

## The Character of Man

### A. How God Governs the Universe

God's creation is valuable. To preserve this value God must govern the universe He created. He does this with laws.

1. A law is "a rule of action."

2. Different parts of creation require different types of laws, each suited to its own nature.

#### a. The Material Universe

The material part of the creation is governed with physical law – the law of necessity or force. Also called the "law of cause and effect."

##### i. Inanimate

a. Gravity

b. Inertia

c. Heat Transfer

##### ii. Animate-Amoral

Animals are governed through instinct, a complex form of physical law.

#### b. Moral Beings

i. Man, created in the image of God, has a free will and thus must be ruled by a different kind of law entirely: the "law of liberty." This kind of law is called "moral law."

ii. This kind of law is a rule of what *ought to be* rather than what *must be*.

iii. Moral law is a way of governing the action of free will.

iv. It is only indirectly a way of governing actions and states of mind and body that follow the free will by law of necessity.

v. Moral law is a rule of moral action with sanctions.

### 3. Our Moral Obligation: to Love

#### a. The Grounds of Moral Obligation

The grounds of something is the foundation for it, the reason for its existence.

##### i. What the grounds of moral obligation is:

The sole grounds of moral obligation is the intrinsic value of the well being of God and the universe.

##### ii. What the grounds of moral obligation is not:

a. God's will – If moral obligation is founded in God's will then it is arbitrary; that is, if God chooses laws based on nothing whatsoever, for if He bases His choices on anything, that thing is the foundation for moral obligation.

- b. Man's selfish interests – To say that moral obligation is founded in man's will is to say that it respects the intentions alone, in a vacuum, but without information about the value of the object being chosen, no choice can be made.
  - c. Man's self-interest – That the benefits we receive from living a "Godly" life are to be our motive and are the grounds of our obligation. This view assumes that because we are "in ourselves" we have no choice but to act in self-interest, and that if we trust God to guide us we will be happier than if we follow our own ideas.  
This view has exactly reversed the biblical view that to love God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves, for their own sakes, is the supreme good, and that to act in our own selfish interest without regard for God or others is the definition of sin.
  - d. Man's nature and relations – This confounds the conditions with grounds of moral obligation. A parent's obligation to their child is not because of the relationship, but because of the value of the child's happiness, and the relationship is the condition. The obligation of the child to the parent is the same. Also with employers and employees, Creator and creature.
  - e. Etc.
- b. The Conditions of Moral Obligation
- i. In summary – Ability
    - a. This is intuitive.
    - b. "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." (Deuteronomy 6:5)
    - c. "Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)
    - d. Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' "The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29-31)
    - e. "For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have." (2 Corinthians 8:12)
    - f. "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it." (Proverbs 3:27)
  - ii. Moral Agency
    - a. Intellect
    - b. Sensibility  
Without the senses we could not comprehend what value is.
    - c. Free Will

iii. Light

We must have knowledge of the value of an action as an end, or as a means to an end, for us to be obligated to choose it.

4. God's Right to Rule

a. The Grounds

The sole grounds of the right to rule is the intrinsic value of the well being of God and the universe.

b. The Conditions

i. The Ability (Nature, Metaphysics)

ii. The Will (Character, Morals)

5. What Sin Is Not

a. Sin is not a thing.

"there is nothing that is unclean in itself." (Romans 14:14); Mark 7:14-23

What moral value do the following have (good, bad, or neutral)?

i. Money

ii. A baseball bat

iii. Food

iv. Your physical body

v. ?

b. Sin is not a mistake.

Mistakes are due to limitations of finite beings

c. Sin is not a lack of knowledge.

i. We are finite beings.

ii. Choices that cause ignorance are sin, but the resulting ignorance is not.

iii. Gentiles will be judged according to the light given them. (Romans 2:14-16)

d. Sin is not a disease.

e. Sin is not a temptation.

f. Sin is not our nature.

6. What Sin Is

(These are all choices.)

a. Sin is lawlessness.

Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. (1 John 3:4)

b. All unrighteousness is sin. (1 John 5:17)

- c. Not doing what we know to be right.  
Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)
- d. Whatever is not from faith [confidence] is sin.  
But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin. (Romans 14:23)
- e. The devising of folly is sin. (Proverbs 24:9)

## 7. God's Law

### a. What God's Law Is

#### i. In the Garden

- a. God blessed them; and God said to them, "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." (Genesis 1:28)
- b. Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. (Genesis 2:15)
- c. The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but 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." (Genesis 2:16-17)
- d. Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. (Genesis 2:19)
  - i. Another job for man. Man could have refused.
  - ii. It was man's dominion.
  - iii. God didn't know what man would name them.

