes the very method it proclaims to be combating: disobedience to God. The more the Christian Right secularizes, the more it uses its political influence to fuel totalitarianism. If Christians in this movement continue down this road, they should not be surprised to very soon find themselves ruled by an outright Nazi-type regime.

While some in the Christian Right would justify pragmatism by arguing “desperate times call for desperate measures,” we must ask, in the words of Joe Morecraft, “Do desperate times justify disobedience to the Word of God? Or are desperate times caused by disobedience to the Word of God?” Pragmatism is never justified, even when the majority of the public would never accept the Bible’s civil code. It is not about perceived political success, but obedience to the King of kings.

If obedience means losing politically, so be it. The criterion for what “works” legally and politically is not what appears to bring the greatest amount of happiness (utilitarianism), but obedience to God’s commands (Eccl. 12:13). Man’s duty is to obey God and God alone. Period. And so by God’s standards political pragmatism doesn’t work. Obedience is more important than perceived political success, although God might very well grant political success for obedience.

But it is self-defeating to attempt political success and disobey God in the process. Compromise—even when attempted in order to transform a corrupt political party from within—only leads to statism. “As the light of the world, we must set the standard. Our Lord never called His people to help build the tower of Babel in the hope of getting a

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989 Ibid.
Bible study in the basement. He commanded us to build our own city on a hill."\textsuperscript{990}

Outside of obedience to God, there is no success, only death, since the wages of sin (disobedience to God) is death (Rom. 6:23). The Christian Right thinks it supports a pro-life party, but despite the Republican Party claiming to be so, it is not pro-life at all. Besides the fact that, generally speaking, Republican politicians are officially only a little less pro-death regarding abortion than Democrats (but pro-death nonetheless), and besides the fact that Republican politicians seem to rarely act on whatever weak pro-life views that they have, any party that refuses to recognize the Crown Rights of the Lord Jesus Christ is pro-death: “all who hate me love death” (Prov. 8:36b).

Another problem with the argument that God’s truth must be compromised because not enough of the U.S. population are Christians is that it denies God’s absolute sovereign control over all things, including the civil realm. The Bible is clear that God doesn’t need the majority to turn the political tide. Whenever God pleases, He can raise up a King David, or turn the heart of a wicked ruler, such as a Nebuchadnezzar. Whenever God pleases, He can put it in the heart of a pagan ruler to enforce the Bible’s entire civil code (Ez. 7:25-28). And whenever God pleases, He can deliver His people from the slavery of a totalitarian Egypt.

Furthermore, all influential political movements begin as a minority. They go from a minority to gradually influencing the larger population. So it is self-defeating to argue “we can’t run on a Christian platform because no one will vote for us!” Joe Morecraft III wisely observes,

I don’t expect many of our people to get elected—if they’re distinctively Christian in character and policy.

But I don’t despise the days of small beginnings. We’ve got to be pioneers, is the point. We’ve got to cut the trails, politically, show

\textsuperscript{990} David Chilton, “What’s Really Wrong With Public Schools?”, The Biblical Educator, March 1981, vol. 3, no. 3. Chilton is speaking in the context of public schools, but the same principle applies to civil government.
them how to do it, how not to do it, for future generations to build on what we’ve done.

I ran for Congress in 1986 as an overt Christian, obviously, self-consciously aware that I was a pioneer, praying that people would build on that. If we have political parties now that are overtly Christian it is a great training program for future days. …

And I think there’s another purpose for a political party, too, rather than running its own candidates, sort of like, you remember the old, [William] Buckley Conservative Party in New York, years ago? It was a restraint, for a while, on other political parties, and I think that if a Christian political party became strong enough—even though it couldn’t run a candidate, or elect a candidate in a certain area, it can began by being a clear restraint on candidates, who maybe wouldn’t run on their platform.991

Morecraft’s strategy, in short, can at best lead to eventual political victory, or at least possibly serve as a restraint on wicked rulers.

But the Christian Right’s pragmatic strategy of embracing the lesser-of-two tyrants brings tyranny nonetheless; a lesser tyrant is still a tyrant. Such a strategy logically leads to supporting a Mussolini to keep a Hitler out of office, and eventually supporting a Hitler to keep a Stalin out of office. Supporting tyrants to keep out other tyrants does not take us in the direction of liberty—at best it slows how tyrannical the nation becomes. And so it is better to gradually bring about liberty via distinctly Christian candidates than to gradually bring about tyranny via distinctly humanistic Republican candidates.

Of course, this is even assuming that the tyranny caused by the Republican Party is even gradual. Perhaps it is just as much or even more rapid than the Democratic Party, only in a more stealthful way. In a parody of the Republican Party’s surreptitious statism, a representative of the Republican Party says the following upon being asked whether the Republican Party opposes Obamacare:

Being the Republican Party we initially oppose things, but in the end our reforms are much more sweeping than those of the Democrats. Whereas the Democrats promise you socialism in 5 years, we promise you Communism in 10. That way you get to pretend to be more conservative, while all the time being far more radical than the liberals. …

… President Obama is too honest about what he believes; if you really want a soviet republic then you need to do it by stealth. Just convince the voters that you believe in capitalism and limited government, when all along you are introducing state totalitarianism, and before you know it you will have so-called conservatives acting like socialists. Lenin could not have come up with a better plan. 992

The interviewer then posed the following series of questions to the Republican representative:

Q: You know, that reminds me so much of George W. Bush. Who would have thought it? If you really want socialism, it is best to vote for the GOP.

A: Yeah I am not really supposed to say that as it might upset the evangelicals who support us, but we will just tell them that we are Christians and they will keep voting for us.

Q: Even though your Christianity does not affect your politics?

A: Christianity and politics have nothing to do with each other, we just use it to get votes. 993

The interviewer then responds, “Yes, I always thought that was the case. After all, the GOP has been saying it is anti-abortion for years, yet it never does anything about it. Moreover, we can hardly call your foreign policy or jurisprudence biblically informed.” The Republican answered,


993 Ibid.
“No, we don't claim to be biblical, just less wicked than the Democrats; the voters swallow it every time.”

Matthew C. Moen, in a book published in 1992, touches on the secularization of the Christian Right during its alliance with the Reagan presidency. He didn’t see much probability in the Christian Right reversing its Reagan-era secularization. However, he did see a possibility through Christian Reconstructionism:

Other evidence that the secularization of the Christian Right may be limited to that time frame [the Reagan era] is found in the emergence of Christian Reconstructionism. It emphasizes the utility of the first five books of the Old Testament for ordering contemporary American society, a goal that Bruce Barron and Anson Shupe have noted proceeds well beyond the Christian Right in scope yet has certain affinities related to ‘recapturing’ institutions from secular forces. ... [T]he penetration of the Christian Right by Reconstructionists may halt, or even reverse, the process of secularization described.

While today the Christian Right and Reconstructionists are not always on the friendliest of terms, and the Christian Right has continued in its secular drift, Moen’s comments point to the necessity of the Christian Right to base its political platform on the Bible to help reverse its process of secularization.

To the extent the Christian Right rejects the Bible’s civil code, it rejects Jesus as Lord and is polytheistic. This is because acknowledging Jesus as Lord over all includes acknowledging Him as Lord—and thereby His law—over the state. As King Jesus says, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (Lk. 6:46). God requires in the First Commandment “You shall have no other gods before me,” and, as R. J. Rushdoony remarks, “To have none other gods … means to have no other law than God’s law.”

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994 Ibid.
996 Rushdoony, Institutes, 47.
Regarding its political conservative philosophy, the Christian Right should keep in mind that since traditions continually change, conservatism, which bases its laws on tradition, is morally relativistic and thus rejects God since it rejects God’s absolute, unchanging law. In one of his works, Russell Kirk, father of American conservatism, called it a “foolish notion” for his “Puritan ancestors of Massachusetts Bay, like their fathers the ‘Geneva Men’ of Elizabethan England,” to hope “to make the laws of the ancient Jews into a code for their own time.”997 He reasoned that “the particular laws of a people ineluctably mirror the circumstances of an age.”998

This rejection of the laws of the Massachusetts Bay Puritans—one of the strongest examples of a society influenced by the Bible’s absolute, unchanging civil code—was by the nature of the case a rejection of absolute law for relativistic, circumstantial law. As such, to the degree Kirk was consistent in his rejection of biblical law, he found himself embracing the relativistic ideology of humanism.

What is interesting—but not surprising—is that in the very book that Kirk condemns implementing biblical law, he denies that secular humanism is in itself evil: “The body of belief, or non-theistic religion, called secular humanism is not a creation of the Evil Spirit. Some honest and able scholars subscribed to the two Humanist Manifestos.”999 Kirk does go on to say that if society were to adopt secular humanism, the civil social order would become decadent due to secular humanism’s “feeble humanitarianism” absent a “pervasive religious faith.”1000 Nevertheless, Kirk’s denial that secular humanism is evil displays terrible discernment on his part and reveals his ignorance of the fact that moral neutrality is impossible—and one’s view of moral neutrality affects one’s view of civil law itself, which is based on morality.

The Christian Right has followed in the tradition of Kirk’s idolatrous rejection of absolute Divine law for relativistic law based on the traditions of man. The Christian Right ignores much if not most of

998 Ibid.
999 Ibid., 192.
1000 Ibid.
the Bible’s civil code at best, treats it with contempt at worse. The syncretistic result is that the Christian Right is willing to entertain laws as conceived by Roman Catholics, Mormons, Muslims, secularists, and other anti-Christian humanists—just as long as they are based on “common-ground family values” (whatever that means).

Another reflection of the Christian Right’s syncretism is its referral to “our Judeo-Christian heritage.” Rushdoony writes that “the term ‘Judeo-Christian’ is most commonly used by the adherents of the religion of humanity, who are insistent on reading their religion into both Judaism and Christianity. No doubt, if Buddhism were a factor on the American scene, we would hear references to our Buddho-Judeo-Christian heritage.”

