



**God's Law**

**vs.**

**Man's Law**



# God's Law vs. Man's Law

*“These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus”*  
(Acts 17:6, 7).

Most are aware that life is made up of a series of conflicts. The battle between good and evil rages within each human heart and it manifests without amongst men and nations. Since time memorial, war has been and continues to be a common experience that plagues our poor-fallen world. It is a constant reminder of the lust, greed, and avarice that arouse men and nations to cruelly conquer and dominate their weaker neighbors. The Apostle James reveals the source of war that plagues the sons of men:

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God (James 4:1-4).

R J Rushdoony helps to illuminate this battle. He wrote:

This peace, (God's peace) however, is more than the absence of hostilities: it is peace with God. Peace with God means warfare with the enemies of God. Christ made it

clear that allegiances to Him meant a sword of division (Matthew 10:34-36). In a sinful world, some warfare is inescapable. A man must therefore pick his enemies: God or sinful man? If a man is at peace with sinful men, he is at war with God. Peace in one sector means warfare in another. God alone, however, can give inner peace now, and finally, world peace through his sovereign law. (Micah 4:2)

"Divine Augustus  
Caesar, son of a god,  
imperator of land and  
sea...Ó

- inscription at myra, lycia

According to our opening passage of Scripture, the battle comes down to two vital issues. Who is Lord and whose laws are to govern in the affairs of men? Who has the final authority in the affairs of men? Is it Almighty God or Caesar? Whose laws reign? Is it the laws of flawed men, which in many cases codifies evil into law or the righteous laws of God that protects the liberty Christ died to secure for the sons of men?

Notice that the accusation against the early church that “turned the world upside down” was not “There is another Savior and He has a wonderful plan for your life.” No, the early Church suffered great persecution because the revelation of another King and the laws of His Kingdom that burned brightly through their lives. His decrees were contrary to Caesar. This was the clear and present danger to the political tyrants and religious oppressors of their day.

We must remember that Rome was not threatened religiously by

the new sect called Christianity. They were threatened politically. There was religious freedom under Roman occupation. You could worship the god of your choice. Every land, nation, and tribe that Rome conquered, however, was required to pledge a civil and religious loyalty oath to Caesar.

Caesar demanded that every knee bow and every tongue confess that he was Lord. It was the full manifestation of emperor cult worship that flourished under pagan rule. Not only did Caesar demand lawful submission to civil authority, but a pinch of incense to honor his deity. Christians whose conscience was bound to the Lordship of Christ could not cross this idolatrous line. They courageously maintained their worshipful allegiance that belonged to God alone. Subsequently, many died because of their refusal to worship Caesar.



Tragically, the Jews of the day submitted to this idolatry. Though they were free to worship Jehovah in the temple, once they left the temple, however, they were forced to confess “Caesar is Lord!” Did they do so willingly? God’s Word testifies in the affirmative. When it came to the revelation of the Kingship of Jesus Christ John 19:15 states, “But they cried out, away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your

King? The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Man is still faced with this choice today. If Jesus is not the rightful Sovereign King and His law not binding upon all men and nations at all times, then men are left with two failed options. The state is therefore king, which has led historically to unprecedented murderous regimes that crushed the people they claimed to serve, or the individual is sovereign which inevitably leads to chaos, confusion, and anarchy.

Only One Nation under God can secure the delicate tension between authority and liberty. Only One Nation under God can provide a proper social order on one hand with maximum individual freedom on the other hand. There is no other worldview or faith that can accomplish this upon earth.

### **Laws of a Nation reveal the gods of a Nation**

The laws that govern societies reveal the gods worshipped by nations. Any person, religion, philosophy, institution, court, or group who assumes final authority and arbitrator of good and evil, have taken unto themselves the status of godhood. In that sense, all men and nations adopt a theocratic position, which in most cases reinforces the Fall of man. They enable the lie Satan passed to our first parents. Genesis 3:1-5 reveals the masterful con job perpetrated by the Evil One:



“Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:1-5)

Notice the subtle attack of the enemy. He did not directly take on God nor even man for that matter. He went after the revealed Word, will, and way of the Lord. He called God’s commandment into question. Doubts arise, do they not? It certainly did in the case of Eve, whom the Bible states was deceived, Adam, however, sinned.

