

Christian Faith in the Public Square – Fall 2010 - Lewis

Law & Justice

I. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS LAW & JUSTICE OF GOD¹

A. RIGHTEOUSNESS & SIN: INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

1. ***God Requires Perfect Righteousness from His Moral Creatures.***

- a. Lev. 11:44 cf. I Pet. 1:16
- b. James 2:10

2. ***There is an Absolute Necessity of Divine Justice.***

- a. Ex 34:7
- b. Hab. 1:13
- c. Ps 5:4
- d. 2 Tim 4:8

B. TYPES OF DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. ***Internal and External Righteousness Distinguished***

a. *Internal Righteousness (iustitia interna)*

- (1) Internal Righteousness is the *holiness* of the divine will and its perfect correspondence with the good of His eternal law (*lex archetypa*), which is the divine essence.
- (2) Positive Holiness is the essential goodness of God and the goodness of God's will toward His creatures. (Isaiah 6:3)
- (3) Negative Holiness is that the goodness of God remains inviolate and eternally separate from all that is sinful. (Hab. 1:13)

b. *External Righteousness (iustitia externa)*

- (1) External Righteousness is the righteousness of God as it is manifest externally (*ad extra*) in the Law of God (*Lex Dei*).
- (2) God's External Righteousness can be distinguished into the following categories:
 - (a) Antecedent or Legislative Righteousness
 - (b) Consequent or Judicial Righteousness

¹ See Muller, *DLGTT*, "iustitia"

C. ANTECEDENT OR LEGISLATIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS: THE LAW

1. **Definition:** This is the declaration of the standards of righteousness, which gives the individual and community notice of the expectations of righteousness *before* an act of obedience or disobedience occurs.

2. **Biblical Terms for Law**

a. *Old Testament: Torah* = Instruction

b. *New Testament: Nomos* = Rule or custom

3. **Two Types of Ectypal Law**

There are two kinds of antecedent righteousness, or ectypal law, grounded in the archetypal law of the divine essence:

a. **Natural Law** is the universal moral law either impressed on the minds of all people OR immediately discerned by reason in its encounter with the order of nature

(1) Rom. 1:18-23; 2:14-15

(2) Leaves people without excuse.

b. **Mosaic Law** is given by Special Revelation.

(1) John 1:17

(2) It was given as the clear guide for human conduct.

(3) It is divided into three sections:

(a) **Civil Law**

i. The civil laws prescribe the government, judicial system, penal code, and case law of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament (see Deut 1:9-17; 17:14-20; 20:1-20).

ii. With the cessation of the Nation of Israel, the Old Testament “civil laws” were abrogated (Eph 2:14-16).

iii. However, the foundational moral principles of the civil law remain instructive and binding for Christians (1 Cor 9:8-10).

(b) **Ceremonial Law**

i. Ceremonial laws prescribed the structures and duties of the priesthood, the precepts for tabernacle and temple worship, and the sacrificial system (Exodus 35-40; Leviticus).

ii. These laws and the acts that were performed as a result were types and shadows of Christ. Since Christ has come, the types are no longer necessary.

iii. The writer of Hebrews affirms that Christ is our Great High Priest (Heb 7:15-17, 23-25) and the “one mediator between God and men” (1 Tim 2:5). As such, there is no longer a need for the Old Testament priestly system.

iv. Christ fulfilled and abolished the Old Testament sacrificial system since he has “by one offering...perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (Heb 10:14). And “where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin” (Heb 10:18).

(c) **Moral Law**

- i. The moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments, which have continuing authority according to the New Testament (Matt 5:17-19; Rom 13:8-10; Jas 2:8-11).
- ii. *The Ten Commandments* (Exodus 20:1-17)
 - 1 Then God spoke all these words, saying, 2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of Lit slaves slavery.
 - (i) 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.
 - (ii) 4 "You shall not make for yourself a graven image an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
 - (iii) 7 "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.
 - (iv) 8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 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. 11 "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.
 - (v) 12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.
 - (vi) 13 "You shall not murder.
 - (vii) 14 "You shall not commit adultery
 - (viii) 15 "You shall not steal.
 - (ix) 16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 - (x) 17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

4. *Selected Attributes of God's Law*

- a. Perfection—Ps. 19:7
- b. Majesty—It is superior to all. Jam. 2:8; 4:12
- c. Immutability—It remains forever. Ps. 119:89
- d. Holiness—It is pure. Ps. 19:8; 119:140

5. *The Law has not been Abolished.*

- a. Christ did Not Abolish the Law. (Mt. 5:17)

- b. Moses and the Prophets are useful. (Lk. 16:29)

- c. Jesus encouraged keeping the whole law (Mt. 22:34-40)

- d. Paul considered the law to be beneficial (Rom. 13:8-10)

- e. Faith Establishes the Law (Rom. 3:31)

D. CONSEQUENT OR JUDICIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS: JUSTICE

1. *Definition:* This is righteousness determined *after* a particular act is performed.
2. It is often designated as “Particular Justice” which can be either:
 - a. Remunerative or Distributive—Rewards obedience in proportion to the value of the deed performed; OR
 - b. Retributive, Vindictory or Punitive—Penalty is exacted of a transgressor for the sake of vindicating or making restitution to the victim of the wrongdoing
3. *Consequent or Judicial Righteousness & the Work of Christ*
 - a. Christ satisfies the justice of God as a *substitute*.
 - (1) Remunerative or Distributive
 - (a) This is important to Christ’s vicarious satisfaction. It indicates an exact equivalence between the merit offered and the salvation bestowed.
 - (b) Christ’s Active Obedience of keeping the law merits a positive relationship with God.
 - (2) Retributive, Vindictory or Punitive
 - (a) This is the strict proportionality of crime and punishment.
 - (b) This also rests on the sufficiency of the merit of Christ in that He satisfies the retributive justice of God in our place.

