

ET 2.1 – Introduction to Christian Ethics

Law and grace in ethics

The Third Sunday before Lent

Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity: give your people grace so to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, among the many changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Some starter questions

1. In the New Testament era, does the category of “command” apply? Does God issue commands which we are obliged to obey? (law as mode of relating to God) Give examples ...
2. What is the supreme command and what is its relationship to the law and the prophets? (law as OT content)
3. What is the content of the law which is written on our hearts?
4. List some places you might go for further specification of what the love command means in particular circumstances ...
5. In what ways was OT law designed for people other than the holy nation of Israel?
6. In what ways does OT law point to Jesus?
7. In what ways is OT law a revelation of the character of God?
8. Are OT laws meant to teach, reprove, correct and train us in righteousness so that we may be competent, equipped for every good work?

Summary so far ...

Introduction

The title, 'Law and Grace' is not meant to imply that the two are parallel or that they are in competition. Nor that historically God's dealings with humankind move from law to grace. Grace is primary and grace is supreme.

- The giving of law as the way to live is an act of grace.
- Salvation from the punishment for law-breaking (sin) is an act of grace
- The use of the law to bring us to awareness of our need is an act of grace
- The writing of the law on the hearts of believers is an act of grace
- The enabling of Spirit-empowered, love-motivated obedience to the law is an act of grace.

The only conceivable ways that law can be opposed to grace are when sinners misuse it. They may fail to understand the purpose of law and try to use it to do what it was never meant to do - restore sinners to right relationship with God. Or they may rely upon it to give what it was never designed to give - the power to produce the obedience it commands.

Grace rules, O.K. Law - as given by God - is not a rival to grace but a tool in the hands of grace - to guide, convict, drive to Christ, explain God's will, and so on.

Block on the “mythconceptions”:

I am keenly aware that in proposing to address this subject I have guaranteed for myself a limited hearing. There are many reasons why there is little interest in preaching Old Testament law in our churches, whether they are mainline protestant or charismatic or fundamentalist or generic evangelical. This aversion toward Old Testament law arises from a series of “mythconceptions” concerning the law. First, we are deluded by the ritualistic myth, that is, that Old Testament law is pre-occupied with boring ritualistic trivia, declared to be obsolete with Christ's final sacrifice on the cross. Second, we are driven away by the historical myth, that is that Old Testament law concerns the times and cultural context of nations so far removed from our own that, unless one has purely academic or antiquarian interests, what it has to say about the human condition is hopelessly out of date. Third, we are repelled by the ethical myth. The OT law reflects a standard of ethics that is rejected as grossly inferior to the law of love announced by Jesus and the high stock placed on tolerance in our enlightened age. Fourth, we are confused by the literary myth, that is, that the Old Testament laws are written in literary forms that are so different from modern literature that we cannot understand them. Fifth, we are indoctrinated by the theological myth, that is that Old Testament law presents a view of God that is utterly objectionable to modern sensitivities. So long as these “mythconceptions” determine the disposition of preachers and pastors toward Old Testament law there is little hope that they will pay much attention to those parts of the Old Testament that we refer to as Israel's constitutional literature.

Some further questions:

1. How were sinners saved in the OT era - by grace or by works of the law?
2. Did God set aside his law in order to save sinners or did he provide a way for its demands to be met?
3. Does 'law-breaking' remain the character of sin in the NT era?
4. What is God's attitude to the sin of believers?
5. Why is 'law' a negative word whereas 'wise instructions of our loving Father' is a positive phrase?
6. What sources of ethical norms are there to rival God's law and which do Christians rely on most?
7. How do you feel about Psalm 119?

Some important NT references to law:

Matt 5.17-21 7.12 15.3-6 22.35-40 23.23 28.20

John 1.17 1.45 12.50 14.15 14.21 15.10, 14 Acts 13.39 15.5, 24.14, 28.23

Romans 2.18 3.19-21 3.31 5.13, 20 6.14-15 7.1-14, 21-25, 8.2-4, 6-8, 10.4 13.8-10,

I Cor 5.1, 13, 7.19 9.9-14, 20-21 15.56 , II Cor 6.14 Gal 3.10-24 5.14, 5.16-23 6.2 Eph 2.15 6.2 Phil 3.9 I Tim 1.7-9, 5.18 Heb 7.19 8.8-10 10.16 James 1.25 2.8-13, 4.11 I John 2.3, 4, 3.4 3.22-24 5.2-3 Rev 12.17 14.12 22.14

Look at them (minus Romans) for a few minutes:

Matt 5.17-21 ¹⁷ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks 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. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

7.12: “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

15.3-6: He answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴ For God said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.’ ⁵ But you say that whoever tells father or mother, ‘Whatever support you might have had from me is given to God,’ then that person need not honor the father. ⁶ So, for the sake of your tradition, you make void the word of God.

22.35-40: “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ He said to him, “ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

23.23: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. ²⁴ You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

28.20: 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

John 1.16-17: From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

1.45: Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.”

12.49-50: for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰ And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me.”

14.15: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

14.21: They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.

15.10: 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.

15.14: You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Acts 13.39 : by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

28.23: After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets.

I Cor 5.1, 13, : it is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father’s wife. ...God will judge those outside. “Drive out the wicked person from among you.”

7.19: Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything.

9.8-10: Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law also say the same? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? ¹⁰ Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop.

9.20-21: 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 I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law.

15.56: The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

II Cor 6.14: Do not be mismatched with unbelievers.

Gal 2.15-17: We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.

Gal 3.10-24 : Including: ¹⁰ For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law." ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for "The one who is righteous will live by faith." ¹² But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, "Whoever does the works of the law will live by them." ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"— ¹⁴ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

and

¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained through angels by a mediator. ²⁰ Now a mediator involves more than one party; but God is one. ²¹ Is the law then opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could make alive, then righteousness would indeed come through the law. ²² But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian,

5.14: For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

5.16-23: Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

6.2 : Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Eph 2.15: For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵ He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

6.2 : Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother"—this is the first commandment with a promise: ³ "so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

Phil 3.9 : that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.

I Tim 1.7-9 : ⁷ desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions. ⁸ Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. ⁹ This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, ¹⁰ fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching ¹¹ that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

5.18: ¹⁷ Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; ¹⁸ for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves to be paid."

Heb 7.12: ¹² For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well.

7.19: ¹⁸ There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual ¹⁹ (for the law made nothing perfect); there is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God.

8.8-10: ⁷ For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one.

⁸ God finds fault with them when he says:

"The days are surely coming, says the Lord,
when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel

and with the house of Judah;
⁹ not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors,
on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;
for they did not continue in my covenant,
and so I had no concern for them, says the Lord.
¹⁰ This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their minds,
and write them on their hearts,
and I will be their God,
and they shall be my people.

10.16: ¹⁶ “This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds,”

James 1.25: ²⁵ But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

2.8-13: You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ⁹ But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. ¹¹ For the one who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

4.11: Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

I John 2.3, 4: Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. ⁴ Whoever says, “I have come to know him,” but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist;

3.4: Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

3.22-24: and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

5.2-3: By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. ³ For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome

And now Romans:

Caution: A survey like this does not itself conclusively prove what Paul means by "law" at any given point. It is provided solely to demonstrate that he uses the word in a variety of ways and that it is therefore irresponsible to talk about the law as "fulfilled" or "no longer binding" without explaining in what sense this is being asserted.

