

# *The Church and God's Law (1)*

By Andrew McColl, 7/5/2013

*...what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today? (Deut.4:8).*

*From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way (Ps.119:104).*

What's been happening to the Church for over three hundred years? We have been going backwards, in terms of our influence in the world.

Opportunities for influence have abounded, but we haven't successfully used them. As a result, the world has been in a kind of moral reverse. The twentieth century bears this out dramatically. What's been happening?

*The tools of dominion, God's law, sit unused and generally unread by those who call themselves Christians. They are the best weapons that Christians possess for moral self-defence, since the best defence is a good offence, yet they steadfastly refuse to use them. To use God's law effectively would require them to become intimately familiar with its many subtleties and complex applications, and even less appealing, to discipline themselves in terms of it. They prefer to let it sit unopened, either in their laps or on their shelves. Christians therefore continue to lose the war for civilisation.<sup>1</sup>*

This series of essays is an attempt to show one thing:

The Church can and must comprehensively address the manifold problems of our modern society, using the document God commanded us to use, from the beginning: His law.

*O how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day (Ps.119:97).*

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<sup>1</sup> Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, Vol. 1, p.48.

## *The Church and God's Law (2)*

By Andrew McColl, 14/5/2013

*The Israelites had experienced firsthand the institutional effects of a social order governed by a law-order different from the Bible's. They had been enslaved. The God who had released them from bondage announced at Sinai His standards of righteousness - not just private righteousness but social and institutional righteousness. Thus, the God of liberation is simultaneously the law-giver. The close association of Biblical law and human freedom is grounded in the very character of God.<sup>2</sup>*

The Ten Commandments were given to a people who had been miraculously freed from slavery. Now, God gave them His laws. What does this show us?

Grace precedes law. God deals graciously with undeserving sinners, in order that they may change their attitudes and behaviour, serve and please Him.

Is there a contradiction between God's grace and His law? Not at all. They both proceed from the same God, and they are both needed by every society, at all times.

Three things must be noted about the law of God:

Firstly, the law is the revelation of God and His righteousness. Secondly, the law was a treaty or covenant given by God, such as in the case of the Ten Commandments. Thirdly, the law is a plan of dominion under God which He expects His people to abide by, and to obediently implement in the world.<sup>3</sup> To choose or accept anything else, is tantamount to apostacy.

*It is these laws [the case laws of Exodus] and their amplification in the Book of Deuteronomy that must serve as the foundation of any systematically self-conscious Christian revolution.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Gary North, "The Sinai Strategy," 1986, p.19. See also Gary North, "Moses and Pharaoh," 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, "The Institutes of Biblical Law," 1973, p.6-8.

<sup>4</sup> Gary North, "Ethics and Dominion," 2012, p.1742.

## *The Church and God's Law (3)*

By Andrew McColl, 21/5/2013

*...it was with the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ that Biblical law burst the Old Covenant wineskin of national Israel and flowed judicially across the nations. It was not the ministry of Moses that accomplished this; it was the ministry of Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup>*

The gospel of Jesus Christ is certainly one of grace, as it is also a gospel of the kingdom of God. A kingdom pre-supposes a king, and what sort of king is there who has a kingdom without laws and requirements? Christians should never be embarrassed about this fact: there is right and wrong in God's sight, and He reveals this through the Ten Commandments and other parts of scripture, for all to see.

Chilton explains this well:

*The fact is that all law is 'religious.' All law is based on some ultimate standard of morality and ethics. Every law system is founded on the ultimate value of that system, and that ultimate value is the god of that system. The source of law for a society is the god of that society. This means that a theocracy is inescapable. All societies are theocracies. The difference is that a society that is not explicitly Christian is a theocracy of a false god.<sup>6</sup>*

The implications of this for us are enormous. They have always been enormous, but because the Church has neglected God's law for over 300 years, and we have gotten used to trotting out the same old excuses like, "we're under grace, not law, don't you know?" the whole issue of the application of the law of God to society has gotten right away from us. While we slept, our enemies operated, and the God-haters have wreaked enormous damage throughout the nations of the world.

Was it their fault? Yes, but it happened on our watch, so it was our fault too. We ignored our obligations to represent God in the world, speaking of the totality of the kingdom of God, along with His law and its power and importance, and have watched the decline of both the world around us, and the Church which was supposed to be His agent for transformation of every civilisation.

Think of what has taken place all over the Western world, since the publication of Charles Darwin's "The Origin of the Species" in 1859. As Wikipedia notes, "Within two decades there was widespread scientific agreement that evolution, with a branching pattern of common descent, had occurred."

And the Church? It was silent, on a matter that seriously undermined its theology and credibility.

