

## 11.02.2012 GOD THE LAWGIVER

***For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us. Isaiah 33:2***

***There is one Lawgiver and Judge, who is able to save and to destroy you. James 4:12 (NIV)***

This week's lesson topic is 'God the Lawgiver'. Earlier, we studied that the triune God is our Creator. As Creator, His will as to how the universe is run is expressed in natural law, or the laws of nature — "ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jeremiah 33:25). The Creator is a logical God who has imposed order in His universe.

God's logic is built into the universe, and so the universe is not haphazard or arbitrary. It obeys laws of chemistry that are logically derived from the laws of physics, many of which can be logically derived from other laws of physics and laws of mathematics. The most fundamental laws of nature exist only because God wills them to; they are the logical, orderly way that the Lord upholds and sustains the universe He has created. The atheist is unable to account for the logical, orderly state of the universe. Why should the universe obey laws if there is no law-giver? But laws of nature are perfectly consistent with biblical creation. In fact, the Bible is the foundation for natural laws.

The laws of nature are uniform. They do not (arbitrarily) change, and they apply throughout the whole cosmos. The laws of nature apply in the future just as they have applied in the past; this is one of the most basic assumptions in all of science. Without this assumption, science would be impossible. If the laws of nature suddenly and arbitrarily changed tomorrow, then past experimental results would tell us nothing about the future. Why is it that we can depend on the laws of nature to apply consistently throughout time? The secular scientists cannot justify this important assumption. But the Christian can because the Bible gives us the answer. God is Lord over all creation and sustains the universe in a consistent and logical way. God does not change, and so He upholds the universe in a consistent, uniform way throughout time

**However, our lesson this week discusses God the Lawgiver in a different sense.** It follows last week's lesson. **God is a holy God. And when He created beings (mankind) with reasoning, He provided them with moral laws, laws that would be a reflection of His character of love, righteousness and justice. Above all, they are an expression of His will. While the laws of nature are ordained by God and will always respond in the same way (unless God chooses to intervene in a supernatural way), mankind has been given free-will, the freedom to choose whether they will follow God's moral law or not.**

*I delight to do Your will; yes, Your law is within my heart. Psalm 40:8*

### **God's Law Eternal**

While we can accept that the laws of nature have existed since the beginning of the universe, nevertheless, since the moral law is a reflection of God's character, it is eternal and unchanging. It is as absolute as God is.

*Forever O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven. Psalm 119:89*

From the beginning of time, from the creation of the earth, mankind has known the will of God with regard to righteousness. All the ancient civilisations have their code of moral practice which is a reflection of the 'Light which lightens every man that comes into the world' John 1:9. So we have no difficulty in understanding that God's law was known to mankind before it was written as 10 precepts on tablets of stone at Sinai. And because mankind fell short of it, 'missing the mark of the glory of God' (Rom 3:23), they were all sinners.

Paul makes this argument in Romans 5:12-14. All men died until Sinai; this meant that they were sinners. All that a written law does is to make sinners into transgressors. One who is a transgressor is one who deliberately breaks the law. But one is a sinner even when one is not aware of deliberately breaking the law, because the word 'sin' means 'missing the mark' (as in archery). The Bible is very clear that all have sinned and come short, or missed the mark, of God's glory (Rom 3:23). It is equally clear from the Bible that no-one will have an excuse before God, for rejecting His will, because He has made Himself known to all mankind.

*He (Christ) was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. John 1:9*

*'We...preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.'*  
Acts 14:15-17

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:18-20*

'God is light; and in the words, "I am the light of the world," Christ declared His oneness with God, and His relation to the whole human family. It was He who at the beginning had caused "the light to shine out of darkness." 2 Corinthians 4:6. He is the light of sun and moon and star. He was the spiritual light that in symbol and type and prophecy had shone upon Israel. But not to the Jewish nation alone was the light given. As the sunbeams penetrate to the remotest corners of the earth, so does the light of the Sun of Righteousness shine upon every soul.'

