

CREATION ORDINANCES AND CULTURE

BY

MICHAEL G. MUÑOZ

AN INTEGRATIVE THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

THESIS ADVISOR: Richard Belcher (signed)

RTS/VIRTUAL DIRECTOR: Andy Peterson (signed)

AUGUST 16, 2004

Copyright © 2004 by Michael G. Muñoz
All rights reserved

To Stacey, Jessica, and Josh

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
PART I. HISTORY OF MEANING AND USAGE	
2. PAGAN HISTORY - THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST	7
The Sumerians	
The Babylonians	
The Assyrians	
The Egyptians	
Summary	
3. PAGAN HISTORY - THE GREEKS AND THE ROMANS	25
The Greeks	
The Romans	
Summary	
4. CHRISTIAN HISTORY	39
Anti-Nicene Fathers	
Augustine	
Aquinas	
Calvin	
The Westminster Confession of Faith	
Summary	

PART II. SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

5. CURRENT THEOLOGICAL MEANING AND USAGE	63
Neo-Calvinism	
Systematic Theology	
Christian Ethics	
Summary	

PART III. BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
CRITERION FOR IDENTIFYING CREATION ORDINANCE:
A THREEFOLD PATTERN

6. CREATION DECREES	90
The Biblical Data	
Creation Ordinances Proper	
Summary	
7. CREATION ORDINANCES AND THE DECALOGUE	105
Labor and Dominion	
Marriage and Multiplication	
Sabbath	
Summary	
8. FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST - COVENANT CONTINUITY	121
The Covenant of Creation	
The Covenant of Grace	
Summary	
9. FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST - THE SUMMING UP OF ALL THINGS . .	142
New Administration	
Summary	

PART IV. APPLICATION

10. Application to the Church Today	155
The Knowability of Creation Ordinances	
Covenant Theology	
Ethics	
Summary	
11. CONCLUSION	174
Historical Survey	
Theological Survey	
Biblical Identification	
Cultural Significance	
APPENDIX. TRANSLATION OF GENESIS 1:1-2:3	181
WORKS CITED	186

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Commenting on the first 11 verses of Genesis chapter one, Everett Fox correctly noted that:

Three principal themes emerge from the great creation account with which Genesis opens. The first is the total and uncompromised power of God as creator; the second, the intrinsic order and balance of the created world; and the third, humankind's key position in the scheme of creation.¹

The above quotation provides a good example of what theologians have long gleaned from the first book of the Bible—God has sovereignly created and ordered the universe. This ordering applies as much to morality as it does to nature, to man's behavior as it does to his constitution. God has arranged and regulated both the natural and ethical spheres of His creation.

In an attempt to express both the elements of morality and natural function, theologians have coined the term "creation ordinance." Other terms have been used in the history of theology to refer to this same idea—most notably the expression "natural law". At various times there has been a broadening or

¹ Everett Fox, *In the Beginning: A New English Rendition of the Book of Genesis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983), 5.

narrowing of the notion expressed by these different terms. This has created confusion.

A proper understanding of the concept denoted by the phrase "creation ordinance" is especially significant today amid the current cultural wars. Traditional values along with their foundation are regularly being challenged. In the midst of this recalcitrance, the Christian must maintain that the sovereign, Triune God is the only foundation for right behavior. Questions concerning the sanctity of marriage (gay marriage, civil unions, living together), the sanctity of life (abortion, human cloning, genetic engineering, euthanasia), diversity and tolerance (different religions, gay and lesbian lifestyles, distinguishing among good and bad cultures), and the goal of human achievement (a proper work ethic, recreation, retirement) can only be answered in terms of a universe ordered by God. The only alternative is relativity and chaos.

Thus, a fresh understanding of creation ordinances can reignite Christians' marching orders to bring all of culture under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. John Murray, in his book *Principles of Conduct*, identified the specific creation ordinances as, "The procreation of offspring, the replenishing of the earth, subduing of the same, dominion over the creatures,

labor, the weekly Sabbath, and marriage."² The classification used in this study will vary only slightly. Creation ordinances can be categorized as: 1) Dominion and Labor; 2) Marriage and Multiplication; and 3) Sabbath.

It will be argued and explicated in the pages that follow that creation ordinances adhere to the following threefold pattern. First, creation ordinances are decrees of God ordering the world. Second, creation ordinances constitute moral imperatives that appear in the Decalogue. Finally, creation ordinances are tied to God's covenant with man and are fulfilled in the redemptive work of Christ.

The distinction made in points one and two above are important for a proper understanding of what creation ordinances are. It is also helpful when considering how and why creation ordinances are not only valid for all cultures but can actually be seen operating in all cultures. Though not necessarily exploring this distinction, John Murray seems to have recognized it:

These original mandates are germane to our present inquiry precisely because they are *so closely related to the powers and instincts with which man is naturally endowed*, and they show unmistakably that native endowment or instinct is not sufficient for man's direction even in the state of original integrity. The exercise of native instincts, the institution within which they are to be exercised, and the ends to be promoted by their exercise are prescribed by

² John Murray, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), 27.

specially revealed commandments. If all this is true in a state of sinless integrity, when there was no sin to blind vision or depravity to pervert desire, how much more must expressly prescribed directions be necessary in a state of sin in which intelligence is blinded, feeling depraved, conscience defiled, and will perverted!³

This work will begin with an historical survey of the concept of order within creation—both secular and Christian. It will then examine current theological meanings of the expression "creation ordinance(s)". From this, a somewhat new definition of creation ordinances will be advanced. This definition, though consistent with those of the past, will evince progress by introducing the threefold pattern given above. Attempts to identify creation ordinances must retain this pattern, this blueprint. If a particular notion is deemed a creation ordinance then it must adhere to this schema.

This study will then examine each element of the threefold pattern in light of Scripture. Finally, in view of several contemporary theological debates, doctrinal and ethical application will be made. Special attention will be given to the relevance and application of the Sabbath commandment.

At the end of a discussion concerning creation order in Neo-Calvinism, Dr. A. M. Wolters noted:

Two problems with the overall approach to creation [order] . . . one epistemological and one ethical. . . . The epistemological one is the question of the knowability of creational ordinances, especially the normative ones.

³ Emphasis mine; *ibid.*, 26.

Assuming that there are given standards for economics or art, what methodological safeguards can we devise against epistemological subjectivism in establishing what is normative in these areas? . . . Do we have no recourse but to appeal to intuition or self-evidence? (I leave aside here the question of the light of Scripture, which makes the matter both easier and more difficult.) The ethical problem I see is the danger of legalism.⁴

This work is an attempt to utilize the "light of Scripture" and offer an answer as to how one can correctly identify the creation ordinances.

⁴ Albert M. Wolters, "Creation Order: A Historical Look at our Heritage," in *God's Order for Creation*, ed. B. J. van der Walt (Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, 1994), 60.

PART I

HISTORY OF MEANING AND USAGE

CHAPTER 2

PAGAN HISTORY - THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The idea of creation ordinances has a long history.⁵ Beginning with the idea of order in the cosmos (natural and then moral) to the use of the term "natural law" and then "creation ordinance", both the concept and the words used to describe it have evolved.

A brief survey of the past will demonstrate that almost all cultures have recognized an inherent order (design and stability) in the universe established at creation. Most cultures, in some sense, have attributed this creation order to the hand of a god (or the hands of the gods).

With the one significant exception of the modern West, it seems that all cultures have a notion of cosmic order, an overarching and stable framework of meaning in which everything finds a meaningful place. Consonant with this is the fact that virtually all religions teach a doctrine of cosmic order.⁶

⁵ Andre Troost, "The Idea of Creation Order in Western Thought," in *God's Order for Creation*, ed. B. J. van der Walt (Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, 1994), 2.

⁶ Albert M. Wolters, "Creation Order: A Historical Look at our Heritage," 43.

Man's belief in *divine* ordering persisted until he began to claim (atheistic) autonomy and put himself at the center of the predication and understanding process.

This chapter and the next will explore the beliefs of ancient peoples who lived outside of God's covenant community. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Romans, aptly described the religious practices of these people:

For even though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks, but they become futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they become fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures" (1:21-23).⁷

Consequently, inconsistencies and contradictions riddled the religious beliefs of these ancient cultures.

The Sumerians

The ancient Sumerian culture is believed to be one of the "earliest high civilizations."⁸ Along with several Semitic peoples, the Sumerians settled in the ancient land of Mesopotamia. They believed in an immense polytheistic system of gods. The four chief gods of the Sumerians were An, the sky/heaven god; Enlil, the god of the air/atmosphere/wind; Enki,

⁷ The Holy Bible, New American Standard Version. Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Version.

⁸ Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East*, trans. Donald G. Schley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 47.

the god of water also the god of wisdom; and Ninhursag, the goddess of the stony ground (the mother-goddess).⁹

These chief gods of the Sumerians along with others of their incestuous, anthropomorphic pantheon were believed to control and order the universe (the *an-ki*)¹⁰ through means of a divine power known as *me*. *Me* was infused into the various elements of creation and controlled them according to the divine plan;¹¹ thus, "Maintaining and protecting the cosmic and earthly order."¹² This is well illustrated in a text entitled "Enki and the World Order":

Enki decrees (the) fate: "Sumer, 'great mountain,' 'country of the universe,' filled with enduring light, dispensing from sunrise to sunset the *me's* to (?) the people, your *me's* are lofty *me's*, unreachable. Your heart is profound, unfathomable. . . ." ¹³

⁹ For a description of these four gods, see Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 95-116.

¹⁰ *An-ki* is a compound word meaning "heaven-earth" (Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963], 112-113).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹² Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient*, 177. According to Leo G. Perdue, "*Me* [is] best regarded as a cosmic law which, acting in concert with the other cosmic laws, provided the force which originates, integrates, and regulates a particular element of the natural and societal spheres of world order" (*Wisdom and Cult: A Critical Analysis of the Views of Cult in the Wisdom Literatures of Israel and the Ancient Near East* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977], 85).

¹³ Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians*, 177. *Me*, in this text, is translated as, "Divine powers," in Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, eds., *Readings from the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 19-20.

The following hymn to Enlil provides another example, elucidating the belief in divine ordering:

Enlil, whose command is far-reaching, whose word is holy, the lord whose pronouncement is unchangeable, who forever decrees destinies, whose lifted eye scans the lands, whose lifted beam searches the heart of all the lands, Enlil who sits broadly on the white dais, on the lofty dais, who perfects the decrees of power, lordship, and princship, the earth-gods bow down in fear before him, the heaven-gods humble themselves before him. . . . The Anunnaki¹⁴—he is their exalted god; when, in his awesomeness, he decrees the fates, no god dare look on him. . . . The command, the word of his heart, did he make known, did he inform, did he commission to execute his all-embracing orders, did he entrust all the holy laws, all the holy decrees.¹⁵

Sumerian anthropology also argues for the belief in creation order. The Sumerians believed that their sole purpose was to serve the gods and they passively accepted their second-class role in the universe.¹⁶ According to Kramer:

All credit for the high moral qualities and ethical virtues that the Sumerians had evolved gradually and painfully over the centuries from their social and cultural experiences was attributed to the gods; it was the gods who planned it that way, and man was only following divine orders.¹⁷

In addition, these early people had a concept of sin and transgression against the gods. One even finds long lists of

¹⁴ The Anunnaki are the seven judges of the underworld.

¹⁵ Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians*, 120-121. For a convenient list of Sumerian gods and a short description see, *Mesopotamian Mythology (Akkad, Assyria, Babylonia, and Sumer)*; available from <http://www.geocities.com/darkmage71/myth/middleeastern/mesopotamian.html>; Internet; accessed 29 February 2004.

¹⁶ Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 186.

¹⁷ Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians*, 123. It should be noted here that "moral qualities and ethical virtues" are in the eyes of the beholder.

sins (*Šurpu*, "burning").¹⁸ This reflects the idea that as Sumerian religion developed, so did the belief that the gods placed greater ethical restraint upon mankind.¹⁹ In fact one of the lesser gods, Utu the sun god, came to hold a prominent place in the minds of the people as having the responsibility of upholding divine law and justice.²⁰

One can see, then, that several different components of the Sumerian worldview combine to demonstrate a belief in cosmic order. The gods rule over creation, order it, and maintain it by divine decree.

The Babylonians

Both the Babylonians and the Assyrians grew out of Sumerian culture. Scholars recognize Babylonian history as beginning with the reign of Hammurabi (c. 1792-1750), "A Semitic state built on a Sumerian foundation."²¹

Babylonian theology can be described as syncretistic.²² Although a large number of the Sumerian gods lost their significance, the Babylonians took up many others and merged them into their religious system. "In the national cults the

¹⁸ Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient*, 186, 198 (note 42).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 131. Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 184.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

²² Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient*, 179-182.

great gods of the Sumerian pantheon were equated with parallel Semitic gods. The polytheistic view of the ancients allowed them to accept the gods of other nations."²³ For example, the Sumerian god Utu (the sun god) came to be known as Shamash to the Babylonians, who continued to worship him as the god of law and justice.²⁴ Enki transferred over as Ea, who continued as the god of wisdom. Eventually, Marduk, the local god of Babylon, rose to prominence among the Babylonian pantheon.

The Babylonians continued to believe in a divine order inherent in the creation as well as governing the actions of man. The words, "*parsu, mesaru and kittu*" expressed this equivalent of *me*.²⁵

The ancient epics and myths of Babylonia provide many examples of this divine ordering. The Epic of Atrahasis (Atrahasis), which survives in fragmentary form,²⁶ relates the story of the creation of mankind and the ensuing flood that destroyed all but one man's family (Atrahasis). The story opens with the lesser gods (the *Igigi*) complaining about having to labor on

²³ Karen Rhea Nemet-Nejat, *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, 179.

²⁴ Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient*, 180.

²⁵ Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 121. See also: Edmund I. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs: Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), 309; and E. A. Speiser, "Authority and Law in Mesopotamia," in *Authority and Law in the Ancient Orient*, eds. J. A. Wilson et al. (Baltimore: American Oriental Society, 1954), 12.

²⁶ James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (ANET)*, 3d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 104.

behalf of the greater gods. To solve this problem, man is created from clay composed of a mixture of the flesh and blood of a slain god. In time, man and his noise start to vex the gods so they send a great flood to destroy mankind. One of the gods, Enki, warns Atrahasis who then builds a great boat (an ark) to preserve the life of his family and the animals (clean and common alike). In this account, man was created to serve the divine will:

They [i.e., the greater gods] summoned and asked the goddess, the midwife of the gods, wise Mami, you are the birth-goddess, creator of humankind, create humanity that he may bear the yoke, let him bear the yoke assigned by Enlil [i.e., the head of the gods], let man carry the toil of the gods.²⁷

The gods are sovereign over mankind. They impose their will, rule and order upon man. They also command and order nature:

Enki opened his mouth and addressed the gods [his brothers]: Why will you bind me with an oath? . . . Am I to lay my hands on [my own peoples]? The flood that you are commanding [me], who is it? I [do not know]. Am I to give birth to [a flood]? That is the task of [Enlil]. . . . The gods commanded total destruction, Enlil did an evil deed on the peoples.²⁸

After the flood, in an attempt to avoid any further vexation from man, the gods actually order and control the reproductive abilities of humanity:

²⁷ Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, eds., *Reading from the Ancient Near East*, 24.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

*Let there be among the peoples women who bear and women who do not bear. Let there be among the peoples the PASHITTU demon to snatch the baby from the lap of her who bore it. Establish UGBABTU women, ENTU women, and IGITSITU women, and let them be taboo and so stop childbirth. (gap) . . . Regulations for the human race.*²⁹

Another example presenting the sovereignty of the gods is the Babylonian Creation Epic, *Enuma Elish*. There are three main parts to this epic. The story begins with a short theogony (origin of the gods). The gods come forth from the primeval waters Apsu and Tiamat. Soon Apsu (now viewed as a god) wants to destroy the other gods because they are disturbing him. This leads to the second main part of the story—a theomachy (war among the gods) and the rise of Marduk.

After the gods kill Apsu, Tiamat comes forth to avenge his death. In light of this threat and as a condition for his promised protection, Marduk wants to be king, "Proclaim supreme my destiny! . . . What I may bring into being shall be unalterable; neither shall the command of my lips be recalled nor changed."³⁰ The gods willingly grant this authority to Marduk:

We have granted you kingship over the entire universe. When you sit in assembly, your word shall be supreme. Your weapons shall not fail; they shall smash your foes! O lord, spare the life of him who trusts you, but pour out the life of the god who seized evil. . . . Lord, truly

²⁹ Ibid., 31.

³⁰ Ibid., 37.

your decree is first among gods. Say but to wreck or create; it shall be.³¹

As promised, Marduk defeats Tiamat in battle.

In the final part of the epic, Marduk creates the universe from the severed body of Tiamat. This creation by Marduk is described as "artful works" and "the plan he conceived in his heart."³² Finally, as in the Epic of Atrahasis, man is created to serve the gods.

In addition to cosmic or natural order, the Babylonians believed that the gods ordered the ethical realm. They did this by imposing law upon man. Aside from the Mosaic Law, probably the most famous law code coming from the ancient world is The Code of Hammurabi (Hammurapi). Hammurabi wrote his law code upon a stele. Atop the stele is a depiction of him standing before the god Shamash (the sun god, the god of justice). Most likely, this is a depiction of Hammurabi receiving the law from Shamash. This appears to be the very explanation given by Hammurabi himself in the epilogue to his law code:

The laws of justice, which Hammurabi, the efficient king, set up. . . . I wrote my precious words on my stela. . . . By the order of Shamash, the great judge of heaven and earth, may my justice prevail in the land; by the word of Marduk, my lord, may my statutes have no one to rescind them. . . . I, Hammurabi, am the king of justice, to whom Shamash committed law.³³

³¹ Ibid., 39-40.

³² Ibid., 42.

³³ James B. Pritchard, *ANET*, 177-178.

The fact that these laws pertain to the minutia of human interaction (e.g., robbery, cheating, bearing false witness, protection of soldiers, agricultural and animal management, marriage, sex, miscarriages, inheritance, dowries, adoption, *lex talionis*, physicians, construction accidents, goring, etc.) demonstrates that the control of the gods is all encompassing.

As with the Sumerian worldview, so too the Babylonians believed the gods to be sovereign over the universe. The gods created mankind to serve their purposes, even twisting nature (e.g., the flood) to ensure the divine desire. The Babylonians also acknowledged that the gods did more than just order the natural realm; they also regulated the moral sphere.

The Assyrians

Assyrian theology does not differ much from Babylonian. This is due to their common land (Mesopotamia), their common race (Semitic), and their common language (Akkadian).³⁴ Notwithstanding the conspicuous replacement of Marduk with Ashur (the Assyrian national god), the Assyrians worshiped the same pantheon as did the Babylonians. They also shared many of the same epics and myths,³⁵ an example of which is the Creation Epic,

³⁴ Georges Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria*, trans. K. R. and A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1954), 3-7.

³⁵ See James B. Pritchard, *ANET*, vi; the various myths and epics are simply listed as, "Akkadian Myths and Epics."

Enuma Elish, where the Assyrians made only slight changes to the text but replaced Marduk with Ashur.³⁶

The history of these two great empires may best be characterized as a "bitter struggle for supremacy."³⁷ At some times the Assyrians held political power and at others the Babylonians were supreme. For Assyria, this struggle reached its zenith under Ashurbanipal (c. 668-626 B.C.).³⁸ The Babylonian empire reached its peak under Nebuchadnezzar (c. 605-563 B.C.).³⁹ With the exception of the supreme high god (Ashur over against Marduk), this struggle does not seem to have affected their shared religious beliefs. The Assyrians continued to pray to the Babylonian gods.⁴⁰ The following excerpt, illustrating the Assyrian belief in the all-controlling power of the gods, comes from a hymn entitled "Prayer of Ashurbanipal to the Sun-God" (Shamash, the god of law and justice):

As one who does not cease from revelation, daily thou dost determine the decisions of heaven and earth. . . . With Sin, thy father, thou dost hold court; thou dost deliver ordinances. Anu and Enlil without thy *consent* establish no decision. Ea, the determiner of judgment in the midst of the Deep, depends upon thee. . . . [I am] thy [servant], Ashurbanipal, the exercising of whose kingship thou didst command in a vision . . . [the proclaimer of] thy

³⁶ Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness*, 167 and Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient*, 213.

³⁷ Georges Contenau, *Everyday Life*, 8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

⁴⁰ Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient*, 183.

greatness, who glorifies thy praise to widespread peoples. Judge his case; turn his fate to prosperity. Keep him in splendor; daily let him walk safely. [Forever] may he rule over thy people whom thou has given him in righteousness.⁴¹

This prayer is sufficient to show that the gods were believed to order creation, determining what would take place in the universe. The gods control the destinies of man and kingdoms. Because of this it is proper for the people to worship and praise their greatness.

The Assyrians also recognized the gods to be arbiters of justice. An Assyrian law code identified as The Middle Assyrian Laws contain a variety of statutes regulating the life of man. It is important to note that the example below is the very first law that appears in the list, thus, forming the context of all that follows:

If a woman, [whether] the wife of a seignior or the daughter of a seignior, has entered the temple of a god, has stolen something belonging to the sanctuary [from] the temple of the god, (and) it has been found [in her possession], when they have prosecuted [her] or convicted [her], [they shall take] the indictment and make inquiry of the god; as he orders [the woman to be treated], they shall treat her.⁴²

Because the gods determine man's purpose in the universe, they determine appropriate punishments when men transgress their order.

⁴¹ James B. Pritchard, *ANET*, 387.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 180.

Though the survey has been brief, it has been shown that the peoples of ancient Mesopotamia collectively believed in cosmic order. This divine ordering began at creation and extended to all of nature and human conduct.

The Egyptians

Egyptian history and chronology may forever be debated. In both scholarly and popular works, Egypt is presented as a very ancient people. Typical of scholarly opinion, Lionel Casson wrote:

Egypt was ancient even to the ancients. It was a great nation a thousand years before the Minoans of Crete built their palace at Knossos, about 900 years before the Israelites followed Moses out of bondage. It flourished when tribesmen still dwelt in huts above the Tiber. It was viewed by Greeks and Romans of 2,000 years ago in somewhat the same way the ruins of Greece and Rome are viewed by modern man.⁴³

⁴³ Lionel Casson and the Editors of Time-Life Books, *Great Ages of Man a History of the World's Cultures: Ancient Egypt* (Alexandria: Time-Life books, 1965), 11. Egypt is most certainly an ancient culture, but Christians must be critical of accepting what has been called current consensus chronology (CCC). Most of the ancient BC dates in this work correspond to the CCC, but only with great hesitation and for the sake of correspondence with other historical works that use this dating system (both secular and Christian). I have serious reservations concerning this system of chronology and believe it to be too long with too many gaps. For more on the problems with the chronology of Egypt and the ancient world see the following: James B. Jordan, "Egypt in Biblical History," *Biblical Chronology* 5, no. 8 (December 1993). James B. Jordan, "The Egyptian Problem," *Biblical Chronology* 6, no. 1 (January 1994). James B. Jordan, "Problems With Current Consensus Chronology," *Biblical Chronology* 6, no. 2 (February 1994). This series is available on the web at <http://www.hornes.org/biblicalhorizons>. See also: Peter James and others, *Centuries of Darkness: A Challenge to the Conventional Chronology of Old World Archaeology* (London: Cape, 1991); and Carl E. DeVries, "The Bearing of Current Egyptian Studies on the Old Testament," in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (Waco: Word Books, 1970) 25-36.

The history of ancient Egypt is typically placed between c. 3100 BC and 332 BC (Pharaoh Menes to Alexander the Great).⁴⁴

Like the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians, the Egyptians recognized a god-ordained order in the universe and society. Corresponding to the Mesopotamian *me*, the Egyptians had the principle of *ma'at*. According to Leo G. Perdue:

Ma'at ('truth,' 'justice') is the constitutive order of creation established by the primeval creator deity to direct the harmonious regularity of the cosmos for all eternity. . . . *Ma'at* is also the constitutive order of society. . . . Furthermore, *Ma'at* is the constitutive order of the individual wise man who, instructed by wisdom, is able to live according to her dictates.⁴⁵

The Egyptian Pharaoh was bound to this principle in his reign over the people. "They [i.e., the gods] directed the king to rule Egypt as their heir and successor according to the principles of *ma'at* (divine order, equilibrium, and justice)."⁴⁶

This is illustrated by the fact that Pharaoh's throne and those

⁴⁴ Rosalie David, *Discovering Ancient Egypt* (London: Michael O'Mara Books Limited, 1993), 109. The reworking of Egypt's history begins with the effort of Manetho, an Egyptian priest (c. 305-285) who divided Egypt's kings (beginning with Menes) into various dynasties. For more on Egypt's history, see: Rosalie David, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3-33; and J. I. Packer, Merrill C. Tenney, and William White, Jr., *The Bible Almanac* (Carmel: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980), 121-128.

⁴⁵ Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 19. According to Rosalie David, "Ma'at [is] the principle of balance and order" (*Handbook to Life in Ancient Egypt*, 22). See also: Margaret Bunson, *A Dictionary of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 152 and Jan Assmann, *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*, trans. David Lorton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 3-6, 171-183. For the meaning of *ma'at* as it relates primarily to the ethical sphere, see: Miriam Lichtheim, *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Related Studies* (Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).

⁴⁶ Rosalie David, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Egypt*, 116. Perdue labors extensively to prove this point (*Wisdom and Cult*, 22-64).

of the divine gods are often depicted atop a pedestal in the shape of the hieroglyph for *ma'at*.⁴⁷

As with all other ancient cultures (with the exception of the Hebrews), Egypt corrupted the divine knowledge given them in nature and heart (Romans 1:18-21; 2:14-15) and created a pantheon of gods. The various gods within this pantheon are not always easy to distinguish, as they seem to evolve into one another as well as replace one another in the various creation accounts (depending on who gained political dominance). Even with the difficulty of interpreting these various stories,⁴⁸ the principle of order in the universe (*ma'at*) is found throughout. In one version of the Heliopolis creation story Atum (or Atum-Kheprer), the creator god, speaks of his primacy and sovereignty, "I am Atum when I was alone in Nun; I am Re in his (first) appearance, when he began to rule that which he had made."⁴⁹ In Egyptian thought, the gods ruled creation on the basis of *ma'at*.

In this Heliopolis creation account, the only thing in existence was Nun (the primeval waters) from which Re (also known as Khepri or Atum-Re) self-generated. Finding no place

⁴⁷ Ibid., 66 (note 10) and E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead: The Hieroglyphic Transcript of the Papyrus of ANI, the Translation into English and an Introduction* (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960), 241.

⁴⁸ According to Budge, "The different interpretations which different Egyptologists have placed upon the facts demonstrate the difficulty of the subject" (Ibid., 120).

⁴⁹ James B. Pritchard, *ANET*, 3.

upon which to stand he brought forth the primordial mound (also known as the *benben* hill) upon which he created everything else (gods, nature, and man).⁵⁰ What is interesting about this account is the fact that the hieroglyph for *ma'at* came to signify the primordial mound.⁵¹ Thus Re created with the aid of and upon the foundation of *ma'at*.

Another similar creation account identified as *The Book of Knowing the Creations of Re and of Overthrowing Apophis*, described creation in the following way:

Many were the beings which came forth from my mouth, before heaven came into being, before earth came into being, before the ground and creeping things had been created in this place. I put together (some) of them in Nun as weary ones, before I could find a place in which I might stand. It (seemed) advantageous to me in my heart; I planned with my face; and I made (in concept) every form when I was alone. . . . I planned in my heart, and there came into being a multitude of forms of beings⁵²

Here it is the spoken decree of the god that brings things into being.

Another variant of the creation story stemming from Memphis also presents this idea of the spoken decree. In Memphis theology, the god Ptah created all things by his spoken word. Ptah, later identified with the god Re, was described as, "the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 3-7; E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 117-119; and Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 20, 66 (note 10).

⁵¹ Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 66 (note 10) and E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 241.