But that's history. If we Christians will take responsibility for how things are in the world, and apply God's Word and His law to affecting the changes He wants to see take place, we can see

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<sup>5</sup> Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," Vol.1, 1990, p.89.

<sup>6</sup> David Chilton, "Paradise Restored," 1999, p.219.

transition take place. It begins with us, or else God will only crank up His judgment and make things even more difficult for the world, and for us.

*Over time, when the welfare state finally runs out of money, there will be new institutional systems that will begin to replace the old order. I do not think the old order will give up voluntarily, but new ideas can change policies in a crisis. When the existing welfare state no longer functions, people will turn to alternatives.*

*That is where our opportunity lies. I do not think the present ideology in favour of the welfare state can survive the demise of the finances of the welfare state.<sup>7</sup>*

It's time to act- to move for the kingdom of God.

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<sup>7</sup> Gary North, "The Setting for Serious Reform," 17/5/2013.

## *The Church and God's Law (4)*

By Andrew McColl, 28/5/2013

*So keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do (Deut.29:9).*

The modern Christian faced with the prevalent indifference and hostility to God's law (both within and without the Church) has to ask himself, "Why did the New Testament writers (including Jesus, in Mat.5:17-20) place such importance on the authority and legitimacy of Old Testament law? Why have we neglected this vital fact?"

Speaking of the financial support of ministers of the gospel, Paul declares

*...Does not the Law say these things? For it is written in the law of Moses, "you shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is he speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops (I Cor.9:8-10).*

Paul repeats this teaching. In I Timothy (in the context of elders being paid) he explains that "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing, and the labourer is worthy of his wages" (I Tim.5:18), which is Old Testament teaching located in Deuteronomy 25:4, and Leviticus 19:13.

What can we make of this? North comments that

*Christians are supposed to take the Old Testament's case laws seriously. As Paul's use of them indicates, they set forth in an encapsulated form fundamental principles of justice...these case law principles have long served as a major component of the judicial foundation of Western civilisation. As Western civilisation steadily departs from the legal principles that the case laws set forth, we walk closer toward the precipice of God's judgment, oblivious to the mortal danger that faces us. Men have forgotten that God judges nations and cultures in history. Biblical law warns them of this reality...<sup>8</sup>*

Paul doesn't relegate these Old Testament case law texts to some theological dust-bin of history. On the contrary, he is effectively saying, "God spoke to Moses. He is the authority. What more do we need? This is what we're commanded to do." In fact, Paul actually writes, "Yes, for our sake it was written..." (I Cor.9:10).

Now, if these commands were legitimate for Paul's day, wouldn't they be just as legitimate for today, or any other period of Church history, past or present?

Let's look at Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth." Notice here in this quote from the Ten Commandments

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<sup>8</sup> Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, p.88-89.

(Ex.20:12), that Paul inserts a parenthetical statement: “which is the first commandment with a promise.” Paul, who is very familiar with the Old Testament (as every Christian ought to be), takes the time to add a brief apostolic commentary to this Exodus passage, noting that a promise is attached.

For those inclined to suggest that the Mosaic law is somehow obsolete in the New Testament era, I ask these questions:

Does Paul tell us that in Ephesians 6:1-3?

Does he speak of the law’s obsolescence?

Does he say there are new laws to replace the Old Testament laws?

Frankly, he says nothing of the kind. There is nothing in Paul’s discourse that suggests that the Fifth Commandment is discarded in the New Testament. On the contrary, he passes on the command to children from the Old Testament to the New, changing the focus of the promise from the promised land, to “the earth.” This is fitting, because Jesus Christ commanded us to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mk. 16:15).

*It is true that Jesus did not teach a comprehensive social theory. He did not have to. He taught from the Old Testament. He said that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament (Luke 4:16-21). In His divine nature as the second person of the Trinity, He co-authored the Old Testament. Why would any Christian believe that Jesus annulled this judicial heritage? Why would He have done this? He did not say that He did this. Where is the evidence that Jesus annulled the social theory that had been taught from Moses to Malachi?<sup>9</sup>*

In Romans 13:8-10, Paul returns to his commentary on the law, and finishes by declaring that

*Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law (v.10).*

One writer who grasped the implications of what Paul said in Romans 13:8-10, was John Murray. He wrote:

*If love is the fulfilment of the law, this means that no law is fulfilled apart from love...it is only through love that we can fulfil the demands of justice...this appeal to the Decalogue demonstrates the following propositions: 1) The Decalogue is of permanent and binding relevance. 2) It exemplifies the law that love fulfils and is therefore correlative with love. 3) The commandments and their binding obligation do not interfere with the exercise of love; there is no incompatibility. 4) The commandments are the norms in accordance with which love operates.<sup>10</sup>*

#### Conclusion:

It was the boxer Joe Louis, who famously said of his opponent in a forthcoming bout, that “he can run but he can’t hide.” Christians have been running and hiding for three hundred and fifty

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<sup>9</sup> Gary North, “Treasure and Dominion,” 2012, p.xv.

