

# CHALCEDON Report

October 2003 • Issue 456

*Faith for All of Life*

## Chalcedon Staff:

**Rev. R. J. Rushdoony** (1916-2001) was the founder of Chalcedon and a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical Law to society.

**Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony** is president of Chalcedon and Ross House Books. He is also editor-in-chief of the *Chalcedon Report* and Chalcedon's other publications.

**Susan Burns** is Chalcedon's executive assistant and managing editor of the *Chalcedon Report* and Chalcedon's other publications.

**Rev. Christopher J. Ortiz** is the Director of Communications for Chalcedon and Ross House Books.

Receiving the *Chalcedon Report*: The *Report* will be sent to those who request it. At least once a year we ask that you return a response card if you wish to remain on the mailing list. Contributors are kept on our mailing list. Suggested Donation: \$30 per year will cover only printing and mailing costs (\$35 Canada, \$45 foreign — U.S. funds only). Tax-deductible contributions may be made out to Chalcedon and mailed to P.O. Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251 USA.

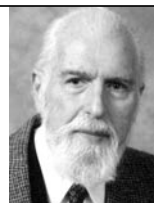
Chalcedon may want to contact its readers quickly by means of e-mail. If you have an e-mail address, please send an e-mail message including your full postal address to our office: [chaloffi@goldrush.com](mailto:chaloffi@goldrush.com).

**For circulation and data management contact Rebecca Rouse.**

**Contact her at (209) 736-4365 ext. 10 or [chaloffi@goldrush.com](mailto:chaloffi@goldrush.com)**

<b>The Response to Institutes of Biblical Law</b> <i>R.J. Rushdoony</i>	2	<b>FOCUS on Dominion</b> <i>Ford and Andrea Schwartz</i>	16
<b>The Grace of Law</b> <i>Mark Rushdoony</i>	4	<b>By Force? or By Persuasion?</b> <i>Tom Rose</i>	20
<b>Biblical Law</b> <i>Ian Hodge</i>	7	<b>In Defense of the Death Penalty</b> <i>Curt Lovelace</i>	22
<b>Acts 25 and the Theonomy Question</b> <i>Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., Th.D.</i>	9	<b>American Decadence and Biblical Law</b> <i>Samuel L. Blumenfeld</i>	25
<b>The Trinity and Storytelling</b> <i>Greg Uttinger</i>	10	<b>Legitimizing the Homosexual Lifestyle</b> <i>Warren Kelley</i>	27
<b>Our Fathers Faith: Genealogical Research and Covenant Evangelism</b> <i>Roger Schultz, Ph.D.</i>	12	<b>Pornography and the Church</b> <i>Larry E. Ball</i>	29
<b>And the Peasants Rejoiced</b> <i>William Blankschaen</i>	14	<b>Classifieds</b>	32

The *Chalcedon Report*, published monthly by Chalcedon, a tax-exempt Christian foundation, is sent to all who request it. All editorial correspondence should be sent to the managing editor, P.O. Box 569, Cedar Bluff, VA 24609-0569. Laser-print hard copy and electronic disk submissions firmly encouraged. All submissions subject to editorial revision. Email: [chalcedon@netscope.net](mailto:chalcedon@netscope.net). The editors are not responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts which become the property of Chalcedon unless other arrangements are made. Opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of Chalcedon. It provides a forum for views in accord with a relevant, active, historic Christianity, though those views may on occasion differ somewhat from Chalcedon's and from each other. Chalcedon depends on the contributions of its readers, and all gifts to Chalcedon are tax-deductible. ©2003 Chalcedon. All rights reserved. Permission to reprint granted on written request only. Editorial Board: Rev. Mark R. Rushdoony, President/Editor-in-Chief; Walter Lindsay, Assistant Editor; Susan Burns, Managing Editor and Executive Assistant. Chalcedon, P.O. Box 158, Vallecito, CA 95251, Telephone Circulation (8a.m. - 4p.m., Pacific) (209)736-4365 or Fax (209) 736-0536; email: [chaloffi@goldrush.com](mailto:chaloffi@goldrush.com); [www.chalcedon.edu](http://www.chalcedon.edu); Circulation; Rebecca Rouse.



# The Response to *Institutes of Biblical Law*

The response to *Institutes of Biblical Law* was a very gratifying one. Few expected so large a study on a subject of so little concern to the churches to succeed. It did, however, meet with a very wide approval and response, among students, lawyers, legislators, churchmen, and others.

## Hostile Reactions

It has also met with intense hostility at times. It would be well to review the areas of hostility in order to understand some of the key problems of our times. *First*, the comments on homosexuality outraged many. No other aspect led to more intense (if covert) opposition, slander, and sheer venom. Dr. David A. Noebel has observed to me that the church has perhaps been the central area of infiltration by homosexuals. I find this readily believable in terms of my experience. The homosexual clergy are sometimes great champions of love in the pulpit and savage practitioners of hatred on the sly.

*Second*, much hostility has been aroused by my statements with respect to the tithe. Many resent a mandatory tithe in favor of more "spiritual" principles of giving, which they insist lead to more giving than does the tithe. I ask all such to prove to me that their "spiritually minded" giving surpasses the tithe.

None have done so. If "spiritual" giving cannot equal the requirements of God's law, it is clearly not the Holy Spirit which is the spirit thereof!

*Third*, a whole series of objections have their roots in the sexual revolution, which has permeated the churches, evangelical and Reformed, far more than appears on the surface. All too many find fornication and adultery justifiable at times, man being himself the judge of the times!

Obviously, many people are "all for the Lord," provided that He doesn't interfere with their money and their sex lives!

A *fourth* general objection has been that the emphasis of *Institutes of Biblical Law* is on law rather than love. But Romans 13:8-10 makes clear that love is the fulfilling of the law, that is, love puts law into action: it respects God's requirements concerning life, property, our neighbor, our enemy, and ourselves. Our Lord makes clear that to love God means to keep the first table of the law, and to love our neighbor means to keep the second table of the law (Mt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-34). We do not love our wife or God if we commit adultery, nor do we love God if we are idolaters and take His name in vain. *Love is the law in action; hate is lawlessness in action.* Love and hate are more than mere feelings: they are ways of life, either in faith and obedience to God and His law, or in unbelief and disobedience.

An important question we need now to ask is this: Why do we encounter these and similar objections to

God's law? Why the sometimes intense reaction even to the point of screamed insults, to an insistence of the binding nature of God's law?

## To Be as Gods

The key is Genesis 3:5. The tempter's key plan is that every man should be his own god, knowing, or determining for himself, what constitutes good and evil. This is original sin; it is the basic sin of man and the underlying factor and foundation of all particular sins. When man tries to be his own god he is saying that he is not a creature, in particular that he is not God's creature.

To be free from God's law means that we are our own law, and this is the heart of antinomianism. It is the denial that God can bind us. We are indeed willing to have God free us from sin, *provided* that we are also freed from bondage to Him and His law! This is the heart of antinomianism, its desire to be free from both sin and God and to become a supposedly free spirit, finding holiness in a spirit-filled life which is disobedient to God's Spirit and Word.

## To Be a Creature

To be a creature means that we are created by the triune God and that our redemption and every aspect of our life and society *must* be governed by His law-word. Every word of God is a binding word, because it is God's word. My life must be governed by the word of God. This means that my money, my calling, my family, my sexuality, my political life, my economics, science, art, and all things else must be subject

to God's word and its requirements. When I sit at the table and eat, my eating is governed by God's law. When I speak, God's word and the Spirit must govern my tongue. When I think and act, I am subject to God's law and must be governed by Him. I have no area of independence from God and His word, and every desire for an independent thought, word, or act, is sin.

To be born again means that I, who was once governed by my word and my spirit am now totally to be governed by God's word and Spirit. My failure to be totally under God's word and Spirit is evidence of sin and my imperfect sanctification in this life. I must war against my sinful impulses to independence from God, and, like Paul, regard myself as the enemy whenever and wherever I stray from God's law-word (1 Cor. 9: 24-27).

There is more to godliness and to righteousness (or, justice) than the mere

condemnation of sin. If mere condemnation constituted virtue, then Stalin was most righteous for condemning Hitler, and Hitler was likewise righteous for condemning Stalin! The idea of condemnation as righteousness smacks of pharisaism. Our Lord says, "[E]xcept your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:20). Churchmen today are often ready to condemn sin, but where is that righteousness that comes from obedience to God's Word? Where is the readiness to teach all nations to bring all things into captivity to Jesus Christ? (Mt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 10:4-6).

To be creatures means that we are commanded by God the Lord because we are His creation and His re-creation in Jesus Christ. To be a creature means that I know that the Lord is God, my God: "He shall choose our inheritance for us" (Ps. 47:4), and He has done so

in Jesus Christ. I can therefore say with David, "My times are in thy hand" (Ps. 31:15), and I can rest, work, and sleep in that confidence (Ps. 4:8).

### The Greatest Privilege

To serve and magnify God is the greatest of privileges and callings, and I am a most privileged man, having been given so happy a calling.

The purpose of the Chalcedon Foundation is the reconstruction of all things in terms of the Word of God. This, after all, is the purpose of life, to be conformed to God, and ours is a magnificent task. May God the Lord bless us all therein. **CR**

The foregoing article is a condensed version of the author's introduction to *The Institutes of Biblical Law, Vol. 2, Law and Society*. All three of these volumes are available from Ross House Books, [www.rosshousebooks.org](http://www.rosshousebooks.org).

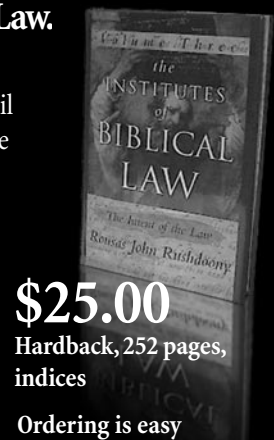


## R.J. Rushdoony had a lot more to say about the Law of God...

### Discover the *Intent of the Law* in Volume 3 of the *Institutes of Biblical Law*.

In this concise volume Rushdoony tackles the *Intent of the Law* in detail with special emphasis upon the case laws and the practical implications of theonomy. You'll learn:

- The Necessity of Biblical Law
- Laws of Sacrifice
- Tithes & Social Financing
- The Dietary Laws
- Law as Warfare
- The Law for all the World
- Theonomy vs. Tyranny
- Law as Liberty
- Much more...



**\$25.00**

Hardback, 252 pages, indices

Ordering is easy  
Simply utilize the order form on page 19 or visit [www.chalcedonstore.com](http://www.chalcedonstore.com)



# The Grace of Law

All men live in terms of some principle of law. Some men believe they are laws unto themselves, and range from the unpleasantly self-centered to the dangerously anarchistic. Yet most are willing to pragmatically submit, in most instances, to statutory civil law.

## Transcendental Law

While individuals may have a personal preference and need for some principle for law, societies need more than just a personal preference. A society must defend its laws with reference to someone or something that gives it moral authority. Law is always religious; it is an enacted moral code. Law says something is bad, so it is forbidden, or something is good, so it is allowed to flourish. Even tyrannical societies must appeal to a frame of reference that makes their laws, their enforced morality, transcendent, rather than arbitrary.

In the ancient world the ruler was often, as in Egypt, said to be a deity. In other cultures the ruler was a priest-king with access to the will of the gods. Both beliefs gave transcendence to the civil law order, for rebellion against the state was then sacrilege as well as treason. Freedom was unheard of, as the will of the state was the will of the gods.

Modern tyrannies have also attempted to achieve a transcendent authority. The most obvious examples are the Islamic and the Marxist regimes of the 20th century. Marxist economic theories absolutized the state as the instrument of justice, making the state itself the transcendent authority. Islamic

law had earlier absolutized the state in a similar way, in that it provided a moral defense of forced conformity. Islamic cultures are more explicitly religious, and thus have always been statist. Islam itself professes to be a religion largely of essentially external duties which can be imposed, unlike Christianity which must be embraced by personal faith.

Christianity's rejection of any transcendence by men or institutions was clear at the Council of Chalcedon of A.D. 451. Christ was declared to be fully God and fully man and thus the only Mediator between heaven and earth. By denying any transcendence to man, his laws, or his institutions, Chalcedon laid the foundation for Western liberty. Chalcedon saw all men under the transcendent God and His Mediator. All human authority was thus limited. This represented the first attempt in history to reign in the power of men over others. The effects of Chalcedon slowly shaped medieval society, imperfectly, and with fits and starts. Even the church rebelled against the implications of Chalcedon by making itself transcendent partway through the medieval period. Late in the medieval period monarchs challenged the church's authority with the "divine right of kings" in an attempt to import the ancient priest-king pattern into Christendom.

In the West, a social order developed concurrently with the spread of Christendom with Biblical ethics replacing, imperfectly, the pagan law of the Roman Empire. English common law

was an advanced development of this trend, which was imported to colonial America. Human law was seen as a methodology by which a transcendent moral law, understood in Biblical terms, was applied. The Puritans were the most self-consciously Biblical in their laws, but not unique in their understanding of law and justice within a distinctly Biblical frame of reference. Many have correctly noted that the establishment of the United States and its Constitution was the direct result and perhaps the high water mark of the influence of the Protestant Reformation.

## Man's Law and the Retreat of the Church

The Enlightenment was an 18th century European movement that self-consciously criticized the Biblical emphasis of the Protestant Reformation in favor of a secular humanism. America was heavily influenced by the Enlightenment's humanistic rationalism somewhat later, as it was insulated by an ocean and its firmly entrenched Protestant Christianity. When that influence did arrive, however, it met a church already in retreat.

Puritanism had long since died out and Pietism, an emphasis on personal, subjective experience, was firmly entrenched in American religion. Enlightenment thinking operated on the premise that there was no supernatural in a purely naturalistic world. Truth, ethics, and law were to be determined by man's reason; theistic reasoning was an imposition on man's freedom. Faced with such

a challenge to Biblical interpretation, the church retreated and further redefined Christianity as a religion concerned only with the personal and spiritual. Increasingly, the church failed to stand for the transcendent nature of the truth it professed. The church allowed itself to be irrelevant in a humanistic, naturalistic society. It represented the irrational in a rationalistic world, the supernatural in a naturalistic universe.

The Enlightenment's view of the world in naturalistic terms continued to gain ascendancy in the 19th and 20th centuries. Such thinking continued to affect the church. It drifted into the narrowed confines of the pietistic spiritualized corner into which it had painted itself. Gone was the full-orbed claims of the Protestant Reformation or invocations of "Thus saith the Lord."

