

## **I. Introduction**

Review: What is a covenant?

How does your view of God's Covenant with man affect your day-to-day life?

## **II. Non-Reformed views**

### **A. Atheist**

What is an Atheist's basis for morality? How does he set the boundaries of family vs. state vs. religion?

### **B. Papal administration**

What is the Roman Catholic view of covenants in Scripture?

How can this view lead to the church having authority over other areas of life?

### **C. Dispensational**

What is the dispensational view of the covenants in Scripture?

What is the dispensational view of the Mosaic covenant, compared with the New Testament covenant?

## **III. Classic Reformed View**

One Covenant of Grace with various administrations. "I will be your God, and you will be my people."

### **A. Natural Law**

What is it?

#### **1. How does scripture speak of natural law?**

Romans 1:18-23, Romans 2:14-15, Genesis 1:26-27

What does it mean to be "In the image of God?"

#### **2. The usefulness of natural law**

How is natural law useful to us? (both believers and non-believers)

How do we see natural law shown in creation? What are some examples?

### **3. The limits of natural law**

Is natural law sufficient? Why?

Does the corruption of natural law mean it's now of no use? Why?

What examples do you see in cultures today where we've drifted further from correct recognition of the natural law? How/why do you think this has happened?

## **B. Law in Special Revelation**

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 19

### **1. Moral**

James 1:22-25; Romans 3:21-31; Romans 13:8-10

**Definition:**

**Applicability today:**

### **2. Ceremonial**

Hebrews 9:1-10:18

**Definition:**

**Applicability today:**

### **3. Judicial (Theocracy)**

Deut. 25:1-6; 1 Cor. 9:3-12

**Definition:**

**Applicability today:**

### **4. Application Exercise**

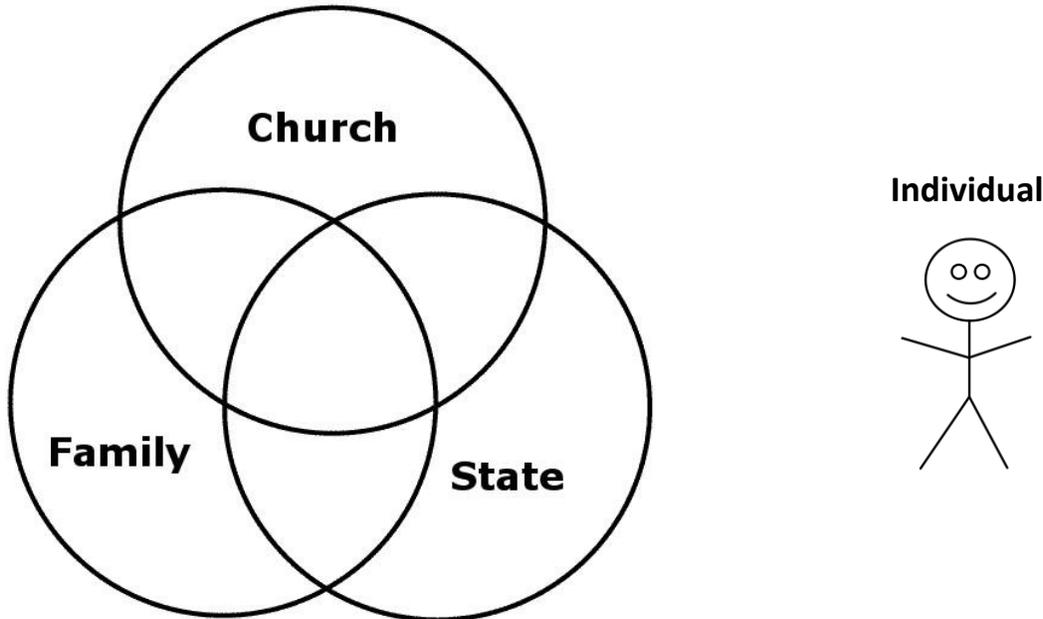
In which categories (Moral, Ceremonial, or Judicial/Civil) should we place each of the laws/commands given in these passages?

1. Ex. 29:15-26
2. Lev. 23:22
3. Lev. 23:23-25
4. Num. 35:6-28
5. Deut. 22:11-12
6. Ex. 22:2-3
7. Ex. 20
8. Others?

### C. God's law in society today

How God's revelation through the Covenants shows us how his laws should be applied in the different areas of life.

Church, state, and family as three different institutions created by God, each with their own areas of responsibility.



*How does our view of the covenant affect our view (or our very definition) of the institution?*

*How does our view of God's Covenant influence how we determine which of God's laws and commands apply to each institution?*

#### 1. Church

1 Cor. 5; Matt. 18:15-17

What kind of authority does the church have?