<sup>10</sup> John Murray, “The Epistle to the Romans,” (2 vols., vol.II), 1959, 1965, p.159, 161-162. Quoted in Gary North, “Cooperation and Dominion,” 2012, p.137-138.

years from God's commandments, and our declining influence in this period witnesses against us.

It's time to stop running. It's time to manfully take responsibility for the world we live in; our cultures, our societies, our laws. We can do this, because God commands us to, according to His Word, and His law.

We must do this, because God is going to hold us to account for the state of our nations, when we give account to Him.

# *The Church and God's Law (5)*

By Andrew McColl, 4/6/2013

## *The Errors of Judaism*

*the warfare of Jesus was not against Moses. It was against the scribes and Pharisees who perverted Moses. It is a perversion of Scripture to separate the law and the prophets from Jesus. The Mount of Transfiguration witnessed to their unity.*<sup>11</sup>

Jesus made His attitude towards the law abundantly clear, in Mat.5:17-18: *“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”* This means that Christians of any era ought to reject careless and foolish assumptions about the law, which are not found in scripture. *“Either God's revealed law is sovereign in society or else autonomous man's declared law is sovereign.”*<sup>12</sup>

It is important to understand that there was a significant difference between the faith delivered to the Old Testament saints, and the religious beliefs of the Pharisees in Jesus' day. The Pharisees purported to be faithful to the Old Testament revelation, but this was a sham. They held to Judaism, which was a humanistic corruption of Old Testament faith. *“The Pharisees, professing to be champions of God's word, were in fact its enemies and perverters.”*<sup>13</sup>

The Pharisees' commitment was merely to a hypocritical outward observance, rather than inward obedience. This is shown clearly in Jesus' commentary on the Jews in Jn.5:45-47: *“Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for He wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”* Jesus later said, *“Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you carries out the Law?”* (Jn.7:19)

*When faced by Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees, who saw themselves as the guardians of the law, found themselves face to face with the law incarnate. Jesus manifested the true law of God, not the pharisaic versions of it, in all His being. In the hands of the religious leaders, the law had become a yoke of bondage (Gal.5:1), not the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25; 2:12).*<sup>14</sup>

The true attitudes of the scribes and Pharisees were illustrated when they brought a woman before Him, caught in adultery (Jn.8:1-11). Clearly, they were not interested in justice; if they were, there would have been a man alongside her, to be tried. *“The Mosaic Covenant mandated that God's law must apply to all men equally, thereby upholding the principle that the rule of law is to be upheld (Ex. 12:49).”*<sup>15</sup> The text clearly shows that they were *“testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him”* (v.6). *“This was a staged episode in order to destroy His*

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<sup>11</sup>Rousas Rushdoony, “The Institutes of Biblical Law,” p.714.

<sup>12</sup>Gary North, “Inheritance and Dominion,” 1999, ch.18.

<sup>13</sup>Rushdoony, p.706.

<sup>14</sup>Rousas Rushdoony, “The Gospel of John,” 2000, p.145.

<sup>15</sup>North, “Inheritance and Dominion,” ch.72.

credibility.<sup>16</sup> Jesus cuts to the heart of the issue, with His challenge to the men present: “*he who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her*” (v.7).

It is a serious mistake to contend that Jesus is saying that because of sin, no one can legitimately condemn another in a court of law. If that was the case, there would be no legitimate court convictions. “*The witnesses departed. The Mosaic law required two witnesses in any capital crime (Deut.19:15). So, there was no way to convict her. She had to be set free. Jesus sent her away, after asking specifically where her accusers were (v. 10). They were gone, she replied. So He dismissed her (v. 11).*”<sup>17</sup>

“*Judges, witnesses, and executioners had to have clean hands in dealing with an offender and an offense, in this case adultery. All of them were guilty men, adulterers, and their consciences convicted them.*”<sup>18</sup> This was why they all filed out of the room.

Jesus in His statements on the day had not denied Old Testament law. He merely refused to be a party to its application through the Pharisees’ moral hypocrisy. They were no less guilty than the woman, yet they were ready to see her condemned. “*Their use of the law was evil and obscene.*”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, “*nothing is more hateful to God than a perversion of His truth which claims to be a defence of it.*”<sup>20</sup>

Jesus was a champion of God’s law, but that law (being God’s eternal purpose of justice), would never be served through hypocrisy, misogyny, or a selective application.

