

Matthew 5:13-20

sec 1. “God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him & all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, & perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, & threatened death upon the breach of it, & endued him with power & ability to keep it.”

A. There are only 2 covenants found in Scripture.

1. covenant of works-

- a. To keep this covenant, God required that Adam keep the moral law written upon his heart. He was required to obey it with “personal, entire, exact, & perpetual obedience”
- b. Adam was the only one ever “endued” or given “power & ability to keep it.” Of course he failed.

2. covenant of grace-

- a. Because our 1st covenant head cast himself and all his posterity into an estate of sin & misery, God had to send a 2nd covenant head, a 2nd Adam, to fulfill all the 1st failed to do.
- b. Jesus fulfilled “perfect, personal, & perpetual obedience to God” & accounts His obedience to all those who put their faith in Him.
- c. Jesus also paid for the believer’s sins— their failure to keep “perfect, personal, & perpetual obedience to God.”

B. Salvation depends upon:

1. Which of the 2 covenants you choose. So often mankind selects the covenant of works hoping in vain that he will be good enough. Even before a man, woman, or child has done any good or evil, they already are condemned because they are born into a sinful nature that itself is an offense to God.
2. We could also phrase the ultimatum: your salvation depends upon which covenant head you choose.
3. These ultimatums seem so simple to us, yet God has to open the understanding of unbeliever to enable him or her to embrace Christ as He is offered in the gospel.

C. As we continue on in the WCF, the next 3 sections give us the 3 main divisions of the law of God:

sec 2. “This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; &, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, & written in two tables: the first four commandments containing our duty towards God; & the other six, our duty to man.”

A. This is the moral law abides forever as a “perfect rule of righteousness.”

1. I believe this is what Jesus refers to when He said in **Mat 5:19** **“Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, & teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps & teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰“For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**
2. The NT upholds these 10 commandments time & time again.

B. This perpetual moral law is what defines

1. Sin (acts of commission or omission)
2. It also defines what is a good work that is pleasing in God’s sight.

sec 3. “Beside this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, & benefits; & partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated [done away with], under the new testament.”

A. In **Mat 5:17**, Jesus said, **“I did not come to abolish but to fulfill”**

1. This is exactly what Jesus did with the ceremonial laws
2. The ceremonies were types & shadows of Christ to come.

B. Because the perfect, ultimate, sinless Lamb of God was sacrificed, there was no longer any need for a sacrificial system which was commanded prior to the “church under age.”

sec 4. “To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry [various] judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.”

A. Under this section says that judicial law given by God to Israel as a governing body still has application today. This section says that we are obliged to keep the “general equity” of those laws.

1. “General equity” here can be defined as the underlying moral principles of such laws. **Deut 22:8**
“When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you will not bring bloodguilt on your house if anyone falls from it.”

a. The underlying principle is that the 6th commandment not to murder also involves being careful to preserve life.

- 1) Vent you factory to prevent fumes from causing health trouble to your employees.
- 2) Put a fence around your pool to keep the neighbor’s kids from falling in.

2. If someone tried to take the judicial law of Israel and apply it to today in its entirety, they would not be in keeping with the WCF. Such an application was not taught by the NT church either.

sec 5 goes on to say that we ought to arrange society according to the moral law of God. “The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; & that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.”

1. When we say we are Reformed Christians holding to the WCF, our confession says “The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others”

- a. Yes, America needs laws that follow after the 10 commandments.
- b. Yes, it is appropriate to put up the 10 commandments in the courthouse & in our other government buildings.
- c. Some call this a breach of the necessity of having a “separation of church & state.”
 - 1) Such a claim does not fit with WCF 19, section 5
 - 2) This claim basically say we want to be ruled by the imaginations of men rather than the wisdom of God—“the moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others”
 - 3) This was America’s heritage for the majority of its existence.

2. All in society ought to arrange their lives according to God’s law “not only regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.”

- a. Keep the moral law because it is wise, holy, & just.
- b. Keep the moral law “also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it.”
— We obey parents, police, & others in authority to respect & honor God.