Eve’s response to Satan’s temptation is telling. It was the first recorded case of legalism. God said, “Do not eat, lest you die.” Eve added to God’s commandment, “nor shall you touch it.” On the spot, she manufactured her own man-made tradition. This produced the Forbidden Fruit syndrome that plagues mankind to this day. The more man tries to work holiness from the outside in, through religious rules, the more evil entices and enslaves men’s soul. It is this dilemma that Jesus addressed in His day. He stated:

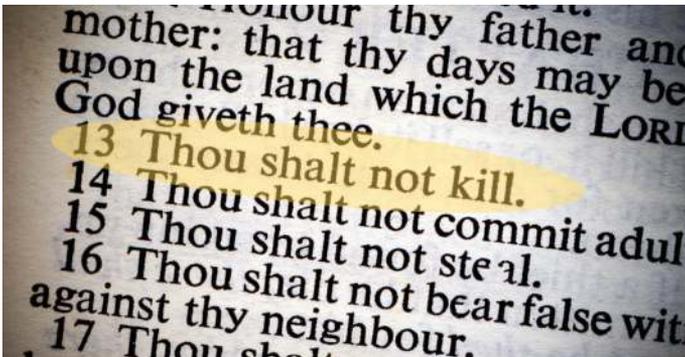
Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”.  
(Matthew 15:6-9).

The next suggestion by Satan exposes the battle between God’s authority and law vs. man’s pursuit of autonomy. It is this decep-

tion that convinces unregenerate men to be a law and god unto themselves. Satan declared, “For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

He was not offering them the understanding of knowing the concepts of good and evil. His deceptive proposal was for them to reject the objective truth of God and His Law and to determine for themselves subjectively what was good and evil to them. No need to obey God when you can replace Him and become a law and god unto yourself. This reveals the source of conflict between God’s Law vs. man’s law that rages to this day.

### God’s Negative Law vs. Man’s Positive Law



God’s laws are negative in nature. Most of God’s commands commence with “Thou Shalt Not!” Though negative in nature, they are the bulwark of liberty. They are the embankments that keep the river of freedom flowing properly. Remove the embankments and liberty becomes licentiousness, which invariably results in tyranny. Self-government, under God, remains the key to liberty.

Man’s attempts at law, however, are positive in nature. Government declares, “Thou shalt” with taxes, license fees, and regulatory fines attached to increase government’s scope of power. Positive laws subject citizens to the dictates of government, which

typically curtails their freedom already granted to them by God.

The Declaration of Independence touched on this dilemma. Our Founding Fathers articulated that our liberties originated with God and government's purpose was to protect our God-given rights. Statists use positive law to control its citizens. It is this fabricated law system that diminishes our liberty.

History reveals if man will not subject himself to the Ten Commandments of God, he will be made subject to the ten thousand commandments of men." Subsequently, the removal of the Ten Commandments from the public life of our nation does not serve to make America freer; it actually has served to increase the size and scope of the Federal beast.

### Who is Jesus?

- **Cornelius Tacitus – Called the Greatest Roman Historian of all time. Lived 55 to 120 A.D. Wrote Annals & Histories covering AD 14 to 96.**
- "Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius: but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also. (Annals XV,44)

The historian from antiquity, Cornelius Tacitus, concurred, "The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws." Review all the laws on the books that micro-manage American life today to affirm the veracity of these statements. If added up, all the regulations, licenses, and bureaucratic policies would tower over our heads. If they physically fell upon us, the mere weight would crush us to powder. The lesson is clear. Rebellion against God, the breaking of his bonds and the severing of his cords does not make us free (Psalm 2). It leads to increased bondage and civil despotism. In this, the historical admonishment rings true, "Those who will not be ruled by God will be ruled by tyrants."

Besides these realities, God did not give his laws to make men good. He established his laws to restrain evil and to protect the life, liberty, and property of His creatures. Spiritually, He established His law as a tutor to lead depraved men to his Son to partake of His great salvation (Galatians 3:24).