⁵² James B. Pritchard, *ANET*, 6.

lord of Ma'at."⁵³ Ptah created by, "thinking and commanding everything that he wishes."⁵⁴

Egyptian wisdom literature also illustrates the belief that the gods ruled based on *ma'at*. Egypt's wisdom literature contains texts which have an older man (father, pharaoh, or visor) transmitting wise instructions to a younger man.⁵⁵ One such Egyptian instruction is given to king Meri-ka-Re. Toward the end of this document, one reads a lengthy passage concerning the creative sovereignty of the god over man and nature:

Well directed are men, the cattle of the god. He made heaven and earth according to their desire, and he repelled the water-monster. He made the breath of life (for) their nostrils. They who have issued from his body are his images. He arises in heaven according to their desire. He made for them plants, animals, fowl, and fish to feed them. He slew his enemies and injured (even) his (own) children because they thought of making rebellion. He makes the light of day according to their desire, and he *sails by* in order to see them. He has erected a shrine around about them, and when they weep he hears. He made for them rulers (even) in the egg, a supporter to support the back of the disabled. He made for them magic as weapons to ward off what might happen or dreams *by* night as well as day. He has slain the treacherous of heart among them, as a man beats his son for his brother's sake. For the god knows every name.⁵⁶

The god directs man and has fashioned the universe to coincide with this direction. Thus, with the rest of the

⁵³ E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Book of the Dead*, 169-170.

⁵⁴ James B. Pritchard, *ANET*, 5.

⁵⁵ Rosalie David, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Egypt*, 122-124, 207-208. James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 412-425.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 417.

ancient Near East, the Egyptian worldview embraced the conviction of creation by divine design. The gods have ordered both the natural and the ethical spheres of the universe.

Summary

This brief survey of the cultures of the Ancient Near East has demonstrated that they all recognized an order in creation. This order adheres in both the natural (cosmic) and moral (ethical) spheres. In addition, this order is attributed in various senses to the gods.⁵⁷

These ancient peoples used various terms to communicate the idea of cosmic and ethical order—*me, parsu, mesaru, kittu*, and *ma'at*. These expressions can be variously translated as justice, truth, and order.

Though certainly not neglecting the moral sphere, the early emphasis within these pagan cultures was on the natural order (e.g., cosmology, theogony, and the often-capricious actions of the gods manipulating nature to control mankind). As time progressed that emphasis began to wane and a growing interest in human justice and ethics developed.

⁵⁷ Though not directly explored in this chapter, it has also been shown that there is a good deal of arbitrariness and inconsistency within the various pagan worldviews. Often it is hard to determine if the principle of order is above or below the gods. Do the gods establish and maintain order or does order rule the gods? In most of the cultures examined, both principles are found (inconsistency) and there is no attempt to reconcile the two (arbitrariness).

CHAPTER 3

PAGAN HISTORY - THE GREEKS AND THE ROMANS

The Greeks

The Greeks may have begun as an amalgam of peoples,⁵⁸ but they soon developed a national pride and recognized themselves to be a unique and advanced society. Herodotus, writing between 484 and 425 BC, boasted that, "The Greek stock from the most ancient times has been distinguished from the barbarians for its cleverness and for being free from such silly simplemindedness."⁵⁹ Later, he described what he called, "Our common Greekness," as, "We are one in blood and one in language; those shrines of gods belong to us all in common, and the sacrifices in common, and there are our habits, bred of a common upbringing."⁶⁰

Like the pagan cultures that preceded them, the Greeks were polytheistic in their religious beliefs. The majority of the

⁵⁸ For a concise, but accurate history of ancient Greece, see Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Ancient Greeks* (Acton: Copley Publishing Group, 1985).

⁵⁹ Herodotus *Histories* 1.60.

⁶⁰ Herod. *Histories* 8.144.

Greek pantheon was worshiped as early as the Minoans of Crete and the Mycenaeans of mainland Greece.⁶¹

The Mycenaeans were the Achaeans of Homer's poems. It is to Homer and Hesiod (the early poets of Greece) along with the Greek philosophers that one must turn to learn of the Greek belief in creation order. Homer and Hesiod were accounted by the ancients⁶² as well as by modern scholars as the authoritative first theologians of ancient Greece.⁶³

Early Greek theology focused more on divine providence than any divine order established at creation. This is because, "The Greeks did not believe that the gods created the universe. It was the other way about: the universe created the gods."⁶⁴ Nevertheless, their emphasis on divine government is significant to the subject at hand because of the prominent place it would hold in the theologies of both Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin.

⁶¹ Robert Parker, "Greek Religion," in *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, ed. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 257-258. The 12 gods of the Greek pantheon were: Zeus, Poseidon, Hades, Hestia, Hera, Ares, Athena, Apollo, Aphrodite, Hermes, Artemis, and Hephaestus. See Edith Hamilton, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes* (New York: New American Library, Inc., 1942), 25.

⁶² As Herodotus states, "But whence each of these gods came into existence, or whether they were for ever, and what kind of shape they had were not known until the day before yesterday, if I may use the expression; for I believe that Homer and Hesiod were four hundred years before my time—and no more than that. It is they who created for the Greeks their theogony; it is they who gave to the gods the special names for their descent from their ancestors and divided among them their honors, their arts, and their shapes" (*Histories* 2.53).

⁶³ Robert Parker, "Greek Religion," 259; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Ancient Greeks*, 18.

⁶⁴ Edith Hamilton, *Mythology*, 24. See also Hesiod *Theogonia*.

Both of these men connected divine providence to the maintenance of the creation order.

Though quarrels and petty jealousies exist⁶⁵, though Zeus at times seems unsure⁶⁶ and incapable;⁶⁷ from the beginning of the *Iliad* to its end, he is presented as the one who rules and orders the universe. At the very onset of Homer's poem, Thetis, the mother of Achilles, supplicating for her son addressed Zeus as, "Olympian Zeus: your urgings rule the world!"⁶⁸ The gods, led by Zeus, plan the outcome of the war.⁶⁹

Concerning the main issues of the book (Achilles' regained honor and Hector's death), Zeus orders the future:

This powerful Hector will never quit the fighting, not till swift Achilles rises beside the ships that day they battle against the high sterns, pinned in the fatal straits and grappling for the body of Patroclus. So runs the doom of Zeus.⁷⁰

This decree of Zeus happens exactly as ordered.⁷¹

With Hesiod comes both agreement and advancement. According to William Jones, "The operation of [the] moral law is

⁶⁵ There is constant bickering between Zeus and Hera (Homer *Iliad* 1.619-624, 1.673-727, 14).

⁶⁶ Zeus debates with himself as to how to cause Patroclus' death (Hom. *Il.* 16.749-760).

⁶⁷ Zeus is frustrated at the coming deaths of Sarpedon and Hector (Hom. *Il.* 16.512-548, 22.200-220).

⁶⁸ Hom. *Il.* 1.606.

⁶⁹ Hom. *Il.* 4.1-20.

⁷⁰ Hom. *Il.* 8.546-550.

⁷¹ Hom. *Il.* 16

no longer conceived of as being in the hands of an arbitrary and temperamental divinity."⁷² Instead, Hesiod's conception of the will of Zeus is that, "It has now become a force operating uniformly, regularly, and pervasively throughout nature."⁷³

In *Theogony*, Zeus is presented as, "The king of the Gods."⁷⁴ He is the dispenser of good and bad as well as the one who distributes justice and order:

But before this could happen Zeus put her [Metis, his first wife] into his stomach so that this goddess might help him to plan both good things and bad. Then he took as his wife shining Themis, who bore him the Horia: Orderly Government, Justice, and Peace, a bountiful goddess.⁷⁵

In *Works and Days*, these attributes of Zeus are emphasized with even more clarity. The poem opens with a hymn to Zeus proclaiming his foreordination of the destinies of men:

Pierian Muses, I pray you, singers and bringers of glory, come and tell us of Zeus, singing a hymn of your father, through whom mortal men are both dishonored and honored; they become famous and do not become famous as almighty Zeus wills. Easily he strengthens the faltering, easily shatters the strong, easily makes the flourishing fade, the faded to flourish, easily straightens the crooked and withers the haughty in spirit, Zeus the Thunderer on High, who dwells in the uppermost palace. Hearken, O witnessing, listening Zeus, and straighten our judgments, hold us to justice (1-10).⁷⁶

⁷² William Thomas Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy: The Classical Mind*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969), 8.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Hes. *Theog.* 886.

⁷⁵ Hes. *Theog.* 899-905.

⁷⁶ Hesiod *Opera et Dies* 1-10.

Both Hesiod and Homer taught the concept of divine providence. In early Greek theology, Zeus governed the mortal world.

Beginning with the Greek philosophers, one finds an incipient secularizing of the concept of order in nature. The conviction that the universe is ordered is inherent in the Greek word κόσμος usually translated "universe". This term embodies the idea of, "That which is well assembled or constructed from individual constituents,"⁷⁷ and, "Order."⁷⁸

The notions of *kosmos* and *sophia* [wisdom] became intellectualized in Greek philosophy, so that both order and wisdom come to be defined in strictly rational terms. It now becomes the special province of the philosopher, by means of his rationality, to discern the order of the world, now defined in terms of the metaphysical universals behind and in the reality of our experience. There is now little sense of the religious or ethical dimensions of this apprehension of the cosmic order. The tradition of rationality, with its corresponding 'natural law' is born in Greek philosophy.⁷⁹

Three examples from early Greek philosophy will suffice to show the belief in cosmic (creation) order as well as the slow but determinative move away from a theistic view of this order. Most historians of philosophy begin their histories with the

⁷⁷ Hermann Sasse, "κόσμος," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 3, Θ-Κ, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 868.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 869. See the whole article, 868-895.

⁷⁹ Albert M. Wolters, "Creation Order," 46.

philosopher Thales (d. c. 546 BC).⁸⁰ Of Thales, W. T. Jones wrote:

According to Aristotle, who lived almost two hundred and fifty years later, Thales believed that water is the cause of all things and that all things are filled with gods. This is virtually all that is known about Thales, but it clearly shows that he conceived of the world process in natural terms. With Thales, cosmogony had not yet become science, but it was no longer a genealogy of the gods.⁸¹

Thales was a monist who considered water to be the one "single unifying principle"⁸² of the universe. He was one of the first to offer a quasi-naturalistic explanation of the order that surrounded him. The important thing to note here is that he attempted to explain what he perceived to be observable *order*.

The second example comes from Heraclitus (c. 500 BC). According to W. T. Jones, in Heraclitus one finds, "The gradual emergence of the concept of natural law—of a neutral, regular, and pervasive interrelationship of all things in nature."⁸³ Heraclitus believed that all things were in a continual state of flux, of change. He used the term *logos* to describe the

⁸⁰ See William Thomas Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 8-10; William S. Sahakian, *History of Philosophy: From the Earliest Times to the Present* (New York: Barnes & Nobles Books, 1968), 1-2; and Frederick Charles Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, *Greece and Rome* (New York: Image Books, 1993), 13-24.

⁸¹ William Thomas Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 8.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 9. A monist believes that all of reality can be reduced to one single substance.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 18. William Sahakian declared, "To Heraclitus, therefore, we must grant the distinction of having been the first to discover natural law, the laws of science" (*History of Philosophy*, 8).

principle of change that regulated the universe. This *logos*, "Was a cosmic law of Reason that control[led] the universe and is immanent in human reason."⁸⁴

The third example comes from the epistemology of Plato (c. 428-348 BC). Plato may very well be the greatest philosopher the world has ever known, "No one, with the possible exception of Aristotle, comes close to challenging Plato's prominence in the history of philosophy."⁸⁵ Plato's epistemology consisted of two essential elements: rationalism and dualism. Plato can be described as an utter rationalist, believing that no human knowledge arises from sense experience whatsoever. Plato's dualism consisted in his belief in two different avenues of knowledge corresponding to his belief in two different worlds—the material world below and the world of the Forms above.

Plato believed that the material world was constantly changing and thus could only result in opinion or belief. On the other hand, the world above, the world of the Forms, was immutable and provided the *order* needed for true knowledge.⁸⁶ Plato's epistemology is illustrated in his famous allegory of

⁸⁴ Ronald H. Nash, *The Word of God and The Mind of Man* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1982), 60.

⁸⁵ Ronald H. Nash, *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 59.

⁸⁶ Ronald H. Nash, *Life's Ultimate Questions*, 68-70.

the cave found in Book 7 of the *Republic*.⁸⁷ Important in terms of creation order is Plato's presentation of the sun, which he explained to be the Form of the Good. In the allegory, the sun is the last thing seen and is understood to be that which, "Provides the seasons and the years, governs everything in the visible world, and is in some way the cause of all the things that he [i.e., the prisoner] used to see."⁸⁸ Plato's explanation of the allegory reveals his belief in the order of the universe:

But this is how I see it: In the knowable realm, the form of the good is the last thing to be seen, and it is reached only with difficulty. Once one has seen it, however, one *must conclude that it is the cause of all that is correct and beautiful in anything*, that it produces both light and its source in the visible realm, *and that in the intelligible realm it controls and provides truth and understanding, so that anyone who is to act sensibly in private or public must see it.*⁸⁹

Whether it was Thales's search for that which unified the universe, or Heraclitus' *logos*, or Plato's concept of the forms, the Greek philosophers believed the universe to be logical and ordered. This conviction was passed on to the Romans.

⁸⁷ Very briefly, the allegory is as follows. Several prisoners are captive in a dark cave, chained in place and unable to turn their heads. Behind them burns a fire that casts shadows on the wall in front of them. These shadows are then interpreted as reality. One of the prisoners finally escapes and makes it to the outside world where he sees reality for what it really is. The last things he sees before returning to the cave is the sun (Plato *Respublica* 7.514-517).

⁸⁸ Emphasis mine; Pl. *Resp.* 7.516.

⁸⁹ Emphasis mine; Pl. *Resp.* 7.517.

The Romans

Rome, from its legendary founding by Romulus and Remus to its consumption by Christianity, has a long and fascinating history.⁹⁰ Early in its history, Roman religious beliefs differed little from that of the Greeks before them.⁹¹ As time progressed and Rome grew, it practiced a polytheistic system of religion by habitually incorporating the gods and religious practices of conquered peoples into its own belief system.⁹²

Religion in Rome functioned much as it did in all the cultures studied so far. Durant affirmed that, "The old religion made for morality, for order and strength in the individual, the family, and the state."⁹³ It was also the basis for order in the universe, "It strengthened law by giving it celestial origins and religious form, by making crime a disturbance of the order and peace of Heaven, and by placing the authority of Jove [i.e., Jupiter] behind every oath."⁹⁴

⁹⁰ For an account of this history, see Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, vol. 3, *Caesar and Christ: A History of Roman Civilization and of Christianity From Their Beginnings to A.D. 325* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944).

⁹¹ For a description of Roman religious beliefs see Lionel Casson, *The Horizon Book of Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (New York: America Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1975), 78-91; Jerome Carcopino, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire*, ed. Henry T. Rowell, trans. E. O. Lorimer (London: George Routledge & Sons, LTD., 1941), 121-140; and Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, 58-67, 93-94.

⁹² Lionel Casson, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, 79-80.

⁹³ Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, 67.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Much the same is true concerning Roman philosophy; it was, according to Durant, a continuation and building upon Greek thought:

The Greek conquest of Rome took the form of sending Greek religion and comedy to the Roman plebs; Greek morals, philosophy, and art to the upper classes. These Greek gifts conspired with wealth and empire in that sapping of Roman faith and character which was one part of Hellas' long revenge upon her conquerors. The conquest reached its climax in Roman philosophy, from the stoic Epicureanism of Lucretius to the epicurean Stoicism of Seneca.⁹⁵

This is especially true in the development of ethics and law.⁹⁶

An important example of Roman ethical thinking is the great statesman, philosopher, and orator Cicero (c. 106-43 BC). Two of Cicero's works, *The Republic (De Republica)* and *The Laws (De Legibus)*, demonstrate that the Romans believed in cosmic order.

Even more conspicuous than Heraclitus before him, Cicero believed and taught the authority of natural law. "It is in Cicero, writing in high-minded academic detachment, that we encounter a conception of natural law which not only strongly resembles the Christian teaching but, very likely actually

⁹⁵ Ibid., 95. John Maurice Kelly wrote, "While . . . events were unfolding on the military and political plane, something like a reverse conquest was taking place in the sphere of the intellect. . . . It was the paradoxical conquest of Rome by the Greek spirit, at the very time that Greece was falling politically under Roman dominion" (*A Short History of Western Legal Theory* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1992], 46. eBook [Online]: <http://www.netlibrary.com> [8 April 2004]).

⁹⁶ Jonathan Barnes, "Hellenistic Philosophy and Science" in *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, eds. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 365-385.

contributed something to the formation of that teaching."⁹⁷ For Cicero, natural law was the basis and foundation of human justice:

Law in the proper sense is right reason in harmony with nature. It is spread through the whole human community, unchanging and eternal, calling people to their duty by its commands and deterring them from wrong-doing by its prohibitions. When it addresses a good man, its commands and prohibitions are never in vain; but those same commands and prohibitions have no effect on the wicked. This law cannot be countermanded, nor can it be in any way amended, nor can it be totally rescinded. . . . There will not be one such law in Rome and another in Athens, one now and another in the future, but all peoples at all times will be embraced by a single and eternal and unchangeable law; and there will be, as it were, one lord and master of us all—the god who is the author, proposer, and interpreter of that law.⁹⁸

In *The Laws*, Cicero provided the following definition of law, said to be accepted by wise men of old:

Law is the highest reason, inherent in nature, which enjoins what ought to be done and forbids the opposite. . . . If this assertion is correct, as on the whole I think it is, the origin of justice must be derived from law. For law is a force of nature, the intelligence and reason of a wise man, and the criterion of justice and injustice. . . . But in establishing what justice is let us take as our point of departure that highest law which came into being countless centuries before any law was written down or any state was even founded (1.18-19)⁹⁹

Clearly, Cicero believed in an ordered universe. The Stoic school of philosophy had a special influence on his thinking in

⁹⁷ John Maurice Kelly, *A Short History of Western Legal Theory*, 57.

⁹⁸ Cicero *De Republica* 3.33.

⁹⁹ Cicero *De Legibus* 1.18-19.

this area.¹⁰⁰ Stoicism began with the Greek philosopher Zeno (c. 336 BC),¹⁰¹ and had a great influence on Roman thought. According to Ronald Nash, "On the whole, cultured people during the first century A.D. were influenced more by Stoicism than by any other philosophical movement."¹⁰²

Stoic philosophy comprised three periods: early (300-200 BC), middle (150 BC-AD 30), and late (AD 30-180). Throughout these three periods, the basic components were a belief in materialism (the early stoics were monists), an adherence to the thoughts of Heraclitus (especially concerning the idea of the *logos*), pantheism, and fatalism.¹⁰³

Pertaining to order in nature, the stoics held to the notion of cosmic reason called the *logos*—a divine, but impersonal reason that inhered in and throughout all of reality.¹⁰⁴ This belief in creation order buttressed the notion of natural law. "Perhaps the most clear-cut evidence of the

¹⁰⁰ Frederick Charles Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, 418-420 and William Thomas Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 333-337.

¹⁰¹ Copleston points out that this Zeno is, "Not to be confused with Zeno the pupil of Parmenides" (Ibid., 326, note 5).

¹⁰² Ronald Nash, *The Gospel and the Greeks: Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* (Richardson: Probe Books, 1992), 67.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 67-79 and William Thomas Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 326-347.

¹⁰⁴ Ronald Nash, *The Gospel and the Greeks*, 69.

influence of Stoicism was the introduction into Roman jurisprudence of the notion of natural law."¹⁰⁵

Like the Greeks before them, the Romans continued the secularization of the concept of cosmic order. In the Roman understanding of natural law, there was no universal agreement as to the definition of "nature" or the involvement of a god or gods.¹⁰⁶

This influence of stoicism upon both the Roman people and the Roman State lasted long into Roman history. Some of the important figures from later stoicism were Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius.¹⁰⁷

For the Romans, there was something eternal and universal behind the law and, thus, behind right behavior. Whether due to god or nature, science, rationality and ethics were viewed as existing in and because of a logical, ordered universe.

Summary

Like the cultures of the Ancient Near East, the Greeks and the Romans continued to believe in an ordered universe. Throughout their histories, many continued to attribute this order to the gods. Eventually a secularized understanding of

¹⁰⁵ William Thomas Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 345.

¹⁰⁶ John Maurice Kelly, *A Short History of Western Legal Theory*, 60-63.

¹⁰⁷ Ronald Nash, *The Gospel and the Greeks*, 73-77 and William Thomas Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy*, 337-347.

the cosmos began to grow. This came to its zenith with the Greek philosophers and the concept of impersonal natural law.

The idea of impersonal order influenced Greek and Roman philosophical endeavors. In the natural sciences, the perceived order in the universe was explained by natural law. Plato developed an epistemology based on impersonal Forms, which for him, made rational thought possible. Cicero believed that all laws traced back to natural law, which was the foundation of human justice. The philosophy of Stoicism influenced Cicero and developed further the idea of ethics based on natural law.

The early church adopted this phrase to express its understanding of the Sovereign Triune God ordering His creation. However, the Church's understanding of natural law differed radically from the secular cultures examined so far.

CHAPTER 4

CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Like the pagan cultures that preceded them, the early Christians recognized an order to creation. However, neither Israel nor the Christian Church shared the same presuppositions or worldview with these non-covenanted peoples. Thus, interpretations and emphases differed radically.

While both Christians and pagans recognized order in both the natural (cosmic) and moral (ethical) spheres, they accentuated different aspects of that order. Over against the pagan emphasis on the natural order, the Church emphasized moral order.¹⁰⁸ The Church was also very clear as to the sovereignty of God—He is the one who established and maintains order.

Very early in its history, the Christian church used the phrase "natural law" to express this concept. The early Church Fathers emphasized the moral aspect of natural law and thus tied the idea to the law of God written upon the heart of man (Romans 2:14-15). Natural law referred to not just cosmic order, but more importantly, to God's moral ordering of humanity. The

¹⁰⁸ The Christian emphasis on the moral ordering of the universe in no way led to neglect of the cosmic order. In fact, as will be shown below, God's ordering of the cosmos was the foundation and context of the moral order.

Decalogue recorded the content of this moral ordering. Though influenced by the culture around them, the Church based their understanding of natural law unmistakably upon their apprehension of divine revelation found in the pages of the Old and New Testaments.

Ante-Nicene Fathers

Writing in the late second century (c. AD 185), Irenaeus penned the following words illustrating the early Christian understanding:

They (the Jews) had therefore a law, a course of discipline, and a prophecy of future things. For God at the first, indeed, warning them by means of natural precepts, which from the beginning He had implanted in mankind, that is, by means of the Decalogue (which, if any one does not observe, he has no salvation), did then demand nothing more of them.¹⁰⁹

According to Irenaeus, "natural precepts" were simply the Decalogue written upon man's heart.

Tertullian, writing about the same period (c. AD 204), communicated the same idea in the following words:

Demanding then a law of God, you have that common one prevailing all over the world, engraven on the natural tables to which the apostle too is wont to appeal . . . as when to the Romans, affirming that the heathen do by nature those things which the law requires, he suggests both natural law and a law-revealing nature.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 4.15.1.

¹¹⁰ Tertullian *The Chaplet, or De Corona* 6.

Writing in even more precise language:

For why should God, the founder of the universe, the Governor of the whole world, the Fashioner of humanity, the Sower of universal nations be believed to have given a law through Moses to one people, and not be said to have assigned it to all nations? For unless He had given it to all by no means would He have habitually permitted even proselytes out of the nations to have access to it. But—as is congruous with the goodness of God, and with His equity, as the Fashioner of mankind—He gave to all nations the selfsame law, which at definite and stated times He enjoined should be observed, when He willed, and through whom He willed, and as He willed. For in the beginning of the world He gave to Adam himself and Eve a law, that they were not to eat of the fruit of the tree planted in the midst of paradise; but that, if they did contrariwise, by death they were to die. Which law had continued enough for them, had it been kept. For in this law given to Adam we recognize in embryo all the precepts which afterwards sprouted forth when given through Moses.¹¹¹

According to Tertullian, God ordered both the natural and the moral realms. God, as Creator, governs the cosmos and orders the ethical realm by that same law which He later revealed to Moses upon Mt. Sinai.

A final example comes from Archelaus (c. AD 277). After a brief discussion of God's implanting the law in the hearts of men, Archelaus makes clear what law he is referring to:

But inasmuch as only few were able to rise by this medium to the height of righteousness, that is to say, by means of the traditions of parents, when as yet there was no law embodied in writing, God had compassion on the race of man, and was pleased to give through Moses a written law to men, since verily the equity of the natural law failed to be retained in all its perfection in their hearts. In consonance, therefore, with man's first creation, a written

¹¹¹ Tertullian *An Answer to the Jews* 2.

legislation was prepared which was given through Moses in behoof of the salvation of very many.¹¹²

The above examples are sufficient to show that the early church used the expression "natural law" to refer to God's ethical ordering of mankind by means of the Decalogue written upon the heart. The language and concepts of these early authors set the stage for further development in the works of Augustine.

Augustine

St. Augustine is associated with a group of men known as the Nicene and Post-Nicene Church Fathers. He lived at a time in the history of the Church when major persecution had ended. These men could write in relative peace and safety. Hence, their thoughts and ideas are much expanded when compared to the Apostolic Fathers. The doctrines of creation and providence contributed to their understanding of cosmic order, especially God's ethical government of mankind.

Augustine's understanding of cosmic order is discernable from his theology of creation as well as his adoption and continued use of the term "natural law". From a study of these two concepts in the writings of Augustine, it is clear that he believed in a God-ordained cosmic order in both the natural and moral spheres.

¹¹² Archelaus *The Acts of the Disputation with the Heresiarch Manes* 28.

Creation

On several occasions, Augustine undertook the task of explicating creation (in particular, Genesis chapters 1 and 2). His views are often difficult to understand. At times, he asks more questions of the Scriptural text than he answers. However, throughout his several attempts he makes unambiguously clear that God is the Creator, Craftsman, and Fashioner of the universe—creating as He desires, setting the bounds and limits of His creation according to His wisdom. For Augustine, God created all things, Himself alone being uncreated:

There is, accordingly, a good which is alone simple, and therefore alone unchangeable, and this is God. By this Good have all others been created, but not simple, and therefore not unchangeable. "Created," I say—that is, made, not begotten.¹¹³

Augustine began his work, *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book*, with a statement of the Catholic faith. In this statement, he presented his view of creation:

God the Father Almighty made and established all of creation through his only-begotten Son, that is, through the Wisdom and Power consubstantial and coeternal to himself, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, who is also consubstantial and coeternal. Therefore, the Catholic discipline commands that we believe that this Trinity is called one God and that he has made and created all the things that there are insofar as they are. Thus all of creation, whether intellectual or corporeal—or, as we can put it more briefly in the words of the divine Scriptures, whether invisible or visible—has been made by God, not out of the nature of God, but out of nothing. Thus nothing of

¹¹³ Augustine *City of God* 11.10. See the entirety of book 11 in this work. See also books 11 through 13 in *Augustine Confessions*.

the Trinity is found in all of creation apart from the fact that the Trinity created it and it was created. Hence, we may not say or believe that the whole of creation is either consubstantial with or coeternal with God.¹¹⁴

Augustine's exposition of the Psalms further illustrates what he believed concerning God's sovereignty and wise ordering of the universe. Commenting on words from Psalm 104:24, "O Lord, how great are made Thy works!"¹¹⁵ he asked several rhetorical questions which described and exalted God's work of creation. One question in particular is revealing of his belief in a well-ordered universe:

To take it word for word, every ordained creation, running by ordinance, beautiful by ordinance, rising by ordinance, setting by ordinance, going through all seasons by ordinance, whence hath it proceeded?¹¹⁶

Augustine adulated in the fact that, "the whole universe, is the work of God."¹¹⁷

Commenting on another Psalm (106:44), Augustine again expressed his belief that God orders and rules His creation:

Creation, which He ruleth wonderfully, He, without any temporal change in Himself, is said to do by a sudden act of will what in the ordained causes of events He hath arranged in the unchangeableness of His most secret counsel, according to which He doth everything according to defined sea-

¹¹⁴ Augustine *On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book* 1.2.

¹¹⁵ Augustine *On the Psalms* 104.31.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

sons, doing the present, and having already done the future.¹¹⁸

An almost obscure comment in *City of God* concerning the birth of Ishmael reveals God's ordering of nature. Ishmael, "Was begotten by natural law, the other [i.e., Isaac] was given by gracious promise. In the one birth, human action is revealed; in the other, a divine kindness comes to light."¹¹⁹ Here, natural law refers to the normal course of events put into place by God.

Natural Law

Augustine's view of natural law derives from his doctrine of creation. It is a continuation and expansion of what the earlier Church Fathers taught. For Augustine, natural laws are "divine laws absolutely imposed upon nature."¹²⁰ In *Reply to Faustus the Manichaean*, he had further occasion to discuss natural law, here equating it to "eternal law":

Sin, then, is any transgression in deed, or word, or desire, of the eternal law. And the eternal law is the divine order or will of God, which requires the preservation of natural order, and forbids the breach of it.¹²¹

Not only does natural law order the cosmic or physical realm, according to Augustine, it also has moral content that can be transgressed. Augustine used the expression "eternal

¹¹⁸ Augustine *On the Psalms* 106.31.