Among the most fatal fruits of the Christian Right’s political polytheism is the compromise of the gospel itself. Consider the 1994 Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) statement, which reads:

In the exercise of these public responsibilities there has been in recent years a growing convergence and cooperation between Evangelicals and Catholics. We thank God for the discovery of one another in contending for a common cause. Much more important, we thank God for the discovery of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. Our cooperation as citizens is animated by our convergence as Christians. We promise one another that we will work to deepen, build upon, and expand this pattern of convergence and cooperation. Together we contend for the truth that politics, law, and culture must be secured by moral truth (emphases mine).

The evangelical portion of the document even recognizes the compromises of the gospel it makes, but then treats them as insignificant. It states: “Evangelicals hold that the Catholic Church has gone beyond Scripture, adding teachings and practices that detract from or compromise the Gospel of God’s saving grace in Christ” (emphasis mine), then turns

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around and states, “We are bound together by Christ and his cause” (emphasis mine).1003

Here unity trumps salvation and thereby the author of salvation, Jesus Christ. Is the gospel a side issue, since those who hold to different gospels are according to ECT saved? Are there two paths to God? Apparently for the evangelical signers of the ECT, there is: the Protestant way, and the Roman Catholic way. Thus in rejecting the gospel for politics, the alliance of conservative evangelicals with Roman Catholics has, practically speaking, resulted in an acceptance of the liberal social gospel.

Ironically, Charles Colson, a principle author of the ECT, said years before the ECT movement, “Our well-intentioned attempts to influence government can become so entangled with a particular political agenda that it becomes our focus; our goal becomes maintaining political access. When that happens the gospel is held hostage to a political agenda, and we become part of the very system we were seeking to change.”1004

Recently, in 2009, a similar gospel compromise was made in the name of political unity in The Manhattan Declaration. (Colson was again involved.) Not only did evangelicals again embrace Roman Catholicism as Christian, but Eastern Orthodoxy as well.1005

1003 Ibid.
1004 Moen, The Transformation of the Christian Right, 159.
1005 At the declaration’s beginning, the following is said: “We, as Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical Christians, have gathered, beginning in New York on September 28, 2009, to make the following declaration, which we sign as individuals, not on behalf of our organizations, but speaking to and from our communities.” Manhattan Declaration.org, Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience (2009). Retrieved June 16, 2010, from http://www.manhattandeclaration.org/the-declaration/read.aspx.

Notice how the declaration makes Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox adherents to be Christians: “We, as Orthodox, Catholic, and Evangelical Christians …” The document goes on to say “We are Christians who have joined together across historic lines of ecclesial differences to affirm our right …” (emphasis mine). R.C. Sproul writes of this document:

“The drafters of the document, Charles Colson, Robert George, and Timothy George, used deliberate language that is on par with the ecumenical language of the Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) movement that began in the 1990s. The Manhattan Declaration states, ‘Christians are heirs of a 2,000-year tradition of
Thus the rejection of Jesus as Lord over the state can and does lead to the rejection of Jesus as Lord and Savior over the church. And so in this sense there is no separation between church and state: to reject the Lord of the state is to reject the same Lord over the church; Christ rules over both. How we approach politics matters. We never compromise holding to Jesus as Lord over the state by compromising His law, and we never compromise the gospel and thereby destroy the church in the name of political expediency.

However, not only can Christ’s lordship be denied in political activism that rejects His law. It can also be denied in rejecting political activism in and of itself. Some churches have the attitude that says that politics has nothing to do with Christianity. To hold such a position is to implicitly deny that Christ is Lord of the state. And if Christ is not Lord of the state, then some other god is—whether it be the people, the state, or Moloch. Thus to affirm Christ’s lordship over the church but to deny His lordship over the state is to affirm polytheism. Christianity and the rejection of biblical political activism, then, are incompatible.
Appendix F:

Is the Rape of an Unbetrothed Virgin a Capital Offense?

Some conclude that since Deuteronomy 22:25 deals specifically with capital punishment for one who rapes a young betrothed woman, while Deuteronomy 22:28-29 does not sanction capital punishment when a nonbetrothed virgin is raped, then the death penalty for rape only applies for the rape of a betrothed woman. We disagree, however, for several reasons.

First, Deuteronomy 22:28-29 should not be understood as dealing with rape. Greg L. Bahnsen, beginning with citing Deuteronomy 22:28-29, writes,

“If a man finds a girl who is an unbetrothed virgin, and he lays hold of her and lies with her, and they are found, then the man lying down with her shall give to the girl’s father fifty pieces of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he may not put her away all his days.”

This is the literal translation of the Hebrew. Unfortunately, some commentators and Bible translations (Driver, Craigle, Rushdoony, New International Version) make the mistake of interpreting these words as referring to the use of force and thus to raping a virgin. …

The Hebrew word tapas (“lay hold of her,” emphasized above) simply means to take hold of something, grasp it in hand, and (by application) to capture or seize something. It is the verb used for “handling” the harp and flute (Gen. 4:21), the sword (Ezek. 21:11; 30:21), the sickle (Jer. 50:16), the shield (Jer. 46:9), the oars (Ezek. 27:29), and the bow (Amos 2:15). It is likewise used for “taking” God’s name (Prov. 30:9) or “dealing” with the law of God (Jer. 2:8). Joseph’s garment was “grasped” (Gen. 39:12; cf. I Kings 11:30), even as Moses “took” the two tablets of the law (Deut. 9:17). People are “caught”
(I Kings 20:18), even as cities are “captured” (Deut. 20:19; Isa. 36:1). An adulterous wife may not have been “caught” in the act (Num. 5:13). In all of these instances it is clear that, while force may come into the picture from further description, the Hebrew verb “to handle, grasp, capture” does not in itself indicate anything about the use of force.

This verb used in Deuteronomy 22:28 is different from the verb used in verse 25 (chazak, from the root meaning “to be strong, firm”) which can mean “to seize” a bear and kill it (I Sam. 17:35; cf. 2 Sam. 2:16; Zech. 14:13), “to prevail” (2 Sam. 24:4; Dan. 11:7), “to be strong” (Deut. 31:6; 2 Sam. 2:7), etc. Deuteronomy 22:25 thus speaks of a man finding a woman and “forcing her.” Just three verses later (Deut. 25:28), the verb is changed to simply “take hold of” her – indicating an action less intense and violent than the action dealt with in verse 25 (viz., rape). …

The Hebrew word anah (“humble, afflict,” emphasized above) used in Deuteronomy 22:29 can sometimes be used for forcing a woman (Gen. 34:2; Jud. 20:5; 2 Sam. 13:12, 14, 22, 32; Lam. 5:11) but need not indicate a forcible rape, which is clear from the Deuteronomy passage itself at verse 24. It can simply mean to dishonor, mistreat, or afflict (e.g., Ex. 1:11; Gen. 16:6; Ex. 22:22; Deut. 8:2; Ps. 119:67), and in sexual settings can denote other kinds of sin than rape (Ezek. 22:10, 11).

We can agree with the reasoning of James Jordan: “At first sight, this seems to allow for rape of an unbetrothed girl. In Hebrew, however, the verb ‘seize’ is a weaker verb than the verb for ‘force’ used in the same passage (v. 25) to describe rape. This stronger verb is also used for the rape of Tamar (2 Sam. 13:11). Implied here is a notion of catching the girl, but not a notion that she fought back with anything more than a token resistance. Modern random rape would not be excusable under this law, and would have to come under the death penalty of Deuteronomy 22:25-27” (The Law of the Covenant, p. 149).
Accordingly, one will find that many competent authorities in Biblical interpretation understand Deuteronomy 22:28-29 to apply to cases of seduction, not forcible rape.\textsuperscript{1006}


\textit{Second}, less clear passages are to be understood in light of clearer passages. Again, Bahnsen:

Even if one has some question about the applicability of Deuteronomy 22:28-29, \textit{the clear and decisive command from God when a man has seduced a virgin is found in Exodus 22:16-17}: “If a man \textit{seduces} a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall surely pay her dowry to make her his wife. If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall weigh out money according to the dowry for virgins.”

In this text there is no question whatsoever of forcible rape. The Hebrew verb used to describe the sin (italicized in the quotation above) is \textit{patah}, used elsewhere for “coaxing” (Jud. 14:15), “luring” (Jud. 16:5; Hos. 2:14), and “enticing” (Prov. 1:10; 16:29). When a man gets a virgin to consent to have sexual relations with him, he is morally obligated to marry her.\textsuperscript{1008}


\textsuperscript{1007} Bahnsen, \textit{Pre-Marital Sexual Relations}.

\textsuperscript{1008} Bahnsen, \textit{Pre-Marital Sexual Relations}.
Third, the reason the rapist in Deuteronomy 22:25 is put to death is not because the woman he raped was betrothed, but because rape is a crime equivalent to murder. Verses 26b and 27 read: “For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.” Francis Nigel Lee writes

Why precisely death to this rapist? God says: “For it is as when a man rises against his neighbour and slays him, even so is this matter” (Deuteronomy 22:26b). Rape is thus like a case of premeditated murder, where God says also the murderer is to get the death penalty (Genesis 9:6).1009

The reason rape is equivalent to murder is because the woman is forced against her will: “because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.” Since forcing a woman to have sex against her will is the basis for executing the rapist, then rape always warrants capital punishment—regardless of whether the victim is betrothed or not. Just as murder is always a capital offense, regardless of who is murdered, so rape is always a capital offense, regardless of who is raped.

Fourth, one might still ask, “Why then does Deuteronomy 22:25-27 deal only explicitly with a betrothed woman?” Michael H. Warren, Jr., believes that it

speaks of a betrothed virgin because it is continuing the theme of Deuteronomy 22:23-24 in which a betrothed virgin consents to sex with a man not her husband, not because it was meant to limit the death penalty for rape to betrothed virgins. The distinction that is the focus of the section is between betrothed virgins who consent (Deut. 22:23-24) and unbetrothed virgins who consent (Deut. 22:28-29).1010

Moreover, while Deuteronomy 22:25-27 deals explicitly with betrothed women, it does deal implicitly with unbetrothed women. As noted in the previous point, rape in and of itself is equivalent to the capital crime of murder.