N.T. Wright: “Nothing is straightforward when we are dealing with the law in Paul.” (*Paul for Everyone: Romans, I*, p.95)

Distinguish (for example) ...

- the law as a revelation of God's righteous standards
 - to define righteousness and sin
 - to restrain the evil-doer
 - to drive us to Christ
 - to guide our obedience
- the law as typological - pointing to Christ
- the law as a force - revealing, stirring up and condemning sin
- the law as a "realm" of condemnation
- the law as announcer of the curse
- the law as a tutor for humankind in its infancy
- the law as ceremonially separating Israel from pagans for 1400 yrs or so
- the law as twisted by sinners into a method of salvation
- the law as a phase of redemptive history from Sinai to Christ, always subordinate to the promise

Is there ever an occasion in Paul's writings where he uses the word "law" to mean "the law in its every dimension and function all at once"?

Westerholm: “Typical of Calvin and the Reformed tradition is the insistence that the law, when taken as a whole, in perfect harmony with the gospel, but that the term is also used of particular aspects of the whole (in which case the law’s continuity with the gospel may well be obscured) or even of a distorted understanding of the law’s true nature or purpose (in which case the continuity will inevitably be lost to view.

Thus when Paul claims that Christian’s are not “under law” or have “died” to it, it is self-evident to those schooled in a Reformed way of thinking that “law” is being used in a limited sense: it can hardly refer to the moral order under which all human beings live and which, as set forth in the moral commands of the Mosaic code, is the subject of fervent praise in the Psalms (a sense in which the Reformed, no less than the sweet Psalmist of Israel, are wont to employ the term). Nor can it mean the Mosaic order as a whole, since the goal of that order was Christ, and it represented a renewal of the Abrahamic covenant to which believers in every age belong. Hence the context of each usage must be consulted to discover the particular aspect of the law under consideration.” pp.202-203

Rom 2:12-15

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. 14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, 15 since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

Rom 2:17-18

Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; 18 if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law;

Rom 2:20

an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth--

Rom 2:23

You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?

Rom 2:25-27

Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. 26 If those who are not circumcised keep the law’s requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? 27 The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

Rom 3:19-21

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. 21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

Rom 3:27-28

Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Rom 3:31

Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

Rom 4:13-16

It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is worthless, 15 because law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. 16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

Rom 5:13

for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.

Rom 5:20

The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,

Rom 6:14-15

For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!

Rom 7:1-9

Do you not know, brothers--for I am speaking to men who know the law--that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives? 2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. 3 So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called

an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. 4 So, my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death. 6 But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code. What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.

Rom 7:12

So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Rom 7:14

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

Rom 7:16

And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.

Rom 7:21-3

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Rom 7:25

Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Rom 8:2-4

because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Rom 8:7

the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Rom 9:31-32

but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. 32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone."

Rom 10:4-5

Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. 5 Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."

Rom 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Rom 13:10

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Propositions about the Law

1. A working definition ...

The righteous requirements of God for the conduct of men and women expressed as commands and thereby defining sin. The word 'law' itself is used in all sorts of ways and with all sorts of referents. We are using it here as a category and concept in ethical thinking rather than as a biblical word though the lines get fuzzy at times. In the sense of "norms", "criteria", "standards" law is an inescapable concept in ethics. The question here is not "law" or "no law" ("standards" or "no standards") but "whose law?" or "by which standards?"

(In Biblical usage 'law' can mean

- the Scriptures of the OT
- The Five Books of Moses
- The laws given through Moses to Israel
- The phase of history from Sinai to Jesus
- The curse/penalty/condemnation of the law due to sinners
- The law as twisted by first-century Jews into a system of earning God's favour (or a nationalistic badge)

2. Law is **the good gift of a loving God.**

The most common OT word for 'law' is *tôrâ* (220x in OT) which has resonances of 'fatherly instruction' as well as of 'kingly commands'. The assumption of Scripture is that the righteous will delight in the law of God, meditate upon it, desire to obey it, find freedom in it - and all because it is the good gift of a loving God. Psalm 1, 19, 119:5, 7, 14, 18, 20, 24 etc , Romans 7.12, 14, 22, 25, James 1.25, 2.8, 12

3. Law is the **reflection of the holy and righteous character of God.**

The things that God commands are not random or arbitrary but expressions of his holy being: Leviticus 11.44-5 18.2-5, 29-30 19.2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 28, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37, 20.7-8, 26, Romans 7.12, 14

4. Law is **located variously** e.g.

- the commands and prohibition given to Adam - Genesis 1-2
- the dictates of the consciences of the Gentiles - see Romans 2
- the written commands of God given through prophets (notably Moses) and apostles
- the example and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ

Each of these brings to men and women the righteous requirements and commands of God concerning their conduct. Obviously, as the history of redemption unfolded there was progress in the fulness of the revelation of God's law. Even the OT Scriptures were sufficient to 'thoroughly equip for every good work' and on top of those we have Christ's embodiment and exposition of the law as well as the apostles' commands. Still there is the need for 'wisdom' - God-given ability to know and approve what God's good, pleasing and perfect will is in every situation.

5. **The Law of Moses** holds a special place in biblical law as being the most extended expression of God's righteous commands. A number of points need to be understood

- A. It was given to a people redeemed by grace in order to direct them, through grateful obedience, to 'life' - Exodus 20.2, Leviticus 18.1-5, Deuteronomy 4.1-2, 39-40, 5.1, 28-33, 6.1-3, 18, 7.6-16, 8.1, 10.12-13, 11.1, 8, 13, 31-32, ... 26.16-19, chaps 27-28, 30.15-20 Romans 7.10. It was never given by God as a way of justification. (What is the "life" of the OT promise? Living in the land, secure and prosperous etc. Is this unconnected with the "life" of eternal life for the individual? No - the "life" on offer was the epitome and summary of the things which those who are in right relationship with God are and do and enjoy.)
- B. The Law of Moses was only truly obeyed when obeyed out of love for God and from the heart
- C. OT law could be summarised as 'love God, love your neighbour'
- D. Under the 'Law' directions were given so that sin could be dealt with and sinners restored. In the Law God set up a comprehensive sacrificial system - His mercy was revealed through the provision of Christ-declaring substitutionary sacrifices, and sinners were restored when they availed themselves of these sacrifices, in faith.
- E. The single most important thing about the Law of Moses was that it pointed to Christ. Christ was the goal of the law (Romans 10.4) See also John 1.45, 5.45-47, Acts 28.23. It did this:
 - by the types and ceremonies. Sacrifice, priesthood, tabernacle and temple, land (including Jubilee), food laws, laws of uncleanness, sabbath and festival laws all point to Christ. (Colossians 2.16, book of Hebrews, Matthew 12, Luke 4, John 2, John 6 etc
 - by describing the perfect Human Person - drawing a picture of Christ before he came.
 - by bringing heightened awareness of sin, by actually increasing sin, by pronouncing a curse on sin, by totally failing in itself to bring righteous status before God (it was never meant to!), the law drives us to Christ.'
- F. Jesus and the law of Moses
 - not come to abolish but to fulfil - Matt 5.17-20

Plero-o in Matthew 5.17
Plero-o has been translated / interpreted in all sorts of ways in Matthew 5.17. In [*Christ and the Law in Matthew*](#) (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001), Brice L Martin sorts the various proposals that have been made into ten categories, as follows (pp.117-137):

 1. to fulfil in multiple senses
 2. to have the salvation event take place
 3. to establish
 4. to do
 5. to affirm the validity of
 6. to recognize and implement
 7. to perfect
 8. to set forth in its true meaning
 9. to bring to eschatological completion
 10. to bring to eschatological fullness

He makes some telling criticisms of Carson's view that plero-o at 5.17 has "exactly the same meaning as in the formula quotations". And Martin's thesis, argued throughout the book, is that translation / explanation #10 is what is required for a proper understanding of Matthew 5.17. Whether or not he establishes each and every proposal that he makes, his book is refreshing for arguing so thoroughly from the breadth and depth of the relevant evidence from Matthew's gospel.

