

Within the depths of our deceitful hearts lay innumerable strategies to avoid God's will. We want to live our lives according to our own patterns, rationalizing our ignoring of the Lord's instructions. We even offer "biblical cases" for our rationalizations, wherein we limit Scripture to certain areas. Only from Natural Law, we say, must social and political guidance be obtained. But without an objective measuring rod of our readings of nature, can Natural Law escape the charge that appeals to it are merely euphemistic ways of justifying one's personal tastes? Or we limit the Bible to certain people. Scripture, we say, obligates only the redeemed; ignoring the fact that redemption is but an additional *motivation* to obey the Scriptures, not the sole reason why they bind. Let us remember that to interpret nature independently from God's Word follows the serpent's advice, not our Lord's.

Natural ethicists need to come to grips with the fact that it is God's *judgment* to leave people with nature alone. As Paul and Barnabas told the crowds at Lystra, "In the generations gone by [God] permitted all the nations to go their own ways" (Acts 14:16). God did not see fit to correct those walking in their own sinful ways—one of the advantages of having the oracles of God (Romans 3:1–2). Being left to the guidance of nature alone brings "times of ignorance," leading to lifestyles that are not praised by God but to lifestyles requiring repentance (Acts 17:30). Even when the covenant people ignored the law of their God, they walked not in moral knowledge but in the lack thereof, meriting their destruction (Hosea 4:6). What should we say, then, about a moral theory advocating this very arrangement that is the judgment of God?

As followers of the Lord Jesus, we can no longer divide

life into our *Christian* life and our *common citizen* life, as the Two Kingdoms doctrine would have us do. It is to Christ and to His Word that we have sworn allegiance for *all* of life. It is His authority that makes laws obligatory, causing Christians to shun Christ-less moral theories (Colossians 3:17). It is by His Scriptures that He redeems the world (Isaiah 11:4)—in vain do we seek economic, cultural, and political prosperity by Scripture-less guidance.

We are children of the King. To us, not to the world, do all things belong. It is only if we demand of men complete submission to the living Christ of the Scriptures in every area of their lives, that we have presented to men the claims of the Lord Christ without compromise.**

Indeed, the world needs an uncompromised Christ (Psalms 2:10–12) with uncompromised instructions from Scripture (Proverbs 29:18). If Christians will not give these to the world, who will?

*All quotations in this Two Kingdoms section are from David VanDrunen, *A Biblical Case for Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Acton Institute, 2006). For a more comprehensive critique of the Two Kingdoms doctrine, see my review of this book at www.annodomini.co.


**Cornelius Van Til in Greg L. Bahnsen's, *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1998), 23.

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**Christ's
Kingdom
Doctrine**

VS.

