

Examining Presuppositions- Dispensationalism (7)

✓ Foundations affect everything else.

- Like a building a house, if you start with a bad foundation, everything get out of whack. There are horrible foundations all around us on basic worldviews that affect theology & SL.
- Philosophical foundation – everyone has one. Scientists are generally the worst at philosophy and consequently practice bad philosophy—all the while unbeknownst to them. More contradictions in science than ever claimed in regard to the Bible. Bad philosophy = skepticism & agnosticism.
- Theological foundations—everyone has one. Bad theological foundations affect everything else in life, cf. Gal. 3:1-5. The need for serious philosophy (logical fallacies, reductionism) and exegesis (Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, syntax).
- We live in a time of great assault on dispensationalism, fellowship, the spiritual life, and Bible doctrine.

Two Theological Frameworks— Covenant Theology or Dispensational Theology?

- ✓ Critical flaw of Covenant Theology = double hermeneutic.
- ✓ Only dispensationalism uses a consistent literal [grammatical-historical] and is able to treat the Text with integrity. Yet, many today are doubting dispensationalism due to faulty foundation. Jokingly (skeptically?) some call themselves “pan-millennialists.”
- ✓ Consider the unconditional eternal promises to Israel:
 - **Genesis 13:14** And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵ for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.

- **Jeremiah 31:35** Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day, And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: ³⁶ "If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also shall cease From being a nation before Me forever."
- ✓ **Jeremiah 31:37** Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the LORD.
- **Psalms 89:35** "Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. ³⁶ "His descendants shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me.

ORIENTING TO THE ABSOLUTES OF A THRIVING SPIRITUAL LIFE

Salvation adjustment to the justice of God

Heaven

Saved by grace, not works
Eph 2:8-10; Rom 3:28

In His presence are pleasures
forevermore, Psa 16:11

No tears, no death, no pain
Rev 21:4

Hell*

Condemned on good works
Rom 2:5-9; Rev 20:11-15

Weeping & gnashing of
teeth, Mt 25:30.

Weeping, death, torment,
Luke 16:28

*Unbelievers often hubristically say they will not be afraid of facing God. Easy to say now (like watching a storm vs. riding one out). We all have a date with God. The only issue is . . .

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; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin [progressive sanctification]. . . . ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [recovery from not walking in the light].

- Key to fellowship is walking in the light. Consider the what it means to walk in the light in James, the Petrine epistles, Galatians, Romans, Corinthians. Fellowship dynamics or *mere* mechanics? Fellowship has been the foundation of FBC since 1995—only fellowship foundation avoids philosophical problem of existential reductionism.

Maturity – the Four Steps in Eph 3:16-19

1. Life in the power of HS (f-ship: walking in the light), 3:16, *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;*
2. Life with Christ –deeper settled f-ship, 3:17: *so that Christ may dwell (κατοικῆσαι) in your hearts through faith (BD);*
3. Life of appreciation of Christ's love and the POG, 3:18-19, *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge [f-ship again],*
4. The pleroma/fullness of God, 3:19: that you may be filled up to all the fulness of God (wow!). Standard is God, Matt. 5:48.

Results of maturity/pleroma: **Eph 3:20** Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within [=HS] us,

Review:

Government 1 - The 7 laws of divine establishment.

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

Government 3 - The purpose of Government, Rom 13.

Government 4 - How Christ and BD gave us Western Civilization

Government 5 - General revelation and 5 decay stages of a nation

Government 6 - The Real Nature of Evil: corrupted good, privation.

Government 7 - Natural Law & the state and church.

Government 8 - More on Natural Law & the state and church.

3 Views of Government:

1. **Secular over State.** Consider the democide in 20th century.
2. **Church over State.** Consider the witch hunts from 1400-1700.
3. **Jeffersonian: Natural Law. . . . *Laws of Nature and of Nature's God. . . 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,***
 - ✓ “Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God” = natural law.
 - ✓ “Self-evident” = general revelation.
 - ✓ “Creator” = Our national birth certificate recognizes God.
 - ✓ “endowed . . . unalienable rights” = rights come from God and not government.
 - ✓ 2 Kingdoms: Matt. 22:21, . . . "Then render (Ἀπόδοτε) to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's."

General/Natural and Special Revelation

1. Scriptures:

- ✓ **Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 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, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.
- ✓ **Psalm 14:1** *For the choir director. A Psalm of David.* The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

- ✓ **Psalm 19:1-4** *For the choir director. A Psalm of David.* The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ² Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. ³ There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world.
- ✓ **Acts 17:26** and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷ that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His offspring.'

2. General (natural) Revelation

- ✓ God's general revelation is for all of mankind, bels. & unbel.
- ✓ General revelation includes the laws of logic and a sense of right and wrong. Includes what man "can't not know."
- ✓ General revelation is required for special revelation.
- ✓ General revelation never contradicts special revelation.
- ✓ General revelation is broader than special revelation.
- ✓ General revelation is characterized by induction whereas special revelation is by deduction.
- ✓ When general revelation seems to disagree with clear special revelation, then one goes with special revelation
- ✓ When clear general revelation seems to disagree with ambiguous special revelation, then one may need to go with general revelation.
- ✓ General revelation is essential for proper role government.

