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The Grace of Law and the Obligation of Gospel



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In a 1995 article published in a prominent conservative Lutheran journal, Pastor Scott Murray wrote:

[T]he message that does God's true and proper work in the church is the gospel alone. In fact, the sum and center of the Christian faith is the gospel because the law can never save; it *always and only condemns*. For Lutheranism *the law is not even a uniquely Christian doctrine*.¹

This opinion, while aggressive, is by no means hyperbolic. Since at least the Protestant Reformation,² the terms *gospel* and *law* have assumed contrasting theological definitions; in fact, gospel and law are often considered antithetical. The antithetical *theological* definitions are not identical to the definitions of gospel and law (and related terms) expressed in the Bible, though the theological definitions are usually alleged to derive from the biblical usage. When many Evangelicals and other Protestants and even some Roman Catholics hear the term *gospel*, they likely think of the gracious message of salvation in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ appropriated by faith alone apart from good works, law-keeping, or other ethical stipulations. It has no or little reference to human commitment or responsibility or, more accurately, ethical

stipulations. *Law*, however, is deemed quite different from a gracious message of salvation in that it denotes just such ethical stipulations (sometimes summarized in the Ten Commandments) of which the gospel is void. This law is sometimes held to serve three chief functions:³ (1) a flawless morality that God demands of humanity which the sinner cannot hope to keep but which *can* drive him or her to trust in Christ alone for salvation (the gospel); (2) an external legislation restraining individuals in civil and political society; and (3) a godly standard for Christians in their sanctification, furnishing a pattern for Christian growth. The first use of the law mentioned above is often starkly contrasted with the gospel:

The Law in the proper sense . . . is the Word of God in which God demands of men that in their nature and in their thoughts, words, and acts they conform to the standard of His commandments and pronounces the curse on those who fail to comply. . . . The Gospel in the proper sense is the Word of God in which God *makes no moral demands whatever* on men, hence reprove no transgressions, but, on the contrary, promises His grace for the sake of Christ's vicarious satisfaction to such as have not kept the divine law. . . .⁴

This traditional view holds that gospel and law must be kept far apart from each other, because to unite or confuse them is to threaten polluting salvation by grace in Christ alone.⁵ The law is a rigorous standard, and, in the Reformer John Calvin's words, God "annex[es] a curse if we are guilty of the smallest transgression." Since man cannot possibly meet this rigorous, but righteous, standard, God "introduce[s] a *different way of salvation*,"⁶ i.e., the gospel.

Reformed scholastic Francis Turretin even argues that the Old Testament, while containing gracious revelation, often "denotes the covenant of works or the moral law given by Moses—the unbearable burden . . . of legal ceremonies being added, absolutely and apart from the promise of grace."⁷ This "legal dispensation" constitutes an impossible ethical stan-

dard whose actual purpose is to drive the sinner to despair and compel him to trust in Christ alone.

The law in this segment of Reformed thinking implies and demands human effort and achievement that are antithetical to the gospel, in which is offered salvation by grace in Christ alone.

According to this understanding, gospel is that which God grants freely in Christ, and law is what he demands of humanity. Thus defined, gospel is (always and only) gracious, and law is (always and only) obligatory. Salvation is God's monergistic (non-cooperative) work accomplished in Jesus, and its truth is communicated in the gospel. To add human obligation to this message is to subvert its gracious character and undercut the redemptive work of Christ. Law is good, and law has its place,⁸ but that place is not as a component of the gospel.

This popular view has clear roots in the Reformation debate over the nature of salvation, and specifically justification. A rigid distinction between gospel and law in Lutheranism, for example, is expressed powerfully in the *Book of Concord* (Article V), a confessional standard. Note especially the portions emphasized below:

1. We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between the law and the gospel is to be maintained in the church with great diligence as an especially brilliant light, by which, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God is rightly divided.
2. We believe, teach, and confess that the law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reprove everything that is sin and contrary to God's will.
3. For this reason, then, *everything that reprove[s] sin is, and belongs to, the preaching of the law* (italics mine).
4. But the gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the law, and therefore is con-

demned by it, is to believe, namely, that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and has obtained and acquired for him, without any merit of his [no merit of the sinner intervening], forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.

5. But since the term gospel is not used in one and the same sense in the Holy Scriptures, on account of which this dissension originally arose, we believe, teach, and confess that if by the term gospel is understood the entire doctrine of Christ which he proposed in his ministry, as also did his apostles (in which sense it is employed, Mark 1, 15; Acts 20, 21), it is correctly said and written that the gospel is a preaching of repentance and of the forgiveness of sins. {Here the Confession acknowledges biblical usage.}

6. But if the law and the gospel, likewise also Moses himself [as] a teacher of the law and Christ as a preacher of the gospel are contrasted with one another, we believe, teach, and confess that the *gospel is not a preaching of repentance or reproof, but properly nothing else than a preaching of consolation, and a joyful message which does not reprove or terrify, but comforts consciences against the terrors of the law*, points alone to the merit of Christ, and raises them up again by the lovely preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ's merit (italics mine). {Here the contrasting theological usage is introduced.}

7. As to the revelation of sin, because the veil of Moses hangs before the eyes of all men as long as they hear the bare preaching of the law, and *nothing concerning Christ, and therefore do not learn from the law to perceive their sins aright*, but either become presumptuous hypocrites [who swell with the opinion of their own righteousness] as the Pharisees, or despair like Judas, Christ takes the law into his hands, and explains it spiritually, Matthew 5:21ff; Romans 7:14. And thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all sinners [Romans 1:18], how great it is; by this means they are directed [sent back] to the law, and then first learn from it to know aright their sins—a *knowledge which Moses*

never could have forced out of them (italics mine).

8. Accordingly, although the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God, is an earnest and terrible proclamation and declaration of God's wrath, whereby men are first led into the law aright, after the veil of Moses has been removed from them, so that they first know aright how great things God in his law requires of us, none of which we can observe, and therefore are to seek all our righteousness in Christ.