*Jesus always respected and kept the Old Covenant law. His purpose in coming into the world was to take the Old Covenant to Himself and, in His own death and resurrection, to transform it into the life-giving New Covenant.*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, “The Gospel of John,” 2000, p.92.

<sup>17</sup> Gary North, “Analysing John 8: The Woman Taken in Adultery,” [www.garynorth.com](http://www.garynorth.com), Feb.18<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, “The Gospel of John,” p.92.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p.92.

<sup>20</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, “Thy Kingdom Come,” 2001, p.224.

<sup>21</sup> James Jordan, “The Law of the Covenant,” 1984, p.234.

# *The Church and God's Law (6)*

By Andrew McColl, 11/6/2013

## The Case Laws

*The case laws of Exodus provide us with fundamental legal principles that God has established in order to provide His people with a means of gaining His external, historical blessings. These case laws are mankind's God-given tools of dominion...It is time for Christians to place themselves consistently and forthrightly under the ethical terms of the covenant, and affirm the continuing judicial validity for all societies of the case laws. They can begin with the case laws of Exodus.<sup>22</sup>*

The case laws of Exodus begin with the laws of servitude (Ex.21:1-11). In the Bible, the issue is never bondage or no bondage. It is always, "bondage to who?" Every person serves someone. The deliverance of Israel at the Exodus freed the nation from Pharaoh and Egypt, but their deliverance was not into a vacuum; it was so that they could fear and serve the Lord.

What does this mean? There is no lasting dominion for humanity apart from service to God, and everyone is under a yoke. Jesus said that "everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin" (Jn.8:34). But He promised that "... My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Mat.11:30).

Rehoboam disputed this fact, when "He and all Israel with him forsook the law of the Lord" (II Chron.12:1). He effectively said, "don't give me this bondage stuff! We're doing what we want!"

God's response? He sent an invading force against Rehoboam, led by Shishak the king of Egypt.

Why? God said that "They will become his slaves so that they will learn the difference between My service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries" (II Chron.12:8).

The modern world is doing just the same. We have rejected God and His law, but once again, the bondage issue won't go away. The modern world has witnessed the tacit acceptance of humanistic socialism as a legitimate political ideology, the centralisation of power in governments, the waging of aggressive war with casualties on a scale never seen before in human history,<sup>23</sup> the murder of non-combatants and other innocents both in war and peace by governments, destructive government manipulation of economies through reserve banking systems,<sup>24</sup> the widespread introduction of graduated income tax systems, in violation of Leviticus 19:15 (such as in France, where the top rate is presently 85%), and much, much more.

And we like to tell ourselves that we're free.

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<sup>22</sup> Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, p.109, 110.

<sup>23</sup> See for example, Gil Eliot, "Twentieth Century Book of the Dead," 1972. Up till 1969, Eliot estimated that man-caused deaths in the twentieth century, could have ranged between 80-150 million.

<sup>24</sup> "The supposed benefits of central banking are all illusory and impossible." Mike Rozeff, "The Meaning of Quantitative Easing," Lew Rockwell website, 11/5/09.

But Jehoshaphat? He was different. The Bible explains in II Chronicles 17 that:

- a) *“He followed the example of his father David’s earlier days”* (v.3).
- b) *“He... “sought the God of his father...[and] followed His commandments”* (v.4).
- c) *“The Lord established his kingdom in his control”* (v.5).
- d) *“He sent his officials... to teach”* (v.7).
- e) *“They taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the Lord with them”* (v.9).
- f) *“Now the dread of the Lord was on all the kingdoms of the lands which were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat, and they brought gifts and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat”* (v.10-11).
- g) *“Jehoshaphat grew greater and greater, and he built fortresses and store cities in Judah. He had large supplies in the cities of Judah, and warriors, valiant men, in Jerusalem”* (v.12-13).

Jehoshaphat was receiving the promise given by the Lord, in Joshua 1:8.

*This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.*

Are the case laws still binding today? Absolutely. As Bahnsen writes, “Since the case law’s principles define the Decalogue [the Ten Commandments], the case law’s principles (in their full scope: personal and social, ecclesiastical and civil) are as perpetual as the Decalogue itself.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Greg Bahnsen, “By This Standard: The Authority of God’s Law Today,” 1985, p.318. Quoted in Gary North, “Tools...” Vol.1, p.102-103.

## *The Church and God's Law (7)*

By Andrew McColl, 18/6/2013

*He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death (Ex.21:12)*

This case law is effectively a re-statement of the Sixth Commandment: “you shall not murder” (Ex.20:13). But this text has the penalty attached.

The law of capital punishment for murder precedes the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic law in the Bible. God had commanded Noah, “whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (Gen.9:6).

