

COVENANTAL ANALYSIS OF THE LAW

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(WTS/CA Pentateuch Lectures)

As opposed to the traditional three-fold division of the Mosaic Law (moral, civil, ceremonial), Kline proposes the following covenantal analysis of the Law. Rather than a three-fold division, Kline sees a two-fold division – *not* moral vs. ceremonial/restorative (Bahnsen), but moral vs. typological. These are not to be understood as "bins" into which each Mosaic stipulation can be placed, but as aspects of the whole Mosaic Law regarded as a covenantal unity. The Decalogue, for example, cannot be neatly identified as totally moral, since it contains typological elements (the curse sanctions attached to the second and third commandments, and the promise of long life in the land attached to the fifth commandment). The reason that the first three commandments only are mentioned under the "moral-cultic" category is that Sabbath command, while rooted in creation and thus applicable in some form in all pre-consummation epochs of covenant history, is a sign of the covenant and hence not universally binding on all men.

Both the moral and typological aspects of the Law are further subdivided into cultic and cultural. The cultic dimension pertains to the vertical God-man relationship; the cultural dimension to the horizontal man-man and man-creation relationships. Cult is the priestly task, culture the kingly task – both integrated under the theocratic lordship of God. In non-theocratic contexts (i.e., the pre-Mosaic patriarchal era, and the present church age prior to the parousia) cult and culture are not institutionally integrated, and culture in particular is not part of the holy redemptive program of the kingdom (with the exception of the cultural function of reproduction, which for believers and their seed is subsumed under the redemptive program by means of the familial covenant even in non-theocratic situations).

	CULTIC	CULTURAL
Moral (permanent)	Worship God only First three commandments	Love your neighbor Work diligently Moderate use of food and clothing
Typological (temporary)	Priesthood Temple Sacrifice	Theocracy Holy War Subjugation of false religions & idolatry Penal system (typological of hell, not discipline) Enforcement of first four commandments

Kline also sees a fifth category of technologically incidental laws applicable only to Israel in its cultural milieu (e.g., king shall not build up his army to a certain size; the parapet law). These would basically fall under the category of "cultural" but they are neither permanent nor strictly typological in the same sense that holy war and the penal sanctions are. The latter are typological intrusions of the eschatological kingdom of Christ when he exercises his kingly office in judgment upon unbelievers at the last day. The technologically incidental laws seem to be temporary laws bound up with Israel's immediate cultural context.

Explanatory note on the shaded box. One of the weaknesses of the traditional three-fold analysis is that it implies that typology is limited to the ceremonial law and that there is no typological significance

to civil law. Kline's covenantal analysis thus has the advantage of showing that there is a fourth category: typological-cultural laws. This is the category that gets missed in the usual three-fold analysis. The issue of theonomy lies here. For if the civil law is a typological intrusion of Christ's eschatological kingship, then it may not be applied to the common grace arena of the civil magistrate's non-eschatological governance.

Kline writes:

We must recognize that the symbolico-typical dimension informs the civil as well as the cultic side of the Mosaic institution. Israel as a whole was a holy theocratic kingdom, a prototype of the consummated eternal kingdom, and as such not paralleled by any earthly institution in New Testament times – not by the state, for it is not holy, and not by the church, for it is not a geopolitical kingdom, at least not in its present phase of existence as a visible organization on earth (Review of Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, in *Christian Scholar's Review* 10:2 [1981] 175).