¹¹⁹ Augustine *City of God* 15.2.

¹²⁰ Augustine *On Two Souls, Against the Manichaeans* 1.12.16.

¹²¹ Augustine *Reply to Faustus the Manichaean* 22.27.

law" as a synonym for natural law. Because natural law publishes the moral demands of the Creator, it shares in His eternality.

In his work entitled, *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*, Augustine considered Matthew 18:7, "Woe unto the world because of offenses."¹²² Combining this phrase with the exhortation found in Psalm 119:165, "Great praise have they who love Thy law, and nothing is an offense to them,"¹²³ he concluded that the meek love the law of the Lord. He illustrated this with the example of Job. Job was both meek and instructed out of the law of God. As to what law Job learned from, Augustine leaves no doubt:

In a word, behold the meek man, behold one taught in the law of God, the eternal law of God I mean. For that law on tables was not yet given to the Jews in the time of Job, but in the hearts of the godly there remained still the eternal law, from which that which was given to the people was copied.¹²⁴

In another discussion describing the various aspects of peace—in nature, in the soul, between God and man, in the family and society—Augustine argued that it is eternal law and order that establishes peace. For instance, "Peace between man and God is the well ordered obedience of faith to eternal

¹²² Augustine *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament* 31.1.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 31.2.

law."¹²⁵ This eternal law is none other than, "The law of order."¹²⁶ Moreover, it is God, "the most wise Creator and most just Ordainer of all natures,"¹²⁷ who has given this law. Speaking of well-ordered peace in the family, he wrote, "Even those who rule serve those whom they seem to command."¹²⁸ What is important here is that he grounds this principle in the creation and the order established then:

This is prescribed by the order of nature: it is thus that God has created man. For "let them," He says, "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every creeping thing which creepeth on the earth." He did not intend that His rational creature, who was made in His image, should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation—not man over man, but man over the beasts.¹²⁹

In Augustine one finds continued use of the phrase "natural law." Natural law refers to God's ordering of the cosmic and ethical spheres of His creation. The moral order does not come from some impersonal source, but from the personal eternal God. Hence, one finds that Augustine used "natural law" and "eternal law" synonymously. Heinrich A. Rommen in his work on natural law penned an accurate summary of Augustine's insights:

Through this law [i.e., eternal law] God, so far as He produces external effects, directs, guides, and sustains

¹²⁵ Augustine *City of God* 19.13.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 19.14.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 19.15.

the universe. God, supreme reason, unchangeable being and omnipotent will: this is oneness in its highest form. But the natural moral law . . . is precisely this divine law with reference to man, so far as the latter participates in the divine law. The eternal law dwells as blind necessity in irrational nature. As oughtness, as norm of free moral activity, it is inscribed in the heart of man, a rational free being. It appears in the moral, rational nature of man; it is written into the rational soul.¹³⁰

A growing emphasis on the moral content of natural law continues in the writings of the Church. This is seen in the systematized thinking and writing of Thomas Aquinas.

Aquinas

Aquinas' magnum opus is named *Summa Theologica*¹³¹ because, for Aquinas, that is exactly what it was. One need not turn farther to find Aquinas' mind on any subject. To this work, attention will now be turned to apprehend Aquinas' thoughts on creation and natural law.

Creation

One cannot miss the influence of Plato on Aquinas' metaphysic. Nevertheless, Aquinas maintained the historic Christian belief that God created the entire universe of nothing, in the space of six days. Therefore, God is sovereign

¹³⁰ Heinrich A. Rommen, *The Natural Law: A Study in Legal and Social History and Philosophy*, trans. Thomas R. Hanley (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1947), 37-38.

¹³¹ The Sum of Theology; i.e., its principle parts and their meanings.

over all things—governing and directing their courses as He pleases.

After appealing to Genesis 1:1 in defense of God creating out of nothing, Aquinas affirmed that, “Nothing can be, unless it is from God, Who is the universal cause of all being. Hence it is necessary to say that God brings things into being from nothing.”¹³² According to Aquinas, the entire Trinity is involved in the creation process¹³³—a process that spanned 6 days.¹³⁴

Aquinas also believed and taught that God sovereignly governs all that He has created:

It is necessary to attribute providence to God. For all the good that is in created things has been created by God, as was shown above (Q. 6, A. 4). In created things good is found not only as regards their substance, but also as regards their order towards an end and especially their last end, which, as was said above, is the divine goodness (Q. 21, A. 4).¹³⁵

The providence of God gives order to the natural world, “Wherefore the un failing order we observe in things is a sign of their being governed.”¹³⁶ This providence of God—this divine government—extends to all things:

¹³² *ST* 1a 45.2.

¹³³ *ST* 1a 45.6.

¹³⁴ *ST* 1a 74.2-3.

¹³⁵ *ST* 1a 22.1.

¹³⁶ *ST* 1a 103.1.

As there can be nothing which is not created by God, so there can be nothing which is not subject to His government. . . . As there can be nothing that is not ordered to the Divine goodness as its end, as is clear from what we have said above (Q. 44, A. 4; Q. 65, A. 2), so it is impossible for anything to escape from the Divine Government (1a 103.5).¹³⁷

Aquinas discusses further this divine, eternal ordering by God under the headings of eternal and natural law.

Natural Law

Aquinas differentiated between God's ordering of the natural (or cosmic) sphere, calling it eternal law,¹³⁸ and His ordering of the moral (or ethical) sphere, which he called natural law.¹³⁹ For Aquinas, Supreme Reason ruled the universe. This Supreme Reason was immutable and eternal. This he called eternal law and equated it with divine providence:

Now it is evident, granted that the world is ruled by Divine Providence, as was stated in the First Part (Q. XXII., AA. 1,2), that the whole community of the universe is governed by Divine Reason. . . . Accordingly the eternal concept of the Divine Law bears the character of an eternal law, in so far as it is ordained by God to the government of things foreknown by Him.¹⁴⁰

According to Aquinas, "Eternal law is nothing else than the type [i.e., source or essence] of divine Wisdom, as directing

¹³⁷ *ST* 1a 103.5.

¹³⁸ *ST* 1a2ae 91.1, *ST* 1a2ae 93.

¹³⁹ *ST* 1a2ae 91.2, *ST* 1a2ae 94.

¹⁴⁰ *ST* 1a2ae 91.1.

all actions and movements."¹⁴¹ God has ordered the cosmos so that, "All actions and movements of the whole of nature are subject to the eternal law."¹⁴² Aquinas believed that all other laws proceeded from this eternal law.¹⁴³ Therefore, natural law flowed from eternal law and was thus eternal in character.

When dealing with the norms or rules of proper behavior known to all, Aquinas appealed to natural law. According to John Maurice Kelly, "The achievement of creating a total and organized synthesis of the natural law which is the product of reason, on the one hand, and Christian doctrine, on the other, belongs to St Thomas Aquinas."¹⁴⁴ Natural law, like eternal law, is related to reason:

Wherefore, since all things subject to Divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law, as was stated above (A. 1); it is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law. . . . This participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law.¹⁴⁵

The "first principle" of natural law relates it to the moral sphere:

The first principle in the practical reason is one founded on the notion of good, vis., that *good is that which all things seek after*. Hence this is the first precept of law, that *good is to be done and ensued, and evil is to be*

¹⁴¹ *ST* 1a2ae 93.1.

¹⁴² *ST* 1a2ae 93.5.

¹⁴³ *ST* 1a2ae 93.3.

¹⁴⁴ John Maurice Kelly, *A Short History of Western Legal Theory*, 143.

¹⁴⁵ *ST* 1a2ae 91.2.

avoided. All other precepts of the natural law are based upon this: so that whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends as man's good (or evil) belongs to the precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided.¹⁴⁶

It is important to note that Aquinas, unlike those before and after him, never equated the natural law with the Decalogue. There was certainly overlap with the Decalogue,¹⁴⁷ but not identity. According to Aquinas, "The Old Law is distinct from the natural law, not as being altogether different from it, but as something added thereto. For just as grace presupposes nature, so must the Divine law presuppose the natural law."¹⁴⁸

Calvin

Calvin, like Augustine and Aquinas¹⁴⁹ before him, believed that God created and ordered the universe. Calvin's comments on creation reveal his conviction that God ordered the physical world (i.e., cosmic order); his sustained use of the expression natural law, understanding its content to equal that of the Decalogue, expressed his belief that God also ordered the ethical sphere.

¹⁴⁶ Emphasis original; *ST* 1a2ae 94.2.

¹⁴⁷ R. S. Clark understood Aquinas to "related the Decalogue and natural law more by way of overlap than identity" ("Calvin on the *Lex Naturalis*" *Stulos Theological Journal* 6.1&2 [1998]: 6).

¹⁴⁸ *ST* 1a2ae 99.2.

¹⁴⁹ Though there is basic agreement between Calvin and Aquinas, there are also differences. Clark observed, "Turning to Calvin's epistemology and definition of natural law it will become evident that the most notable difference between Thomas and Calvin is that the latter defined natural law primarily in terms of the Decalogue and Thomas did not" (R. S. Clark, "Calvin on the *Lex Naturalis*," 7-8).

Creation

For Calvin, God creates all things *ex nihilo*¹⁵⁰ and is sovereign over the heavens and the earth. The whole universe is His workmanship and He has ordered it according to His wisdom.¹⁵¹ If God were to remove His sovereign hand and government, the world would cease to exist:

For it is certain that inasmuch as God sustains the world by his power, governs it by his providence, cherishes and even propagates all creatures, he is constantly at work. . . . If God should but withdraw his hand a little, all things would immediately perish and dissolve into nothing, as is declared in Psalm civ. 29. And indeed God is rightly acknowledged as the Creator of heaven and earth only whilst their perpetual preservation is ascribed to him.¹⁵²

Calvin is unyielding in his conviction that God sovereignly governs *all* of creation:

It is here declared to us that the course of nature, as we call it, is nothing but the disposition of the will of God, and that He bears such rule over both heaven and earth and over rain and fair weather, that He changes them at His own pleasure, and yet does not send either without cause.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Commenting on the first verse of Genesis (1:1), Calvin wrote, "He [i.e., Moses] moreover teaches by the word 'created,' that what before did not exist was now made. . . . Therefore his meaning is, that the world was made out of nothing" (*Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 1, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. John King [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989], 70).

¹⁵¹ Calvin wrote, "Let us admire this wonderful Artificer, who has so beautifully arranged all things above and beneath, that they may respond to each other in most harmonious concert" (*Ibid.*, 85).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 103-104.

¹⁵³ Calvin is here commenting on Deuteronomy 28:15-24. John Calvin, *The Covenant Enforced: Sermons on Deuteronomy 27 and 28*, ed. James B. Jordan (Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), 143.

Throughout Calvin's comments on Genesis 1 and 2, he recognizes God to be the active agent designing the universe at will and according to His sovereign plan.¹⁵⁴ This ordering of the physical sphere extends to the very nature, purpose, and function of all created things.¹⁵⁵

Natural Law

R. S. Clark astutely argued that Calvin's epistemology informed his understanding of natural law.¹⁵⁶ Calvin's *Institutes* begin with these memorable words, "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."¹⁵⁷ This knowledge of God leads man to awareness of right conduct.¹⁵⁸

According to Calvin, this knowledge of God is naturally implanted in all men:

There is within the human mind, and indeed by natural instinct, an awareness of divinity. This we take to be beyond controversy. To prevent anyone from taking refuge in the pretense of ignorance, God himself has implanted in all men a certain understanding of his divine majesty.

¹⁵⁴ John Calvin, *Genesis*, 67-137.

¹⁵⁵ God has, according to Calvin, "endowed each kind with its own nature, assigned functions, appointed places and stations" (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1.14.20).

¹⁵⁶ R. S. Clark, "Calvin on the *Lex Naturalis*," 7-10, 22.

¹⁵⁷ Calvin *Institutes* 1.1.1.

¹⁵⁸ Calvin wrote, "Now, the knowledge of God, as I understand it, is that by which we not only conceive that there is a God but also grasp what befits us and is proper to his glory, in fine, what is to our advantage to know of him. Indeed, we shall not say that, properly speaking, God is known where there is no religion or piety" (*Institutes* 1.2.1).

Ever renewing its memory, he repeatedly sheds fresh drops. Since, therefore, men one and all perceive that there is a God and that he is their Maker, they are condemned by their own testimony because they have failed to honor him and to consecrate their lives to his will.¹⁵⁹

For Calvin, man's knowledge of God brings with it knowledge of his guilt. This is because knowledge of God is accompanied by awareness of natural law.

Explicating Romans 2:14, Calvin wrote that the Gentiles, "Prove by their own deeds that they have some rule of righteousness: for there is no nation so lost to every thing human, that it does not keep within the limits of some laws."¹⁶⁰ He continued, "It is beyond all question evident that they have some notions of justice and rectitude . . . which are implanted by nature in the heart of man."¹⁶¹

Commenting on this same passage (Romans 2:14-15) in the *Institutes*, he wrote that, "There is nothing more common than for a man to be sufficiently instructed in a right standard of conduct by natural law (of which the apostle is here speaking)."¹⁶² As to the content of natural law, Calvin was clear, "Now that inward law, which we have above described as

¹⁵⁹ Calvin *Institutes* 1.3.1. See also Calvin's comments on Romans 1:18-32 (*Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 19, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. and ed. John Owen [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989], 67-83).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

¹⁶² Calvin *Institutes* 2.2.22.

written, even engraved, upon the hearts of all, in a sense asserts the very same things that are to be learned from the two Tables."¹⁶³ Later, commenting on civil government, Calvin added that:

The Moral law . . . is contained under two heads, one of which simply commands us to worship God with pure faith and piety; the other, to embrace men with sincere affection. Accordingly, it is the true and eternal rule of righteousness, prescribed for men of all nations and times, who wish to conform their lives to God's will.¹⁶⁴

This "eternal rule of righteousness" is none other than the, "Law of God which we call the moral law [which] is nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience which God has engraved upon the minds of men."¹⁶⁵

There are two additional and important components to Calvin's understanding of natural law. First, Calvin correctly asserted that man, in sin, blinds himself to the truth of nature. Because of man's depravity, "The light of nature is extinguished."¹⁶⁶ Man does not have the ability to live up to the dictates of natural law, but suppresses it instead (cf. Romans 1:18-21). Thus, for Calvin, at best:

"The purpose of natural law . . . is to render man inexcusable. This would not be a bad definition: natural law is that apprehension of the conscience which

¹⁶³ Calvin *Institutes* 2.8.1.

¹⁶⁴ Calvin *Institutes* 4.20.15.

¹⁶⁵ Calvin *Institutes* 4.20.16.

¹⁶⁶ Calvin *Institutes* 2.2.24.

distinguishes sufficiently between just and unjust, and which deprives men of the excuse of ignorance, while it proves them guilty by their own testimony" (Institutes, 2.2.22).¹⁶⁷

Second, Calvin scattered the seeds from which modern scholars, using the phrase "creation ordinances," narrowed the concept of natural law.¹⁶⁸ In his commentary on Genesis, Calvin clearly distinguished dominion,¹⁶⁹ marriage,¹⁷⁰ and Sabbath¹⁷¹ as binding, permanent ordinances of God established at creation.

The Westminster Confession of Faith

The fact that Calvin's theology has had a major influence on subsequent Reformed thinking is discernible throughout the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Confession begins with a

¹⁶⁷ Calvin *Institutes* 2.2.22.

¹⁶⁸ It was pointed out above (pages 1 and 7) that the concept of cosmic and ethical order described by the terms "natural law" and "creation ordinances" has undergone significant evolution. What began as recognition of order in the cosmos evolved into recognition of ethical order as well. While not denying overall moral order (the content of which equates to the Ten Commandments), it will be argued below that Christian scholars have narrowed the concept described by the phrase "creation ordinances" to a unique few: Labor and Dominion, Marriage and Multiplication, and Sabbath.

¹⁶⁹ Commenting on Genesis 1:26, Calvin wrote, "Here he [i.e., God] commemorates that part of dignity with which he *decreed* to honor man, namely that he should have authority over all living creatures" (emphasis mine; *Genesis*, 96).

¹⁷⁰ "That pure and lawful method of increase [i.e., marriage], which God ordained from the beginning remains firm; this is that law of nature which common sense declares to be inviolable" (Ibid., 98). Commenting on Genesis 2:22, Calvin wrote, "Moses now relates that marriage was divinely instituted, which is especially useful to be known" (Ibid., 134).

¹⁷¹ "First, therefore, God rested; then he blessed this rest, that in all ages it might be held sacred among men; or he dedicated every seventh day to rest, that his own example might be a perpetual rule" (Ibid., 106). For more on Calvin's view of the Sabbath, see: Richard Gaffin, *Calvin and the Sabbath: the Controversy of Applying the Fourth Commandment* (Great Britain: Mentor, 1998).

chapter on the foundational and authoritative documents of Christianity—the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The doctrine of God follows in chapter 2. God is described as, “Almighty, most wise . . . working *all* things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory.”¹⁷²

Even before the Confession describes God creating all things, it deals with the ground of creation—the eternal decree, “God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.”¹⁷³ The next chapter describes the doctrine of creation in the following words:

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good.¹⁷⁴

It is apparent that the Confession is designed to show that all subsequent doctrines flow from God’s ordering and governing the world.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Emphasis mine; *Westminster Confession of Faith* 2.1.

¹⁷³ *WCF* 3.1.

¹⁷⁴ *WCF* 4.1.

¹⁷⁵ This is confirmed by the description of God’s providence, “God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and

The very next paragraph of the Confession describes the creation of man, "After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female . . . having the law of God written in their hearts."¹⁷⁶ Here the Confession is conspicuous to point out that with the creation of man, God's government extended to the ethical sphere.

As to the identity of the law written on the heart of man, Chapter 19 leaves no doubt, "God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience."¹⁷⁷ This moral law consists of the Decalogue, "This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments."¹⁷⁸

Finally, the Confession acknowledges that dominion, marriage and Sabbath were all ordained of God, from the beginning, for man's benefit. God created man to have dominion over the rest of His works:

After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image, having the law of God written in their hearts. . . . Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge

the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy" (WCF 5.1).

¹⁷⁶ WCF 4.2.

¹⁷⁷ WCF 19.1.

¹⁷⁸ WCF 19.2.

of good and evil; which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.¹⁷⁹

Marriage was, "Ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife."¹⁸⁰ The perpetuity of the Sabbath began at creation:

As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, He hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.¹⁸¹

Summary

One can see from this brief history that the Christian Church, guided by Scripture, embraced the concept of order both in nature and in the moral/ethical sphere of humanity. God sovereignly ordered every sphere of His creation and by His providence governs and guides all outcomes to His glory. The early Christian writers inherited the phrase "natural law" from

¹⁷⁹ WCF 4.2. This truth is confirmed in question 17 of the Larger Catechism (WLC) and question 10 of the Shorter Catechism (WSC).

¹⁸⁰ WCF 24.2.

¹⁸¹ WCF 21.7. In answer to the question, "What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created?" (WLC 20), dominion, marriage and Sabbath are acknowledged to have been ordained from creation. "The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with himself; instituting the Sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect and perpetual obedience. . . ."

the surrounding culture to express this idea, but infused new meaning and emphasis into it.

The Church rejected the idea of some impersonal *logos* or force ordering the natural world. Instead, they worshiped the personal, Triune God of heaven, recognizing Him to be responsible for the order found in the universe. Understanding natural order to be the context from which the moral order was communicated to man, Christians began to emphasize the ethical sphere when using the phrase "natural law".¹⁸² The content of natural law was the Decalogue.

The Church also acknowledged fallen man's inability to read nature aright and the need for Special Revelation. In Calvin and the Westminster Confession of Faith, one finds the recognition of a special class of ordinances established at creation: Labor and Dominion, Marriage and Multiplication, and Sabbath.

¹⁸² This is a matter of emphasis not exclusivity. Throughout Church history, one still finds the phrase "natural law" used of physical order.

PART II
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

CHAPTER 5

CURRENT THEOLOGICAL MEANING AND USAGE

This section will investigate the idea of creation ordinances beginning with the thought of Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. It will also survey several systematic theologies and works on Christian ethics as to their position on the topic. The choice to begin this section with the thought of Kuyper and Bavinck is due to a distinct change in terminology. With these men, what was before called "natural law" is increasingly referred to as "creation ordinances". Toward the end of this section, an additional change will become apparent. Works on Christian ethics narrow the concept of creation ordinances to labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath.

Neo-Calvinism

Abraham Kuyper

Abraham Kuyper was an avowed Calvinist and Reformed theologian. He astutely understood that the battle for Christianity was a battle over worldviews.¹⁸³ The system known as Calvinism was for Kuyper the preeminent vessel from which to

¹⁸³ Kuyper recognized the fact that, "Two life systems are wrestling with one another, in mortal combat" (*Lectures on Calvinism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1931, 2002], 11).

display the Christian worldview. He gladly acknowledged, "I found and confessed, and I still hold, that this manifestation of the Christian principle is given us in *Calvinism*."¹⁸⁴

Hence, it comes as no surprise that, in harmony with the historic Calvinistic understanding of the sovereignty and providence of God, Kuyper wrote:

Everything that has been created was, in its creation, furnished by God with an unchangeable law of its existence. And because God has fully ordained such laws and ordinances for all life, therefore the Calvinist demands that all life be consecrated to His service, in strict obedience. . . . No sphere of human life is conceivable in which religion does not maintain its demands that God shall be praised [and] that God's ordinances shall be observed.¹⁸⁵

Note the immediate change in emphasis. Kuyper began with the idea of cosmic order or "the law of its existence," but abruptly moved to the idea of moral order, "The Calvinist demands that all life be consecrated to His service, in strict obedience." Also illustrated by the above quotation is a change in terminology. Kuyper used both the terms "law" and "ordinance" to refer to divine order. These laws are the "ordinances" of God.

Kuyper's fondness for Calvinism came from what he believed to constitute the "essence of religion":

Calvinism in its conception of the Christian religion, nay, in its view of life and the world in general, assigns the first place to God Almighty. . . . The greatest religious height will be reached by him who at every point of his horizon views God as God, by honoring him in all things as

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 53.

the almighty Creator who has created all things for his own sake, who, as God, is not bound by anything but himself, and determines for every creature both its being and the law thereof, now and forevermore.¹⁸⁶

Elsewhere, Kuyper defined this sovereignty as, "The authority that has the right, the duty, and the power to break and avenge all resistance to its will."¹⁸⁷ He went on to identify this authority as residing only in God, "Does not your indestructible folk-conscience tell you too that the original, absolute sovereignty cannot reside in any creature but *must* coincide with God's majesty?"¹⁸⁸ For Kuyper and Calvinism this divine government is currently exercised by the God-man Jesus Christ, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: 'Mine!'"¹⁸⁹

In 1898, Princeton Theological Seminary invited Abraham Kuyper to deliver the "Stone Lectures". These lectures are best known today as his "Lectures on Calvinism". It is here that Kuyper presented the breadth of his worldview thinking. Moreover, in the second lecture entitled, "Calvinism as

¹⁸⁶ Abraham Kuyper, "Calvinism and Confessional Revision," *The Presbyterian Quarterly* 5.4 (October 1891): 490-491.

¹⁸⁷ Abraham Kuyper, "Sphere Sovereignty," in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 466.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 488.

Religion", his understanding of creation ordinances can especially be discovered.

At the heart of his discussion concerning creation ordinances, Kuyper united them to the sovereignty and providence of the Creator. He used historic Christian terminology:

What now does the Calvinist mean by his faith in the ordinances of God? Nothing less than the firmly rooted conviction that all life has first been in the *thoughts* of God, before it came to be realized in *Creation*. Hence all created life necessarily bears in itself a law for its existence, instituted by God Himself. There is no life outside us in Nature, without such divine ordinances,—ordinances which are called the laws of Nature—a term which we are willing to accept, provided we understand thereby, not laws originating *from* Nature, but laws imposed *upon* Nature.¹⁹⁰

Here, though using the expression, "laws of Nature," Kuyper hints at his displeasure with the phrase. One begins to see his penchant for using the expression "ordinances" instead. He makes clear that the ordinances of God rule all things, including and especially the moral sphere:

There are ordinances of God for our bodies, for the blood that courses through our arteries and veins, and for our lungs as the organs of respiration. And even so are there ordinances of God, in logic, to regulate our thoughts; ordinances of God for our imagination, in the domain of aesthetics; and so, also, strict ordinances of God for the whole of human life in the domain of morals. . . . Just as the ordinance of God determines the course of the smallest asteroid, as well as the orbit of the mightiest star, so also these moral ordinances of God descend to the smallest and most particular details, stating to us what in every case is to be considered as the will of God.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, 70.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

God reigns absolutely. There is nothing, according to Kuyper, that falls outside the government and plan of God. At this point in the lecture, Kuyper narrows his discussion to the moral sphere.

These moral ordinances are not like rules written on paper, but "they are urged upon us as the constant will of the Omnipresent and Almighty God, who at every instant is determining the course of life, ordaining its laws and continually binding us by His divine authority."¹⁹² Thus, these moral ordinances are for Christian and pagan alike:

Every distinction between general moral ordinances, and more special *Christian* commandments is unknown to [the Calvinist]. Can we imagine that at one time God willed to rule things in a certain moral order, but that now, in Christ, He wills to rule it otherwise? As though He were not the Eternal, the Unchangeable, Who, from the very hour of creation, even unto all eternity, had willed, wills, and shall will and maintain, one and the same firm moral world-order! . . . The world-order itself remains just what it was from the beginning. It lays full claim, not only to the believer (as though less were required from the unbeliever), but to every human being and to all human relationships.¹⁹³

Not only do these ordinances bind all men, they have bound all men for all time—God's moral world-order began at creation.

Kuyper next identified the content of this moral world-order. In so doing, he placed himself firmly within the historic understanding of the Church. The moral world-order

¹⁹² Ibid., 70-71.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 71-72.

consists of the "eternal ordinances and unchangeable commandments"¹⁹⁴ of God. He explained:

Hence it is that, for the Calvinist, all ethical study is based on the Law of Sinai, not as though at that time the moral world-order began to be fixed, but to honor the Law of Sinai, as the divinely authentic summary of that original moral law which God wrote in the heart of man, at his creation, and which God is re-writing on the tables of every heart at its conversion.¹⁹⁵

The Ten Commandments encapsulate God's eternal moral world-order. God revealed this moral order to Adam at creation.

In a subsequent lecture entitled "Calvinism and Science" Kuyper referred to the mandates of Genesis 1:28. He described them as the "order of creation" which instructed man to "replenish the earth, subdue it and have dominion over everything that lives upon it."¹⁹⁶

In Kuyper, there is both continuity with the past and progress. He continued to identify the eternal moral law of God as the law published at Sinai and first written on the heart of Adam. However, there is a change in favored terminology, from "natural law" to "ordinance". Finally, as with Calvin before him, Kuyper identified a narrower set of ordinances that subsequent theologians will identify uniquely as "creation ordinances."

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 72.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 130.

Herman Bavinck

Bavinck's theology differed little from Kuyper's doctrine. He too was an avowed Calvinist. According to Bavinck, true religion:

Distinguishes itself from all other religions by the fact that it construes the relation between God and the world, including man, as that between the Creator and his creature. The idea of an existence apart and independently from God occurs nowhere in Scripture.¹⁹⁷

For Bavinck, creation is that from which all other theology flows. As Creator, God is sovereign over all things for He is the:

Proprietor, Owner, and Lord of all things; apart from him there is neither existence nor ownership; he alone has absolute authority; his will is decisive everywhere and always. Again and again Scripture makes mention of God's sovereign will. . . . That will is the final ground of all things and their being what they are.¹⁹⁸

Thus, man is dependent upon God for his very existence as well as his proper goal in life, "All things in Scripture are described over and over as having been made by God and as being absolutely dependent on him."¹⁹⁹

In line with historic Calvinism, Bavinck linked the doctrines of providence and preservation with that of creation and

¹⁹⁷ Herman Bavinck, *In the Beginning: Foundations of Creation Theology*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 24.

¹⁹⁸ Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, trans. William Hendriksen (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977, 1979), 223.

¹⁹⁹ Herman Bavinck, *In the Beginning*, 36.

sovereignty.²⁰⁰ According to Bavinck, "Scripture teaches not only that at the beginning God called the world into being, but also that this world is continuously, from moment to moment, sustained and governed by that same God."²⁰¹ God providentially governs His world by sustaining the laws and ordinances established at creation.

