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B0847 – December 21, 2008 – Suzerainty-Vassal Treaties

Just to review. If you were dealing with a problem of suffering, what historical event would you visualize of the one's we've done so far? What would be the one that you'd say, okay, there's my background event, now I'm going to start thinking about the text, the narratives and the implications. Which event would go you to? Any category of suffering, whether it's a disciplinary issue for the believer, whether it's a death in the family, whether it's cancer, whatever, where would you move to? The Creation and the Fall.

If somebody said to you that they were working in a laboratory and it's been shown that all of our emotions, all of our consciousness and everything else is just growing out of the biochemistry of the human brain, therefore, since we believe that man is a machine, because this is how he evolved along with all the other natural machines in the universe, etc., What event, what cluster of Scripture would you go to? Creation.

What if someone were to tell you that the whole act of salvation is purely a spiritual thing, that when we die we go to heaven and that's it, we go, so to speak, out of physical history into sort of a heavenly place and that's the end of our interaction with the physical universe. Salvation, in other words, is the escape from material realm into the (quote) "spiritual realm," New Age stuff, that kind of thing. When the word salvation and deliverance is mentioned, what image in the Bible should you think about? There are two we've studied so far that are great historical events depicting what salvation means and show you that it's not just spiritual? The Flood and the Exodus. In both cases, they're a revelation of what the word salvation means and God's salvation is not merely in the spiritual realm, it's also in the physical realm. It's as much physical as it is spiritual. Why is that? When man fell, was it just spiritual or did the Fall also have physical consequences? It did, when man fell the ground

was cursed, man began to sweat, the ground began to produce thorns and thistles, so there were physiological effects, chemical effects, all stemming from the Fall. In memory of this, when Jesus Christ went to the cross what was placed on his head? A crown of thorns, a stark reminder of the Fall, He was dying for both man and nature, the spiritual and the physical.

If somebody says that the proper norm of our society can be discovered by interviewing a thousand people's behavior, plotting it on graph paper and taking the average, saying that's the normal. What totally incorrect premise underlies that whole idea of the statistical method of defining norms and standards? You're defining the behavior of your average fallen sinner. But is that a true norm? What did we say Scripturally if you go back to the Creation and the Fall. When is the only place we find the norm? At Creation. Then we have the Fall and this introduces an abnormal state. So how then, by taking statistics in an abnormal state do you get a norm?

These are the ways you want to start thinking to bring your faith into collision with the culture around you, and we need to do that. We need to be able to say that, "Because I'm a Christian I view things this way," and more even important than that is to recognize that because the culture is non-Christian, it's screwed up in a very, very basic way, the culture around us is seriously perverted. People always think of perversion as some sort of moral perversion. I'm not talking, necessarily, about a moral perversion. We're talking about a total screw up in the way reality is viewed. Reality is being viewed in a very distorted way.

After the Flood we looked at an event called the Tower of Babel that showed how rapidly the world was paganizing and God had to do something to save the human race or they would have just worked themselves into oblivion. To salvage the universe and get the gospel going out again God chose a subset of the human race to be his vessel of salvation. What event is that? The Call of Abraham.

These are the ways to think through these things. Thinking that way, we've just come through the Exodus and we've said that the Exodus, like the Flood, is a picture of judgment/salvation; both have the same five characteristics. You see it again and again and again, the Bible is very consistent this way. Every time there's salvation, there's one and only one way to be saved, there's only

one ark, there's only one way to be saved from the angel of death, by blood on the door. Its man and nature being saved, man AND animals on the ark, man AND animals being saved by the blood on the door. There's always a spiritual and a physical dimension to salvation, the whole cosmos was affected by the Flood, the plagues of Egypt. God is always gracious before He saves. He waits and He waits and He waits and He waits, grace before judgment. And the method of appropriating that salvation is always by faith and it's always by faith because there's nothing we can do. God gets the glory.