*Desire of Ages p.464*

### **God the Lawgiver**

*For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, the LORD is our King; He will save us.*  
Isaiah 33:2

This phrase 'the Lord is our lawgiver' also is seen in James 4:12 and has the same meaning in the Greek. God is our lawgiver and therefore has the power to rule and judge. Man has no authority to judge because he is not the lawgiver. In stating that God is our lawgiver, judge and king, Isaiah is describing the role of a monarch who has legislative, judicial and administrative functions. James further describes this in terms of the absolute sovereignty of God.

## **Our Response to God's Revealed Will**

If God's law is ultimately the will of God (for mankind, for the church, for me, personally), we must get to **know** His revealed will in His Word (the Bible) and then to **obey** it.

1. Firstly, we must believe in Christ (John 6:40); if we do, we shall live forever, if we do not accept Christ, we shall be condemned in the judgement.
2. The Bible teaches that God's will for man is sanctification (1 Thess 4:3), giving thanks to God (1 Thess 5:18), and doing good (1 Peter 2:15).
3. The will of God as revealed in the Bible must be applied to every aspect of our lives (Deut 29:29). We must follow after righteousness, shun evil and delight to do God's will.
4. In situations that are not covered by specific statements in the Bible, we must seek to know God's will by being in fellowship with God (1 John 1:6, 7), looking for principles from the Bible (1 Cor 10:6), asking advice from godly counsellors (Prov 11:14, 15:22, 24:6) and remember that God will make His will plain to us if we truly desire to follow Him (John 7:17, Phil 2:13). If we are still not sure, we can go ahead with what we think is the best decision, but always asking God to open or close doors according to His will.
5. **Reading, memorising and meditating on the Word and will of God are of no value without obedience to God's will.** This obedience is the fruit of holiness, which comes as a result of our presenting ourselves to God daily as living sacrifices (Rom 6:13, 22; 12:1, 2).

## **The Blessings of Obeying God's Will**

1. Treasured by God - Exodus 19:5)
2. Blessedness (happiness) – Psalm 119:2
3. Unashamed – Psalm 119:4-6
4. Understanding – Psalm 119:100
5. The avoidance of evil- Psalm 119:101
6. Guidance for life – Psalm 119:105
7. Safety, freedom from anxiety – Proverbs 1:33
8. Life – Pro 19:16, Ezekiel 18:19, John 8:51
9. God's blessing – Isa 1:19
10. Greatness in the kingdom of heaven – Matt 5:19
11. Bearing fruit for God – Matt 13:23
12. God's love perfected in us – 1 John 2:5
13. The promise of God's presence – John 14:23, 2 John 1:9

14. Abiding in the love of God – John 15:10
15. Assurance of salvation – 2 John 2:3, John 17:3
16. Eternal Life – 1 John 2:17
17. Dwelling in God – 1 John 3:24
18. Love of God's children – 1 John 5:2
19. Entrance into heaven and the right to the Tree of Life – Revelation 22:7, 14

### **The Mission of Christ**

*Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God.'"*

*Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." **He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.***

Christ came to earth to do the Father's will. By His death, He fulfilled God's will, for He provided a perfect and complete salvation for mankind. By doing the Father's will, He glorified God.

We too, are called to glorify God by doing His perfect will. He calls us to identify with Christ's death by denying ourselves and presenting our new lives to Him daily as living sacrifices, so that the Spirit can transform us and reveal to us the perfect will of God.