9. Yet as long as all this (namely, Christ's suffering and death) proclaims God's wrath and terrifies man, it is still not properly the preaching of the gospel, but the preaching of Moses and the law, and therefore a foreign work of Christ, by which he arrives at his proper office, that is, to preach grace, console, and quicken, which is properly the preaching of the gospel.⁹

To oversimplify, but not to mislead, law demands without mercy; gospel bestows without obligation.

This perspective suffers from two fatal flaws. First, as even a reading of the Book of Concord indicates, the biblical denotation of the terms *gospel* and *law* do not neatly fit the popular theological meanings it endorses. More importantly, by deeply severing gospel from law, we undercut the Bible's unified message.¹⁰ Although nothing but a quick and cursory survey is possible in this chapter, I hope to present a basic line of evidence that calls into question the conviction that gospel is only about grace and not obligation and that law is only about obligation and not grace.

BIBLICAL USAGE

Law in both Testaments. In the Old Testament, law is overwhelmingly the translation of *Torah*. While we cannot determine the meaning of biblical words merely by examining their etymology,¹¹ it is significant that *torah* literally means "teaching," or even more fundamentally, "human direction," though this teaching includes the divine revelation regulating Israel's conduct: "The end [objective] of the law lay beyond

the obedience to such and such rules, that end being instruction in the knowledge of God and of individuals' relation to him, and guidance in living as the children of such a God as he revealed himself to be."¹² Law is integrally related to God's covenant with Israel and is sometimes even equated with that covenant (Psalm 78:10).¹³ As a holistic revelation of God's standards for his covenant people, *law* and related terms like *statutes*, *testimonies*, and *commandments* do not denote his demands devoid of his grace manifested in both communal and individual salvation, but as the "teaching" reflect God's comprehensive revelation to Israel. Gracious salvation is, in fact, a chief aspect of that revelation in *Torah*, "the teaching" that God imposes on his covenant people.

In the New Testament, law is *nomos*. It is not etymologically equivalent to *Torah* but more specifically signifies ethical requirements, originally referring to customs governing a society that are eventually codified as "law."¹⁴ *Nomos* is a codified stipulation or a set of codified stipulations. Yet for Paul in particular, *nomos* is almost always equated to some degree with the *torah* of the Old Testament.¹⁵ We are informed, similarly, that the "new covenant" prophesied in the Old Testament and inaugurated in Jesus' blood includes the provision of the inscription of the law—the *Old Testament law as an objective revelation*—on the hearts of its believing recipients (Hebrews 8:10; cf. 2 Corinthians 3:15–16).¹⁶ The meaning of *nomos* varies in the New Testament, of course, but in the vast majority of cases it refers to the revelational *Torah* of the Old Testament or to a part of it. Whether law in the New Testament includes the gracious provision of salvation or denotes merely God's requirements of humans, it seems certain that the New Testament denotation stands in strong continuity with the *Torah* of the Old Testament.

Gospel in both Testaments. *Gospel* translates *euaggelion* in the New Testament, where it is overwhelmingly found (the English word does not even appear in the Old Testament of the King James Version, for example, though it does in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament from the inter-testamental era). It would be a mistake to think the

gospel is not in the Old Testament, however. The appearance of the gospel, the "glad tidings" or "good news," is evident, to mention but two instances, in Isaiah 52:7 and 61:1–3. In fact, in introducing his own gospel ministry in Luke 4:18–19, Jesus cites this latter passage. The message of salvation to Israel is replete in the Old Testament, and it comes to the fore in the gospel of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Strictly biblical usage does not reinforce a traditional set of contrasting, and surely not antithetical, definitions for gospel and law such as we find in the Book of Concord.

THE GRACE OF LAW

The grace of law in the Old Testament. Even a cursory reading of the Bible yields the conclusion that the Law is not a category of stipulations, demands, and threatenings void of grace, forgiveness, and the message of eternal life. The law as the stipulations of the covenant with Israel is introduced in Exodus 19. Jehovah lays out the covenant "preamble"¹⁷ as follows (verses 4–6, NKJV):

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

These are the words which you [Moses] shall speak to the children of Israel.

One can hardly describe this introduction as imposing requirements and demands devoid of God's gracious, loving provision of salvation! Indeed, it is hard to imagine a more grace-enriched message to his covenant people. And if the preamble out of which the rationale for the subsequent law grows is a grace-enriched message, it is inconceivable that the stipulations of the law itself are merely demands and requirements that do not reflect God's grace and are the polar opposite of his message of eternal life and salvation. If the law is

the ethical stipulation of the covenant, and the covenant is gracious throughout, we cannot suggest that the law is devoid of God's grace.

In Exodus 20:24, in the very giving of the Mosaic Law, Jehovah includes provision for the sacrificial system, at the heart of which is (temporary, Hebrews 10:1-4) forgiveness of sins pointing to Jesus, who would one day cleanse his people from their sins. The sacrificial system as an integral component of the Law¹⁸ tends to refute the notion that the Law as revelation was somehow an imposing, insuperable ethical standard that God's people could not surmount. In its very structure, the Law contained the means for forgiveness of and rectification for sins committed.¹⁹

When Moses told Israel that the Law would be their "wisdom and . . . understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'" (Deuteronomy 4:6, NKJV), it is hard to imagine that he was depicting a Law that was a rigorous set of demands apart from grace and the message of eternal life, particularly when he went on to exult, "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon him" (v. 7). Israel was so close to Jehovah (by his covenant mercies) that they may call on him "for whatever reason." Interestingly, this calling on the Lord seems to be a benefit of the gracious law he had bestowed on them. He granted Israel his covenant law of love, and it brings them near to him. The Law cannot be understood as divine demand sequestered from divine grace and mercy and salvation.

And what intent Christian could read the psalmist's (presumably David's) exaltation of and exultation in the Law in Psalm 119 without identifying with his love for the Law as a gracious, merciful, reviving, life-giving revelation (note especially verses 17, 20, 25, 29, 32, 37, 40, 41, 50, 64, 77, 92, 105, 116, 144, 149, 154, 155, 166, 174)? We discover from a careful reading of this psalm that David oriented his entire life—including his eternal life—to Jehovah by means of his revelation in the law. We detect not a single hint that David consid-

ered the law only a compendium of commands and threatenings terrifying all who but swerve from it and containing nothing of God's grace; rather, the law is filled with gracious, vivifying force to all who submit to it.