Alright, so we've looked at the **Exodus**. The Exodus has a worldly counterfeit. What worldly paganzed idea is a faint substitute for the Exodus? What is it that men crave when they live in an oppressive society, a society that doesn't quite generate freedom? Over the last 300 years of western history there have been serious attempts to produce, by human works, something like an Exodus. Those attempts we call revolutions, the idea that human society can rid itself of evil and get corrected. Karl Marx, the Russian Revolution, Voltaire, Robespierre, the French Revolution, I wouldn't classify the United States American Revolution as a real revolution; it was more of an upheaval inside English common law. We really can't be compared in many ways and this is why third world countries always try to quote "have their revolution" mimicking ours, but without the biblical basis for it, it always has terrible results. We had a basis for it stemming from the Reformation base which went back to the authority of the Bible, law was given by God and the Bible stood above laws generated by human legislation, and that idea went into English law, and finally to American law. But when you get to the Russian Revolution, the French Revolution, and they try to produce these freedoms minus the biblical base you end up with a blood bath, a period of stark terror that ends in a dictatorship.

The Exodus wasn't like that. There was a blood bath, yes, but the blood wasn't shed over men fighting men. The blood was shed to solve a basic problem that the other revolutions don't solve. Marx didn't solve the problem because all Communism or Marxism ever did was to replace one fleshly system with another fleshly system; exchange one evil form of government with another, so obviously you didn't get rid of evil in society. So these are pagan attempts to generate, on the basis of human works, a true revolution. But that can never be reproduced by man because at heart man is a sinner. So the Exodus is the genuine revolution. It's a revolution that starts not with something inside man

but it comes from outside man. God was the Personal architect of the revolution. So it's not by human works, it's God's work. So keep the Exodus in mind next time you hear about a revolution going on. A lot of these people are very sincere, they're very dedicated. Communists were very, very dedicated people because they really, genuinely thought that they could change society and get rid of evil in society by their program and that's why they're willing to kill people to get there. The end justified the means.

Now we come to **Mt Sinai** and the issue of the law. Envision in your minds eye two million Israelites showing up at the foot of Mt Sinai. You're standing there on the sand surrounded by unscalable rock cliffs. And the voice of God reverberating off those cliffs where you stand. It's a perfect PA system and all the people heard the voice of God. This shocked the people to say the least. You've heard the expression "put the fear of God into someone..." Well it did just that. Exod 19:9, here's some more of the visual around that Mt., "...Behold, I shall come to you in a thick cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe in you forever." The "believe in you" means believing the word of God that's going to come to Moses. Notice in verse 9 the purpose clause. "I shall come to you," Moses, but then for what purpose is He coming in this thick cloud? "in order that the people may hear when I speak with you." In other words, God deliberately wanted people to overhear the conversation. We said that's a very, very important aspect of revelation, this is a public revelation.

And this is an offensive truth we'll get into next week. A publicly speaking God is as offensive as anything we saw in Gen 1. When we dealt with Gen 1 we kept running into biology, geology and physics, it's unavoidable, and we found that everywhere there's a conflict with the secular model of history. Well here again we rub with the world because we can't have a speaking God, we don't like a God who reveals Himself clearly. So it's verses like Exod 19:9, and the public hearing of the Ten Commandments in Exod 20 that are just as offensive to modern thought as anything in Genesis. Let me tell you the point of offense and try to show you why paganism rebels profoundly against it. In verse 9 it says God is going to speak. It doesn't say Moses went up to Mount Sinai, took some drugs and hallucinated. That's the interpretation that the modern theologian has to have, he can't accept a public revelation of a speaking God, that is absolutely unthinkable. Why is that? Think back a moment. When we went back to Creation, I made a big point over and over again until I'm sure some of

you thought, why is he doing this? I kept saying about language and that there are limitations to human language; I said that again and again and again, limitations to human language, limitations to human language.

What do we mean by limitations to human language? There are certain inherent limitations to human language. I gave some semantic paradoxes to illustrate. The famous one says: All Cretans are liars. said the Cretan poet. How do you take that? If all Cretans are liars then the poet who said that is telling the truth, in which case He's not a liar, but if what he's saying is true then he is lying and all Cretans are not liars because he's a Cretan. So there are these language paradoxes people have discovered inherent to our language. Our language simply is incapable of certain things. What the modern theologian inferred from this, which has totally destroyed Bible teaching, this is why your First Liberal Church doesn't teach the Bible anymore. This is why modern theology cannot accept fundamentalist doctrine anymore. They started with the philosophy of human language that says it's limited, therefore they conclude God cannot communicate with man because to do so He has to come through human language but human language is fouled up so we're cut off from hearing God. So no theologian in his right mind believes verse 9. The only way a modern person would interpret verse 9 is Moses hallucinated that the Lord said to him, Moses had a dream or something. But God really didn't say it in words you and I could hear if we were there and capture with a cording device.

