

How to Live Long & Prosper in the Land: Paul's Gospel And Civilisational Renewal

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For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.
Romans 10:5

Paul declares unequivocally that, “*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*” (2 Timothy 3:16).

And yet the majority of commentators have relegated a key text, Leviticus 18:5 – “if a person does them, he shall live by them” – to oblivion. Paul cites it in both Romans and Galatians as absolutely integral to his Gospel.

Space doesn't permit a full explanation, suffice to say that the majority view posits Romans 10:5-6 as two contrasted antithetical kinds of righteousness: v. 5 “the righteousness that is based on the law” as *works-righteousness*, and v.6 “the righteousness based on faith” as *faith-righteousness*.

This leads to a *dispensational disjunction* between OT and NT, the former governed by law and the latter by grace. The OT promotes a system of salvation based on law, while the NT one of salvation based on grace. Therefore, the Law belongs to the OT and the Gospel to the NT, creating a disjunction between Law and Gospel. The NT Christian, they claim, is no longer “under law but under grace”, misreading also Romans 6:14.

“The Gospel according to St. Evangelical”

This obviously results in a *lawless* Gospel. My commentary on Romans provides a fuller treatment, showing why and how this is an egregious error. The end result is a neutered Gospel of personal salvation only—the “Gospel according to St. Evangelical”. A Gospel that is voided of God's power to bring the Kingdom of God in terms of cultural and civilisational renewal. As I will show, momentarily, God's law is his wisdom for man's life and prosperity in this world.

Whereas, my proposal shows that, rather than a *dispensational contrast* that posits law *versus* grace, Romans 10:5-6 is a *functional comparison* of two equal but complementary principles – law *and* grace – that function simultaneously in all iterations of God's covenant, older and newer. Law is, consequently, integral to the Gospel for the Christian era.

Paul not only declares that “*All Scripture is God breathed and profitable*” – which categorically includes the law – but also that the law is “holy and righteous and good” (Rom 7:12). Not only so, it is, in fact, “spiritual “ (Rom 7:14).

Nevertheless, the majority position sets up the teachings of Christ and his apostles – the NT – in opposition to the law – the OT. It posits a radical *discontinuity* between old and new covenants. How can this but not come under the rubrics of Antinomianism and Marcionism?

The Promise of the Law: “that you might *live* and prosper in the land”

Therefore, Romans 10:5, citing Leviticus 18:5, is not a command of complete and perfect law-keeping so as to inherit eternal life (as taught by the majority view), but rather, a promise of *temporal* life. Leviticus 18:5 is situated in a chapter proscribing unlawful sexual relations. The chapter in turn lies within the larger Holiness Code of chapters 17-22 that prescribe ethical standards, ranging across: love for one's neighbour, judicial impartiality, care for the disabled and poor, hygiene and food laws, respect for the elderly, protection of aliens; also proscribing theft, slander, oppression, and so forth. So, contra to the majority view, the law was never intended to be a meritorious means of justification, but rather, as a means of *sanctification*. The law is, therefore, not abrogated by Christ, but rather reinstated in the newer covenant as the unchanging standard for holy living (see Matt. 5-7).

Israel's ethical code was to mark them off from their neighbouring pagan nations—from their cruelties, immoralities, occultism,

and idolatry (Lev. 18:1-5). When God commanded Moses' second giving of the law to Israel, prior to entering the land, he also gave its rationale:

And now, *O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.* You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God destroyed from among you all the men who followed the Baal of Peor. But you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive today. *See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples,* who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

And he declared to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone. *And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules, that you might do them in the land that you are going over to possess.*

Deuteronomy 4:1–8, 13–14

Echoing Leviticus 18:5, obedience to the covenant, to its statutes and judgements, was so that they might *live* and prosper in the land (Deut. 4:40; 5:33; 6:1-3; 7:12-16; 8:1). It was a promise that they may flourish there, in the land, and multiply as a reiteration of Adam's original Creation Mandate to fill the earth and subdue it as God's vice-regent (see Gen. 1:26-28). Not only so, it was additionally the promise, subsequent to Adam's tragic and epochal fall, that the seed of the woman would crush the serpents head, thus, conquering sin and death, and restoring the earth as the Garden of the Lord, as God's cosmic temple. This is vividly displayed not only through the garden imagery but also the sacrificial cultus of both tabernacle and temple.

So, like Eden, the land was merely a down-payment on the entire earth. Israel was to first possess and settle Canaan, cultivate it and multiply in it, and then, as God's missionary nation, export God's reign and prosperity to the nations. This was in fulfilment of the promise not only to Adam but also to Abraham that his seed would bless and inherit the earth (see Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-21; 17:1-27; Ex. 19:5-6). Christ and his Church are then the final and full consummation of this promise and mandate (see 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:16; Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Psa. 110; Matt. 28:18-20).