The law is clear: there is a deliberate act on the part of the murderer to end the life of an innocent person. While this verse does not state it clearly, other passages where the murder law is re-phrased make it clear that the murderer is one who initiates violence. Deuteronomy states

*If there is a man who hates his neighbour and lies in wait for him and rises up against him and strikes him so that he dies...you shall not pity him, but you shall purge the blood of the innocent from Israel, that it may go well with you (Deut.19:11-13).*

What does this show? a) The presence of hate in the heart of the murderer towards his neighbour, and b) a pre-meditated plan to kill him: “lying in wait.”

Exodus 22:2-3 permits a householder to kill a thief if he is found breaking in, and “there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account” (ie, the householder).

This clearly means that acts of self-defence (whether they be personal defence, or for others, or national, in time of war) are clearly permitted. Furthermore, it is incumbent upon all law-abiding people to come to the aid of people who are being attacked by criminals, to apprehend the criminal and if necessary kill them, as the protection of innocent life requires (see Prov.6:16-17). Biblical law implies the police power of every citizen to uphold the law. As Rushdoony notes,

*The police power and duty of the person involves a common defence of godly order. Law and order are the responsibilities of all good men without exception.<sup>26</sup>*

This effectively prohibits passivity in the face of criminality. If individuals do not seek to prevent injury, assault, or murder, they are themselves in part guilty of the offence committed.<sup>27</sup>

All capital crime convictions required multiple witnesses. Deut.17:6 states that

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<sup>26</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, “The Institutes of Biblical Law,” 1973, p.221.

<sup>27</sup> See Rushdoony, p.220.

*On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.*

Not only must there be multiple witnesses for capital convictions. The Bible specifically warns of the testimony of a “malicious witness:”

*If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing...the judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. The rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you (Deut.19:16-20).*

Conclusion:

Obedience to God requires action in relation to criminal activity. Our inactivity in the Church in relation to pressing for the death penalty for murder and other capital crimes has been nothing other than negligence towards crime; an offence against God. We have not protected or cared for the innocent, which the Bible specifically commands us to do.

*Deliver those who are being taken away to death, and those who are staggering to slaughter, Oh hold them back. If you say, “See, we did not know this,” Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul, and will He not render to man according to his work? (Prov.24:11-12).*

The sooner the Church again endorses the Biblical position in relation to murder, the better.

## *The Church and God's Law (8)*

By Andrew McColl, 25/6/2013

*He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death (Ex.21:15).*

It's common in the modern era to underestimate the importance of the godly family.<sup>28</sup>

Why is this? Partially due to the declining influence of the Church, and the growth in influence of Marxist thought, for Marx hated marriage. The socialism that resulted from Marx in the West is a political philosophy which has had its day, but we've all grown up witnessing such an emphasis on the roles, function and power of civil government. This has tended to overshadow the vital functions of the family, which have been laid out since Genesis.

*Marriage is not lawless. It is a covenantal institution. It is the primary training ground for the next generation. It is the primary institution for welfare: care for the young, care for the aged, and education. It is the primary agency of economic inheritance. The family is therefore the primary institutional arrangement for fulfilling the terms of the dominion covenant (Gen.1:26-28). God honoured this crucial dominion function of the family by placing restrictions on it. A servant is expected to defer marriage until he is an independent man. Later, as a husband in a position of authority, he can exercise dominion under God as the head of his family. The model here is Jacob (Gen.29:20).<sup>29</sup>*

The hierarchies of the family, Church and State under God are legitimate. Jesus had no trouble submitting to His parents (see Luke 2:51-52). No family is perfect, as the book of Genesis surely bears out, but it has been the State in violating its God-ordained limits, which historically has been the institution responsible for the death of millions of innocents. This abuse continues today.

It is in the interests of children that they learn to submit and obey their parents (Eph.6:1-3). They will spend their lives being part of various systems of hierarchy, all of them imperfect ones where there are imperfect people.

If family members view themselves firstly as servants of God, responsible to Him, they will have an attitude which brings stability, purpose and longevity to every family. Parents are foolish if they believe they are the main beneficiaries when they receive honour from their children. It is the children who in doing so, inherit the blessing of God which results from obeying the Fifth Commandment.

A ban on violence towards parents is a negative application of the Fifth Commandment, to "honour your father and your mother" (Ex.20:12), and the ultimate end of this commandment is the honour of God, and distribution of the family inheritance. Only foolish parents indeed would wish to distribute their inheritance to a child who held them in contempt; much less one who was violent towards them.

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<sup>28</sup> See Andrew McColl, "The Significance of the Godly Family," 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, Vol.1, p.214-215.