#### ii. Circumcision – a covenant of faith.

- iii. Regarding the Passover celebration, God said, "And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever." (Exodus 12:24)

#### iv. The Ten Commandments

- a. Exodus 20:2-17
- b. Deuteronomy 5:6-21

#### v. The Statutes—Leviticus—ceremonial laws, sacrifices, health ordinances, moral laws

- a. And He said, " If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer." (Exodus 15:26)
- b. Vitamin K

- vi. New Testament Commands
  - b. Form and Freedom
    - i. Form protects freedom.
      - a. The two-way street.
      - b. Music
      - c. Human Governments
        - i. Communism – too much form
        - ii. Anarchy – too much freedom
        - iii. Both are bad for the individual’s well-being.
      - d. “The artist is God to the canvas...*until he wants to say something.*” —Francis Schaeffer
    - ii. Freedom is the rule. “from *any* tree in the garden”
  - c. We are still obligated to keep the moral law.
    - i. Jesus said he did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17-20)
    - ii. Jesus required the law be kept from the heart. (Matthew 21-48)
    - iii. Walking in the Spirit causes us to fulfill the requirements of the law. (Romans 8:4)
    - iv. The ceremonial law is generally considered to have been fulfilled in Jesus. So they have not been *abolished* but needn’t be followed either.
    - v. Jesus declared all foods clean. (Mark 7:18-20); 1 Timothy 4:1-5
    - vi. Circumcision superseded by the Spirit circumcising our hearts and giving us power over the desires of the flesh. (Romans 2:27-29; Colossians 2:11-12; Galatians 5:6, 6:15; Philippians 3:3; Ephesians 2:11ff)
    - vii. Passover is fulfilled in Jesus’ sacrifice (1 Corinthians 5:7) and is presumably celebrated by us in communion (or the Lord’s supper), an abbreviated form of the Passover meal.
  - d. We are able to keep the law.
 

*See references section for verses.*
8. The Story of Theo – a reality check.
  - a. The law was suited to our nature and relations.
  - b. The rule was freedom.
  - c. The form protected a freedom.
  - d. I was obligated.
  - e. He was able to keep it.

## References (New American Standard Bible)

### The Law

*What They Are*

#### **Genesis 26:4–5**

<sup>4</sup>"I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*;

<sup>5</sup>because Abraham obeyed Me and kept *My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.*"

#### **Leviticus 18:5**

'So you shall keep My *statutes and My judgments*, by which a *man may live* if he does them; I am the LORD.

#### **Exodus 20:2-17**

<sup>2</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

<sup>3</sup>**You shall have no other gods before Me.**

<sup>4</sup>**You shall not make for yourself an idol**, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

<sup>5</sup>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,

<sup>6</sup>but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

<sup>7</sup>**You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain**, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

<sup>8</sup>**Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.**

<sup>9</sup>Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

<sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>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.

<sup>12</sup>**Honor your father and your mother**, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

<sup>13</sup>**You shall not murder.**

<sup>14</sup>**You shall not commit adultery.**

<sup>15</sup>"**You shall not steal.**

<sup>16</sup>"**You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.**

<sup>17</sup>"**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."

### Division of the Ten Commandments by religion/denomination

Commandment	Jewish	Anglican, Reformed, and other Christian	Orthodox	Roman Catholic, Lutheran**
I am the Lord your God	1	preface	1	1
You shall have no other gods before me	2	1		
You shall not make for yourself an idol		2	2	
You shall not make wrongful use of the name of your God	3	3	3	2
Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy	4	4	4	3
Honor your Father and Mother	5	5	5	4
You shall not murder*	6	6	6	5
You shall not commit adultery	7	7	7	6
You shall not steal	8	8	8	7
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor	9	9	9	8
You shall not covet your neighbor's house	10	10	10	9
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife				10

Notes:

\* The Roman Catholic Church uses the translation 'kill' (less specific) instead of 'murder'.

\*\* Some Lutheran churches use a slightly different division of the Ninth and Tenth Commandments (9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; 10. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his workers, or his cattle, or anything that is your neighbor's).

## *The Law Still Applies*

### **Matthew 5:17-20**

<sup>17</sup>"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

<sup>18</sup>"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

<sup>19</sup>"Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>20</sup>"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

### **Matthew 12:50**

"I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

### **Romans 13:10**

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

### **1 Corinthians 7:19**

Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.

### **James 2:12**

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

### **Proverbs 29:18**

Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law.

### **Deuteronomy 30:19**

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,

### **1 Timothy 1:5-11**

<sup>5</sup>But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

<sup>6</sup>For some men, straying from these things, have turned aside to fruitless discussion,

<sup>7</sup>wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.

<sup>8</sup>*But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,*

<sup>9</sup>realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers

<sup>10</sup>and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching,

<sup>11</sup>according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted.

### **Leviticus 18:5**

'So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD.

### **Romans 7:12-14**

<sup>12</sup>So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

<sup>14</sup>For we know that *the Law is spiritual*, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

### **James 1:25**

But one who looks intently at the perfect law, *the law of liberty*, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

### **1 John 2:3-4**

<sup>3</sup>By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

<sup>4</sup>The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

### **1 John 5:2**

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

### *Exceptions to the Law Still Applying*

#### Food Laws

### **Mark 7:18-20**

<sup>18</sup>And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him,

<sup>19</sup>because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (*Thus He declared all foods clean.*)

<sup>20</sup>And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.