### Antinomianism in the Church

At the heart of most doctrinal error one often finds a defective view of God. In the 19th century, dispensationalism began to enter the church, even before C.I. Scofield popularized it after the turn of the 20th century. Dispensationalism posits a God who has changed His dealings with man repeatedly over time. Scofield reduced the binding Word to part of the New Testament. Some reduced it even further. Conveniently, the church was developing a Biblical theology that served as an apologetic for its withdrawal from the world. Biblical law and even the words of Jesus Christ were relegated to other dispensations far, far away. Not only was the church in retreat from the Word of God, it was defending such retreat as the only Biblical Christianity.

An aspect of dispensationalism is its antinomian ("against law") position. Antinomianism was not new to theology with dispensationalism, but virtually all antinomianism today owes its theological justification to some form

of dispensational theology. According to dispensational antinomianism, God deals differently with man in different dispensations or eras. The church age, which is said to begin after the ascension of Christ, supposedly frees believers from the requirements of the previous dispensations. Christians are thus said to be freed from the law by grace, as though the law was ever the source of man's bondage. Grace and law are said to be opposed, and the law is viewed with disdain by the antinomian church.

### The Christian and God's Law

The opposite of grace is not law, but deserved punishment. The opposite of the law is man's self-willed, lawlessness. The Bible does say we are dead to the law by the body of Christ (Rom. 7: 4, Gal. 2:19), but this is because we are dead to sin in Jesus Christ. Before God, the Supreme Judge, our death penalty has been paid by Christ's atonement; in His eyes we are dead to the law's indictment. We are freed from the law's indictment of our sins and its condemnation to death (Rom. 8:1-2) and are saved for a purpose, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us (Rom. 8:4).

Christ came to reverse the curse, to restore us to our created purpose. After the Fall, God promised redemption and defeat of Satan (Gen. 3:15). To this end, He called His covenanted people, gave them His law, and sent prophets to call them to obedience. Jesus Christ became the New Adam, the head of a new humanity. He makes us to be "born again" as new creatures by the power of His Spirit. Jesus Christ restores us to a legal standing of righteousness (justification) and empowers us by His Spirit to serve God. Christ reestablished Himself as the foundation of His new creation. Thus, He said that if we love Him, we keep His commandments, which include *all* of God's Word (Mt. 5:17-20).

Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of God's grace. We love God only by His gift of grace. If we love God and claim His grace as new creatures, we will seek to obey His Word.

### Viewing God and His Law

Anything God gives to undeserving man is grace. The promise in Eden and accomplishment of salvation at Calvary were acts of grace, but so is God's revelation of His will in His Word. God's law was, and still is, His revelation by grace of His will, which does not change. While we were rebels, God's law hung over us as a death sentence over a man on death row. The law represented indictment and death sentence. To the man saved from death, whose penalty God now judges as paid-in-full, the same law represents freedom, and the context of life as new creatures in Christ. As yet another act of grace, God puts His Spirit within us to empower us to love righteousness and resist sin. We are empowered to live under the "law of the Spirit of life" (Rom. 8:2).

The "law of the Spirit" has unfortunately been used by antinomians as an alternative to Biblical law as revealed in the Scriptures. This often leads to a belief that the Spirit of God might lead in a way other than that revealed in God's Word (some even falsely assume the Bible is the work of the Father alone). But such thinking imports our theological schizophrenia into the godhead. Because God is one, His Spirit will not lead any man in any way contrary to His revealed Word. Man is a sinner who, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, tends to believe lies and then rationalize them to prove himself right. This is the very basis of the Enlightenment's rationalism as a basis for knowing truth. Quite simply, Satan is a better liar than man is a discerner. If man rejects God's law he will believe in some other form of transcendent law. He may call it "spiritual,"

but the use of God's Spirit to challenge God's revealed Word is blasphemous, for it lays the responsibility for our disobedience on the assumed changeableness of God. Rather, we must see the triune God and His Word as unchangeable. We can and must judge what we perceive as the work of God's Spirit in terms of its conformity to God's Word. Too much of the modern church's "leading of the Spirit" is, in reality, the sinful self-will of lawless churchmen.

### Errors Regarding the Law

It is foolish to reject the binding nature of Biblical law simply because it has been the subject of error in the his-

tory of the church. The book of James dealt with the separation of works and grace yet held to the necessity of both, properly understood. Paul's letter to the Galatians dealt with the heresy of justification by the works of the law. Errors regarding the law, however, do not invalidate the law, or we would be without any Scripture or theology. Creation, incarnation, marriage, and the nature of the church have all been the subject of various false teachings, but we do not abandon Creationism, the doctrine of the incarnation, marriage, or the church to spite false teachings. Concern about false uses of God's law are valid, but contempt for the law is not.

God has been gracious in redeeming us by Christ's atonement. God has been gracious to us in sending the Spirit of life. God's Spirit will never lead us contrary to God's Word as contained in the Old and New Testaments. God's law was given to us as an act of God's grace, so that covenant man might know His will. It is time for the church to return to the psalmists exclamation, "Oh how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97). **CR**

### Suggested Reading List:

- *The Impulse of Power: Formative Ideals of Western Civilization* by Michael Kelley
- *The Death of Meaning* by R.J. Rushdoony
- *The One and the Many: Studies in the Philosophy of Order and Ultimacy* by R.J. Rushdoony
- *The Foundations of Social Order: Studies in the Creeds and Councils of the Early Church* by R.J. Rushdoony
- *The Institutes of Biblical Law* by R.J. Rushdoony
- *The Institutes of Biblical Law, Volume II: Law and Society* by R.J. Rushdoony



## Institute for Theonomic Reformation

*Empowering the Christian Community  
for Cultural Dominion*

### On-Line Newswire

- World News
- Economic Report
- Science & Technology
- Political Commentary
- Legal Review
- Intelligence Report

### Resources

- Family Law Index
- Home Education
- Biblical Law Index
- Theological Dictionary
- Greek/Latin Glossary

### Covenant Christian Academy

### Reformation/Puritan Theology

- Articles
- Commentary
- Poetry/Literature
- History
- Fine Arts

### Primary Source Documents

- Online Bookstore
- Audio Tapes
- CDs
- Videos

### Research & Links

[www.HisGlory.us](http://www.HisGlory.us)

Email: [pastor@HisGlory.us](mailto:pastor@HisGlory.us) • Phone: 434-352-2667 • Toll-free: 1-800-347-2330  
P.O. Box 778 • Appomattox, VA • 24522

# Biblical Law

*Ian Hodge*



The debate over Biblical law — especially Old Testament law — is not new. It has a long history, just like the centuries-old debate over Arianism. And just as Trinitarianism conquered Arianism historically, the advocates of Biblical law won over their anti-law opponents.

The emperor Julian the Apostate [Ed. reigned 361-363 AD] used Christian ambivalence to Biblical law as an excuse to deny the faith. He challenged antinomian Christians with their inconsistency, “Why do you not accept the Law which God gave the Jews? ... You assert that the earlier Law ... was limited in time and place. But I could quote to you from the books of Moses not merely ten but ten thousand passages where he says that the Law is for all time.”<sup>1</sup>

Soon after, the early church repented and set about reforming life with Biblical law — Old and New Testament — as the foundation. It changed Europe from Roman to Christian. The results have been remarkable and remain one of the great stumbling blocks, even today, for those who oppose Christianity. The early and medieval church influenced the surrounding culture to solve problems in society Biblically.

We know that in England by the time of Alfred the Great [Ed. reigned 871-899] — the only king the English have ever called great — the Bible had become the foundation of what we now call common law. Alfred himself translated parts of the Scriptures into

the common language, and employed scholars from the Continent to give his people the whole Bible in their native tongue. Alfred thus predates Wycliffe by several hundred years, and his work illustrates that the movement to provide the Bible in the vernacular tongue has a very long history. If Wycliffe was the morning star of the Reformation, then Alfred the Great was an even earlier bright light who provided the Bible for the common people.

Alfred the Great was a reformer in the best tradition. Not only did he provide the Scriptures for the people to understand, but he also reformed the legal structure of England. To do this he wrote the Ten Commandments and case-law examples from Exodus chapters 21-23 into the laws of England. While the Bible may not have been the only source of his laws, as he borrowed from other sources when it suited him, Alfred at least indicated that Biblical law — Old Testament law — was a very significant source for English law.

In countries that have inherited English common law, it is common to speak of the Christian origins of the common law that still governs so much of the legal framework. The legacy that Alfred the Great left is ... well, great, and remains with us in many respects. Unfortunately, those principles of Biblical law are gradually being undermined and lost.

One of the chief aspects of Biblical law is the status of the church. Today, most churches are more intent on making people feel good than telling them what their duties and obliga-

tions are. But at one time the church advised both king and subject on duty and obligation. The church not only advised rulers, but had also secured a unique position in society. In the battle between church and state, property has always been central. Property meant wealth, and wealth provided the means to mount an effective opposition to the state. So the church, after much difficulty, secured a position that protected its property, its money, and its people. For example, tax exemption declares that the church is not under state control, but takes its orders directly from above.

The church's influence in matters of the law thus affected the surrounding culture. The church's insistence on its kingdom-like status put all the kings of earth on notice that any power they desired was strictly limited by the church's teaching — and the church's teaching was, if nothing else, Biblical in origin. However faulty its application of the Bible might have been, the fact that the church successfully limited the powers of the secular courts is a remarkable testimony.

Chief among the church's triumphs has been her influence in the area of the family. Monogamous marriage in the Western world today is the result of the church's successful counter to pagan practices. It considered women equal in the marriage partnership, though this did not affect the duties and obligations that husband and wife owed to each other. It officially protected women and attempted to give them equal or near equal rights in property inheritance.

In order to administer justice, however, a body of law was needed, and the canonists turned to the Bible for their source. The church's view on marriage thus reflected Biblical law. Marriage, said the church, was a contract, and therefore required free choice of the individuals concerned. Coercion in the marriage contract was grounds for annulment. And the contract itself, between the groom and bride's father, reflected again the Biblical account of Moses securing a wife for himself. The payment of dowry for the bride was again an application of Old Testament ideals.

The church's views on property were also a development of Biblical law, and the protection it provided families was clearly drawn from the Biblical concept of private or family property. Under pagan laws, property had always been up for grabs. The church modified the idea that possession was nine-tenths of the law to allow the original titleholder to claim ownership, no matter who had possession. The idea of being a receiver of stolen goods, intentionally or otherwise, is an application of the concept of individual or family ownership, a practice still evident in our courts today.

Similarly, in our legislative chambers we find another carryover of Christian law, and that is the idea of equity and good faith. These are the underlying principles of the legislative processes still with us today.

The canonists in the medieval church were influential in establishing the concept of obligations and duty in terms of contracts. A man's word was to be honored and kept. Attached to this was the idea of oaths, an implied obligation to God. Under Roman law, agreements were not mutually binding, but the church's influence left a legacy that has lasted to the present age. When we sign a contract we are expected to fulfil its obligations and, if need arise,

we can insist through the courts that the other party maintain his part of the agreement.

The church was also instrumental in establishing the practice of making a will. It not only encouraged this, but also secured for itself the administration of deceased estates, a practice that continued until 1887.

In areas such as the prohibition of usury, and the creation of the just price, the church continued its influence. And while it is possible to disagree with some of the church's position, it is easy to agree with the source of the ideas: the Bible.

In so doing, the church moved society from arbitrary law to fixed law, from the whim of the monarch to the fixed laws of the King of kings. That the church no longer administers wills or contributes much in the way of policy debate over legislation illustrates the decline of the church. I deliberately speak of the church rather than Christianity, because while there are many who speak in the name of Christianity today, not many speak on the basis of formal ecclesiastical authority.

At one time in Western countries, a person was free to move around without fear of intrusive authorities. It was the police who had to show probable cause in apprehending a suspect, and they needed to get before a judge, usually within 24 hours, to prove their point. Now, people can be apprehended and held without charge for much longer periods, a legacy of 9/11 and the attempt by authorities to provide protection for everyone in the country. Some erosion came earlier with the introduction of random breath testing when the police pull over a driver they assume to be under the influence of alcohol, and the driver must prove his innocence. Longer detention, the denial of counsel, the proposed lack of freedom in some areas to even hold private conversation with

counsel, are all indications of a civilization that knows nothing about justice and equity, but instead panders to "theories of absolutism and enlightened despotism."<sup>2</sup> These are the principles that now rule our culture, not the more Biblical system of a former era.

We could never see another Alfred the Great at the start of the 21st century in this current religious climate. Christians cannot even agree on *whether* Biblical law should be applied, let alone *how* it should be applied. Christians are divided and, therefore, cannot stand against the power of the absolute state.

One thing is certain: the issues surrounding Biblical law, property, life, and God Himself, cannot be resolved by making people feel good, either about themselves or their lot in life. It will take another Reformation — of gigantic proportions — to force Christians to accept the necessity of Biblical law, then work to change the surrounding culture.

This is the task ahead of us, and the writings of R.J. Rushdoony and other Chalcedon writers have shown us the road and taken the first step. **CR**

Ian Hodge, AmusA, Ph.D., is Director of International Business Consulting for the Business Reform Foundation ([www.businessreform.com](http://www.businessreform.com)) a ministry that teaches how to apply the Bible to business and provides consulting services based on biblical principles. He writes a weekly Commentary at [www.biznetdaily.com](http://www.biznetdaily.com). When he is not business consulting, Ian enjoys exercising a ministry in music with his family ([www.musicreform.com](http://www.musicreform.com)).

1. Julian, Against the Galileans, quoted in Will Durant, *The History of Civilization: The Age of Faith* (New York: MJF Books, 1950) p. 16.
2. Gabriel Le Bras, "Canon Law," in C.G. Crump and E.F. Jacob, eds., *The Legacy of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 359.



# Acts 25

## And The Theonomy Question

Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., Th.D.



**“For if I am an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.”**  
Acts 25:11

### The Anti-theonomic Charge

In Will Barker’s *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique*, Dennis Johnson, of Westminster Theological Seminary, attempts to disprove theonomy, partly by reference to this verse. He comments on this verse:

Is Paul here making a direct appeal to the Mosaic judicial laws as defining crimes that cause one to be “deserving of death”? Certainly Paul does claim not to have violated the law of the Jews (v. 8), but it is pressing his words further than the context will allow to argue that Paul expects the pagan Festus to understand the complexities of the Torah ... well enough to find Paul’s appeal intelligible and persuasive. On this point it is most natural to suppose that Paul is appealing to Roman law. (pp. 180-81)

Johnson has seriously erred here. There are numerous and compelling indications that the Mosaic sanctions are in Paul’s mind as he utters the words of Acts 25:11.

### The Theonomic Response

First, though Paul himself is in Caesarea, this portion of his series of trials was initially engaged before the *Sanhedrim* and Festus by Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 25:1-2). These accusers demanded

that Paul be brought to Jerusalem for trial (v. 3). Thus, its historical circumstances were pre-eminently in terms of Jewish legal concerns.