- uses a summary of the law at heart of his teaching - Matt 7.12
 - encourages people to obey the law - Matt 8.4
 - is angry with those who set it aside - Mark 7.8-9
 - points to law as expression of God's will for human conduct - Mk 10.19
 - argues against his opponents from the law - Matt 12.5, Matt 23.23
- G. The NT affirms the righteousness of the law of Moses even while teaching that with the completed work of Christ, the making of once-for-all atonement, the internationalizing of the Kingdom of God, the inauguration of the new covenant, and so on, certain aspects of the law are to be observed differently. Romans 3.31, 13.8-10, Ephesians 6.2, Hebrews 8.8-10 (Matt 15.3-6, 18.16, Mk 10.17-19, I Cor 5.1, 9.9, James 5.4)
- diet laws have changed - Mark 7
 - sacrifice laws - Hebrews 7.27, 8.13
 - laws relating to priesthood, tabernacle/temple - Hebrews 7.12
 - land laws - Matthew 5.5, Matthew 21.43, Ephesians 6.1-3, Rom 4.13, I Peter 1.3f
 - separation laws (Jews and Gentiles) - Ephesians 2.14, 2 Cor 6.17-18. etc.

With the working out of God's redemptive purpose, some laws, given at one stage of redemptive history, change in their application - that is to say that while they remain a revelation of the righteousness of God and while they continue to have the authority of the commands of God, the way in which they are obeyed changes with the changed circumstances of the world.

'Go into the garden and help your mother with the weeding' - a command from a father to his child. Depending on the age of the child and the time of year, the exact way in which that command is obeyed will differ.

In effect, a command may carry an implicit limitation in it: e.g. a mother says to her child who is just about to go out - 'put your coat on - and keep it on'. Implicit in that command is - keep it on while you are outside - until the circumstances are such that it is unnecessary, ridiculous and even harmful to continue to obey the literal wording of the explicit command - i.e. when you come back into a really warm, centrally-heated house. But the command obeyed in a certain way under a certain set of conditions is not 'abrogated' by a changed set of circumstances - the way it is observed changes. Even if the child were NEVER to go outside again the command would have 'force' in the following ways:

- 1) as an expression of the mother's love
- 2) in the principle that it is good to look after yourself
- 3) in the more detailed principle that it is good to do so with reference to body temperature
- 4) in the related but deducible principle that there are things which your body needs protecting from and a good way to protect is by covering - this may be used as a principle when picking up something extremely hot, when using bleach, when looking at a very bright light source etc ... And the child's brothers and sisters may learn these things even if they only read of them years later and never go out themselves.

And the limitations which God places upon the law do not prevent that law being eternal and unchanging. It is eternally true that "if you are a post-Sinai, pre-Calvary Jew you must not eat pork." The key question will be the recognition of God-given specifications and "limitations" not the thought that law, as such, comes to an end. Best-before dates.

- H. The very fact that the application of OT laws changes with the completed work of Christ - (the beginning of the new world order/establishment of the kingdom/ end of the old age) means that the WAY in which NT believers relate to OT law is different from the way in which OT believers related to it. For the OT believer, if the law said it then whether or not it made sense, could be understood, it had to be done. For the NT believer this cannot be true because a PRIOR interpretative operation must take place. "This is relevant and profitable to me ... but HOW?".
- I. Related to this, the NT makes clear that the Law was a warden/tutor for the people of God in her infancy/immaturity. This means that the way NT believers (grown-up in Christ with humankind having 'come of age' in him) relate to OT law is different from the way that OT believers related to it. The NT believer will receive the OT law as 'wisdom' (albeit, God's perfect and authoritative wisdom) rather than as simple decree. An adult receives his/her parents' advice differently from the way as a child s/he received their commands. The warden/tutor who used to be able to issue commands to the young prince no longer does so. But the warden/tutor may well become a trusted and wise counsellor to the king - and in the case of the OT this is plainly the case. (The hooded man who arrests you and takes you to a party ...)

- J. Additionally, the NT believers' keeping of OT law is qualitatively richer:
- 1) the law is written on our hearts - Jeremiah 31, Hebrews 8.8ff
 - 2) the law has much greater clarity through the life and teaching of Christ and the teaching of the apostles
 - 3) NT believers have much deeper motivation to obey the commands of God - Romans 6.1-23, 12.1-3, Colossians 3.1-5, I John 3.1-3
 - 4) NT believers have much greater Spirit-given power to obey - Ezekiel 11.19-20; 36.26-28 (law as pattern not power, map not motor, eyes not legs)

6. **God's saving intervention** in Christ upholds the law. Christ obeyed the law of God. And he bore the curse of the law. It was not that God said, 'Forget about law - I'll let you off' but rather that he sent his Son to satisfy the demands of the law for obedience to be rendered and penalty paid.
7. Redemption for law-breakers **as received by sinners** is all of grace. Any attempt to earn, win, accomplish salvation by 'the works of the law' is not only bound to fail but is itself an offence to God. That has been the case since the fall, throughout the OT, all over the world, whether the Gospel has been heard or not. Salvation is of grace.
8. With respect to the justification of the sinner, **the law has a negative function:**
- it defines and highlights and stirs up sin Romans 3.20, 7.1-14
 - it announces the curse - Galatians 3.10-14 2 Cor 3.7, 9
 - it points away from itself - Romans 8.3

Think of the law as salt. In its place it is a marvellous thing - as a revelation of God's holy character and therefore a guide to sanctification for those saved by grace, it is a wonderful gift of God. But if taken not to preserve and add taste but as a substitute meal it is horrible. Horrible because used for the wrong thing. And yet, God in his mercy may even use the misuse to create a realisation that this is not the real thing and that our own efforts will kill us, and also a hunger and thirst after Christ the Saviour.

"Paul has a clear and positive view of Torah. Even when it is performing a negative task, it remains God's Law, holy and just and good. What it cannot do – and, in the mysterious purposes of God, what it was never actually intended to do – was to give the life it had promised." (N.T. Wright: *Paul: Fresh Perspectives*, p.103)

9. Salvation by grace leads to and enables **grateful law-keeping**. Does the law have a place in the life of a New Testament believer? Certainly the commands of Jesus do - John 14.15, 21 15.10, 14 I John 5.3 - and of the apostles - I Corinthians 14.37 2 Thess 3.6

A believer wants:

- to be holy as God is holy - a holiness expressed in the law
- to grow in the likeness of Christ - the law-lover and law-keeper
- to be led by the Spirit - so that the righteous requirement of the law might be met, Rom 8
- to walk in freedom - the freedom of staying away from sin - James 2.8-13
- to love God and to love his neighbour - as the law requires - Matt 22
- to live by the Golden Rule - which summarizes the law - Matt 7
- to do the will of God and to please God - expressed in the law
- to express his love for Christ - by obeying his commands - John 15
- to fulfil the Great Commission - teaching obedience to the commands of Christ - Matt 28
- to avoid sin - defined as law-breaking - I John 3
- to live a life of good works - Matt 19.16-17 - defined by the law