We should not be surprised, therefore, to read in Psalm 19 that the "law of the Lord is perfect, converting [or reviving] the soul" (v. 7). David patently sees the law as a tool of man's conversion, an assertion that contradicts the idea that the law only and always threatens and lacks any instrumental salvific efficacy.

The grace of law in the New Testament. The New Testament presents a similar testimony. Jesus, citing the *Shema* of Deuteronomy 6, identifies the first great commandment of the law as love for God with all of one's being and the second as love of one's neighbor (Matthew 22:34-40). The fact that at the very heart of the law is such a requirement of passionate affection for God and, secondarily, our fellow man militates against the idea that the law is a graceless, austere set of requirements. It implies that law is anchored in a covenant relation that entails a reciprocity of affection and allegiance (Exodus 19:1-8; 24:1-8)—and neither without the other. God's covenant relationships with humanity as disclosed in the Bible are far from one-sided impositions of requirements and threatenings. They are bilateral relationships that include love and affection and forgiveness (Psalm 78:32-38; 86:5-7; 99:6-8) and agonizing longsuffering (Hosea 1-2) and means of rectifying grievances (Numbers 4-5) and, in fact, instruments for obtaining eternal life (Deuteronomy 30:11-20).²⁰

This is why Jesus could on the one hand reprimand the Pharisees for their austere, external, legalistic approach to the law (Matthew 23), while himself advocating observance of the law in the smallest detail (Matthew 5:17-20).²¹ He invites those souls burdened by sin and the cares of life to assume his easy yoke and light burden (Matthew 11:28-30). Yet his message clearly was *not* that the law is no longer in force. In other words, Jesus set forth a view of the law that preserved its proper character (Matthew 5:21ff.) while rebuking those who perverted it by transforming it into an external, legalistic, burden-

some code of works-righteousness (Mark 7:1–13).

This portrait of Jesus' message does not seem to fit within the constrictive frame devised by a theology that sees the law as only a series of commands backed up by dire threatenings, bracketed from the grace of God and the promise of eternal life.

Nor does Pauline theology conform to this restrictive, graceless view of the law. While Paul repeatedly criticized those who turned the law into a Christ-less system of (often racial) pride and privilege (Galatians 3:1–9), he acknowledged the life-giving power disclosed in the law by which a man is justified by Christ's work alone (Romans 2:13; cf. 3:20–21!). The Law is "spiritual" (Romans 7:14), and is "ordained to life" (Romans 7:10). Properly understood, it is not a death-dealing legal code but a glorious life-giving message of faith in Christ alone and obedience to him.

Nor is the law a rigorous code that one can never hope to meet. In Romans 10:4–9, Paul cites Deuteronomy 30:11–14 in assuring his readers that the law (in Christ, v. 7) is not far away from any of God's covenant people but is near them, in their mouth and heart (v. 8). The "word" (v. 8) to which Paul refers is the word of the gospel (v. 6), yet it is a gospel nestled in and inextricably a part of the law. It is a gospel message contained in the revelatory Law of Moses that is near God's covenant people and ready for them to appropriate by faith. It is not the imposition of codified demands apart from a gracious salvation.

While I have presented here only sketchy evidence, I hope it will give the reader pause in assuming that law is always and only obligatory and in no sense a revelation of God's grace tied inextricably to the obtainment of eternal salvation, the message of the gospel.

THE OBLIGATION OF GOSPEL

This gospel is, as I noted above, the good news of salvation to all who believe. It is impregnably anchored in Jesus Christ's redemptive acts in history.²² The entire New Testament verifies this assertion (e.g., John 20:30–31; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; 2

Corinthians 5:12–21; 1 John 1); and among Christians (at least conservatives) of whatever theological bent, it is not controversial. Simply put, at the heart of the gospel, the good news, is what God has accomplished in Jesus Christ's life and particularly his death²³ and resurrection.²⁴

Its precise biblical meaning, however, is not always easy to pin down. "Its use among early Christian evangelists," Robert W. Wall observes, "is so diverse, so multifaceted, that one has difficulty describing all that the good news is. Perhaps the word 'gospel' served a more *symbolic* function for the early Christians who used it: the 'gospel' embraced the whole Christian message—in all its many written and preached forms—of what God did for the world through his Son, Jesus from Nazareth."²⁵ Perhaps for this reason, beyond agreement on the central theme of Christ's redemptive work for humanity, theological consensus fades.

For the purposes of this chapter, we may confront the fervent dispute over the nature of the human response that the gospel elicits. All, even the most committed monergists, agree that the gospel compels faith in those to whom it is preached—none is entirely passive in accepting the gospel;²⁶ but the definition of faith is itself under dispute. This is not even to mention the relation of repentance and good works to each other and to faith or belief. As a firmly committed monergist, I contend that three principal biblical themes display the gospel not only as a message to be believed, but also as an obligation to be obeyed. These themes feature an undeniably ethical component to man's proper response to the gospel, and they tend to refute the notion that the gospel is merely a message to be passively accepted apart from man's obligation and commitment. These themes are (1) the obedience of faith, (2) the demand for repentance, and (3) the regal character of the gospel itself.

The obedience of faith. At least three times in Romans (1:5; 10:3; 16:26) in setting forth facets of his own gospel ministry, and once in 2 Thessalonians (1:8), warning of judgment at Christ's second advent, Paul so closely aligns obedience with acceptance of the gospel that it is impossible to

dismiss the element of active human obligation, an ethical requirement. I refer to expressions variously translated (1:5; similarly in 16:26) "obedience to the faith" (KJV/NKJV) or "obedience that comes from faith" (NIV). Whether the grammatical construction suggests the denotation "obedience which consists in faith" (that is, obedience is of the essence of faith), or "obedience which flows from faith" (that is, faith is the source of obedience), or simply, "obedience to faith" (that is, faith induces obedience),²⁷ it is clear that, for Paul, belief in the gospel includes and imposes obligation.

