

Holiness, Legalism, & the Sufficiency of Scripture

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The God of Holiness

In the year that King Uzziah died, the Sovereign Creator of heaven and earth revealed Himself to the Prophet Isaiah by a heavenly vision in the temple. Isaiah writes, “I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa 6:1-3). Between eight and nine hundred years later, God revealed Himself to the Apostle John in a breathtaking vision of heaven as well. John writes, “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Rev 4:8). He alone is the very essence of goodness, righteousness, flawless purity, and moral excellence: “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1Jo 1:8).

God alone is the definition and standard of holiness. “There is none holy as the Lord” (1Sa 2:2). The sum total of all His attributes, the splendor of His majesty, and the grandeur of His perfections are summed up in the word holy. Nothing in the entire created universe compares to the matchless beauty of His holiness. The radiant outshining of His holiness fills the angels of heaven with shouts of praise: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” It fills the citizens of heaven with awe, wonder, and adoration. It causes the very prophets of God to cry out, “Woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips” (Isa 6:5). It moves His people to marvel, “Who is like unto Thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness?” (Exo 15:11). And it causes His enemies to wonder, “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?” (1Sa 6:20).

When we open the Scriptures, we discover that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are holy. God’s name is holy. His habitation is holy. His throne is holy. His angels are holy. He speaks in His holiness and swears by His holiness. His Word is holy. His works are holy. His tabernacle and temple, their priests, their garments, their vessels, their anointing oil, their offering—they’re all holy. His Sabbath is holy. Jerusalem of old is holy, and Jerusalem to come is holy. His prophets and apostles are holy. And His people—His old and new covenant elect, His old and new covenant Israel, His old and new covenant temple, His old and new covenant priesthood—were and are called with a holy calling that they might be holy. Reader, do you believe this? Do you know this holy God?

God's Purpose and Holiness

Before He created the world, our thrice-holy God purposed to pardon an innumerable host of fallen, wicked rebels and to transform them into loving, obedient, holy children. Paul tells us that God “hath chosen us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love” (Eph 1:4). What was God’s goal in making these sinners holy? Paul tells us “For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). We are going to be like Christ! But that’s not exclusively a future event: it begins when God regenerates a sinner. The holy God through the Holy Spirit and the holy Word begets His children to make them holy in this life.

God's People and Holiness

God created man in His image; and man, the crown of creation, was to reflect God’s holy character in every aspect of his life. The Word of God informs us that man believed the lie of Satan, rejected the authority of God’s Word, followed his wife in believing Satan’s lie, and died spiritually, forfeiting God’s holiness and spreading the reign of death and the pollution of sin to all his descendants. Though created in the image of God, all human beings are born with hearts that are “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jer 17:9). God’s commandments reflect His holy will and His holy character; and when men obey God’s commandments they reflect His glory to the world. We reflect the thrice-holy God when we walk in simple, child-like obedience to what He commands: “Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev 19:2).

But because man is spiritually dead and depraved, he cannot make himself holy. Regardless of what we say, we really don’t believe this. In our heart of hearts, we really think that we can do things in our own strength that will satisfy and please God; and that is a tragic delusion that must be dispelled by the truth of God’s Word. We must be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

The Meaning of Holiness

What then is holiness? When we say God is holy, we mean that in His essence He is perfectly good and entirely free of evil. This means that God is separated from all that is wicked and separated unto all that is good, all that is righteous. When we say redeemed men are holy, we mean the state and outworking—in thought, word, and deed—of union with Jesus Christ. In other words, the heart and soul of biblical holiness in the lives of redeemed sinners is union with the resurrected Lord of glory.

The Bible reveals this holiness in two senses: 1) by the power of the Holy Ghost bringing us into union with the risen Christ, we are dead to the realm of sin, we are spiritually alive by His resurrection life, and we are new creatures. Holiness, in this sense, is a once-for-all state of being that begins when God's children are brought into saving union with Christ by the transforming power of the new birth (we call this definitive sanctification). Being born again is not simply nodding one's head in an evangelistic meeting, in and of itself. Rather, it is the Holy Spirit's work of imparting spiritual life to the darkened heart of a sinner, enlightening his mind to understand his lost condition, and bringing him to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this glorious work Christ begins a great, amazing, and supernatural union that is no fiction. This miracle is not just "interesting" religious talk: it is reality for every child of God.

The second sense of holiness revealed in Scripture is a progressive, on-going work in which the Spirit continually renews and transforms us into Christ-likeness. As we observed earlier, God's eternal purpose is to make His people like Christ. And what is Christ like? He is "holy, harmless, undefiled" (Heb 7:26). Scripture makes clear that God will not fail in this purpose because the Holy Spirit dwells within us and is continuously at work transforming us.