1010 Michael H. Warren, Jr., e-mail message to author, January 3, 2010.
Fifth, the interpretation that Deuteronomy 22:28-29 deals with rape is counterintuitive, since the man is required to pay the woman’s father fifty shekels of silver and to marry the woman. But how many fathers would even want to see a man who raped his daughter, let alone permit him to marry her? How can he even look at the rapist without wanting to kill him?

Moreover, “And what if the man rapes five virgins _seriatim_? Should he then marry all five?!”?1011 Or, what if five men gang rape one virgin? Should they all marry her? Finally, the requirement for the woman who is raped to marry “would lay a burden and penalty on the woman who had no part or consent in the act, which is as unfair and senseless as punishing the victim of attempted murder.”1012 The Bible requires punishing the criminal, not the victim. Eye-for-an-eye means “you take an eye, you lose an eye”—not “you lose an eye, you lose another eye.”

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1011 Lee, _What Penalty for Child-Molesting and Rape?_, 11.
1012 Bahnsen, _Pre-Marital Sexual Relations_.

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Appendix G:

The Bond of Law: A Theonomic Reply to
The Bond of Love

By Daniel F. N. Ritchie B.A., D.Min.

Reformed Worldview Books
Saintfield, Northern Ireland, 2008

Introduction

In this brief work I am seeking to respond to some (albeit mild) criticisms of Theonomy made by David McKay in his book The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church. Allow me to say at the outset how much I value this particular book for its superb presentation of covenant theology; Prof. McKay’s work would make an excellent addition to any Christian’s library. Furthermore, readers should also keep in mind that in responding to his critique of Theonomy one is not saying that Prof. McKay’s views are necessarily unbiblical or unconfessional; my main concern is that certain misunderstandings about Theonomy (which are partly the result of the incautious language of some Theonomists like R.J. Rushdoony) mean that the Theonomic position has not been adequately represented, nor have the issues been properly addressed. Nonetheless, what Prof. McKay has written is absent of the gross caricatures and wild accusations that are found in most critiques of Theonomy. And I would like to publicly thank him for the gracious and irenic manner in which he has dealt with the subject. As one who has learned much from his teaching, I hope he will be receptive to what I have to say here, especially as the differences of opinion do not seem to be of a doctrinal nature but more a question of semantics, emphasis and terminology.

Misunderstandings about Judicial Laws
A common misconception in relation to Theonomy is that because it teaches that the Law of God remains binding in extensive detail, it is therefore presumed that the Theonomic view advocates the idea that the whole judicial law of Moses, in all its precise details, remains literally binding upon all nations. While he avoids the crass misrepresentations of most Theonomic critics, one would tend to get the impression from Prof. McKay’s comments that this is what Theonomy believes. For instance, he claims that Theonomy advocates ‘the view that the judicial law of Moses can and should be enforced in detail.’ He also maintains that Greg Bahnsen ‘argues for the continuing validity of the Mosaic judicial laws as the standard for modern nations,’ making no distinction between which judicial laws Dr. Bahnsen believes to be valid today, and which laws he believes are no longer binding. Is this an accurate representation of Theonomy? No, because since Theonomy only teaches that the whole moral law remains binding, it recognizes that aspects of the judicial law which were either completely unique to Israel, or expressed in a manner peculiar to its circumstances, are not to be literally followed in the modern world. Greg Bahnsen argues that those laws which were unique to the land of Canaan have expired in the New Testament:

With the coming and establishment of that kingdom typified by the “promised land”, and with the removal of special kingdom privileges from the Jews by Christ, the laws regulating aspects of the land of Canaan (for example, family plots, location of cities of refuge, the levirate institution) have been laid aside in the New Testament as inapplicable.

Moreover it must also be recognised that the Older Testament contained various judicial (social and civil) laws particularly worded for the ancient Jewish nation; although these laws may have expired as they were literally expressed, their underlying principle of justice and fairness remains binding. Theonomists recognise that moral principles are sometimes conveyed through cultural illustrations. For instance, Greg Bahnsen points out that ‘the requirement of a rooftop railing (Deut. 22:8),

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1013 D. McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 191.
1014 Ibid., p. 192.
1015 G. L. Bahnsen, By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today, p. 6.
relevant to entertaining on flat roofs in Palestine, teaches the underlying principle of safety precautions (e.g., fences around modern backyard swimming pools), not the obligation of placing a literal battlement upon today’s sloped roofs. So it is important to realise that ‘we ought not to read the case laws of the Old Testament as binding us to the literal wording utilized.’ Consequently, Theonomy agrees with Prof. McKay when he notes that ‘what is of continuing value is the principle embodied in each regulation: this is to be sought out and enshrined in laws suited to each particular society in its historical setting,’ and that ‘consideration must be given to differences of time, place and culture’ as ‘the precise context in which Old Testament Israel found itself as a nation cannot be replicated.’ Prof. McKay has assumed that because Theonomy supposedly believes in “The Abiding Validity of the Law of God in Exhaustive Detail,” that this means it believes in upholding every detail of the judicial laws, however, this is qualified by other things in Theonomic writings that make it plain that Theonomy is only teaching that the moral law continues in exhaustive detail — as does the Westminster Larger Catechism in its exposition of the Decalogue.

**Theonomists as Judicial Simpletons**

The above misconstruction seems to have led to another misunderstanding, as David McKay says that ‘Theonomists differ considerably among themselves on a range of issues, and it does not seem that their approach to the judicial laws is quite as clear-cut as they might suggest.’ However, do Theonomists claim that their approach to the Law makes everything in relation to Christian ethics a simple task? No, because Greg Bahnsen, in his book *By This Standard*, makes it abundantly clear that applying Older Testament law in the modern world does involve its fair-share of difficulties:

We need to be sensitive to the fact that interpreting the Old Testament law, properly categorizing its details (for example,

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1017 G.L. Bahnsen, *By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today*, p. 5.
1019 David McKay, *The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church*, p. 192.
ceremonial, standing, cultural), and making modern day applications of the authoritative standards of the Old Testament is *not an easy or simple task*. It is not always readily apparent to us how to understand an Old Testament commandment or use it properly today. So the position taken here does not make everything in Christian ethics a simple matter of looking up obvious answers in a code-book. Much hard thinking – exegetical and theological homework – is entailed by a commitment to the position advocated in these studies.\(^\text{1020}\)

Since at the outset of one of the most basic Theonomic works Dr. Bahnsen expressly denies that a Theonomic approach to ethics is to be equated with judicial simplicity, then one is left wondering why critics of Theonomy continue to allege that Theonomists are judicial simpletons. Moreover, in the same book Dr. Bahnsen admitted that although Theonomists agree on the basic principle of the abiding validity of Older Testament law, nevertheless, that does not mean that they will always agree on the application of this principle:

Indeed, those who agree with the foundational conclusion of these studies – that God’s Law is binding today unless Scripture reveals otherwise – may very well disagree among themselves over particular matters in interpreting what God’s Law demands at this or that point, or that may disagree over how these demands should be followed today.\(^\text{1021}\)

So the argument that Theonomists are judicial simpletons simply is not correct. While the apologetic argument for Theonomy may appear to be simplistic, the practical application of the Theonomic thesis is not. However, before leaving the matter of judicial simplicity, surely Prof. McKay is not opposed to deriving specific teaching from the Old Testament law? Does he oppose the cutting off of people’s hands for theft? If so why? On what basis is this not an equitable punishment?

**The Question of Ethical Continuity**

\(^\text{1020}\) G.L. Bahnsen, By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today, p. 7.

\(^\text{1021}\) Ibid., p. 9.
Commenting on the views of Greg Bahnsen, Prof. McKay summarises his position on ethical continuity as follows: ‘the laws of the Old Testament are to be assumed to be fully in force unless there is specific indication in the New Testament to the contrary.’\textsuperscript{1022} If by “specific” he means explicit indication, then this is wrong; as Dr. Bahnsen argues that ‘the way in which the Biblical text publicly teaches alteration in an Old Testament command, however, need not be by means of explicit enumeration, flagging or direct command.’\textsuperscript{1023} However, if the word “specific” includes good and necessary consequence deductions in favour of discontinuity, as well as explicit statements, and if “laws” is understood to be referring to standing laws binding all men, and not laws which are clearly positivistic, then that definition is valid. This would seem to be the case, as Prof. McKay goes on to say that Dr. Bahnsen’s view ‘with reference to the “standing laws” (the judicial policy directions), they are a reflection of God’s moral character and so are objective, universal and generally applicable.’\textsuperscript{1024} Of course, Dr. Bahnsen’s position – that the standing laws in the Old Testament are a model for all nations - is simply that of the Bible itself:

\begin{quote}
See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today? (Deut. 4:5-8) (ESV)
\end{quote}

Since the marrow of Israel’s standing civil laws was meant as a model for all nations to measure themselves against, is it to much to assume that the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1022] David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 192.
\item[1023] G. L. Bahnsen, No Other Standard: Theonomy and its Critics, p. 50.
\item[1024] David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 192.
\end{footnotes}
nations are bound to implement the same laws as far as they can be applied outside Israel?

