

Examining Presuppositions- Dispensationalism (6)

6 Truths of Covenantalism and Dispensationalism

1. Inerrancy of the Bible
2. Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ
3. Deity of Jesus Christ
4. Atoning character of His death
5. Bodily Resurrection
6. Second Coming of Christ
 - Rapture?
 - Judgment Seat of Christ?
 - Separate judgments or one universal judgment?
 - Church and Israel?
 - Government?
 - Kingdom promised to Israel?

ORIENTING TO THE ESSENTIALS OF A THRIVING SPIRITUAL LIFE

1. Salvation adjustment to the justice of God.

- ✓ **2 Thessalonians 1:7** when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey (ὕπακούουσιν) the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ And these will pay the penalty of eternal (αἰώνιον) destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,
 - Christ will be the Final Judge of all unbelievers.
 - Hell is as eternal (αἰώνιον) as Heaven

#2 Fellowship adjustment to the Justice of God.

1 John 1:5 And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If (Ἐὰν) we say that we have fellowship with Him (μετ' αὐτοῦ) and yet walk in the darkness (ἐν τῷ σκότει), we lie (ψευδόμεθα) and do not practice (οὐ ποιοῦμεν) the truth;

1 Corinthians 11:30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves (ἑαυτοὺς διεκρίνομεν) ~~rightly~~, we should not be judged.

#3—Maturity adjustment to the justice of God: Spiritual Growth into the Greater Grace Life.

James 4:6 But He gives a greater (μείζονα) grace. Therefore *it* says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

✓ How are you doing in the "game of life"?

1 Corinthians 2:9 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, And *which* have not entered the heart of man, All that God has prepared for those who love Him (τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν)." ¹⁰ For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

✓ These "things" are in time.

Review:

Government 1 - The 7 laws of divine establishment.

Government 2 - The Evils of Big Government, 1 Sam 8.

Government 3 - The purpose of Government, Rom 13.

Government 4 - How Christ and BD founded Western Civilization

Government 5 - Natural Law and the 5 decay stages of a nation

Government 6 - The Real Nature of Evil=corrupted good. Takes many years in doctrine under the HS to grasp this.

Government 7 - Natural law & the relationship between State and church

The Relationship between the Church and State

1. There are 3 perspectives on the relationship of church and state.
 - a. #1: Secularism—State over the Church: Marxism/Statism.
 - “Power kills; absolute Power kills absolutely. . . . The more power a government has, the more it can act arbitrarily according to the whims and desires of the elite, and the more it will make war on others and murder its foreign and domestic subjects. The more constrained the power of governments, the more power is diffused, checked, and balanced, the less it will aggress on others and commit democide. At the extremes of Power, totalitarian communistic governments slaughter their people by the tens of *millions* (R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government*, 1-2).
 - ❖ USSR, 1917-87 = 62 million – govt mass murder
 - ❖ China, 1928-87 = 45 million – govt mass murder
 - ❖ Germany, 1933-45 = 20 million – govt mass murder

- Secularism—state dominates everything—including church.
- Marxism/secularism as per the old Soviet Union and China.
- This is rapidly increasing in the United States.
- Leadership often claims a separation of church and state, but in practice it is domination of the church by state.
- In secularism State ends up imposing irreligion on the church.
- In secularism the State brainwashes its populace through a public education program, cf. China's Tiananmen Square.
- Government is reduced to situationalism as it dismantles all God-given moral absolutes, cf. Humanist Manifestos I and II. As the state rejects God (Rom 1:20ff), inalienable rights & moral law from the Creator are replaced with a civil command theory law. America today is saturated with command theory of law.

Note “how far we have come” in the 45 stated goals of communism in taking over the United States (cf. Cleon Skousen, *The Naked Communist*, 259-262).

- ✓ #6: Provide American aid to all nations regardless of Communist domination
- ✓ #11: Promote the UN as the only hope for mankind. . . .
- ✓ #16: Use courts to weaken basic institutions by claiming activities violate civil rights.
- ✓ #17: Get control of the schools. Use them as transmission belts for socialism. . . . Get control of teacher’s association.
- ✓ #20: Infiltrate the press.
- ✓ #24: Eliminate all laws governing obscenity by calling them censorship and violation of free speech.