In Romans 10:3 Paul laments that Israel as a whole has not submitted or subjected itself to "the righteousness of God." The context is clear that this righteousness (however it is precisely defined) is an aspect of the gospel (9:30; 10:1, 8, 10, 13–15). In lamenting that Israel has not submitted herself to God's righteousness, he is firmly implying that the belief at the cornerstone of the acceptance of the gospel either includes or is accompanied by ethical obligation—submission. When we believe the gospel, we *bind* ourselves to Jesus as Savior and Lord.

More striking, perhaps, is Paul's statement in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 that Jesus will one day appear in great glory, "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." We know from Paul's message to the Athenians that in the present age God commands all individuals everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30), and, by implication, to believe the gospel. Is response to this command to repent and believe the gospel what Paul had in mind when he referred to the impending judgment on those who do not obey the gospel? We have every reason to believe that it is.

And if it is, we simply cannot agree with the Lutheran theologian Francis Pieper, cited earlier, that "the gospel makes no moral demands whatever on man and therefore reproves no transgressions—not even the sin of unbelief . . . but rather, without regard to any good quality or works on their part, promises God's grace for Christ's sake to all transgressors condemned by the law."²⁸ We indeed must affirm that God does

not regard men's good quality or good works in proffering the gospel, but to say that the gospel makes no moral demands and reproves no transgressions can find little support from the Bible itself. I cannot, therefore, agree with Michael Horton that "obedience must not be confused with the gospel. . . . The gospel contains no commands or threat."²⁹ Rather, I agree with Lesslie Newbigin that "[B]elief and obedience . . . are but two sides of one response."³⁰

While I agree, therefore, with the motivation of those theologians who wish to avoid identifying the reception of the gospel with human achievement, I do not agree that the imposition of certain moral demands and reproof of certain transgressions as aspects of the gospel qualify as opening the door to human achievement. Nor do I agree that the imposition of these demands and reproof of these transgressions threatens a gracious, monergistic soteriology. Conversely, I am convinced that to wrench these requirements from the gospel is to come dangerously close to succumbing to an antinomian message that Paul excoriates (Romans 6:15).

Paul declares of his gospel preaching, "For we are unto God a sweet savor [aroma] of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life" (2 Corinthians 2:15–16, [KJV]; cf. 4:3–4; 1 Corinthians 1:18ff.).³¹ Some suggest that we should first preach a rigorous law to convict the sinner and then, only afterward, preach a gracious gospel as a relief to the burden that the law imposes. But note well that Paul did not enlist the law as a separate category as prelude to the gospel—the gospel *itself* sufficed to condemn the impenitent. The gospel carries in its very bosom the broad ethical stipulation (law!) that since humanity stands condemned by its rebellion against God, coming to God in Christ for salvation entails a surrender of that rebellion and commitment to follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24–27).

But it is not often considered that rebellion is man's chief dilemma that the gospel is calculated to begin eliminating from its very first communication. Part of the problem in Lutheran theology, for example, is that its soteriology is

shaped partly by Luther's own agonizing experience wrestling with a guilty conscience before a holy God, and less by the picture of man's rebellion against God. The gospel is then readily depicted in a rather imbalanced fashion—as a panacea to man's emotional plight. Luther drew parallels of his own dilemma with Paul's, but, as New Testament scholars are increasingly recognizing,³² Paul did not seem to have suffered from a troubled conscience before his conversion. He did, however, describe himself (Philippians 3:3–9) and his Jewish countrymen (Romans 2), as well as the gentiles (Romans 5:10–21; Ephesians 2:1–3), as rebels against God and in dire need of submission to him. To picture Paul's chief problem as one of a troubled conscience under the weight of sin is to confuse effects with causes. Man's great problem to which the gospel is the solution is his sin—in essence, his rebellion against God.

Repentance. For this reason, we are not surprised to discover that the gospel demands repentance, whose biblical definition is a turning from sin to God, an act that elicits God's forgiveness. Repentance is not simply external conformity, for while it "is emphatically a matter of conduct . . . it is also a matter of the heart."³³ Sinners abandon their rebellion against God and his law and turn to him in humility with the determination henceforth to obey him. Alan Richardson observes:

The fundamental idea in the biblical conception of repentance is that of turning or returning to one's due obedience, as of rebels returning to serve their lawful king, or of a faithless wife coming back to her husband. It represents a fundamental reorientation of the whole personality.³⁴

This demand for a holistic repentance as a dimension of the gospel begins in the Old Testament. For instance, in Deuteronomy 30, at the conclusion of Jehovah's covenant ratification with Israel, he conditions his forgiveness on her repentance (v. 2). Significantly, he suspends regeneration, installing a new heart, on that act of repentance (v. 6). We are left to infer the precise relation between repentance and

regeneration; but it is clear that Israel could not expect to enter (or re-enter) into a living, organic relation with God until she had repented.

Paul in Romans 4:6–8 enlists David as an Old Testament illustration of justification by faith in Christ, and not by the good works of Jewish exclusivity (v. 10). David, like Abraham (vv. 1–3), was justified by faith. The gospel is not a message of human performance but of God's grace, received by faith (4:23–5:2). In adducing David as an example of this wholly gracious justification conferred in the gospel, Paul cites the beginning of Psalm 32. In verse 5 of this psalm, interestingly, we learn that the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity (i.e., whom he justifies) is the man who acknowledges and confesses his sins and who determines to be led of the Lord (vv. 6–9). In other words, the one justified is the one who repents.

Isaiah 55:3–7, moreover, furnishes a clear, succinct example of the Old Testament's inclusion of repentance as a component of the gospel:

Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David: Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and commander for the people. Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. (NKJV)

God makes his covenant of mercy with and abundantly pardons the "unrighteous man" who abandons his sin, and we are fully warranted in inferring that he will *not* shower his covenant mercies on or pardon those who do not repent. Nor

may we surmise that this message was merely communal, targeting Israel as a nation but not individual Jews. It is the wicked and unrighteous *individual* whom the prophet specifically addresses.