So a gargantuan point right off the bat is that at Mt Sinai God publicly spoke to the Hebrews. He spoke what we call the Ten Commandments. What it means is that all the people heard from that mountain top in the Hebrew language God's Voice. Cecil De Mille did a great job portraying this, fires coming down, thunder and lightning and the voice of God coming forth, but no modern theologian would ever buy that. Why are we making such a big issue? Because now we come to an important doctrine just as with all the key events of Scripture there are doctrines associated with these events. And when we are at Mt Sinai, we are face to face with a contemporary issue and here it is. What is the source of values, ethics, and law? This is a debate that goes on all the time in society: values, ethics and law. In the Christian life we code it maybe, and we tend to weaken it, but whenever we're interested in what is the will of God for me, we're interested in this. What's the will of God? I can't tell what the will of God is, can I, if I don't know where it is found? Of course, unless I'm a mystic. Then apparently I can dream the will of God or I can feel the will of God or I

can go through some spooky mind emptying meditation technique and get an impression of will of God. But that's not Biblical. The Bible says that we know the will of God through the word of God, through conversation. That's why He wrote a book for us. He talks to us in the word. So, the issue then is values, ethics and law and where those come from.

So to go into this we're going to review some stuff, go into the Biblical view, look at the pagan view and when we get done we're going to learn something about Law. We said there were six elements that are found in ancient treaties. These treaties are called, suzerainty-vassal treaties, they were made between a great king and a vassal king. A vassal king was the inferior power. The great king was the super power. And there was a relationship that was established by means of a treaty and these treaties have these six features. And it was discovered back in the early 20th century that the Mosaic Law had these six elements. God was the great Suzerain and Israel his vassal. So let's review these six elements.

Look at Exodus 20, the Ten Commandment passage. There are features in this Ten Commandment passage you want to look at. The first one is that in treaties there was always a **Preamble** and in the Preamble the great king would identify himself. What does He say in verse 2? "I am the LORD your God. So there's item one, the Preamble where the great king identifies Himself.

Second, item two is the **Historical Prologue**, that is, in the beginning words there's some history cited, something has happened—and this is important because we're going to see what this leads to in an understanding of laws. It's really important to see the way the politics worked here. The politics worked like this, the lesser king wanted protection from the greater king and so he'd provide goods and services to the great king and in return the great king would send his infantry soldiers down there to fight off the lesser king's enemies. It's the same thing today in the international realm. During the cold war the small countries would align themselves with the Soviet Union or with the United States of America and they would prostrate themselves economically, in one sense, but they bought our security. Now the great king could have come in "Alright, now you're going to obey me!" But instead of doing that they would appeal to the lesser king. And so instead of saying you *are* going to obey me, the great king would say, you *should* obey me and here's why, and he'd give him some historical precedent. Of course it was historical precedent with a big stick

behind it, but nevertheless it was a historical precedent, there was some reason he should obey. And here it is found mostly in verse 2, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." Think about that for a minute. Who acted first? Israel or YHWH? YHWH did. Who owes who? See the relationship set up. Remember this, we're going into the law and a lot of people misunderstand the law. Understand that the law comes after the great King did something for the lesser. So the motive is gratitude for something the great king did. A fundamental point about the law; we're going to come back to again and again and again. Gratitude for what God has done for you.

Number three, the treaties made certain **Stipulations** and, of course, the Ten Commandments, what the Hebrews called the Ten Words, are the stipulations. What the great king required.