Holiness in this sense is empowered by the Holy Spirit, informed by the Word of God, and manifested by faith, repentance, and loving obedience to the God of heaven and earth. In this way, God's eternal purpose becomes historical reality in the lives of His dear children. This is what we call eschatological life. Eschatological may be an unfamiliar word to some, but it means that the life God's children will know in the eschaton,[1] the future consummation of all things, is already in the here and now. Eschatological life is the life of God in the soul of man. It is the "presence of the future," as one man entitled his book.[2] It is the life that we will know in its fulness when the consummation of God's glorious kingdom comes, but it dwells within our vessels of dust now. Eschatological life is future life now.

God's Spirit fills our hearts with love and zeal for His Son, and because of union with Christ, we hunger to please Him. In response to the operations of His grace within our hearts, we want to do whatever He wants us to do. This is what Paul meant when he wrote, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phi 2:13). We want to obey Him with all our hearts, yet we do not obey Him in order to earn our salvation nor to keep our salvation: we lovingly obey Him to bring Him glory because of what He has done for us in His death and resurrection. This great salvation is all of grace, all of Christ. We obey Him because we love the One Who loved us first (1Jo 4:19). We love the One who rescued us. We love the One who fills us with His Spirit and speaks to us by His Word. We love the One Who guides us as our Prophet, our Priest, and our King. This is holiness. It begins as the state of a heart made new by the Spirit and expresses itself in what we think and say and do. We long to be like Him because of what He does in us, and this internal principle of grace displays itself externally in loving conformity to the Word of God.

Therefore, we may conclude that there are at least three discernable elements regarding holiness as it applies to God's children: 1. a standard – the Word of God. 2. a power – the Spirit of God. 3. a motive – the love for God that we have because of Christ Jesus. If we fail in any of these three elements, we will likely fall into some form of legalism. So let us now take up the subject of legalism.

The Difficulties in Defining Legalism

In the light of the biblical witness to holiness, how are we to understand this word legalism? Consider the following carefully:

1. Legalism is a difficult issue because the word is not found in a single verse of Scripture. This doesn't disqualify it as a legitimate term. The word trinity is not found in the Scriptures, neither is the word millennium. We often use terminology that is not found in the Scriptures to describe something revealed there. But a word not found in Scripture must be carefully defined. This leads us to the second problem.

2. Legalism is a difficult issue because the words legalist and legalism are rarely carefully defined. These terms usually become pretty much whatever anyone wants them to mean. In most evangelical circles, if you really want to hurl an abusive term of the first magnitude at someone, you simply call him a legalist: "Legalist! You, you are a legalist!" And, you know, it's a word that hurts when it lands, doesn't it? It is likely that at least some readers of this article have heard that word spewed in their direction. Unfortunately, the way many modern evangelicals use it, legalism basically means "someone who tells me that the Bible says I should not do something that I want to do or that I should do something that I don't want to do."

3. Legalism is a difficult issue because there are several attitudes and errors in Scripture associated with it. These attitudes and errors are not precisely the same things, yet they are called legalism or Phariseeism.

4. Finally, legalism is a difficult issue because no one who is accused of being a legalist ever admits to being one. How many of you have ever known a confessing legalist? Let's be honest: when we've been called a legalist, how many of us have ever thought, "I know that in my sinful flesh, I really am one. I wonder if this accusation is true?" What we normally do is to reply, "Ah, you're calling me a legalist. But a legalist is really this, and I'm not that, so I'm not a legalist." This, of course, is a game of theological dodge ball.

So, we have a term that isn't found in Scripture; that is difficult to define, and therefore, regularly abused and misused; that can be applied to several different errors; and that no one accused of ever admits to. Complicating this even further is the fact that because all believers still have the remainders of sin in their flesh, every one of them is tainted by legalism of some sort.

The Elements of Legalism

It appears that there are at least three elements in legalism that we can discern: a standard, a power to accomplish, and a motive. In this way, it is similar to holiness, which shouldn't surprise us: legalism is counterfeit holiness. Every legalist has a standard, whether it's God's Word, a misinterpretation of God's Word, a human addition to God's Word, or just plain old flesh-inspired human tradition. Secondly, there is a power, which is one's own sinful flesh. Thirdly, the motive of our efforts is righteousness. In our heart of hearts, we believe that by our own efforts we can procure God's favor.