The demands for repentance enclosed in the gospel do not abate in the New Testament era. The message of John the Baptist, Jesus' precursor, resonates with the words, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:1 [NKJV]; cf. v. 8; Mark 1:4). John's ministration of baptism is seen as requiring a public reflection of a repentant heart (Matthew 3:6). Jesus himself continues John's message: "Repent, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Repentance is not merely a prelude to the gospel, however, for this summary command in its entirety is identified as "the gospel of the kingdom of God" (vv. 14–15). The call to repentance for sinners who wished salvation was a hallmark of Jesus' teaching (Matthew 9:9–13; 11:20–24; Luke 13:1–5; 14:25–33). Before his ascension, Jesus charged his disciples with the gospel they were to propagate. Linked inextricably to the joyous fact of his own death and resurrection was the call to repentance (Luke 24:44–49). The apostles recognized this sacred trust of the gospel and preached a Christ-drenched message of repentance (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 2 Peter 3:9)—it is not enough to believe in Jesus; one must, as an aspect of believing in Jesus, turn from his sins.

Paul preaches a repentance-charged gospel: while repentance is surely a necessity for sinning *believers* (2 Corinthians 7:8–10; 12:20–21), it is also requisite within the gospel itself. For instance, Paul instructed Timothy in the manner of dealing with those ensnared by the Devil, whom God may grant repentance (2 Timothy 2:24–26). In Romans 2:1–8, he warned the Jews not to boast in their exalted place in God's covenant, for God alone grants repentance and consequent eternal life. Toward the end of his ministry, he solemnly reminded the Ephesian elders that he had preached to both Jew and Greek "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Paul saw the gospel as a message demanding repentance.

While repentance is a gift of God that humans cannot

conjure under their own power ("turn thou me, and I shall be turned," [Jeremiah 31:18, KJV]; cf. Psalm 80:3, 7, 19; Acts 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:24–26; Hebrews 12:17), it is a fully human act, and God requires it. In Ezekiel 18:31, Jehovah even curtly demands that an apostate Israel "get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit."

Repentance no less than faith itself is a requirement imposed by the gracious gospel message.

The biblical picture is unmistakable: no repentance, no gospel.³⁵

A *kingly gospel*. Interestingly, in the ancient world, the *evangel*, or gospel, began in the cult of the emperor, and the emperor and his citizens used this very word.³⁶ The important days in the emperor's life, his birthday, how he came to power and so on, were announced throughout the realm as gospels, or pieces of good news, and festivals were held in honor of him.³⁷ The gospel messages were grand, resplendent, public statements of joy and hope and reverence for the emperor. This was the Roman Empire's gospel.

The early Christians had their own, competing gospel—the only true gospel. It was not a secret, heavenly, esoteric message for a select few, for it would not have "made waves" had it been such a secret *gnosis*.³⁸ Rather, it was a grand, resplendent, public message of joy and hope and reverence for Jesus Christ, Savior and Lord. It declared that he alone is the world's King, he alone is the world's hope, and in him alone could the world find salvation.

This message had its roots in Jesus' ministry and the apostolic interpretation of it. The angel's annunciation to Mary highlighted the kingship of Jesus in perpetuating the Davidic throne (Luke 1:28–33). When the angel alerted Joseph of the impending incarnation and Mary's pregnancy with Jesus, he accented the meaning of "Jesus," Savior (Matthew 1:20–21). These angelic announcements should not be interpreted as two messages delineating two distinct ministries of the Messiah, but as two aspects of a single message and single ministry—Jesus as the Savior-King, redeeming his people by means of his overarching claims of royalty. When Jesus came

proclaiming the message of the kingdom, we must infer that it was just this regal soteriology that he preached (Mark 1:15).

The apostles after the resurrection understood this message. Peter's Pentecost sermon (Acts 2) indicting the Jews marshals Old Testament evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, the risen Lord who now rules from heaven (vv. 22–36). When the Jews under deep conviction of sin implored Peter for a course of action, he demanded that they repent and believe in Jesus and submit to baptism. It is evident that the objective message that convinced the hearers was not merely that they were sinners, but that they had collaborated in crucifying the one whom God had made both Lord and Christ ("Master" and "Anointed," v. 36). The incentive to repent is the exalted position of Jesus. They (and their Roman masters) had murdered the king! Peter's gospel is just this: that the one who had been cruelly killed had risen from the dead, was now exalted in the heavens by the Father (v. 24), was showering his church with great gifts of power (vv. 14–21), and summoning sinners over the known world (v. 39) to submit to his kingship by exercising faith in him and being baptized (v. 38) with the sure hope that all things will be subordinated to his authority (v. 35).

This is the message that the other apostles declared. For instance, we are not surprised that Paul begins his masterly statement in Romans of the eternal plan of God for humanity (vv. 1–7) with a declaration of the Davidic kingship of Jesus attested in the Old Testament that buttresses Paul's own gospel ministry (v. 1). Here he employs the phrase "the obedience of faith" (see above) that constitutes his gospel preaching. Like Peter at Pentecost, Paul accents the resurrection of Jesus as the visible, public demonstration of the power of God and identification of Jesus as God's Son—and king. The implicit picture is not hard to discern. God has raised from the dead his Son, who is the rightful heir of David's throne from which he now reigns and enlists his followers to declare to all nations the gospel: the message that sinful men must submit to the king by exercising faith in and following him.³⁹

The chief features of this Pauline definition of the gospel appear in Ephesians 1:15–23, in which Paul assures his read-

ers of his prayer for them that they would understand their high calling as the inheritors of God's regal blessings in Jesus (vv. 18–19) effected when God exalted him to his kingship and universal reign by means of the church (vv. 20–23). One is clearly left to infer that the message of the gospel by which Paul's readers believed is the effect of Jesus' kingship in putting down all human authority (v. 22).