But the family is not absolute, or autonomous. It must be pointed out that

*Membership in the church is of far greater consequence than membership in the family. Jesus was at war with any view of the human family that elevated it to equality with the church, “For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household” (Mat.10:35-36). The Biblical economic goal is to increase the dominion of Christians, not families as such; the institutional focus is on the kingdom rather than the family.<sup>30</sup>*

Every family must be protected from lawlessness, from within or without. The family has a direct interest in the discipline and when necessary, removal of law-breakers. This law permitting capital punishment (to be carried out by the State, which is “the bearer of the sword” Ro.13:3-4), illustrates the legitimacy and sanctity of the family structure, under God.

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<sup>30</sup> Gary North, “Tools of Dominion,” 1990, Vol.1, p.271.

## *The Church and God's Law (9)*

By Andrew McColl, 2/7/2013

*He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death (Ex.21:16).*

The cattle on a thousand hills belong to God, the Bible tells us (Ps.50:10), because everything belongs to God. Even a spouse doesn't own their husband or wife in an absolute sense, because like all of creation, they belong to God absolutely.

But a kidnapper rejects this notion. He is essentially is saying to someone, "God doesn't own you. I'm asserting my ownership of you, and I'll control your life." But to deprive a man of his liberty, let alone his life is a serious thing. His ability to serve God is now totally frustrated. The kidnapper effectively disputes with God concerning His sovereignty over individuals.

*Who is the true owner of the kidnapper's victim? God is. God owns the whole world (Ps.50:10). Nevertheless, stealing a privately owned animal is not a capital crime (Ex.22:1). Why the special case of a man? The answer is found in man's special position: subordinate under God and possessing authority over the creation. Man is made in God's image (Gen.1:27; 9:6). By interfering with a man's God-given calling before God, the kidnapper disrupts God's revealed administrative structure for administering the earth.<sup>31</sup>*

Kidnapping is thus a blasphemous statement of sovereignty and power, in breach of the First Commandment ("you shall have no other gods before Me,") the Eighth ("you shall not steal") and the Tenth Commandment ("you shall not covet.")

God said of Sennacherib when he came and invaded Israel, "Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? And against whom have you raised your voice and haughtily lifted up your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel!" (Isa.37:23)

To the western mind today, to take someone's life for this reason certainly seems very harsh, but that's only because we've lost the Biblical view of liberty and law. The Bible places great value on men being able to make choices, in a context of their liberty. In fact, we've been commanded to "...keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal.5:1).

Capital punishments remind us that ultimately (despite what kidnappers and other criminals may assert), everything belongs to God, and "...each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (Ro.14:12).

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<sup>31</sup> Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, Vol.2, p.322.



## *The Church and God's Law (10)*

By Andrew McColl, 9/7/2013

*If men have a quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist, and he does not die but remains in bed, if he gets up and walks around outside on his staff, then he who struck him shall go unpunished; he shall only pay for his loss of time, and shall take care of him until he is completely healed (Ex.21:18-19).*

There are always costs involved in conflict. This doesn't mean that we can or should always avoid conflict; to some degree we will face it whether we like it or not. It is an aspect of being fallen people living in a world with other fallen people.

But the Bible instructs us that "keeping away from strife is an honour for a man, but any fool will quarrel" (Prov.20:3). It also teaches that "an angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds with transgression" (Prov.29:22).

It is one thing to legitimately "...contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints" (Jude 3), and it is another to be a contentious, quarrelsome person by nature, unnecessarily aggravating others. "Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is counted prudent" (Prov.17:28).

This case-law shows us that a peaceable and just community requires individual responsibility. Peaceable communities do not get that way by imposition, but by the day to day consistency of individuals and families. Not only that, no man can safely claim that he's an island, without community and hopefully Christian bonds and obligations with his neighbours. Ignoring this fact was the fateful mistake that Nabal made (see I Sam.25).

The Bible commands us to "through love serve one another" (Gal.5:13), and Jesus' definition of "neighbour" in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), includes all of those we may come into contact with in our day, regardless of whether we sought their company or not.

*The Bible does not permit the use of force to resolve disputes, except where force is lawfully exercised by God's ordained officer, the civil magistrate. To put it another way, the Bible requires men to submit to arbitration, and categorically prohibits them from taking their own personal vengeance (Ro.12:17-13:7).<sup>32</sup>*

What should happen if criminals attack a family? The Bible isn't a pacifist document, so firearms and other means of family protection are perfectly legitimate.<sup>33</sup> The Sermon on the Mount must be seen in context; it was given at a time when Israel was under the judgment of God, and Roman occupation. This gives us the context of Jesus' command, "*do not resist an evil person*" (Mat.5:39). He does not expect parents to stand by and watch evil people harm

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<sup>32</sup> James Jordan, "The Law of the Covenant: an Exposition of Exodus 21-23," 1984, p.110. Quoted in Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, p.344.