'Law' as 'the wise instructions of our loving Father'

- is not opposed to love - Romans 13.8-10
- is not opposed to the Spirit - Romans 8.2-4, Gal 5.
- is not opposed to freedom - I John 5.3, James 1-2

10. **The law in itself, as a gift of God, is wholly good** - all the negative things said about the law arise from what happens when it meets with sinners who are misusing it as well as disobeying it. (In the first century the main misuse of the law by Jews was either to think that obeying it would gain favour with God and/or that possessing it was the badge of the people of God.)
- it pronounces a curse when it meets with sinners
 - it stirs up sin when that sin is in the heart
 - it disables and kills when sinners misuse it as a way to justification
 - it cannot produce the obedience it enjoins in sinners

11. Paul's **polemic against the misuse of the law** runs:

- 1) The law of Moses was never meant to justify - Acts 13.19, Gal 2.21, (Heb 10.1)

- 2) The Law points out sin and brings consciousness of it, makes it worse for those who try and earn salvation through law-keeping, and announces the curse - Romans 3.19-20, 5.20, 7.
- 3) What the Law could not do - and was never intended to do - came through the promise and is received by faith in Christ - Romans 3.28, 4.13, 10.4, Gal 2.16, 3.10-21, 5.3-4, Phil 3.9
- 4) Christians are free from the Law in a number of ways: they have grown up and so the training aspect of the law is over now; they are declared righteous because of the faith in Christ so the condemning power of the law can not touch them now; they live in grace and by the Spirit so they do not look to the Law for a power to please God it could never give; the mystery of Jew-Gentile unity in Christ has been revealed and so the "keep Jews and Gentiles separate" dimension of the law has been abolished - Romans 6.14-15, 7.1-9, Gal 3.2 3.23-25, 4.4-5, 5.18 Eph 2.15

Romans 6.14-15 - not under the law as a condemning power, not under it with all its inability to empower obedience - under GRACE - with power to not sin (i.e. obey the law!)

Romans 7.4, 6 - the law as condemning you ...

2 Cor 3 - "the contrast at its heart is not between the Law and the gospel, not between Moses and Jesus, but between the *hearers* of Moses and those who believe in Jesus." (NTW, *Fresh*, p.123)

Galatians 3 - Paul arguing against those who taught justification by following the ritual (circumcision) of the law. No - law as a system of justification will kill you. It was never meant that way. The law subordinate to the promise. The law points us to Christ.

Colossians 2.14 - the I.O.U. stating our indebtedness as sinners

Ephesians 2.15 - those laws which separated Jews and Gentiles formed a barrier which has now been dismantled by Christ.

12. "Not abolish" / "abolish" – an attempted harmonization:

Matthew 5.17-20: The law and the prophets are a true and perfect (though not exhaustive) revelation of the character and purposes of God. It is therefore inconceivable that I should come to do away with them or undermine them in any way. Quite the contrary, I have come as the embodiment of the character and purposes of God which the law and prophets reveal. Thus I fulfil, give true meaning to, show the function of, and am in myself the highest expression and realisation of the law and the prophets. And this means that even the least of these laws is not to be tampered with, compromised or diluted but rather respected, adhered to, delighted in and obeyed precisely as expressed and realised in my person and work.

Ephesians 2.14-16: The Lord Jesus Christ is the true and perfect revelation of the character and purposes of God and supremely of God's purpose of reuniting a divided humanity and restoring that humanity to right relationship with God. The Mosaic law had several functions and one of those was to keep the chosen people of God separate and distinct from the pagans. This function was particularly fulfilled by means of specific ceremonial regulations - which is not to say that these specific ceremonial regulations served no other purpose. This dividing/separating function was fulfilled until the arrival of the new Adam and now those laws which kept Jew and Gentile apart have been abolished with respect to the dividing/separating function. As God's eternal law they stand, of course, with respect to other purposes which they served such as revealing the character of God as holy, illustrating God's ethical demands, pointing to the priestly work of Christ. And they are abolished with respect to one function and stand with respect to other functions altogether and only in Christ.

13. Other considerations:

- I Corinthians is important for showing Paul's use of the law outside of the context of disputes about justification - 7.19, 9.8-9, 9.20-21, 14.21, 34, II Cor 8.15, 13.1
- OT case law - 'paradigmatic illustrations'
- Common division of OT law into 'moral', 'civil' and 'ceremonial' – does not have an explicit biblical warrant and fails to take into account the way in which these 'categories' are mixed up in the way that God has given the OT law and also the way in which laws from one category illustrate and reflect those from another. Maybe "prophetic", "priestly", "kingly" dimensions or perspectives might yield something?
- Use of the law as a guide for sanctification is often referred to as the 'third use' of the law - after its political and pedagogic uses.
- Legalisms:
 - keeping a list of rules will gain favour with God and make up for sin
 - applying OT rules inappropriately
 - focussing on externals
 - getting things out of proportion

- imposing human laws not God's
- believing that all our problems wd be solved if we had more/different laws
- Antinomianisms:
 - thinking that the law of Moses is a complete irrelevance / barbaric
 - thinking that we don't need written directions from God about what pleases him because our love for him / his Spirit tell us all we need
 - thinking that obeying commands is not a NT category of thought - if you do something because you 'ought' to then you're already in the wrong
 - thinking that God doesn't care about what we do and we can sin as much as we like because we are covered by grace
 - ignomianism - never reading the law parts of the Bible
- The difference between 'legal' and 'evangelical' obedience (Bolton):

| <i>Legal</i> | <i>Evangelical</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Forced by conscience | Flowing from a new nature |
| Pleasure in achievement | Pleasure in God |
| To get the thing done | To please our Father |
| To try and earn 'life' | Because we already have 'life' |
| Coldly and formally | Fervently and lovingly |
| To gain something else | As part of delight in life |
| Wishing not have to | Delighting to obey |

'God so constructed him that grateful obedience would have brought him highest happiness; duty and delight would have coincided, as they did in Jesus (John 4.34 Ps 112.1 119.14, 47-48 97-113 127-128 163-67) those who know Christ ... find not only that they love the law and want to keep it, out of gratitude for grace (Romans 7.18-22 12.1-2), but also that the Holy Spirit leads them into a degree of obedience, starting with the heart, that was never theirs before (Romans 7.6 8.4-6 Hebrews 10.16).' The moral teaching of Christ and his apostles is the old law deepened and reapplied to new circumstances - life in the kingdom of God, where the Saviour reigns, and in the post-Pentecost era of the Spirit, where God's people are called to live heaven's life among themselves and to be God's counter-culture in the world.' J.I. Packer.

One or two leads – follow bibliographies ...

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*Samuel Bolton - *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom*

* Daniel I. Block, "Preaching Old Testament Law to New Testament Christians," *Hiphil* 3 (2006) [<http://www.see-j.net/hiphil>]. (free subscription)

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*C E B Cranfield - 'The OT Law' in ICC *Romans*, pp.845-862

*E F Kevan - *The Grace of Law*

Colin Kruse – "Law" in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*

*James Jordan – *The Law of the Covenant*

Donald Macleod - 'Luther and Calvin on the Place of the Law' in *Living the Christian Life*, Westminster

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H Ridderbos - *Paul - An Outline of his Theology*

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N T Wright - *NT and the People of God*

Social application:

1. internally “owned” law – self-control brought about by moral transformation – God’s law on heart – God as saviour – liberty
2. externally imposed law – salvation by human law – the state as saviour - tyranny
3. trying to live without law – moral degeneration – anarchy

Neither the libertinism of unrenewed humans without law, nor the tyranny of unrenewed humans imposing arbitrary law on one another will do (and a society, like ours, which abandons the gospel will get BOTH of these at the same time – imposition in areas of life where there should be no law and no law in areas of life where there should be!).