The Kinds of Legalism

1. The first kind of legalism is the idea that one can be justified in whole or in part by his own works rather than by faith alone in the resurrected God-man, Jesus Christ. This eternally fatal error is plainly refuted throughout the New Testament especially in the epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. Paul says in Romans 3:20, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." Likewise, Galatians 2:16 says, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." This is a common, but damning error, which is clearly refuted by Scripture. This is the clearest expression of something in Scripture that we can call "legalism."

2. The second kind of legalism is the idea that one can keep his salvation by his works of obedience. Many profess to believe in justification by faith, while believing at the same time that they can keep themselves holy enough to maintain their salvation. This too is a great error, which many denominations believe and teach.

3. A third kind of legalism is stressing a strict observance to the letter of the Law without stressing the spirit from which God's law should be kept. Outward conformity to God's Law without a heart of faith and love was characteristic of Israel. We can have the right standard but the wrong motive. We may outwardly conform ourselves to any commandment in God's Word, but such obedience dishonors God because it is not done by faith in the Lord Jesus: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb 11:6).

4. A fourth kind of legalism is doing what is right, while motivated by self-exaltation. This is a subcategory of the previous error. Jesus gave the parable: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give

tithes of all that I possess” (Luk 18:10-12). What’s wrong here? The things that he did and avoided were all in harmony with God’s Word. It’s good to fast and pray! It’s wonderful not to be an extortioner, unjust, or an adulterer. But in this man’s case, it was all for naught because his works were motivated by self-exaltation. The Lord ended His parable declaring, “Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased.”

5. A fifth kind of legalism is adding human tradition to the Law of God. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees saying, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mat 15:9). Paul warned the Colossians about this kind of error: “Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men?” (Col 2:20-22). This verse can certainly be abused. I have heard some say, “Oh, well, we don’t worry about do’s and don’ts; that’s just legalism. All we worry about is relationship.” But this is seriously confused thinking and entirely misses the last portion of verse 22. Paul is not talking about the commandments and doctrines given to us by our Lord, but those conceived in the fallen minds of men. By nature we are factories that constantly fashion and churn out hundreds of laws. And not only for ourselves: we especially delight in making laws for other people. Don’t we?

Sometimes it is quite difficult to identify legalism when it adorns itself in lovely religious adornment. Nevertheless, lying at the heart of all forms of legalism are unbelief and the prideful notion that our works, whether issuing from God’s Word or man’s mind, establish our righteousness before God. The root of all legalism is the idol of self-righteousness, which substitutes human achievement for faith in Christ alone. Legalism then is the adherence to a standard—the Word of God or the rules of men—empowered by the flesh for the purpose of self-exaltation.

Identifying a Legalist

So who is and who isn’t a legalist? Time and space limitations only permit a partial list of things we can consider.

1. You are not a legalist if by faith in and love for the Lord Jesus Christ you obey God’s Law. Some will tell you that you are. But you are a legalist if you keep God’s law in order to gain or keep your salvation.

2. You are not a legalist if you believe that professing Christians should obey the Lord Jesus Christ, and if with love, humility, and mercy you exhort them to do so. Some will tell you that you are. But you are a legalist if you believe that your obedience makes you more acceptable to God than others who are not on “your level.”

3. You are not a legalist if you have high standards, scruples, or a more precise understanding of obedience perhaps than others. Some will tell you that you are. But you

are a legalist if you think that your high standards or scruples make you more acceptable to God.

4. You are not a legalist if you exhort others to obey God's Word out of love for their souls in Christ. Some will tell you that you are. But you are a legalist if you bind men's consciences to human traditions in the place of God's Word.

5. You are not a legalist if you come to a matter that Scripture does not directly address, and by prayerful study you reach a conclusion and implement it in your life and home. Some will tell you that you are. But you are a legalist, if another believer prayerfully considers the same matter, reaches a different conclusion than yours, and you think that your conclusion makes you more righteous and more acceptable to God than he.

6. You are not a legalist if you do not watch TV, you do not attend movies, you do not listen to rock music, you do not practice birth control, you do not practice mixed swimming, or you do believe in patriarchy, you do practice courtship, you do practice covering your body modestly, and you do homeschool (I trust you recognize that this list could get very lengthy). You are not a legalist just because you do these things or ask others to prayerfully consider what you believe the Word of God teaches about them! Some will confidently tell you that you are. But if you believe that any or all these things are infallible signs that you are a true Christian and others are not; or if you believe that by holding these convictions you are more acceptable to God, then you are a legalist, and you deserve the charge.