E. SUPEREROGATORY ACTS & THE LAW

1. A supererogatory act is an action one performs that is above the normal requirements and merits remuneration.
2. Arguably, there are no meritorious supererogatory acts in a law based community.
3. One must obey all the law all the time to maintain a relationship with the community.
4. One cannot offer his keeping of the law to satisfy the debt incurred from breaking the law.
 - a. Example #1: When one runs a red light, one may not offer to the court the green lights through which one passed as satisfaction for running the red light.
 - b. Example #2: A murderer may not offer to the court his “merit” allegedly accrued for allowing other people in the community to live.
5. Biblically, law breaking brings wrath (Rom. 4:15) and by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified (Romans 3:20).
6. If righteousness can come through the Law, Christ died needlessly (Gal. 2:21)

7. *Use of the Law for Communitarian Purposes: Covenant*
 - a. In a personal relationship with another individual or a community, the law provides the terms for the “social contract.”
 - b. If one obeys the terms of the contract, his remuneration is that he is permitted to have a continued relationship with the community.

II. THE USES OF THE LAW²

A. STATE OF INNOCENCE

1. The law provides the terms of the Covenant of Works.

B. LAW IN THE SINFUL STATE

1. *Civil Use of the Law*--For Restraining Sinners (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 1:9)

2. *Elenctic-Pedagogical Use of the Law*
 - a. For Condemnation (Rom 4:15; 2 Cor. 3:9)
 - b. For Conviction of Sin (Rom 3:20)
 - c. For Leading to Christ (Gal. 3:24)

C. LAW IN THE RESTORED STATE OF GRACE

1. *Didactic Use of the Law*--For Sanctification in Christ (1 Tim. 1:5-10)

² See Montgomery, *Law Above the Law and Law & Gospel*

III. DISTINGUISHING LAW & GOSPEL³

A. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ISSUE

1. A true understanding of Scripture and the Gospel depends on this distinction.
2. This is because no one is saved by the works of the law.
3. The distinction is seen throughout Scripture.
 - a. Galatians 2:16
 - b. Galatians 3:24-25

B. DISTINGUISHING THE TERMS “LAW” AND “GOSPEL”

1. *Definitions*
 - a. The difference between Law and Gospel is not that Gospel is from God and Law is not.
 - b. The distinction is one of function, not origin or genesis.
 - c. “Law,” as a basic concept, is the set of commands of God by which He prohibits or mandates certain behaviors, demanding perfect obedience to all.
 - d. “Gospel,” as a basic concept, offers a gift of grace for the forgiveness of sins.
2. *Scriptural Illustrations of the Distinction*
 - a. A clear distinction can be seen in discussions concerning the way of salvation.
 - (1) Matthew 19:16-22
 - (2) John 1:17
 - (3) John 6:28-29
 - (4) Acts 17:29-34
 - (5) Romans 3:20-22

C. CONSEQUENCES OF IGNORING THE DISTINCTION

1. *Introduction*
 - a. Sinful Humans always wants to prove their self-worth and save themselves by attempting to create and maintain “ideal” legal and ethical structures, by which they may claim they have met the Divine demand.
 - b. But this is as impossible as the Tower of Babel actually reaching the heavens. (Genesis 11; John 3:13)
 - c. Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps. 111:10; Proverbs 1:7)
2. *Theological Consequences of Ignoring the Distinction*
 - a. *Legalism*
 - (1) When law is given the properties of Gospel it results in legalism.
 - (2) It gives people the false notion that they can save themselves.
 - (3) Most, if not all, of the world religions and cults of Christianity fit this category.

³ Ibid.

b. *Antinomianism*

- (1) When gospel replaces law, it produces “cheap grace” as Bonhoeffer called it. Here, the law has been abolished.
- (2) There is no longer any use of the law. This is the position of many contemporary evangelicals.
- (3) Paul says the Law is good, if we use it lawfully. (1 Tim. 1:8)
- (4) The State administers the civil use of the law and is a servant of God. (Rom. 13)
- (5) The Antichrist is designated as the Lawless one (*anomos*) (2 Thess. 2:8)

3. *Cultural Examples of the Consequences of Ignoring the Distinction*

- a. Marxist East—recast Law so that it no longer favors a ruling caste of capitalists and the classless “kingdom” will arrive.
- b. Capitalist West—the social engineering is similar, recast Law and man will be in prosperity, peace, harmony, etc.
- c. Third World—Place an American Legal and Justice System in Afghanistan or Iraq and we will have peace.
- d. These scenarios ignore the basic problem—the Fallen Human Heart (Jer. 17:19 cf. Ezek. 36:22-32)