**TWO
Kingdoms
Doctrine**


	TWO KINGDOMS	VS.	CHRIST'S KINGDOM
1	<p>All men know God's moral truths from nature.</p> <p>"[Natural Law is] the moral order inscribed in the world and especially in human nature [i.e., heart, see Romans 2:14–15], an order that is known to all people through their natural faculties (especially reason and/or conscience) even apart from supernatural divine revelation that binds morally the whole of the human race." (1)*</p>		<p>Man's corruption causes his interpretations of nature to be untrustworthy.</p> <p>Though all men know God's moral truths from nature (Romans 1:19–20; 2:14–15), their corruption (Colossians 1:21; Ephesians 4:17–18) impels them to suppress this knowledge (Romans 1:18) to the point of convincing themselves that they are ignorant of it (Acts 17:30; 1 Peter 1:14). Consequently, their corrupt interpretations of nature cannot be trusted (Acts 14:8–18; Romans 1:25).</p>
2	<p>Nature is sufficient as a moral guide.</p> <p>"Natural law is the moral standard that governs life in the civil kingdom. Scripture is the sacred text given to God's covenant people whom he has redeemed from sin. . . . Given its character, therefore, Scripture is not given as a common moral standard that provides ethical imperatives to all people regardless of their religious standing." (53)*</p>		<p>Nature is insufficient as an independent guide. Scripture must measure our reading of nature.</p> <p>"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool." (Proverbs 28:26; cf. Jeremiah 17:9)</p> <p>"Speak to the Israelites and says to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes.'" (Numbers 15:38–39; cf. Deuteronomy 6:6, 8)</p>
3	<p>Christ's kingdom does not include temporal matters, like sociopolitical matters.</p> <p>"[God] has established two kingdoms (or, two realms) in which he exercises his rule in distinct ways. God governs one kingdom . . . as its creator and sustainer, but not as its redeemer. This civil kingdom pertains to temporal, earthly, provisional matters, not matters of ultimate and spiritual importance. . . . The other kingdom . . . is also ruled by God, but he rules it not only as creator and sustainer but also as its redeemer in Christ. This kingdom pertains to things that are of ultimate and spiritual importance, the things of Christ's heavenly, eschatological kingdom." (24)*</p>		<p>Christ's kingdom and authority is over temporal matters, even sociopolitical matters.</p> <p>"Now therefore, be wise, O kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him." (Psalms 2:10–12)</p> <p>"Jesus Christ, . . . the ruler of the kings of the earth." (Revelation 1:5; cf. 17:14; 19:16)</p> <p>"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name [authority] of the Lord Jesus." (Colossians 3:17)</p>
4	<p>Christ rules as redeemer only over the Church. (see above quotations in #3)</p>		<p>Christ is redeeming all creation.</p> <p>"Jesus, . . . whom heaven must receive until the period of <i>restoration of all things</i> about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time." (Acts 3:20–21; cf. Ephesians 1:9–10; Colossians 1:19–20)</p>
5	<p>Mosaic Covenant temporarily rescinded the common cultural realm wherein believers and unbelievers could interact.</p> <p>"With the account of Israel's exodus from Egypt and settlement in the promised land of Canaan, there was a temporary interruption of the two kingdoms principle. . . . Instead of mingling with unbelieving nations in cultural endeavors, God's people were now commanded to exterminate the pagans within their nation's borders (e.g., Deut. 7:1–5)." (30)*</p>		<p>Mosaic Covenant included a common cultural realm.</p> <p>Unbelievers had a civil right to dwell in Israel (Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 19:33–34), had to obey the laws of the land (Leviticus 20:2; 24:16, 22), could be employed (Leviticus 25:40), could engage in commerce (Nehemiah 13:15–21), could glean from others' property (Leviticus 19:10; 23:22), could hold political office (2 Kings 21), and could even buy Hebrew servants (Leviticus 25:47).</p>
6	<p>Mosaic repeal of common culture realm was a type of eternal age.</p> <p>"Theocratic Israel in the land is a typological foreshadowing of the eschatological age to follow Christ's second coming, in which all sin and evildoers will be banished and therefore no mixing of believers and unbelievers will be possible." (32)*</p>		<p>Mosaic moral structure not typological of eternal age; even binds NT age.</p> <p>Mosaic civil penalties are distinguished from eternal penalties. (Hebrews 2:2–3; 10:28–29)</p> <p>"Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.'" (1 Corinthians 9:8–9; cf. Hebrews 8:7–12)</p>
7	<p>Scripture is not for the common civil realm.</p> <p>"Scripture is not the appropriate moral standard for the civil kingdom." (38)*</p> <p>"Natural law is the moral standard that governs life in the civil kingdom." (53)*</p>		<p>Scripture's authority is over all spheres of life, including the civil sphere.</p> <p>"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for . . . training in <i>righteousness</i>, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for <i>every good work</i>." (2 Timothy 3:16–17)</p> <p>"I will speak of your statutes before kings and will not be put to shame, for I delight in your commands because I love them." (Psalms 119:46–47)</p> <p>"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us break their <i>bonds</i> in pieces and cast away their <i>cords</i> from us.'" (Psalms 2:2–3)</p>
8	<p>Scripture is for redeemed people only.</p> <p>"The moral instruction given in Scripture cannot be taken simply as the moral standard for the world at large. The purpose of Scripture's moral instruction is to regulate and define the lifestyle of God's redeemed covenant people." (39)*</p> <p>"Christians cannot rightly appeal to the moral lifestyle set forth in Scripture as directly applicable to non-Christians." (40)*</p>		<p>Scripture's authority is over all people.</p> <p>"You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country." (Leviticus 24:22)</p> <p>John the Baptizer held the heathen Herod accountable to the laws of Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21. (Matthew 14:4)</p> <p>Paul required an unbelieving judge to obey Leviticus 19:15 and Deuteronomy 25:1–2. (Acts 23:3)</p>