Second, according to J. A. Alexander’s comments on Acts 25:7, “the nature of these charges may be gathered from the former accusation [Acts 24: 5-6] and the abstract of Paul’s answer in the next verse.”<sup>1</sup> The “former accusation” is found in Acts 24:5-6, where the charges before Felix read: “For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, and wanted to judge him according to our law.” Indisputably these are *Jewish* charges that, in the Sanhedrin view, demand redress “according to *our law*.”

The “abstract of Paul’s answer” is found in verse 8: “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.” The first two foundational points of defense relate to “the law of the Jews” and the charge regarding temple desecration. And then he adds for good measure that he has not even offended Caesar’s law.

Third, because of this, Festus asked Paul: “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?” (Acts 25:9). *The case is close to being remanded back to the Sanhedrin, where matters of Jewish law would be dealt with.*

Fourth, an earlier charge in this series of legal woes for Paul directly relates

his worthiness of death to the Jewish law: “I found out that he was accused concerning questions of *their law*, but had nothing charged against him worthy of death [*axion thanatou*] or chains” (Acts 23:29). The same terminology is used by Paul in his protestation against the charges against him: “For if I am an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death [*axion thanatou*], I do not object to dying” (Acts 25:11a).

It is important to notice that Paul considers the case already to have been tried and concluded in Jerusalem before the Sanhedrim: “... but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar” (Acts 25: 11b). That is, “if such is the result of the investigation just concluded, then *I do not refuse* ....”<sup>2</sup> “These things” charged to Paul are clearly spelled out in Acts 23: 28-29: “And when I wanted to know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. I found out that he was accused *concerning questions of their law*, but had nothing charged against him worthy of death or chains.” And later in Acts 24:13 and 20, he confirms that the trial by the council (Gk. *sunhedrion*) could not establish his guilt: “Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me .... Or else let those who are here themselves say if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council.” Because of the concluded proceedings Paul can say to Festus: “To the Jews I have done no wrong, *as you very well know*.”

*continued on page 31*

# The Trinity and Storytelling

Greg Uttinger



## Within the Trinity

Before the beginning there was communication. The Persons of the Trinity, from all eternity, shared intimate fellowship and counsel. They made promises to one another (Tit. 1:2). They assumed obligations (Jn. 14:31; 17:2). They took on roles. The Father gave the Son a people and instructions concerning them (Jn. 17). The Son became the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8; cf. 1 Pet. 1:19-20). The Holy Spirit agreed to wait on the earthly work of the Son and to come in His name (Jn. 16:7-15; cf. 7:39). They did these things in love, seeking the glory of one another (Jn. 14:13; 16:14; 17:1-5, 24-26).<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, in those eternal counsels, the Father ordained the details of Christ’s mission: the conspiracy against Him, His betrayal, His sufferings and death, His resurrection, His ascension to the Father’s right hand, and His outpouring of the Spirit (cf. Ac. 1:15-25; 2:23-35; 4:27-28). The plans were specific, for the prophecies that revealed them listed more than twenty details (some quite odd) that God would bring to pass.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, the Son and the Spirit knew the mind of the Father in these things (Jn. 5:20; 1 Cor. 2:10).

God decreed other things in eternity: for His “own purpose and grace... was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Tim. 1:9). He ordained us to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). He foreordained all the good works we would do (Eph. 2:

10). In other words, God planned more than the Cross, and more than the moment of our conversion; He has planned the whole of our lives. In fact, He has planned everything. God works “all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:11). He declares “the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Is. 46:10). In God’s decrees we find the magnificent doctrines of predestination and divine sovereignty. But we also find supreme storytelling.

## God as Storyteller

Before the world began, the Persons of the Trinity communicated to one another the nature of the history They would create. They communicated all that They would do, all that would happen. And They rejoiced in their plan. This is where Storytelling began.

Christians have coined the phrase, “History is *His* story,” and this is true. But evangelicals who use this cliché rarely think through the implied analogy. For an author writes the entire story, every word. He creates the characters; he orchestrates the plot; he hammers out the details. He leaves no blanks in his manuscript.

Now this is exactly how Scripture presents God’s control of history. History is what it is because of what passed among the Persons of the Trinity in eternity. From eternity God ordained all of history’s details, large and small. He decreed the rise and fall of empires (Dan. 7, 11), the great crimes and the noble deeds of men (Ac. 4:26-28; Is. 44:24-28), the roll of the die and the fall of

the sparrow (Pr. 16:33; Mt. 10:29). We are comforted by Romans 8:28, and yet if God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28), is it not precisely because He does control all things and does cause them to work together?

But in spite of the clear testimony of Scripture, evangelical theology often shies away from God’s sovereignty. It makes the story we call history a joint effort, a collaboration between God and man. God devises the basic plot line, but man makes sovereign choices that God must work around as best as He can.<sup>3</sup> Evangelical theology gives us not “His Story” but “Our Shared Story — in Process.”<sup>4</sup>

## Man as Character

It seems many of us are uncomfortable thinking of ourselves as characters in someone else’s story. We want more literary control, perhaps. Or we may fear such a situation would destroy our moral responsibility or our significance as human beings. Or maybe we think that it would somehow make God responsible for evil or callous to our suffering. There are several things we need to remember, however.

First, we are talking about God’s story. God’s story differs from all others in that God, being all-powerful, has made His story real. We are not characters on paper or celluloid; we are not moving images in the mind of God. We are real beings, distinct from the God who made us. Moreover, we are the image of God. We are significant. Our choices and feelings, though not absolute or divine, are nevertheless real.

Second, within His story God has ordained that consequences spring from choice, and choice from character. Jesus was arrested because Judas betrayed Him. Judas betrayed Him, not simply because the part was ordained for him, but because he was a thief and a traitor. He chose to betray Jesus because he *wanted* to betray Jesus. Likewise, Joseph's brothers "could not speak peaceably unto him," not because divine sovereignty had unfairly shut their mouths, but because their hearts were full of envy and hate (Gen. 37:4). They sold their brother into slavery, fully intending evil, though God intended good (Gen. 50:20). They acted out of their own character; they behaved as the men they were. We find the same thing in the life of David. Late in his reign, David conducted an illegal census. 2 Samuel 24:1 says he was moved by God; 1 Chronicles 21:1 says he was moved by Satan. Even so, David confessed, "I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing... I have done very foolishly (1 Chr. 21:8).<sup>5</sup> David had acted out of his own pride, and he knew it.

Third, God knows His own mind exhaustively, and He is infinitely wise. His story, therefore, is exactly what he wants it to be. Human authors may struggle with development or resolution. They may unwittingly generate artistic touches they had not intended.<sup>6</sup> Or they may find it difficult to reconcile the characters they have created with the plot or theme they originally had in mind. An author, for example, may find that his naïve heroine, who was supposed to fall for the dark foreigner, is in fact too much of a provincial to do any such thing. But God does not have this sort of plotting problem. His characters never get out of hand. Character, plot, and theme function in perfect harmony.

Fourth, God is not responsible for the evil men do (Jas. 1:13-14). Of course, we do not blame Shakespeare for

the treachery of Macbeth. We do not charge Agatha Christie with the murder on the Orient Express. Even on the human level there is a sort of creator/creation distinction that we all recognize. But what human authors can and can't do only gives us hints about divine sovereignty. How does God work all things after the counsel of His own will? How does He ensure that His characters do all the things they're supposed to? We don't know. We're not God. But what He does, He does in absolute holiness and purity.

Fifth, if we are in Someone Else's story, then our lives have a meaning and value that transcend ourselves. We are defined by the story and its theme. But if God is dead, if there is no Storyteller, then we are all writing our own stories. The bad news is that we are pitiful writers; the irony is that, in this godless world, the very idea of story is alien to our existence. Story, like meaning, is only meaningful on the assumption that God is and that He created the universe. The alternative to God as Author is no story at all.

Sixth, God has entered His own story as its Hero. In that role He has suffered more than any of us. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched by the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). God does not regard His children with a callous eye. He pities us as a Father; He remembers we are dust (Ps. 103:14). We must learn to trust the Storyteller.

### The Story in the Book

History is His story. But history is complex beyond our kin. There are too many facts, too many twists and turns, too many unknowns. It isn't even finished yet. Deriving a philosophy of storytelling from our observations of history would be problematic at best, even if we didn't have our fallen imagi-

nations to work with. We have, however, a more sure word for storytelling. God has written a Book that contains the heart of His story.<sup>7</sup> For the Bible has the same plot and theme as the story itself. But the Bible goes further. It teaches us how the Author thinks and how His world works. The Bible, for example, teaches us the source and nature of conflict. It explains what a hero really is and what he must do. It demonstrates plot complication, suspense, and foreshadowing. It shows us the possibility of resolution. It gives us climax, denouement, and unity of theme. It teaches both by doctrine and example.

And its lessons are necessary. For we are the image of God. We will tell stories. We will listen to stories. We will watch stories. And these stories can be powerful things. We had better learn from them. **CR**

Greg Uttinger teaches theology, history, and literature at Cornerstone Christian School in Roseville, California. He lives nearby in Sacramento County with his wife, Kate, and their three children.

1. See Greg Uttinger, "The Trinity and Love," *Chalcedon Report*, No. 410, September 1999.
2. Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1979), 158-166.
3. God becomes the Game-Master in a cosmic role-playing game. He works from a pre-written module, but He has to make room for a great deal of player digression, innovation, and stupidity.
4. Open theism takes this to its logical conclusion. Even God doesn't know what's in the next chapter since He and man haven't collaborated on it yet.
5. Scripture sees no conflict between these three propositions.
6. Dorothy Sayers give a good example of this in *The Mind of the Maker*, ch. 5.
7. And many subsidiary stories as well.

# Our Fathers Faith: Genealogical Research and Covenant Evangelism

*Roger Schultz, Ph.D.*



Five years ago I searched the archives of a small county historical society for information on my great-grandfather, Samuel Allston (1859-1944). I had a special interest in him, as I had grown up on his homestead in north central Minnesota and from my grandmother had heard stories about his family's migration from Ireland. As children, my cousins and I played in the little cabin on our farm that had been his last home.

## **A Treasure Chest!**

Earlier searches had been unproductive, but in checking a spelling variant, Alston, I hit the jackpot. The archive contained a formal interview that my great-grandfather had given in 1939, when he was 80. The interview described his youth, the family's disastrous migration to the United States, and his subsequent life story. The Allstons had settled in an upstate New York milltown, where three of his siblings and his father died soon afterwards as the result of a typhus epidemic. Eleven-year old Samuel was reduced to child labor to provide for the remnants of the family. Always sickly, by the time he was a young man Allston was gravely ill with the "galloping consumption" and physicians recommended a new climate. It was 35 degrees below zero when he made the wintry trek to Minnesota. On the advice of his new doctor, a homeopath who believed in the restorative

powers of resinous pine "airs," Allston went to work in a remote logging camp. He had plenty of food, hard work and clean air, and by the spring he left the woods "completely cured." This is where genealogy is fun. My great-grandfather was a Minnesota lumberjack: Cool!

The file also contained family photographs — ones that had been loaned to the historical society in 1939 and forgotten. "Do you recognize this person?" I asked my 95-year old grandmother when I returned from the archives, holding up a photograph of her mother. There were few photographs of my great-grandmother, and grandma hadn't seen this photograph in nearly 60 years. Tears welled up in her cataract-clouded eyes as she said, "It looks like ... my mother!" That is where genealogy is really fun.

We have a covenantal faith. God makes covenant with us and with our children (Gen. 17:7). We are called to honor mother and father (Ex. 20:12). For our edification, Scripture records the details of past generations, in both positive and negative ways. And Job 8: 8-10 urges us to learn from our forbearers: "Please inquire of past generations, and consider the things searched out by our fathers. For we are only of yesterday and know nothing, because our days on earth are as a shadow. Will they not teach you and tell you, and bring forth words from their minds?"

Genealogy can be a powerful tool. It provides an excellent opportunity

to teach and learn history. It provides excellent opportunities to learn research methods. (Genealogists constantly ask questions about accessibility, documentation and verification.) It provides excellent opportunities for homeschool projects — teaching about families and their histories. Most importantly, at least for those from Christian families, genealogical research provides opportunities to learn about the faith of our fathers. What follows, then, are practical ideas about how to initiate such research.

## **How to Begin**

First, one can begin simply, by constructing a family tree. Make a list of parents, and grandparents, siblings and children, cousins, and grandchildren. (Quick question: what is your maternal grandmother's maiden name? Most adults, I suspect, would recognize the name but wouldn't be able to recall it. It is all too easy to forget the commonplace past.) Those who are ambitious can track down dates for marriages, births, and deaths. The family tree will introduce other questions. Grandma and grandpa, for instance, were alive during the Depression and World War II. What was life like for them? What do they remember about those years?

Second, budding genealogists can conduct oral interviews. Interview parents and grandparents. Start with questions about life's milestones (conversion, marriage, children, vocation, church, etc). And be sure to ask qualitative or reflective questions. (What lessons have

you learned? How has God guided you? What advice do you have for the next generation?)

Some old timers are fuzzy on details, but will become more lucid when talking about issues of importance to them. I once interviewed “Daddy Zeke,” a nonagenarian black patriarch in southwest Virginia. He didn’t recall much about the things on my list of questions concerning segregation and the civil rights movement. But he came alive when I asked questions about his family, his work, and his church (right next door, for which he donated the land). He recalled working overtime to pay off the house and with great passion described taking possession of “the deed.” Mr. Johnson had a wonderful Christian testimony and was an inspiration for his descendants who lived all about him, including his grandson who pastors the family church.

Third, genealogists should check on local resources. Public libraries usually have sections on local and genealogical history. If your family has lived in an area for any time, there should be some information. It can be exciting to use microfilm of the local newspaper, even if it is just to show a youngster his birth announcement or to show what was in the headlines on that date.

### Rich Sources of Information

Sometimes libraries will have special collections useful to a researcher. In looking through microfilm of naturalization papers for my home county, for instance, I uncovered my German grandfather’s immigration paperwork. “I understand that Grandpa was neither a polygamist nor an anarchist,” I told Grandma upon my return home. When she gave me a puzzled look, I pulled out a photocopy of the document where he had sworn to those facts.

Fourth, census information can be helpful. The federal government first

authorized a census in 1790, and one is conducted every ten years. They can be rich sources of information, not only listing the names of household members, but also their age, country of birth, literacy and occupation.

