

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

LAW AND CREATION: A STUDY OF SOME BIBLICAL LAWS RELATED TO CREATION—THE SEXUAL, DIETARY, AND SABBATH LAWS OF THE PENTATEUCH—AND THEIR INTERRELATEDNESS

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Problem

The growing consensus within recent biblical scholarship that acknowledges the paradigmatic importance of Genesis 1–3 for the interpretation of the rest of the Scriptures identified the fundamental role of Creation for understanding the origin, nature, purpose, and relevance of various biblical laws. This present study was to determine to what extent the intertextual connection between the sexual, dietary, and Sabbath laws of the Pentateuch and Creation, as well as the interrelationship among these laws, justifies a theology of Creation, a theology of the Law, and a theology of their interrelationship.

Method

The sexual, dietary, and Sabbath laws of the Pentateuch were analyzed from a lexical, structural, contextual, and theological perspective in relationship to Creation in general and to their creational blueprint in particular. Eventually, the three legislations were explored in relationship to each other lexically, structurally, contextually, and theologically.

Results

All the sexual, dietary, and Sabbath laws of the Pentateuch exhibited an undeniable relationship to Creation in general and to their respective foci within the Creation accounts to Genesis 1–2 in particular. Moreover, the legislations under discussion were found to be intricately connected among themselves, attesting thereby that the tripartite law of Creation was of one piece, on one hand, and that the Law itself was integral to Creation, on the other. This relationship was proposed as the basis for a theology of Creation, for a theology of the Law, and for a theology of the relationship between Law and Creation.

Conclusions

The organic integration of the sexual, dietary, and Sabbath laws of the Pentateuch with Creation and among themselves, attests the fact that the respective laws are part of the functional design of Creation. As such,

Creation is viable to the extent that humanity fulfills its moral duty to live in harmony with the multidimensional legislative design, which, like the Creator, knows no variation or shadow of turning. Adaptations in the sexual and dietary designs, while reflective of a changed human-divine relationship, are measures intended to stabilize the brokenness of the Fall with the restoration of the ideal in view.

The creational origin, nature, and purpose of the biblical Law has wide implications for the unity and authorship of the Pentateuch, for source analysis, for the question of order, for the relationship between Creation and salvation, for biblical hermeneutics, for classifying biblical legislation, for transcultural analysis, and for biblical ethics.