Furthermore, the principle of presumed continuity unless there is abrogation is simply the outworking of covenant theology. After all, the reason we baptise infants is because God has never revoked the command to pass the sign of the covenant of grace unto our covenant children (Gen. 17:10-14). Indeed, the theme of continuity unless the Lawgiver stipulates otherwise is repeated over and over again in Scripture. Man is not to add to or detract from God’s word (Deut. 4:2; 12:32); God’s precepts are considered to be right concerning all things, which obviously includes civil law and penology (Psa. 119:128); the Lord’s righteous judgments are said to endure forever (Psa. 119:160); man is to live by every word which proceeds from God’s mouth (Matt. 4:4); Christ demands that we observe even the least commandment of God’s Law (Matt. 5:19) and all God-breathed Scripture is declared to be authoritative (2 Tim. 3:16). Thus it would appear reasonable to conclude that in order for a standing law to be no longer obligatory one is obliged to show Scriptural evidence as to why it is not.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that when Samuel Rutherford argued against the continuing validity of the death penalty for Sabbath breaking, he did this on the very hermeneutical basis which Prof. McKay questions. His argument was that execution for Sabbath violation ‘was not the ordinary and standing law.’1025 Indeed Rutherford’s methodology here is in agreement with that of Greg Bahnsen when he argues for the discontinuity of certain administrative details of Older Testament society, maintaining that ‘these aspects of Old Testament life were not prescribed by standing law, and they do not bind us today.’1026 Rutherford’s pupil John Brown of Wamphery adopted the same approach when he distinguished between positivistic and standing laws in the Mosaic judic peace:

There is a difference betwixt a transient act once commanded, and a standing law made to continue; the transient act had its

1026 G. L. Bahnsen, By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today, p. 6.
peculiar reason, that perished with that occasion; but the law is founded upon, and backed with moral and lasting reasons.1027

Although there may be intra-mural debates between Theonomists as to how precisely the standing civil laws are to be a model for modern nations to follow, it is difficult to see precisely what is wrong with presuming that standing laws remain valid unless Scripture itself stipulates otherwise.

Theonomic Exegesis of Matthew 5:17-20

While it is not my purpose to defend every single aspect of Greg Bahnsen’s exegesis of Matt. 5:17-20 in his book Theonomy in Christian Ethics (partly because I would not endorse all the conclusions he reaches in that work), nonetheless, it is proper to offer some response to David McKay’s attempts to negate a Theonomic interpretation of that particular text. He argues that ‘it is important to note that Bahnsen has no exegetical justification for confining “the Prophets” to the ethical content of these books.’1028 Prof. McKay then goes on to suggest that we should view Matt. 5:17 as referring (at least partly) to the fulfilment of prophecy:

Christ is the focus of the whole Old Testament. As we are told in relation to his meeting with the disciples on the Emmaus road, ‘beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself’ (Luke 24:27). The focus of his fulfilling the Old Testament is indicated in the previous verse as being his redemptive, mediatorial work: ‘Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’ (verse 26). This indicates how Matthew 5:17 is to be approached.1029

The primary objection to this interpretation of Matt. 5:17 is that it is counter-contextual. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ is not focusing on prophecy or typology; instead He is specifically concentrating on the ethical conduct of His followers. We see this theme repeated over and

1028 David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 193.
1029 Ibid.
over again in the Lord Jesus’ sermon in Matthew 5-7. He pronounces ‘blessed’ those ‘who hunger and thirst for righteousness’ (Matt. 5:6); declares that those who are ‘pure in heart’ (Matt. 5:8) shall see God; tells us that believers can expect to be ‘persecuted for righteousness sake’ (Matt. 5:10); Christians are to be salt and light in the world by letting men see their ‘good works’ (Matt. 5:13-16); Jesus forbids the relaxation of ‘the least of these commandments’ (Matt. 5:19); the righteousness of Christ’s disciples must exceed that of the Pharisees (Matt. 5:20); the Lord corrects the Pharisees’ truncated and perverted view of the Law’s demands with respect to murder (Matt. 5:21-26), adultery (Matt. 5:27-30), divorce (Matt. 5:31-32), oaths (Matt. 5:33-37), retaliation (Matt. 5:38-42), and the duty to show love to other men (Matt. 5:43-47); He tells His followers that they ‘must be perfect, as [their] heavenly Father is perfect’ (Matt. 5:48); the Lord warns His hearers against practicing righteous deeds merely in order to be seen by men (Matt. 6:1-2); Christ provides them with guidelines about the ethical issues concerning how to give to the needy (Matt. 6:3-4), and with respect to praying sincerely (Matt. 6:5-8); in the Lord’s Prayer, Christ tells His listeners to pray that God’s will would be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10), to forgive our debtors who have sinned against us (Matt. 6:12); and for us to pray that we will not be led into temptation, but to be delivered from evil (Matt. 6:13); Christians are to forgive others for their trespasses [of God’s Law] (Matt. 6:14-15); Christ’s disciples are instructed as to how to fast in a manner that is ethically right (Matt. 6:16-18); His hearers are warned against having an evil eye (Matt. 6:22-24), against covetousness (Matt. 6:24), and worldly anxiety (Matt. 6:25-34); the Lord tells us to be careful about pronouncing moral judgment upon others lest we be found to be hypocrites (Matt. 7:1-4); in the golden rule, the Lord Jesus says ‘whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets’ (Matt. 7:12), unselfish behavior is thus a summary of the ethics of the Law and the Prophets (not the fulfillment of prophecy); Christ declares that a profession of faith may be tested by its ethical fruit, whether it be good or bad (Matt. 7:15-20); He warns that the ‘workers of lawlessness’ shall be excluded from the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21-23); and, finally, those who obey Christ’s words are compared to a house which is built upon a rock, while those who disobey are likened to a house built upon sand (Matt. 7:24-27).

So contrary to David McKay’s suggestion that Greg Bahnsen ‘has no exegetical justification’ for saying that “the Law and the Prophets”
refers to ‘the ethical content of those books,’\textsuperscript{1030} it would appear that the local context of Matthew 5:17 strongly favours the view that when Christ said He did not come to abolish ‘the Law and the Prophets,’ He was primarily referring to their \textit{ethical stipulations}. Thus (in defending Greg Bahnsen) Kenneth Gentry is able to point out that ‘Bahnsen recognizes \textit{grammatically} that the phrase refers to the whole Old Testament; but then he points out \textit{contextually} Jesus is \textit{highlighting} the ethical directives of the Old Testament revelation.’\textsuperscript{1031} The focus of Christ’s discourse in the Sermon on the Mount is on kingdom righteousness, not prophecy fulfillment. Hence it is unsurprising that in Matt. 5:17, when Jesus speaks of the Law and the Prophets, ‘there is absolutely nothing in the context of the verse or its wording which touches on the life of Christ (in distinction from His teaching) or on prophecy-typology.’\textsuperscript{1032}

Since there is nothing in the verse itself, or the local context, which would automatically cause the reader to think that Matt. 5:17 refers to Christ’s fulfillment of Older Testament prophecy, then where does the idea come from? Greg Bahnsen alleges that, in the case of Wayne Strickland at least, the proponent of this view ‘imports it into the passage from outside.’\textsuperscript{1033} Certainly Prof. McKay’s appeal to the incident on the road to Emmaus is a classic example of such exegesis. The problem with appealing to Luke 24:26-27, in order to come to a conclusion about what ‘the Law and the Prophets’ in Matt. 5:17 means, is that the context of the two passages is totally different. In Luke 24:26-27 the risen Saviour is explaining to the disciples that the prophets predicted that the Christ would suffer death and rise to glory; thus the contextual usage of ‘Moses and all the Prophets’ (Luke 24:27) specifically refers to the prophetic fulfillment, whereas prophetic fulfillment is not the over-riding concern of Christ’s teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. In order to determine what ‘the Law and the Prophets’ refers to in Matt. 5:17 it would be much safer to examine the other usage of the phrase within the Sermon on the Mount itself. In Matt. 7:12 we find that the ‘Golden Rule’ is described as being ‘the Law and the Prophets.’ Since the golden rule is ‘whatever you

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{1030} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{1031} K. L. Gentry, \textit{Covenantal Theonomy}, p. 55.
\item\textsuperscript{1032} G. L. Bahnsen, \textit{By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today}, pp 304-305.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
wish that others would do to you, do also to them,’ it obviously refers to our ethical treatment of other people, and is thus a summary of the ethical stipulations of ‘the Law and the Prophets.’

Therefore, although there is more to ‘the Law and the Prophets’ than ethical commands, nevertheless, the context of Matt. 5:17 demands that we accept that this is what the phrase *primarily* refers to as it is used here. Consequently, when Jesus Christ affirms that He did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, He means that He did not come to set aside their ethical stipulations. Furthermore, it is illogical to argue that ‘the Law and the Prophets’ refers to prophecy, as nobody would have possibly thought that the Messiah was coming to abolish prophecy. As Henry Alford argues ‘no person professing himself to be the Messiah would be thought to contradict the prophecies,’\(^{1034}\) and it is unlikely that He would have been accused by the Pharisees of abolishing prophecy. On the other hand, His correction of the scribal distortions of the Law (Matt. 5:21-48), would have left Him open to the accusation that He was abolishing the Law of God; thus the need to emphatically deny that He was doing any such thing before He proceeded to expound the Law (Matt. 5:17). Moreover, if Matthew 5:17 refers to prophecy, then why does Christ warn His listeners about breaking even the least commandments (Matt. 5:19)? Surely ‘these commandments’ are not prophecies, but ethical stipulations, the keeping of which enabled believers to let their light shine before men that they may see their good works and give glory to their heavenly Father (Matt. 5:13-16). In summary then, although the prophecy fulfillment interpretation of Matt. 5:17 has some support among respected scholars, the context in which Christ’s statement occurs means that we must respectfully disagree.

But even if Prof. McKay is correct that the word “fulfill” in Matt. 5:17 does have some reference to prophecy fulfillment, it would not necessarily rule out a generally Theonomic interpretation of the passage – i.e. that Christ came to uphold the Law of God. Indeed, Prof. McKay seems to recognize this in his earlier comment that ‘Jesus was not contradicting the Old Testament Law but was in fact clearing away the centuries of man-made tradition that the Pharisees had built on top of

\(^{1034}\) Cited in K. L. Gentry, *Covenantal Theonomy*, p. 75.
God’s Law, in many cases obscuring its true significance.  So if Prof. McKay wishes to maintain that Matt. 5:17-20 refers to both ethical continuity and prophecy, then it is difficult to see how this rules out a Theonomic interpretation. Such an interpretation may not agree with every ‘jot and tittle’ of Greg Bahnsen’s exegesis, but it does not need to, as Theonomy is not Greg Bahnsen, and Greg Bahnsen is not Theonomy.

