

Faith Pulpit

The Mosaic Law and National Reconstruction

There is a movement today identified as Reconstructionism or Dominion Theology that has its roots in postmillennialism. It advocates establishing a theocratic kingdom in America based on the judicial laws of Moses. In fact, by its reasoning, the Christian is under a divine mandate to accomplish this end.

It has been popularized in recent years by Rousas J. Rushdoony in *The Institutes of Biblical Law* and Greg Bahnsen in *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*. Out of this has come the Chalcedon school which is a foundation that identifies itself as an independent Christian educational organization. Its viewpoint represents an exact opposite to the Biblical, dispensational position of fundamental Baptists. In essence, Reconstructionists argue the continuing and universal obligation of Old Testament Law.

Moreover, although the ceremonial laws are excluded from the Chalcedonian theory of theonomic politics, laws of man's duty to God are included, the sanctions, as well as the stipulations of Mosaic Law. This means that the civil ruler is supposed to execute capital punishment in all cases prescribed by Moses; these include incorrigibility in children, homosexuality, blasphemy, apostasy, idolatry, witchcraft, sabbath-breaking, and advocacy of worship of gods other than Jehovah.

Lest we be misunderstood, based on New Testament authority, we stand solidly behind all legitimate standards of holiness and deplore the pell-mell race to utter degradation our society runs. Further, we should be active in upholding those standards in our preaching, teaching, election of public servants, enactment of laws, and personal lifestyle. After all, God, in His moral essence, does not change. But this is not the issue.

This is the issue: is the New Testament Christian under the law of Moses and do we, then, have a mandate to construct a theocratic society in America ?

A fact that is too often missed among even the best of us is that Christians are a distinctively New Testament people. What is the Mosaic Law and does it apply to New Testament people? The Mosaic Law is the theocratic system of regulations which governed the nation of Israel in every aspect of its life. (Deut. 4:8; 5:1; Mark 12:29, 30; Rom. 9:4). According to Romans 2:14, Gentiles have never been under the Mosaic Law except the very small number who became Jewish proselytes. Further, the church, itself, was never given the Mosaic Law. Since the church was founded on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, there is absolutely no Scriptural evidence that the Mosaic Law was given to the church.

The Word of God has divided humanity into three groups—the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church (1 Cor. 10:32). Some Scripture has been specifically written to each of these three. It is a violation of God's Word to misapply Scripture written specifically to and for the Jews. The purpose of the Mosaic Law was to reveal man's utter hopelessness and sinfulness until Christ should come (Gal. 3:16–19).

At the root of this controversy is the issue of the unity of the Law. There are those who argue from the popularized “division” of the Mosaic Law (moral, ceremonial, and civil) that the ceremonial part of the Law was finished in Christ, but that all aspects of the moral and civil laws are in force today both for individuals and for society.

But the position of Biblical scholars, both Jewish and Christian, is that the Mosaic Law constitutes a unified system and that all of its various regulations are equally binding. The only exception to this position is held by those who adhere to some form of covenant theology. But it is interesting to note that even many who espouse a covenant position consider the rationale of dominion theologians unbiblical or at least exegetically erratic. Thus, the issue of the unity of the Mosaic Law leaves only two alternatives—either complete deliverance from, or complete subjection to the entire Mosaic system.

Finally, has the entire Mosaic Law been terminated and, if so, when? 2 Corinthians 3:7–14 is clear. Three times (vs. 7, 11, and 14) the Law is declared cancelled. According to Colossians 2:14, Christ's death “blotted out” the Mosaic system. For instance, as a consequence there is no penalty for failure to observe the Sabbath. And if there is no penalty, there obviously is no longer a Law that applies.

The book of Hebrews especially nails the coffin of societal reconstructionism shut with these assertions:

1. There has been a change from the Mosaic Law (Heb. 7:12).
2. The first covenant—the Mosaic Law—has been replaced by the New Covenant (Heb. 8:7–9).
3. The Mosaic Law was merely a shadow of things to come, not the real thing (Heb. 10:1). Therefore, the Law was intentionally temporary.
4. The Mosaic Law (first) has been taken away in order that the New Covenant (second) may come into existence (Heb. 10:9).
5. Christ is the end (termination) of the Mosaic Law (Rom. 10:4).

In light of our viewpoint, often we are: accused of “Antinomianism” or “Lawlessness.” But that is simply not true. Instead of the Mosaic Law, we are under the Law of Christ. This is not the Mosaic Law (1 Cor. 9:20, 21; Gal. 6:2). It is the Law of Love (Jn. 13:34) and is a “new commandment.” These are not issues of stone: these are issues of heart.

And there is our answer. We do not change our society by changing its government and its laws. Both Calvin and the Puritans attempted the impossible (the impossible being a change of society through government) and felt the pangs of its failure. Our mandate is to take the gospel of salvation, which alone is capable of changing the heart of man, and doing what we are mandated to do: “Preach the gospel to every creature.”

We have no expectation of significantly changing our society or that of others as desperately as each society needs it. We look for the coming of Jesus Christ in “power and great glory” to set up His kingdom and rule of righteousness of which “there will be no end.” The tragedy in our churches is an almost total failure to evangelize the lost and to accept this mandate that we have been given.

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