- ✓ #25: Present homosexuality, degeneracy, and promiscuity as normal, natural, healthy.
- ✓ #27: Infiltrate the churches and replace revealed religion with social religion.
- ✓ #29: Discredit the American Constitution
- ✓ #36: Infiltrate and gain control of more unions
- ✓ #40: Discredit the family as an institution.
- ✓ #41: Emphasize the need to raise children away from the negative influence of the parents.
- ✓ #42: Create the impression that violence and insurrection are legitimate aspects of American tradition; that students and special-interest groups should rise up and use “united force” to solve economic, political or social problems.

**b. #2. Reconstructionism/Theonomy: Church over State
a.k.a. theocracy. The reconstructionists want to
reconstruct civil government in a theocratic model,**

- ✓ Constantine, Charlemagne, Roman State Church, Augustine's *City of God*.
- ✓ 1400-1700 = Church's 300 years of witch hunts. All in the name of the "known science" (during the time of Decartes, Newton, Galileo, Copernicus, Kepler, Tycho Brahe), cf. "devil's spot," & "water float tests." Number of murdered range from hundreds of thousands to a million. Guess what class suffered the most? Why? However, the number of murders by State Church pales in comparison to secular government's democide—in the 20th Century!

- ✓ AKA dominion theology, kingdom-now theology, theonomists
- ✓ Reformational State churches: Calvin and Puritans. What Calvin did for Geneva Constantine did for RCSC
- ✓ Puritans in early American colonies followed Calvin and persecuted believers like Roger Williams.
- ✓ Players today: Rushdony, James Kennedy, David Barton.
- ✓ The aim is to Christianize both America and the world.
- ✓ Generally postmillennial. See a need to bring in the kingdom by establishing Mosaic Law in society.

Problems with theonomy:

- ✓ God never gave biblical law to Gentiles as basis for civil law.
- ✓ Theonomy is unworkable in a pluralistic society
- ✓ Theonomy politicizes the church's mission
- ✓ Theonomy stresses God's special revelation to the neglect of natural law (Romans 2:12-14)
- ✓ Theonomists deny the practical value of general revelation and natural law (due to noetic effects of sin). However, the Word declares that natural revelation is clearly seen, written on the hearts of all unbelievers, and is the grounds for their being without excuse and is sufficient for them to eternally perish, Rom. 2:12.

- c. **#3 - Jeffersonianism (J): The Natural-Law View.** Natural Law and the Founding of our Great Country. Note the natural law in the *Declaration of Independence*—our nation’s birth certificate:

*When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the **Laws of Nature and of Nature's God** entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, **that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.** --That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed*

2. Blessings of Jeffersonianism (J): The Natural-Law View.

- ✓ State is separate from the church in that it receives its authority directly from God (natural revelation), Rom. 13:1-7.
- ✓ Does not make civil law based on special revelation.
- ✓ Never becomes an arm of the church.
- ✓ Civil government is based on Nature's Law which comes from Nature's God.
- ✓ By basing government in natural, universal, moral law, Jeffersonianism avoids antinomianism (secularism) on the one hand and state-mandated religion (reconstructionism) on the other.

- ✓ Natural Law did not begin with Christians: Natural law is also found in ancient Hindu, Chinese, Greek, and Roman writings that predate the time of Christ.
- ✓ Natural Law is reflected in God's image within humanity; the image is marred but not wholly blotted out. Thus, God is just in punishing unbelievers for not living in accordance with natural law written on their hearts.
- ✓ Natural law is common to all people whereas special revelation is only for believers.
- ✓ Jefferson believed these unalienable rights are rooted in Law of nature that derive from Nature's God.

- ✓ On the Jefferson Memorial in D.C. are his words: “God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?”
- ✓ For Jefferson, natural law is not a humanly descriptive “is,” but a divinely prescriptive “ought.”
- ✓ Secularists who attempt to argue that it is a violation of the First Amendment to impose a moral laws based on a Moral Lawgiver (God) are **full of balderdash (σκύβαλα)**! Foundational natural law is the view of the Declaration of Independence, our country’s founding document. It is a twisted logic that pronounces our National Birth Certificate unconstitutional.
- ✓ Rejection of natural law has led to positive law—command theory of law under which even the Nazi atrocities can not be condemned.