Regrettably Prof. McKay does not appear to take this on board as he seems to imply that if Greg Bahnsen’s precise interpretation of Matt. 5:17-20 is incorrect then Theonomy has been refuted. This is evidenced by his reliance upon Vern Poythress’ assertion that the word “fulfill” should not be translated as “confirm.” He claims that Dr. Bahnsen ‘has been decisively refuted by the detailed study carried out by Vern Poythress.’ Yet, Prof. Poythress does point out (in his view) that “the theological and logical fact that fulfill implies “confirm” must not be confused with the linguistic question about distinct senses of the English word fulfill.” And he goes on to say that “the Greek word pleroo often implies confirmation in the same way as the English word fulfill does.” Since the disagreement between Vern Poythress and Greg Bahnsen does not affect the basic Theonomic interpretation of the passage (that Christ came to confirm the moral law in exhaustive detail), then Prof. McKay is surely putting far too much weight upon the importance of Greg Bahnsen’s exegesis of this particular text. As Dr. Bahnsen himself further explains:

Even if we grant the legitimacy to the linguistic complaint Poythress may have with translating pleroo as “to confirm”, this would not in any way weaken the theological point made by Theonomists with respect to Matthew 5:17. The reason is that Poythress readily admits that the concept of confirmation is an implication of many of the legitimate translations of the Greek word pleroo. If Poythress wants to insist that Jesus did not “say”

1035 David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 188.
1036 David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 193. Prof. McKay does not seem to have taken into account Greg Bahnsen’s reply to Vern Poythress in No Other Standard: Theonomy and its Critics (Appendix B), as he makes no reference to it.
1038 Ibid., p. 373.
that He confirms the Old Testament Law, but rather that Jesus “implied” by what He said that He came to confirm the Old Testament Law, Theonomists need not stop to argue. The crucial theological point has still been established.  

So even if Prof. McKay is correct that Dr. Bahnsen’s exegesis is not 100 percent accurate, he has not proved that Theonomy is unbiblical. This is especially true due to the fact that Theonomy relies on much broader exegetical support than a mere reference to Matt. 5:17-20; indeed Dr. Bahnsen even said that ‘the Theonomic thesis could be demonstrated without any reference to this text at all.’ Consequently, a particular interpretation of Matt. 5:17-20 is not the be all and end all of the debate over Theonomic ethics. And so when Prof. McKay writes ‘whilst recognising the Theonomists’ zeal for the authority of Scripture, it does not appear that their position is Scriptural,’ he has not adequately proved his point. He needs to consider other Theonomic arguments concerning the confirmation of the Law in the New Testament (Rom. 3:31), the citation of the penal sanctions in the New Testament (Matt. 15:4; Acts 25:11; 1 Tim. 1:8-10; Heb. 2:2; 10:28), the fact that the Gentiles were judged for violating the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:24-30; Deut. 12:29-31); the fact that the Law is upheld by Gentile magistrates (Ezra 7:25-28; Dan. 3:29), and various other exegetical and theological questions.

John Calvin and Theonomy

Unsurprisingly Prof. McKay appeals to John Calvin against Theonomy. He writes ‘John Calvin argued strongly in his day that modern nations did not have to enforce the civil law of the Old Testament in order to be properly governed.’ Although I hope to deal with Calvin’s views in more detail elsewhere, I will seek to offer a brief response here. Non-Theonomists (such as Prof. McKay) often appeal to

1041 David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 193.
1042 David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 191.
these words in Calvin’s *Institutes* to prove his opposition to Biblical civil law:

I would have preferred to pass over this matter in utter silence if I were not aware that here are some who deny that a commonwealth is duly framed which neglects the political system of Moses, and is ruled by the common laws of nations. Let men consider how perilous and seditious this notion is; it will be enough for me to have proved it false and foolish. (4. 20. 14)\(^{1043}\)

However, in the context in which this statement occurs Calvin is not condemning those who want to institute the penal sanctions of Scriptural civil law, but instead he is condemning radicals who sought to use the neglect of Biblical Law (indeed the whole Mosaic political system – a view which is a view far removed from modern Theonomy) as a pretext to overthrow civil governments by means of violent revolution. Christopher Strevel helpfully explains the historical context in which Calvin wrote these words:

Basic hermeneutic principles teach us that to understand the meaning of a particular text, we must have a grasp of the historical context in which the author wrote. Accordingly, before we consider the particulars of this and other statements Calvin made in this section, let us briefly remind ourselves of Calvin’s purpose for writing the *Institutes*. This will shed enormous light upon Calvin’s purpose for making such a statement. On October 18, 1534, in protest against the Roman Mass, placards were pasted over all Paris. The Roman Catholics were quick to persecute all the Protestants they could catch. Adding fuel to this controversy was the Anabaptist debacle in Munster, Germany. There, certain wicked and seditious persons, under the veil of reforming the church, overthrew the existing government, instituted a *Jewish* theocracy, and killed many innocent persons. King Francis I and his advisors justified their slaughter of the Protestants in France by accusing them of an Anabaptist attempt to overthrow the civil government! Calvin saw the peril of this situation. The Reformers in France must be separated from their revolutionary counterparts in Germany. In order to accomplish

this, Calvin wrote his *Institutes*. Calvin expressed two purposes for its writing. He wished to provide an accurate summary of the Reformers’ theology and to vindicate the French Protestants, who were being wrongfully confused with the Anabaptist radicals and persecuted for their faith. In short, the *Institutes* is an apology of the Reformed faith and a plea to King Francis to end the violent persecution of Christians in his realm:

“And indeed I shall not fear to confess that here is contained almost the sum of that very doctrine which they shout must be punished by prison, exile, proscription, and fire, and be exterminated on land and sea. Indeed, I know with what horrible reports they have filled your ears and mind, to render our cause as hateful to you as possible.”

In the *Institutes*, Calvin gave a masterful presentation of the Reformed faith, demonstrating that the true enemies of the king are those who suppress the truth of the Gospel, not the Reformers who seek to support a godly society based upon obedience to God’s law and faith in Jesus Christ. Calvin then responds to the Roman Catholic charge that French Protestants are, like the Anabaptists, plotting to overthrow the king:

“And when this profited him nothing, he [Satan] turned to stratagems: he aroused disagreements and dogmatic contentions through his catabaptists [i.e. Anabaptists] and other monstrous rascals in order to obscure and at last extinguish the truth…But I return to you, O King. May you be not at all moved by those vain accusations with which our adversaries are trying to inspire terror in you: that by this new gospel (for so they call it) men strive and seek only after the opportunity for seditions and impunity for all crimes…And we are unjustly charged, too, with intentions of such a sort that we have never given the least suspicion of them. We are, I suppose, contriving the overthrow of kingdoms – we, from whom not one seditious word was ever heard…But if any persons raise a tumult under the pretext of the gospel – hitherto no such persons have been found in your realm – if any deck out the license of their own vices as the liberty of God’s grace – I

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have known very many of this sort – there are laws and legal penalties by which they may be severely restrained according to their deserts. Only let not the gospel of God be blasphemed in the meantime because of the wickedness of infamous men.”1045

Given the emergency situation existing in Paris, the Reformed Churches, and Munster, Calvin felt compelled to separate the mainstream reformation movement from the radical Anabaptists in Munster. He begins the *Institutes* with an appeal to the king to listen to him and cease from persecuting just men. He concludes his treatise with a section on the legitimacy and responsibility of the civil magistrate. “The entire following section (chapter 20) is a vindication of government and a polemic against the Anabaptists.”1046 As Calvin addresses King Francis, he considers the radical Anabaptists wicked and infamous men who were being used by Satan to stop the progress of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Under the pretext of reforming the church, these men sought to overthrow kingdoms, subvert the laws, and institute all manner of ungodly behaviour. Nowhere are the anti-Christian tendencies of the radical Anabaptists more clearly seen than in the Munster incident, which prompted Calvin to write the *Institutes*. These men were revolutionaries, maintaining that the return of Christ and re-establishment of the Old Testament theocracy were imminent. As we look more closely at the Anabaptists in Munster, it will be obvious that Calvin addressed his supposedly anti-Theonomic statements in the *Institutes* to their dangerous views. ‘Given the historical circumstances, the persecution of French Protestants, and the revolutionary furore in Munster, Calvin’s remarks in 4:20:14 must clearly be seen for what they are: a clear denunciation of the seditious utilization of the political system of Moses by the Anabaptists.’1047 1048

1045 Ibid., p. 30.
1048 This whole extract is taken from C. B. Strevel, “Theonomic Precedent in the Theology of John Calvin” in S. M. Schlissel, *The Standard Bearer: A Festchrift for Greg L. Bahnsen*, pp 343-346. The reader is pointed to Chris Strevel’s article if he wants a more thorough study concerning the views of Calvin and their consistency with Theonomy.
Do modern Theonomists advocate the view that unless a nation adheres to the whole political system of Moses it is not legitimate? Hardly, since modern Theonomy does not teach that modern nations are to be governed by the whole judicial law of Moses, but only by what is applicable to all nations in the judicial laws. Thus it is perhaps regretful that David Hall writes: ‘And while some of his own day thought that a commonwealth could be “duly framed” only if it included a Theonomic approach, Calvin called that idea “perilous”, “seditious”, “false and foolish.”’\textsuperscript{1049} I say this is regretful, as these people Calvin is writing against go far beyond the Theonomic position (even though there may be some similarities, they are not the same). Moreover, Calvin’s comments are directed towards radicals (Anabaptists and others) who believed that a nation was entirely illegitimate if it neglected Biblical Law; but such a revolutionary view is far removed from the teachings of Christian Reconstruction. Although Theonomists believe that all nations should uphold Biblical civil law, Theonomy does not teach that a nation is not legitimate if it neglects to do so. Instead what Christian Reconstruction teaches is that societies are to be transformed by \textit{regeneration}, not by the sort of ungodly \textit{revolution} that the radicals in Calvin’s day were agitating for. For instance, R.J. Rushdoony argues:

\begin{quote}
The only true order is founded on Biblical law. All law is religious in nature, and every non-Biblical law-order represents an anti-Christian religion. But the key to remedying the situation is \textit{not} revolution, nor any kind of resistance that works to subvert law and order. The New Testament abounds in warnings against disobedience and in summons to peace. The key is regeneration, propagation of the gospel, and the conversion of men and nations to God’s law-word. Meanwhile, \textbf{the existing law-order must be respected}, and neighbouring law orders must be respected as far as is possible without offence to one’s own faith. The pagan law-order represents the faith and religion of the people; it is better than anarchy, and it does provide a God-give framework of existence under which God’s work can be furthered.\textsuperscript{1050}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1049} D. W. Hall, ‘Calvin on Human Government and the State’ in D. W. Hall and P. A. Lillback (eds), \textit{A Theological Guide to Calvin’s Institutes: Essays and Analysis}, p. 419.