States also authorized censuses, and I found the 1905 Minnesota census interesting, particularly on the issue of origins. At the time, my great-grandfather’s household included himself (born in Ireland), his mother (born in Scotland), his wife (born in the U.S.), and my grandmother, who was the last child remaining at home. Researching the census shortly after *Braveheart* came out, I was delighted to have a Scottish ancestor. And it seemed a nice coincidence that I had lived with my grandmother, as she had with hers. “Tell me about your Scottish grandmother,” I said, “What was she like?” My grandmother, a kindly person who never said anything bad about anyone, paused for a long time. Finally she said, “You know, she had a hard life — what with losing those children and her husband after coming to America, and I don’t think she was quite right in the head.”

### Correspondence and Pictures

Fifth, research might include family ephemera, like pictures and artifacts, or correspondence. A student once did research on her grandfather who was killed in Italy late in World War II. Missy had known little about him and that side of the family, but discovered a stack of correspondence that the grandfather had written to his parents. Homesick and desperate to return to his young sons and pregnant wife, the young soldier wrote heart-wrenching letters home, and everyone in our class had teary eyes as Missy read excerpts from the letters. At one point, Missy’s grandfather told his parents not to worry about him anymore, as he had got things “straight” with the Lord. He

was killed in action shortly afterward. It was highly meaningful for Missy to find in the long-lost correspondence a record of her grandfather’s salvation.

Finally, researchers might try to find family genealogies. Often, other relatives have done the legwork in collecting family history, and you can build upon their labors. A friend of mine, for instance, was delighted to learn that he was a direct descendent of Rev. John Thompson, an 18th century Presbyterian minister and strong advocate of confessional integrity. Thompson also authored a catechism, which my friend passed along to his children. It was a powerful tool to show where their family had come from, to show them their ancestor’s commitment to the Lord and the church, and to challenge the next generation.

There are many things I don’t know about the life of Samuel Allston. I know that he had a tough time in the new country, and I gather that he was strict and parsimonious. Yet the interviewer described him as a “devout Presbyterian,” and my Baptist grandmother confirmed that: “he always catechized us, and he never missed family devotions.” It is encouraging to know that we are descended from those who loved the Lord and His Word, and by studying their histories we can be moved to greater faithfulness. **CR**

Dr. Schultz is Chairman of the History Department at Liberty University, teaches Church History at Christ College, and is the homeschooling father of nine children.

# And the Peasants Rejoiced

William Blankschaen



Poor Tim. Tim Allen, that is, of *Home Improvement* sitcom fame. Aside from his endless quest for bigger and better power tools and

manly grunting, he actually contributed something useful to my own perception of things in an episode in which his wife wanted to watch ballet, but Tim wanted football. Always the clever schemer, he devised a compromise that appeased his wife by splicing recorded scenes together from both events, first the football game, then ballet. He humorously tried justifying the blending of events by adding humorous commentary: “Bone-jarring tackle!” — switch to ballet dancers — “And the peasants rejoiced!” It made for a humorous ending to marital conflict, but, of course, nothing was truly resolved.

Yet somehow, the image of peasants, poor and destitute, of desperate people rejoicing at meager success struck me as a sad, yet often mimicked, practice in education today. When a conflict rages between two opposing views, a faulty compromise is reached — and the peasants (who don’t know any better) rejoice. Because they don’t know any better, because they’re too desperate to discern, or because, like a tired Tolstoy character, they’ve just grown weary of trying to figure it all out. If you sometimes feel like one of those confused peasants — hold on! Stick with me for just a minute to consider a fresh approach to the conflict.

## Peaceful Coexistence Is Impossible!

Consider this claim: Any educational system that does not actively

promote a Biblical method of interpreting reality stands in flagrant opposition to the infallibility of Scripture. Like oil and water, capitalism and communism, ballet and football — the two cannot peacefully coexist in the same arena. If you don’t agree, that’s fine. Keep reading. Let’s look honestly and briefly at the two methods:

The Word of God presents a distinctive method of interpreting reality. It is:

- 1. God-centered** “In Him we live and move and have our being” (Ac. 17:28). “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Col. 1:17). “Apart from Him, life has no meaning.”<sup>1</sup>
- 2. Covenantal** The triune God is relationship driven by nature — three and one in perfect harmony. He is the ultimate One and Many, without conflict, tension, or dispute. Because He is Himself relationship driven, all of creation is related to and through Him.
- 3. Purpose-driven** Scriptures espouse a universe with objective meaning granted to it by a transcendent God for an eternal purpose. Consequently, history is moving in a linear fashion toward a victorious destination.

Each non-Biblical system, on the other hand, also presents its own unique method of interpreting reality, but all such methods seem to share the same essential qualities. They are:

- 1. Man-centered** That is all they can be in the absence of any transcendent factor. At the very least, human reason is set up as the ultimate authority, thereby positioning man as the measure of all things.
- 2. Chaotic** Without an understanding of the triune God, such methods view the One and Many in tension. The uni-

verse is a dialectical short circuit with no real answers, only constant competition between equally viable and equally destructive alternatives. Thus, the survival of the fittest determines the evolution of ideas, people, and animals.

**3. Nihilistic.** The universe has no objective meaning. We have no purpose. History is just a morass of mistakes that we are doomed to repeat to extinction.

## Implications of Infallibility

Here’s the point: through the Bible, God has revealed His method of interpreting reality. In His light, we see light (Ps. 36:9). God’s light, by His very nature, is not capable of error. If He could err, He could not be God. That’s what makes Him, and consequently His Word, infallible. So His method of interpreting reality must be the true method of interpreting reality because He is infallible.

OK. You’re right. I can see I’m losing some of you at this point by the simplicity of this point. But others may be dazed and confused, trying to harken back to a distant Sunday School class to remember just what exactly infallibility is. So here’s a brief refresher: God is incapable of erring. Note that it is not simply that He has yet to make a mistake, but that He could not possibly make a mistake; in fact, He couldn’t even want to. “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether” (Ps. 19:9). Because “it is impossible for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18) and the “truth of the Lord endures forever” (Ps. 117:2). In short, God is truth. But it’s not just that He is true; He is infinitely true.

God’s infinity may be the least understood of His incommunicable attributes (those that He shares with

no one). His infinity is “the absence of all limitations and defects.”<sup>2</sup> As God Himself queried rhetorically to Job, “Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?” (Job 11: 7-10). His truth has no limits or defects, nor could it. It is infinitely true, infinitely holy and without the possibility of error. Consequently, His revelation of Himself and His methods in Scripture has “a theological and infallible certainty, which cannot possibly deceive the true believer illuminated by the Spirit of God.”<sup>3</sup> To suggest that anything could even be mentioned as credible competition to God’s truth is sheer absurdity.

But now, back to the point. God is infallible. He has revealed the infallible method of interpreting reality. Any non-Biblical method is not — by definition — God’s method. Thus, we must conclude either that every non-Biblical method is wrong — by definition — or that God’s method *may* be wrong. But that would mean He is not infallible. That would mean God could be wrong. That would mean man could be right. And isn’t that what we’ve been saying ever since Eden? Could God finally be starting to “get it”?

Now let’s rewind. This point may have been lost in its own simplicity. It boils down to this — either God is infallible or He isn’t. Either His Word is incapable of containing error or it isn’t. There can be no question that the anti-God methods of interpreting reality employed in our government schools, most non-Christian private, and, yes, even some nominal Christian schools are diametrically opposed to the methods revealed in Scripture. We are left with only one question. Which method is valid? But know this. If we even entertain the notion that the anti-God methods *may* have credence, we have denied the infallibility of God and His Word. For you see, His truth is not on trial. Those who encounter it are.

### Choose Ye This Day

So if you’re still courageous and concerned enough about being faithful to the One who loved you and gave Himself for you that you’re still reading you might wonder — where does that leave parents who send their children to be indoctrinated by anti-God methods of interpreting reality? With two choices:

#### 1. Deny the infallibility of God.

Tell their children that there is strength in diversity. Feed them a multicultural line about Christians needing to be more open-minded. After all, if we could just quit judging others, everyone would like Christians a lot more. And isn’t love what the world’s really all about?

**2. Be honest.** Explain to their children why they are submitting them to be trained in methods of interpreting reality that are at war with the very existence of his Almighty and infallible Creator and therefore could not possibly be true. They shouldn’t conceal the truth behind coy clichés (“You’re a missionary, son.”) or tired excuses like the following ones heard so often:

#### “We just can’t afford an education that uses a Biblical method.”

Let’s see them try that on their children with other essentials of life. “Sorry, we just can’t afford food this week, kids.” No decent, or even wicked, parent could imagine saying such a thing. The truth is this: money is never the issue. The kingdom of Heaven has access to untold wealth. After all, the earth and it’s fullness belong to the Lord. Poor financial management? Too much pride to ask for help? Misplaced priorities? Yes, those may be credible excuses — credible, but still not valid.

#### “We can learn from them and then use that education to serve God.”

Oh, please, not this decrepit, “facts are neutral” argument again. Are we still stumbling over such idiotic logic? But beyond the myth of neutrality, this approach is like training a child in demoli-

tions so he can acquire expertise in construction. The purpose of the anti-God educational methods — by definition! — is to destroy the Kingdom of God, not to build it. Unfortunately, all too many parents have bought into this fallacious argument so that we now have a generation of Christians who excel at constructing kingdom edifices that are easily demolished.

#### “Well, the government is making us do it.”

As if that explains anything but their own unwillingness to do the right thing in the face of incredibly mild adversity. Do the words, “We ought to obey God rather than men” ring a bell here? The sad part is that some Christian parents would rather not waste an education (read here money) on their kids (“After all, Junior’s not the brightest bulb in the box.”), except that the mean, old government is forcing them to perform their covenantal duty toward their sacred trusts on loan from God.

You know, come to think of it, I guess there is a third option for these parents. In fact, perhaps this option would just clear up all the confusion in the first place. Perhaps they should drop the façade. Deny the validity of Christianity. Dare to dance without their Christian costume.

And the peasants *will* rejoice. **CR**

William Blankschaen has been blessed with a beautiful wife and three children. He is a teacher and administrator at Cornerstone Christian Academy near Cleveland, OH, and a writer of challenging essays and Christ-honoring fiction.

1. Greg Nelson and Phil McHugh, “A Chasing of the Wind,” Dayspring Music, 1991. Recorded by Steve Green on the album “We Believe.”
2. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Banner of Truth: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1998), p. 60.
3. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing: Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1992), p. 62.

# FOCUS on Dominion

Ford and Andrea Schwartz

*And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (Matthew 25:40)*

Who qualifies as the “least” in Our Lord’s statement? A homeless person? A patient in a coma? Unborn children with diagnosed medical concerns? If you were perplexed at the last category, note that 80% of unborn children diagnosed with medical concerns are aborted. Yet, there is a group of Christians who actually seeks out and adopts such children, often agreeing to do so before these children are born.

Christian Homes Adopting Special Kids (CHASK), operated by Tom and Sherry Bushnell, is an organization of hundreds of families that is part of a greater umbrella organization of 14,000 families — National Challenged Homeschoolers Associated Network (NATHHAN). These organizations exist to encourage “homeschooling families with special needs children, in ways that glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and finding Christian homes for special needs children.”

Six months after their third child Tally (born with Down’s Syndrome) died at the age of 3 months, the Bushnells received a phone call from a midwife explaining that a child who was born with Down’s Syndrome was not wanted by his family. The Bushnells agreed to adopt the two-week old boy and Jordon, now 16, has been a member of their family ever since. Along with 8 siblings born to Sherry and Tom, Jordon also has 2 adopted siblings: Sheela, adopted at age two with blindness and no eyes and Sherlyn, adopted at age one with cerebral palsy and autism.

CHASK is not an adoption agency. However, it brings together birth parents who, for whatever reason, feel incapable of raising a child with severe medical problems and prospective Christian families answering the Lord’s call to serve Him in this way. Often it is through Pregnancy Centers, churches, or ob/gyns that this option is presented to a birth mother. CHASK gives her three profiles of candidates that seem suited for her particular situation. The choice remains with her. CHASK is there to refer her to the proper agencies or lawyers that can help bring about an adoption.

Friends of Chalcedon (FOC) recently had the opportunity to interview the Bushnells about their involvement with CHASK.

**FOC:** You indicated that the writings of Rousas John Rushdoony had a tremendous effect on your theology and worldview. Please elaborate on that.

**CHASK:** The late Rousas John Rushdoony was a trail-blazing, Christ-honoring man. Those who have studied his writings, such as myself, have come to a greater understanding of the significance of presuppositional apologetics. I better comprehend the spheres of responsibility of the civil government, the church government, and the family government. The crossover lines where these can work together or apart was of great interest to me. Rush’s life work is significant to those who have made a big impact on the body of Christ today, especially in the area of homeschooling. We were particularly impacted by his understanding of the God-given responsibility of fathers to train their children.

**FOC:** Many who hear your story marvel

at your level of compassion and stamina. Do you consider yourself, your family, and the other CHASK families to be extraordinary people?

**CHASK:** We consider ourselves obedient to whatever God has planned for us, just like you are doing what you feel God has called you to do. Those of us who have children with special needs, probably do not see the whole area of “handicaps” as so daunting. Our experience is that our children are children first, then they carry a label called “disability.”

**FOC:** Many Christians strive to put the dominion mandate into effect in their lives, seeking how God would have them do this. Do you consider adopting a child with significant medical concerns — possibly with some that guarantee a short life span — to be a dominion activity?

**CHASK:** We believe Christians should live what they believe. Adopting a child with severe delays may be the way God has called us to further His kingdom. All lives are sacred and have a purpose from God’s perspective, from conception, birth, and on. Our job is to work out daily His purpose. We do not know why certain children are born with particular needs, outside of the fact that there is sin the world. We do understand that God works all things out for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

**FOC:** What would you consider to be the primary qualifications for parents considering the adoption of a medically challenged child?

**CHASK:** From a CHASK perspective, we ask adoptive parents to be mindful of birth parents and their needs first. This



missionary mind-set is not for everyone. We consider any family that has a desire to work for the Lord and has a solid relationship with Him and each other in the home. The birth parents are the ones who choose the home for their baby.

**FOC:** What kind of support have you and the other CHASK families needed in order to accept this tremendous responsibility and not short-change your existing children?

**CHASK:** NATHHAN has a database of over 14,000 families. Many of these parents are experienced in special needs. Their children are older. They are ready to reach out and help others. We have each other to lean on and get resources if we are in need. There are also a lot of folks privately supporting CHASK financially who do not have children with disabilities. This support is how we as families are able to reach out.

One of the good things that has come about because of the ministry's growth is that we have hired 2 full time workers. This is making NATHHAN more productive and blending CHASK successfully with in-place operations.

**FOC:** What would you recommend to folks who would like to assist in your mission, but don't feel called to actually adopt?