Bavinck affirmed the belief that God ordered His creation, "There are laws and ordinances for all created things."²⁰² This ordering by God involves both the physical or natural world and the moral/ethical domain. As to the physical world:

The whole creation is a system grounded in the ordinances of God. . . . On all creatures God conferred an order, a law which they do not violate (Ps. 148:6). In all of its parts it is rooted in the counsel of God, a design that emerges in things great and small. This all comes from the Lord of hosts; he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom (Isa. 28:23, 29).²⁰³

God governs his rational creatures by means of moral ordinances. Bavinck correctly pointed out that man is both rationally and morally dependent upon God.²⁰⁴ Man's original relation to God was that of a creature in covenant:

²⁰⁰ In discussing the creation week, Bavinck wrote that, "Creation immediately and instantly passes into preservation and government" (Ibid., 100).

²⁰¹ Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith: A Survey of Christian Doctrine*, trans. Henry Zylstra (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), 39.

²⁰² Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, 221.

²⁰³ Herman Bavinck, *In the Beginning*, 249.

²⁰⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 33.

When [man] first came perfect from the hand of the Creator, he could understand the speech of God, which came to him internally in the moral law written on his heart, and which came to him from without in the probationary command which was added to the moral law. At that time God went about with man as He did with no other creature. God entered into covenant with him, took him up into His fellowship, and required of him that he consciously and willingly walk in His ways. The moral law was the content and the proclamation, the rule and the norm, of the original covenantal relationship which God established with the newly created man.²⁰⁵

As to the content of this natural, moral law, one finds unity between Bavinck, Kuyper, and Calvin. Bavinck understood that, "The moral law, which was known to the Gentiles only imperfectly and impurely, was purely and perfectly proclaimed by God on Sinai and was held up to His people Israel as a rule of life."²⁰⁶ He also wrote:

The law of the ten commandments does not stand loosely and independently by itself; it finds itself, rather, in the middle of a rich environment. In its material content it originally was written on the heart of man created as he was by God Himself. It is partially still preserved there inasmuch as people continue to do naturally the things of the law, and so prove that the works of the law are written in their hearts (Rom. 2:14-15).²⁰⁷

Bavinck, like Calvin and Kuyper before him, also recognized a unique class of ordinances given at creation. Concerning the Sabbath, he affirmed:

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 407.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 410.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 488. Commenting on humanity's destiny, Bavinck pointed out that, "Adam knew the moral law by nature. . . . It is essentially the same as the Ten Commandments but differed in form" (*In the Beginning*, 209).

The Sabbath commandment belonged to the moral law. Before the fall our first parents did not yet enjoy the eternal heavenly Sabbath. Just as they were subject to the alternation of day and night they were also *bound to the rule* of six days of labor and one of rest. A day of rest and days of labor were therefore also distinct before the fall.²⁰⁸

In addition, God "charged man with the task of subduing and having dominion over the whole earth, and He equipped him for this task and gave Him the interest to do it."²⁰⁹ God instituted marriage from the very beginning²¹⁰ and He "immediately pronounced the blessing of multiplication (Gen. 1:28)."²¹¹

As stated earlier, Bavinck's theology differed little from Kuyper's before him. As to the content of natural law, he agreed with Calvin as well. He had a proclivity for the term "ordinance" when dealing with God's sovereign order. Finally, he recognized the institutions of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath as constituting a unique set of ordinances given at creation.

Systematic Theology

Systematic theologies are not wont to deal with the topic of creation ordinances as a unit. With some effort, one can

²⁰⁸ Emphasis mine; *Ibid.*, 210.

²⁰⁹ Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*, 32.

²¹⁰ Commenting on Genesis chapter two, Bavinck pointed out, "A third particular of this second chapter of Genesis is the gift of the woman to the man and the institution of marriage" (*Ibid.*, 187).

²¹¹ Herman Bavinck, *In the Beginning*, 212.

find material sprinkled throughout a particular work. They do, however, supply the reader with needed cautionary information and show the relationship of the creation ordinances to other doctrines.²¹²

Robert L. Dabney

Dabney's systematic theology was published in 1871, 27 years prior to Kuper's "Stone Lectures". This, in part, accounts for his continued use of the phrase "natural law". Nevertheless, one finds a hint of disfavor for the term. Dabney had occasion to discuss natural law while dealing with the concept of cause and effect and its relation to our knowledge and scientific investigation. For Dabney, the belief in natural law or the uniformity of nature is "a priori and intuitive."²¹³ However, this is only so:

When we assume that there is a Creator to the created, that there is an intellect and will; and that, an immutable one, establishing and governing these sequences of physical change [i.e., cause and effect]. . . . There is a basis of law in them because, and only because, this ruling intelligence and will has some end in view.²¹⁴

²¹² The criteria utilized in the selection of the systematic theologies used in this study are as follows: First, limitations were necessary due to the vast number of theologies available. Second, a basic Reformed outlook was desired (Erickson was included for variety—he is eclectic with a Baptist foundation). Third, chronologically they correspond to and continue the historical progress made so far (Dabney is only slightly prior to Kuyper and Bavinck, the remaining three proceed chronologically to the present). Finally, they are representative of how Systematics handle creation ordinances.

²¹³ Robert L. Dabney, *Systematic Theology* (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 93.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

Dabney used the word "law" to refer to the ongoing providence and government of God in the natural realm.

Dabney had another occasion to talk about natural law in his discussion of the relationship of miracles to providence. He rejected the idea that a miracle was simply a higher-level law of nature heretofore misunderstood or unknown. For Dabney, miracles were as much a part of God's providence as any other event. Miracles are, "Properly the result of supernatural power: i.e., of God's immediate power which He has not regularly put into any second causes, lower or higher. . . . The Divine will is perpetually present, underlying all the natural."²¹⁵ Thus, Dabney cautions the Christian reader against any purely naturalistic idea of cosmic order. The Triune God of heaven orders and governs the universe.

Dabney also recognized God's government of the moral sphere. Obedience from the creature was naturally due God.²¹⁶ For this purpose, man was endowed with the "natural law of conscience."²¹⁷ In this respect, the moral law of God as contained in the Decalogue was "intrinsic and eternal."²¹⁸ Man's obligation to the moral law of God, "Must be one of the natural

²¹⁵ Ibid., 283.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 300.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 303.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 352.

endowments of the rational creature made in God's image. . . . To this agree the Scriptures, Rom. 1:19-21; 2:14-15; Acts 14:17."²¹⁹ Dabney is quick, however, to caution the reader not to rely on one's natural instincts, for due to sin, "The light in man's conscience is imperfect, [thus] we see that it is not true that this faculty is a sufficient rule of duty."²²⁰

Finally, Dabney recognized two special institutions of Paradise: marriage and Sabbath.²²¹ God established the institutions of marriage and Sabbath along with dominion over the earth for Adam and Eve and their posterity:

In the dominion assigned man over the beasts, in the injunction to multiply, in the privilege of eating the fruits of the earth, in the hallowing of the Sabbath, God spoke seemingly only to the first pair; but His words indisputably applied as well to their posterity.²²²

Though not dealing with creation ordinances (or natural law) as an isolated topic, Dabney held the conviction that God ordered both the cosmic and moral spheres of creation. In Dabney there is a continued narrowing of the concept of creation ordinances to a unique few—Dominion, Marriage, and Sabbath.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 352-353.

²²⁰ Ibid., 353.

²²¹ Ibid., 376 and 414.

²²² Ibid., 329.

Louis Berkhof

According to Berkhof, God has decreed all that will happen and is the Creator of heaven and earth:

Reformed theology stresses the sovereignty of God in virtue of which He has sovereignly determined from all eternity whatsoever will come to pass, and works His sovereign will in His entire creation, both natural and spiritual, according to His pre-determined plan.²²³

Berkhof defined the decree of God by citing the definition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism.²²⁴ He was also quick to note that this decree embraces both the cosmic and moral spheres, "The decree includes whatsoever comes to pass in the world, whether it be in the physical or in the moral realm, whether it be good or evil, Eph. 1:11."²²⁵ Thus, Berkhof cautions the reader against any convoluted notion of "law" outside the sovereign will of God.

Like Dabney, Berkhof mentioned natural law when discussing miracles. In responding to an objection against miracles on the basis that they violate natural law, he wrote:

There is undoubtedly a certain uniformity in nature; there are laws controlling the operation of second causes in the physical world. But let us remember that these merely represent God's usual method of working in nature. It is His good pleasure to work in an orderly way and through

²²³ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939, 1941), 100.

²²⁴ "The decree of God," wrote Berkhof, "May be defined . . . as 'His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.'" Ibid., 102.

²²⁵ Ibid., 105.

secondary causes. But this does not mean that He cannot depart from the established order, and cannot produce an extraordinary effect, which does not result from natural causes, by a single volition, if He deems it desirable for the end in view. When God works miracles, He produces extraordinary effects in a supernatural way.²²⁶

The laws of nature are the manifestation of God's will in His continued providence and government of the universe, which He created.

In the moral sphere, man is obligated to obey God's moral law "in virtue of his creation."²²⁷ Disobedience—sin—is defined in terms of its connection to the law of God, "The following passages clearly show that Scripture contemplates sin in relation to God and His law, either as written on the tablets of the heart, or as given by Moses, Rom. 1:32; 2:12-14; 4:15; Jas. 2:9; 1 John 3:4."²²⁸ Based squarely upon Scripture, Berkhof understood the content of God's moral law to be summarized in the Decalogue and written upon the heart of man from creation onward. Obedience to this moral law was one of the elements of the covenant of works (also called the covenant of creation).²²⁹

Berkhof too recognized the special institution of dominion assigned to man at creation. Man was, "Crowned as king of the lower creation, and [was] given dominion over all the inferior

²²⁶ Ibid., 177.

²²⁷ Ibid., 613.

²²⁸ Ibid., 232.

²²⁹ Ibid., 215.

creatures."²³⁰ Genesis 1:28 is cited in defense of this statement.²³¹ Though not treating creation ordinances as a systematic category, Berkhof, nevertheless, implicitly recognized their existence and function in God's government of His creatures.

Millard J. Erickson

As with the theologians already discussed, Erickson recognizes God to be the sovereign Creator and Governor of the universe.²³² The idea of natural law is again raised when discussing miracles, "One of the important issues regarding miracles involves their relationship to natural laws or the laws of nature."²³³ In the end, Erickson cautions the reader with the same admonition seen in the other systematic theologies examined, "If we are open to the possibility that there are reality and force outside the system of nature [i.e., God], then miracles are a possibility."²³⁴

In his discussion concerning general revelation, Erickson recognized God's moral government to be carried out and enforced in part by His law being written upon the hearts of all men,

²³⁰ Ibid., 183.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, unabridged one-volume edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 365-410.

²³³ Ibid., 406.

²³⁴ Ibid., 409.

"When they do by nature . . . what the law requires, they are showing that what the law requires is written on their hearts ([Romans 2:]14-15)." ²³⁵ In addition, God directly communicated instructions to man at creation, "The instructions given to man (Gen. 1:28) regarding his place and activity in the creation suggest a particular communication from Creator to creature." ²³⁶ God commanded man to exercise dominion ²³⁷ as well as to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 1:28)." ²³⁸

This brief survey of Erickson's work demonstrates that he treats the subject of creation ordinances in the same manner as those theologies examined above. This methodology is characterized not by any systematic treatment of the subject, but by recognition of how these various ordinances relate to other systematic categories.

Wayne Grudem

One finds a similar treatment of the subject of creation ordinances in Wayne Grudem's work as well. God is the sovereign creator of all things and governs His creation for His glory and purpose. God has created the universe to display a law-like

²³⁵ Ibid., 169.

²³⁶ Ibid., 177.

²³⁷ Ibid., 508-509, 510, 597, and 607.

²³⁸ Ibid., 557.

uniformity and order, "God in preserving all things he has made, also causes them to maintain the properties with which he created them."²³⁹ The universe has order and science is possible because, "God has made and continues to sustain a universe that acts in predictable ways."²⁴⁰

God not only orders the natural or cosmic sphere, but also the moral, "God has so ordered the world that living according to his moral standards very often brings rewards in the natural realm, and violating God's standards often brings destruction to people."²⁴¹ All men are aware of this standard because God has clearly published it in His general revelation, "The knowledge of God's existence, character, and moral law, which comes through creation to all humanity, is often called '*general revelation*' (because it comes to all people generally)."²⁴²

In a discussion concerning miracles, one again finds a shying away from the use of the phrase "natural law":

Yet another definition of miracle is "an exception to a natural law" or "God acting contrary to the laws of nature." But the phrase "laws of nature" in popular understanding implies that there are certain qualities inherent in the things that exist, "laws of nature" that operate independently of God, and that God must intervene or "break" these laws for a miracle to occur. . . . This

²³⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 316.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 317.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 660.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 122.

definition does not adequately account for the biblical teaching on providence.²⁴³

The Church has never recognized natural law to function independently of divine providence.

Grudem also recognized specific commands or ordinances given to man at creation. Marriage is a lifelong relationship "created by God"²⁴⁴ and instituted at creation.²⁴⁵ Along with the institution of marriage, God gave man the ability to procreate.²⁴⁶ He also commanded man to have dominion over all of creation.²⁴⁷

Three important observations stand out from this brief survey of systematic theology. First, works on systematic theology do not treat creation ordinances as a systematic category. Second, they recognize, both explicitly and implicitly, the existence and authority of creation ordinances. Finally, systematic theologies illustrate the relationship of creation ordinances to other Christian doctrines.

Christian Ethics

Works pertaining to Christian ethics often refer to creation ordinances. Though often just a passing reference, crea-

²⁴³ Ibid., 356.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 455.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 447.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 448.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

tion ordinances are treated as authoritative and even foundational. The most significant observation is that creation ordinances are limited to a specific few—labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath.

John Murray

John Murray's book, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics*, was published in 1957. The obvious purpose of this book was to discuss Christian ethics, which Murray defined as, "The manner of life and behaviour which the Bible requires and which the faith of the Bible produces."²⁴⁸ Murray understood creation ordinances to "furnish us with what is central in the biblical ethic"²⁴⁹ and he defined them as "the commandments or mandates given to man in the state of integrity."²⁵⁰ He listed them as "the procreation of offspring, the replenishing of the earth, subduing of the same, dominion over the creatures, labor, the weekly Sabbath, and marriage."²⁵¹ In chapters two, three, and four Murray explicated these ordinances applying them to ongoing Christian ethics.²⁵²

²⁴⁸ John Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, 12.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 27-106.

Several things stand out in Murray's appeal to creation ordinances. First, he limits his discussion of the creation ordinances to the moral sphere.²⁵³ Second, he does not equate the creation ordinances with natural law or the Decalogue.²⁵⁴ Third, he limits what he calls "creation ordinances" to a specific few.

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

Walter Kaiser's work, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, also has occasion to mention and list the creation ordinances. Kaiser is clear as to the overall purpose of his book, "The time is long overdue for a separate treatment of biblical ethics, but especially in the area totally neglected in this century: a monograph in English on Old Testament ethics."²⁵⁵

Before examining Kaiser's definition and list of creation ordinances, two things ought to be observed. First, Kaiser recognized and referred to order in the natural world, describing

²⁵³ I realize that the obvious response to this statement is that the book under discussion is a book about *ethics*. However, Murray never even hints at the fact that others understand the phrase "creation ordinances" in a broader sense. In addition, other ethicists do refer to the broader usage (see below).

²⁵⁴ It will be admitted that he comes close to saying this. He wrote that the Ten Commandments, "furnish the core of the biblical ethic," and that they, "were relevant from the beginning" (Ibid., 7). He also wrote that they "embody principles which belong to the order which God established for man at the beginning" (Ibid., 8). However, he stops short of making the equation—there is clearly a connection, but no equation.

²⁵⁵ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), xi.

it as, "order in nature,"²⁵⁶ "orders of creation,"²⁵⁷ and "created order."²⁵⁸ Second, while identifying the Ten Commandments with the law written on the heart of man, he clearly distinguished the Decalogue from the creation ordinances. He argued that:

It must not be thought that the Decalogue was inaugurated and promulgated at Sinai for the first time. All Ten Commandments had been part of the law of God previously written on hearts instead of stone, for all ten appear, in one way or another, in Genesis. . . . Each [one] would appear to add to the orders of creation already given in the first chapters of Genesis.²⁵⁹

According to Kaiser, the Ten Commandments supplement the creation ordinances.

In chapter 2, entitled "The Nature and Task of Old Testament Ethics," Kaiser defined and listed the creation ordinances:

One final basis for ethical decision comes from the work of God, the "creation ordinances." These ordinances reflect the work of God in creation and depict "the constitution of things" as they were intended to be from the Creator's hand. They cover and regulate the whole gamut of life: bearing children, superintending the earth as a responsible steward before and under God, responsibly ruling the creatures of all creation, finding fulfillment and satisfaction in work labor, resting on the Sabbath, and enjoying marriage as a gift from above.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 122.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 148.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 198 and 304.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 82.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 31.

Kaiser indicates that while the creation ordinances supply moral direction for man, they also have something of a constitutional nature, they "depict 'the constitution of things' as they were intended to be." Kaiser makes clear that the "Old Testament nowhere excuses or rescinds the ordinances of creation."²⁶¹ There is also continuity between Kaiser and Murray. Kaiser approvingly quotes Murray's list of creation ordinances.²⁶²

John & Paul Feinberg

Ethics for a Brave New World is the product of two brothers, John and Paul Feinberg. The Feinbergs' use of creation ordinances is limited to their discussion of marriage and divorce. Their references to creation ordinances are short and terse. In answer to the question, "What constitutes a marriage?"²⁶³ they appeal to the creation ordinances. They wrote, "This question seems best answered by appeal to the creation ordinances in Genesis 2. Genesis 2 shows that marriage is God's idea (2:18)."²⁶⁴ No further explanation as to what constitutes a creation ordinance and why is forthcoming.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 36.

²⁶² Ibid., 153, note 4.

²⁶³ John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg, *Ethics for a Brave New World* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993), 301.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

A second appeal to creation ordinances is just as vague. They argue, "In Mark 10:6-8 Jesus . . . invokes the creation ordinances (Gen. 1:27; 2:24) and commands (v. 9) that no man separate those whom God has joined together."²⁶⁵ The Feinbergs view creation ordinances as authoritative and, according to their exegesis, so does Jesus.

Books on Christian ethics are wont to appeal to creation ordinances. Often, though, these appeals are terse and vague. However, they do indicate an acknowledgement of the authority and legitimacy of these ordinances given at creation.

The Sabbath

One area of Christian ethics is of particular interest and importance in relation to the creation ordinances. Arguments for the continued obligation of the Sabbath command—the fourth commandment of the Decalogue—are especially concerned with the Sabbath's status as a creation ordinance. One's view of Sabbath observance is often directly tied to one's view of this issue. Belcher and Belcher recognized this admitting, "One key to the subject matter is whether or not the Sabbath is a creation ordinance."²⁶⁶

In the Belchers' work, *A Layman's Guide to the Sabbath Question*, three views are compared and contrasted: the Seventh

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 318.

²⁶⁶ Richard P. Belcher and Richard P. Belcher, Jr., *A Layman's Guide to the Sabbath Question* (Southbridge: Crowne Publications, Inc., 1991), 133.

Day view, the Christian Sabbath view, and the Lord's Day view. At the end of this work, a helpful comparison is given. Note the significance of the creation ordinances concerning this issue:

A. The Seventh Day View

The Sabbath was established by God at creation as a creation ordinance, which means it is to be permanently observed by man. . . .

B. The Christian Sabbath View

The Sabbath was established by God at creation as a creation ordinance. Though not spelled out explicitly by direct command in the Biblical record to be a creation ordinance, there is enough evidence to lead to that conclusion. . . .

C. The Lord's Day View

No evidence nor even a hint of evidence exists to say that the Sabbath was established as a creation ordinance in Genesis 2. . . . No mention is made here of a Sabbath for man, neither is there any command for man to keep the Sabbath.²⁶⁷

Whether or not the Sabbath is a creation ordinance is a key component in all three positions. The significance of this issue cannot be overemphasized. It is a crucial component of any argument for or against the abiding significance of the fourth commandment and Sabbath-keeping for the Church today.

Summary

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 121-122.

Beginning with Kuyper and Bavinck, one sees both continuity and growth in the Church's understanding and application of creation ordinances. The firm belief in the sovereignty of God and His ordering of the universe remains foundational in the Reformed arm of the Church. The concept of natural law in the domain of ethics remains in place as well. However, there is a change in favored terminology—from natural law to creation ordinances.

Neo-Calvinistic theology and systematic theology warn the Church not to rely on the natural man's ability to comprehend and apply the creation ordinances due to his depravity. Though not developed here, allusion to the connection between the creation ordinances and the Covenant of Works has been made.²⁶⁸

Along with the change in terminology, there is a narrowing of the content of the creation ordinances. This is especially true in works on Christian ethics. These works refer to Genesis 1 and 2 for the identification of the creation ordinances as labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath. Works on Christian ethics tend to cite the creation ordinances as foundational and authoritative. Little attempt is made to prove or demonstrate this position. Finally, the Sabbath question is of special significance in the identification of creation ordinances.

²⁶⁸ See chapter 7 below.

PART III

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

CRITERION FOR IDENTIFYING CREATION ORDINANCES:

A THREEFOLD PATTERN

CHAPTER 6

CREATION DECREES

In order to avoid confusion, one needs to recognize that in current theological language there is both a broad and a narrow use of the phrase "creation ordinances." The broad use refers to God's ordering all of His creation—the natural realm as well as the ethical.²⁶⁹ The narrow use, on the other hand, refers to a unique class of ethical and functional (constitutional) mandates consisting of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath. This narrow use of the phrase "creation ordinances" is especially prevalent in works on Christian ethics.

This unique class of ordinances has often been associated with what is called the cultural or creation mandate. According to A. M. Wolters, "It becomes one of the distinctive features of Neo-Calvinism that it conceives of history as the unfolding of creation, the carrying out of a task contained in the ordinances of creation."²⁷⁰ He continued:

²⁶⁹ Kuyper, Bavinck, and Kaiser all used the expression this way (see chapter 5).

²⁷⁰ Albert M. Wolters, "Creation Order: A Historical Look at our Heritage," 55.

One of the clearest ways in which this comes to the fore is in the Neo-Calvinist conception of what is termed "the cultural mandate", the command given by God to Adam and Eve to multiply and "subdue the earth" (Gen 1:28). . . . The connection between creation and cultural mandate is so close that some Neo-Calvinists have preferred to speak of the "creation mandate" instead. Culture, and indeed all of history, is the bringing forth, through human responsible action, of the riches latent in God's good creation.²⁷¹

Creation ordinances, in this narrow sense, ought to be understood in light of God's covenant with man. O. Palmer Robertson, in discussing the Covenant of Creation,²⁷² recognized this distinction within the overall ordinances of God:

Man, as part of creation, is responsible to obey the ordinances embedded in creation's structure. Three ordinances, inherent in God's creational orderings, *deserve particular attention*. They are the Sabbath, marriage, and labor. Each of these creational orderings stands as an inviolable principle inherent in the structure of the world as God has ordained it.²⁷³

The focus of this chapter and the remainder of this work will be the narrow use of creation ordinances—the ordinances that deserve "particular attention." Specifically, what justifies one in identifying labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath as creation ordinances? Before answering this question, it is necessary to look at the biblical data regarding God's overall ordering of His creation.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 56.

²⁷² This covenant is also called the Covenant of Life or Works. See chapter 8.

²⁷³ Emphasis mine; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), 68.

The Biblical Data

The historical data concerning the idea of order in creation has already been examined. Church history and current theological usage have also been reviewed.²⁷⁴ This section will consider the Scriptural foundation for the Church's historical position. The Scriptures reveal that God has indeed ordered His creation in both the natural and ethical spheres.

The prophet Moses wrote the book of Genesis some time after the Israelites departed Egypt. The people were grumbling and complaining, desiring to return (Exo. 16:2-3, 6-8; Num. 11:1-6; 14:1-4). Moses wrote to encourage the people to enter Canaan and thus obey God's plan. The creation account in chapters one and two was more than just a historical reference to the past; it was a description of God's sovereignty over all of creation. God ordered the creation for the benefit of mankind. Israel, in covenant obedience, was to receive the blessings of creation by entering Canaan.²⁷⁵

Throughout the Bible, mention is made of God's providential ordering of creation. God promised Noah that He would preserve the created order (Gen. 8:21-22). Job was reminded in a remarkable and frightful way that God governs nature (Job 38-42). The

²⁷⁴ See chapters 2-5.

²⁷⁵ See, for example, Deut. 7:12-15; 30:15-20. See also chapters 8 and 9 where this idea is traced throughout the Covenant of Grace.

Psalmist recognized God's order, "You have established all the boundaries of the earth; You have made summer and winter" (Psa. 74:17). God declares "the end from the beginning" because His purpose is established (Isa. 46:10). The prophet Jeremiah, while rebuking the people for their unfaithfulness, reminded them of the faithfulness of God in maintaining the natural order, "Even the stork in the sky knows her seasons; and the turtledove and the swift and the thrush observe the time of their migration; but My people do not know the ordinance of the LORD" (Jer. 8:7). It is interesting that here Jeremiah rebuked the people's disobedience to God's moral ordinances by reference to His natural ordinances.

God's ordering of the universe extends to the minutest of things, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father" (Mat. 10:29). All things "hold together" and function properly because of Christ (Col. 1:17; John 1:1-3; Eph. 1:20-23). All things are worked out according to the counsel of God's will (Eph. 1:11; Dan. 4:35). The prophet Jeremiah refers to God's ordering of nature as a covenant (Jer. 33:20, 25).

God's general ordering of all things extends to the ethical realm as well. All men know this moral order (Rom. 1:18-32; 2:14-15). Governments and authorities are established to maintain this order (Rom. 13:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:13-14). Creation—the

natural realm—is the context of this order (Psa. 19:1-4; Rom. 1:18-32). God writes His moral law on the hearts of all men (Rom. 2:14-15). Furthermore, Jesus the Messiah enforces this moral order (Psa. 2; Phil. 2:6-11).

This moral/ethical ordering of God began with the creation of Adam and Eve. In creating man, God established a unique set of creation ordinances. These ordinances regulate man's nature as well as his behavior (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:3).

It is now appropriate to respond to the question posed above. What justifies one in identifying labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath as creation ordinances?

Creation Ordinances Proper

Labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath constitute a special class of creation decrees. They are distinct in how they relate to man (regulating him both naturally and ethically) and how they are developed throughout the Scriptures. Unless otherwise stated, from this point forward, the use of the phrase "creation ordinance(s)" will be in reference to this unique class—corresponding to the narrow usage of the phrase.

Creation ordinances adhere to the following threefold pattern. First, they are decretive. They order the world. Second, they constitute moral imperatives that appear in the

Decalogue. Third, they are tied to God's covenant with man and are fulfilled in Christ.

Creation ordinances are divine decrees. From one perspective, the creation ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath differ little from the other ordinances found in Genesis chapters one and two—e.g., "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). All of the ordinances of Genesis 1:1-2:3 order, structure, and dictate the purpose and function of God's world. God commanded, "Let there be light" and light came into existence, functioning according to God's purpose and design. These ordinances are constructive in nature; they result in the world being the way it is. Hence, the creation ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath structure man's nature, function, and purpose. This understanding is inherent in the structure and consequent meaning of Genesis 1:1-2:3.

The Hebrew Cohortative, Imperative, and Jussive

In order to facilitate the information below, it will be necessary to discuss the meaning of the volitional forms of the Hebrew verb. Waltke and O'Connor introduce these forms as follows, "In Hebrew there is a set of volitional forms, the cohortative, imperative, and jussive. These do not make up a mood, however, since they are morphologically independent. . . .

The Hebrew volitionals rather form a functional class."²⁷⁶ This idea of a "functional class" is important because the reader must determine how this kind of Hebrew verb functions in the context in which it appears. Waltke and O'Connor continue:

The terms imperative and jussive refer etymologically to absolute expressions of the will. . . . In fact, these forms may express varying degrees of volition . . . as do comparable constructions in other languages. Through the volitional forms a speaker aims to impose his or her will on some other person (or, in figurative language, thing). The force with which that will is exerted depends on various factors, including the speaker's social standing vis-à-vis the addressee, the social context of the discourse, and the meaning of the verb. For these reasons the precise nuances of the volitional forms may range from command, advice, and permission to request, wish, etc.²⁷⁷

Most of the volitional forms found in Genesis chapter one are in the jussive (14 jussives; 8 imperatives; and 1 cohortative). Nevertheless, they "function," as strong commands. Waltke and O'Connor acknowledge that the jussive can have this force. In fact, they speak of "divine jussives" which have, "the force of a command."²⁷⁸ They even cite Genesis 1:3, "Let there be light," as an example of this usage.²⁷⁹ This corroborates the terse explanation of the jussive given by Kelley, "The

²⁷⁶ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 564.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 565.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 568.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

jussive is used to express the speaker's desire, wish, or command."²⁸⁰

Structure Identified and Examined

Moses was very specific when he wrote the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis. Of the many things he wished to communicate to the Israelites of the Exodus, one was how God had ordered His creation, thus showing that He is sovereign over all creation. God is sovereign over all the false gods of the pagans, whether Egyptian or Canaanite. For the Israelites, this would provide confidence in leaving Egypt and entering Canaan.