When we begin to think that our differences make us spiritually superior to others and more righteous before God, we are thinking like legalists (at least one brand of legalists anyway). As Jesus taught us, we can do right and good things from the wrong motives and with wrong desires. Moreover, it is a common thing for us to take portions of Scripture that are unclear and make them the definitive standards of Biblical Christianity over against those that are plain as day. And when we forge new standards for righteousness, we are thinking like legalists of the sort that Jesus denounced: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mat 15:9).

Do you want to know God's standard for being a Christian? Read, for example, the five chapters of 1 John over and over. John describes in vivid terms what a real Christian is. You can't miss it: a Christian as one who is born of God's Spirit, who fellowships with the Father and His Son, and who is characterized by love for God, love for God's children, and loving obedience to God's commands. Isn't it ironic that none of the particulars listed in (6) above appear in John's epistle? This is not to say they're unimportant or that they can't be derived from John's instruction. But the real damage comes when we formulate acid tests for Christianity that God Himself doesn't! Too often we don't have a firm foundation built on God's clear, primary principles, while making peripheral or derivative principles the be-all and end-all of true spirituality.

So what is the acid test of a real Christian and true holiness? 1 John will tell you. True holiness has the Word of God for its standard, God's Holy Spirit bringing us into union

with the resurrected Christ as its power, and God's love for us with our reciprocal love for Him as its motive.

Legalism has its standard: a distortion of God's Word or our own traditions. Legalism has its motive: self-exaltation. And legalism has its power: our weak and sinful flesh which cannot transform us. Pride puffs us up, and in bloated delusion we believe our self-righteous self-exaltation will gain us favor before the throne of God.

God's children must understand that legalism in any of its forms is the natural-born religion of our hearts, and we must always keep a watchful eye that it doesn't subtly creep into our lives. If we are not actively engaged in warfare with our own legalism, we are likely legalists of one sort or the other (while confident that someone else is)! Like a caustic acid, it has seeped into our hearts, corroding every trace of real spirituality.

If you haven't come to grips with this, it is likely that in some way or another you are a legalist, and you don't see it. That's sobering, isn't it? Everyone else is always the legalist, not us! And that's probably a tip-off that you are a legalist: you stand in your self-righteous pride, seeing everyone else's errors but your own! I repeat: we are all legalists by nature. In the depths of our being, we really believe we can do something that merits God's favor.

You may protest, "Oh, no, not me! I understand that salvation is by grace." You might. On the other hand, let's consider the following: suppose that you have sinned. It's a grievous sin. Your heart is aching and broken. Now, let me ask you: what do you do? Do you react like this? "Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord! If You will just forgive me, I'll read the Bible more. I'll be more faithful to go to church! I won't speak to my wife the way I have. I won't talk to the children that way anymore!"

Have you ever done this? You legalist. What are you pleading? You are pleading with God on the basis of works. But what does the Word of God say? "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Tit 3:5-7). We should always plead the merits and mercies of Christ, not what we've done or will do! While our legalistic flesh always drives us to our works, the Spirit of God always drives us to Jesus Christ.

Again, suppose some tragedy befalls your family, perhaps a child leaves home in rebellion, and you began to agonize, "I don't understand this! I don't get this! Lord, I've been faithful! I've taken them to church – I've been bringing up the children the way You said. I catechized them. I taught them from this recommended conference, and I took them to that recommended seminar! I took them to hear the greatest speakers on manhood and womanhood and parents and children and multi-generational thinking!"

Have you ever thought this way? You legalist. What are you pleading? What are you really saying when you think this way? "Lord, why did this happen to me? With all the good works I've done, this shouldn't have happened to me." This is legalism. It creeps in,

and we begin to think that we are right with God by the things we do and that He should be taking notice. We are all works mongers by nature. Only the grace of God through Jesus Christ can make us acceptably righteous with God: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph 2:8, 9). And this matter of grace and faith is not simply a matter of the beginning of a Christian’s walk; this is the way of life for every child of God every moment of every day.

The Tragedy of Legalism

No one wants to admit being a legalist because it’s such an ugly word, such a destructive existence. Legalism in all its forms is the very opposite of true holiness. Christians long to be holy, but our sinful flesh makes us all natural born legalists. We must understand and believe that union with the living Christ is the only way to be holy. Those who are born of God’s Spirit believe and live by the power of Christ’s resurrection life every day, which points to the great tragedy of legalism.

