

## God's Law: Ceremonial, Civil, Moral Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 34d

1. THE QUESTION: Why does it seem like we \_\_\_\_\_ some of God's laws, but \_\_\_\_\_ all of them?
  - a. For example: why are we \_\_\_\_\_ to eat shellfish, even though it is forbidden in Leviticus 11:9-11?
  - b. All of God's commandments – even about shellfish in the Old Testament – are \_\_\_\_\_ for us as they point to Christ and are \_\_\_\_\_ in him.
 

We believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ended with the coming of Christ, and that all foreshadowings have come to an end, so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians. Yet the truth and substance of these things remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, we continue to use the witnesses drawn from the law and prophets to confirm us in the gospel and to regulate our lives with full integrity for the glory of God, according to his will. (Belgic Confession, Article 25)

<sup>16</sup> Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. <sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (Colossians 2:16-17)
  - c. God's law is never arbitrary but orients us \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_: to Christ and to the world created through him.
2. THREE ASPECTS OF GOD'S LAW: To help us understand \_\_\_\_\_ God's law is fulfilled in Christ, we can identify \_\_\_\_\_ aspects of God's commandments – ceremonial, civil, and moral.
  - a. The *ceremonial* laws pointed \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. Many of them – including the food laws – were temporary illustrations of Israel's separation from the nations (Matthew 15:10-11, Acts 10:9-16).
  - b. The *civil* laws pertained to the covenant people of Israel as a \_\_\_\_\_. The covenant people of God are now an international community living *within* diverse nations, and so those laws do not apply directly as they did to Israel, though we can still learn wisdom from them. For example: the requirement of a wall around the roof of a house (Deuteronomy 22:8).
  - c. The *moral* laws are those that most directly express the \_\_\_\_\_ of the law as a matter of \_\_\_\_\_ for God and neighbor, and they apply to all people in all times and places. The Ten Commandments are often used as the clearest expression of the moral law.
  - d. While it can be helpful to divide the laws into categories, these are better understood as \_\_\_\_\_ of God's law. The fourth commandment, for example, includes both a ceremonial aspect (the specific day) and a moral aspect (setting aside one day out of seven). It's also debated whether the aspect of resting from work is more ceremonial or moral.
3. THE GLORY OF CHRIST: God's law exalts Christ for our \_\_\_\_\_ and describes the life he gives us as a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. For example: Christ fulfills the festival \_\_\_\_\_ of Israel (Leviticus 23).
  - b. Christ fulfills the \_\_\_\_\_ law.
 

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10:4)
  - c. We \_\_\_\_\_ God's law, therefore, because his commandments reveal his character, point us to Christ, and orient us \_\_\_\_\_ to a life of love.