

TORAH AND NOMOS IN THE BIBLE
The Law and Grace
Romania, 7. January 2014

CONTENTS

0. INTRODUCTION

1. THE PROBLEM
2. TORAH & NOMOS

1. TORAH IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

1. THE TERM "TORAH"
2. PRAISING TORAH
3. TORAH'S TEACHINGS
4. PROBLEMS WITH TORAH?

2. NOMOS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. THE WORD "NOMOS"
2. POSITIVE & NEGATIVE
3. A "BETTER HOPE"

3. LAW AND GRACE

1. LAW VS. GRACE
2. LAW USED BY GRACE

4. CONCLUSIONS

0. INTRODUCTION

- Legalism – Galatians (I need to do this or that to earn God's favor)
- Libertinism – Letter of Jude (**Jude 1:4** turning the grace of our God into promiscuity = Jesus obeyed for me, I don't need to)
- Easy believism – modern preaching (**1 John 3:4** sin is lawlessness) – repentance often not being mentioned in a gospel message
- Judgmental attitudes – relationships between Christians (I know God's law and judge the others' fulfilling the law)
- Theology – Old Testament Authority; the Law and the Gospel...

1. THE PROBLEM

- "law": (1) natural, impersonal, manipulated/taught e.g. at school and viewed as something determined and unchangeable (2) arbitrary, biased, critiqued – personal but often viewed as unhelpful (e.g. some parliamentary laws)
- Torah (the Law) - necessary? – Torah as God's law connects the deterministic aspect (it can't be changed) of the natural law and the personal aspect of the arbitrary law = it requires respect and consciousness of the fact that it's an expression of God's personal will, His character
- if necessary - what is the use for it in life under grace?
[BUNYAN] ...so long as people are ignorant of the nature of the law, and of their being under it — that is, under the curse and condemning power of it, by reason of their sin against it — so long they will be careless, and negligent as to the inquiring after the true knowledge of the gospel. ... I say, therefore, if thou wouldst know the authority and power of the gospel, labor first to know the power and authority of the law ; for I am verily persuaded, that the want of this one thing, namely, the knowledge of the law, is one cause why so many are ignorant of the other.¹
- **Rom 3:20** through the law *comes* the knowledge of sin.
- "the law is *spiritual*" (?) then why so many *very physical*

¹ BUNYAN, J. *The Doctrine of the Law and Grace Unfolded*, In: *WORKS I*, p. 181.

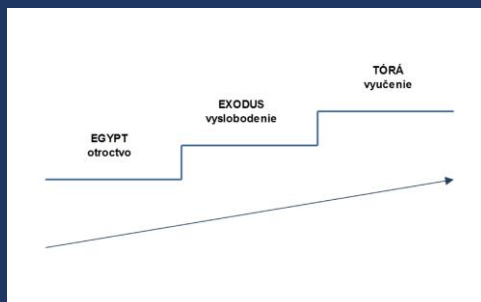
There is perhaps no part of divinity attended with so much intricacy, and wherein orthodox divines do so much differ, as the stating the precise agreement and difference between the two dispensations of Moses and of Christ.²

[SPURGEON] THERE is no point upon which men make greater mistakes than upon the relation which exists between the Law and the Gospel. Some men put the Law instead of the Gospel—others put the Gospel instead of the Law. Some modify the Law and the Gospel and preach neither Law nor Gospel—and others entirely abrogate the Law by bringing in the Gospel. Many there are who think that the Law is the Gospel and who teach that men by good works of benevolence, honesty, righteousness and sobriety, may be saved. Such men do err. On the other hand, many teach that the Gospel is a Law—that it has certain commands in it by obedience to which men are meritoriously saved. Such men err from the Truth and understand it not.³

2. TORAH & NOMOS

- the differences in “appraisal” between the OT and NT (→ Is the Law valid for a Christian?)
- OT: **Dt 4:5-6** Look, I have taught you statutes and ordinances as the LORD my God has commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to possess. ⁶ Carefully follow *them*, for this will *show* your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the peoples. When they hear about all these statutes, they will say, "This great nation is indeed a wise and understanding people.
- NT: **Acts 15:10-11** Why, then, are you now testing God by putting on the disciples' necks a yoke that neither our forefathers nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹ On the contrary, we believe we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way they are."
- **Rom 3:28** ...we conclude that a man is justified by faith *apart from works of law*.
- **Rom 4:5** to the one who does not work, but believes on Him who declares righteous the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