Rather, human individuals and communities flourish only when there is a combination of internalised law which brings self-control (regeneration) and of restricted government (which acts as God's minister of vengeance on certain, carefully defined evil-doers). The only society which can know real and lasting liberty is a society of renewed human beings living under God's law.

John Dod – 1549-1645 – on Old Testament law

John Dod, in his views of the use of Old Testament law, was a mainstream puritan and typically reformed.¹

He believed that the law had a threefold use: to restrain the evil-doer, to drive the sinner to Christ and to instruct the righteous in ways pleasing to God. He believed that law was an inescapable concept in a universe with a God who was neither morally indifferent nor silent. God has standards and reveals those standards and those revealed standards represent authoritative moral demands upon his creatures. He further believed that the Ten Commandments represented a distinct and special summary of God's universal moral law which in addition to being written by the finger of God on stone was also stamped upon the conscience of all humankind. These commandments were specially given to Israel not to show that they were not binding upon all humankind but rather to show that they could only be kept by a redeemed people. No human being, the Lord Jesus Christ excepted, has ever kept these Ten Commandments, the summary of which is the twofold love command, and thus all men and women deserve the curses announced by the law. The Lord Jesus Christ came not to set aside the moral law but rather to keep it, confirm it, expound it and intensify it and to bear the punishment due to the elect for their transgression of it. And more, he came to enable his redeemed people to keep it themselves and thus enjoy the blessings of obedience. The law, after all, was not a malicious imposition of a spiteful tyrant but the loving, righteous, wise instruction of a Fatherly God who loves to bless. Obedience to it by the pardoned and renewed people of God represents the path to true human maturity and to the flourishing not only of individuals but of societies. Those individuals and societies that live by the law of God will enjoy the blessings of God and those that do not will suffer the curse of God. Many times in his life Jesus, who declared that Scripture cannot be broken and who lived by every word that came from the mouth of God, sang, "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day" and "I open my mouth and pant, because I long for your commandments" and "Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules". Far from setting aside the law, Jesus by his Spirit causes the law, which his servant Paul calls holy, righteous, good and spiritual and says he delights in in his inner man, to be written upon the hearts of his people. He gives them the new hearts which are essential to a life of loving God which is, of course, a life of obeying his not-burdensome commands. He also gives them all manner of encouragements and motivations to obey, knowing that obedience is a blessing and a delight to the renewed people of God. Those with new hearts will seek to please God with their every thought, word and deed and will pursue universal obedience in the fear and love of God.

The Ten Commandments are expounded in the case law which helps us to understand specific applications. They are spiritual and require heart obedience. They bring positive and negative requirements, touch the inner life and the outer life, direct the individual by himself and in all his roles, responsibilities and relationships. Even now no believer perfectly obeys the requirements of the law - far from it - and yet true and sincere obedience is possible and God is - and does not merely pretend to be - truly pleased with it, rewarding it with all manner of blessings in this life and the next. Such is his providence, however, that the righteous continue to suffer much affliction, which, it should be understood, God allows and uses for their real good; and also that the curse which rests upon the unrighteous is rarely manifest in its full force this side of judgment.

This is the Reformed synthesis and Dod's *Decalogue* is fully in tune with it. He pays almost no attention to what some would see as "negative" statements about the law on the simple grounds that the law is negative only when misunderstood and misused by sinners. Rightly understood and rightly used by the right people it is nothing but a good gift of a loving God whose will for the faithful, who delight in and constantly meditate upon the law, is prosperity, life, maturity, and true humanness; in a word, blessing. The law is the revelation of the perfect will of God. So, quite simply, the law is my enemy if God is my enemy. But if God is my friend then the law is my friend.

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes*, II.vii; Francis Turretin, *Institutes*, Eleventh Topic; Westminster Confession, Chapter XIX; Heidelberg Catechism, Questions 92-115; William Perkins, *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*, 1606; Edward Elton, *An Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, 1623; William Ames, *Marrow of Sacred Divinity*, 1641; Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis*, 1646; Thomas Shepard, *Theses Sabbaticae*, 1649; James Durham, *The Law Unsealed*, 1676.

Introduction

God's Law displays the right response to a covenant God

The nature of the God who reveals himself

Relational response can only occur in relationship

1. The Law is primarily given for the life of holiness
2. The Law is promissory
Live now in the light of the ultimate certain reality
3. The law is anticipatory of something greater
Christ is the magnificent climax

The Law of God and the Christian Believer

Jesus came not to abolish but to fulfil the law

1. A fuller revelation has been given
2. A fuller response has been demanded
3. A fuller authority has been proclaimed
4. A fuller glory demands greater awe and reverence

The law is the struggling believer's trusty and gracious friend

An illustration of the gracious nature and purpose of the law

Man in innocence: a journey begun

Man by nature in sin: lost and powerless

Man in grace: found and travelling onwards

Man in glory: arrived !

Loving the Law of God

Great:

1. covenantal categories as bringing together the personal demand of a holy God who saves by grace and requires loving obedience
2. Law as something to be delighted in
3. Celebration of the depth and newness of the new covenant without denigrating the perfect law.
4. Recognition of the various dimensions (moral requirement, typological signpost etc) of the law
5. Positive attitude to the believer's use of the law. Splendid emphasis on continuity of God's righteous requirements.

Pity:

1. the Pauline passages which get used as slogans need mentioning
2. stating the "relational response can only occur in a relationship" truth in such a way as almost suggests that the wicked are exempt from the demands of God's law
3. missing the recognition that fulfil is set against "abrogate / abolish" in a "confirm/establish" sense
4. pp.26-29 – category confusion.
 - a) Needs to distinguish between law as a) "what the law says" and b) "where the law is written". "Do we still need the law?" is actually two questions and he confuses them. If he had separated them out then his answers would be a) yes and b) less and less as the internalisation of the law by the Spirit's work proceeds. But because he doesn't separate them, his "less and less" to b) might be read/heard as a "less and less" to a).
 - b) top p.29 – similar confusion between motive and content. I need the external law less and less to motivate me but I still need the content of the law in order to see where my spiritual motivation should lead me.
 - c) in other words – and it's not that WP doesn't believe and say this, it's just that it's a bit confused – the end of the law as a paper document (because in the new heavens and earth now fully in our hearts) is not the end of the law as a transcript of God's holiness or as the statement of what righteousness looks like. Internalising the map is not the end of the map – it's the relocation of the map. Like scanning it into the computer and then chucking away the hard copy.

Some nice moments:

- In preaching and teaching the Scriptures, many of us find ourselves rather hesitant when it comes to preaching from the Old Testament Law. Because we are committed to a gospel of the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, and because in Paul's writings we find an unremitting and vigorous defence of the salvation that is 'by faith in Jesus Christ' alone and *not* 'by works of law' (*Galatians 2:15ff*), we are naturally wary of being found to be turning people away from grace and towards a works-based salvation. Rightly so! God forbid that we should so 'distort the gospel of Christ' and put ourselves under the curse of the apostle (*Galatians 1.8-9*).