<sup>33</sup> "The same God who was incarnate in Jesus Christ ordered the Hebrews to annihilate the Canaanites. Any discussion by God-fearing people of the legitimacy of warfare from a Biblical standpoint must begin with a consideration *and moral acceptance* of Deut.7:1-6." Gary North, "Moses and Pharaoh," 1986, p.134.

their family. We can safely say that this is what motivated Abraham in his rescue of Lot (Gen.14), and Moses in his two initial conflicts, firstly in Egypt (Ex.2:11-14) and then later when he assisted the daughters of the priest of Midian against the shepherds (Ex.2:15-21). Clearly, these patriarchs were not men to be trifled with.

When Nehemiah was troubled by the threats of those who conspired against Jerusalem, he said to the men of Jerusalem, “...do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses” (Neh. 2:14).

*“If you were a male believer around the time of Moses and Joshua, your job was to fight.”*<sup>34</sup>  
If an unprotected woman is threatened at home by a male intruder, a firearm in her hands (which she has become competent to use) suddenly tips the scales heavily in her favour, and the Bible teaches (Ex.22:2-3) that anybody may use any necessary force to protect themselves or their family.<sup>35</sup>

*The Bible places restraints on violence. The goal of the God-fearing man should be to reduce private physical violence. Thus, if the attacker uses fists, and the defender has a weapon, the attacker should be warned to stop. The victim does have the right to identify the attacker and press charges. The civil government should inflict the penalty. But if the attacker still challenges the person with the weapon, then the person has the right to stop the attacker from inflicting violence on him.*<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Gary Thomas, “Sacred Marriage,” 2000, p.39.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew McColl, “They Shall Become One,” 2009, ch. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Gary North, “Tools of Dominion,” 1990, Vol. 2, p.345, footnote.

# *The Church and God's Law (11)*

By Andrew McColl, 16/7/2013

*If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there be any further penalty, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise (Ex.21:22-25).*

Though what has occurred was an accident, God requires that responsibility must be accepted by one of the men fighting: "he shall pay as the judges decide." We can deduce from this that injury through accidents lessen responsibility, but they do not remove it. Though there was not criminal intent, it is still criminally negligent.

What does this mean?

Every person has a measure of responsibility for the life and welfare of his neighbour. Later, God commanded the children of Israel,

*When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you will not bring bloodguilt on your house if anyone falls from it (Deut.22:8).*

Liberty is a great thing, but the Bible is clear: "do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Gal.5:13).

The birth of a child due to an injury to its mother required compensation. Clearly, the level of negligence involved in the fight, and the injury to the woman, would determine the amount of compensation that the judges would determine was due to the woman's husband.

This is the initial passage of the case-laws which specifically spells out God's law of restitution. Regrettably, the Church of the modern era has completely and tragically misunderstood this principle of *lex talionis*.

The "eye for eye" principle is known by the Latin phrase *lex talionis*, or "law of retaliation." The English word, "retaliate," is derived from the same Roman word as "talionis." Today, "retaliate" means to inflict injury, but earlier English usage conveyed a broader meaning: to *pay back or return in kind*, including good will.<sup>37</sup>

Simply put, this is not a law that permits retaliation or the taking of vengeance. For men to take vengeance is specifically prohibited in the Bible. "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord'" (Ro.12:19).

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<sup>37</sup> Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, Vol.2, p.387.

“Eye for eye” does not mean, “you have destroyed my eye. Therefore I am legally able to destroy yours.” It means that the victim of crime is entitled to be financially compensated for what has taken place. Depending on the crime and the level of culpability, this could be one for one (see Ex.21:36), or much more, as we will discover later. The punishment must fit the crime.

“The intention of the talion was not, therefore, to *inflict* injury-as it might sound to us today-but to limit injury.”<sup>38</sup>

The birth of a child that resulted from an injury resulting from a brawl between two men required restitution to the father to be made, via the judges. How much more, when an abortionist and a woman (and possibly the child’s father) conspire together to deliberately end the life of a baby in the womb? Clearly, that would be murder.

Conclusion:

*The principle of “eye for eye” is easily understood. It allows people to evaluate in advance their potential liabilities for actions that inflict physical harm on others. This encourages personal responsibility. It also encourages people to make accurate assessments of potential costs and benefits of their actions. This is the Biblical principle of counting the cost (Luke 14:28-30). It is basic to Biblical liberty that individuals count the costs of their behaviour.*<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Boecker, “Law and the Administration of Justice,” p.174. Quoted in North, p.394.

<sup>39</sup> North, p.398.