Within the overarching arrangement of the seven days of creation (Genesis 1:1-2:3) one finds a two-fold structure, one contextual the other grammatical.²⁸¹ Contextually, throughout this entire passage, Elohim (God) is active. He is the primary subject of all but 8 verses: "From beginning to end the emphasis in the passage is on God's sovereign majesty. He is the subject, his actions, although expressed simply and briefly, are lofty and inspiring."²⁸²

Moses brings these actions to the reader's attention by a number of recurring Hebrew verbs. Elohim creates (בָּרָא, used 5

²⁸⁰ Emphasis mine; Page H. Kelley, *Biblical Hebrew: An introductory Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 131.

²⁸¹ For the author's translation of Genesis 1:1-2:3, see Appendix A.

²⁸² Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 101.

times: 1:1, 21, and 27^{x3}); He speaks (אָמַר, used 11 times: 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, and 29); He sees (רָאָה, used 7 times: 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31); and He separates (בָּדַל, used 5 times: 1:4, 6, 7, 14, and 18). He also calls (קָרָא, used 5 times: 1:5^{x2}, 8, 10^{x2}); He makes (עָשָׂה, used 10 times: 1:7, 11, 12, 16, 25, 26, 31; 2:2^{x2}, and 2:3); He blesses (בָּרַךְ, used 3 times: 1:22, 28; and 2:3); and He rests (שָׁבַח, used 2 times: 2:2, and 3).

Grammatically, this passage has a clear, definite, and instructional element employed. The verb אָמַר "to say" or "to speak" is used in conjunction with the divine jussive (i.e., God's command) to express Elohim's decrees. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism states, "The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, *by the word of His power.*"²⁸³ Gordon J. Wenham comments on this phenomenon:

Though it is of course taken for granted throughout the OT that God speaks, אָמַר "to say" is used here in a more pregnant sense than usual. It is a divine word of command that brings into existence what it expresses. Throughout Scripture the word of God is characteristically both creative and effective: it is the prophetic word that declares the future and helps it come into being. But in this creation narrative these qualities of the divine word are even more apparent.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Emphasis mine; WSC 9.

²⁸⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *World Biblical Commentary*, vol. 1, *Genesis 1-15* (Waco: Word books, 1987), 18.

In all but three instances in which the verb **אמר** is used in this passage, the Hebrew follows the exact same pattern: Qal Imperfect + Jussive (+ result). Table 1 illustrates this pattern.

Table 1

Verse	Qal Imperfect	Jussive	(Qal Imperfect)
1:3	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said	יְהִי let it be	וַיְהִי and it was
1:6	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said	יְהִי let it be	וַיְהִי and it was (v. 7)
1:9	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said	יִקָּוּ let it be gathered	וַיְהִי and it was
1:11	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said	תִּדְשֵׂא let it sprout	וַיְהִי and it was
1:14	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said	יְהִי let it be	וַיְהִי and it was (v. 15)
1:20	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said	יִשְׂרְצוּ let them swarm	
1:24	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said	תּוֹצֵא let it bring forth	וַיְהִי and it was
1:26	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said	נַעֲשֵׂה let us make	

The Qal Imperfect at the end of all but two of the passages is important because it instructs the reader how to understand the jussives of the passages. These jussives do not function as wishes, requests, or acts of permission; but are decretive in nature—they order the creation. In three of the passages (1:6-7, 14-15, and 20ff.) the jussives are followed by explanations as to how Elohim, the active agent, brought to pass what He com-

manded. Note that in 1:26 a cohortative (1st person volitional), not a jussive, is used.

Of the three remaining passages that use the Hebrew verb **אמר** "to speak", one is not applicable (1:29), but the other two are unique and important. In both 1:22 and 1:28 Elohim's creation decrees are introduced by the Hebrew verb "to bless" (**ברך**). Observe the comparison with 1:3:

Table 2

Verse	Qal Imperfect		Jussive
1:3	וַיֹּאמֶר and he said		יְהִי let it be
Verse	Qal Imperfect	Use of אמר	Imperative
1:22	וַיְבָרֶךְ and he blessed	לֵאמֹר Qal Infinitive - saying	פְּרוּ be fruitful וּרְבוּ and be numerous וּמְלֵאוּ and fill
1:28	וַיְבָרֶךְ and he blessed	וַיֹּאמֶר Qal Imperfect - and he said	פְּרוּ be fruitful וּרְבוּ and be numerous וּמְלֵאוּ and fill

This table follows the same basic pattern as the one above. When comparing the data, one finds that the jussives and the imperatives function in the same manner; they are decreative in nature. God is ordering His creation. The change from jussive

to imperative has to do with the umbrella of "blessing", not function. It relates to the fact that in these two passages Elohim is ordering animate, conscious beings, whereas previously none existed. The structure in verse 28 (the blessing of man) and in verse 22 (the blessing of animals) is striking and, again, instructive of this conclusion.

Commentators have long noted that the blessings found in these two passages communicate ability. Wenham wrote, "Here [v. 22] the words of command 'be fruitful and multiply' carry with them the divine promise that they can be carried out."²⁸⁵ Commenting on verse 28, "This command, like others in Scripture, carries with it an implicit promise that God will enable man to fulfill it."²⁸⁶ C. F. Keil commented concerning verse 22, "The word of blessing was the actual communication of the capacity to propagate and increase in numbers."²⁸⁷ Concerning v. 28, H. C. Leupold wrote, "This blessing of God, however, is not a mere wish or a wishing-well on the part of the Almighty. It is a creative word of power which makes possible the things that it commands, and it continues in power to this day."²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 24.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 33.

²⁸⁷ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, *The Pentateuch* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 61.

²⁸⁸ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, vol. 1, *Chapters 1-19* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949), 81.

There is one final blessing given in Genesis 1:1-2:3 that needs to be examined. In Genesis 2:3 Elohim blesses the seventh day. Though the customary jussive/imperative is missing, the overall structure remains the same: Elohim's blessing + Elohim, the active agent, bringing about the blessing. Note the pattern:

Table 3

Verse	Qal, Imperfect	The agency and action of Elohim
2:3	וַיְבָרֶךְ and he blessed	וַיִּקְדַּשׁ אֹתוֹ and he set it apart

There is enough similarity present in all three tables above to recognize that Elohim is ordering His creation. It is not necessary to find an exact correspondence in all parts of the grammatical or contextual structure. In fact, the variation found here in Genesis 2:3 is, like other markers in this passage, very instructive. Wenham recognized that, "In this way form and content emphasize the distinctiveness of the seventh day."²⁸⁹ The slight variation found in this verse communicates the idea of "completion."²⁹⁰

It is important to note that it is in the "Blessing" passages that one finds the Creation Ordinances of dominion and la-

²⁸⁹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 7.

²⁹⁰ H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 103.

bor (1:29), marriage and multiplication (1:29), and Sabbath (2:3). In these verses, the creation ordinances begin as decrees of God ordering His creation. They are and ought to be considered blessings of a benevolent Creator.

Summary

This chapter briefly considered the biblical data concerning God's sovereign, providential ordering of all creation (both cosmically and ethically) and then focused on Genesis 1:1-2:3. The two structural elements of this passage lead to the conclusion that all of the volitional pronouncements (whether jussive or imperative) are decretive.

The first structural element is the plain and simple fact that Elohim alone is the active agent throughout the entire passage. The passage is not primarily concerned with the actions of the creature, whether at creation or in the future, but with God's sovereign, logical and balanced work of creation.

The second structural element concerns ten of the eleven verses that use the Hebrew verb **אמר** "to speak". In every case, these verses are parallel in grammar and communicate the strong command of Elohim. Two of these verses (1:22 and 28) include an additional element of blessing. The parallel wording and grammar found in these two passages lead to the conclusion that these verses must be understood in a unified manner. Elohim, as

in the rest of the chapter, is sovereignly ordering His creation.

A third and final blessing passage is Genesis 2:3. This verse relates the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day. It also follows the pattern of blessing + Elohim, the active agent, bringing about the blessing. Elohim is constructing His world according to His design.

Two of these blessing passages (1:28 and 2:3) relate specifically to man and not only meet the first criterion for identification as creation ordinances—they are divine decrees—their content also meets the second and third criteria—their subject matter appears in the Decalogue and is fulfilled in Christ. Elohim sovereignly structured and designed His creation. In this, He created man to function in accord with the creation ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath. As Richard Pratt wrote, "He has embedded the ideals of multiplication and dominion deep within the human psyche."²⁹¹ The same is true with regard to the Sabbath.

²⁹¹ Richard L Pratt, Jr., *Designed for Dignity: What God Has Made it Possible for You to Be* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1993), 21.

CHAPTER 7

CREATION ORDINANCES AND THE DECALOGUE

This study proposes that creation ordinances adhere to a threefold pattern. First, they are decretive. Second, they constitute moral imperatives that appear in the Decalogue. Third, they are tied to God's covenant with man and are fulfilled in Christ.

This chapter will examine how creation ordinances constitute moral imperatives that are found in the Decalogue. John Murray recognized that:

None of the basic ordinances which guided and directed the life of man in the state of original integrity were abrogated by the fall of man. Their obligation and sanctity remain inviolate. It is not saying too much if we maintain that these creation ordinances furnish us with what is central in the biblical ethic.²⁹²

Not surprisingly, the ordinances of creation, taken together, form a unified whole. God commanded man to exercise dominion over all creation. Marriage was ordained to assist him in this task. God gave Adam a wife "suitable" or "corresponding" to him (Gen. 2:18). The fruit of the marital union is multiplication and children. With a family comes the task of

²⁹² John Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, 43-44.

training and raising children in "the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4; see also Deut. 6). This task, in part, constitutes humble submission and worship unto God, which reflects overall Sabbath principles. In addition, man, being mortal, needs rest and refreshment to carry out God's charge. He must also be exercised in the public worship of God; this he does one day in seven—a day instituted by God.

Similarly, the relationship that the creation ordinances have to the Decalogue is not a one to one correspondence, the Decalogue complements the creation ordinances (and vice versa). The reader cannot properly interpret the commands of the moral law in isolation from one another. Man's responsibility to his neighbor fulfills, in part, his responsibility to God. Moreover, his responsibility to God causes man to love his neighbor, who is created in God's image (see Jm. 3:9).

Labor and Dominion

Man, created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), was to exercise dominion. He was to study, harness, and utilize all of the resources and hidden treasures of creation to the glory of God. Man accomplishes this through means of labor.²⁹³ From the very beginning, man was placed in the Garden of Eden to work, "The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden

²⁹³ Labor can take place apart from dominion (e.g., the Israelites in Egypt, cf. Exo. 1), but dominion cannot take place apart from labor.

to cultivate it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). God also assigned Adam the task of naming the animals (Gen. 2:19).

God's curse upon the ground adversely affected Man's labor.

God's words to Adam are as follows:

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:17-19).

The curse corroborates man's ongoing responsibility of labor, while burdening him with much futility.

The Bible records man's post-Fall cultural activities. Cain and Abel excelled in husbandry, "Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground" (Gen. 4:2). After Cain murdered Abel, he built the city Enoch (Gen. 4:17); Cain's descendents became husbandmen, musicians, and developed metallurgy (Gen. 4:20-22).

Before the Flood, Noah was resourceful enough to construct an ark of impressive size (Gen. 6:14-16, 22). After the flood, Noah engaged in husbandry and the making of wine (Gen. 9:20). Nimrod became a king and a "mighty hunter before the Lord," founding several cities (Gen. 10:8-12). Though acting in sin,

Noah's descendents went to the land of Shinar and built a city with a tower (Gen. 11:2-5).

At the time of Abraham's calling at least two great civilizations existed: Babylon (Gen. 11:28) and Egypt (Gen. 12:10-20). Multiple cities existed as well (Genesis 12ff.). Kings and warfare were long established (Genesis 14), a variety of craftsmanship was developed (tools, implements of war, the making of idols, etc.), and commerce had increased (Genesis 23; 41:55-57). Though not always in obedience to God, man was nevertheless constituted to obey the creation ordinance of labor and dominion.

The importance of labor and dominion is also evident in their relationship to stealing and covetousness, which mankind recognized as evil and worthy of condemnation long before the giving of the law at Sinai. Stealing was a crime. Jacob's honesty was tested by whether or not he stole from Laban (Gen. 30:33). Laban accused Jacob of stealing his idols (Gen. 31:30), a crime punishable by death (Gen. 31:32). Joseph's brothers understood that stealing was wrong and denied it profusely (Gen. 44:1-13); the Egyptians understood stealing to be "evil" and "wrong" (Gen. 44:4-5).

God cursed Pharaoh even though he coveted Abraham's wife in ignorance (Gen. 12:14-17). Joseph's brothers coveted his place of honor with Jacob and this led to multiple other sins and consequences (Gen. 37:4ff.).

The relationship of the ordinance of labor and dominion to the Decalogue is apparent in its affinity to the 4th, 8th, and 10th commandments. As found in the Book of Exodus, the Fourth Commandment is:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy (20:8-11).

In Exodus 20:9, after the words "six days," the phrase translated "you shall labor and do all your work" begins with a Hebrew imperfect (תַּעֲבֹד). This imperfect should be understood as an imperfect of instruction or command.²⁹⁴ Thus, included in the Sabbath commandment is the injunction to labor. For six days man is to labor in the service of Yahweh in anticipation of coming rest.

This relationship between labor and the need for Sabbath existed from the very beginning. Robertson affirmed that, "The explicit command given to man concerning his responsibility

²⁹⁴ For more on this use of the imperfect see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 509-510. The above interpretation is confirmed by comparing the use of the imperfect in verse 9 with the prohibitive use in verse 10, "you shall not do (לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה) any work." In addition, all but the 4th and 5th commandments begin with an imperfect. All of these must be given an imperatival meaning. Finally, confirmation is found in the imperative of the 5th commandment, "Honor (כִּבְדֹּ) your father and your mother."

toward the creation enforces the implication concerning labor in the Sabbath ordinance."²⁹⁵

Douma recognized that the 8th commandment, "You shall not steal," has direct relevance to the ordinance of labor and dominion:

In connection with the eighth commandment, we should also pay some attention to our mandate to work. That is obvious in view of the clear connection that the Bible makes between laziness and stealing. The sluggard comes to poverty (Prov. 6:6-11), and poverty tempts a person to steal (Prov. 30:9).²⁹⁶

Stealing is no substitute for man's responsibility to work and rule over creation. "You shall not covet," the 10th commandment, has the same relevance as the 8th commandment—its violation tempts one to steal which is contrary to labor and dominion. In fact, the relevance of inward sinful desire is pertinent to all of God's commands whether given at creation or Sinai.

Not only does the Decalogue repeat the creation ordinance of labor, it also gives added instruction as to how man ought to labor and dominate the earth. As Thomas Watson noted, "Religion gives no warrant for idleness."²⁹⁷ At creation, God gave man the task of ruling over the earth and laboring to harness its

²⁹⁵ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 80.

²⁹⁶ Jochem Douma, *The Ten commandments: Manual for the Christian life*, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1996) 302.

²⁹⁷ Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments* (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1959, 1995), 97.

blessings. God gave man additional tools at Sinai to assist him in this task.²⁹⁸

Marriage and Multiplication

Adam and Eve were married in Paradise. God, after showing Adam his need for a wife, brought Eve to him and they were joined (Gen. 2:18-23). This interpretation is confirmed by Moses' inspired commentary on these events, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed" (Gen. 2:24-25).²⁹⁹ Adam and Eve also received the mandate to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28).

The curse negatively influenced this union of the man and the woman. God pronounced His curse, addressing Eve as follows, "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (Gen. 3:16). Eve's "desire" as well as Adam's "rule" was to be a perversion of the original ordinance. C. F. Kiel's comments on this verse are instructive:

The woman had also broken through her divinely appointed subordination to the man; she had not only emancipated herself from the man to listen to the serpent, but had led

²⁹⁸ This is not to deny the law of God written upon man's heart also from creation onwards. However, the hindrance of sin and the need of special revelation have been referred to above.

²⁹⁹ There are those who would attribute these words to Adam. Even so, Moses made the decision to include these words as commentary on the preceding events.

the man into sin. For that, she was punished with a *desire* bordering upon disease . . . and with *subjection* to the man. "And he shall rule over thee." Created for the man, the woman was made subordinate to him from the very first; but the supremacy of the man was not intended, to become a despotic rule, crushing the woman into a slave, which has been the rule in ancient and modern Heathenism.³⁰⁰

The affects of the curse touched multiplication as well. The Lord said to the woman, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth" (Gen. 3:16). As with labor and dominion, the curse confirmed the ordinance of marriage and multiplication—they were to continue. Moreover, this is exactly what one finds throughout the Book of Genesis.

Cain married and had children (Gen. 4:16-24) as did the rest of Adams descendents (Genesis 5; 10-11). When God saved the family of Noah from the flood, He saved four pairs of husband and wife (Genesis 6-9). Abraham's marriage to Sarah was a vital component to God's promised blessing of multiplication (Genesis 12-17). God would not allow offspring from a union that violated Abraham's original marriage covenant to fulfill the promise (Gen. 17:20-21). In fact, God's promise to Abraham that He would bless him and make him a great nation (Gen. 12:2; 15:4-5; 17:2-4) was also a promise to bless, "all the families of the earth" (Gen. 12:3). God's very purpose in choosing Abraham was the he would, "command his children and his

³⁰⁰ Keil, C. F., and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, 103.

household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice" (Gen. 18:19).

Not only was it important for Isaac and Jacob to marry and have children, it was important whom they would marry (Gen. 24; 28:1-2ff.). It is obvious from the Scriptures that the surrounding pagan cultures were also marrying and having children. This blessing of God abounded. Douma accurately described the situation when he wrote:

God created man and woman with a common mandate: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). . . . *Marriage* is the arena for experiencing this repeatedly new unity between one man and one woman, and thus marriage is the route designed for realizing the mandate of Genesis 1.³⁰¹

One also finds the belief in the *sanctity* of marriage throughout the pages of Genesis. Even the Egyptians understood the sacredness of marriage. According to Abraham, they would rather kill him than take his wife (Gen. 12:11-12). Abimelech, king of Gerar, held marriage in high esteem as well. After taking Sarah, he pled both innocence and ignorance as to her marital status, "In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this" (Gen. 20:5). In fact, Abimelech referred to adultery as a "great sin" (Gen. 20:9). God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19) and, according to the

³⁰¹ Jochem Douma, *The Ten Commandments*, 249.

account in Genesis, this was due to sexual immorality (i.e., the perversion of the marital union).³⁰²

The people of God certainly held marriage in high esteem. Jacob's sons were infuriated at the rape of their sister. The text describes this as a "disgraceful thing" which "ought not to be done" (Gen. 34:7). Jacob's son Joseph refused to lie with Potiphar's wife calling it a "great evil and sin against God" (Gen. 39:9).

The submissive role of children is also seen prior to Sinai. Noah's sons Shem and Japheth disapproved of what their brother did and honored their father (Gen. 9:22-23). Noah cursed Ham's actions and blessed his other two sons (Gen. 9:24ff.). Esau, because of his love and deference to Isaac, would not lay a hand on Jacob until after Isaac's death (Gen. 27:41). Jacob's sons submit to his blessings upon them and honor him in death (Gen. 49:1-50:3).

According to Robertson, "Marriage . . . may be regarded as a most significant dimension in God's creation orderings. This ordinance continues to have binding significance on man-in-redemption."³⁰³ Thus, the law of God, given to God's redeemed people (Exo. 20:2), reflects the original ordinance. The creation ordinance of marriage and multiplication relates

³⁰² Although the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah went beyond sexual sins (cf. Ezek. 16:49-50), they certainly included them.

³⁰³ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 79.

especially to the 5th, 7th, and 10th commandments of the Decalogue. The 5th commandment is, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (Exo. 20:12). This commandment recognizes the well-established role and place of honor that parents—the married couple—hold in society. God uses the model of husband and wife as representative of all forms of authority. This reflects the authority given to Adam and Eve at creation and in the ordinances thereof.

The 7th commandment—"You shall not commit adultery"—though not actually repeating the creation ordinance, explicitly enforces what was implicit in that mandate. The original creation ordinance limited the marital union to one man and one woman. The "one flesh" nature of the union (Gen. 2:24) indicates that it is for life. This is the exact interpretation given this ordinance by Jesus. Responding to the Pharisees' question concerning divorce, Jesus appealed to the original creation ordinance as a decisive argument against it. His interpretation on this issue is binding:

"Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female," and [He] said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (Mat. 19:4-6).

Jesus concluded that it was, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way" (Mat. 19:8).

The 7th commandment (Exo. 20:14; Deut. 5:18), case law (Exo. 22:16-17; Deut. 22:28-29), and the holiness code (e.g., Lev. 18; Lev. 20:10-13) all teach the same standard of marital sanctity as does the original creation ordinance. As Thomas Watson wrote of the 7th commandment, "The thing implied is that the ordinance of marriage should be observed."³⁰⁴

The law against coveting—the 10th commandment—has relevance here as well. As in the case of Shechem (Gen. 34) and Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39), extreme desire and lust lead to sexual immorality and violation of the marriage bond. Hence, the biblical ethic has remained consistent. Special revelation published what was already contained in the creation ordinance.

Sabbath

The Sabbath is a reflection of Garden lifestyle. Genesis 2:15 states that, "The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden." However, Adam was not just placed in the garden; he was "rested" in the Garden. The Hebrew of Genesis 2:15 can be translated, "And the Lord God took the man and

³⁰⁴ Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments*, 152.

rested him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”³⁰⁵

Ross noticed the significance of this passage and commented that:

The vocabulary in verses 15-17 strikingly points to the spiritual nature of the man's responsibility. First, the word translated "placed" [or "put"] is actually from the word for "rest" (*nûah*). It means "placed" in this passage, but the choice of a word with overtones of "rest" is important. . . . Genesis 2:15 thus must have some connection with the biblical teaching of Sabbath rest in the Bible.³⁰⁶

The connection to Sabbath rest in Genesis 2:15 is made more explicit by comparing this verse to Exodus 20:11. In Exodus 20:11 God provides the reason for remembering the Sabbath, "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and **rested**³⁰⁷ on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." The same Hebrew word used in Gen. 2:15 is here used to describe God's "rest" on the first Sabbath.

The word play in Gen. 5:29 confirms this understanding of Gen. 2:15. Lamech named his son Noah (Gen. 5:29a). The Hebrew for "Noah" is related to the word translated "put" or "rested" in Gen. 2:15 and Exo. 20:11.³⁰⁸ Lamech explained the name of his son by saying, "This one will give us **rest** from our work and

³⁰⁵ Author's translation. The word translated "rested" is the hiphil, imperfect of נָח.

³⁰⁶ Allen P. Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, 124.

³⁰⁷ Here, the gal, imperfect of נָח is used.

³⁰⁸ נֹחַ is Hebrew for Noah.

from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed" (Gen. 5:29b).³⁰⁹

Even in the Garden, God designated one day in seven for special rest (Gen. 2:3). The Lord's words in Mark 2:27, "The Sabbath was made for man," confirms that this original Sabbath was intended for the creature. God's sanctifying of this day was for man's benefit, not His own.³¹⁰

Adam's removal and banishment from the Garden affected his enjoyment of the Sabbath. This explains why the people of God were looking for "rest" (e.g., the words of Lamech in Gen. 5:28-29). This may explain why the evidence of Sabbath celebration is at best sketchy prior to the exodus (Exodus 16).

The evidence of Sabbath celebration may be a bit vague, but it is not entirely absent.³¹¹ The recognition of a 7-day week is present in Genesis (8:6-12; 29:27-28). Worship and sacrifice continue throughout Genesis (Gen. 4:3, 26; 8:20; 12:7-8; 13:18; 26:25; 35:6-7). Finally, the Sabbath is explicitly mentioned and observed in Exodus 16:22-30. What is of interest in this account is the fact that the Sabbath seemingly comes out of

³⁰⁹ The word translated "give rest" is the piel, imperfect of נָחַ. In English the word play looks something like this, Gen. 2:15 - *nuah* (to rest), Gen. 5:29a - *noah* (Noah), Gen. 5:29b - *naham* (to rest), and Exo. 20:11 - *nuah* (to rest).

³¹⁰ Watson wrote, "God himself is not benefited by it, we cannot add one cubit to his essential glory; but we ourselves are benefited" (*The Ten Commandments*, 94).

³¹¹ "Sabbath celebration" refers to the recognition of one day in seven set aside for the worship of God and rest from labor.

nowhere. There is no explanation or teaching concerning its purpose or meaning. The seventh day is called a Sabbath and the majority of the people simply observe it (cf. 16:27-28).

Of all the creation ordinances, the Sabbath is the only one that does have a one-to-one correspondence with the Ten Commandments and it is the only one that is verbatim appealed to.³¹²

The fourth commandment states:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy (Exo. 20:8-11).

Moses makes explicit and conspicuous appeal to the creation ordinance of Gen. 2:3. Certainly, God's week is a pattern to be followed; but it is more than a mere pattern. The Sabbath is something from the past—the people must remember its significance. By appealing to the creation Sabbath, Moses appeals to its original purpose and design for man (cf. Mark 2:27).

There is no good reason to understand Moses' appeal to the creation ordinance any differently than one ought to understand Jesus' (Mat. 19:4-5) or the Apostle Paul's (Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor.

³¹² The last part of Exodus 20:11, בָּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת־יְמֵי הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהָ (the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy) is a quotation of Genesis 2:3, וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יְמֵי הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ (God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it).

11:7-12; 1 Tim. 2:13-15). Hence, there is direct confirmation in the 4th commandment to the validity of understanding the Sabbath as an ongoing creation ordinance. As with the relationship of the Decalogue to the other creation ordinances, divine revelation publishes and makes clear what depravity suppresses (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).

Summary

Creation ordinances have moral force. Three things exhibit this ethical nature. First, the curse adversely affects as well as confirms all of the creation ordinances. Second, both their practice and enforcement can be seen in the biblical account leading up to Sinai—this both in God's people and surrounding pagans.

Third, and finally, the creation ordinances all appear, in some sense, in the Decalogue. Hence, their moral significance is normative and binding. In particular, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the Sabbath ordinance of creation and the 4th commandment. Moses established the authority of the 4th commandment based on the blessing and institution of the Sabbath at creation.

CHAPTER 8

FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST: COVENANT CONTINUITY

One final element contributes to the recognition and identification of the creation ordinances. The creation ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath are tied to God's covenant with man and are fulfilled in Christ.

Egmond and Kooi recognized this aspect of the creation ordinances, indicating, "There are definite ordinances in the creation which are directed to make God's covenant with man possible."³¹³ They further described these ordinances as providing "for the life of people in social relationships and of humanity with their world."³¹⁴ This understanding of the creation ordinances is vital to a full orbbed understanding of God's covenant with man, His work of redemption, and "the summing up of all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10).

What is meant by a divine covenant? Others have provided varying definitions. O. Palmer Robertson defined a covenant as,

³¹³ A. van Egmond and C. van der Kooi, "The Appeal to Creation Ordinances: A Changing Tide" in *God's Order for Creation*, ed. B. J. van der Walt (Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, 1994), 30.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

"A *bond in blood sovereignly administered*. When God enters into a covenantal relationship with men, he sovereignly institutes a life-and-death bond."³¹⁵ Douglas Jones offered this definition, "A Lord-servant covenant is a *God-ordained bond of union, peace, friendship, and service between the Lord and His people*."³¹⁶ For the sake of simplicity, a divine covenant consists of three parts. First, it is a relationship: a friendship with God that He sovereignly controls. Second, God promises union and communion: "I will be your God, and you will be My people."³¹⁷ Third, man has a responsibility: faith and obedience.

The Covenant of Creation

God not only created the world to be a suitable habitation for man, He created a world where it would be possible for man to live in covenantal union with Him.³¹⁸ God created man to

³¹⁵ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 4.