Consequently, both Law *and* Gospel, functioning together as equal partners in the covenant, are absolutely strategic in God's earth purpose. The law of God is the wisdom of God for living and prospering in this time-space world. It is, hence, the key to building Christian civilisation, of the Kingdom of God coming fully and ruling, in history, over the affairs of men.

An Eschatology of Victory

This Gospel, therefore, demands an eschatology of victory. All thought of defeat before the demonic hordes of pagan darkness, and their worldly acolytes – the god-kings of the humanistic power-state, the supra-national global elites, the cultural Marxists, and the high-priests of scientism – is now cast out. There is no room for the spirits of unbelief and deception that parade as doctrines of the "end times", but are, in fact, "doctrines of demons"—of imminent Raptures, of a failed and impotent church, of Antichrists, of cataclysms and terminal judgements, of a world delivered to the ravages of Satan and his hell-hounds, to autonomous man, decreeing his own reality and remaking the world in his own image.

A Strategy for Dominion

This then demands, not only an eschatology of victory but also a strategy for dominion—for one body, under one Lord, in one Spirit to come together city-by-city to declare the crown rights of King Jesus over the totality of created existence. In the unity of the Spirit and of the faith once delivered to the saints, they will stand as one in the advance of the Gospel and Christ's Kingdom throughout the entire globe. Moving in the power of the Spirit this one body will display the diverse wisdom of God before men and angels—to spiritual forces of evil, to principalities and powers; to kings, prime ministers and presidents, who

will again become the defenders of the faith and protectors of the church. God's blueprints for the prosperity and peace of mankind will prevail centre-stage in the counsels of men.

Repenting from unbelief

But not without the church first repenting of her unbelief. This will demand eschewing the traditions of men for the word of God. Turning from her theological golden calves that, in God's name, have been raised up against his knowledge and the manifestation of his purposes for the earth—from every belief system that robs Christ of his crown-rights *in* the Christian era, that postpones them for another age. And thus, while holding to orthodoxy, denies in practice that, from this time-space world, a Man ascended to the Majesty on high who has been enthroned over history and is now actively governing it as the anointed King, and who has been commanded to rule *until* every enemy is subdued under his feet. Only after destroying *every* rule, authority, and power will he come to deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Then, at his coming, the last enemy – death – will be destroyed in the resurrection. The “last enemy”, signifies that there is a first, a second, a third, and so on, before the last—a progressive increase of God's victorious reign over men and angels before the end.

If this is not the Christian era what is it? There are no enemies in the age to come, in the new heavens and the new earth. But there are here and now, in *this present* evil age! Christ was raised, ascended, and enthroned at the beginning of the intersection of the ages. The *age to come* invaded *this present evil age* when, two-thousand years ago, the Holy Spirit overshadowed that young Hebrew girl, Mary, and gave birth to Emmanuel, *God with us*, who, after his sinless life and death at the hands of godless men, rose from the dead, conquering death and hell, ascending to the Father from whom he had come, and, having made atonement for many, sat at his right hand, and poured forth that which we now see and hear, the Holy Spirit, who has been sent by the Father and the Son to gather in the elect, Christ's corporate body on earth, a new humanity, ordained to rule as his king-priests over the earth. How does Christ rule from heaven but by his Spirit through his body in the earth! And how are his enemies subdued under his feet, in history, except through his body of which he is now the head! This means that *we* are his feet, under which his enemies are subdued. And just as God promised Joshua that the land on which his feet trod was an inheritance to him, our feet must also tread upon our land, our inheritance as God's king-priests. And this inheritance is not just one nation, Canaan, but all the nations and the peoples of the earth, for all the families of the earth shall worship him.

Placing our foot on the neck our enemies

But like Joshua, to put our feet upon our land is also to place them upon the neck of our enemies. Similar to the cultural challenge of the twenty-first century, the land, however, was a land that devoured its inhabitants, was full of giants and occupied by pagan peoples, whose cities were fortified and large. This demanded a different spirit, one of faith, which so filled Caleb and Joshua that they gave a different report, saying, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it”.

The Church that Christ is building is an overcoming one, against which the gates of hell cannot stand, they have no defence – no coherent argument, no spiritual power – against God's power in his Gospel and the wisdom of his laws. His Church is not cowering for fear of giants, but is on the march, arrayed in divine order in their tribes and under their banners, moving as one, as God's army under God's authority, under his word and his ministers, bringing down every proud imagination raised up against the knowledge of God.

Therefore, to wrest the law of God from the Gospel, is to stop in its tracks the advance of God's Kingdom. Satan's schemes include scripture. Certain “doctrines” have been diabolically inspired to forestall God's purposes and rob his people—to render them impotent and irrelevant to the world, to time-space history. This is not to demonise those who may hold them, but it is to expose and bring down every proud imagination raised up against the knowledge of God. It is time to recover the purity and power of Paul's Gospel, so as to receive from the Father the Kingdom—the rule of Christ the King and his law-word over the totality of created existence.

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