But of course rejecting 'works of law' as of any value for salvation is not at all the same as rejecting the law of God itself. This Paul will not do. Rather, he happily affirms 'I agree with the law, that it is good' (Romans 7:16), and moreover he both 'delights in it' and 'serves it' in his inner being, his transformed and renewed Christian mind (Romans 7:22,25). That is why in the epistles, where he so extravagantly unfolds the indicatives of grace in the gospel, he also, and without any embarrassment, expounds the many and varied imperatives, or law-commands, which flow out of that grace and give expression to its reality in the lives of believing and transformed people. This unperturbed juxtaposition of God's grace and his law in Paul's New Testament gospel theology ought to alert us to beware of any imbalance in our own thinking or preaching which, for fear of adding to the gospel of God, actually subtracts from it. The law of God, rightly understood, is an integral part of the gospel. It is not opposed to grace, but both witnesses to grace and works in the hands of grace to bring glory to God, and to work glory in his people.

So we need God's law, and we must teach it, including the teaching of the Old Testament Law', or Torah, that we find in the Pentateuch ... (p.3)

- In Scripture, the law is never separated from the lawgiver ... (p.4)
- The Bible never deviates from this basic position. Humankind is designed for obedience to what God reveals. (p.7)
- The law is a flawless image of God himself, a perfect "preceptual replica of the divine nature." (pp.11-12)
- Jeremiah ... speaks of the great defining blessing of the New Covenant as being that the *law* will be written in the heart. (p.13)
- [Israel ...] had the great privilege of being given comprehensive and detailed instruction about everything 'that pleases the Lord' (cf. Ephesians 5.10) so they might respond in every sphere of life to this gracious revelation, and truly be a people holy to his Name in the eyes of the world. (p.16)
- As the law revealed the wonderful, ultimately eschatological, promise (in stone) of what *God's people* would be, by his grace, so in Jesus the full wonder of it is revealed in flesh. (p.18)
- To put it simply, and personally, when I am walking most closely to Christ, and keeping in step with the Spirit, it is true to say I do not need the law in any external sense. It is beating strongly in my heart, kept in rhythm by the 'pacemaker' of God's Spirit within me. (p.27)
- What a gracious provision this is! 'Oh how I love the law' which is so faithful a friend, to guide me and to help me know the smile (and the frown) of my heavenly father – until the day when the promise is finally accomplished and I shall worship wholly according to the law of love and life. How I rejoice that my friend the law will not desert me, but will be with me, as an instrument of grace in the hands of the Spirit, to teach me all along the way. For so it shall be until the promise of the new covenant is fully realised, and the law shall be written perfectly over a new heart of resurrected flesh. (pp.28-29)
- We find that we have so come to *love* the very thought of this map, with all its revelation of our glorious destination, that we pore over it more and more, so that the way of travel becomes ever more familiar to us. (p.30)
- But when we have packed away our map, and said a somewhat tearful goodbye to our trusty lifelong companion and friend, we shall discover a most wonderful thing. Each and every part of the map, even down to the tiniest jot and tittle of the symbols and contours, we shall see are now before our eyes everywhere, as we look around that glorious destination. (p.31)
- Our trusty old map, which throughout our journey had become more and more a part of us, has at last become completely part of us. (p.32)

Four brief thoughts on Romans, Galatians, Law, New Perspective

1. NPP Galatians – a Noddy Guide
2. Galatians 3.10-14 – NPP reading
3. Law in Romans 5-7
4. Aeon flesh

1. NPP GALATIANS - A NODDY GUIDE

Does the New Perspective help make sense of Galatians? Here are some alternative readings (not all of them as mutually antithetical as my formulations suggest). They amount to two pairs of spectacles. Which pair brings the actual content of Galatians into clearer focus?

The question

Not: How can I, an individual sinner who deserves to go to hell because I have broken the law, be saved?

But: Who are the true children of Abraham and what makes them (recognizable as) such?

The opponents' views

Not: Try hard to be good by keeping God's rules and that way you will be saved

But: The true children of Abraham are those who have / do "the works of the law"

"Works of the law"

Not: Attempts to gain God's favour by being morally worthy

But: But Torah possession / circumcision / sabbath as markers of Abraham's children

Paul's response

Not: No, you must stop trying to earn God's favour and just trust Jesus

But: The true children of Abraham are those who have faith in Jesus

History

Not: Soteriology is a theory of getting right with God and works with timeless categories of law, works, grace, faith

But: Soteriology is the story of God restoring and renewing the world and things like "law", "promise", "faith", "works of the law", "curse", "the Spirit" are never timeless but must be understood according to what point in the story is being referred to

Relationship between law and promise

Not: The law is the thing, and the promise finds a way of fulfilling the law

But: The promise is the thing and the law is a tool/phase in fulfilling the promise

The problem

Not: How can I be avoid the curse given that I've broken the law?

But: How can God's promise (to bless the world through Abraham) be fulfilled given that Israel is under the curse?

God's saving focus

Not: Finding a mechanism to rescue individuals

But: Fulfilling his promise to bless the whole world through Abraham's seed (which entails the rescue of vast numbers of individuals), in spite of Israel's failure

2. GALATIANS 3.10-14 - AN NPP READING

I'm trying to get my head around how the "new perspective" (as if there were such a single thing) reads Galatians 3.10-14 which, on the face of it, is the passage in Galatians where it most looks as though Paul is arguing against moralism. So I've come up with this interpretative paraphrase. I'm thinking aloud. I'm not saying that I agree with all this and I'm particularly uneasy about v.12, but I think that this captures something of what's going on there:

ASV: 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. 11 Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for, The righteous shall live by faith; 12 and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 that upon the Gentiles might come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Context: We're discussing how we identify those with whom we should eat which is the same as those who are God's people which is the same as the children of Abraham. These people are the new, blessed, Jew-Gentile humankind and they are the ones who receive the blessings of God's promise to Abraham which can be summed up as receiving the Spirit (3.2, 3, 5, 14; 4.6, 29; chapter 5). It should be clear by now that these people are not "works of the law" people (not those who possess Torah, have been circumcised, observe certain days and so on) but rather "faith" people. You could put it like this, "So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith." (3.9).

3.10

So it's no good lining yourself up with the "works of the law" party, the Judaizers who think that the blessing rests on those who belong to their "torah-circumcision" group. Fact is, they're under the curse. Israel is under a curse. God said, in summarizing and concluding the curses back in Deut 27, that this is what would happen. It's not a matter of whether an individual could be in God's favour under that regime if he sinned - of course he could, he just needed to avail himself of the God-given means of restoration. No, it's a matter of whether Israel as Israel was going to be obedient and thus the agent of the fulfillment of God's global blessing-promise. And the answer was "no" - both as foretold by God quite definitely in Deut 28-29 and as seen in history subsequently. So here we are at this 1st century point in history and it's obvious (because of continuing "exile") that the law-people, Israel, are under a curse. You'd have to be pretty dumb to go line up with them, wouldn't you? Joining the "works of the law" group is placing yourself in the curse-crowd, failed Israel.

3.11

Anyway, it's obvious that vindication / membership of God's blessed covenant people / the route to blessing lies not in law but in faith. This is explicit in other Scriptures like Habakkuk. He says, at a time of upheaval and uncertainty, that it is not law but faith which marks out those who are really God's own.