### **Conclusion:**

**Our God is the Holy God. His holiness is the divine attribute of perfection by which He is absolutely distinct from all His creatures and exalted above them in infinite majesty (Exodus 15:11, Isa 57:15). His attributes of love and righteousness are manifestations of His perfections.**

**By virtue of God's righteousness, He maintains a moral government and imposes a just law on man, rewarding obedience and punishing disobedience.**

**This Holy God is our King, Lawmaker and Judge.**

**If we acknowledge Him as King and Lord of our lives, then our greatest pleasure will be found in loving Him and doing His will. We will have no fear of the judgement, for we have passed from death to life and shall not come into condemnation at the judgement (John 5:24, 1 John 4:14-17).**

To all who love God and seek to follow His will in their lives, God will reveal to them the fullness of His will. To spiritual children, just starting on the journey of salvation, He reveals the basic concepts of His will as the 10 precepts given at Sinai. As we grow older in faith, we understand that these laws are based on 2 principles – love to God and love to our fellow men. The love we manifest is the very love of God, unchanging, unconditional and self-giving. It is at once, impossible of ourselves, yet

wholly possible through the work of the in-dwelling Spirit in our lives. As we grow still more in our knowledge and love of God, we seek for holiness; to be set apart to the will of God, to be and do whatever He wants. We offer Him our lives, so that He Himself can live out His life within us.

And our song will be the same as that of David, the sweet psalmist of Israel:

***The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.  
More to be desired are they than gold,  
Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
Moreover by them Your servant is warned,  
And in keeping them there is great reward.***

***Who can understand his errors?  
Cleanse me from secret faults.  
Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;  
Let them not have dominion over me.  
Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression.***

***Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight,  
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.***

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For Reflection:

- If I teach others to break the law, I am setting myself up as a lawgiver.
- In doing so, I am setting myself in the place of God.
- Every time I make a critical judgement of another, I am setting myself in the place of Christ the Judge. There is a word that describes those who desire to usurp the position and work of Christ – it is 'Antichrist'.
- 'It is a fundamental principle in Christianity that no laws are binding on the conscience, but those which God has ordained'. Do you agree with this statement?

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The weakness of the arguments of people who have no absolute authority for their moral beliefs:

1. Their rejection of God, who does pronounce absolute moral standards, is hypocritical in light of the fact that they want their own moral rules to be absolute.
2. When people secularize biblical laws by basing them on human opinions rather than the Bible, they are in effect setting up those laws to be easily brushed aside if opinion is swayed against them at some later date.

Below is a chart comparing and contrasting the assumptions and consequences of 1) believing in God as Creator, King, Lawgiver and Judge with absolute moral authority and of 2) not believing in God. Taken from 'Answers in Genesis' available at:

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/cm/v20/n4/two-worldviews-in-conflict>

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**Assumptions:**

1. There is no God (atheism); or, if a god exists, he/she/it left no trace of any creative activity
2. The present is the key to the past
3. We are here by chance

**Mechanism:**

1. Random mutation with natural selection
2. Life appeared and gradually diversified
3. No global flood covered the earth

**Order of Appearance:**

(also for 'progressive creation')

1. Matter always existed or just appeared
2. Sun/stars existed before Earth
3. Sun is Earth's first light
4. First life = marine organisms
5. Reptiles pre-date birds
6. Land mammals predate whales
7. Disease/death precede man

**Implications:**

1. No life after death
2. Our present life is all there is
3. Man is the highest authority
4. Self-fulfilment is the highest priority of man

**Logical Consequence:**

1. God is reduced to a creation of man
2. God is removed from public life
3. Man determines right and wrong
4. Civil laws written by the group with most (political) power

**Assumptions:**

1. In the beginning, God created
2. Revelation (God's Word) is the key to the past
3. We were created by God

**Mechanism:**

1. Intelligent design
2. Universe/life created in six ordinary days approximately 6,000 years ago
3. Noah's flood covered the entire earth

**Order of Appearance:**

1. God created matter
2. Earth created before sun/stars
3. Light created before sun
4. First life = land plants
5. Birds pre-date land reptiles
6. Whales pre-date land mammals
7. Disease/death result from man's sin

**Bible Teaches:**

1. Man will live forever if accepts Christ
2. God wants us to live with Him forever
3. God is the highest authority
4. Love of God, and obedience to His Word is the highest priority of man

**Logical Consequence:**

1. God is the all-powerful Creator
2. God is honoured in public life
3. God determines right and wrong
4. Civil laws based on God's law