

Question 104 (Partial): The Judicial Precepts

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By Thomas Aquinas

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The Judicial Precepts

1. [What is meant by the judicial precepts?](#)
2. [OMITTED] Are they figurative?
3. [OMITTED] Their duration
4. [OMITTED] Their division

Article 1. Whether the judicial precepts were those which directed man in relation to his neighbor?

[Objection 1 omitted]

Objection 2. [It would seem that the judicial precepts were not those which directed man in his relations to his neighbor. For] the judicial precepts are distinct from the moral precepts, as stated above ([Question 99, Article 4](#)). But there are many moral precepts which direct man as to his neighbor: as is evidently the case with the seven precepts of the second table. Therefore the judicial precepts are not so called from directing man as to his neighbor.

Objection 3. Further, as the ceremonial precepts relate to God, so do the judicial precepts relate to one's neighbor, as stated above ([Question 99, Article 4](#); [Question 101, Article 1](#)). But among the ceremonial precepts there are some which concern man himself, such as observances in matter of food and apparel, of which we have already spoken ([Question 102, Article 6](#), Replies 1 and 6). Therefore the judicial precepts are not so called from directing man as to his neighbor.

[On the contrary, I answer that, and Reply 1 omitted]

Reply to Objection 2. This argument holds in respect of those precepts which direct man in his relations to his neighbor, and derive their binding force from the mere dictate of reason.

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Reply to Objection 3. Even in those precepts which direct us to God, some are moral precepts, which the reason itself dictates when it is quickened by faith; such as that God is to be loved and worshipped. There are also ceremonial precepts, which have no binding force except in virtue of their Divine institution. Now God is concerned not only with the sacrifices that are offered to Him, but also with whatever relates to the fitness of those who offer sacrifices to Him and worship Him. For men are ordained to God as to their end; wherefore it concerns God and, consequently, is a matter of ceremonial precept, that man should show some fitness for the divine worship. On the other hand, man is not ordained to his neighbor as to his end, so as to need to be disposed in himself with regard to his neighbor, for such is the relationship of a slave to his master, since a slave “is his master’s in all that he is,” as the Philosopher [Aristotle] says ([Politics](#), 1.2). Hence there are no judicial precepts ordaining man in himself; all such precepts are moral: because the reason, which is the principal in moral matters, holds the same position, in man, with regard to things that concern him, as a prince or judge holds in the state. Nevertheless we must take note that, since the relations of man to his neighbor are more subject to reason than the relations of man to God, there are more precepts whereby man is directed in his relations to his neighbor, than whereby he is directed to God. For the same reason there had to be more ceremonial than judicial precepts in the Law.

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