Man's view of law seeks to force men to be "good," by restricting their liberty. In other words, secularists do not reject the notion of salvation. They just reject God's version of redemption. Man can still be "perfected" by keeping their laws and public policies. This is why leftists gravitate toward seats of power. They must capture the sword of civil government to implement their plan to "save" the world through their positive laws. Thus, citizens are reduced to mere guinea pigs in their grand social experiment to establish their secular version of Utopia.

Christians rightly reject these despotic notions. Man's salvation only comes by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Acts 4:12 confirms, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name (Jesus Christ) under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

## Is Law a Fixed Eternal Standard or Evolutionary in Nature?



Darwinism not only corrupted the study of biology and provided the intellectual justification for genocide, the theory spread to subvert the law itself. As a legal theorist and Supreme Court Justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes, became infatuated with Darwin and his evolutionary theory. He, along with a few like-minded jurists in the early twentieth century, expanded evolutionary “science” to influence the discipline of law.

Holmes was one of the first who sought to remove the transcendent understanding of law. Holmes emphasized man’s experience and circumstances, rather than a fixed standard, as the basis for law. To him, truth was relative, not absolute. Holmes did not want our system of law to derive its basis from divine law. That outdated social construct had run its course as far as Holmes was concerned. A new “enlightened” social construct was in order, one that was based on an evolving view of law.

Eventually, this novel judicial mind-set influenced other adjudicators in our nation to view our Constitution as a “living” document rather than a fixed standard for the rule of law. Holmes believed legal principles should develop and adapt to man’s progress. Though probably not intentional, he ended up fulfilling Thomas Jefferson’s worst fears when it came to the judiciary. Thomas Jefferson warned, “The constitution, on this hypothesis, is a mere thing of wax in the hands of the judiciary, which they may twist and shape into any form they please.”

The concept of law promoted by Holmes is known as legal positivism. Legal positivism implies the law does not need to have an ethical basis. In other words, it is not necessary for law to have a moral foundation. Holmes was a hardcore pragmatist. Absolute truth, righteousness, or morality was none of his concern. All that mattered was “what works” as men evolve.

It is this betrayal against God’s law as the foundation of man’s law that moved American jurisprudence to adopt legal positivism.

It supplanted Blackstone’s “law of nature (eternal laws of good and evil) and the law of revelation, found only in the Scriptures” as the basis for human law. Interestingly enough, until the mid 1800s competent lawyers in the defense of American liberty thoroughly studied Sir William Blackstone’s, Commentaries on the Laws of England. In 1870, however, a major paradigm shift in the concept of law occurred.

Christopher Columbus Langdell, dean of the Harvard Law School, embarked on a campaign of judicial reform. The “reform” Langdell birthed made him the father of the current “case method” legal model. The case method uses the study of man’s experience, previous court cases, and prior judge’s rulings as the basis for “law.”

Starting with Langdell and proceeding to Holmes, American law was divorced from God and morality. Thus, Blackstone fell to the wayside. The law became the study of human court decisions and precedent based upon fallible men, instead of the infallible standard of God’s Law. It became an evolving concept rather than a fixed, transcendent, eternal standard based upon the moral commandments of Almighty God.

## **Conclusion of the Matter**



“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

Previously, Sir William Blackstone was mentioned. This is what he believed about the relationship between God’s Law and man’s law, “Upon these two foundations, the law of nature (the eternal laws of good and evil) and the law of revelation (found only in the scriptures), depend all human laws. That is to say, no human laws should be allowed to contradict these.”

In other words, any human law that is not rooted in these two underlying premises for law is no law at all. More recently, Martin Luther King Jr. affirmed this truth. He gave this apologetic on law:

There are two types of law: just and unjust. I would be the first advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that ‘an unjust law is no law at all.’ Now what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law.

America has rejected this premise in our day and the fruit of our rebellion is ripe unto judgment. Psalms 2 reminds us who the true Lawgiver is as this warning goes out to men and nations:

Now therefore, be wise, O kings; Be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you

perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.  
Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

In light of these truths, I know not what course others will set, but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord, seek to love Him by obeying His commandments and keeping His Word (Joshua 24:15; John 14:21). I pray all those who read this will do the same as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission in the earth by ensuring nations, “Observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

IN KING JESUS’ SERVICE  
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