\textsuperscript{1050} R. J. Rushdoony, \textit{Institutes}, pp 113-114.
Dr. Rushdoony explicitly rules out the kind of revolutionary disobedience that Calvin’s opponents were promoting: ‘The fact that man-made laws now govern us does not entitle us to disobedience, because Christ’s way is not revolution but regeneration.’\footnote{1051} Moreover, he also says that Christians (as private citizens) are to submit even to tyrannical civil governments (such as the Roman Empire), rather than resort to radical revolution:

At this point, many will cite Matthew 5:39 “resist not evil.” The point made by Christ in this passage (Matt. 5:38-42) has reference to resistance to an alien power which governs the land, can “compel” man by a forced draft to serve the Roman imperial forces for a mile or more, seize property, enforce loans, and generally conscript property, money, and labour for its needs. In such a case, resistance is futile and wrong, and co-operation, going the second mile, is more productive of good.\footnote{1052}

So although Theonomists do not believe that existing law-orders are ideal, this does not mean that a nation is totally illegitimate, nor does it justify revolutionary anarchy. It is only as the gospel advances that the nations will submit to God’s Law; in the meantime we must submit to the laws of men, except when they ask us to sin.

A further problem with Prof. McKay’s assertion that Calvin’s views rule out a Theonomic view of Biblical penology, is that it simply does not square with other statements Calvin made. For example, concerning the superiority of Biblical law to that which the heathens have invented - while preaching on Deuteronomy 4:6-8 Calvin says:

And for proof thereof, what is the cause that the heathen are so hardened in their own dotages? It is for that they never knew God’s Law, and therefore they never compared the truth with the untruth. But when God’s Law comes in place, then does it appear that all the rest is but smoke insomuch that they which took themselves to be marvellous and witty, are found to have been no better than besotted in their own beastliness. This is apparent.

\footnote{1051}{R. J. Rushdoony, Sovereignty, p. 32.}
\footnote{1052}{R. J. Rushdoony, Institutes, p. 121.}
Wherefore let us mark well, that to discern that there is nothing but vanity in all worldly devices, we must know the Laws and ordinances of God. But if we rest upon men’s laws, surely it is not possible for us to judge rightly. Then we need to first go to God’s school, and that will show us that when we have once profited under Him, it will be enough. That is all our perfection. And on the other side, we may despise all that is ever invented by man, seeing there is nothing but fondness [foolishness, weakness, want of sense of judgment – DR] and uncertainty in them. And that is the cause why Moses terms them rightful ordinances. As if he should say, it is true indeed that other people have store of Laws: but there is no right at all in them, all is awry, all is crooked.1053

Could a clearer statement about the need for special revelation in civil ethics possibly be made? Calvin considers the laws of the heathen to be a product of ‘their own beastliness’ and considers them to be ‘vanity’ and ‘worldly devices.’ Furthermore, like modern Theonomists, Calvin notes that ‘it is not possible for us to judge rightly’ if we rely on men’s laws; therefore, in order to enact justice, we need the civil law of God as revealed in Scripture. As Christopher Strevel surmises Calvin ‘reveals his belief that all spiritual and social light available to men is to be found in the law of God versus all competing systems of law and philosophy.’1054 Thus:

Calvin affirms the authority of the Old Testament case laws because Moses said it, i.e., because God’s laws given through him retain their authority over men and nations to the present time. Calvin’s overall assessment of the Mosaic laws is stated in his commentary on Deuteronomy 4:6-9…This should be taken as a foundational statement regarding the law of God…It establishes the direction for his careful exposition and application of God’s laws to non-Jewish men and nations.1055

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Indeed Calvin further contends that, if we want justice, we must follow the civil laws of Moses:

Therefore let us hold this position: that with regard to true spiritual justice, that is to say, with regard to a faithful man walking in good conscience and being whole before God in both his vocation and in all his works, there exists a plain and complete guideline for it in the law of Moses, to which we need simply cling if we want to follow the right path. Thus whoever adds to or takes anything from it exceeds the limits. Therefore our position is sure and infallible. 1056

Moreover, aside from these general statements, Prof. McKay does not adequately take into account the references to the abiding validity of Biblical penal sanctions that may be found throughout Calvin’s writings, especially in his commentaries and in the Sermons on Deuteronomy. In these works, Calvin calls for the death penalty to be applied to adultery, incest, to the women who lies to her husband about her virginity, rape of a betrothed maid, perjury, man-stealing, witchcraft, incorrigible children, seducers to idolatry, blasphemy, and treason – not to mention his support for the execution of the blasphemous heretic Servetus. These views are most strange coming from a man who, according to the opponents of modern Theonomic ethics, is entirely opposed to the contemporary application of Biblical penology. The fatal problem with an anti-Theonomic interpretation of Calvin’s allegedly anti-Theonomic comments in his Institutes is that anti-Theonomists would have us believe that Calvin was condemning himself. Moreover, Calvin would not only be condemning himself, but the views of his close friends and colleagues like Martin Bucer, John Knox and Theodore Beza who also called for many of the Mosaic penalties to be implemented in the modern world.

Prof. McKay makes mention of the fact that ‘one of the founders of the [Theonomy] movement, Rousas J. Rushdoony, calls Calvin’s views “heretical nonsense” and claims that his classical humanism had overcome his Biblical exegesis.’ 1057 First of all this writer wishes to

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1056 Cited in Ibid.
distance himself from the overstatements of R.J. Rushdoony in *The Institutes of Biblical Law* in relation to Calvin’s views, and on various other issues. This rash comment has been a source of annoyance to many Theonomists, as it is often trotted out whenever Theonomy is discussed— even though the vast majority of Theonomists have repudiated his opinions at this point. However, in fairness to Dr. Rushdoony it must be remembered that he made this comment in 1973, long before most research into Theonomy’s historical pedigree had been carried out. Indeed, the most obvious source for Calvin’s views on Theonomy, his *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, was not even reprinted until 1987—fourteen years after Dr. Rushdoony made his ill-advised comments. In light of these facts, it is important not to place too much weight upon Dr. Rushdoony’s views in relation to Theonomy and Reformed history.

**Theonomy and the Westminster Confession**

A lengthy defence of the Theonomic nature of the Westminster Confession of Faith is far beyond the scope of this work, yet, nonetheless, we should note that David McKay seriously misrepresents the Theonomic reading of the Westminster Confession when he writes that ‘Theonomists who appeal to the Confession tend to interpret “general equity” in such a way (i.e. embracing the detail to the laws) that they in effect reverse the Confession’s statements about the laws having “expired” and their “not obliging any.”’\(^{1058}\) This is a straw-man for several reasons.

Firstly, Theonomists do not believe that the precise details of ‘sundry judicial laws’ which the Confession says have ‘expired’ to be literally binding today. What Theonomy teaches is that the very details of the moral law continue, and for that reason even the principles of justice and equity found in various expired judicial laws continues.

Secondly, Theonomists do not reverse the Confession’s teaching that the laws have ‘expired’ as they were given to the ‘body politic’ of

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\(^{1058}\) David McKay, *The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church*, p. 196.
Israel, or else they would be calling for them to be literally implemented today (which would be impossible).

Thirdly, Theonomy does not reverse the Confession’s statement that concerning their ‘not obliging’ other nations, instead Theonomy finishes the sentence which states that the laws do continue to require observation in modern nations, but not any ‘further than the general equity thereof may require.’ Again, since Theonomy is not calling for a literal application of all the details in the judicial law of Moses, it does not contradict the doctrine of the Confession that only the general equity of such laws remains binding.

It is thus also regretful that Sinclair B. Ferguson (upon whom Prof. McKay seems to rely) sets for a highly misleading assessment concerning the Westminster Confession’s statement that various judicial laws have ‘expired’:

'[This] is not the natural way of expressing a Theonomic view. It is certainly not the way contemporary Theonomists express their position. For the Confession, the governing principle is that the Mosaic judicial laws have expired (whatever else may be said to clarify their relevance), whereas for Theonomists the governing principle is that the Mosaic judicals have not expired but are still in force; Christ has confirmed them and they are literally binding.\textsuperscript{1059}

J. Ligon Duncan has also maintained that the Westminster Confession forbids a Theonomic position simply because it states that ‘sundry judicial laws’ have ‘expired’ (19:4), arguing that ‘to interpret the confession in such a way that “general equity” cancels out the Assembly’s declaration in the restrictive clause (which expired...) that modifies the direct object (sundry judicial laws) is to make a mockery of the English language.’\textsuperscript{1060} However, both Dr. Duncan’s and Prof. Ferguson’s


comments are highly mischievous for a number of reasons. Firstly, they do not take into account the different historical contexts in which modern Theonomists and the Westminster divines find themselves in. At the time of the Westminster Assembly it was generally assumed that the penal sanctions of the judicial law remained binding, the error they had to guard against was the extremist view that the whole judicial law was perpetually valid (an error which modern Theonomy repudiates), hence they are obliged to stress the element of discontinuity between the judicial law’s application in the Older Testament and its application today. However, the error which modern Theonomists confront is totally different; it is the error that nothing in the judicial law is to be viewed as morally binding today. And so in order to prove that some things in the judicial law remain binding upon all nations, the modern Theonomists have to stress the continuity between the Older and New Testaments. Thus there is a slight difference of semantics between modern Theonomists and earlier Reformed divines; but that is all it is – a difference of semantics, not a difference of substance. Therefore, even if Prof. Ferguson is correct that the semantics of modern Theonomy is somewhat different to that of the Confession (and one is of the opinion that he has grossly overstated the case), he has not proved that Theonomy is contrary to the doctrine of the Westminster Standards.