**CHASK:** There are several areas of support that have been excellent.

1. Churches and others have taken a special offering to provide a loving home for a little boy born with only a brain stem. They have provided help for the adoptive family's legal costs. This is through our "Already Loved Fund" program. Many more families are needed to lovingly support special needs babies like this, saying to the doctors, "We already love this baby and are willing to help provide a home."

2. With the financial help of families outside of NATHHAN, 100,000 "adverse prenatal diagnosis" brochures are in the hands of birth parents, giving them encouragement to choose life for their baby with special needs.

3. Families in all areas of the U.S. are needed for one-on-one comfort and encouragement for birth parents facing the possibility of disability in their child or even possible death of their baby upon birth. Just having someone who cares makes a huge difference.

**FOC:** Does the task that you've undertaken ever seemed burdensome to you?

**CHASK:** We do feel a weight of responsibility. Because of our rapid growth, we are constantly reassessing our needs in order to find solutions. We really want to do what God wants, however He wants it done. We are learning to lean on Him daily ... even hourly.

---

Our culture has abandoned God's mandate to care for those who cannot care for themselves — those about to be slaughtered. Over the years we've asked ourselves why the Lord has spared our country — one that makes it perfectly legal to kill a defenseless child in his mother's womb. CHASK represents a remnant not unlike the early Christians in Rome who provided salt and light to the culture around them. As R.J. Rushdoony relates in his book *The Atheism of the Early Church*:

Two battles, which marked the early church from the beginning, we still have with us today. The first was over the question of sovereignty or lordship, and the second was over the issue of abortion. Abortion was entirely legal within the Empire, but the early church instituted very severe penalties against any of its members involved in this very common practice. But that is not all. At the same time, the early church began

to deal with the results of this world of abortion.

Not every abortionist in those days functioned with the cold and brutal efficiency common to us now. Therefore, they were not always successful in aborting babies. As a result, when the unwanted babies were born, they were promptly taken and abandoned under the bridges of the river Tiber in Rome. In other cities there were places which were routinely used for abandoning babies.

The Christians made it their habit immediately to go to the places where these babies were abandoned — to be devoured, as Tertullian said, by wild dogs — to collect these infants and parcel them out from family to family. This tells us something about the life of faith among these believers. How many members of congregations today would welcome an officer of the church coming by with an abandoned baby or two, and feel it was their duty to rear them in faith!<sup>1</sup>

May God richly bless these families and raise up more to care for these the *least of His brethren*. May their example energize and enrich others in their own particular dominion callings. **CR**

For more information about CHASK/NATHHAN contact:

NATHHAN  
PO Box 39  
Porthill, ID 83853  
(208) 267-6246  
Email: NATHANNEWS@aol.com  
www.nathan.com  
www.chask.org

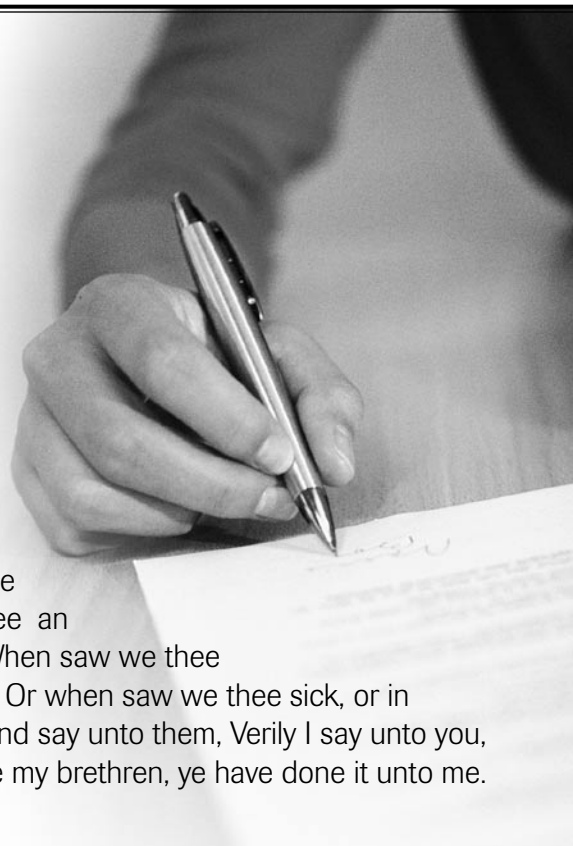
1. R.J. Rushdoony, *The Atheism of the Early Church* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1983, 2000), 10.

# **FOCUS on Dominion**

## ***Essay Contest Announcement***

### **Topic: "The Least of My Brethren"**

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matthew 25:34-40



**Essay:** Entrants (16 – 19 years of age) must submit an essay (750 – 1000 words) describing their particular application and execution of Matthew 25:34-40. The essay must include specifics of something they have actually participated in and the details of their participation. No abstract ideas that have never been tested are eligible.

**Verification:** Each essay must be accompanied by two attestations that the application described has actually taken place and that the report of such is accurate and honest. A parent or pastor must be one of the attestations and contact information for them must be included.

<b>Awards:</b>	<b>First Place</b>	<b>- \$500</b>
	<b>Second Place</b>	<b>- \$300</b>
	<b>Third Place</b>	<b>- \$200</b>

**Judging & Deadline:** A blind judging system will be used to determine the winners. The decision of the judges will be final. Submissions must be received before April 11, 2004.

**Complete forms available at: [www.chalcedon.edu](http://www.chalcedon.edu)**

Emmaus Christian Fellowship sponsors this contest as part of its continuing effort to equip Christians to defend the Faith. For more information about ways to support this ministry contact:

**Emmaus Christian Fellowship**

4960 Almaden Expressway, #172 • San Jose, California 95118 • [ecf\\_sj@ix.netcom.com](mailto:ecf_sj@ix.netcom.com)

# Order Form

**Price Range**      **Shipping Cost**      **Also Available**

under \$5 ..... \$2.00      Next Day Air,

\$5.01-\$15.00..... \$4.00      Second Day Air,

\$15.01-\$40.00..... \$6.00      Third Day Select,

Over \$40.00 ..... 15% of order      and Priority Mail.

**Orders shipped outside U.S**      Please call for  
**add additional \$8.00**      shipping rates  
209-736-4365.

## 4 Easy Ways to Order...

- 1. Order By Mail**  
Chalcedon  
P.O. Box 158  
Vallecito, CA 95251-9989
- 2. Order by Phone**  
209-736-4365
- 3. Order by Fax**  
209-736-0536
- 4. Order by Email**  
chorders@goldrush.com

Qty	Item (Description)	Unit Price	Total
	<b>Chariots of Prophetic Fire: Studies in Elijah and Elisha</b>	\$30.00	
	<b>Institutes of Biblical Law Volume 3</b>	\$25.00	
	<b>Genesis, Volume 1 of Commentaries on the Pentateuch</b>	\$45.00	
	<b>Flight of Humanity - FREE Book (w/purchase of Genesis commentary)</b>	\$5.00	\$0.00
	<b>American History to 1865 - Audio Series (18 tapes)</b>	\$90.00	
	<b>This Independent Republic - FREE Book (w/purchase of American History to 1865)</b>	\$17.00	\$0.00
<b>Sub-total</b>			
(California residents add 7.25% sales tax) <b>Tax</b>			
(See chart above) <b>Shipping</b>			
(Send me a trial subscription to the Chalcedon Report) <b>Donation</b>			
<b>Total</b>			

**Ship to: (Please print clearly)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone\* \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Method of Payment:**  Check  Money Order  Visa  Master Card  Amex  Discover

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date\* \_\_\_\_\_

- Payment must accompany all orders. We do not bill.
- Foreign orders: Pay by check payable in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank, Master Card, Visa, Discover, American Express, or money order in U.S. Dollars.
- Prices subject to change without notice.
- Make checks payable to Chalcedon.
- Credit card orders may be phoned or faxed to the numbers below.

Signature\* \_\_\_\_\_ \*Required for credit card orders



## Online shopping made easy

Now you can search the entire Chalcedon and Ross House catalog of books, monographs, audio tapes, and video anytime you want to. Our convenient, secure shopping cart makes ordering simple and safe. Visit often to find out about updates and new releases.

[www.chalcedonstore.com](http://www.chalcedonstore.com)

# By Force? or By Persuasion?

Tom Rose



When analysts have difficulty determining the major trend of stock prices because of the “static” of conflicting price signals in daily market activity, they often resort to comparing daily or weekly price trends with longer-term trends (like a 200-day moving average). This longer view helps smooth the static of conflicting signals generated by fluctuating daily or weekly price actions, thus enabling the analyst to more accurately discern long trends.

Similarly, taking a long-term view of history is useful in discerning trends in society, especially in the growing intrusion of civil government into our private lives, and the political and economic activity we do to generate our personal incomes.

For instance, if we take a panoramic view of the entire 20th century, we see that in the early 1900s, during the so-called “Progressive Era,” radical spiritual and political changes occurred in America that generated a gradual drift during the rest of the century. None of these changes increased economic freedom or political liberty. Rather, they gradually shackled our economic freedom through a fascist bureaucracy.<sup>1</sup> What happened in the spiritual sphere is that our country shifted from a negative concept of law that previously limited the power of the state to punishing wrongdoers, to a positive concept of law that now empowers the state to invade every facet of our public and private lives.

R.J. Rushdoony ably discusses the difference between the concepts of Biblical negative law and humanistic *positive* law:

A negative concept of law confers a double benefit ... It states, “Thou shalt not steal.” ... A negative statement thus deals with a particular evil directly and plainly: it prohibits it, makes it illegal. The law thus has a *modest* function; *the law is limited, and therefore the state is limited.* The state, as the enforcing agency, is limited to dealing with evil, not controlling all men ... [A] *negative concept of law insures liberty:* except for the prohibited areas, all of man’s life is beyond the law, and the law is of necessity indifferent to it. If the commandment says, “Thou shalt not steal,” it means that the law can only govern theft: it cannot govern or control honestly acquired property ... *The negativity of the law is the preservation of the positive life and freedom of man.*

But, if the law is positive in its function, ... then the state has total jurisdiction to compel. The immediate consequence is a double penalty on the people. *First*, an omniscient state is posited, and a totalitarian state results. Everything becomes a part of the state’s jurisdiction, because everything can potentially contribute to the health or the destruction of the people. *Because the law is unlimited, the state is unlimited. It becomes the business of the state, not to control evil, but to control all men.* Basic to every totalitarian regime is a positive concept of the function of law.

This means, *second*, that no area of liberty can exist for man; there is then no area of things indifferent, of actions, concerns, and thoughts which the state cannot govern ...<sup>2</sup>

This seismic shift in the concept of civil law reflected an inner, spiritual shift that gradually occurred in the American mindset. The entire 20th century saw a vast “continental drift” in Americans’ concept of law, civil government, and economic exchange.

In the early 1900s Americans were generally independent and self-reliant. They zealously saved and invested for the future. When workers were laid off from work, they immediately searched for new employment or undertook entrepreneurial activity to generate income. They did not look to the state for unemployment benefits, welfare payments, or food stamps. Christian diaconal outreach programs were active. In contrast, seven decades later a church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, received a call from a young mother with her two children whose car had broken down. When the pastor and deacon went to see her, she complained:

I phoned 14 churches, and you are the only one that responded Biblically! All the other churches referred me to a government agency, but I want to be helped by Christians!

The pastor and deacon got her car started, filled it with gas, and sent her on her way. Can you imagine the statist mindset held by the spiritual leaders of the other 13 churches?

## How Do We Earn Our Incomes?

This historical review brings us to consider a very important question: Is the income we personally receive generated by force or by persuasion? That is, do we live by income that is earned voluntarily through the competitive free-market economy, or do we rely on coercion exerted by civil government for our income? And, in either case — by force or by persuasion — is our way of getting income Biblical or unbiblical? This question is extremely important today. Why? Because the public’s view of the proper role of civil government

has shifted tremendously during the 20th century; today many facets of income received by individuals rely on the coercive arm of the civil authority.

Making one's income from monies coercively collected by the state is not necessarily evil or unbiblical because the state has a Biblical mandate to exist through taxation (Rom.13:6-7). But, the state's *proper* role in society, as pointed out by Rushdoony, is to exert a *negative* force of law (Rom.13:3-4) and a *limited* role of authority (Dt.17:18-29) that does not invade the liberty and self-responsibility of individuals in their service to God (Ex. 8:1).

Coercive incomes that are Biblical are policemen, sheriffs and their deputies, judges and employees of the court system, tax collectors, military personnel, and business firms and individual contractors who sell necessary goods and services to those mentioned.

However, not everyone who draws income from the state gets it Biblically or honestly. Why not? Some of those mentioned can receive part of their incomes from under-the-table payoffs — judges, police, and other government employees, for instance, have been known to be bought off. The Old Testament prophets complained about these practices thousands of years ago (Am. 5:12, 6:12; Is.1:23, 5:23). Are we to believe that the hearts of men have changed over the years? Hardly! If anything, the tactics of milking members of society for money have grown more sophisticated: Speed traps to generate more fine money from motorists; purposely shortening the time of yellow lights at traffic signals, plus automatic cameras, to generate additional fine income; passing intrusive, hard-to-understand laws that turn average citizens into lawbreakers, confiscatory income and real estate taxes that pauperize citizens; inflationary government borrowing and central bank monetary policies

that insidiously debauch the purchasing power of people's money and savings; allegedly "protecting" citizens through licensing laws, seat-belt laws, and confiscatory RICO-based property forfeiture laws; sending military personnel who blindly trust their political leaders to engage in unconstitutional foreign wars, or to station them in foreign countries; and wasting multi-billions of taxpayers' income in so-called "foreign aid."

The list could go on and on, but my point is this: While the *institution* of civil government is indeed Biblical, the *use of civil power* can easily be used in ways that are clearly unbiblical and unconstitutional. That is why Paul admonishes us to pray for those in authority (1 Tim.2:1-2). Our task as Christians is to take Bible in hand and bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ as we cast down unbiblical institutions and erect Biblical institutions in their place (2 Cor.10:3-5). This is neither an easy nor a much-appreciated task because it calls for people to change their world and life view and their basic way of thinking about the proper role of civil government in society. But in seeking to follow Biblical principles, we must refrain from judging individuals who might mistakenly believe their incomes are earned Biblically.

Our goal as Christ's followers is to demolish ungodly *systems* while not attacking the *persons* involved. But the problem is that, over the last century, the "politically correct" role of civil government has expanded into so many areas of life that well-intentioned individuals have been suckered unthinkingly to accept unbiblical and unconstitutional roles of employment.