³¹⁶ Douglas M. Jones III, "The Beauty of it All" in *Back to Basics: Rediscovering the Richness of the Reformed Faith*, ed. David G. Hagopian (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1996), 72.

³¹⁷ See Jer. 7:23; cf. Gen. 17:7-8; Exo. 6:7; Jer. 11:4; 30:22; Ezek. 36:28; 2 Cor. 6:16; Heb. 8:10.

³¹⁸ The view of Covenant Theology presented here (i.e., the bicovenantal framework and the organic unity within the Covenant of Grace) is consistent with what can be found in *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (WCF 21.7-8, WLC 115-121, and WSC 57-62) and O Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*. That there is not absolute agreement among Reformed Theologians concerning the bicovenantal framework or the exact nature of the organic unity of the covenant of grace, see the following: Craig G. Bartholomew, "Covenant and Creation: Covenant Overload or Covenantal Deconstruction," *Calvin Theological Journal* 30 (1995): 11-33; John Murray, "The Adamic Administration," in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4 vols., 2.47-59 (Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977); O. Palmer Robertson, "Current Reformed Thinking on the Nature of the Divine Covenants," *Westminster Theological Journal* 40 (1977):

enjoy both his horizontal and vertical relationships. To enable man to do this God ordered His creation and entered into covenant with him,³¹⁹ giving him direction and responsibility. Part of man's original and ongoing responsibility is to live in accordance with the creation ordinances and thus fulfill his covenantal duties. God's words for man are, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gen. 1:28; see also 1:26). Genesis 2:18-25 further explicates the ordinance of marriage, the bond from which multiplication flourishes. God also established the Sabbath "for man" (Mark 2:27; Gen. 2:3). In addition to these ordinances, God wrote His moral law upon man's heart (Rom. 2:14-15; see Rom. 1:18-32).

In addition, God gave man a unique command, "From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17). This command was a pure test of obedience—would Adam obey God merely for the sake of obedience? In the words of Anselm, "It is certain that the rational nature was created to love and choose

63-76; John H. Stek, "'Covenant' Overload in Reformed Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994):12-41; and Meredith G. Kline, *The Treaty of the Great King; The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963).

³¹⁹ This original, pre-fall covenant is referred to as the Covenant of Works, Life, or Creation.

the supreme good above all things, not for the sake of another good, but for its own sake."³²⁰ Had man obeyed God's command, he would have been preserved and glorified in life (cf. Gen. 3:22-24).³²¹

Sadly, man did not obey God's command but chose death. Instead of faith and obedience, Adam and Eve disobeyed by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because Adam was the federal head of all his posterity, "All mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression."³²²

Man, in covenant obedience to God, was to subdue the earth and harness its resources and blessings to the glory of God. He was to do this with the aid of family, a wife and children. The work would have been satisfying and man would have been refreshed weekly on the Sabbath. Robertson astutely observed, "Always the total life of the participant in the divine covenant finds its ordering through the covenantal bond."³²³ Hence, if God is to redeem man and restore garden lifestyle, *all things* must be reconciled to Him. This is exactly what God began to do in the Covenant of Grace.

³²⁰ Anselm *Why God Became Man* 2.1.

³²¹ See also Lev. 18:5; Neh. 9:29; Mat. 19:16ff; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12; Heb. 11:6.

³²² *WCF*, Shorter Catechism 16.

³²³ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 82.

The Covenant of Grace

There is both continuity and discontinuity between the Covenant of Creation and the Covenant of Grace. Man's responsibilities remain the same—faith and obedience. In terms of the Covenant of Creation, man remains a covenant breaker. For this reason, the Covenant of Grace takes on a redemptive aspect that was unnecessary in the former covenant.

The Apostle Paul wrote that the Father, through Christ, has "reconcile[d] all things to Himself" (Col. 1:20; cf. Rev. 21:5). Christ's work of redemption and reconciliation encompasses not just the soul of man but the entire creation. This is because man needed to be restored "to the condition he was going to be in if he had not sinned."³²⁴ God's original covenant with man involved man's responsibility to creation as God's servant and vice-regent. Man's failure in this covenant needed to be repaired for reconciliation to take place. According to Bartholomew, "At the heart of biblical covenant is 'creation regained', with the additional historical perspective of the development from the garden to the city."³²⁵ Though Christ's work of redemption and reconciliation is finished (John 19:30),

³²⁴ Anselm *Why God Became Man* 2.3.

³²⁵ C. G. Bartholomew, "Response to Al Wolters' Paper" in *God's Order for Creation*, ed. B. J. van der Walt (Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, 1994), 63.

there remains a present and future aspect to it (2 Cor. 5:16-21; Rev. 21-22). God, in Christ, is restoring garden lifestyle.

Adamic Administration

The Covenant of Grace began with Adam. In fact, God's redemptive grace began in the very midst of the curse that He pronounced upon the serpent and fallen man. Beginning in Gen. 3:14, Yahweh³²⁶ curses those involved in transgressing His covenant. In the midst of this curse is the Protevangelium (the first gospel). In His address to the serpent, Yahweh said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head and you shall bruise him on the heel" (Gen. 3:15).

In these words, God both curses and blesses.³²⁷ From this moment on, the sons of men were insuperably divided. The seed of the serpent would relentlessly hate and attack the seed of the woman (Rev. 12). The blessing is twofold. First, God placed enmity between Satan³²⁸ and the woman and in this enmity is the salvation of Eve.³²⁹ It is impossible to serve two

³²⁶ Yahweh (יהוה) is God's covenant name (see Exo. 3:13-15; 6:1-9), it is a reminder of His faithfulness.

³²⁷ The presence of blessings and curses is additional proof that this relationship between God and man was indeed covenantal.

³²⁸ That the serpent is indeed Satan is established from the following passages: Rev. 12:9; Mat. 12:34; John 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14.

³²⁹ I understand Genesis 3:15 to address three distinct groups: 15a - Satan and Eve, 15b - the offspring of Satan and Eve, and 15c - Satan and a

masters (Mat. 6:24; Luke 16:13). No man or woman can truly hate evil and God at the same time; to hate evil is to love God (Psa. 97:10; Mat. 12:30). Eve's enmity toward Satan is proof of her regeneration.³³⁰

Second, God's blessing is in the promised seed of the woman. The original has a play on words; one time "seed" has a plural meaning and the next, a singular.³³¹ Out of the plural seed will arise a singular masculine seed³³² who will reverse the work of Satan and restore man to his paradisiacal state. Subsequent Scripture leaves no doubt as to whom this male descendent is. It is the Messiah, the Lord Jesus (Luke 3:23-38; Rom. 16:20; Gal. 3:16-29; 1 Jn. 3:8; Rev. 12).

Hence, from the very beginning of the Covenant of Grace multiplication played an important role in the redemption of mankind (see Gen. 5), ultimately being fulfilled in the person of Christ. Marriage continued, though it was quickly perverted

singular masculine offspring of Eve. For a similar tripartite understanding, see Keil, C. F., and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, 100-102 and H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 164-170.

³³⁰ One would assume, based on the following context, that Adam is also included in this act of God's grace. Adam's life shows forth signs of salvation. He instructs his children concerning sacrifice (Gen. 4:3-5) and the coming seed (note the words of Lamech in Gen. 5:29).

³³¹ The Hebrew for "seed" is זָרַע. This Hebrew word can be used as a countable (i.e., referring to one) or as a collective (i.e., referring to many). For more on this use of the Hebrew noun, see Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 113-114.

³³² Contrary to normal Hebrew grammar, the subject הוּא ("he") is here placed before the verb. Since Hebrew verbs carry their own pronoun, the independent pronoun adds emphasis and helps to identify the זָרַע.

(Gen. 4:19-24). Man's labor and dominion brought about cultural progress (Gen. 4:2-3, 16-22). The worship of Yahweh continued (Gen. 4:25-26; reflecting overall Sabbath principles) and included a sacrificial system (see Gen. 3:21; 4:3-5).³³³ Consequently, all of the original creation ordinances were integral parts of man's life in this first administration of the covenant.

Noahic Administration

By the time Noah was 480 years old, mankind's corruption was widespread and Yahweh determined to destroy life upon the earth (Gen. 6:5-7, 11-13, 17). Noah, however, found "favor in the eyes of Yahweh" (Gen. 6:8). God, therefore, renewed covenant with him and commissioned him to build an ark to preserve his life, the life of his family, and two of every kind of animal upon the earth (Gen. 6:14-22).³³⁴ True to His word, God destroyed the entire earth with a great flood (Gen. 7:11ff). After the flood, Noah exited the ark, built "an altar to the Lord," and offered sacrifices (Gen. 8:20). Then, God further elaborated upon His covenant (Gen. 8:21-9:17).

God promised to preserve the natural order (Gen. 8:21-22) thereby ensuring an environment in which the coming seed of the

³³³ Worship is a key component (i.e., "principle") to Sabbath observance (WCF 21.7-8).

³³⁴ Noah preserved additional clean animals as well (Gen. 7:2-3).

woman could redeem mankind. God's words of covenant renewal come from the original covenant, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1, cf., 9:7; 1:28). Man's dominion was reiterated (Gen. 9:2-3), however, with a reminder that he is vice-regent and his authority is limited (Gen. 9:4-6).

With each renewal and administration of the Covenant of Grace, God further reveals His plan and design. God renewed His covenant with Noah and "with [his] seed³³⁵ after [him]" (Gen. 9:9), thus reminding him of the promised "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15). This promise continued to stress the importance of multiplication (as well as marriage) in God's redemptive purpose. God, then, gave to Noah and his seed a remarkable sign of His faithfulness—the rainbow (Gen. 9:12-17). The image depicted by the sign of the rainbow is easily missed. The actual words of Yahweh were, "I will set my bow in the cloud" (Gen. 9:13). The word translated "bow" (Gen. 9:13, 14, 16) is the word used for a war-bow (cf. Josh. 24:12; 1 Sam. 2:4; Psa. 7:12; etc.).³³⁶ This weapon points heavenward. God is assuring Noah and his seed that upon pain of death (for failure) He will bring about His promised blessings.

God's covenant with Noah was very broad in its scope. God covenanted not just with man, but also with creation—for the

³³⁵ The same Hebrew word זָרַע ("seed") is used throughout God's covenant administrations.

³³⁶ The Hebrew קֶשֶׁת is a bow for hunting or battle; it is a weapon.

sake of man (Gen. 8:21-22; 9:8-17). The original creation ordinances continued to be an integral part of His saving purpose. Multiplication and dominion are vital components of God's covenant with man (Gen. 9:1-7) and are visible throughout Genesis 10 and 11. Noah's sacrifices (Gen. 8:20) and his recognition of a 7-day pattern (Gen. 8:10, 12) show forth the Sabbath principles of time and worship.³³⁷

Abrahamic Administration

Corresponding to the weakness of man, God is wont to renew His covenant. With each renewal, He provides man with additional tokens and signs of His faithfulness. God's covenant dealings with Abraham exemplify this (Gen. 12; 15; 17).

God, by His grace alone, called Abraham out of the midst of paganism (Gen. 11:31-32; 12:4; Acts 7:2-4). He sovereignly initiated a relationship with Abraham, instructing him to leave his

³³⁷ Interestingly enough, Genesis chapter 8 brings together the 7-day pattern and worship (i.e., the Sabbath principles of time and worship). Gen. 8:5 supplies the timeframe of 10th month, 1st day (according to Gen. 7:11, this is the 600th year of Noah's life). Forty days later Noah sends out a raven and a dove to see if the "water was abated from the face of the land" (Gen. 8:6-8), this would have been (assuming a 30 day month) the 11th month, 10th day. 7 days later, Noah sends out a second dove (11th month, 17th day; Gen. 8:10); he sends out a 3rd dove after another 7 days (11th month, 24th day; Gen. 8:12). In Gen. 8:13, the text informs us "in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth." This is exactly 7 days after Noah had released the 3rd dove. Noah then exits the ark "in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month" (Gen. 8:14-19) and immediately builds an altar and offers sacrifice (Gen. 8:20). This would have been a 7th day. Starting at the 601st year, 1st month, 1st day and adding consecutive 7's, one arrives at the 2nd month, 27th day.

home and family and go to the land shown to him (Gen. 12:1).

God's words of promise followed:

I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:2-3).

God promised to multiply Abraham in such a way that "all the families of the earth will be blessed." In all of this Yahweh swore to provide Abraham with sovereign protection.

God formally covenanted with Abraham in Genesis 15 (cf. 15:18). Here, God repeated His promise of multiplication. In response to Abraham's lament that he had no seed,³³⁸ God promised him, "One who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir" (Gen. 15:4), and as the stars are in number, "So shall your seed be" (Gen. 15:5). Abraham believed God's promise, therefore, God "reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6)—Abraham was justified by faith. Like Lamech before him (Gen. 5:29), Abraham understood that God's promise of multiplication had greater significance than just physical offspring. The words of this encounter hearken back to God's promised "seed" who would counter the work of the devil (Gen.

³³⁸ Here, again, the familiar Hebrew זרע is used.

3:15). Once again, God's promise came in the form of a self-maledictory oath (Gen. 15:9-10, 17-18).³³⁹

God renewed His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17. Only this time things were different. This time the emphasis fell upon Abraham's behavior. Abraham had some significant failures prior to this point. Due to a lack of faith, he had violated his marriage covenant twice (cf. Gen. 12:11-20 and Gen. 16:1-6). It was time for Abraham to recognize that his marriage to Sarah as well as his obedience and faithfulness to God were vital components in the fulfillment of God's promises.

In previous encounters, God had used His covenant name Yahweh. Here, He addressed Abraham as *El Shaddai*³⁴⁰—God Almighty—and immediately reminded him to, "walk before Me, and be blameless" (Gen. 17:1). The title *El Shaddai* speaks of God's sovereign power. God is *more than capable* of fulfilling his promises to Abraham, but Abraham has covenant responsibilities that he *must* fulfill. God will indeed execute His promises to Abraham, but Abraham must respond in faithfulness.

It was time for Abraham to acknowledge his ongoing sinfulness, to repent, and to recognize the need for blood cleansing. Therefore, God commanded of Abraham the rite and sign of circum-

³³⁹ A self-maledictory oath is one that ends in the death of the covenanter if the covenant promises are not fulfilled (O Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 130-131).

³⁴⁰ אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדָי.

cision. Circumcision not only depicted God's promise to Abraham, but it reminded Abraham of his responsibility as well (see Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; 9:25-26; Col. 2:10-12).³⁴¹ Deuteronomy 30:6 is especially helpful in understanding the meaning of this sign. Moses instructed the people, "The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants,³⁴² to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live." Because of heart circumcision—an act performed by God—the people will turn to God in true love and faithfulness; they will live. Life among God's people involves obedience to God's law (Lev. 18:5; Neh. 9:29; Ezek. 20:11; Rom. 10:5). This illustrates the connection between circumcision being a sign of God's grace and human responsibility.

After these events, God was finally able to say of Abraham, "I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice" (Gen. 18:19). Abraham had finally reached the point where he understood that God's covenant involved all of life.

God's covenantal requirements of Abraham demonstrate the ongoing significance of the creation ordinances and their

³⁴¹ For more on circumcision, see Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 147-166.

³⁴² The Hebrew literally reads, "the heart of your seed (לְבַבְךָ)."

intimate connection to God's redemptive purpose. The importance of Abraham's marriage to Sarah testifies to the ongoing significance of the creation ordinance of marriage—i.e., one man with one woman for life. The fact that kings would come forth from this union (Gen. 17:6) bears witness to the ongoing significance of multiplication and dominion. The land of Canaan—a token of Abraham's seed inheriting the world (cf. Rom. 4:13)—points to ongoing labor and dominion. Though no explicit mention of the Sabbath is found in the life of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, they continued to worship God by offering sacrifices (Gen. 12:7; 22:5, 8-9, 13; 31:54; 35:1; 46:1) and the 7-day pattern was still observed (Gen. 29:27; 50:10). In addition, prior to the formal inauguration of the Mosaic Covenant at Sinai, Exodus 16 does mention the Sabbath and its practice.

Mosaic Administration

Exodus chapters 1 and 2 are foundational to a proper understanding of the Mosaic administration of the Covenant of Grace. The people of Israel were in Egypt. The covenant blessings were being fulfilled, "The sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them" (Exo. 1:7). However, because of the God-ordained enmity (Gen. 3:15), Pharaoh and the Egyptians—the seed of the serpent—began to rob Israel of the good

benefits of their labor. Pharaoh "appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor" (Exo. 1:11). This action took away their rest as well. God, however, continued to bless His people, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out" (Exo. 1:12). Pharaoh then increased their labor and "made their lives bitter with hard labor" (Exo. 1:14). In addition, the seed of the serpent struck out with cruel enmity against the offspring of Israel—sons were to be put to death (Exo. 1:15-22). Nevertheless, God continued to bless Israel, "The people multiplied, and became very mighty" (Exo. 1:20). Pharaoh again struck back commanding his people that, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile" (Exo. 1:22).

In time, the Egyptians had almost completely removed all semblance of garden lifestyle from Israel. Israel was unable to practice and unable to benefit from the ordinances of creation. However, Yahweh, the faithful One, would correct the situation. He brought forth one through whom He would redeem the people and deliver them from Egypt and their bondage (Exo. 2:1-22). This He did because He "remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Exo. 2:24). Yahweh rescued Israel "by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm" (Deut. 5:15; cf. Exo. 32:11).

What God did for Israel in the exodus from Egypt was a continuation of the Covenant of Grace (Exo. 3:16; 6:8; etc.).

God brought the people into the land of Canaan where garden lifestyle and the blessings of the creation ordinances could be experienced (Deut. 6:1-25). Before entering the land of Canaan, God brought the people to Sinai and gave them His law. If the people would heed the "commandment, the statutes and the judgments" of God, their days would be prolonged (Deut. 6:1-2) and they would prosper in the land (Deut. 6:10-11, 18-19).

The Old Testament repeatedly admonishes and promises blessings for labor and dominion. If Israel obeyed the voice of Yahweh and worked to His glory, they would be blessed of Him and would lend to and rule over many nations, never having to borrow (Deut. 15:6). God promised that He would, "Open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow" (Deut. 28:12). God warned Israel against being lazy and a sluggard (Prov. 6:6; 10:26; 12:27; 19:24; etc.). He also warned them against the abuse and wrong motive often associated with riches (Eccl. 4:8; 5:13; etc.). Even though Israel would be disobedient and taken into captivity, God would remain faithful to redeem them yet again and He would bless them with the wealth of the nations (Isa. 60:5; 61:6). The king of Israel reflects a special aspect

of dominion.³⁴³ Finally, one finds the glorious description of man's dominion, given him by God, in Psalm 8.

Marriage and multiplication continued to be an important aspect of God's covenant with Israel. God had previously promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their descendents would be as the stars of heaven and the sand of the seashore (Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 28:14; 32:12). Later generations received the same promise (Jer. 33:22; cf., Jer. 31:36; Hos. 1:10). The idea of a promised singular seed who would come and reverse the work of Satan and be a blessing to the world has already been examined (Gen. 3:15; 12:2-3; 15:5). The Davidic administration develops this idea further.

Israel was to hold marriage in high esteem. Sexual sin and temptation were vigorously condemned (2 Sam. 11-12; Prov. 2:10-22; 5; 7:20-35; Hos. 1-3). The men of Israel were rebuked for marrying outside of the covenant people and transgressing their marriage covenant (Ezra 10; Mal. 2:13-16); God exclaiming, "I hate divorce" (Mal. 2:16). God described His relationship to Israel as a marriage (Ezek. 16:8-14; Hos. 1-3) and Israel's unfaithfulness was as harlotry and adultery (Isa. 57:3; Jer. 3:8; 9:2; Ezek. 16:15-43; Hos. 1-3).

³⁴³ Because this relates especially to the Davidic administration of the Covenant of Grace, this aspect of dominion will be discussed below.

Finally, the Sabbath is, throughout the Old Testament, associated with God's covenant. The Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic covenant (Exo. 31:12-17). It had redemptive significance and was to be celebrated as a memorial of God redeeming Israel from Egypt (Deut. 5:15). In this respect, the various feasts and holy days of Israel's calendar—types and shadows of Christ—were associated with the Sabbath. The religious festivals had within them days called Sabbaths, described as "a Sabbath of complete rest" (Lev. 16:31; 23:24, 32, 39; 25:4) or "a holy convocation" (Lev. 23:7-8, 21, 24, 27, 35-36; Num. 28:18, 25, 26; 29:1, 7, 12). Both of these descriptions were used of the seventh day Sabbath (Lev. 23:3).

Israel's profaning of the Sabbath was one of the chief reasons they went into exile (Lev. 26:2, 27-35; 2 Chr. 36:15-21; Neh. 13:18; Jer. 17:19-27; 25:1-11; cf., Amos 8:5). Thus, the Sabbath was guarded and restored after the return from exile (Neh. 13:15-22; Isa. 66:23). If the people would only properly honor God by honoring His Sabbath, He would pour out His blessings upon them:

If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure and speaking your own word, then you will take delight in the LORD, And I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken (Isa. 58:13-14; cf. Isa. 56:1-8).

Accordingly, the Sabbath had tremendous significance in its relation to God's work of redemption.

Davidic Administration

God had previously promised a king (Deut. 17:14-15; 28:36; cf., Gen. 49:8-12) and had given legislation concerning the king (Deut. 17:16-20). In part, the Book of Judges may very well be the author's apologetic for a king.³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, God's covenant with David added to the people's understanding of God's redemptive plan and restoration of garden lifestyle. God would bring this about by raising up a king who would rule over and provide for His people "forever" (1 Chr. 17:12, 14). God's words to David are found in 2 Samuel 7:8-17 and 1 Chronicles 17:3-15.

The dominion promised and demanded of God's people is exercised in the reign of David and his seed (2 Sam. 7:11-13, 16; 1 Chr. 17:7, 10-14) and in the conquering of all Israel's enemies (2 Sam. 7:9-11; 1 Chr. 17:8-10). Ultimately, the "seed"³⁴⁵ of David fulfills Israel's purpose in multiplication. This coming masculine seed hearkens back to the "seed of the woman" (Gen.

³⁴⁴ Note the recurring phrase, "In those days there was no king in Israel" (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). For a short discussion concerning the political overtones in the Book of Judges, see Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 120-123, 127.

³⁴⁵ The New American Standard Bible translates *נְרִיעָם* as "descendants" throughout 2 Samuel 7:8-17 and 1 Chronicles 17:3-15.

3:15) and the seed of Abraham (Gen. 15; 17). Yahweh promised that He would "establish his throne forever" (2 Chr. 17:12, cf., v. 14). No mere human king who would bring about the redemption of God's people and the restoration of garden lifestyle—this King would reign forever. David himself confirmed this interpretation of God's promise in the second Psalm. Psalm 2 speaks of the Messiah, the "son" of God (Psa. 2:7), Who would rule the nations. This Messiah would also receive worship from His subjects.³⁴⁶ As God alone is to receive worship (Exo. 20:1-6; Deut. 6:13; Psa. 81:9), David was writing of one Who transcended humanity. Finally, the placement of God's people within the land of Canaan was a picture of Sabbath rest. God described Israel conquering her enemies as giving the people "rest" (2 Sam. 7:11)³⁴⁷

Summary

God's covenant with man consists of a relationship that God sovereignly establishes. God promises to be the God of His people and He requires faith and obedience from them. This faith and obedience is all embracing.

After the fall of Adam and Eve and the transgression of the original covenant, God entered into another covenant with man.

³⁴⁶ נִשְׁקִיבָר in Psa. 2:12 is translated, "Do homage to the Son," but literally reads, "kiss the son." 1 Kgs. 19:18 and Hos. 13:2 demonstrate that this expression refers to worship.

³⁴⁷ The familiar word נִיחַ is here again translated "rest."

This covenant has traditionally been called the Covenant of Grace. All the Old Testament administrations of this covenant worked toward the reestablishment of Garden lifestyle, which includes the carrying out and full realization of the creation ordinances. However, the crescendo of God's redemptive work is in the New Covenant to which attention is now turned.

CHAPTER 9

FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST: THE SUMMING UP OF ALL THINGS

The New Administration

Jesus Christ fulfills the Covenant of Grace. The prophet Jeremiah promised this covenantal administration (Jer. 31:31-34; cf., Heb. 8:8-12) and the blood of Jesus initiated it (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 12:24). Christ, the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), came and repaired the damage done in the Garden (Rom. 5:12-21) and has redeemed man body and soul (1 Cor. 15:42-57; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; cf. Mat. 10:28). In Christ, man has access to the Father (John 6:35-40, 44; 14:6; 17:3; Rom. 5:1, 6-11; 8:1; Eph. 2:18-19; 3:12; Heb. 4:16; 1 John 2:1-2) and the world (Prov. 1:7; Mat. 22:37; Rom. 4:13; 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16; Col. 2:3).³⁴⁸

The New Covenant constitutes a new administration of the Covenant of Grace. This is seen, in part, by the fact that the covenant promise is the same, "I will be their God and they shall be My people" (Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 6:16; Heb. 8:10; Rev. 21:3). Man's covenantal responsibilities, faith and obedience,

³⁴⁸ In Christ are hidden, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). Because of the redemption wrought by Christ, man is able to interact with the world around him, harnessing its resources to the glory of God and his own enjoyment.

are the same as well (John 3:36; Heb. 11:6; James 2; 1 John 2:3-6). In addition, Jesus Christ fulfills all of the creation ordinances—He restores garden lifestyle.³⁴⁹ He does this in at least two ways. First, He brings them to their proper goal—He accomplishes their required task. Second, He confirms the ordinances of creation by sanctifying their continued relevance for man.

Labor and Dominion

Jesus Christ fulfills the ordinance of labor and dominion. With the coming of Christ and His redemptive work at Calvary, a new dispensation began "suitable to the fullness of times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on the earth" (Eph. 1:10). Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father in heaven:

Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:21-22).

In this, Christ exercises absolute dominion over every created thing. He fulfills the mandate of labor and dominion by bringing it to its goal (Psa. 8; Heb. 2:5-8; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; Rev. 5:13; 6:2).

³⁴⁹ As was mentioned above (see p. 125-126), there is a past (John 19:30; 1 Cor. 15:1-11), present (Mat. 28:18-20; Rom. 6-8; 2 Cor. 5:16-21), and future or consummate (1 Cor. 15:12ff; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 21-22) aspect to the redemptive work of Christ.

Jesus Christ is the antitype of the Davidic king. He is the seed of David. He rules the universe seated upon the throne of David (Luke 1:33; Acts 2:33-36; 4:25-28; 13:33-37; 1 Cor. 15:25; Heb. 1:5; 5:5; Rev. 11:15; 19:15-16). From His throne, Jesus will exercise dominion in the judgment of all mankind (Rom. 2:1-11; 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15). There will come a day when, "At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:10-11).

Jesus' labor and dominion will be consummated with the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21-22). The language used to describe the new heavens and earth—as well as the holy city, Jerusalem—is purposefully reminiscent of the Garden: God dwells in intimate communion with His people (Rev. 21:3; Gen. 2:15-17, 22; 3:8-9), there is no death (Rev. 21:4; Gen. 2:17), and all things are new (Rev. 21:5; Gen. 1:1, 31). Furthermore, the river of the water of life is there (Rev. 21:6; 22:1; Gen. 2:10-14), the city is full of costly and precious stones (Rev. 21:11, 19-20; Gen. 2:11-12), the sun and the moon are mentioned (Rev. 21:23; Gen. 1:14-18), and it is full of light (21:23-24; 22:5; Gen. 1:3-5, 17-18). The tree of life is there (Rev. 22:2, 14; Gen. 2:9; 3:22), there is no curse (Rev. 22:3; Gen. 2:17; 3:14-19), and man will serve

God as His vice-regent (Rev. 22:3, 5; Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15).
Jesus Christ restores garden lifestyle!

The Savior, as man, has sanctified man's work (Jn. 17:19; Acts 20:32; 26:18; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Tim. 4:4-5; Heb. 2:11; etc.) and thus, man is able to participate in His dominion. In Christ, God's elect are more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37), their work has relevance and purpose (Mat. 22:37; Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 10:5; Eph. 4:28; 1 Thes. 1:2-3; 4:11; 2 Thes. 3:6-13; Heb. 6:10; Rev. 5:10; 20:6), and they participate in the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-20). According to Kenneth Gentry:

Both the Creation and New Creation Mandates are designed for the subduing of the earth to the glory of God. The Creation Mandate was to begin at Eden (Gen. 2:15) and gradually to extend throughout all the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). It was restated after the Great Flood (Gen. 9:1-7).