Secondly, Prof. Ferguson (and Prof. McKay) sets up a false dichotomy between the Confessions’ teaching that various judicial laws have expired, and Theonomy’s teaching that Biblical civil law remains binding. This is because Theonomy does not deny that there is some sense in which various judicial laws, given to the nation of Israel, have expired ‘together with the state of that people.’ This is because Theonomy recognises that many judicial laws cannot be literally applied outside Older Testament Israel, and so only the ‘general equity’ or the underlying moral principle of these laws remains valid. For instance, Theonomists do not argue that Deut. 25:4 is literally binding on non-agrarian societies today (but if Prof. Ferguson and Prof. McKay were correct this is what Theonomy would be teaching); we recognise that this judicial law, as it was literally expressed, has expired; but (along with the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 9:8-10) we also recognise that the law’s underlying moral principle or general equity remains valid. Thus we acknowledge the discontinuity that arises from the expiration of various judicial laws, but we also do justice to the continuity which remains due to the
perpetual obligation of the general equity of those laws, which, while containing underlying moral principles, cannot be literally applied today.

A reading of the opening chapter of Greg Bahnsen’s book *By This Standard* (which is a non-technical introduction to the Theonomic position) should be enough to convince anyone that Theonomy definitely does not deny that various judicial laws have expired. Consider, for example, the following comments by Dr. Bahnsen:

It should be recognized that certain aspects of the Old Covenant are not authoritative today. For instance, in addition to the standing laws by which the Jews were always to live, God gave certain *Localized imperatives* to them — commands for specified use in one concrete situation, not principles with the continuing force of law from generation to generation. An example would be the command to go to war and gain the land of Palestine by the sword; this is not an enduring requirement for us today. Likewise, there were *cultural details* mentioned in many of God’s laws so as to illustrate the moral principle which He required (for example, the distinction between accidental manslaughter and malicious murder was illustrated in terms of a flying axhead). What is of permanent moral authority is the *Principle* illustrated, and not the cultural detail used to illustrate it. Thus we ought not to read the case laws of the Old Testament as binding us to the literal wording utilized (for example, flying sickle blades and faulty car brakes are also covered by the law dealing with the flying axhead).¹⁰⁶¹

We can also think here of the provisions regarding the land of Palestine. With the coming and establishment of that kingdom typified by the “promised land,” and with the removal of special kingdom privileges from the Jews by Christ, the laws regulating aspects of the land of Canaan (for example, family plots, location of cities of refuge, the levirate institution) have been laid aside in the New Testament as inapplicable. Other examples could perhaps be given, but enough has been said by now to demonstrate the point that the position taken herein is not that every last detail of Old Testament life must be reproduced today as morally obligatory, but simply that our *presumption* must be

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¹⁰⁶¹ G. L. Bahnsen, By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today, p. 5.
that of continuity with the standing laws of the Old Testament (when properly, contextually interpreted).\textsuperscript{1062}

Therefore Prof. Ferguson’s remark that for Theonomy ‘the governing principle is that the Mosaic judicials have not expired but are still in force’ is a misrepresentation of the Theonomic position, and it distorts the doctrine of the Westminster Confession, as it fails to recognise that the Confessional and Theonomic view is that a judicial law may have expired (as it was originally expressed) and yet still be in force (as to its general equity).\textsuperscript{1063} The fact that Theonomy teaches that some judicial laws

\textsuperscript{1062} Ibid., p. 6.

\textsuperscript{1063} Another example of such misrepresentation of the Confessional and Theonomic position may be found in Westminster Seminary California’s R. Scott Clark’s comment on Westminster Confession 19:4: ‘The civil laws have “expired.” In the words of John Cleese, they’re “pushing up daisies.” They don’t oblige any non-canonical civil entity any more than the “general equity” of the civil laws may require. Whatever “general equity” means, it doesn’t mean “the abiding validity of the law of God in exhaustive detail.” In fact the Decalogue and other biblical summaries of the natural law have usually been taken to be, in effect, the “general equity thereof.”’ R.S. Clark, ‘The Abiding Validity of the Creational Law in Exhaustive Detail’ online edition. In response to Prof. Clark, I wrote: “Here Prof. Clark erects a straw-man of the Theonomic position. Theonomy does not teach that the whole judicial law remains binding in exhaustive detail; instead Theonomy teaches that the whole MORAL law continues in exhaustive detail, and so the aspects of the judicial law which are part of the moral law continue. Hence Theonomy does not deny that “sundry judicial laws” that were entirely unique to Israel (see Gen. 49:10 WCF proof-text) have ‘expired’ completely. Nor does Theonomy deny that "sundry judicial laws" that were expressed in a manner which cannot be literally applied today (see 1 Cor. 9:9 WCF proof-text) have ‘expired’ as to their literal application, and so only the general equity (underlying principle of justice/fairness) of these laws can be applied today. Since Theonomy does not teach that the judicial laws bind “further than the general equity thereof may require” it cannot be considered as contrary to the doctrine of the Confession, as it does not call for a literal application of the whole judicial law. However, for the Puritans and Covenanters, many of the penal sanctions were automatically assumed to be moral laws (and thus they are quoted in the Larger Catechism’s exposition of the moral law) and hence do “for ever bind all.” (WCF 19:5). While Reformed theology recognizes a three-fold division of the law, it also recognizes that there is overlap between the moral and judicial categories. That is why the Puritan Thomas Shepard was able to say “the morals abiding, why should not their judicials and fences remain? The learned generally doubt not to affirm that Moses’ judicials bind all nations…because it is but just and equal that a moral and universal law should be universally preserved” (Thomas Shepard, \textit{Theses Sabbaticae}, pp 53-54). Nor does the Westminster Confession teach that the moral law is the Decalogue alone. On the contrary, the moral law in Confessional perspective is “summarily comprehended” in 460
(mostly those governing criminal punishments) are literally requisite, does not mean (as Prof. Ferguson implies) that Theonomic ethics teaches that all the Mosaic judicial laws ‘are literally binding.’ Instead Theonomy (along with the Confession) recognises that many of the judicial laws are not literally binding, but that Christ has confirmed their underlying moral principles. The Theonomic position is that the whole moral law has been confirmed by Christ and remains perpetually valid, and so the parts of the judicial law which are also part of the moral law (either literally, as in the case of the death penalty for murder; or in terms of their general principles, such as the laws governing safety precautions) remain perpetually binding.

Of course it should be remembered that in the era of the Westminster Assembly, the term ‘judicial laws’ had a much more broad meaning than it presently has. Nowadays we tend to equate judicial law merely with civil laws governing crime and punishment, but early Reformed divines believed that all laws governing Israel’s society were judicial laws. Thus they could refer to laws concerning not muzzling an ox as part of the judicial laws (WCF 19:4 proof text 1 Cor. 9:9). Obviously Theonomists do not believe that all the laws governing social ethics in Israel are to be literally applied today; otherwise we would all have to revert to Ancient Near Eastern culture. And, therefore, it is more than proper for Theonomists to affirm that various judicial laws (using the term in its broadest sense) have expired as to their literal application, but remain valid as to their general equity. Having considered the fallacious nature of Prof. Ferguson’s reasoning here, is it to be wondered at why his essay has received virtually uncritical acceptance in non-Theonomic Reformed circles? Especially when you consider that Martin Foulner’s Theonomy and the Westminster Confession contains sixty pages of quotations from early Reformed authors of that era affirming that many of the Mosaic judicial laws (especially relating to crime and punishment) are perpetually obligatory, as they are part of the moral law of God. Yet despite the overwhelming historical testimony to the modern
application of Biblical penology, Prof. McKay tells us that ‘it is clear that the Westminster divines, like other covenant theologians, did not seek the application of the details of Mosaic penology to modern societies.’

That statement is much too sweeping, especially as it is not substantiated by a single shred of historical evidence. While the Westminster divines and the Scottish Covenanters would have allowed a degree of latitude with respect to which penalties were maximum or mandatory, or which penalties had been modified in the New Testament, or whether certain penalties were meant to be standing laws for all nations, it simply cannot be maintained that they were not in favour of implementing (at the very least) some of the Mosaic penalties. Indeed, Prof. McKay seems to recognise this when he with respect to Westminster Confession 19:4, ‘within that statement there is scope for a variety of views on how much of the penalties prescribed by the Mosaic Law should be retained and on how closely modern laws should follow these Old Testament provisions.’ This is absolutely correct, and the same is true of modern Theonomy.

Sinclair Ferguson has accurately pointed out that some of the Westminster divines believed the ‘Mosaic punishments may be altered not only in mode of administration but in severity of action.’ This has also been acknowledged by Martin Foulner, who writes that ‘since no one particular position on the degree of application of the penal sanctions, was held by all the Divines, we should expect the Confession to allow for a degree of latitude which would accommodate these perspectives.’ The key difference between these men and other divines was that they did not believe that the penal sanctions were always mandatory: ‘even the most moderate position, held by great theologians such as William Greenhill and Anthony Burgess, still held to the penal sanctions for certain crimes: albeit the magistrate could impose lesser penalties.’ Is this view intrinsically anti-Theonomic? No, instead it is a difference of opinion among those committed to the basic principle of Theonomic

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1064 David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, p. 191.
1065 Ibid.
1068 Ibid.