3.12

And, just to make this absolutely clear, in the sense that we are talking about these things, "law" and "faith" stand over against each other. (Of course, ask me in a different context and for a different reason and I will assert that "faith" is how the "law" is kept and that law is a matter of faith - but that's not what I'm talking about here.) You can see that in Leviticus 18 (though it's not all that Leviticus 18 says): "life is found in doing". "Law" as my opponents understand it (a "doing" thing) and "law" as worked out in Israel's history (a curse thing) needs to be set against "faith". In fact, you could sort of show this from the way the law speaks about things itself - "you've got to DO these things in order to enjoy life". (Mind you, to understand Lev 18.5 as if it were a prescription for attaining God's favour would be a nonsense, though it's not a nonsense that my opponents avoid! I'm just quoting it in the way that they insist on using it. And since my opponents are very keen on reading it this way and going on about things which are "done", like observance of days and circumcision and so on, well, let them try - they are badly mistaken and they won't find life in these things for themselves, nor will they deal with the covenant-curse blockage which Israel's disobedience has put in the way of God's global blessing-promise.)

3.13

So there we were (until a few years ago) - just as God had foretold and just as the law rightly brought upon us - we were cursed Israel, in exile and incapable of being the agent of promise-blessing fulfillment that God had told Abraham his seed were to be. What was going to happen? How could the blockage be removed so that the promise could be fulfilled? Answer: Jesus. He, the corporate messiah, the true Israel, bore the curse which the law had rightly placed us under for our centuries-long, national covenant failure. He experienced Israel's exile, he took Israel's punishment, he bore Israel's judgment. And, vindicated by God, he is the place of the promised-blessing, the Abraham-purpose, the global-restoration, the Spirit-Life.

3.14

And that means that God's original, "bless-the-world-through-Abraham" intention is fulfilled in Jesus (who is, after all, the seed of Abraham). By faith, the gentiles are incorporated into true-Israel Jesus - they become Abraham's offspring and heirs of the promise through faith (see v.29). And by faith (just as Habakkuk said) we cursed Jews move into the New Covenant which is, of course, above all, a thing of the Spirit - the promise-blessing Spirit-Life. How? Through incorporation (by faith) into Messiah-King-Israel: Jesus. That way we find ourselves no longer "cursed-under-the-law Jews" but rather new covenant, "blessed-as-promised" Jews.

And so ... All this being true, it would be ridiculous for you Galatian Christians, who have entered into all this by faith and who are recognizably Abraham's children by faith, to go over to the "works of the law" party. To do so would be to turn the clock back to the (pre-cross) moment when law-Israel was the place of curse AND it would be to fail to see that the Deuteronomy and Habakkuk explanations of how God's people are identified have now come into their own AND it would be to give up on the only hope of moving from curse to blessing, namely through incorporation into Christ, cursed on the cross and now blessed for ever.

3. "LAW" IN ROMANS 5-7

This might be Andy Hutchinson's or it might be mine ... I've lost track:

Since the middle of Romans ch.5 Paul has been talking in terms of realms, of spheres, of countries, or even of worlds.

One country is the country of Adam, sin, condemnation and death. The other is the country of Christ, righteousness, justification, grace and life.

By my union with Christ I have died to the one country and been born into the other. I have changed worlds, I have swapped spheres, I have crossed continents. Before, I was in the place of sin and death and now I am in the place of righteousness and life.

There's this good and holy and spiritual fellow I know and his name is "Law". "Law" comes from God and God loves him and God would never do anything to undermine him. But God gives "Law" a job to do: he sends him to Adam-land and, although the company there is highly uncongenial to "Law" he is at work there. Over there – in the most wicked and violent and unhealthy company you can imagine – the company of Death, Sin, Condemnation, and Adam – "Law" is at work. It was bad enough before ... but now "Law" has come, it's even worse. I met him when I lived there and he dished it out as if he was on their side. When I was over there he slapped me about, beat me up, screamed in my ears, "you're - in - Death-city" and then kicked me in the head and ribs over and over. He made life in Adam, which was pretty awful anyway, a lot worse - and yet in response to his violence, I have to say, I clung to my Master, Sin, all the more tightly.

So "Law" – which is spiritual and holy and righteous and good – was at work in Death-city telling people where they are AND making things worse.

That is just plain odd. Surely "Law" – God's friend who is an altogether good fellow – would not team up with Death and Sin and Adam and Condemnation? Well, he has. And he has done so at God's instructions and, indeed, to further God's purposes.

Romans 7 explains this to us (and, in particular, it explains 5.20 and 6.14-15) and does so by way of celebration and reassurance. I'm confused by the fact that "Law" has been SO horrible to me when I thought he was one of the good guys. When I was in Death-city, over in Adam-land, I experienced "Law" as violent, ugly, and painful. He viciously threatened me, screamed at me, and hurt me. But when I escaped Death-city by clinging onto Jesus in his death and burial and resurrection, then I left "Law" in this violent and horrible mood behind.

In Romans 7.1-6, Paul celebrates the fact that having been joined to Jesus I have changed worlds or countries. And having changed worlds or countries I have left "Law" as a cursing, screaming, violent monster behind me. I am not under "Law". What a relief! His accusations and condemnations and curses only apply to those who live in Death-land.

In Romans 7.7-25, Paul explains how all this works, given that, yes, "Law" really is a good guy.

And what Paul says in Romans 3 and 13.8-10 and Galatians 5.14 and what James and John do in their phenomenally "positive" statements about "Law" is to explain that once I'm in Life-land I will meet "Law" again but now instead of screaming in my ears "Death and condemnation – you're going to hell" he will be whispering in my heart, "Love God and love your neighbour as yourself".

Or as Cranfield puts it (nicely Calvinist on law, although pre NPP),

The life promised for the man who is righteous by faith is, in the third place, described as a life characterized by freedom from the law, that is, from the law in the limited sense of the-law-as-condemning or the law's condemnation. The point is made in the first sub-section (7.1-6), which takes up and elucidates the statement 'you are not under the law, but under grace' made in 6.14. The second sub-section (7.7-25) is a necessary clarification of 7.1-6, intended to elucidate certain matters relating to the law and to guard against possible misunderstanding. (*Romans*, I.330-31)

4. AEON FLESH

Remember, when you read Paul in flights of narrative theology and come across the word "flesh", try out various redemptive-historical possibilities.

So, for example, you notice that (with a different "send" word) there is something of a parallel between Romans 8.3 and Galatians 4.4, thus:

Romans 8.3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God [did]: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and [as an offering] for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the dikaiōma of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Galatians 4.4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

What's going on here? Well, there was a phase of history when it looked as though everything was hopeless because of the weakness of Israel in sin.

You could call this phase "the law" and state that during this phase it was a time of "curse". If the Son came "under the law" and bore the curse then he would "redeem" and the "Spirit" blessing to Abraham would be enjoyed by all those who "in Christ" were "children of promise". That would be a Galatians way of putting it.

You could, however, call this phase "the flesh" and state that during this phase it was a time of "death". If the Son came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" as a "sin-offering" then he would "condemn sin" and "Spirit and life" would be enjoyed by all those who were "set free in Christ Jesus". That would be a Romans way of putting it.

The parallel which this sets up is between "flesh" and "law" which is *utterly* unsurprising, given what we've already seen in Romans 7.

But since "law" when used in this way in Galatians pretty much stands for "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless" then it's worth trying out whether the same explanatory paraphrase works for "flesh".

What do we get?