1. TORAH IN THE HEBREW BIBLE



Egypt/slavery, Exodus/freedom, Tórá/teaching
= a group of slaves becomes emancipated/a nation by receiving regulations how to live in a perfect way

1. THE TERM “TORAH”

- 1. (orig.) **direction, instruction** (asked of God in a given situation), administered by priests Jer.18:18; — 2. **instruction** (given by men) Pro1:8; — 3. sg. (an established instruction > single) **law**: Lev 6:2'; 4. **tôrâ, the law** (= summation, contents of the laws): tôrat yhwh 2Ki.10:31; tôrat mošeh 2Ki 2:3; oft. w. sf. = God's 2Ki.22:8.
- **Joshua 1:8** *This book of instruction* must not depart from your mouth; you are to recite it day and night, so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.
- **Lv 6:9** "Command Aaron and his sons: This is the law of the burnt offering; the burnt offering itself must remain on the altar's hearth all night until morning, while the fire of the altar is kept burning on it.
- **Pr 1:8** Listen, my son, to your father's instruction, and don't reject your mother's teaching

² EDWARDS. J. *Qualifications for Full Communion*, In: *Works (1856) I*, p. 160.

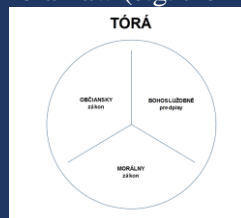
³ SPURGEON, C.H. *Law and Grace* (Sermon No.37)

2. PRAISING TORAH

- **Ps 1:2** his delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night.
- **Psalm 19:7-12** The instruction of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart *glad*; the commandment of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are reliable and altogether righteous. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold-- than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey-- than honey dripping from the comb. ¹¹ In addition, Your servant is warned by them; there is great reward in keeping them. ¹² Who perceives his unintentional sins? Cleanse me from my hidden faults.
- **Psalm 119:1-3** How happy are those whose way is blameless, who live according to the law of the LORD! ² Happy are those who keep His decrees and seek Him with all their heart. ³ They do nothing wrong; they follow His ways.
- Josh 1:8

3. TORAH'S TEACHINGS

- Three components (inseparable!): (1) civil law (e.g. how to sell a piece of land), (2) ceremonial law (cleanliness code; ritual...), (3) moral law (e.g. the Decalogue)



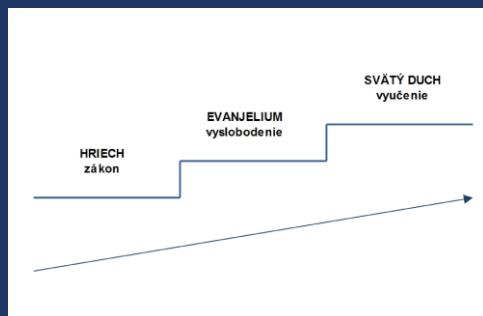
- Proverbs - mother's teaching...

Some people would say that one or two parts of Torah don't need to be followed (e.g. no need to sacrifice animals) but one part needs to be obeyed (e.g. the moral law).

4. PROBLEMS WITH TORAH?

- **Dt 29:4** Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a mind to understand, eyes to see, or ears to hear. = the Israelites did have the perfect law, Torah, to follow yet they didn't have "tools" to be able to follow it
- **Psalm 119:176** I wander like a lost sheep; seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commands
- **Ecc 8:11** Because the sentence against a criminal act is not carried out quickly, therefore the heart of people is filled *with the desire* to commit crime.