3. Biblical basis for separation of church and state.
- Romans 13:1-7—best place to start for Christian view
Romans 13:1 Let every person be in subjection (ὑποταστέσθω) to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established (τεταγμέναι) by God.
 - **Romans 13:2** Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance (διαταγή) of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.
 - ✓ Government is a divine institution, 13:1-2.
 - ✓ The authority does not come from social compact or from church—it comes from God Himself.

- ✓ God is the source of all rights—rights of government (capital punishment and taxes) and human rights.
- ✓ Government is not a family (Aristotle) or social convention (Rousseau). These are non-theistic views.
- ✓ Government is needed to restrain evil man. Prior to government, man was never given dominion over man.
- ✓ Only the Christian view fits with the purpose of God as it relates to the depravity of man. All others are humanistic or paganistic and evil (= corrupt good) and fail miserably.

- ✓ Government is not a positive good, but rather a necessary evil.
- ✓ Government is an evil not because of the abuse of power by the authorities, but also because it interferes with freedom and introduces an unnatural superiority among men.
- ✓ The existence of government is a partial punishment and cure for crime and injustice.
- ✓ Politicians, often arrogantly believe they are immune from evil (profit motive, temptation), and we should trust them to regulate our affairs and take care of us.
- ✓ Unless the rights of government are given and limited by God, there is no systematic ground between anarchy and dictatorship.

- ✓ Christian view of government is that all men are sinful and need restraint.
- ✓ The Christian is under obligation to obey governments in many ways undesirable.
- ✓ When Paul insists that every soul should be subject to the powers that be, he is evidently removing from individual judgment any question as to a *de jure* opposed to a *de facto* government, cf. Julius and Augustus Caesar.
- ✓ Compare Christ's answer to "is it lawful to pay tribute to Caesar?" Paul and Christ oriented to *de facto* government.
 - ✓ **Matthew 22:21** They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's."

- ✓ It is a duty before God to pay taxes, even if those taxes are exceedingly unjust—as our evil graduated income tax.
- ✓ Rebellion or revolution on account of taxation is not condoned. However, the Christian is enjoined to use every legal means possible.
- ✓ Bible doctrine is for all aspects of life—not just priesthood.
- ✓ The doctrinal believer will do all he can to limit power of gov.
- ✓ The Christian can disobey govt when it intrudes in his relationship with God. Caesar's power is limited, cf. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Moses' mother, Niemöller in Nazi Germany, and Corrie ten Boom in the Netherlands.
 - ✓ **Acts 5:29** But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men.

- ✓ True freedom cannot not be justified apart from Christianity. This freedom goes against the grain of humanistic robotic mentality.
- ✓ Christianity is inconsistent with totalitarianism due to absolute and unchanging values and rights. The majority does not determine what is right; the majority is not *ipso facto* right.
- ✓ Republicanism with separation of powers is the best form of government because evil people working at cross purposes under written law does less harm than a single evil ruler.
- ✓ Only the Christian possess a solid foundation of metaphysics and epistemology from which to build the best form of government—an evil but a necessary evil due to the bent of evil men.
- ✓ Only a doctrinal Christian believer grounded in natural law and an understanding of God's purpose for government can safeguard human rights and political liberty—humanism and relativism simply cannot do it.

4. Biblical basis for natural law.

- ✓ Distinction between general revelation (Rom 1:19-20; Psa 19:1-6) and special revelation (2 Tim 3:16-18; Psa 19:7-14)
 - **Romans 1:19** because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen (καθορᾶται), being understood (νοούμενα) through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
 - **2 Tim 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- ✓ Explicit statements of God's revelation in nature, Psa 19:1; Psa 97:6; Acts 14:15-17; Acts 17:24-25; Psa 14:1
 - **Psalm 19:1** *For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*
The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring (ἑλεγε) the work of His hands.
- ✓ Man is made in the image of God and thus capable of receiving rational and moral revelation from God, Gen 1:27; James 3:9; Rom. 1:19-20.
 - **James 3:9** With it we bless *our* Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness (ὁμοίωσιν) of God;
- ✓ God is revealed in nature in two basic ways: as Creator and as Sustainer—Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:2-13; Rev 4:11.