Likewise, while Paul's summary of the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15 is no stand-alone proposition but rather partial rationale for confuting erroneous views of the resurrection, it is striking that he identifies the reign of Jesus as a part of the redemptive complex that includes the resurrection (vv. 22–28). This redemptive complex is just what the gospel attests and interprets. The message of salvation is the message of what God has done in Christ in human history.⁴⁰ Central to that message is the present kingship of Christ by which he accomplishes God's redemptive plan for humanity.

In short, the gospel is the message of the king, not merely the Savior—or, more positively, it is the message of the Savior-king. He atoned for the sins of humanity, rose from the dead for their justification (Romans 4:25), and commands (the word is not too strong) them to repent of their sins and follow him. The gospel is not only a message to be believed; it is a command to be obeyed.⁴¹

These and related issues come into sharp relief in the so-called "lordship salvation" controversy: whether in accepting Jesus for salvation individuals must also accept him as Lord of their life. Opponents of lordship salvation argue that to demand that sinners accept Jesus as Lord is to pollute the free grace of God by intruding good works or human effort into the plan of salvation.⁴² Proponents of lordship salvation believe, on the other hand, that while salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, in coming to Christ one accepts him in his entirety, as both Savior and Lord, and in so doing submits to Christ as Lord and king.⁴³ There is no divided Christ, at times Savior and only subsequently Lord.⁴⁴ Clearly, if the position I advocate in this chapter is correct, lordship salvation is an almost axiomatic teaching of the Bible, for the

only salvation the Bible knows is one that not merely saves sinners from their sin but also commands obedience of them. The gospel is not only an offer but also a requirement—the king who shed his life's blood for sinners and bore their penalty in his own body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24) demands that these sinful rebels submit to his rightful authority by trusting in him and becoming his disciples (Titus 2:14).

The obedience of faith, the demand for repentance, and the regal character of the gospel all verify that the gospel is not a message that one simply passively receives; one must actively affirm it and submit to its demands.

THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE

The baseline question, though, is not even whether law in Scripture includes grace, or gospel includes obligation, but whether there are there really two different messages, one that says, "You must obey in your own power, and God accepts nothing but flawless obedience," and another message that says, "Simply accept what Jesus has done for you and you will be saved, apart from any ongoing commitment on your part," the first message driving man to accept the second. I hold that there are not two such messages, but one (very different) message. Without fully addressing the question of the interchangeability of gospel and law,⁴⁵ I hold that the single salvific message of the Bible is: "Trust in Christ alone for salvation; and in trusting in him, you are submitting to his authority as the Savior-king." In this understanding, man is saved solely by the grace of God appropriated by faith alone that carries with it a submissive and obedient heart, a faith that works by love (Galatians 5:6). This message preserves monergism without sacrificing obedience, and it retains ethical stipulations without compromising salvation by faith in Christ alone.

OBJECTIONS

Now it is true that Paul writes in Galatians 3 that the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. To those who do not believe, it condemns. Before faith comes, we see in the law only a condemnation. But this is no less true of the gospel.

Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians 1 that Jesus will one day return in flaming vengeance to wreak judgment on all who do not obey the gospel. The gospel is not only a message to be believed; it is a command to be obeyed.

Of course, sometimes the law (like the gospel) can be used illegitimately—it then becomes a yoke (Acts 15). The problem here was similar to the problem in Galatians—the requirement that one be circumcised in order to be saved. The Pharisees had transformed the Law of Moses into a prideful, sectarian, tedious burden. This perversion of the Law the Jerusalem council soundly repudiated.

The "works of the law." But what about those statements, notably by Paul, that contrast the faith of the gospel and the "works of the law" (Galatians 2:16; 3:2, 11–12)? It comports remarkably with Paul's argument to interpret most of these uses as referring not to the revelatory law, but to the Pharisaic and Judaistic misinterpretations of the law by Paul's opponents,⁴⁶ sincere though they may have been. Paul's negative comments about the law are almost always set in a polemical context, and there was no word group in Greek to designate "legalism," "legalist," or "legalistic."⁴⁷ If Paul can confirm the authority of the law and advocate its life-giving character in the very contexts in which he distinguishes law from grace (Galatians 6:1, 14; 6:2; Romans 7:6–14), the most natural way to understand him is to recognize a contrast between a false and a genuine view of the law, and between a submissive relation to the law and a sinful relation to it.⁴⁸

In Galatians the expression translated "works of the law" appears four times. It never appears in a positive light. It is set in sharp contrast with "the hearing of faith" (2:16; 3:2; 3:5), which is obviously positive. So, does "works of the law" denote the *genuine* commands of the Old Testament Law? Does it refer to commands that, while legitimate as stand-alone ethical standards, have nothing to do with eternal life, in fact, commands that, if one reads and obeys them, will draw him *away* from Christ?⁴⁹ Are they commands, in other words, that sinners should at all costs avoid for fear that they will lead away from Christ? This interpretation seems inconceivable. As Daniel P.

Fuller writes: “[T]he law presented at Sinai was one of faith, with essentially the same content needed for salvation as the message people received in the New Testament times.”⁵⁰

In Romans 9:30–33 Paul states that unbelieving Israel did not seek righteousness by faith in Christ but by the “works of the law.” Significantly, however, he clearly implies that they could have discovered the truth of faith-righteousness in the law—the revelatory law. This means that “works of the law” denotes not the revelatory law, but a perversion of the law by the self-righteous, a law without Christ.

The “works of the law” are not what the Old Testament required. Read properly, the Old Testament teaches (in anticipatory form) salvation solely in the redemptive work in Jesus (Romans 10:4). Old Testament Law is, therefore, not a legalistic code. It is a covenant revelation of holy conduct that includes at its very heart the disclosure of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus apart from human merit or “good works” or any other human activity in which man can boast.

So, the contrast in Paul is never between the law, properly understood, and salvation by grace through faith in Christ. Rather, the contrast is between a perversion of the law, transforming it into a legalistic code apart from Jesus, and a proper understanding of the law, a gospel message of faith in the Redeemer and obedience to him.