Legalism in all its forms is spiritually bankrupt. It is a counterfeit religion, a false hope, and the opposite of true holiness. It damns the self-righteous and destroys true spirituality in God’s children. And one of the most tragic and rotten fruits that it bears is a critical and judgmental spirit. There is a difference between humbly correcting others from the Word of God and becoming Mount Sinai for them. Yet the Apostle Paul says, “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Rom 14:10-13). Because self-righteousness and pride are the heart and soul of every brand of legalism, a harsh, condemning spirit generally accompanies it. Legalism withers and stifles joy in Christ, and it leaves a trail of spiritual bodies in its path. All legalisms, rooted in and empowered by the flesh, are the antithesis of true holiness, rooted in and empowered by union with Jesus Christ.

The Sufficiency of Scripture

Our zealous pursuit of finding precedence in God’s Word for everything we practice or reject has often brought the charge of legalism upon the various authors of this book. The charge may or may not be true, but we are driven by the belief that Holy Scripture is sufficient to infallibly guide us and our families in every issue of our lives. Because the thrice-holy God loves His children, He’s done absolutely everything infinitely necessary to save, to keep, and to glorify them for all eternity. And one of His greatest gifts is His inspired, infallible Word. Paul writes, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is

profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” To what end did God give “all Scripture”? “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2Ti 3:16, 17). We believe that this passage and many others clearly assert the absolute authority of God’s Word for faith and practice in our lives. As the London Baptist Confession of 1677[3] mightily proclaims, “The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.”[4] It also says, “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the Spirit, or traditions of men.”[5] In other words, Scripture is sufficient to address all the issues of life for God’s children.

Moreover, we believe that even those subjects that the Scriptures do not clearly address can be resolved by humble prayer and careful, diligent study. It might be long, agonizing, and tearful study; nevertheless, we believe that the Word of God is sufficient, and we need to look no other place for all the answers to all the issues and decisions we face every day.

Tragically, many professing evangelicals profess to believe this, yet when they come to issues the Bible does not address “expressly,” as the confession says, they act as though God has left them to their own imagination (often dubiously renamed “being led by the spirit”) and to their own devices, which in reality makes them the final arbiters of what they do. And this man-centered practice (often dubiously renamed “Christian liberty”) is calculated to produce fleshy living at best and tragedy at worst: whenever we step outside our Father’s Word, we must ultimately end up outside our Father’s will.

We have to ask, “Do the Scriptures really contain all the truth necessary to honor the Jesus Christ in our personal life, in our family life, in our church life, and in our community life? Or should we turn to science, social theories, and humanistic psychology; or to the latest humanistic anthropological models; or to big-business marketing techniques to answer all of our difficult questions? Will we live and breathe according to God’s Word or man’s word (our own or someone else’s)?” When the Scriptures do not address an issue directly, we must plead with the Spirit of God for light from the Word of God. After prayer, fervent study of the Bible’s precepts and principles, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and seeking the safety of the multitude of counselors regarding our conclusions, we must then by faith and love for Christ do what the Word of God guides us to do.

There are times when difficult issues must be placed in the hands of the elders of the church and we must humbly submit to their conclusions, and there are times when we must agonize before the Lord alone bringing resolution to some issue in our lives by prayer and Scripture. In either case, the final determination must come from the prayerful, careful, thorough, and repeated examination of God’s infallible Word.

Do we really believe that the Word of God is sufficient? Is it the foundation upon which we build the entire structure of our lives? Do we by the power of the Holy Spirit and by

faith in Christ seek to obey His Word out of fervent love for Him? Then these things, done in joyful, loving obedience to the Lord, express a heart of holiness. If we walk only in the principles of men, or if we obey for the wrong reasons, we are in reality legalists. May God have mercy and correct us if this is found to be so.

The holy Father has purposed our holiness, the holy Son has accomplished our holiness, and the Holy Spirit applies that holiness to each and every one of His dear children. May we walk in holiness with joyful, determined hearts. By God's grace may we seek out and eradicate legalism in ourselves, and may we take an extra-large dose of what I call "beam therapy"—dealing with the beam in our own eye before going for the mote in someone else's[6]—before we scrutinize the lives of others.

Let us walk in Biblical holiness by faith in Christ; let us learn to identify and then flee every form of legalism with all our might; and let everything we do be informed and guided by the infallible Word of God. And may it all be to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

[1] eschaton – derived from the Greek term meaning "last," eschaton refers to the end of history, when Christ returns to earth to consummate His eternal kingdom of righteousness and establish justice among all nations.

[2] *The Presence of the Future*, George Eldon Ladd, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976).

[3] Also known as the "1689."

[4] Chapter 1, paragraph 1.

[5] Chapter 1, paragraph 6.

[6] Matthew 7:3-5; Luke 6:41, 42.