- ✓ God's moral law is written in the human heart, Rom 2:14-15.
 - **Romans 2:14** For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively (φύσει!) the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
- ✓ God reveals Himself in beauty. He has created rational human being with the capacity to appreciate beauty as He Himself does, Ecc 3:11.

- ✓ God's revelation in capacity for human music. God loves music and has created us with capacity to appreciate music, Job 38:7; Rev 5:12; 14:12; Ex 15:20-21; Psa 150:3-5.
- ✓ The general revelation is clear enough to render all men without excuse, Rom. 1:20. However, it is not enough to show man how to get to heaven.
- ✓ General revelation is broader than special revelation—science, math, logic, the arts. While the Bible is scientifically accurate, it is not a textbook on science.
- ✓ General revelation is essential to human reason. God thinks rationally and has given man the same capacity.
- ✓ General revelation is essential to human government. The natural law in general revelation is binding on all men.

- ✓ The law of Moses (special revelation) was not given to the Gentiles, Rom 2:14; Nonbelievers are never condemned for working on the Sabbath or not bringing tithes to Jerusalem.
- ✓ Nonbelievers are bound by the law written in their hearts.
- ✓ While they have no special revelation in Holy Scripture, they are responsible to general revelation in human nature.
- ✓ General revelation is essential to Christian apologetics. Apart from general revelation there is no argument from beginning, design, or even for the reality of absolute moral truths.

Objections to general/moral revelation and natural law by some Christians—usually out of zeal to exalt special revelation.

- ✓ “Natural revelation/law is unclear” – however, Rom 1:19 says that it is plain to them. Special revelation is unclear to others as well.
- ✓ “Natural revelation/law is distorted by sin” –the Word says the problem is not in misunderstanding but in rejection—same problem with special revelation. Consider all of the cults and sects claiming to have Truth in special revelation.
- ✓ “Natural revelation/law is unidentifiable and cannot be accessed;” however, the Word says it is accessible in the heart and instinctive, Rom 2:14. Consider how someone *naturally* reacts when an *injustice* has been done to *them*.

4. Demonstration of natural law throughout history.

- ✓ Influence from B.C. to early America. 18th century. Representatives of colonial America greatly admired and were influenced by Stoic philosophy.
- ✓ Stoicism: Posidonius (150 B.C), Seneca (4-65 A.D.), Epictetus (55-138 A.D.), Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.).
- ✓ Stoicism at its core taught that the physical world is governed by law and that the affairs of the state and of daily life must mimic, and approximate, and be obedient to those same principles of lawfulness. It must be the *hegemonikon* of reason that regulates life.
- ✓ Nature and natural law are expressions of the *logos*—an ordered realm, governed by law great and minute, collectively establishing what is “right” for entities that comprise it. When things are out of order there is chaos, degradation, disease, madness, brutality, monstrosity.

(continued Stoic thought)

- ✓ Rationality, law, and order were all connected.
- ✓ Out of rationality, law, and order came liberty—which is antithetical to anarchy.
- ✓ Liberty was conforming one's behavior to a principle rather than to dictatorial instinct or tyrant.
- ✓ What the law imposes is something that a rational being will find justifiable.
- ✓ This led to the development of the concept of the *individual* person and a moral order.
- ✓ The moral order was an express of the logos, the rational order of things.

- ✓ Things that violated the normal *order*, canons of reason, were considered inherently unnatural: insanity, emotions—the passions, anger. This is where we get “stoic” terminology.
- ✓ They believed that the mark of the rational being—fit for the rule of law—was not to be controlled by passion.
- ✓ Irrationality was considered evil.
- ✓ This “rule orientation” led to a desire for man to enter the political realm as well as become lawgivers.

- ✓ Cicero, “The law was neither a thing to be contrived by the genius of man, nor established by any decree of the people, but a certain eternal principle, which governs the entire universe, wisely commanding what is right and prohibiting what is wrong. Therefore, they called that aboriginal and supreme law “the mind of God.”
- ✓ Marcus Aurelius taught that the divine mind rationally passes on what is virtuous and what is vicious, so, too, does law stand as “right reason.” Contrast this with later modern positive law as per Jerome Frank, who said that the outcome of adjudication may well depend upon what the judge had for breakfast. We went from the Mind of God to ham and eggs!