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ethics. The reason why one can assert this is because essentially the same differences exist among modern proponents of Theonomy themselves. For instance, Gary North has argued that, in certain cases, the victim of a crime may call for a lesser penalty than death; for example, in the case of adultery, he argues ‘that the victim can specify a lesser penalty for the adulterers.’\textsuperscript{1069} Although one is of the opinion that there are exegetical and logical problems with this approach, nonetheless, such a view is consistent with Theonomic ethics.

Furthermore, an even more mild position has been adopted by Ray Sutton in his book \textit{That You May Prosper}. In this work, Dr. Sutton argues that not only are the Older Testament penalties not always mandatory, but that in the New Testament they may have been modified to be more or less severe:

The New Covenant view of the State is not to the end that every nation would become another “Hebrew Republic.” There are New Testament similarities and dissimilarities between Old and New Testament sanctions that should be noted. First, Paul’s Romans 1:18-32 language indicates that New Testament penal sanctions are similar to the Old Testament. The vast majority of Old Testament penalties should still be instituted...the proper hermeneutic for determining what carries over into the New Testament is the principle: continue what is not changed in the New Testament. This would apply to the penal sanctions of the Old Testament. The death penalty offenses that should be extended into the New Testament are witchcraft (Deut. 18:10-11), idolatry (Deut. 13:10), murder (Gen. 9:6), blasphemy (Lev. 24:11-23), homosexuality (Lev. 18:22-29), bestiality (Lev. 18:23), rape (Deut. 22:25-27), adultery (Lev. 20:10), incest (Lev. 20:14), incorrigibility of teenagers (Deut. 21:18-20), kidnapping (Exod. 21:16), and some instances of perjury (Deut. 19:19-20). Second, the New Testament penal sanctions are dissimilar to the Old Testament. In some instances they can be more lenient. After the shift from wrath to grace in history, “reformability” has greater possibility. In the Old Covenant, before redemption comes in history, the negative influence of wickedness is so great that it cannot be overcome. It would seem that virtually all of the

\textsuperscript{1069} Gary North, \textit{Victim’s Rights: The Biblical View of Civil Justice}, p. 44.
“bad elements” of society would have to be killed for this reason. But in the New Covenant, the kingdom of God has a positive effect on wickedness. Some of the wicked – indeed many more than could have been in the Old Covenant – can be restored. We discover that former homosexuals, for example, are in the Church of Corinth (1 Cor. 6:11). No death penalty is called for. Thus, we see how Paul can speak of the similarity of Old Testament sanctions in Romans 1, and yet maintain the possibility that not every convicted homosexual would have to be put to death according to 1 Corinthians 6. In the New Covenant Age, only the “unreformable” element would be put to death. In some instances, however, the New Covenant sanctions are stricter than the Old Covenant. Paul allows in Romans 1:30-31 for other offenses that can draw the death penalty: arrogance, unmerciful, strife and others...Therefore, the New Covenant application of penal sanctions is both similar and dissimilar to the Old Testament. The historic shift from wrath to grace in Jesus Christ allows for a much fuller and powerful application, guaranteeing a truer continuity and discontinuity with the covenant.1070

Moreover in his useful book *Who Owns The Family?* Dr. Sutton explicitly says that ‘the death penalty is only mandatory in the case of one capital offense: murder.’1071 This would correspond with the views of those Westminster divines who believed that the death sentence was a maximum rather than a mandatory penalty. Again, while one finds this position highly unacceptable in the face of the text of Scripture, nevertheless, one is also forced to acknowledge that is a Theonomic view. So if Prof. McKay wishes to argue that crime must be punished in accordance with Scripture, but not precisely the same way that it was punished in the Old Testament, then that is a position which I, as a Theonomist, would not have a problem with, provided that there is sufficient Biblical warrant for such modification.

**George Gillespie and Theonomy**

In an endnote Prof. McKay writes:

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A tract entitled *Wholesome Severity Reconciled With Christian Liberty* which argues for the enforcement of the Mosaic penalties in full is often attributed to Gillespie, but in the opinion of the present writer, it is not one of his works.1072

Having dealt with Gillespie’s views elsewhere, we cannot go into great detail here. However, a couple of issues need to be addressed. Firstly, not all Theonomists call for ‘the enforcement of the Mosaic penalties in full’ as many of them (such as Gary North and R.J. Rushdoony) do not believe, for instance, that capital punishment for Sabbath breakers remains valid in the New Testament. So although the position of *Wholesome Severity* may represent one Theonomic viewpoint, it does not represent the entire Theonomic perspective when considered as a whole.

Furthermore with respect to authorship, Prof. McKay produces no historical evidence to substantiate his claim that Gillespie is not the author. On the other hand, Chris Coldwell has provided a number of reasons why Gillespie should be considered to have written it:

There is excellent historical evidence for Gillespie's authorship of *WS*. The source of the attribution of this work to Gillespie is his cousin, Rev. Patrick Simpson (1628-1715). Simpson was 19 or 20 when Gillespie died (1648). He evidently grew up with his cousin and/or cousin's children (see M'Crie's comment in *Wodrow's Correspondence*, volume 1, pp. 14). He was present when Gillespie was sick and dying. The historian, Robert Wodrow, knew Simpson, corresponded with him, and interviewed him and stayed with him for three days. From this interview we have Simpson's recounting of Gillespie's last illness and death and the statement that Wodrow says he has from Mr. Simpson's mouth that Gillespie was the author of *WS* (see also Hetherington's *Memoir*, the appendix, in Gillespie's *Works*). Wodrow's personal assessment of the long lived Mr. Simpson, was that “I have now had long acquaintance of him, and never knew one more pleasant and profitable in conversation … He had one of the clearest judgments, and yet the most exact and tenacious memories that I ever knew.” So we have a usually reliable and accurate historian's interview of a man of unusually clear tenacious memory (for an

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1072 David McKay, *The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church*, p. 196.
octogenarian I suppose he means) attesting to these facts. And who better than a close friend and relative to know what Gillespie may have or may not have written, and who may well have collected and read all the material by his famous cousin? And why would he mention these works? Would it not be because they were published anonymously and he knew his cousin wrote them and wanted to attest to that fact? Wodrow termed Simpson one of the last “antediluvian” Presbyterians. He saw him as an important source of data, particularly I suppose given his relationship to Gillespie, one of the prime movers of the Second Reformation. Gillespie's authorship has been accepted by most of the historians I've seen who comment or make mention of WS. See Walker, *Theology and Theologians of Scotland*, Macphearson, *Doctrine of the Church in Scottish Theology*, Campbell, “George Gillespie” in the *Records of the Scottish Historical Society*, volume X, Part II. 1949.

Arguments from style and content are of little consequence by themselves, but they add a comfort level to the historical data outlined above. 1. In works all from 1645, we find use of similar sources. For example we find the use of the reformed theologian, Gualther in WS, House of Lords Sermon, and *Nihil Respondes. Grotti Apologeta* is cited in WS and *Brotherly Examination*. 2. There are similar themes or ideas among various works and WS. He speaks of Presbyterian Government being maligned in *Aaron's Rod* and WS, and uses the argument that the abuse of a thing is not an argument against the right use of it. Liberty of conscience is addressed in WS and some of the same ideas are covered in his House of Lords Sermon, where very similar language is also used (p. 12). 3. There are similar phraseologies. He uses Gallio to illustrate a favorite idea, the nullifidian, and the adiaphorist for one who views all things as things indifferent, in WS, *English Popish Ceremonies, Aaron's Rod Blossoming*.

Compare from *EPC* “The atheistical nullifidian, nothing regards the assoiling of ecclesiastical controversies; he is of Gallio's humor (Acts 18:17), and cares for none of those things... The pragmatical adiaphorist ...” etc and *Aaron's Rod* (similar use, nullifidian is not used) “Let the Gallio's of this time (who care for no intrinsical evil in the church)...” with WS “The first is when
the Magistrate is a Nullifidian, Neutralist, and Adiaphorist, estimating as Gallio did ....”

There is similar use of language in EPC and WS. In WS the author writes: “The thing being necessary, as has been said, it is pars tuitor, yea, tuitissima [it is the safer part, yea, the very safest], that a man is compelled to it … though it is against his erring and ill informed conscience.” In EPC Gillespie writes: “But if the error of conscience is about unnecessary things, or such as are in themselves indifferent, then it is pars tutior [the safer part], the surest and safest part not to urge men to do that which in their consciences they condemn” (Naphtali Press edition, p. 25).

It is interesting to note in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) that EPC is cited as a usage example of the term “nullifidian,” and Wholesome Severity is cited as one for “adiaphorist.” And for what it is worth, the OED attributes WS without controversy to George Gillespie in the list of works cited for usage.1073

Consequently, the burden of proof lies upon the one who wishes to argue that Gillespie is not the author; so far Prof. McKay has not provided us with any reason to question the evidence in favour of regarding George Gillespie as the author of Wholesome Severity.

Conclusion

While not significantly disagreeing with the views of Prof. McKay, having considered the evidence, we cannot accept his criticisms of the Theonomic position as being Biblically or historically valid. However, we do agree with him when he says that the Theonomic approach ‘yields results little different from the standard Reformed handling of the Mosaic civil laws.’1074 The reason for this is because the position of Theonomy and the early Reformed is essentially (though perhaps not entirely) the same.

1074 David McKay, The Bond of Love: God’s Covenantal Relationship with His Church, pp 192-193.
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Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for truth has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter.

Isaiah 59:4 (NKJV)

No one calls for justice, Nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They conceive evil and bring forth iniquity.

Ezekiel 33:17 (ESV)

Yet your people say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just,’ when it is their own way that is not just.

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