2. NOMOS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT



Sin/law, Gospel/freedom, Holy Spirit/instruction

1. THE WORD "NOMOS"

- a formalized rule (or set of rules) prescribing what people must do - 'law, ordinance, rule

νόμος I. Gesetz, Brauch : *νέμομαι* nehme in Benutzung, gebrauche; daher *νομίζω* erkenne als Brauch an, *νόμιμος* der Sitte gemäß.⁴

Origin of the word: "nomad"

1550s, from Middle French *nomade* (16c.), from Latin *Nomas* (genitive *Nomadis*) "wandering groups in Arabia," from Greek *nomas* (genitive *nomados*, plural *nomades*) "roaming, roving, wandering" (to find pastures for flocks or herds), related to *nomos* "pasture, pasturage, grazing," literally "land allotted," and to *nemein* "put to pasture," originally "deal out," from PIE root **nem-* "to divide, distribute, allot" = to decide something (see *nemesis*).⁵ = the Greek word for the Law stresses its moral aspect

- **Acts 13:15** After the reading of the *Law and the Prophets*
- **Eph 2:15** ...the law of the commandments in regulations
- **Heb 9:1-4** Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. ² For a tent was prepared, ...

2. POSITIVE & NEGATIVE

- **Rom 7:12** the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good
- **Rom 7:14** For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am made out of flesh, sold into sin's power.
- **Heb 7:19** (for *the law perfected nothing*), but a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God.
- **Rom 7:14** For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin.
- **Rom 8:3** What the law could not do since it was limited by the flesh, God did.
- **Rom 5:20** Now the law came in *to increase the trespass*,...
= God's law is perfect BUT I am imperfect – it can't make me right, it can only show my weakness
- the NT shows a better way: grace

3. A "BETTER HOPE"

1. WORKING OF THE LAW

- knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20) → curse (Gal 3:10)

2. WORKING OF GRACE

- the gospel (Rom 1:16) → freedom (Rom 6:14) → power (2Tim 2:1)

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **2Cor 3:7-8** Now if the **ministry of death**, chiseled in letters on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel were not able to look directly at Moses' face because of the glory from his face-- a fading *glory*-- ⁸ how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

3. LAW AND GRACE

- **James 1:25** who looks intently into the perfect **law of freedom** **James 2:12** Speak and act as those who will be judged by the **law of freedom**.

1. LAW VS. GRACE

- "not under the Law"
- **Rom 6:14** For sin will not rule over you, because you are not **under law** but **under grace**.

Grace doesn't mean that God said "I don't care about sin anymore". He has actually performed the trial and the verdict for the one believing in His Son is: grace (like Moses lifted up the snake in the desert – a Christian is looking at the cross in order to be saved from death).

⁴ PRELLWITZ, W. *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Griechischen Sprache*.

⁵ http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=nomad&searchmode=none

2. LAW USED BY GRACE

- **Tit 2:11-12** For the grace of God has appeared, with salvation for all people, ¹² *instructing us* to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age,

1. Threefold use of the Law. We distinguish: a. *A usus politicus or civilis*. The law serves the purpose of restraining in and promoting righteousness. Considered from this point of view, the law presupposes sin and is necessary on account of sin. It serves the purpose of God's common grace in the world at large. This means that from this point of view it cannot be regarded a means of grace in the technical sense of the word. b. *A usus elencticus or pedagogicus*. In this capacity the law serves the purpose of bringing man under conviction of sin, and of making him conscious of his inability to meet the demands of the law. In that way the law becomes his tutor to lead him unto Christ, and thus becomes subservient to God's gracious purpose of redemption. c. *A usus didacticus or normativus*. This is the so-called *tertius usus legis*, the third use of the law. The law is a rule of life for believers, reminding them of their duties and leading them in the way of life and salvation. This third use of the law is denied by the Antinomians.⁶

- Acts 13:39
- the Law can only show me where I've fallen
- only through the presence of the Holy Spirit in me I am able to be gradually changed into God's likeness, through my identification with Jesus at His cross and receiving His grace

4. CONCLUSIONS

- The Law of God is good, spiritual, unchangeable – we have to honour and obey it. (Torah)
- Our human condition changes the law into an instrument of condemnation and curse. (Nomos)
- God in his grace provided way out through the Cross of His Son. (Charis)
- The Law continues to be instructive, but not salvific in the life of a Christian. (Tertius usus legis)

⁶ BERKHOFF, L. *Systematic Theology*, p. 614-5.