Number four, this is intriguing. In the suzerainty-vassal treaty, **two copies** of the treaty were made, one for each party's temple where it would be safeguarded and periodically reviewed. Here's what happened. The great king made these tablets in stone, engraved them in stone, they'd have two of them. One of the kings would take his and deposit it in his temple and the other one would take it and deposit it in his temple. So both nations had a copy of the treaty. Now that's intriguing. How many tablets did Moses bring down from Mount Sinai? Two. Where were those tablets stored? Think about that. Where were they deposited and kept? In the tabernacle. Whose tabernacle? Israel's or YHWH's? Both. They shared the tabernacle. So both copies are kept in the same place. There are not two separate places where the two copies are kept, they're kept together, and in fact, God's copy was kept inside the Ark of the Covenant and Israel's copy was kept beside the ark. So it suggests that instead of having five commandments on one, like you usually see in Sunday school literature and five more commandments on the second tablet, really what you had was all Ten Words on both tablets. There were two copies. Why was this done? So everyone has a copy of the terms of the contract? Why do you make a contract? To monitor behavior. We can always go back and say, "Alright, so and so king did or did not do what he agreed to do." And so it's a measure of each party's faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the terms of the contract. So it's important that both parties have a copy of the contract. We all make contracts at some time. You have a copy of the contract and you keep a copy of that in your files because that is your rights; that spells out the relationship, the

behavior that's expected of both parties. Then there would be a public reading. In Deut.31:9 look what happens to the OT law code. "So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. ¹⁰Then Moses commanded them, saying, "At the end of *every* seven years, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, ¹¹when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing. ¹²"Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, so that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God, and be careful to observe all the words of this law. ¹³"Their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." Isn't that an intriguing requirement? Every seven years, the entire nation had to publicly gather to hear the law in its entirety. It wasn't just the adults, it was the whole nation. They had to stand there as the priest read it. What would be analogous to that in our society today? Every seven years, every American family would have to attend a public reading of the United States Constitution. Every seven years so everybody understands what the basis of this country is all about. Radical idea. That might create a revolution.

Then the next thing that would happen, item five the **Invocation of Witnesses** to the treaty. In Deut 32, remember we said the purpose of the treaty is to monitor behavior. Well who is going to monitor the behavior? In v 1, notice who is addressed in the first stanza of the song. Keep in mind in the Hebrew, here's how they titled music. The song's title isn't Psalm 1 or Psalm 2 or Psalm 3, that's just the English Bible that does that. In the Hebrew, in the original language, the title of the song is the first verse. That's the title. That means that this song, which is the national anthem of OT Israel is entitled by the first verse, so Deut 32:1 is the title of the national anthem and the national anthem doesn't start, "Oh say, can you see," but it says, "Give ear, oh heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth." That's an invocation, actually to angelic powers, for the angels to monitor the behavior of the people in this covenant. Here is a revolution in understanding the OT. For years and years the liberals would say, "Oh Jeremiah and Isaiah and Zechariah, all these guys that wrote in the OT, they were social critics." And the idea that has been taught in schools has been that the rest of the OT is a bunch of social critics. Not so! The prophets of the OT spoke up because the

voice of the Holy Spirit came to them and the Holy Spirit spoke through them to bring them back in conformity to the Mosaic Law. That's the reason. Let me show you exactly how that happens. Turn to Isa 1:2, observe the first two verses of this great prophet, this is the prophet of the prophets; everybody knows Isaiah. Isn't it interesting what he says in verse 2; who is he addressing? "Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the LORD speaks: 'Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me. ³An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manager, But Israel does not know, My people do not understand.'" God is lamenting the behavior of the people before which audience? The heavens and the earth. Who was originally invoked by the treaty to be witnesses to the treaty? The heavens and the earth. It's a consistency that is marvelous in the OT. The OT has this exciting element to it. These prophets are not social critics. They are God's prosecuting attorneys. They are prosecuting and bringing a case against the legal infractions of Israel. Israel is breaking the Law they are supposed to know, they're supposed to have a public hearing every seven years. The prophets are not instituting something new, they're saying, "Look, you have transgressed the law, you have sinned and you should know this, it's right in your national anthem and you should have been singing this, you should have been reading it every seven years, so there's no excuse for this, your social institutions are rotten to the core because you've transgressed all these commandments." The prophets do not in other words introduce new social ideas. The prophets are reactionaries. They go *back* to the ideas of Moses; this is the correct way of reading the OT. It's reactionary. It is back to Moses, not a social advance, not a new thinking, not an evolution of ethics and morality. It's going back, back to the original ideas in the covenant.