More on Cicero (106-43 B.C.) and the Roman World

- ✓ He noted that in every community, there are certain precepts that are honored without exception. These *ius gentium* are universal, understood, and adopted. He, like Aristotle, noted the core principles of equity that are “universal and the same.”
- ✓ He recognized that these were not passed on from one tribe to another throughout the world.
- ✓ He taught that it arises from the very nature of human nature itself as a rational being.
- ✓ This will be referred to as the *ius naturale*, the “natural law.” This will lay the foundations for one of the most developed theories in philosophy of law: the theory of natural law. It will be further developed by Thomas Aquinas—no NL is not some RC conspiracy.

- ✓ Regarding natural law—*Ignorantia legis neminem excusast--* “Ignorance of the law excuses no one.” Here the aspect of the rule of natural law is more fundamental than local ordinances.
- ✓ Not to know natural law is to be an unnatural, defective, kind of being.
- ✓ This Roman development of law enabled her to administer order/law to the known world.
- ✓ This Roman law set rational precepts that rendered life predictable, that let people know their obligations, and their rights, and their duties.
- ✓ It was a law for settling disputes without force, without violence, a system that revered the citizen in the sense of holding that citizen responsible to the rule of law as a rational being.

- ✓ Justinian (533), “the law which natural reason appoints for all mankind obtains equally among all nations.”
- ✓ Thomas Aquinas, “law is an ordinance of reason.”
- ✓ John Locke, “And that all men may be restrained from invading others’ rights, and from doing hurt to one another, and the law of Nature be observed.”

- ✓ The law of nature was understood as a law instilled by nature not merely in mankind, but in all creatures of the sky, earth, and sea (Justinian). Those natural laws included orderliness, purpose, flourishing and survival. Animal kingdom does not requires years of instruction, nor is the infant taught to take nourishment at the breast.
- ✓ Man is fitted out by God with certain intuitive understandings essential to life—a rational being—at core man God wired man to be an intuitive moral rational being that transcends differences in culture an custom.

- ✓ While Rome had religious pagan presuppositions and many corruptions, it was their recognition of and adherence to the principle of natural law that enabled them to build a framework for Western Civilization.

- ✓ After Socrates defeated skepticism and Rome had instituted a strong sense of rationality, order, and yes, natural law, then the world was ready for Christianity.

- ✓ Christ and Christianity came at the right time under a workable framework to access and retain truth
 - **Galatians 4:4** But when the fulness of the time (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου) came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

- 5. Rejection of God eventually leads to rejection of natural law** (Bentham, Austin), and the creation of legal positivism.
- ✓ God is in the process of judging all nations which are rejecting natural law, Rom. 1:18-32. This judgment consists of turning them over to the own scatological sin natures and depravity.
 - ✓ When natural law is rejected, man moves into legal positivism, the command theory of law where *Gesetz is Gesetz*— not as a moral maxim, or the voice of conscience, an ordinance of reason or the mind of God. When natural law is rejected, legal positivism (the command law theory) always emerges. Under such law no one can condemn the Nazi or Stalin atrocities.

- ✓ Much of modern society—especially the courts—due largely to the acceptance of human good and evil, rejects *ius naturale* and thus reject Aristotle’s equity, Plato’s sense of absolutes, Homer’s humanity—and thus the natural law of man’s shared humanity of sense of right and wrong.
- ✓ Modern society has stripped man of his agentic powers (Social cognition theory perspective that views people as self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating, not just as reactive organisms shaped by environmental forces or driven by inner impulses). Because man is created in the image of God, regardless of customs, he is rational and therefore a moral orderly creature. “Even a madman reasons rightly from wrong premises,” Locke.

- ✓ One the best way to see the reality of natural law today is do a google search on “crime” in any country in the world and you will see virtually the same laws against the same crimes—without the need to check special revelation (Bible).
 - The most significant divergences will be when religion runs the state or the state runs religion.
 - God’s Word is as true as it ever was.
- ✓ When there is a conflict between special revelation and natural revelation, special revelation always wins.
- ✓ However, there may be cases when general revelation is clear and special revelation ambiguous. In that case you may need to go with natural revelation.
- ✓ Natural revelation and special revelation are both from God and never contradict each other.