But, on a lighter note, sometimes even I am surprised: While speaking at a conference in Boise, Idaho, a few years ago, I was introduced to a medical doctor. I commented, "You know, I don't believe that the state should license pro-

fessions." He quipped, "Neither do I!" It turned out that he is a Christian and was serving as president of the American College of Physicians and Surgeons, the free-market sector of the medical profession which staunchly opposes licensing laws! How wonderful!

In a July, 2003, letter to financial supporters, Congressman Ron Paul of Texas writes, "I end up voting 'No' on most bills that come before the House of Representatives, because most of them are just flat out unconstitutional." Then he continues:

[T]he voters didn't send us to Congress to get too comfortable or to live a lavish life of ease at the expense of the taxpayers. After all, we are supposed to be your servants ... not the other way around. That's just one reason why I have consistently voted against pay raises for Congress and why I have refused to participate in the lavish pension program that Members of Congress give themselves.

### The Challenge That Faces Us

If we are really interested in doing away with the omnipotent, totalitarian state to which both R. J. Rushdoony and Ron Paul refer, we must recognize that very few incomes earned through state coercion are legitimate. When the coercive power of the state is used to transfer wealth or income from one set of citizens' pockets to others — through price controls, licensing laws, government grants, "welfare payments," and government subsidies — it amounts to what Frederic Bastiat referred to as "legalized theft."<sup>3</sup> It is nothing less than breaking the commandment "Thou shalt not steal," even though it might be legitimized by legal fiat. Let us be guided, in seeking ways to generate income, by the apostle Paul's advice to Philemon:

*But without thy mind would I do*

*continued on page 32*

# In Defense of the Death Penalty

Curt Lovelace



Capital punishment is an emotionally charged topic. It's also muddled by rhetoric of both the uninformed and the dogmatic. Usually occasioned by a murder conviction, the death penalty stirs people to dizzying emotional heights as they argue for either the commutation of supposedly barbaric method of punishment or for the just execution of a deserving criminal. It's a painful subject for many. Yet capital punishment is a subject that needs to be discussed, and be exposed to the light of God's Word.

Simply put, God authorizes governments to rightly administer capital punishment to the vilest offenders in society. Although many claim the contrary, this has neither been diluted nor replaced by any teaching of the New Testament.

There are numerous groups in the United States dedicated to abolishing capital punishment as a cruel and barbaric response to crime — or perceived crime, as some view criminal behavior. Some members of these groups are guided by their love of humanity, however misguided that love. Some believe that Jesus taught that love outstripped the Old Testament law. However, while these lines of reasoning are understandable in a culture that denies Biblical authority, such motives are demonstrably wrong.

## Common Fallacies

Death penalty opponents in the United States believe that death row is over-populated. This is hardly the case.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice website, 71 persons were executed in this country in 2002. That same site states, "At yearend 2001, 37 States and the Federal prison system held 3,581 prisoners under sentence of death, 20 fewer than at yearend 2000. All had committed murder." The most recent census indicates that 281,421,906 people lived in this nation as of April, 2000. Sentencing deserving criminals to death has not reached epidemic proportions.

Many Americans have been led to believe that capital punishment is used as a penalty for being black in America. Notable commentators such as Jesse Jackson often make claims of racial bias in sentencing. Not surprisingly, *Christianity Today* magazine has helped to perpetuate this myth. In a commentary published in 1998, the editors stated, "The death penalty as it is practiced in this country is unfair and discriminatory." The reason for this assertion was, "Race, class, and geography are the best predictors of who will get the death sentence for first-degree murder." Yet the facts regarding the sentence of death do not support such claims. Of those 71 criminals executed in 2002, 53 were white. Only 18 were black. The most recent statistical breakdown of race on death row indicates that there are more whites awaiting execution than any other racial group. According to the Bureau of Justice, of persons under sentence of death in 2001:

- 1,969 were white
- 1,538 were black
- 28 were American Indian

- 33 were Asian
- 13 were of unknown race.

Finally, the argument is made that criminal punishment is no deterrent to crime. Studies, in fact, have indicated the opposite. Columnist Don Feder put this in perspective recently, stating, "Since 1973, when the death penalty was re-imposed, we've had more than 660 executions nationwide. In 1999, the murder rate was the lowest since 1966 (5.7 per 100,000). Coincidence?" Opponents, of course have their own sets of studies. What is undeniably true, however, is that the criminal careers of those executed have been brought to a halt. They have been deterred.

However, there is a sense in which the typical secular counter-arguments are useless. None of them actually matters. Nor does it matter that the American people reach a consensus on the issue of capital punishment. Likewise, we should not be seeking a "Christian perspective" on the topic. What matters is that we accept Biblical authority on the matter of the death penalty — and all of life. The bottom line is that God's Word teaches that criminal offenses have consequences. What we need to explore is exactly what Scripture says and how it applies to our society today.

## Crime and Punishment in the Old Testament

Opponents of the death penalty often point to the Old Testament to prove that capital punishment is simply part of an anachronistic moral code for another historical era. Dismissing the very moral code they call upon to

defend their position (“Thou shalt not kill”), these proof-texters miss a very important point. God instituted the death penalty long before He promulgated the decalogue. In Genesis 9:6 we read, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.” Not out of revenge, but because man is precious to God — made in His very image — did God institute the principle that the penalty for murder is death.

This brings us to an often misread portion of Old Testament Scripture, Exodus 20:13. As translated in the NIV, this verse reads, “You shall not murder.” This reflects a proper translation and understanding of the Hebrew verb *Xcr*. We’ll leave exegetical considerations to those more able, but even the most untrained Bible student can discover that this word, whenever we find it in the Old Testament, always refers to premeditated murder or assassination. We can also discern that the penalty for breaking this commandment is clearly spelled out in Exodus 21:12, which teaches that, “Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death.” Scripture differentiates between killing and murder. One is abominable in God’s eyes. The other is the prescribed remedy.

Old Testament prescribes the death penalty for 18 different crimes. The list includes murder (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12-14), striking a parent (Ex. 21:15), kidnapping (Ex. 21:16), cursing a parent (Ex. 21:17), causing the death of a pregnant woman and/or her child (Ex. 21:22-25), allowing a proven dangerous animal to kill a person (Ex. 21:28-20), sorcery and witchcraft (Ex. 22:18), adultery (Lev. 20:10), incest (Lev. 20:11-12,14), homosexuality (Lev. 20:13), sex with animals (Lev. 20:15-16), cursing God (Lev. 24:10-16), tempting people to idolatry (Dt. 13:1-16), rebellion against appropriate authority (Dt.

17:12), bearing false witness in a capital case (Dt. 19:16-20), rebellion against parents (Dt. 21:18-21), fornication (Dt. 22:13-21), and rape of a married woman (Dt. 22:25-29).

The “criminal justice system” of the Old Testament required that all evidence in capital cases be solid. Great care was to be taken to protect against error or vengeful motives. Deuteronomy 19:15 specifically teaches, “One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” Such care was to be exercised in accepting evidence that if a witness was found to have perjured himself, he was to receive the punishment prescribed for the offense for which the defendant was accused (Dt. 19:16-20). As noted in the list above, this meant that a false witness in a capital case was subject to the death penalty.

Safeguards against vengeance are an integral part of the Old Testament law. The often misapplied *Lex Talionis* is a primary example. Found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, this principle states:

If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death. Anyone who takes the life of someone’s animal must make restitution — life for life. If anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured. Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a man must be put to death. You are to have the same law for the alien and the native-born. I am the LORD your God. (Lev. 24:17-22)

Often purported to be a license for vengeance, this principle is more properly viewed as a limitation on punishments. It states that punishments are to be proportional to the offense — and no more. This law then, acts as

a precaution against allowing emotions to compound the original offense by the sin of excessive punishment.

### The New Testament Ethic of Love

Many — especially those who believe in a dichotomy between an Old Testament God of Wrath and a New Testament Jesus meek and mild — have assumed that the New Testament refutes Old Testament teaching on the subject of capital punishment. To state simply that this is wrong is to understate matters considerably. This important subject matter deserves a more thorough reading of God’s Word, not just a glance at a condensed version.

It is claimed that Jesus set aside all teachings on capital punishment — and the rest of the law — when He preached what we have come to know as The Sermon on the Mount. Jesus taught, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Mt. 5:38-39). It is hard to make it say that Jesus is overturning the Old Testament law. Far from it. Rather, Jesus is teaching that we need to exceed the requirements of the law. We need not only to carry out the provisions specified, we need to reach out to condemned criminals with love and prayer. We need to offer them the peace of the gospel of salvation.

Not only did Jesus not refute the law, He told us specifically that this was not His intention. In Matthew 5:17-18 He makes clear His adherence to the authority of the law, stating:

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

The apostle Paul also affirms the authority of the state both to try citizens and to impose capital punishment. In Acts 25:10-11, Paul stood before a judge and declared, "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die." This was no self-serving, theoretical statement on Paul's part. On the authority of God's Word, he placed himself in the hands of the Roman state.

In Romans 13:1-7 Paul elucidates his best argument in favor of capital punishment. Here he teaches that the magistrate is a minister of God in his administration of justice. The power of the sword is placed into the hands of civil authorities. That those in authority may be heathen is of no consequence in this regard. God has often used heathen nations to chastise His people. John Calvin explains that since the magistrates cannot perform their duties "unless they defend good men from the wrongs of the wicked, and give aid and protection to the oppressed, they have been armed with power with which severely to coerce the open malefactors and criminals by whose wickedness the open peace is troubled or disturbed."<sup>1</sup>

Contained within Paul's instruction is yet another safeguard against vengeance. Note that the power of the sword is not given to grieving families or wronged victims. It is given to the state as a solemn ministry.

### **Serious Objections**

Several of those crimes for which capital punishment was prescribed in the Old Testament give pause to the modern reader. Particularly difficult to understand are the crimes of children against their parents. Surely, some assert, these cannot rise to the level of capital offenses. In a November 1997 article,

Kenneth Gentry answered these objections well. He wrote:

Often anti-theonomists will bring up Deuteronomy 21:18-21 as a horrible example of the danger of theonomy. Be sure to get clear as to what the questioner of theonomy is saying. Is he saying that this law is so obviously horrendous that it should self-evidently not be practiced today? Often, that is the tone of the question; the mere quoting of this law is deemed to evidence the absurdity of theonomy. If this is the approach taken, you should note: (1) This was, in fact, a part of God's Law revealed by God to Moses. Would we be able to defend the integrity of Scripture against the secularist who points to this law as cruel. Whether or not it remains valid today, for those who hold to the inspiration of Scripture, it was valid in the Old Testament era. We need to be careful that we not quote God's Law in a mocking manner. (2) This law calls for capital punishment of rebellious children and was reaffirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 15:3-6. Not only does he not mock this law, but he appears to reaffirm its validity.

In addition, the following may be added for those who are careful not to laugh at the "absurdity" of God's Law: (1) The modern anti-theonomic interpreter does not really understand the law, if he applies it to ten-year-olds who do not take out the garbage. It very obviously does not speak of minor children. It speaks of a situation so dangerous that the parents have lost control over their son, who does not respond to their chastening. He is evidently a danger to them and to society. (2) In fact, he is such a danger that his own parents seek his capital punishment! This obviously is a grievous situation, in that parents normally seek to protect their children, not seek to bring criminal charges of a capital nature against them! (3) The "general equity" of this law is at least three-fold: (a) It provides principles regarding incorrigible criminality. Such a person is a repeat offender, who is so bad that his own parents seek his death. (b) It denies

the right of parents to exercise capital punishment themselves (the state has to do it). (c) It illustrates procedural guidelines for capital cases. Criminals must be brought to civil authorities ("elders sitting in the gates"); the civil authorities must pass the judgment and oversee the execution.<sup>2</sup>

### **Is the Law Regarding Capital Punishment Normative Today?**

It is well and duly noted that there are divisions of laws within the Old Testament. Some have been superseded by the sacrifice of the spotless lamb, Jesus Christ. Gone are the ceremonial laws of Israel. The moral law, however, remains. The principle of proportional punishment was set in place before the moral code was delivered; it was a major part of the teaching of the Old Testament law, and it was upheld by the teaching of the New Testament. Nowhere is there to be found any teaching that supplants the teaching on capital punishment. Man is made in God's image. If we destroy that image-bearer we are still subject to the penalty, that is, death.

### **Conclusions**

This is a hard teaching for many people. They simply can't get their arms around a teaching that calls for the shedding of blood. But, it is God's Word. This does not mean that there are not questions and problems involved in the administration of the law. We can rightly ask whether capital punishment can be fairly administered in imperfect societies by fallen men. We can question whether our apparatus of justice is doing its job in protecting the population and seeking justice for all.

Christians must, as Jesus taught, exceed the provisions of the law. It is our responsibility to minister to the fatherless and the widows, the hungry and the thirsty. But we must also recognize that sin is in our midst. God's Word

*continued on page 31*



# American Decadence and Biblical Law

Samuel L. Blumenfeld



Because, as Calvin pointed out, man is innately depraved, every society, every civilization will have to deal with decadence and corruption to some degree or another. There is no escaping that fact, particularly in the democratic West where individual freedom is sanctioned by constitutional law. Even though there is nothing in the United States Constitution that encourages decadent or corrupt behavior, depraved human beings will find a way to legalize the worst of abominations.

Most Americans, of course, even many devout Christians, believe that what two people do in bed in the privacy of their home ought not to be the subject of police invasion. We had a brutal example of such police invasion when Clinton's attorney general sent a goon squad with automatic rifles into a private home to kidnap the Cuban child, Elian Gonzales. The Supreme Court recently enshrined this view in the way it struck down the Texas sodomy law. After all, shouldn't people be protected from police invading the privacy of the home? Americans are wary of such police action and would prefer to err on the side of individual freedom.

## Freedom or Decadency?

But wasn't the Supreme Court acting as God when it ruled, in contravention to Biblical law, that state laws that forbid sodomy are unconstitutional? As R. J. Rushdoony pointed out many

times, a nation's laws reveal its religion. And what a religion our laws reveal! Our free society has become the most decadent and depraved nation on earth. Nor is our decadence limited to our shores. Our films, television shows, music, and pornography cover the globe, reflecting in the main, the decadence of our culture. Now and then some good films, videos, or music will emerge from the general wasteland, but they cannot outweigh the spiritual harm done by a generally decadent culture.

Many people who look to America as a source of good must be awfully confused by what they see and hear. In the past, our great television evangelists reached people everywhere hungry for the message of salvation, the message of Jesus Christ. But some of them fell victim to the temptations of our culture and have ruined their own ministries and disappointed countless Christian followers. Their ruined lives have become a sharp reminder of man's depravity and often futile struggle to save himself from it.