Natural law Rom 2:14-15.

1. Scripture.

- ✓ **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,

2. Characteristics of Natural Law.

- ✓ Not to be confused with “law” we see in nature.
- ✓ Not a Roman Catholic conspiracy.
- ✓ Natural Law is written on their hearts and therefore clear and perspicuous.
- ✓ Natural Law is binding on all men,
- ✓ Needs to be distinguished from special revelation. Mosaic Law or Bible doctrine was not given to non-believers; unbelievers are never condemned for not following special revelation, e.g. working on the Sabbath, eating shrimp or pork.
- ✓ Natural law is why some un-Christian countries can have low crime, have a respectful people, and even reflect a kind of protestant work ethic. Furthermore, it explains how such a pagan country can have a better, cleaner, and safer society than one with Christians who only orient to special revelation.

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

- ✓ “Natural revelation/law is unclear”— however, Rom 1:19 says that it is clear. What about clarity of special revelation?
- ✓ “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 *the 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*—from there reason comes into play.
- ✓ Consider the founding of this great nation. It was founded on natural law as understood by the most philosophical generation in American history. Do you think we would have fared better with a “Christian” constitution?

4. Demonstration of natural law throughout history.

- ✓ 18th century representatives of colonial America greatly admired and were heavily 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.

- ✓ 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 moral being—at core man God wired man to be an intuitive moral rational being that transcends differences in culture and 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 and Plato 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 of thought and law to access, retain, categorize, and have confidence in 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 the 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 true = correspondence view of truth.
- ✓ When there is a conflict between special revelation and natural revelation, go with special revelation.
- ✓ 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.

6. Christian view of government:

- Govt is a necessary evil because of evil man.
- Since govt is evil, it is best to have it divided with “evil men” (all men are evil) at cross purposes.
- Govt is a divine institution with limited power from God
 - ❖ **Romans 13:1** Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.
 - ❖ **Matthew 22:21** . . . "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." Caesar's rights are limited.

- The most basic reason God ordained government is to restrain the cancer of human crime,
 - ❖ **Romans 13:3** For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; ⁴ for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.
- Govt is authorized by God to punish, exact vengeance and wrath, and execute capital punishment, ⁴. Private citizens do not have this right, Rom. 12:19.

- ❖ 5 Reasons for government punishing criminals.
 - 1) Justice. Civil ruler is a servant of God in this manner, Rom 13:4.
 - 2) Deterrence. When criminals are severely punished, many will think twice. Note Paul's use of "terror" in verse 3. This is deterrence.
 - 3) Restraint on the criminal.
 - 4) Rehabilitation. He learns to obey the law and become more establishment oriented.
 - 5) Prevent private revenge. If society does not take action against criminals, the victim or his relatives will. This can result in great deal of bloodshed.
 - 6) Prevent "lynch mob" or gang bloodshed. The accused is to be presumed innocent until proven guilty, Dt 17:6.

- ❖ Some of the problems in our judicial system
 - ✓ Failure to execute capital punishment, cf. Romans 13:4 – notwithstanding clergy protests. Mass murderers often get life in prison at whim of judge
 - ✓ Often restitution is neglected.
 - ✓ Prisons—no biblical warrant—relatively modern
 - Inhumane, many of the first recipients went mad.
 - Inmates are often raped, become hardened, bitter, more anti-establishment, and learn more tricks of the trade and come out smarter criminals. Many reenter society untrained, unskilled, with no job, no property, often no family, and a criminal record—and filled with hate. What happens when they run out of money—their \$200.00? 74% are rearrested in 4 years.
 - Often more expensive than if they went to Harvard
 - Ineffective deterrent, crime continues to rise

- ✓ Problems with justice system
 - Delays and miscarriages of justice.
 - “Best interest of child” mentality in juvenal court—all the while juvenile crime soars.
 - Money buys justice. Cheaper for indigent to plea guilty.
- ✓ Alternatives to current prison system
 - Community service, restitution
 - Work-release programs where they return to prison at night. This enables them to support families while in prison.
 - Private enterprise with industries in prisons. This would allow job training.
 - Conjugal visits with wives or husbands.
 - Contract sentencing.

Christian view of government (cont), Rm 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-15:

- Limited rights of govt: protect, punish, tax
- Unless rights of people are protect by God, then no ground between anarchy and dictatorship.
- Rejects anarchism (Tolstoy)
- Rejects notion of govt as natural/family (Aristotle)
- Rejects social contract (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau) where rights can be surrender by vote of people.
- Rejects positive law—power theory (Oliver Holmes)
- Rejects theonomy (Mosaic Law)
- Government is under God—not the church.
- Therefore, govt is under fixed and eternal truths.

- **1 Timothy 2:1** First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.
- ✓ In spite of all of the evil in our government, we can still come together and learn BD and worship God according to the Word and our own consciences. Historically, this is a rarity in State-Church relationships.
 - ✓ Remember all of those in government for they all serve God's purposes.
 - ✓ We should understand the Bible doctrines related to govern, pray for our leaders, and advance in supergrace life and so glorify God to the maximum—by being filled with thinking of God.