The sixth thing in a Suzerainty-Vassal Treaty is the **Cursing and Blessings Formula**. This occurs in two key OT chapters, anyone know what they are? Lev 26 and Deut 28. Turn to Lev. This is where God gets a bad name from the OT. Nobody reads this; of course, everybody says that somebody read that somebody said that somebody read it and God us bad. This is the passage, these two chapters, are the meaning chapters. Keep in mind a treaty. The great king, if the vassal king doesn't obey, he's going to have a little problem because the great king has the power to enforce. Verse 3, 'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, ⁴then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.'" What kind of a blessing is mentioned in verse 4? How would you characterize it if you could? Agriculture. What would that

correspond to today? Economic blessing. So in verse 4, you see salvation is just not spiritual, it's in this covenant. Verse 6, "I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. ⁷But you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword; ⁸five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword." They will have military victory; they will enjoy military superiority. It's a picture of a nation that is blessed in the economy and victorious on the battlefield. But now verse 14, "But if you do not obey Me and you do not carry out all these commandments, ¹⁵if, instead, you reject My statutes...." Verse 16, "I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that shall waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you shall sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies shall eat it up." What is that saying in terms of our society? Economic disaster aided by military defeat. The mark of God's cursing on Israel. Verse 17, "And I will set my face against you so that you shall be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when no one is pursuing you" they will become vassals to foreign powers. What happened in the rest of the OT? Did they become vassals to foreign powers, sure they did. Verse 23, "And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, ²⁴then I will act with hostility against you," and it's a series of terrible judgments. Verse 27, "Yet if in spite of this, you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me," then I will do more. There are five degrees of discipline in chapter 26. Five degrees where the nation is blasted and God says, "Now are you going to listen to Me or not? Okay, you're not going to listen, fine we'll turn it up a notch and we'll go to phase two, try that one on. Not going to listen, okay, notch it up to phase three. There are five levels here and they're a prophecy of all the disasters that are going to come upon the nation for disobedience.

Deut. 28 is the other passage of the cursing and the blessings; and this doesn't make for nice reading. This is quite violent, blood thirsty and gory, but God has put it in the Scriptures. It starts off with blessing. Notice verses 3, 4, 5, 6. That's all the blessings and then come the cursing in verses 16, 17, 18, 19; the cursings are not nice. In verse 22, "The LORD will smite you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they shall pursue until you perish. ²³And the heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is

under you, iron.” There will be climatological disasters that yield agricultural disasters. There will be health problems. Public health will be in a mess, verse 22. Verse 26, And your carcass shall be food to all the birds of the sky and to the beasts of earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away,” in other words, so many people will die that you can’t bury them fast enough, so their bodies smell and rot out in the fields. Verse 30, “You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall violate her; you shall build a house, but you shall not live in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but you shall not use its fruit. ³¹Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be torn away from you, and shall not restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies....” Verse 35, the LORD will strike you on the knees and legs with sore boils, from which you cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.” God gets kind of nasty here, doesn’t He, and this is our God and our savior. But look what He’s doing here, verse 50, “A nation of fierce countenance who shall have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young. ⁵¹Moreover, it shall eat the offspring of your herd and produce of your ground until you are destroyed,” etc. It will come against your towns, verse 53. Now verse 53 is a prophecy of what literally happened twice inside the city of Jerusalem. “Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy shall oppress you.” And that happened. In the siege of Jerusalem, mothers ate their babies because they were starving so much, just cut them up and ate them for lunch. That historically happened. You want this text, Josephus, go to the church library and read it; it’s there, part of the historical record. And people say did this just happen because of the Romans? No, this was written before the Romans. Verse 53 was the cursing section of the treaty.

Conclusion: did God or did He not enforce His treaty? Yes He did, the rest of the OT and into the NT is a historical analysis of how He enforced it. It’s historically verifiable, no one questions Israel’s history, they question whether it was forecast. But I hope you see from this the very fact that you had these blessings and cursings does something for you with respect to Israel’s law. It shows you that it was not what we would think of as law. It was more an expression of the terms of a relationship between a Father and a Son. Its YHWH saying, I’m your Father Israel and You are My Son and as My Son this is what I expect from you. I expect you to grow up and learn obedience. But if you don’t I’m going to discipline you. And this just shows that history is very

