

# Does God's Law Apply to All Men, in All Nations, Through All Time?

— An Outline for Personal Bible Study —

The prevailing opinion in our society today, and also in much of the Church, is that Biblical Law is nothing more than an option which may compete for a hearing in the courts of 'public opinion'. The view that is held by most Christians is that God's laws are at best personal guidelines for holiness and they are not to be considered standards for our nation. It is considered absurd for a Christian to suggest that God's Law must be **the** standard for a non-Christian culture. The view that God's Law actually should be legislated (e.g., Sabbath keeping, prohibitions against idolatry, or laws against homosexuality) is scorned not only by non-Christians but also by professed Christians. Consider the following quotation as one example of the general attitude found in the Church:

First, we must recognize that the task of the state is not to legislate morality. The state may not define rules for virtuous living in society, and then insist, by legal means, that all live in accordance with those rules. This would be a most terrible form of tyranny. Instead, the task of the state is to administer public justice; an important difference and one upon which the work of CPJ [Citizens for Public Justice] is premised.<sup>1</sup>

In response we must ask, if the state doesn't legislate morality then what does it do? What are its laws to do, legislate immorality? What are its laws dealing with if not morality? What is a law against stealing legislating, something moral, or not? Everything a government does has a moral implication. Governments by their very nature exist to legislate morality. The question is not whether or not they will legislate morality, the question is **whose** morality will it be, man's or God's?

What people are really saying when they say "you can't legislate morality" is that they do not want God and God's laws over them. Any law that is based on anything other than what God has said, seems to be acceptable to them. But if the law is presented as coming from the Bible, they put their fingers in their ears and scream: "you can't legislate morality!"

When people claim that we cannot legislate morality, what they are really saying is that they don't want God's law to be applied to them. But it is the responsibility of all Governments to enact laws that enforce God's Law.

The purpose of the following Bible Study is to provide God's perspective on the question: does God's law apply to all men, in all nations, through all time? I have constructed this study to show that the Bible is comprehensive in its answer. You will not find God's view on the subject in just one section of the Bible. I should not have to demonstrate that different portions of the Bible speak to this subject. It should be enough to point out once that God has given his laws to all men and that they are to be applied and obeyed. But the reality today is that Church isn't proclaiming God's Law, and as a result Christians have been fooled by the 'philosophy' of this world.

Consider what God has to say about the supremacy of his laws:

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Schouls, "Loving our Neighbours" Politically, *Christian Week*, January 21, 1992

## From the Time of the Patriarchs

•Gen 9.4-7

- To whom were these commands given?
  - Do you think that these commands applied to Noah's grandchildren, and his great-grandchildren, etc.?
  - Are these Jewish commands?
  - When did these commands stop having application? Why?

## From the Law

•Lev 24.13-22

- What was/is to be done with a blasphemer?
- What was/is to be done with a murderer?
- To whom did these laws and their punishments apply?
- Can you see anything about the importance of these two laws? Do they represent types or classes of laws?

[They seem to be representative of the two sections of the laws, our duty to God and our duty to man. They are two instances representative of two classes.]

- Are men to obey these laws today? Why, or why not?
- Are the punishments to be exacted if the laws are not obeyed? Why, or why not?

[Blasphemy is a form of *Theocide*. If murder of the image bearer of God is to be punished with death, then it would seem logical that a 'murderer' of the one in whose image man is made is also to be punished with death. There is a strong indication of how seriously we should caution those around us who take the Lord's name in vain. It is no light matter, and God views it with absolute hatred.]

## From the History

•Nehemiah 13.15-22

- What did Nehemiah warn the Jewish nobles about?
- What did Nehemiah tell the merchants to stop doing?
- Where the merchants Jews?
- What would he do if they continued selling on the Sabbath?
- What was the current government of that day?
- What right did Nehemiah have to tell the merchants not to sell their goods on the Sabbath, under this government?

## From the Literature

•Psm 2.1-7, 10-12

- What do the kings of the earth and the nations they rule try to do?
- What are these 'chains'?
- In contrast, what are the kings of the earth to do?
- How can they do this?

•Psm 33.8

- What are all men to do?
- How can men show reverence for God?
- How can men obey God?

## From the Prophets

### •Jonah 3.1-10

- What did Jonah tell the Ninevites? Why? (8, see also 1.2)
- What made their ways evil?
- Why could God send a Jewish preacher to this Assyrian city?

## From the Gospels

### •Matt 14.3-5

- What was John's teaching against Herod?
- Why was Herod's action wrong?

### •Matt 24.14 (compare with Matt 28.19-20)

- What are the disciples to teach in all nations?

## From the History

### •Acts 17.29-31

- What are all men everywhere commanded to do?
- Of what are they to repent?
- Why can God place this command on men?
- How does this passage show that God has a right to make laws that all men must obey?

## From the Epistles

### •Rom 13.1-5

- From whom do the civil magistrates obtain their authority?
- What are civil magistrates to do? (see 12.19 and following)
- How does the civil magistrate avenge on God's behalf?
- What is the definition of wrong-doing to guide the magistrate?
  - How is the civil magistrate to punish wrong doing?

### •Phil 2.9-11

- What is every person ever created going to do?
- To whom, then, are all people subject?
- Does this tell us anything about the laws that Jesus gave through the prophets?

### •I Peter 2.13,14

- Why does Peter say that we are to submit ourselves to the authorities/civil magistrates?
- If they are sent by God, what are they sent to do?
- What is the wrong that they are to punish?