Circumcision

### **Galatians (entire book)**

Sabbath

### **Hebrews 4:2-11**

<sup>2</sup>For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

<sup>3</sup>For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said,

"AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH,  
THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,"

although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.

<sup>4</sup>For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: "AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS";

<sup>5</sup>and again in this passage, "THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST."

<sup>6</sup>Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience,

<sup>7</sup>He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before,

"TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,  
DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."

<sup>8</sup>For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.

<sup>9</sup>So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

<sup>10</sup>For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

<sup>11</sup>Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.

*Not Arbitrary*

### **Genesis 18:25**

"Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! *Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly [or right]?*"

### **Romans 3:5-6**

<sup>5</sup>But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)

<sup>6</sup>May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?

*Answers to Objections*

### **Galatians 5:18**

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

*Sanctions to the Law*

### **Exodus 15:26**

And He said, " If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put *none of the diseases* on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

*We are able to keep the law.*

### **Deuteronomy 30:11–14**

<sup>11</sup>"For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach.

<sup>12</sup>"It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'

<sup>13</sup>"Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?'

<sup>14</sup>"But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, *that you may observe it.*

### **Matthew 11:30**

"For My yoke is *easy* and My burden is *light.*"

### **1 Corinthians 10:13**

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that *you will be able to endure it.*

### **1 John 5:2–4**

<sup>2</sup>By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

<sup>3</sup>For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and *His commandments are not burdensome.*

<sup>4</sup>For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

*Miscellaneous*

**Deuteronomy 4:7-9**

<sup>7</sup>"For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him?

<sup>8</sup>"Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?

<sup>9</sup>"Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, so that you do not forget the things which your eyes have seen and they do not depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.

*The Law Is Good*

**Romans 7:10**

and this commandment, *which was to result in life*, proved to result in death for me;

**Romans 7:12-14**

<sup>12</sup>So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

<sup>14</sup>For we know that *the Law is spiritual*, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

**Romans 8:4**

so that *the requirement of the Law* might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

**1 Timothy 1:8**

But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully,

**James 1:25**

But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

## Free Will

### *What the Church Fathers Said*

#### **Justin Martyr**

"Let some suppose, from what has been said by us, that we say that whatever occurs happens by a fatal necessity, because it is foretold as known beforehand, this too we explain. We have learned from the prophets, and we hold it to be true, that punishments, chastisements, and good rewards, are rendered according to the merit of each man's actions. Now, if this is not so, but all things happen by fate, then neither is anything at all in our own power. For if it is predetermined that this man will be good, and this other man will be evil, neither is the first one meritorious nor the latter man to be blamed. And again, unless the human race has the power of avoiding evil and choosing good by free choice, they are not accountable for their actions."

(c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 271, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

#### **Tatian**

"We were not created to die. Rather, we die by our own fault. Our free will has destroyed us. We who were free have become slaves. We have been sold through sin. Nothing evil has been created by God. We ourselves have manifested wickedness. But we, who have manifested it, are able again to reject it."

(c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

#### **Melito**

"There is, therefore, nothing to hinder you from changing your evil manner to life, because you are a free man."

(c.170, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

#### **Theophilus**

"If, on the other hand, he would turn to the things of death, disobeying God, he would himself be the cause of death to himself. For God made man free, and with power of himself."

(c.180, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

#### **Irenaeus**

"But man, being endowed with reason, and in this respect similar to God, having been made free in his will, and with power over himself, is himself his own cause that sometimes he becomes wheat, and sometimes chaff."

(c.180, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds'...And 'Why call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do the things that I say?'...All such passages demonstrate the independent will of man...For it is in man's power to disobey God and to forfeit what is good."

(c.180, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 287, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

### **Clement of Alexandria**

"We...have believed and are saved by voluntary choice."

(c.195, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 287, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

### **Tertullian**

"I find, then, that man was constituted free by God. He was master of his own will and power...For a law would not be imposed upon one who did not have it in his power to render that obedience which is due to law. Nor again, would the penalty of death be threatened against sin, if a contempt of the law were impossible to man in the liberty of his will...Man is free, with a will either for obedience or resistance.

(c.207, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 288, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

### **Pelagius**

"Nothing impossible has been commanded by the God of justice and majesty...Why do we indulge in pointless evasions, advancing the frailty of our own nature as an objection to the one who commands us? No one knows better the true measure of our strength than he who has given it to us nor does anyone understand better how much we are able to do than he who has given us this very capacity of ours to be able; nor has he who is just wished to command anything impossible or he who is good intended to condemn a man for doing what he could not avoid doing."

(The Letters of Pelagius and his Followers by B. R. Rees, pg 53-54, published by The Boydell Press)

"Obedience results from a decision of the mind, not the substance of the body."

(The Letters of Pelagius and his Followers by B. R. Rees, pg 90, published by The Boydell Press)