personal, intensely personal and Israel is the model of this. Of course it's individual too in our own lives. And this is why there will be discipline in our lives. You say, God isn't blessing me. Well, not right now He's not; but the fact of the matter is I am being disciplined and that's a sign that my heavenly Father is concerned about me enough to discipline me. Now that's not accepted by our society because God forbid we damage someone's little self esteem. So we let brats do whatever they want to do. But in the OT times discipline was considered to be an expression of love, that's why in Hebrews 12, what does it say in Hebrews 12. If you don't get discipline in your life when you do wrong, you'd better start seriously reconsidering whether you're saved. The fact is, as His children we can't get away with it; He smacks us to get us back in line. He smacks us because we're His children and He loves us. The problem is, if you go out and raise all kinds of Cain and don't get smacked, then you have to wonder on the basis of Hebrews 12, am I really His child? That's how the blessings and cursings apply in a modern sense.

What we want to do in concluding is to get into the meaning of values, ethics, and law. What we're trying to do here is to think about the dilemma of our time. This is what you need to have in the back of your mind if you are sharing the gospel with anybody that is enveloped in the world system. I'm giving you an illustration here. Try this on your friends. There's a dilemma here and this is a neat thing to bring up because on a non-Christian basis, there's no way out of this paradox. In other words, this is ammunition that will put Mr. Unbeliever on the defensive because he hasn't got a solution to what I'm going to show you here. "No society can exist without a moral authority, a binding code of behavior, or a set of common values." The problem for the unbeliever is how to pass a moral judgment when an entire society's moral authority is immoral such as a cannibalistic tribe, Nazi Germany, or the future kingdom of the Antichrist? Obviously, if society were the source of its own moral authority then no one could pass judgment on the society, there would be no room for a reformer, right? What does a reformer do? He challenges the value set of a society. But if society is the source of right and wrong and a reformer comes in then by definition he or she would be immoral because they're rebelling against the society's values. Therefore, a society could sanction flagrant criminal actions and then appeal to society's code to vindicate its behavior. A clear instance of this..." now here's the dilemma, watch this. "A clear instance of this problem occurred in 1945 at the end of World War II. At the end of the war the Nazi war criminal trial was held at Nuremberg. The Nazi defense attorneys

were very well trained, they were very good lawyers and they argued very simply. “We look at Mr. Goebbels here and Goebbels is perfectly vindicated. Look, here’s the order, the Fuhrer gave him the order; Mr. Goebbels followed the order. You can’t convict him, this court has no authority to convict him of any war crimes, as a German officer he was carrying out a German command. On the basis of German law, you cannot convict him” and that’s when the American jurists at Nuremberg had a problem. How do they convict the Nazis? They can’t convict on the basis of Nazi law, can they, because Nazi law vindicated him. So what do you do? Well, what they did in 1945 is so neat from our point of view. They had to retreat away from the idea that society makes law and had to appeal to some (quote) “higher law.” The problem is where do you get the “higher law” from? That’s the intriguing question. American jurist, Supreme Court Judge Robert Jackson, put the matter well, quote, *“These men should be tried on this basis, on a higher law, a higher law which rises above the provincial and the transient.”* So here’s what Jackson says, they have to be tried, we’re not going to vindicate them, the Nazi law was wrong, so to vindicate that it was wrong he says we have to appeal to “a higher law which rises above the provincial and the transient,” the provincial meaning a narrow country Germany, England, France, etc...that being a local law, and transient, meaning it could come and go, the Nazi laws they had a problem with were enacted from 1933-1945, it was transient, for 12 years we had this bizarre German law and he said we have to reject the provincial and transient law. There was no other way to convict the Nazi’s. Think of this, the jurists were in a bind, the only way they could convict the Nazi’s was to appeal to some “higher law” that stood above Nazi law and therefore they had to say that a nations laws are only ‘provincial’ and ‘transient.’ On what other basis can you judge the Nazi’s? So obviously law does not originate from society. But the problem for the pagan is, where then does that law come from? We know as Christians, of course we know. But on pagan basis of an impersonal universe, where there is no ultimate lawmaker, what’s your source of law? How can you say what the Nazi’s did was wrong. You always want to remember that 1945 incident.

Alright, next time we’re going to get into the Biblical answer to that question and we’ll contrast that with the pagan view, then we’ll go on to Lordship since that issue is broached with the Law. Lordship salvation is a contemporary controversy and therefore one that we have to face. But we want to see as we progress that these events in Exodus give us some real insight into the problem and the solution to the problem.

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