The New Creation Mandate [i.e., the Great Commission], which supplements, undergirds, and restores man ethically to the righteous task of the Creation Mandate, was to begin in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47) and gradually to extend throughout the world (Matt. 28:19).³⁵⁰

In the Great Commission, man is recommissioned to his creative task with the additional element of redemption. Christ uses the message preached (1 Cor. 1:21) to bring the world into submission. Finally, man will reign with Christ in the new heavens and earth (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 22:5).

³⁵⁰ Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World*, rev. ed. (Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990, 1993), 13.

Marriage and Multiplication

Jesus Christ fulfills the ordinance of marriage and multiplication. Marriage is held in high esteem throughout all the administrations of the Covenant of Grace (Exo. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; Ezra 10; Ezek. 16:8-14; Hos. 1-3; Mal. 2:13-16; Mat. 5:27-30; 19:3-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-40; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Thes. 4-8; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:4) and this is rooted in the creation ordinance (Mat. 19:4-5). Marriage is highly valued because the intimacy and purity of marriage picture Christ's relationship—His union and communion—with the Church (Eph. 5:22-32). Christ's love for the Church is described as that of a bridegroom for his bride (Mat. 9:15; 25:1-13; Luke 5:34-35; Eph. 5:23-24, 28-32; Rev. 19:7-9). The Church's disobedience to Christ is portrayed as infidelity (Mat. 12:39; 16:4; Mark 8:38; 2 Cor. 4:2; Rev. 2:4; cf., Jer. 2:2; Rev. 2:20-23). At the final consummation, in the new heavens and new earth, the church remains the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2, 9-10; 22:17).

In fulfillment of the creation ordinance to "multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28), the Church is made up of a multitude of people from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9; 14:6-7; 7:9-10; 19:1-6). This multitude consists of those who have been redeemed by Christ (Rev. 5:9; 19:1). These are the children of God (John 1:12; 11:52; Rom.

8:16; 9:8; Phil. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:1-2, 10)³⁵¹ and the sons of God (Mat. 5:9; Luke 20:36; Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26).³⁵² This relationship continues in the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:7).

Christ Himself is the end or goal of multiplication. He is the seed of the woman (Luke 3:23-38; Rom. 16:20; Rev. 12). He is the seed of Abraham (Luke 3:23-38; Gal. 3:16) and, in Christ, Christians are Abraham's seed (Gal. 3:29). He is also the seed of David (Luke 3:23-38; Acts 2:29-31; 4:25-28; Rom. 1:3; Heb. 1:5; 5:5; Rev. 5:5; 22:16). Related to this, the people of God are accounted as His children (Isa. 9:6; 53:10; Mat. 23:37; Luke 13:34).

Christ has sanctified the institution of marriage and the subsequent raising of children. Hence, man finds fulfillment in these endeavors. As mentioned above, the husband-wife relationship ought to mirror that of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22-33; cf., Col. 3:18-19). Christian parents are to raise a godly seed (Mal. 2:15; Eph 6:1-4; cf., Col. 3:20-21). The Great Commission applies here as well. Christians will have spiritual offspring as they labor in obedience to Christ. They must also be actively discipling their own children (Deut. 6; Eph. 6:1-4;

³⁵¹ In 1 Jn. 3:10, the God ordained enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman is seen to still exist.

³⁵² The doctrine of adoption communicates this same truth (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5).

Col. 3:20-21). Gentry's insights are helpful, "Too few Christian parents have implemented basic biblical principles for family living; fewer still recognize the principles applicable to the family that may be drawn from the Great Commission."³⁵³ Gentry believes the following principles to be applicable: "Regular, content-oriented family devotions"; "Involved child rearing and discipline"; "Teaching the value of labor"; "Teaching the value of money"; "Providing an inheritance"; "Formal Christian education"; "Developing a home library and reading program"; and "Neighborhood Bible studies on relevant issues."³⁵⁴

The Sabbath

Jesus Christ fulfills the Sabbath ordinance. Christ is "Lord of the Sabbath" (Mat. 12:8; Mark 2:28; Luke 6:5; cf., John 5:17-18) and as such determines its relevance. Jesus taught that the Sabbath began at creation (Mark 2:27), and expects its future observance (Mat. 24:20). This explains the significant amount of teaching concerning the Sabbath preserved in the Gospels. According to Jesus, "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Mat. 12:12; Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9). This includes works of mercy (Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 5:1-16), necessity (Mat. 12:1-4; Luke 6:1-4), and worship (Mat. 12:5;

³⁵³ Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Greatness of the Great Commission*, 120.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 121-126.

Mark 6:2; Luke 4:16ff; 4:31ff; 6:6; 13:10; John 7:22-23; 9:1-16).

Jesus provides the rest pictured by the Sabbath. He taught His listeners that if they were to know the Father, He must reveal Him (Mat. 11:27); therefore:

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you **rest**. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find **rest** for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Emphasis mine; Mat. 11:28-30).

Salvation in Christ (John 17:3) is the anti-type of the rest pictured by the Sabbath.

The author of Hebrews reached this same conclusion, teaching that Jesus provides Sabbath rest for His people. The development of this theme is found in Hebrews 3:1-4:11. The author begins by identifying Jesus as the "Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Heb. 3:1). The believer is united to Christ as a member of His "house . . . if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (Heb. 3:6). The author then quotes from Psalm 95, describing this situation as entering His "rest" (Heb. 3:11). The believer is warned to persevere, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12), the covenant obligation of faith and obedience remains (Heb. 3:18-19).

Chapter 4 opens with the same call to perseverance, "Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it" (Heb. 4:1). The "good news" severed from faith does not "profit" (Heb. 4:2). Only those who have faith "enter that rest" (Heb. 4:3).

There is an eschatological nature to the rest, a now and not yet. By faith one can immediately enter God's rest: "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 3:7-8; 3:15; 4:7); "For we have become partakers of Christ" (Heb. 3:14); and "we who have believed enter that rest" (Heb. 4:3). On the other hand, there is a future aspect to the rest. One must "hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end" (Heb. 3:14; cf., 3:6).³⁵⁵ Commenting on chapter 4, verse 3, Simon Kistemaker wrote:

[The author] does not use the future tense ("we will enter"). He says, "We who have believed enter," and thus affirms that God's promise has become reality according to his divine plan and purpose. At the moment—in principle but not yet in full realization—we are entering that rest. As long as we keep our eyes fixed on "Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12:2), we enjoy the rest God has promised, and eventually we shall be with him eternally.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁵ According to Joseph A. Pipa, "This tension between the present and future nature of salvation gives rise to the theme of the book, an exhortation to the Jewish Christians to persevere" (*The Lord's Day* [Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1997], 113).

³⁵⁶ Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 107.

The author connects the promised "rest" to God's Sabbath rest at creation. God's "works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb. 4:3) and, "He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: 'And God rested on the seventh day from all His works'" (Heb. 4:4). Therefore, there is rest available "today" (Heb. 4:7). However, there remains a non-earthly character to this rest, "If Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that" (Heb. 4:8).³⁵⁷ "So,"³⁵⁸ the author continues, "There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9). Here, the author uses a completely different Greek word to describe this rest—it is a "Sabbath rest."³⁵⁹ The weekly celebration of the Sabbath day pictures and memorializes this rest. Hence, the author grounds the Sabbath in creation (Exo. 20:11; Heb. 4:3-4) as well as redemption (Deut. 5:15; Heb. 3:1-6).

Christ's work of salvation is complete, "He has rested from His work" (Heb. 4:10). He has secured the true Sabbath rest for the people of God and He brings them into that rest. Moreover,

³⁵⁷ Commenting on Hebrews 4:8, Philip Edgcumbe Hughes wrote, "What our author is saying is that God's promise of rest did not and does not have a merely earthly fulfillment, but is rather eschatological in purport, and therefore still awaits the people of God in all its fullness" (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977], 160).

³⁵⁸ The Greek ἄρα indicates that the author is concluding his argument.

³⁵⁹ Prior to this point in the passage, the Greek words used were κατάπαυσις (noun) and καταπαύω (verb); in verse 9 the Greek word is σαββατισμός. For more on the meaning of this word, see chapter 10 below. For now, note the obvious connection to the Greek word σάββατον meaning "Sabbath."

verse 10 confirms that God's people continue to have the covenant responsibility of faith and obedience, only those who, by faith, are in Christ enter this rest.

The meaning of Heb. 4:10 has often been obscured. Christ is the subject of that verse; He is the "one who has entered His rest" because His work is complete. At least three reasons point to this interpretation. First, the author's argument began in the first verse of chapter 3 by reminding the reader that Christ is the "Apostle and High Priest of our confession." He is the one who has performed the *work* of salvation. Second, verse 10 compares and equates the work of the "one who has entered His rest" with the work of "God." As God created "in the beginning" (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 4:3-4), so Christ recreated in the work of redemption (Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17; Heb. 3:1-2). Third, the change in pronoun (from plural to singular) indicates a different subject.³⁶⁰ All of this leads to the conclusion that the author refers to Jesus.³⁶¹

Both the creational (Exo. 20:11) and salvific (Deut. 5:15) aspects pictured by the Sabbath find fulfillment in Christ. Like the creation ordinances of labor and dominion and marriage

³⁶⁰ When referring to a believer entering God's "rest," the author uses the plural (cf. Heb. 4:1, 3, 11; cf., 4:6, 8); here, the singular is conspicuously used. I realize that in 4:1, the singular $\tau\upsilon\varsigma$ is used, but it must be taken with the rest of the phrase $\epsilon\grave{\xi}\ \upsilon\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$ which is plural.

³⁶¹ With minor differences, John Owen put forth these arguments. *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 20, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews: Hebrews 3:7-5:14*, ed. William H. Goold [CD-ROM] (Rio: The Ages Digital Library, The Works of John Owen, 2000), 411-417.

and multiplication, the Sabbath has reached its goal in Christ.³⁶²

Summary

From the beginning, the creation ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath have been a consistent part of God's covenant dealings with man. God requires His people to obey these ordinances. God's gracious covenants are all embracing, blessing all areas of life and demanding action and obedience in all areas as well.

Therefore, the redemption wrought by Christ, reparation for Adam's fall, is all embracing. Christ did what man is incapable of doing. He fulfilled all the requirements of the covenant on man's behalf. As such, He is the goal and end of all the creation ordinances—they point to Him and are fulfilled in His work of redemption.

By His accomplished work on the cross, Christ has sanctified the continued observance of all the creation ordinances. In Christ, man can faithfully carry out his duties with respect to these ordinances of creation. Finally, each of the creation ordinances is vital for fulfilling the Great Commission.

³⁶² As to man's continued responsibility in "Remember[ing] the Sabbath" (Exo. 20:8), see chapter 10 below.

PART IV
APPLICATION

CHAPTER 10

APPLICATION TO THE CHURCH TODAY

God's covenant with man is all embracing. No area of life falls outside the authority of Jesus Christ. Man lives his life and conducts his affairs as a covenant keeper or a covenant breaker. The creation ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath reflect this all encompassing character of the covenant.

Adherence to these mandates has been a requirement of every dispensation and covenantal union between God and man since the first covenant in Paradise. These ordinances continue to be binding on man today. As the Church labors to fulfill the Great Commission, she must do so by applying the creation ordinances to herself and to culture. In so doing she will fulfill the original creation mandate (Gen. 1:26, 28; 2:1-3) as well as the re-creation mandate (Mat. 28:18-20).

The Knowability of Creation Ordinances

The Introduction to this work referred to a question posed by Albert Wolters concerning the "knowability of creational ordinances."³⁶³ If the creation ordinances are binding upon man, how can one accurately identify them? In response to this question, this work has suggested a three-pronged key. Creation ordinances are decretive in nature, ordering the world. They constitute moral imperatives that appear in the Decalogue. Finally, they are tied to God's covenant with man and are fulfilled in Christ.

This key to identifying the creation ordinances implicitly recognizes that there are hindrances to accurately identifying them. Fallen man is unwilling to recognize these ordinances and he attempts to render himself unable (Rom. 1:18-23). Man is a covenant breaker and he continues to hide from God (Gen. 3:8-10). Therefore, the second prong of the key suggests the need for divine special revelation. Although natural revelation still testifies to and proclaims the ordinances of creation (Psa. 19:1-4), Scripture is necessary to bring them into focus.

³⁶³ Albert M. Wolters, "Creation Order: A Historical Look at our Heritage," 60. See page 5 above.

Covenant Theology

The creation ordinances are an intricate part of all of God's covenantal dealings with man. One implication of this is a proper framework for the interpretation of Scripture.

The Debate Rages

There is no shortage of books today debating the propriety of Covenant Theology over against Dispensationalism (or vice versa).³⁶⁴ Christian charity has not always marked this debate. Charles Ryrie bemoaned that, "The opposition to dispensational teaching has come from many quarters, and the attacks have been quite varied in their intensity."³⁶⁵ In light of this, Vern Poythress began his work with a plea for dialogue:

Numerous books have been written in an attempt to show that Dispensationalism is either right or wrong. Those books have their place. . . . In this book, however, I intend to take a different approach, exploring the ways that can be found to have profitable dialogue and to advance our understanding.³⁶⁶

It is hoped that this work has added to the dialogue. The fact that the creation ordinances are an important part of God's gracious relationship with man and are fulfilled in Christ

³⁶⁴ A few examples are Richard P. Belcher, *A Comparison of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology* (Southbridge: Crowne Publications Inc., 1986); Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1987, 1994); and Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, revised and expanded (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995).

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁶⁶ Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, 7.

displays continuity in Scripture that argues for the covenantal framework. Ryrie's contention that, "The theological covenants on which covenant theology is based are not specifically revealed in Scripture. . . . The all-embracing covenants of covenant theology are not in the Bible,"³⁶⁷ is simply untenable.

God's Covenant of Grace flows throughout all of Scripture. A common promise and a common responsibility, which includes adherence to the creation ordinances, reveal the unity of this covenant. Christ's work of redemption has secured the promise and fulfilled man's responsibility by bringing the creation ordinances to their proper goal.

A Full-Orbed Understanding

A proper understanding of the covenant, how it functions throughout Scripture, and its unifying character is *absolutely foundational and indispensable* to a correct interpretation of the Bible. Recognizing the place that the creation ordinances hold within the covenant is necessary for one to have a full-orbed understanding of God's covenantal requirements of man.

Salvation in Christ, man's responsibility of faith and obedience, and man's duty to his neighbor is all embracing. No endeavor falls outside of the mandates of creation or the authority of Christ. Neither the creation mandate nor the new

³⁶⁷ Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 193.

creation mandate is merely spiritual in nature. According to the Apostle Paul, "every thought" must be taken "captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). This includes thoughts at home, at work, and at church. Since a man's thoughts will regulate his actions (Pro. 4:4, 23; 10:8; 15:28; 20:5; etc.), his actions should self-consciously be obedient to God regardless of what he does—there is no justified secular-sacred dichotomy.

The idea that the Church's job is solely to rescue passengers from a sinking ship is not in accord with her covenantal responsibilities. The Church must work to save the ship! Regardless of an individual's calling or station in life, for the believer, it is evangelical in nature. The Church's responsibility is great and all consuming, and God is faithful "to bring it to pass" (1 Thes. 5:24).

Ethics

Because Christ's work of redemption has fulfilled the creation ordinances, bringing them to their proper goal, man's endeavors (in Christ) have been sanctified. Man can, profitably and enjoyably, bring culture captive to Christ.

The Decalogue

Sadly, the Law/Gospel debate continues to rage. There is an abundance of books dealing with the topic.³⁶⁸ Many today would argue similarly to Wayne Strickland, who wrote:

The regulatory aspect of the law, binding on the Mosaic believer, dealt with sanctification and not justification, and it has been terminated with regard to the regulatory aspect. As with Paul, the church-age believer may rejoice that "now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law" (Ga. 3:25).³⁶⁹

Others would save nine out of the ten commandments, arguing, like John Reisinger, the belief in "both moral law *per se* and specifically the enduring moral principles of nine of the ten commandments written on the Tablets of the Covenant."³⁷⁰ Reisinger excises the fourth commandment from the Decalogue.

The appearance of the creation ordinances throughout the Decalogue³⁷¹ bolsters the position that the *Ten Commandments* continue as "a perfect rule of righteousness."³⁷² The one-to-one correspondence between the fourth commandment and the creation

³⁶⁸ Three examples are Ernest C. Reisinger, *The Law and the Gospel* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1997); John G. Reisinger, *Tablets of Stone* (Southbridge: Crowne Publications, Inc., 1989); and Wayne G. Strickland, ed., *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993, 1996).

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 279. That Strickland includes the moral law (the Decalogue) in this statement is seen on pp. 260-261 and 271.

³⁷⁰ John Reisinger, *Tablets of Stone*, 79.

³⁷¹ With the exception of the fourth commandment, we have not argued for a one-to-one correspondence, but a principial correspondence. The entirety of the Decalogue explicates the creation ordinances.

³⁷² *WCF* 19.2.

ordinance of Sabbath argues for "the enduring moral principle" of remembering the Sabbath. As will be argued below, an accurate understanding of the place and function of the creation ordinances will contribute to a proper understanding of the obligation and application of the fourth commandment.

The Creation Ordinances

As to the application of the individual creation ordinances, much has already been said.³⁷³ Indeed, much more could be said than space will allow. However, a few more points of application are in order.

Labor and Dominion

Man is a creature who bears the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28). Intimately connected to this image are both the deep-seated desire and the duty of labor and dominion. The desire to work and succeed at something is universal among human cultures.

Dr. Kathleen Berger wrote:

Like the desire for intimacy, the motivation to achieve—or the drive to be generative—is a powerful theme in adulthood. The observable expression of this motive varies a great deal. . . .

Every adult needs to feel successful at something that makes his or her life seem productive and meaningful. That much is universal. However, adults meet this need for achievement in many ways.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ See chapters seven, eight, and nine.

³⁷⁴ Kathleen S. Berger, *The Developing Person Through the Life Span*, 5th ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2001) 528.

Nevertheless, sin has affected this part of man's nature as it has the rest of his being. Thus, Scripture warns against laziness and continually instructs man to work (Prov. 19:15; Mat. 25:26; 1 Thes. 4:11; 2 Thes. 3:10-12; etc.). Christians should strive for dominion in all fields of labor (e.g., industry, science, medicine, law, engineering, etc.). Each of these areas should be considered as fields "white for harvest" (John 4:35; cf. Mat. 9:36-38); these are all endeavors that must be brought under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The Church, armed with a proper understanding of the all-encompassing demands of the covenant, must rid herself of any remaining secular-sacred dichotomy.

Toward this goal, Christian parents must take seriously the command of their Lord to raise their children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4; cf. Deut. 6). A Christian education must be a top priority and sacrifices must be made, as necessary, to accomplish this endeavor. Those in the various fields of industry ought to consider apprenticeships for younger saints. Subjects such as recreation and retirement need to be reexamined in terms of the Christian worldview.

The Sabbath is held in low esteem even among Christians. One reason may likely be that, due to a neglect of the labor mandate, Christians are simply not tired. This must be corrected. Labor is both a blessing and a gift from God. In

pursuing his God ordained task of labor and dominion, man can, as Richard Pratt wrote, "Reach heights of dignity because we represent the authority of the king of the universe."³⁷⁵

Marriage and Multiplication

Jesus made clear that the creation ordinance of marriage does not demand that all men and women are to be married (Mat. 19:10-12; cf. 1 Cor. 7:1-9). However, most will move toward the natural state of matrimony. Once a person is married, the creation ordinance and special revelation govern that relationship. Dr. John Cavanaugh writing about singlehood observed that:

Surprisingly, information about single people is very scarce. . . . Few scientific data are available. Perhaps the lack of research is due to the fact that relatively few adults never marry, so singlehood is treated as a transient state of little inherent interest.³⁷⁶

Writing about the psychosocial development of early adulthood, Dr. Kathleen Berger commented on Erick Erikson's³⁷⁷ theory concerning the almost universal drive of men and women to get married:

Perhaps the clearest statement from a development perspective comes from Erik Erikson, who wrote of intimacy and generativity. To be specific, Erikson maintains that after

³⁷⁵ Richard L. Pratt, Jr., *Designed for Dignity: What God Has Made it Possible for You to Be* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1993), 24.

³⁷⁶ John C. Cavanaugh, *Adult Development and Aging*, 3rd ed. (Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1997), 369.

³⁷⁷ Erick Homburger Erikson (1902-1994) was a German-born American psychoanalyst and is famous for his work in childhood development and the eight stages of psychosocial development.

resolving the adolescent identity crises, young adults next confront **intimacy versus isolation**. This arises from the powerful drive to share one's personal life with someone else, a drive that, if unfulfilled, carries the risk of profound aloneness.³⁷⁸

The fact that man has within him the drive to marry and have children reflects the ordinances of creation. In light of the ordinance of marriage and multiplication, the following facts gathered by the Barna Group are alarming. According to recent Barna research, in the year 2000 only 85% of born again Christians thought it desirable to have one marriage partner for life; only 66% thought "having a satisfying sex life with [a] marriage partner" desirable; and only 60% of born agains listed "having children" as a top priority.³⁷⁹ In light of the decretive and constitutional nature of the creation ordinances, one could rightly argue that this is contrary to the "natural function" (Rom. 1:26).

God's promise to Abraham was that "in you, all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). God works covenantally through families. Sadly, it would seem that many Christians no longer look at the family in terms of the

³⁷⁸ Kathleen S. Berger, *The Developing Person*, 511.

³⁷⁹ "Americans Identify What They Want Out of Life," *The Barna Update*, April 26, 2000 (Barna Research Group of Ventura, CA). Available [Online]: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=57> [20 June 2004]. Born again Christians were defined as, "People who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and who then indicated they believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their savior."

Christian worldview. Children are considered as too much work and hindrances to happiness. This is not the biblical picture. Children are a blessing of God (Gen. 33:5; 48:4; Deut. 7:12-13 Psa. 37:26; 113:9; 127:3-5; 128; etc.) and one of the ways that the Great Commission is fulfilled is by a godly offspring (Exo. 20:4-6; Deut. 6; Isa. 53:10; Mal. 2:12; Eph. 6:1-4; etc.).³⁸⁰

Parents must discipline their children in a biblical manner. It is barely understandable why secular authorities consider spanking to be a great evil. However, in light of scriptural passages such as Prov. 13:24; 22:6, 15; 23:13, 14; and 29:15, it is shameful that Christian parents do not discipline in love.

Finally, the Church must recognize the sanctity of the marriage bond. According to another Barna study, Christians are "just as likely to divorce" as non-Christians. A survey conducted in 2001 showed that 33% of born again Christians over against 34% of non-Christians have been divorced.³⁸¹ This is horrific! Marriage is reflective of the love of Christ for His Church (Eph. 5:22-33), it is for life (Mat. 19:3-9), and God

³⁸⁰ This is not to argue that the creation ordinance demands having as many children as is physically possible. Nor is it to say that all married couples must have children. There are other issues to take into account (e.g., one's specific calling, stewardship, etc.), but the norm is still marriage and children. The lack of Christian desire in this area is disheartening.

³⁸¹ "Born Again Adults Less Likely to Co-Habit, Just as Likely to Divorce," *The Barna Update*, August 6, 2000 (Barna Research Group of Ventura, CA). Available [Online]: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=95> [20 June 2004].

"hate[s] divorce" (Mal. 2:16). Christians have the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-13), have been redeemed unto sanctification (1 Thes. 4:3-8), and are to be a forgiving people (Mat. 6:12). These facts do not and should not comport with the above figures.³⁸²

Sabbath

As part of the Great Commission, the believer must bring the good news concerning the Sabbath to his neighbors.³⁸³ The Church must come to a general unified understanding of how Christians ought to remember the Sabbath.

Christians do not agree as to whether or not the fourth commandment has continuing moral relevance. Those who believe the Sabbath commandment to be binding do not agree on which particular day constitutes the Sabbath or if it should be limited to only one day. Finally, the Church needs to reach consensus on the general duties of Sabbath celebration.

³⁸² Another significant issue that must be addressed by the modern Church is the issue of same sex couples. Sadly, many Christians are compromising in this area. A good resource concerning this issue is James R. White and Jeffrey D. Niell, *The Same Sex Controversy: Defending and Clarifying the Bible's Message About Homosexuality* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2002).

³⁸³ This work argues for the Sabbath from a positive perspective and does not explicitly address the negative arguments against continued Sabbath observance. Nevertheless, answers to the common objections are found throughout this presentation. For a good example of one who presents the negative arguments first and then responds to them, see Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Westminster and the Sabbath" in *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century*, vol. 1, *Essays in Remembrance of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly*, ed. J. Ligon Duncan, III (Scotland: Mentor, 2003), 123-144.

This study on the creation ordinances may very well have the greatest impact upon the question of the Sabbath. Most arguments concerning the Sabbath begin by asking if it constitutes a creation ordinance.³⁸⁴ Those who answer in the affirmative typically hold to the view that the fourth commandment, designating one day in seven for rest and worship, is binding.³⁸⁵ It has been demonstrated that the Sabbath follows the exact same pattern of institution, covenant significance, and eschatological fulfillment as do the creation ordinances of labor and dominion and marriage and multiplication. Hence, the Sabbath is an ordinance of creation with continuing and morally binding significance.

As a creation ordinance, the Sabbath appears in the Decalogue. Unlike the other creation ordinances, the Sabbath has a one-to-one correspondence with a particular commandment of the Decalogue—the fourth commandment. In fact, Moses quotes the creation ordinance as the basis for the Sinai Sabbath (Gen. 2:3; Exo. 20:11). In addition to this, there is the teaching of

³⁸⁴ See pp. 86-87.

³⁸⁵ There may be an exception to this, but I have not come across one. The recognition or denial of the Sabbath as a creation ordinance seems to be definitive in terms of its binding significance during the New Covenant era. See Richard P. Belcher and Richard P. Belcher, Jr., *A Layman's Guide to the Sabbath Question*, 81-83, 121-122; D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982); and Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Westminster and the Sabbath," 123-144.

Jesus that He is Lord of the Sabbath (Mat. 12:8)³⁸⁶ and that it was created, not merely for a Jewish dispensation, but for mankind (Mark 2:27).³⁸⁷ He also had the expectation of future Sabbath keeping (Mat. 24:20) and the Gospels preserve an abundance of His teaching concerning Sabbath observance.³⁸⁸

As to the particular day, the first day of the week, or Sunday, is the Christian Sabbath. The following reasons lead to this conclusion.

1. The Old Testament anticipated a first day Sabbath in its eighth day Sabbath celebrations (Lev. 23:36, 39; Num. 29:35; Neh. 8:18). There were other significant eighth day events as well (Lev. 14:1, 23; 15:14, 29; 23:9-14, 15-21; 2 Chr. 7:9;

³⁸⁶ The Greek phrase is κύριος γάρ ἐστίν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. The use of the present tense (ἐστίν) here is significant. Its placement near the beginning of the sentence and the fact that the Gospels were written to instruct the Church indicate that Jesus continues to be Lord of the Sabbath in His Kingdom reign.

³⁸⁷ Again, the Greek is significant here. The Greek word translated "man" is ἄνθρωπος which is the generic word for man. It makes no specific reference to the Jew; The Sabbath was made for mankind.

³⁸⁸ See p. 147-148. I recognize that not everyone would interpret Matthew 24:20 as referring to the Christian Sabbath. Note, for example, D. A. Carson's terse comment on this passage, "Jesus clearly expects these events to take place while the strict Sabbath law is in effect" ("Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, *Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984], 501). Reasons for understanding a Christian Sabbath are: 1) Jesus is talking to His disciples; 2) historically (in 70 A.D.) it was the Christians who heeded this instruction; 3) the instructions are preserved in a book (written to the Church) that has much to say about proper Sabbath observance; and 4) there is no good reason to think that Christians, departing in haste, would have been drastically hindered by the Jewish Sabbath. Hence, Matthew Henry recognized that, "This intimates Christ's design, that a weekly Sabbath should be observed in his church after the preaching of the gospel to all the world" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 5, *Matthew to John* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company), 355).

29:17; Ezek. 43:27). There were even unique first day celebrations (Lev. 23:23-25, 39; Num. 29:1-6; 2 Chr. 29:17). All of these eighth/first day celebrations foreshadowed a first day Sabbath.

2. One finds in the New Testament the first day set aside for religious worship. "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul *began* talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight" (Acts 20:7).³⁸⁹ In Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, he instructed them, as he did the churches of Galatia, to set aside their contribution on the "first day of every week" (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

3. Hebrews 4:9-10. In part, this passage has already been examined.³⁹⁰ It was concluded that the author of Hebrews teaches that both the creational (Exo. 20:11) and salvific (Deut. 5:15) aspects pictured by the Sabbath find fulfillment in Christ. However, this passage has further significance in relation to the identification of the New Covenant Sabbath day.