This is why we read that remarkable statement in Romans 3:21, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.” The revelatory law *itself* attested that righteousness is not by law-keeping, that is, a sort of moralistic, exclusivist code that many Jews observed. The actual revelatory law, by contrast, Paul calls a “law of faith” in verse 27. The problem is *not* the law, which, if properly kept, does not lead away from Christ—it leads to and reveals Christ. And those who understand and keep that law will trust in Christ alone for salvation; and as his disciples, they will obey him.⁵¹

We then can understand why C. van der Waal can write in his penetrating work, *The Covenantal Gospel*: “The law was not outside of Christ, for the law and the gospel are not contradic-

tory concepts, but, rather, interchangeable.”⁵² Not two laws, not two ways, not two means of justification—one holy gospel and law that tell man in whom he must trust, and whom he must obey.

THE CENTRAL FAITH OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH

A principal reason, in my view, that Christians often go wrong in the gospel-law issue is that they tend to see the Bible’s main message as one of individual soteriology: “How can I be saved?” As noted earlier, Luther seemed to hold this view. He was plagued by a bad conscience. “How can a man be just before God?” But it is not clear that this is the chief question the Bible is trying to answer. Luther was convinced it was, though, and his followers (not only Lutherans) transformed his own existential battles into a soteriology and even a hermeneutic. Many Christians today see the distinction between gospel and law at the *heart* of the Christian faith, and they perceive justification by faith alone as the organizing principle of Christian theology and the faith itself.⁵³

In contrast, the central message of the primitive church as found in the Bible was the Lordship of the risen Christ.⁵⁴ Individual soteriology is a crucial aspect of the exercise of this Lordship, but Lordship is much larger than individual soteriology. It is not God’s sovereignty as such, but his sovereignty as it comes to the fore in the Saviorhood-Lordship of Christ, that is central in the Bible.⁵⁵ Both grace and obligation, gospel and law, blessing and judgment, are aspects of that single, unified message of Christ’s lordship.

Steve M. Schlissel is correct, therefore, when he declares that the chief question of the Bible is not, “What must I do to be saved?” (vital, to be sure), but rather, “What does the Lord require?”

COVENANTAL UNITY

A biblical way of explaining the cohesion of gospel and law, a single, biblical message, is to refer to *covenants*. I believe that the Westminster Confession is correct⁵⁶ in declaring that covenant is the means by which God relates to his people

(Chapter 7, Section 1). In the Bible, the covenant is used to establish a sacred agreement, secured by oath (often a bloody oath). It has two parties. God himself sovereignly administers covenants between God and men.⁵⁷ For our purposes, it is essential to understand that virtually *all such covenants are bilateral*. This is to say, each party bears obligations and derives benefits. The negative dimension of this assertion is that, with rare exception, *there are no unconditional covenants in the Bible*.⁵⁸ If Adam obeyed, he was blessed; if he disobeyed, he was cursed. If Abraham remained among his kindred in Ur, he would be judged as a heathen; if he departed and followed Jehovah, he would be the father of many nations. If Noah built an ark, he and his household would be saved; if he did not build an ark, they all would perish with the wicked. If Israel trusted God and remained true to the covenant, she would be blessed both materially and immaterially; if she broke the covenant, she would be cursed. If David's royal heirs remained faithful on the throne, God would preserve and prosper them; if they committed idolatry and otherwise apostatized from God's covenant and law, he would remove the throne from David's house. If the Gentiles continue in faith, God will bless them in the olive tree of his covenantal provision; if they do not continue in faith, he will cut them off and judge them as he did ethnic Israel (Romans 11:18–22).

The same is abundantly true in individual soteriology—election is unconditional, but the covenant is *never* unconditional. Men cannot expect to be justified on the final day if they do not repent, believe, and obey. To preach that the covenant is unconditional is to preach an antinomian gospel, false to its very core. There will be no salvation without repentance, faith, and obedience. An antinomian gospel is no less dangerous than a gospel that avers that men's merit or virtue or good works can somehow stand them in good stead with God.

Individuals are saved entirely on the ground of Christ's vicarious death and victorious resurrection, which is the central tenet of the gospel.⁵⁹ They appropriate union with Christ (and its benefits like adoption, justification, forgiveness, and sanctification) by faith alone. This faith is an active faith

(Hebrews 11), a faith that works by love (Galatians 5:6), a faith that *includes* faithfulness. Salvation is totally the work of God operating in Christ. It is monergistic to the core. But as a covenantal arrangement in history, it is bilateral.⁶⁰

There is obviously expanding revelation in redemptive history, but there is from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 one gospel, one law, one hope, one grace, one justice, one love, one mercy, and one salvation.

This is the covenant message of God to his people in every era of human history.⁶¹

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Notes

1. Scott Murray, "Law and Gospel: The Lutheran Ethic," *Logia*, vol. 4, no. 3 [July 1995]: 16, emphasis supplied. Murray later writes, "[T]he regenerate person now [after conversion] delights in the law of the Lord, being under no compulsion to obedience," 17. Apparently, while obedience is a desire in the regenerate, God does not require it of them.
2. The patristic Fathers' treatment of gospel and law was often polemical, repudiating a Judaistic view of the Old Testament Law at the one extreme and the heretic Marcion's denial of the authority of the Old Testament at the other. The law, particularly its ceremonial portions, pointed to Jesus Christ and was fulfilled in him, so, contrary to the Jews, law cannot be observed as self-contained. However, its basic moral and ethical stipulations are confirmed in the New Testament. The words of Leo I are illustrative: "For all things that, according to the Law, were prior, whether circumcision of the flesh, or the multitude of sacrificial victims, or the observance of the Sabbath, testified to Christ and foretold Christ's grace. And he is the end of the Law, not by annulling but by fulfilling what is signified. . . . But in the area of moral precepts, no decrees of the earlier Testament are rejected; rather, in the Gospel [New Testament] teaching many of them are augmented, so that the things which give salvation might be more perfect and more lucid than those which promise a Savior," William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (Col-

- legeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1979), 3:278.
3. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. John Allen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), Bk. 2, Ch. 8, Sec. 7-17.
 4. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953), 3:222, emphasis supplied.
 5. Geoffrey Bromiley, *Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 230-232.
 6. Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk. 2, Ch. 9, Sec. 4, emphasis supplied. Calvin acknowledges that the law as a revelation of the Old Testament contains the gospel, but the moral requirements within that law contrast sharply with the gospel and are indeed almost antithetical to it. The law, according to Calvin, reveals two different messages and two different ways of salvation.
 7. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 1994), 2:234.
 8. Some older dispensationalists, however, believe that the law has been entirely abolished in Jesus Christ: Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor, 1986), 302-06.
 9. Brackets in this long quotation are original; editorial comments appear in braces.
 10. Daniel P. Fuller, *The Unity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992).
 11. See James Barr's classic, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: SCM Press, 1961).
 12. Ulric Rule, "Law in the Old Testament," in ed., James Orr, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1939), 3:1852.
 13. Hartley, John E., "Law, Teaching," in eds., R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:403-05.
 14. W. A. Whitehouse, "Law," in ed., Alan Richardson, *A Theological Wordbook of the Bible* (New York: MacMillan, 1956), 122-23.
 15. Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 1:259-60.
 16. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 233.
 17. On the covenant structure of the Bible, see Meredith Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 1989, 1997, second edition). He sees the Mosaic Law as a gracious revelation of salvation (125).
 18. Of course, I believe that the sacrificial system at the heart of the ceremonial law has been superseded (as God had always intended) by Jesus' redemptive work toward which it pointed.
 19. Kaiser, *Toward*, 115-16.
 20. Notably, Paul cites from this passage in Romans 10 to buttress his argument for salvation by faith alone.
 21. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nacogdoches, Texas:

- 2002 edition).
22. Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (New York and Evanston, Illinois: Harper & Row, 1967).
 23. Leon Morris, *The Cross of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).
 24. Richard Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed [1978], 1987), 11-16.
 25. Robert W. Wall, "Gospel," in ed., Richard S. Taylor, *Beacon Dictionary of Theology* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1983), 239, emphasis in original.
 26. With the possible exception of infants.
 27. Charles Hodge, *Romans* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1972), 21. See also John H. Armstrong, "The Obedience of Faith," *Reformation & Revival Journal*, vol. 12, no. 4 [Fall 2003]: 13-21.
 28. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3:228.
 29. Michael S. Horton, "The Law and the Gospel," Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals on-line, <http://www.alliancenet.org/pub/articles/horton>.
 30. Lesslie Newbigin, *Proper Confidence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 65.
 31. Robert S. Rayburn, "The Contrast between the Old and New Covenants in the New Testament" (doctoral thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1978).
 32. Launched by the small classic, Krister Stendahl's "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 78-96.
 33. W. Morgan, "Repent, Repentance," in ed., James Hastings, *A Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), 4:225.
 34. Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1958), 31.
 35. On repentance as an essential correlate of faith by which individuals appropriate justification, see Norman Shepherd, "Justification By Faith Alone," *Reformation & Revival Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2 [Spring 2002]: 84-85.
 36. See also P. Andrew Sandlin, *The Full Gospel* (Vallecito, California: Chalcedon Foundation, 2001).
 37. Ethelbert Stauffer, *New Testament Theology* (New York: MacMillan, 1955), 157.
 38. Philip J. Lee, *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
 39. N. T. Wright, "Herald of the King," in *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 39-62.
 40. George E. Ladd, "The Knowledge of God: The Saving Acts of God," in ed., Carl F. H. Henry, *Basic Christian Doctrines* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), 7-13.
 41. Karl Barth, "Gospel and Law," *Community, State, and Church* (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1968), 80.
 42. Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 170.

43. John F. MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988), xiii.
44. A. W. Tozer, "No Saviorhood without Lordship," in *A Treasury of A. W. Tozer* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Christian Publications, 1980), 123.
45. But for a summary case for the virtual interchangeability of gospel and law, evidence that they are two sides of the same covenantal coin, see P. Andrew Sandlin, "Gospel, Law and Redemptive History: 'Trust and Obey,'" *Reformation & Revival Journal*, vol. 12, no. 4 [Fall 2003]: 23–43.
46. Daniel P. Fuller, *Gospel and Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), ch. 4. For answers to critics, see his "The Gospel and Law: A Syllabus," Fuller Theological Seminary, 1988. See also Robert L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 458–62.
47. Daniel P. Fuller, "Paul and 'The Works of the Law,'" *Westminster Theological Journal* 38 (1975–1976): 28.
48. My position is firmly at odds with Douglas J. Moo, "The Law of Moses or the Law of Christ," in ed., John S. Feinberg, *Continuity and Discontinuity* (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway, 1988), 203–18.
49. This is the sentiment of Bultmann, *Theology*, 1:259–69.
50. Fuller, *Unity*, 350.
51. Daniel P. Fuller, "Only Disciples Are Saved," Berean Corner Online, <http://www.fuller.edu/ministry/berean/disciple.htm>
52. C. van der Waal, *The Covenantal Gospel* (Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada: Inheritance, 1990), 62.
53. Hermann Sasse, *Here We Stand* (New York: Harper & Row, 1938), 112.
54. Oscar Cullmann, "The Kingship of Christ and the Church in the New Testament," in *The Early Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 105. See also John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 2002), 12.
55. And in historic Calvinism, too. See I. John Hesselink, *On Being Reformed* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1983), 96.
56. I cannot, however, endorse entirely its interpretation of the covenant.
57. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), chapter 1.
58. Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, 247.
59. Daniel P. Fuller, *Easter Faith and History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 18–19.
60. Heinrich Bullinger, *A Brief Exposition of the One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God*, in Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 99–138.
61. Though I alone am responsible for the views expressed in this article, I am grateful to the following for reading it in draft form and for offering valuable suggestions and criticisms: John Frame, Mark Horne, Walter and Megan Lindsay, Clark Pinnock, Norman Shepherd, and C. L. Stover.