Recently, at a library sale, I picked up a beautiful book with a handsome picture of Jim and Tammy Bakker on the cover published in 1986. It was *Jim & Tammy Bakker Present The Ministries Of Heritage Village Church*, a lavishly illustrated story of how the Bakkers created their marvelous Christian television ministry which boomed into a Disneylike theme park dedicated to clean Christian living. Everything they built was based on the Bible. But since

their religion could be called Fundamentalism Lite, they did not have that Calvinistic sense of how vulnerable they were to their own innate depravity, and simply did not know how to protect themselves. And so their entire glittering television ministry, theme park, and condominiums were destroyed, while the local liberal-humanist newspaper gloated over the fall of the Bakkers and their Christian theme park.

How could such wonderful Christian dreams turn to ruin so easily? Liberals are always waiting in the wings to see if they can help Christians destroy themselves. And, of course, we all know of the tragic fall of Jimmy Swaggart, whose highly charged preaching reached millions everywhere. He sinned, was exposed, and everything he built fell into ruin. He didn't take his own sinful nature into account, and so even his intimate knowledge of the Bible couldn't save him.

## We Have Met the Enemy...

Which leads me to conclude that the most important function of the Bible is not only to teach us about God and His will, but to teach us about ourselves, our vulnerability to sin, and how imperative it is to use the Bible as protection against ourselves. The early American colonists had no illusions about man's innate goodness when they taught their children, "In Adam's fall we sinned all." Today, we feed our kids Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and other friendly creatures who teach us

nothing about human nature.

We live in a culture so awash in depravity that I cannot go through my emails without being subjected to the most obscene messages being sent freely through the Internet. One spends more time deleting obscenity from one's email than reading those real messages sent by friends and associates. The Christian has no choice but to tolerate this river of filth because, unless our Attorney General cracks down on pornography, it will go on indefinitely. The only present remedy is a spam stopper.

When the Chief Justice of Alabama is ordered by a federal appeals court to remove a large display of the Ten Commandments from the rotunda of that state's judiciary building, that ruling can only be seen as an act of war by the federal government against Christianity. R. J. Rushdoony often reminded us that we were involved in a war, unto the death, against the secular humanists. Their program is clearly stated in the Humanist Manifestos, and therefore it is no secret what the humanists want: the total reduction of Christianity to a private closet in one's home. They can't kill us for believing in Jesus Christ, but they will try to punish us if we act as Christians.

I had thought for a while that the Christian revival, particularly among homeschoolers, had brought the humanist cultural juggernaut to a halt. But the Supreme Court indicates otherwise. In fact, what the Supreme Court did in legalizing sodomy is plunge us into moral chaos, which Dr. Rushdoony recognized as the actual goal of the humanists. He wrote in *The Messianic Character of American Education*, "A realistic appraisal of our time requires recognition of this grim fact: chaos is the goal of contemporary human endeavor. Chaos is thus not a threat but an objective" (p. 339).

Can the Christian remnant survive chaos? Yes, just as the Christians in Rome survived the collapse of the pagan empire. But at what price? One does not consider price when the sovereignty of Jesus Christ is the issue. Christians will pay the price regardless of how high it is.

And how shall this war be fought? Decadence produces its own nightmares. It will destroy all who take part in it. Therefore the sacred duty of Christians is to educate their children in the love and admonition of the Lord, to have their children put on the full armor of God so that they can ride into battle against the spiritual forces of darkness.

That is why Christians must take their children out of the public schools that are now controlled by the sodomites who have a long-term agenda to corrupt all of the children in their charge. Since sodomy is now legal throughout the United States, sodomites in the schools will make sure that children understand this new "affirmation of sexual freedom."

### The Only Antidote

Biblical law is the great antidote to chaos. And that is why it is as powerful today as it was when God put commandments into words that men could easily understand. The Ten Commandments are as relevant today as they were when Moses brought them down from Mount Sinai. They remain the basic tenets of morality for all who believe in the Bible. Therefore, it is time for Christians to start publishing a variety of books and pamphlets promoting the Ten Commandments, to be given out to everyone in the United States. Let them know that there is an alternative to our present chaos: It is Biblical law, and its essence is summed up in the Ten Commandments.

There is no reason to be pessimistic in the light of what the Supreme Court

has done to undermine Biblical law. Millions of Americans now realize that what we have now is moral chaos. Our government was supposed to secure and protect our inalienable rights: the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Millions of unborn children are still being murdered in abortuaries, sanctioned by the Supreme Court; liberty has been stretched to include the freedom to engage in perversity and witchcraft, sanctioned by the Supreme Court; and the pursuit of happiness has become the pursuit of the unreal, the unwholesome, the ungodly, sanctioned by the Supreme Court.

It is only within the context of Biblical law that true happiness can be achieved. Drug addiction, sexual promiscuity, cultural decadence, and rejection of God do not lead to happiness. They lead to ruined lives. Biblical law is the home, the family, the love of children, the love of country, the love of God. Our country's founding was based on Biblical law, and its salvation will rest on that same everlasting Testament of Truth. **CR**

Samuel L. Blumenfeld is the author of eight books on education, including *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education*, *How to Tutor*, *Alpha-Phonics: A Primer for Beginning Readers*, and *Homeschooling: A Parents Guide to Teaching Children*. All of these books are available on Amazon.com or by calling 208-322-4440.

# Legitimizing the Homosexual Lifestyle

Warren Kelley



Earlier this year, the Supreme Court overturned the Texas state law against homosexual sodomy in the landmark case *Lawrence v. Texas*. In the years to come we will look back on this ruling as a major sea change in our culture. This is perhaps the largest single victory ever achieved by the homosexual community.

For many years, homosexual activists have fought to overturn state laws condemning homosexual activity. In 1986, 25 states had laws similar to the one in Texas. When the Supreme Court took up this case earlier this year the number had been cut to 13. The decision by the court effectively swept away those 13.

## The Homosexual Agenda

Even more frightening than the victories homosexuals have won is the reason they took up the battle in the first place. Was it because they were afraid of being arrested for their activity? The court itself recognized that prosecutions for homosexual activity are extremely rare and when they do happen it is usually because the activity took place in public.

The motivation for overturning the laws against homosexuality is the removal of any public denouncement of the “gay” lifestyle. Homosexual activists have worked long and hard to achieve moral equality between their lifestyle and that of heterosexuals.

Having struck down the remaining state laws condemning their behavior they will now fight even harder to achieve their “holy grail” — full endorsement of their lifestyle with government-sanctioned homosexual marriage.

It is likely that before the end of the year either a Massachusetts or New Jersey court will rule in favor of a same-sex marriage case. When they do, it will open the floodgates, and homosexual couples will rush to those states to have their relationships officially recognized. Upon their return home they will use the courts to force their home states to recognize their new “marriages.” Soon, this issue will be pushed to the Supreme Court as well.

## Same Sex Marriages

In writing the majority decision in *Lawrence v. Texas*, Justice Kennedy made a point of stopping short of endorsing same-sex marriage. In response to Kennedy’s statement that the ruling “does not involve whether the government must give formal recognition” to homosexual marriage, Justice Scalia wrote, “Do not believe it.”

Prior to his attempt to allay fears that the court was creating same-sex marriage, Justice Kennedy referred to constitutional protections afforded to “personal decisions relating to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, child rearing, and education.” He then went on to say that anyone “in a homosexual relationship may seek autonomy for these purposes, just as heterosexual persons do.”

All through Justice Kennedy’s decision and Justice O’Conner’s concurring opinion are repeated admonitions about discriminating against homosexual individuals. Over and over they both make it clear that any right or opportunity permitted to heterosexuals should be given equally to homosexuals and any attempt by the state to do otherwise would be viewed by the court as an unconstitutional act.

The full meaning and impact of this decision has yet to fully register in the minds of most Americans. In fact, even if the court were to force same-sex marriage on the American people today, most would not fully understand the gravity of the situation.

## No Moral Basis for Law

So what are the effects of this decision? Space will not allow me to fully explore them. Let’s start by introducing the moral implications. The decision, as Justice Scalia stated it, “effectively decrees the end of all morals legislation.” If the majority of the American people cannot agree to make a law based on a moral belief, then what will be the basis for law?

If we cannot make a law against homosexual sodomy, how can we, as Scalia points out, criminalize “fornication, bigamy, adultery, adult incest, bestiality, and obscenity”? Many in the homosexual community believe that any sexual relationship or sexual act should be permitted, with anyone ... and at any age.

If, as the court has decided, a majority moral belief is not a legitimate basis for a law, how can we say it is improper for a young boy's scoutmaster to introduce him to sexual activity? How can we limit marriage to one man and one woman? Why not two women, or two men, or two men and one woman?

If the moral implications were not enough, what about the health and financial consequences of legitimizing this lifestyle? Most Americans don't understand all that is involved in the homosexual lifestyle and therefore are woefully ignorant of its inherent dangers.

### Monogamy in Same Sex Marriages

A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that the average non-infected male homosexual has 106 sexual partners *per year*. Another study released in July of this year found that the average homosexual relationship lasted only 1 ½ years. The study also found that men in homosexual relationships had an average of eight partners per year outside of those relationships.

A study conducted by two University of Vermont psychology professors contrasted couples living in the newly formed "civil unions" with homosexuals not in unions, and with married heterosexual couples. They found that 21 percent of married men felt that sex outside of marriage was OK. Among homosexuals, 66 percent of homosexual men in committed relationships and 50 percent of homosexual men in civil unions felt the same way.

The fact that promiscuity is rampant among homosexuals is dramatically demonstrated in the landmark study conducted by researchers Bell and Weinber in the mid-1970s. The shocking results of their study found that:

43 percent of gay men estimated having sex with 500 or more different partners. 75 percent estimated 100 or

more partners. 28 percent estimated more than 1,000 partners.

79 percent said that more than half of their partners were anonymous.

70 percent said that more than half of their partners were men with whom they had sex only once.

This type of activity has consequences. Due to their promiscuous lifestyle, homosexual males are 14 times more likely to contract syphilis than male heterosexuals and are thousands of times more likely to contract AIDS.

Added to the dangers of this extreme promiscuity are the dangers of the actual sexual practices of homosexuals. These two factors combined are why studies show that homosexuals account for 80 percent of America's most serious sexually transmitted diseases. This is in spite of the fact that they represent only a tiny fraction of the overall population.

A study done in the 1990s by the Family Research Institute found that the median age of death for a homosexual male not having AIDS was only 42. According to the same study only 9 percent lived to old age.

In light of these facts we need to ask ourselves if this is a lifestyle that we, as a nation, should endorse as being on par with normal heterosexual relationships.

If we chose to do so, we can only expect that the numbers of people involved in this lifestyle will increase. And when those numbers increase, we cannot even begin to estimate the strain it will put on our healthcare system.

The Supreme Court has made it clear how it will rule when the issue of same-sex marriage comes before it. The only way to overrule a court that is out of touch with the wishes of the American people and the reality of the consequences of such a decision is to amend the Constitution. The recent ruling has given renewed support to a measure before Congress called the Federal Marriage Amendment.

The amendment simply states that marriage is a union between one man and one woman and prohibits passing any law to the contrary. While the process of amending the Constitution is intentionally difficult, this amendment has a real chance of succeeding and needs our full support. **CR**

Warren Kelley serves as Executive Vice President for International Christian Media, the ministry that produces *Point of View Radio Talk Show*.

## Givler Engineering, Inc.

*Taking Dominion Over Creation*

Water Resources • Site Development  
Structures • Forensics • Municipal

Now **hiring** for engineering, CAD, and administrative positions.

Already employed? Join our **Technical Think Tank!**

E-mail résumés to [hr-info@texas.net](mailto:hr-info@texas.net)

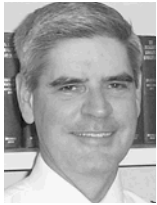
2161 NW Military Hwy., Suite 114 • San Antonio, TX 78213

Phone: 210-342-3991 • Fax: 210-342-6065

[www.givlerengineering.com](http://www.givlerengineering.com)

# Pornography and the Church

*Larry E. Ball*



**P**ornography is present everywhere in our society. From soft-core to hardcore, almost anywhere you look, pornography is available for only a few dollars. Sometimes it's free — just free enough to entice a man to seek more. Cable television and the Internet beckon men (and sometimes women) to step into the world of lust, fornication, and adultery. In fact, softcore pornography is ordinarily part of most television cable purchases, even without buying the typical HBO package. Email communications are constantly delivering invitations to look at hardcore pornography. Without some type of filter, a man will be bombarded every day with an invitation to participate in wickedness as he sits down at his computer. Most employers have set strict rules to keep their employees off of pornographic sites.

Pornography is a deathtrap, especially for men. Addiction to pornography can send a soul to Hell. It is a cesspool that can drown those who choose to come to its waters. No matter how sanctified a man is, he is always a candidate for its deadly influence. Without Biblical safeguards, such as a good marriage, prayer, God's Word, accountability, and the desire to keep a good conscience, a man will find himself easy prey for this ugly beast.

The number of men in America addicted to pornography is unknown. But I have heard numbers that lead me

to believe that at least one in three men in America are addicted to pornography. Even worse, I would surmise that addiction to pornography is rampant in the church. Even worse than that, it is a major problem with the clergy.

## **The Church Begins to Respond**

The church must declare war on this evil sin. It is beginning to do so. What was once tolerated as merely a weakness in men is now being treated as adultery. Not only is it being treated as adultery, but it is being treated as adultery that may very well rise to the level that justifies a Biblical divorce. In other words, men, if you get caught in the cesspool of pornography, the church may very well determine that your wife has a right to sue you for divorce, even if you have never physically touched another woman. This ought to be alarming to any Christian man.

Many years ago, I was taught in seminary that the only grounds for divorce was sexual unfaithfulness that involved actual physical relations with someone other than the man's wife (not getting into the issue of desertion here). After studying the Scriptures and being in the pastorate for over thirty years, I have since changed my mind. I am convinced now that a man can be so addicted to pornography that it may be in a class of adultery that rises to a level that justifies divorce — without a man ever even touching another woman. The word "mastered" might be a more appropriate Biblical term, but recognizing

some validity to modern psychological terms, I have chosen to use the word "addicted." Men may temporarily fall into this sin, but this is not addiction. Addiction is habitual and controlling. It is parallel to being a drug addict. Deliverance is seldom attained. Indeed, it is my position that the wife may be justified in seeking a divorce through the ecclesiastical courts of the church if her husband is under this habitual and reigning power. Today, contrary to a number of years ago, she may very well win her case.

Many women have had to live with the horrible effects of pornography in their marriages. Traditionally, they have remained silent. It is embarrassing when one's sex life with one's husband becomes a public matter. For most women, it is better to live in misery than to have her sex life discussed by other men. Also, with the modern emphasis in evangelical and Reformed churches on submission by wives, in some cases this has sadly resulted in many women feeling guilty at the thought of challenging the sins of their husbands. Shame and guilt are two powerful forces that have prevented many wives from confronting this sin in a Biblical fashion.