Two aspects point to a first-day Sabbath. First, the word "Sabbath rest" (v. 9) is a translation of the Greek *sabbatismos* (σαββατισμός). The very transliteration of this word makes obvious its connection with the word Sabbath (σάββατον). According to

³⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 10:16 demonstrates that the expression "break bread" refers to the Lord's Supper.

³⁹⁰ See pp. 149-153.

BAGD, it refers to "Sabbath rest" or "Sabbath Keeping."³⁹¹ Hebrews 4:9 is the only place that this word appears in Scripture. However, the verbal form (σαββατίζω) is found in the Septuagint and is used of keeping the Sabbath.³⁹² Although the overall context of Hebrews 3-4 speaks of an eschatological rest, the author chose a word here (or possibly coined it) that also refers to a weekly commemorative of the not yet eschatological hope.³⁹³ In other words, the word *sabbatismos* points to the continuation of the weekly Sabbath for the New Covenant believer.

Verse 10, which identifies the day in which Jesus entered his rest, is the second aspect pointing to a first-day Sabbath.³⁹⁴ The day coincides with his finished "works." Christ's work of humiliation was finished at the resurrection (Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:13; 12:2). Pipa well argued that:

³⁹¹ Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 739. Although σαββατισμός is a noun, the μος ending indicates action (A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research* [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934], 151).

³⁹² The Sabbath day - Exo. 16:30; 2 Mac. 6:6; the Day of Atonement - Lev. 23:32; the Sabbath of the land - Lev. 26:34-35; 2 Chr. 36:21.

³⁹³ It was shown above (p. 151) that the author makes a conspicuous change in his use of words, from κατάπαυσις (noun) and καταπαύω (verb) to σαββατισμός. If his only intent was to show a connection with the creation Sabbath, he could have simply used the word σάββατον. However, he doesn't, he uses a word that connotes ongoing action on the part of the believer. This fits the not yet aspect of the Sabbath rest.

³⁹⁴ Hebrews 4:10 speaks of Christ; see above pp. 152.

God the Son rested from His work of redemption on the first day of the week as a sign that His work had objectively been accomplished and nothing remained to be done. In the resurrection He entered into the joy of His work and confirmed that eternal life had been purchased (Isa. 53:10, 11; Heb. 12:2).³⁹⁵

That Jesus rose on the first day of the week is well attested in the Scriptures (Mat. 28:1ff; Mark 16:2ff; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19). The first day of the week is even marked by Jesus' second appearance (John 20:26).³⁹⁶

4. Finally, the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10) testifies to the fact the early Church did in fact give deference to a particular day without returning to the old types and shadows. This does not prove that it was the first day per se, but it does away with the notion that the observing of any special day belongs only to the old dispensation.

As to the particulars of Sabbath observance, there is more freedom here than many might allow. Hence, this is a very broad subject demanding a work of its own.³⁹⁷ Nevertheless, the tradi-

³⁹⁵ Joseph A. Pipa, *The Lord's Day*, 123.

³⁹⁶ Throughout the Bible the Sabbath is connected with creation (Gen. 1:1-2:3; Exo. 20:8-11; Heb. 3:1-2; 4:1-11) and the first day of the week (Lev. 23:36, 39; Num. 29:35; Heb. 4:9-10). The work of Christ is a work of re-creation (Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17) and was finished on the first day (Mat. 28:1ff; John 20:1, 19). In light of this, it seems relevant that although the first Sabbath was the seventh day for God (Gen. 1:2-3; Exo. 20:11), it would have been the *first* full day for Adam and Eve. The fact that fulfilled eschatology is a return to garden lifestyle (see chapter 9) makes this all the more significant.

³⁹⁷ A fine work dealing with this very subject is Bruce A. Ray, *Celebrating the Sabbath: Finding Rest in a Restless World* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2000).

tional words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism still stand as a good starting point:

The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercise of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.³⁹⁸

Basic Sabbath duties include acts of worship, necessity, and mercy. Attending worship service on Sunday is essential. In addition, hospitality (Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:10; Titus 1:8; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9) can accomplish all three of the Sabbath duties. Hospitality is an act of kindness (i.e., it is merciful). It is necessary to eat on the Sabbath and hospitality provides for that. The Sabbath is to be an entire day of worship—hospitality can include worship. There is and ought to be theological conversation that takes place around the table. Singing (psalms and hymns; cf. Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16-17), before and after the meal, is appropriate as well.

Summary

The intent of this chapter was to make application. The chapter identified several theological conclusions. First, a three-fold criterion for identifying creation ordinances has been established. Creation ordinances are decretive in nature; they constitute moral imperatives that appear in the Decalogue;

³⁹⁸ WSC 60.

and they have covenantal significance, which is fulfilled in Christ. Second, because of sinful man's refusal to heed natural revelation, special revelation is required to properly identify and apply the creation ordinances. Third, the existence and recognition of how creation ordinances function forces one to view Scripture through a covenantal structure. Finally, the relationship of the creation ordinances to God's gracious covenant with man reveals that man's duty before God embraces his every endeavor.

The ethical applications of this study are twofold. First, the moral authority of the Ten Commandments still applies to the life of the Christian. This is, in part, because of the abiding moral significance of the creation ordinances and their appearance in the Decalogue. Because the fourth commandment is grounded upon an ordinance of creation, it too is morally binding during the New Covenant era. Finally, the individual creation ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath were applied to various situations in the life of the believer. It was determined that the greatest impact of this study may well relate to the ongoing and abiding validity of one day in seven set apart unto God as the Sabbath—a day of worship and rest.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.

Psalm 103:19

Psalm 103 constitutes one of Israel's great songs of praise reflecting upon Yahweh's covenant faithfulness. God's throne is in the heavens where he orders and rules the universe for the sake of His covenant people.

This study has examined one particular aspect of God's ordered universe. The ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath were sovereignly established at creation as one aspect of God's relationship with man. From the beginning, man was constitutionally designed and sovereignly mandated to live his life in accord with these ordinances, to the glory of God and for his own fulfillment and happiness.

This unique group of mandates is referred to as "creation ordinances." Other terms have been used throughout history to refer to these divine ordinances, most notably the expression "natural law." This idea of a divinely ordered universe, in both the natural and ethical realms, has a long history in both

pagan and Christian thinking. This study has provided an historical, theological, and biblical survey of the concept of creation ordinances. It has demonstrated an evolution in the understanding and identification of these creation mandates.

Historical Survey

The cultures of the Ancient Near East (Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian) all recognized an order to creation. Though often hard to discern if this order was above or below the gods, it was nevertheless attributed to them. The early emphasis was on the natural realm, but soon a growing interest in justice and truth developed and these too were ascribed to the various deities worshiped.

This belief in a divinely ordered universe continued in the Greek and Roman cultures. In time, a secularized understanding of the cosmos came to the fore. This naturalistic view of reality culminated in the concept of an impersonal natural law. Whether in science, philosophy, or the concepts of justice and law, this law of nature supplied the foundation and order needed to make sense of the universe and society.

The phrase "natural law" was adopted by the early Christian Church to express the idea that the sovereign Triune God ordered every sphere of His creation—natural and moral. The Church rejected the idea of an impersonal natural law and instead infused

new meaning and emphasis into the concept. The early Christian authors began to emphasize the ethical sphere when using the expression "natural law" and equated it with the Decalogue.

One finds this idea of "natural law" clearly expressed in the writings of John Calvin. Calvin, however, highlighted fallen man's inability to read natural law correctly and, thus, the need for special revelation. In Calvin and the Westminster Confession of Faith, there is a growing recognition of a unique class of ordinances established at creation—labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath.

Theological Survey

The Dutch Neo-Calvinists Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck continued to teach that God sovereignly ordered every sphere of His creation. However, they exhibited a dislike of the term "natural law" and began, instead, to use the expression "creation ordinance(s)." Kuyper and Bavinck also recognized a smaller, unique class of ordinances given at creation.

Though Systematic Theologies do not treat the subject of creation ordinances as a unit, they (as did Calvin, Kuyper, and Bavinck) warn against relying on man's fallen ability to read natural revelation correctly. Works on Christian ethics, however, are wont to mention the unique ordinances of creation. Appeal is made to Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:1-3 for the identifica-

tion of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication and Sabbath as *the* creation ordinances. These ordinances supply the foundational underpinnings of all human morality and ethical choices. Whether or not the Sabbath is considered a creation ordinance has special relevance in the area of Christian ethics.

Biblical Identification

This study has endeavored to justify the identification of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication and Sabbath as creation ordinances. In this regard and with the historical and theological background in mind, a three-pronged definition for the recognition and identification of the creation ordinances has been proffered. First, creation ordinances are decrees of God ordering the world. Second, creation ordinances constitute moral imperatives that appear in the Decalogue. Finally, creation ordinances are tied to God's covenant with man and are fulfilled in the redemptive work of Christ.

The twofold structure of Gen. 1:1-2:3 reveals that the creation ordinances are decretive in nature. That God is the active subject throughout the entire creation account brings out the fact that the primary concern is with His sovereign, logical, and balanced work of creation. In other words, it is the action of the Creator, on behalf of the creation, that is at issue in the early chapters of Genesis.

The second structural element points to the same conclusion. The grammar of the passage dictates that God's verbal pronouncements in creation are authoritative and decretive in nature. God has sovereignly structured and designed His creation. Man has been mandated and *constitutionally designed* to function in accord with the creation ordinances.

Creation ordinances also have moral force and all appear in the Decalogue. Thus, their moral significance is normative and binding. Their recognition and enforcement existed among God's covenant people and the surrounding pagan cultures prior to Sinai. Their inclusion in God's Ten Words highlights their moral relevance. Of special import is the one-to-one correspondence between the creation ordinance of the Sabbath and the fourth commandment.

God's ongoing covenant relationship with man established the authority of the creation ordinances prior to Sinai. From the beginning, in Paradise, these mandates were required of man. God established a sovereign relationship with man, promising to be his God and demanding faith and obedience. This divine relationship, or covenant, is all embracing. After the first covenant—the Covenant of Works—was broken, God established a second—the Covenant of Grace—with Adam and Eve, requiring the same response on the part of man. Only this time God Himself, in the promised "seed of the woman" (Gen. 3:15), would fulfill

the demands of obedience. All of God's Old Testament administrations of this covenant worked toward the reestablishment of Garden lifestyle.

God's covenant with His people is all embracing, blessing all areas of life and demanding obedience in all areas as well. Thus, the redemption wrought by Christ is all embracing. Christ fulfills all the requirements of covenant obedience. By His accomplished work, Christ sanctified and confirmed the ordinances of creation. Man is enabled to carry out his duties to the glory of God and his own happiness. Therefore, the Church today must still heed God's demands found in the creation ordinances.

Cultural Significance

Obedience to the ordinances of labor and dominion, marriage and multiplication, and Sabbath contributes to accomplishing the Great Commission. Thus, the results of this study have theological and practical significance. Theologically, a proper identification and understanding of how the creation ordinances function contribute to a proper understanding of how divine revelation is structured. The Bible is a covenant document. The relationship of the creation ordinances to God's covenant dealings with man reveal that man's duty before God is all embracing.

The abiding moral significance of the ordinances of creation and their appearance in the Ten Commandments argue for the abiding moral authority of the Decalogue. The one-to-one correspondence between the Sabbath ordinance and the fourth commandment indicates that the setting aside of one day in seven for rest and worship is morally binding during the New Covenant era. God's people must continue to apply the ethics of creation as explicated further in the pages of Scripture. In the midst of today's moral relativism, Christians must maintain that the sovereign, Triune God is the only foundation for right behavior.

APPENDIX

TRANSLATION OF GENESIS 1:1-2:3

1:1. In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.

2. And the earth was a wasteland and waste, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of Elohim was hovering upon the face of the waters.

3. And Elohim said, "Let there be light!" and there was light.

4. And Elohim saw the light, that it was good; and Elohim made a separation between the light and between the darkness.

5. And Elohim called the light "day," and the darkness, He called "night;" and it was evening and it was morning, one day.

6. And Elohim said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters; and let it separate between the waters from the waters."

7. And Elohim made the expanse and He made a separation between the waters which were under the expanse, and between the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.

8. And Elohim called the expanse "heaven;" and it was evening and it was morning, a second day.

9. And Elohim said, "Let the waters from under the heaven be gathered to one place, and let the dry land appear;" and it was so.

10. And Elohim called the dry land "earth" and the gathered waters he called "seas;" and Elohim saw that it was good.

11. And Elohim said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation—green plants sowing seed, fruit trees producing fruit upon the earth according to their kind having seed in it;" and it was so.

12. And the earth produced vegetation—green plants sowing seed according to their kind, and trees producing fruit having seed in it according to their kind; and Elohim saw that it was good.

13. And it was evening and it was morning, a third day.

14. And Elohim said, "Let there be luminaries in the expanse of the heaven, to separate between the day and between the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.

15. And let them be for luminaries in the expanse of the heaven, to give light upon the earth;" and it was so.

16. And Elohim made the two great luminaries; the great luminary to rule the day and the smaller luminary to rule the night, also the stars.

17. And Elohim gave them in the expanse of the heaven to give light upon the earth.

18. And to rule over the day and the night, and to separate between the light and between the darkness; and Elohim saw that it was good.

19. And it was evening and it was morning, a fourth day.

20. And Elohim said, "Let the waters swarm with swarming creatures having the breath of life; and let birds fly over the earth upon the face of the expanse of the heaven."

21. And Elohim created the great sea monsters; and all the moving creatures having the breath of life with which the waters swarmed according to their kind, and all of the winged birds according to their kind, and Elohim saw that it was good.

22. And Elohim blessed them saying, "Be fruitful and be numerous, and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds be numerous upon the earth."

23. And it was evening and it was morning, a fifth day.

24. And Elohim said, "Let the earth bring forth creatures having the breath of life according to their kind, cattle and creeping things and animals of the earth according to their kind;" and it was so.

25. And Elohim made the animals of the earth according to their kind, and the cattle according to their kind, and all that which creeps upon the ground according to their kind; and Elohim saw that it was good.

26. And Elohim said, "Let us make man in our image according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven, and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over all the creeping things creeping upon the earth."

27. And Elohim created man in His image, in the image of Elohim He created him; male and female He created them.

28. And Elohim blessed them and He said to them, "Be fruitful and be numerous and fill the earth and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heaven, and over all life creeping upon the earth."

29. And Elohim said, "Behold, I have given to you all the green plants sowing seed which are upon the face of all the earth, and every tree which has within it fruit sowing seed; it will be food for you.

30. And for all the life of the earth and for all the birds of the heaven and for all that which creeps upon the earth which has the breath of life in it, [I have given] every green plant for food;" and it was so.

31. And Elohim saw all that He had made, and behold, it was exceedingly good; and it was evening and it was morning, a sixth day.

2:1. And the heavens and the earth were completed and all their host.

2. And Elohim finished on the seventh day His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

3. And Elohim blessed the seventh day, and He set it apart; for on it He rested from all his work, which Elohim had created and made.

WORKS CITED

- "Americans Identify What They Want Out of Life". *The Barna Update*, April 26, 2000. Barna Research Group of Ventura, CA. Available [Online]: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=57> [20 June 2004].
- Anselm. "Why God Became Man." *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*. Edited and Translated by Eugene R. Fairweather. The Library of Christian Classics: Ichthus Edition. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956. 100-183.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. 3 Volumes. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1947.
- Archelaus. "The Acts of the Disputation with the Heresiarch Manes." Translated by S. D. F. Salmond. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 6, *Fathers of the Third Century: Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius the Great, Julius Africanus, Anatolius and Minor Writers, Methodius, Arnobius*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978. 179-235.
- Arnold, Bill, and Bryan Beyer, eds. *Readings From the Ancient Near East: Primary Sources for Old Testament Study*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002.
- Assmann, Jan. *The Search for God in Ancient Egypt*. Translated by David Lorton. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Augustine. *The City of God*. Translated by Marcus Dods. Introduction by Thomas Merton. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.
- _____. *The Confessions*. Translated with an introduction and notes by John K. Ryan. New York: Doubleday, 1960.

- _____. "On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis: An Unfinished Book." Translated by Roland J. Teske. *The Fathers of the Church*. Vol. 84, *Saint Augustine on Genesis*. Edited by Thomas P. Halton. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991. 143-88.
- _____. "On the Psalms." Translated by Cleveland Coxe. *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Vol. 8, *Saint Augustine: Expositions on the Book of Psalms*. Edited by Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979. 1-683.
- _____. "On Two Souls, Against the Manichaeans." Translated by Albert H. Newman. *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Vol. 4, *St. Augustine: The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists*. Edited by Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979. 95-107.
- _____. "Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon." Translated by Richard Stothert. *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Vol. 4, *St. Augustine: The Writings Against the Manichaeans and Against the Donatists*. Edited by Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979. 155-345.
- _____. "Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament." Translated by R. G. Macmullen. *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. Vol. 6, *Augustine: Sermon on the Mount, Harmony of the Gospels, Homilies on the Gospels*. Edited by Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, .
- Barnes, Jonathan. "Hellenistic Philosophy and Science." *The Oxford History of the Classical World*. Edited by John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986. 365-385.
- Bartholomew, Craig G. "Covenant and Creation: Covenant Overload or Covenantal Deconstruction." *Calvin Theological Journal* 30 (1995): 11-33.
- _____. "Response to Al Wolters' Paper." *God's Order for Creation*. Edited by B. J. van der Walt. Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, 1994. 62-70.

- Bauer, Walter, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Bavinck, Herman. *The Doctrine of God*. Translated by William Hendriksen. Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977, 1979.
- _____. *In the Beginning: Foundations of Creation Theology*. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- _____. *Our Reasonable Faith: A Survey of Christian Doctrine*. Translated by Henry Zylstra. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956.
- Belcher, Richard P. *A Comparison of Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology*. Southbridge: Crowne Publications Inc., 1986.
- Belcher, Richard P., and Richard P. Belcher, Jr. *A Layman's Guide to the Sabbath Question*. Southbridge: Crowne Publications, Inc., 1991.
- Berger, Kathleen Stassen. *The Developing Person: Through the Life Span*. 5th ed. New York: Worth Publishers, 1983, 2001.
- Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939, 1941.
- "Born Again Adults Less Likely to Co-Habit, Just as Likely to Divorce". *The Barna Update*, August 6, 2001. Barna Research Group of Ventura, CA. Available [Online]: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=95> [20 June 2004].
- Budge, E. A. Wallis, ed. *The Book of the Dead: The Hieroglyphic Transcript of the Papyrus of ANI, the Translation into English and an Introduction*. New Hyde Park: University Books, 1960.
- Bunson, Margaret. *A Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

- Calvin, John. *Calvin's Commentaries*. Vol. 19, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*. Translated and Edited by John Owen. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989.
- _____. *Calvin's Commentaries*. Vol. 1, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. Translated by John King. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989.
- _____. *The Covenant Enforced: Sermons on Deuteronomy 27 and 28*. Edited by James B. Jordan. Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990.
- _____. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. 2 Volumes. Edited by John T. McNeil. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960.
- Carcopino, Jerome. *Daily Life in Ancient Rome: The People and the City at the Height of the Empire*. Edited by Henry T. Rowell. Translated by E. O. Lorimer. London: George Routledge & Sons, LTD., 1941.
- Carson, D. A. ed. *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.
- _____. "Matthew." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 8, *Matthew, Mark, Luke*. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984. 3-599.
- Casson, Lionel. *The Horizon Book of Daily Life in Ancient Rome*. New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., 1975.
- Casson, Lionel, and The Editors of Time-Life Books. *Great Ages of Man a History of the World's Cultures: Ancient Egypt*. Alexandria: Time-Life Books, 1965.
- Cavanaugh, John C. *Adult Development and Aging*. 3rd ed. Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1997.
- Cicero. "The Laws." *Cicero: The Republic and The Laws*. Translated by Niall Rudd. Introduction and notes by Jonathan Powell and Niall Rudd. New York: Oxford, 1998. 97-169.

- _____. "The Republic." *Cicero: The Republic and The Laws*. Translated by Niall Rudd. Introduction and notes by Jonathan Powell and Niall Rudd. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 3-94.
- Clark, R. S. "Calvin On the *Lex Naturalis*." *Stulos Theological Journal* 6.1&2 (1998): 1-22.
- Contenau, Georges. *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria*. Translated by K. R. and A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop. New York: St. Martin's Press Inc, 1954.
- Copleston, Frederick. *A History of Philosophy*. Vol. 1, *Greece and Rome*. New York: Image Books, 1993.
- Dabney, Robert L. *Systematic Theology*. Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985.
- David, Rosalie. *Discovering Ancient Egypt*. London: Michael O'Mara Books Limited, 1993.
- _____. *Handbook to Life in Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- DeVries, Carl E. "The Bearing of Current Egyptian Studies on the Old Testament." *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*. Edited by J. Barton Payne. Waco: Word Books, 1970. pag. 25-36.
- Dillard, Raymond B. and Tremper Longman III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.
- Douma, J. *The Ten Commandments: Manual for the Christian Life*. Translated by Nelson D. Kloosterman. Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing Co., 1996.
- Durant, Will. *The Story of Civilization*. Vol. 3, *Caesar and Christ: A History of Roman Civilization and of Christianity From Their Beginnings to A.D. 325*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944.
- Egmond, A. van, and C. van der Kooi. "The Appeal to Creation Ordinances: A Changing Tide." *God's Order for Creation*. Edited by B. J. van der walt. Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, 1994. 16-33.

- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. Unabridged, one-volume edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985.
- Feinberg, John S., and Paul D. Feinberg. *Ethics for a Brave New World*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1993.
- Gaffin, Richard B. *Calvin and the Sabbath: The Controversy of applying the Fourth Commandment*. Great Britain: Mentor, 1998.
- _____. "Westminster and the Sabbath." *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century*. Vol. 1, *Essays in Remembrance of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly*. Edited by J. Ligon Duncan, III. Scotland: Mentor, 2003.
- Gentry, Jr., Kenneth L. *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World*. Rev. ed. Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990, 1993.
- Gordon, Edmund I. *Sumerian Proverbs: Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.
- Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*. New York: New American Library Inc, 1942.
- Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Vol. 5, *Matthew to John*. Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company.
- Herodotus. *The History*. Translated by David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Hesiod. "Theogony." Translated with introduction and comments by R. M. Frazer. *The Poems of Hesiod*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983. 23-90.
- _____. "Work and Days." Translated with introduction and comments by R. M. Frazer. *The Poems of Hesiod*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983. 93-142.

- Homer. *The Iliad*. Translated by Robert Fagles. With an introduction and notes by Bernard Knox. New York: Viking, 1990.
- Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977.
- Irenaeus. "Against Heresies." *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 1, *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981. 309-567.
- Jacobsen, Thorkild. *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- James, Peter, I. J. Thorpe, Nikos Kokkinos, Robert Morkot, and John Frankish. *Centuries of Darkness: A Challenge to the Conventional Chronology of Old World Archaeology*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1991.
- Jones III, Douglas M. "The Beauty of it All." *Back to Basics: Rediscovering the Richness of the Reformed Faith*. Edited by David G. Hagopian. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1996. 67-73.
- Jones, William Thomas. *The Classical Mind: A History of Western Philosophy*. 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969.
- Jordan, James B. "The Egyptian Problem." *Biblical Chronology* 6.1 (January, 1994): 1-4.
- _____. "Egypt in Biblical History." *Biblical Chronology* 5.8 (December, 1993): 1-4.
- _____. "Problems With Current Consensus Chronology." *Biblical Chronology* 6.2 (February, 1994): 1-4.
- Kaiser, Walter C. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983.
- Keil, C. F., and F. Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament*. vol. 1, *The Pentateuch*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

- Kelley, Page H. *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.
- Kelly, John Maurice. *A Short History of Western Legal Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. eBook [Online]: <http://www.netlibrary.com> [8 April 2004].
- Kistemaker, Simon J. *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984.
- Kline, Meredith G. *The Treaty of the Great King; The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963.
- Kramer, Samuel Noah. *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963.
- Kuyper, Abraham. "Calvinism and Confessional Revision." *The Presbyterian Quarterly* 5.4 (October, 1891): 479-516.
- _____. *Lectures on Calvinism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1931, 2002.
- _____. "Sphere Sovereignty." In *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*. Edited by James D. Bratt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998. 461-90.
- Leupold, H. C. *Exposition of Genesis*. vol. 1, *Chapters 1-19*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- Lichtheim, Miriam. *Maat in Egyptian Autobiographies and Related Studies*. Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992.
- Murray, John. "The Adamic Administration." *Collected Writings of John Murray*. 4 Vols., 2.47-59. Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1977.
- _____. *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957.
- Nash, Ronald H. *The Gospel and the Greeks: Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* Richardson: Probe Books, 1992.
- _____. *Life's Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.

- _____. *The Word of God and The Mind of Man*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1982.
- Nemet-Nejat, Karen Rhea. *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998.
- Owen, John. *The Works of John Owen*. Vol. 20, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews: Hebrews 3:7-5:14*. Edited by William H. Goold. [CD-ROM] Rio: The Ages Digital Library, The Works of John Owen, 2000.
- Packer, J. I., Merrill C. Tenney, and William White, Jr. *The Bible Almanac*. Carmel: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980.
- Parker, Robert. "Greek Religion." *The Oxford History of the Classical World*. Edited by John Boardman, Jasper Griffin, and Oswyn Murray. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986. 254-274.
- Perdue, Leo G. *Wisdom and Cult: A Critical Analysis of the Views of Cult in the Wisdom Literatures of Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Missoula: Scholars P, 1977.
- Pipa, Joseph A. *The Lord's Day*. Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 1997.
- Plato. *Republic*. Translated by G. M. A. Grube. Revised by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1992.
- Poythress, Vern S. *Understanding Dispensationalists*. 2nd ed. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1987, 1994.
- Pratt, Jr., Richard L. *Designed for Dignity: What God Has Made it Possible for You to Be*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1993.
- Pritchard, James B., ed. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. with Supplement. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Ray, Bruce A. *Celebrating the Sabbath: Finding Rest in a Restless World*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2000.

- Reisinger, Ernest C. *The Law and the Gospel*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1997.
- Reisinger, John G. *Tablets of Stone*. Southbridge: Crowne Publications, 1989.
- Robertson, Archibald T. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1936.
- Robertson, O. Palmer. *The Christ of the Covenants*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1980.
- _____. "Current Reformed Thinking on the Nature of the Divine Covenants." *Westminster Theological Journal* 40 (1977): 63-76.
- Rommen, Heinrich A. *The Natural Law: A Study in Legal and Social History and Philosophy*. Translated by Thomas R. Hanley. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1947.
- Ross, Allen P. *Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Dispensationalism*. Revised and Expanded ed. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995.
- Sahakian, William S. *History of Philosophy*. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1968.
- Sasse, Hermann. "κόσμος." *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 3, *Θ-K*. Edited by Gerhard Kittel. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965. 868-895.
- Speiser, E. A. "Authority and Law in Mesopotamia." *Authority and Law in the Ancient Orient*. J. A. Wilson and others. Baltimore: American Oriental Society, 1954. 8-15.
- Stek, John H. "'Covenant' Overload in Reformed Theology." *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994): 12-41.
- Strickland, Wayne G., ed. *Five Views on Law and Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993, 1996.

- Tertullian. "An Answer to the Jews." Translated by S. Thelwall. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 3, *Latin Christianity: Its founder, Tertullian*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980. 151-173.
- _____. "The Chaplet, or De Corona." *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Vol. 3, *Latin Christianity: Its founder, Tertullian*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Revised by A. Cleveland Coxe. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980. 93-103.
- Thornbrough, Emma Lou. *The Ancient Greeks*. Acton: Copley Publishing Group, 1985.
- Troost, Andre. "The Idea of Creation Order in Western Thought." *God's Order for Creation*. Edited by B. J. van der Walt. Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, 1994. 2-16.
- Waltke, Bruce K., and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Watson, Thomas. *The Ten Commandments*. Carlisle: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1959, 1995.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Word Biblical Commentary*. vol. 1, *Genesis 1-15*. Waco: Word Books, 1987.
- Westminster Confession of Faith*. Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1958, 1994.
- White, James R., and Jeffrey D. Niell. *The Same Sex Controversy: Defending and Clarifying the Bible's Message About Homosexuality*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2002.
- Wolfram, Von Soden. *The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East*. Translated by Donald G. Schley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994.
- Wolters, Albert M. "Creation Order: A Historical Look at our Heritage." *God's Order for Creation*. Edited by B. J. van der Walt. Potchefstroom: Instituut vir Reformatoriese Studie, 1994. 42-61.