## *The Church and God's Law (12)*

By Andrew McColl, 23/7/2013

*If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox shall surely be stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall go unpunished. If, however, an ox was previously in the habit of goring and its owner has been warned, yet he does not confine it and it kills a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner shall be put to death. If a ransom is demanded of him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him. Whether it gores a son or a daughter, it shall be done to him according to the same rule (Ex.21:28-31).*

In the Bible, ownership or stewardship of assets always implies and requires responsibility for those assets. This is why God could legitimately hold Adam and Eve accountable for their disobedience in the Garden. The requirement given later in the law, that the builder of a new house erect a parapet on the roof of a house to prevent people from falling to their injury or death (Deut.22:8), is an example of this. An injury or death could conceivably arise from a person being on the roof without a parapet, and God thus held the owner responsible. The ideal of "victim's rights" before the law is a Biblical one.

It is important to note that no blame was to be attached to the owner of an ox that killed a person, but had no history of goring. "...*the owner of the ox shall go unpunished.*" Most animals are generally predictable in their actions, and their predictability as working animals is one aspect of their asset value. Working with a large but trusted animal is much different to working with one with a bad history, known to be untrustworthy.

We can deduce from this that there are limits to the culpability of individuals, which are based on the limited knowledge we all have. There is no such thing as a risk free life, and while we all should seek to minimise the risks we are taking, as responsible stewards of our life before God, the pursuit of a risk free existence is utopian, and futile.

The knowledge that an ox "*was previously in the habit of goring and its owner has been warned,*" clearly placed an obligation on its owner. He should either heavily restrict access to this ox, so that its opportunity to harm a person is minimised, or else he should kill it before it has harmed someone, and he is held liable. Once the ox has shown its tendency to gore, it has become like the house roof without a parapet, or the swimming-pool without a fence; an accident waiting to happen.

The owner becomes legally liable because what was, in fact, a dangerous animal has been publicly treated by him as if it had been safe. *The owner deliberately or inadvertently misinformed the public about the risks.* He did not place restraints on it. The victim died because of the neglect of the owner. The owner should have placed restraints on the beast, or else he should have placed warnings for bystanders.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Gary North, "Tools of Dominion," 1990, Vol 2, p.459.

In the case of an ox goring someone to death, and the owner having been previously warned, he is deemed to be culpably negligent, and is to be put to death. Alternatively, the family of the slain individual could demand a ransom. No amount of money can bring back the slain family member, but sizeable compensation would offset the loss. This illustrates that the owner's level of culpability is certainly very high, but not necessarily high enough to absolutely require capital punishment as would be the case with murder, which involves intent. For him, paying a ransom whatever the size, is better than death.

An important example of this is that of drunk-driving. A drunk-driver who causes an accident, or injures or kills another is criminally negligent, because he has refused to accept the appropriate self-disciplines necessary for driving a vehicle. As anyone knows, a motor vehicle is potentially much more dangerous than any ox. He knows that his use of a vehicle when under the influence of alcohol is dangerous, but he persists in driving while under the influence, in the same way that the owner of an ox that has previously gored has not prevented it from causing further harm. While there is no intention to kill or maim, this does not protect him from prosecution for serious criminality.

This means that not only are there theoretical or moral obligations to behave as responsible individuals, there must also be legal and practical ones, too. This is what Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10) illustrates:

*This was selfless assistance. The Samaritan had no guarantee of repayment. Still, he helped the man. Why? Because he understood that the man was his neighbour. They were both on the same road, facing the same risks. They shared a common environment. They were therefore neighbours. The Samaritan understood Jesus' ethical principle, which we call the golden rule: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).<sup>41</sup>*

Hayek suggests that there are three legal principles undergirding a free society: general rules that 1) distinguish private from public spheres of action; 2) provide legal predictability; and 3) provide equality before the law. The judicial principle of *lex talionis* supports all three.<sup>42</sup>

We should also add Rushdoony's comments:

*"In Biblical law the goal is not punishment but restoration, not the infliction of certain penalties on criminals but the restoration of godly order."<sup>43</sup> Restitution to the victim restores the victim's position prior to the crime, plus it increases his holdings to compensate him for the trouble the crime causes him...the criminal now knows that his debt is paid, and that *the burden of guilt is removed.*"<sup>44</sup>*

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<sup>41</sup> Gary North, "Treasure and Dominion," 2000, ch.20: "The Good Samaritan and the Concept of Neighbour."

<sup>42</sup> See North, "Tools..." Vol. 2, p.400.

<sup>43</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, "The Institutes of Biblical Law," 1973, p.515, quoted in North, "Tools...", p.400.

<sup>44</sup> North, p.400- 401.

This shows us that Biblical justice is infinitely superior to humanistic “justice,” which places a burden on the victims of crime to support criminals by paying for their maintenance in gaols.

There is no basis for gaols in a godly society; the Bible never endorses the notion.