## **Dr. Bahnsen's Theses**

There are two documents that particularly have influenced me to reconsider what I was taught in seminary years ago. The first is a paper written by Dr. Greg Bahnsen entitled "Theses on Divorce and Spousal Abuse." In his

paper, Dr. Bahnsen broadens the traditional basis of divorce from mere sexual unfaithfulness to the act of spousal abuse. He says, "The above conclusion is explicitly substantiated by the law of God at Exodus 21:10-11, demonstrating (*a fortiori*) that spousal abuse violated the marriage covenant, and, as such, [is] grounds for divorce."

The second is a Committee Report to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America in 1983. It stated, "One might argue that pornography and masturbation per se are not grounds for divorce; but if a person becomes so dependent on them that they become a substitute for fulfilling the conjugal rights of the spouse, then they could be understood to break the one flesh union." The Report goes on to say that "all of these are unclear cases, and judgment will have to rest with the Session in their application of Biblical principles." The Report concludes, "But, when that sexual sin becomes externalized in such a way that it becomes a substitute for the one flesh relation with one's spouse, the Session may judge it as being *porneia*."

Thus, if addiction to pornography breaks the one flesh union, then it defiles the marriage bed. As such, it may very well break the marriage covenant and become a Biblical basis for divorce. Church courts are beginning to recognize this fact.

How then may addiction to pornography defile the marriage bed and break the marriage bond? Let me attempt an explanation. If a man comes into the marriage bed and does not provide due benevolence to his wife as a result of living in the world of pornography, then the one flesh relationship is broken and the marriage bed does become defiled. When the marriage bed is defiled, then the marriage bond is severed. In 1 Corinthians 7:3, Paul says, "Let the husband render unto his wife

due benevolence" (KJV). Other translations use the word "debt" rather than "benevolence." In the marriage relationship, conjugal relations are indeed a debt, but as the KJV translators recognized, it is also benevolence. Benevolence implies affection expressed during the act of conjugal relations. Every wife (as well as husband) is due *affection in the form of conjugal relations*, not just the right to participate in a sexual act.

### What a Woman Must Have

A woman's view of conjugal relations typically differs from that of a man. Most men would interpret the benevolence in 1 Corinthians 7 as debt being fulfilled if he is physically satisfied with the sexual act itself. For most wives, there is more importantly a deep need for affection and loving benevolence. This text in 1 Corinthians must not be interpreted as being fulfilled merely if a wife is given the opportunity to participate in a sex act. The benevolence due to a wife is primarily affection directed toward the wife that ultimately will help her enjoy fulfillment in the sexual act itself.

For a woman who knows that her husband is addicted to pornography and has been sleeping with other women with *his eyes and his mind*, receiving her due benevolence from him becomes impossible. His sexual overtures in the bed only become an opportunity for him to sleep with another woman. His wife knows this. She knows that this is not affection. It is defilement. In her mind there is another woman in the bed who is actually a nameless slut who gets paid to expose herself to men and lead them to destruction "like an ox goes to the slaughter" (Pr. 7:22).

This does not imply that perfect marriages exist and that conjugal expressions of love are always perfect. However, it does imply that in the case of addiction to pornography by a husband,

when such addiction is known by the wife, it often becomes impossible for the wife to receive the debt owed to her in affection and dedication — in essence, due benevolence. The sexual relationship often becomes repulsive to her. It becomes disgusting. The one flesh union has been broken and the marriage bed does indeed become defiled.

Again, this need not become justification for any wife to pursue divorce because the husband does not fulfill perfectly the benevolence due her in the sexual relationship. However, it does give a wife the right to claim that when there is habitual, continual addiction to sordid pornography, then she can claim that the marriage bed has been defiled and that she therefore has a right to pursue divorce. Her husband has not been sleeping with her, but with a harlot.

It should also be noted that addiction to pornography seldom occurs in isolation. Usually it is attached with other sins such as deceit, financial mismanagement, and even on occasion physical abuse. These just add to the burden that the wife has to endure, usually silently and secretly. These sins must be *distinguished* from addiction to pornography, but seldom can they be *separated* from pornography. Addiction to pornography does not only bring defilement to the marriage bed, but it also brings destruction and devastation to all the other facets of marriage.

### Reclaiming Male Headship

Today in conservative Christian circles where men are seeking to reclaim their headship, husbands must remember that with headship come grave responsibilities. One responsibility of every husband is to make his wife happy by loving her as he loves himself and as Christ loved the church. This includes sexual fidelity and avoiding pornography.

This is a critical issue for the modern church. It has fallen upon the

church of our age to make a clear and unambiguous statement. Addiction to pornography is spreading like cancer. Only those with God's Spirit shall survive its consequences. Many men in the Christian church are this very day addicted to pornography. Some of these men may be reading this article.

Many Christian women have had to live with husbands addicted to pornography for years. They do not know what to do. They need help and they are afraid to reach out to the church. I am afraid that the church by its silence has been sending a message to these women that they need to "Stand By Your Man." Must the wives of men in the church be asked to live with a man addicted to pornography? When such addiction rises to the degree that it is impossible for the wife to receive her "due benevolence," what shall she do? When the one flesh union is broken and the marriage bed is defiled, then does the wife have a Biblical basis for divorce? These are difficult questions and the truth is often in the details, but the church is now being called upon to deal with these issues in a Biblical manner.

The decision to pursue divorce by any wife must be taken with all seriousness. It should not be made in haste, but only after spending much time in prayer, and receiving wise counsel from other godly men and women. A decision to pursue divorce should only be made after every Biblical means has been taken to achieve confession, repentance, forgiveness, and restoration of the marriage.

Yet, having said this, the church has the responsibility to warn men of God of the consequences of addiction to pornography. Also, their wives should be informed of their Biblical rights before God. When addiction to pornography destroys the one flesh union and defiles the marriage bed, and after all Biblical avenues have been exhausted, then wives

should be informed that they do indeed have the right to pursue divorce in ecclesiastical courts. It is my opinion that even if the husband repents (which is very difficult to judge) the wife still has the right to pursue divorce, even though she is not obligated to do so.

This is a difficult topic to deal with in a public forum, and I have tried to do so with as much discretion as possible. However, for the sake of many suffering women, I must not be silent. **CR**

Rev. Larry Ball is pastor of Bridwell Heights Presbyterian Church, Kingsport, Tennessee. He is also a CPA.

---

*Gentry, Acts 25...continued from page 9*

*Fifth*, Festus writes King Agrippa regarding Paul, pointing to the Jewish charges that failed to prove him guilty of a capital offense, as they themselves argued: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the *whole assembly of the Jews* petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, *crying out that he was not fit to live any longer*" (Acts 25:24). His entire trial before the Jewish and Roman authorities reminds us of Christ's trials, wherein the Jews accused Jesus with religious charges in seeking His death: "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (John 19:7).

Interestingly, in light of Johnson's complaint against the theonomic reference to this passage,<sup>3</sup> Festus admits that the Jews "had some questions against him about their own religion and about one, Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters" (Acts 25:20). In fact, Paul is delighted to appear before Agrippa

"especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews" (Acts 26:3). He is ready to re-defend himself against "all the things of which I am accused by the Jews" (Acts 26:2).

Acts 25:11 is relevant to the theonomic argument, and in no way a hindrance to it. **CR**

Dr. Gentry is the author of thirteen books and a contributor to eight others, from publishers such as Zondervan, Baker, Kregel, P & R, and American Vision. He is the editor of a forthcoming title from Ross House Books: *Thine Is the Kingdom: A Summary of the Postmillennial Hope*. He has spoken at conferences and on radio across the nation and runs a website for Reformed educational materials: [www.kennethgentry.com](http://www.kennethgentry.com).

1. J. A. Alexander, *The Acts of the Apostles Explained* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, n.d.), 2:384.
2. Alexander, *Acts*, 2:388.
3. Of Acts 25:11: "[I]t is pressing [Paul's] words further than the context will allow to argue that Paul expects the pagan Festus to understand the complexities of the Torah... well enough to find Paul's appeal intelligible and persuasive. On this point it is most natural to suppose that Paul is appealing to Roman law." Johnson, p. 181.

---

*Lovelace, Penalty...continued from page 24*

instructs us that criminal offenses have consequences. This we question at our own peril. **CR**

Curt Lovelace is a small town pastor and a student of history. He has finally moved to Maine where, when asked if he would like to declare a political affiliation on his voter registration card, he politely declined.

1. John Calvin. *Institutes*, Book Four:XX:9.
2. <http://www.chalcedon.edu/report/97nov/gentry.shtml>

# Classifieds

**BOOK ONCE AGAIN AVAILABLE** *How to Become a Millionaire in Christian Education* by Ellsworth E. McIntyre. Only \$10 plus \$3.00 (U.S.) for postage & handling. Volume discounts available to distribute copies at your church. (revmac@mindspring.com for prices) Nicene Press, 5524 19th Ct., SW, Naples, FL 34116.

**ARM YOURSELF** spiritually and intellectually. Check us out: [www.biblicaleconomics.com](http://www.biblicaleconomics.com). Mention this ad for a 10% discount.

**ORDER** Ross House books by email! Send your order to [rhbooks@goldrush.com](mailto:rhbooks@goldrush.com). Be sure to include your Visa or Mastercard number and expiration date.

**EAST CENTRAL WISCONSIN** Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church of Manawa. Confessional, Theonomic, Psalm Singing. Located between Appleton and Stevens Point minutes from Manawa. Worship at 10:00 am, Bible Study following. Contact Pastor Martin Waltho at 920-596-3252.

**REFORMATION** Int'l College & Seminary. Distance learning for the seriously reformed. Phone: 772-571-8833 [www.reformation.edu](http://www.reformation.edu).

**DOMINION BUSINESS** Opportunity [www.deu818.com](http://www.deu818.com). Tentmkrs: 888-689-3555 Others: 888-277-7120 Toll free, leave message.

**A GOLD MINE ...** and it is free! Engaging audio lectures in Bible, theology, and church history. [www.brucewagore.com](http://www.brucewagore.com).

**CHALCEDON NOW** has a student question booklet with a separate teacher answer booklet for use with R. J. Rushdoony's "American History to 1865" tape series. Both are available for \$5.00 postpaid from Chalcedon.

**SINGLE MEN** and women and young families wanted for 3 yr. apprenticeship program. Learn how to start, own, and operate your own Christian school. Salary, housing, and medical benefits while learning. Free tuition toward undergraduate or graduate degree. Contact Dr. Ellsworth McIntyre, Grace Community Schools, 5524 19th Ct., SW, Naples, FL 34116. Phone: 239-455-9900 or 239-352-6340 or email: [revmac@mindspring.com](mailto:revmac@mindspring.com).

**FLORIDA EAST** Coast Reformed Church Plant. Palm Bay to Vero Bch. 772-571-8030 [reformation@direway.com](mailto:reformation@direway.com).

**NEHEMIAH CHRISTIAN** Academy of La Mirada, CA offers a classical education with a Reformed worldview. Now enrolling grades K-4. Call 562-868-8896. [www.nehemiahacademy.org](http://www.nehemiahacademy.org)

**REFORMATION CHURCH** - OPC Reformed preaching, All of the Word for all of life S. Denver, CO 303-520-8814.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED** in a free portfolio review, or a discussion regarding your various financial and estate conservation objectives, please contact DAVID L. BAHNSEN, Financial Advisor at UBS Financial Services at 949-717-3917, or by email at [David.Bahnsen@ubs.com](mailto:David.Bahnsen@ubs.com) UBS is not a tax or legal advisor.

**CHALCEDON WANTS** to develop a list of churches, home churches, and Bible studies sympathetic to our position and objectives so we can share this information with those who call. If you would like your group to be on our list send the name of the contact person, their email, phone number, the town and state of the group to Susan Burns at [chalcedon@netscope.net](mailto:chalcedon@netscope.net).

**COVENANT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY** of Westminster, CA offers a classical education for grades K-6. Now enrolling. Call 714-531-9950.

**FREE PRO-FAMILY** Resources [www.abidingtruth.com](http://www.abidingtruth.com)

**PEORIA ILLINOIS AREA** Providence Family of Faith Church is Proclaiming the Crown Rights of King Jesus through Confessional Instruction (WCF), Family Discipleship (NCFIC), and Covenantal Worship in a Loving Community that is Home Education Supportive. Contact 309-387-2600, or [pridajan@aol.com](mailto:pridajan@aol.com) [www.ProvidenceFamilyofFaith.org](http://www.ProvidenceFamilyofFaith.org).

**CREATE FAMILY** Wealth In a ground floor opportunity with a revolutionary roof top mounted wind power technology. I am currently seeking top quality people to add to my leadership/sales team. [www.dealersneeded.com/freepower](http://www.dealersneeded.com/freepower). 815-235-9295.

**CHRIST CHURCH:** Christ-centered worship and living as covenant keepers in covenant community. Close to Birmingham AL 205-629-5343 [jgraveling@alltel.net](mailto:jgraveling@alltel.net)

**WOULD YOU CONSIDER** yourself Charismatic and Reformed? Do you love the Reformation Faith and Contemporary Christian Worship? Would you be interested in starting a Charismatic Reformed Church in the Roseville/Citrus Heights/Auburn area? Let's talk and get acquainted. Call Chris Hoops 916-781-7986

---

*Rose, By Force...continued from page 21*

*nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.*  
(Phil. 14). **CR**

© Tom Rose, 2003

Tom Rose is retired professor of economics and author of nine books and hundreds of articles dealing with economic and political issues. Rose's latest books are: *Free Enterprise Economics in America* and *God, Gold, and Civil Government*. Phone: 724-748-3726; Website: [www.biblicaleconomics.com](http://www.biblicaleconomics.com).

1. It is important to understand the difference between orthodox socialism and the specific form of socialism called fascism. Under a regime of orthodox socialism, the state owns *and* controls the means of economic production. Examples are: Boulder Dam, the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority), and tax-supported education. But under fascism, which is a more sophisticated and deceptive form of socialism, the state allows the *legal title of ownership* of the means of production to remain in the hands of private individuals and corporations; but *effective control* of the means of production rests in the hands of government bureaucrats who then have the power to dictate how the means of economic production must be used. Some examples are the many "alphabet-soup" federal control agencies, which now number over 85: the ICC (Interstate Commerce Commission); the FTC (Federal Trade Commission), the FDA (Federal Drug Administration), the FRB (Federal Reserve Bank), the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Commission), the BATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms), etc.
2. Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (n.p.: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1973), pp 101-102.
3. Frederic Bastiat, *The Law* (Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: Foundation for Economic Education, 1974).