#### **OPC BCO Chapter III: The Nature and Exercise of Church Power:**

*3. All church power is only ministerial and declarative, for the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may presume to bind the conscience by making laws on the basis of its own authority; all its decisions should be founded upon the Word of God. "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship" (Confession of Faith, Chapter XX, Section 2).*

*4. All church power is wholly moral or spiritual. No church officers or judicatories possess any civil jurisdiction; they may not inflict any civil penalties nor may they seek the aid of the civil power in the exercise of their jurisdiction further than may be necessary for civil protection and security.*

*5. Nevertheless, church government is a valid and authentic jurisdiction to which Christians are commanded to submit themselves. Therefore the decisions of church officers when properly rendered and if in accord with the Word of God "are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his Word" (Confession of Faith, Chapter XXXI, Section 2).*

How does our view of the covenant help define our view of the institution of the church? (WCF 25:2-3)

How does our view of the covenant give us a different view of church authority than either the Roman Catholic or the individualistic dispensationalist?

What kinds of Scriptural laws or commands would we generally see as being part of the sphere of the institution of the church?

## **2. Family**

Eph. 5:21-6:4

How does our view of the covenant help define our view of the institution of the family?

What are some other views of the family, and how would our view differ?

What kinds of Scriptural laws or commands would we generally see as being part of the sphere of the institution of the family?

## **3. State**

Romans 13:1-6

How does our view of the covenant help define our view of the institution of the state?

How is this different from some other views of the state?

What kinds of Scriptural laws or commands would we generally see as being part of the sphere of the institution of the state?

## **4. Individual**

Matt. 5:27-28

How does our view of the covenant define our view of the individual in regard to:

- The Church?
- The Family?
- The State?

What kinds of Scriptural laws or commands would we generally see as being applicable primarily just to the individual?

## 5. Boundaries between the institutions

How does our view of the covenant help define the boundaries between:

### a) *Church and Family*

In defining the boundary between these two, we can look at:

- Who the command is directed to (such as parents, children, church, believers)
- What the command concerns (such as familial relationships, salvation, corporate covenantal commands)

### b) *Church and State*

In defining the boundary between these two, we can look at:

- Who the command is directed to (such as rulers, humankind in general, believers specifically)
- What the command concerns (such as civil relationships, rules regarding commerce, the way of salvation)

### c) *Family and State*

In defining the boundary between these two, we can look at:

- Who the command is directed to (such as rulers, humankind, parents, children)
- What the command concerns (such as familial relationships, moral laws that can and should be externally enforced, relationships with other people)

## 6. Application Exercise

Categorize these Biblical commands in the different circles/institutions (church, family, state):

1. Rom. 13:6
2. Num. 35:16-25
3. Lev. 23:22
4. 1 Cor. 11:17-34
5. 1 Timothy 5:3-4, 16
6. Ex. 20
  1. *No other gods*
  2. *No images*
  3. *Don't use the Lord's name in vain*
  4. *Remember the Sabbath Day*
  5. *Honor your father and mother*
  6. *Don't murder*
  7. *Don't commit adultery*
  8. *Don't steal*
  9. *Don't bear false witness*
  10. *Don't covet*
7. 1 Timothy 2
8. Ephesians 4:29-32
9. Others?

## IV. Theonomy

### A. What is Theonomy?

From *theos* (God) and *nomos* (law).

### B. Theonomic view of the covenant

Theonomy views the covenant in much the same way as the traditional reformed position, but there are some key differences in how it views Israel and the Mosaic Law.

#### Israel

Theonomy draws a clear distinction between Israel the *civil* nation and Israel the *religious* people of God.

#### Israel's Law (the Judicial Law)

Theonomy divides the law into only 2 primary categories: Ceremonial and Moral, with Moral being divided into 2 subcategories: God's everlasting moral standards and specific applications of it (also called judicial). Thus Theonomy views what we call civil or judicial law as a subcategory of the Moral law, rather than a specific application of it to a particular nation (Israel) in a specific circumstance (being God's chosen people in a theocracy).

### C. Theonomic view of the judicial law and its application to today

Theonomy has a different view of how the Mosaic Law should be applied to society today:

"...We must recognize the continuing obligation of civil magistrates to obey and enforce the relevant laws of the Old Testament, including the penal sanctions specified by the just Judge of all the earth." (Rev. Greg Bahnsen, *By This Standard*, p.4)

"What is proposed here is that all civil governments, whatever their structure, should be encouraged to submit to and apply the standing laws of Old Testament Israel." (*BTS* p. 323)

This differs from the traditional reformed position that Israel's situation was unique (as a Theocracy) and its civil laws are God's moral law *applied concretely* to its unique situation.