Romans 7.5 For while we were in the flesh, ("the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") the sinful passions, which were [aroused] by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death.

and - wow, this works -

6 But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

So "flesh" and "Spirit" are phases of history / temporarily-specific covenantal realms.

Or pretend for a moment that the "I" of Romans 7.14-25 is a Jew living before Jesus (chronologically or covenantally "before", that is). Then ...

Romans 7.14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, ("the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") sold into bondage to sin. ...

Romans 7.18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh (in me as belonging to "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless"); for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good [is] not. ...

Romans 7.25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh (as someone belonging to "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") the law of sin.

Romans 8.3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh (in "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless"), God [did]: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh (into the situation of "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") and [as an offering] for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,

Romans 8.4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh (live as those who belong to "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8.5 For those who are according to the flesh (live as those who belong to "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") set their minds on the things of the flesh, ("the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Romans 8.6 For the mind set on the flesh ("the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

Romans 8.7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able [to do so],

Romans 8.8 and those who are in the flesh (live as those who belong to "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") cannot please God.

Romans 8.9 However, you are not in the flesh ("the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless") but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

The "Law" is an altogether good fellow.

If I live in the "flesh", that is, as sinful Israel under the mosaic administration, then "Law" gives me a very hard time, in fact, he kills me and curses me.

If I live in the "Spirit", that is, as redeemed and set free by the work of Christ - in the temporarily-specific covenantal order of grace-righteousness-Christ-obedience - then "Law" is a fine fellow and I enjoy his promised covenant blessings of "life".

So, David, when you see "flesh", try out "as sinful Israel under the Mosaic administration".

Flesh is (sometimes) "the old aeon".

Romans 8.12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh ("the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless"), to live according to the flesh (as if in "the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless")-- 13 for if you are living according to the flesh ("the period of history when sinful Israel, under the Mosaic administration, was cursed and helpless"), you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Meditation on OT Law

"We are not to refer solely to one age David's statement that the life of a righteous man is a continual meditation upon the law." (Calvin - *Institutes* II.vii.13)

Method

- since the law is a reflection of the character of God, what may I learn / re-learn about God from this? what is the theological principle here?
- since the law points to Christ, in what ways might this part of it point to Christ?
- in what ways might we see Christ observing and fulfilling this part of God's law?
- is this part of the law (or others closely connected with it) referred to / explained / used in the NT?
- how is this part of the law (or others closely connected with it) connected with any other parts of Scripture?
- does this part of the law simply state an ethical norm or does it carry theological explanation / incentives / motivations - sermonically of legal features?
- does this part of the law have sanctions (rewards and punishments) specified and if so who is responsible for distributing those rewards / imposing those penalties / carrying out those punishments?
- is this part of the law founded upon features of the circumstances of the first hearers which no longer obtain at our moment in redemptive history. State clearly what those features are, how you know that this part of the law is founded upon those features (and no others?) and how those features no longer obtain at our moment in redemptive history;
- move up and down the scale of specificity (foundational truth, broad ethical principle, single ethical rule, specific case) seeking possible applications;
- try the truths / principles / rules / cases in relation to various settings - relationship with God - individual and corporate; relationship with others of the people of God; life in the family; relations in society, in the marketplace, in the local community; civil law code;
- since I know that this Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable in equipping the man of God for every good work, in what ways, to this point, have I profited from it? Pray.

Some encouragements in the face of hermeneutical terror:

1. NOT to meditate on Scripture will not solve our hermeneutical uncertainties
2. There are no ethical vacuums - NOT to meditate on Scripture will mean that our thinking on those issues upon which we might receive wisdom from those parts of Scripture that we are neglecting will come from somewhere less reliable and more prone to error
3. Even if there were no direct Scriptural answers to an ethical question or the answers were located in passages other than those we are looking at, meditating on Scripture, though not giving us quick and easy answers will begin to reshape our minds and move us towards wisdom, ethical maturity. Who is more likely to grow in ethical wisdom and maturity - the one who carefully, humbly and joyfully meditates on the law day and night or the one who neglects the law for fear of misinterpreting / misapplying it? Remember Joshua 1 and Psalm 1.
4. We might ask, then, of any OT passage, "which good works does this passage help equip me for?"

Exercise A.

Work through the process above with Exodus 22.21 – 23.9

Exercise B.

Do the same with these passages which relate to gleaning

Ruth 2.1-3

Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side, a prominent rich man, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. ² And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain, behind someone in whose sight I may find favor." She said to her, "Go, my daughter." ³ So she went. She came and gleaned in the field behind the reapers. ⁴ Just then Boaz came from Bethlehem. He said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you." They answered, "The LORD bless you." ⁵ Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "To whom does this young woman belong?" ⁶ The servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the Moabite who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. ⁷ She said, 'Please, let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the reapers.' So she came, and she has been on her feet from early this morning until now, without resting even for a moment."

Exodus 23.10-11

For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow so that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the wild animals may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard and with your olive orchard.

Lev 19.9-10, 27

⁹ When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.

Lev 23.22

²² When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am the LORD your God.

Deut 24.19-22

¹⁹ When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.

²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. ²² Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this.

Isaiah 17.4ff

⁴ On that day the glory of Jacob will be brought low, and the fat of his flesh will grow lean. ⁵ And it shall be as when reapers gather standing grain and their arms harvest the ears, and as when one gleans the ears of grain in the Valley of Rephaim. ⁶ Gleanings will be left in it, as when an olive tree is beaten— two or three berries in the top of the highest bough, four or five on the branches of a fruit tree, says the LORD God of Israel.

See also, e.g. Obadiah 5-9

Some possible learnings and application – at various levels of plausibility ...

From Gary North: *Tools of Dominion, Boundaries of Dominion, Inheritance and Dominion* (Economic commentaries on Ex 21-24, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy respectively). All may be viewed at or downloaded free from <http://freebooks.commentary.net/freebooks/sidefrm2.htm>

1. We're all gleaners – the ground is cursed, there are no easy pickings
2. Jesus Christ is the great Gleaner – he serves faithfully
3. Field, vineyard, olive orchard - the three great blessings
4. All things belong to God and he can direct any secondary owner to do anything with his property
5. Allowing gleaning was morally compulsory without being legally compulsory
6. Positive God-given sanctions are a test of faith
7. The relatively wealthy are morally (not legally) obliged to help the destitute
8. Gleaning restrained/revealed the idolatry of greed – the owner is not fanatically to try to get every last bit
9. Divine exogenous economic growth theory – God's blessing is more important than any other factor – obeying him against our apparent economic best interest is actually in our economic best interest – Leviticus 26, Deut 28.11 etc
10. Gleaning required humility - acknowledgement of need and asking permission to glean
11. Gleaning was hard work
 - harder than normal harvesting
 - low pay
 - bringing the hard-working poor to the attention of potential employers
12. Gleaning was the beginning of escape for the poor
 - a moral / skills education. ('an inefficient way to produce food; an efficient way to produce men')
 - hard work; trust in God; demonstrating competence in the face of adversity
13. Gleaning localized charity
14. Gleaning personalized charity - reduced the subsidy of evil
15. Gleaning conditionalized charity - no 'entitlement', no unconditional 'right'/legal claim to welfare, no passive recipients
16. The civil authority did not have jurisdiction or responsibility for gleaning-charity
17. Gleaning ensured that more of the crop was harvested and waste reduced
18. Orphans, widows, strangers
19. Tied to agriculture not to urban commerce/industry?
20. Part of land laws the application of which radically changed at Pentecost and Holocaust (AD70)?