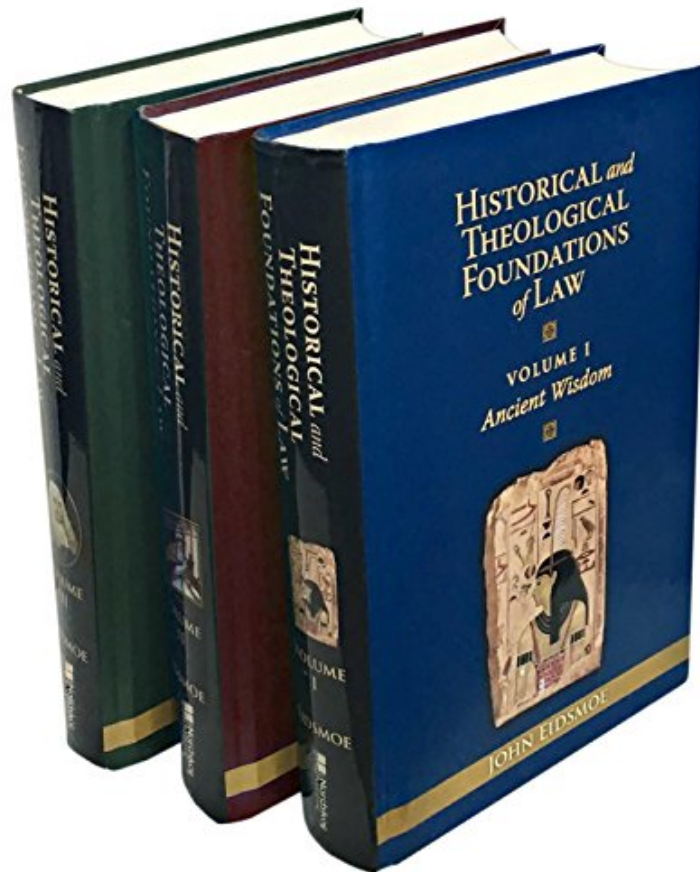


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## Historical and Theological Foundations of Law

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**John Eidsmoe M.Div. : Historical and Theological Foundations of Law** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Historical and Theological Foundations of Law:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy CustomerVery Good history.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Comprehensive investigation into the origin of lawBy Joan N.Laws are everywhere. Every society has law in some form. Where did law come from? Is there something innate in man or is their a higher source of law? Eidsmoe answers these kinds of questions as a result of his investigating the legal systems of ancient and modern societies.This is a three volume set. The first volume looks at ancient legal systems such as Egypt, India, China, etc. He investigates how their legal systems came to be, whether there are common aspects, and the possible source. He then focuses on the ancient Hebrew system of law and why it is frequently ignored today. He pays particular attention to Greek and Roman law and the Sharia law of Islam in the second volume. He also investigates the rise of the Common Law of the West and its roots. He explores the Reformation in the third volume and how legal philosophers wrote of law in a modern way. He then shows how the Common Law traveled to the Americas and provided the background for the founding documents of the United States.This is an amazingly comprehensive work

of over 1,400 pages. It is a tremendous resource for anyone interested in the nature, purpose and source of law. It is not the kind of collection one would read quickly. It may take months to work through the information it contains. A comprehensive index is included at the end of each volume. Readers may find a few surprises, such as Eidsmoe pointing out the fallacy of having an evolutionary concept of the development of law. He offers proof that the United States is unique in its Judeo-Christian heritage, especially in the influence of the ancient law systems, including the Hebrew laws of the Old Testament. I recommend this comprehensive investigation to those readers interested in the origin of our laws and how they developed. Questions for reflection and discussion are included at the end of each chapter. I received a complimentary copy of this title through The Book Club Network. My comments are an independent and honest review. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Well researched, organized, and written, 5 star book. By N. Wilkerson. Author John Eidsmoe's "Historical and Theological Foundations of Law" is a set of three hardback books that total 1500 pages. These religious history law books are definitely not light reading but full of information. Author Eidsmoe has done a vast amount of research and study in preparing these three volumes. This collection is divided into three books according to eras. The first is Ancient Wisdom, followed by Classical and Medieval, and ending with Reformation and Colonial. The author has a concise, orderly effective way of writing. His collection is well organized and well researched. He has given information on a subject that is much needed and relevant today: history, religion, and our laws. In a clear, level-headed, fair-minded way the author provides evidence and discusses the proof of God's existence by examining the way "the people of the ancient world possessed such sophisticated knowledge of building construction, writing, medical skills, and so many other forms of knowledge, is it not possible, is it not likely, that they possessed sophisticated systems of law as well? In fact, would not a sophisticated system of law and government be a prerequisite for the other achievements? If so, then modern Darwinian theories that law evolved from the simple to the complex, definitely need to be re-examined. Noting that every society has laws, the author examines and discusses why. Where did this idea come from? How did man know what laws to propose? Was this instilled by God? Readers will learn so much in this multi-book set. Information is given on different cultures, countries, and years. There is so much information to absorb that it took me months to get through and it is still swirling through my mind. I recommend this comprehensive collection to those readers interested in the origin of our laws and how God is involved. These are definitely great reference books. They would make a wonderful learning group book. Questions for reflection and discussion are included at the end of each chapter. I rated it a 5 out of 5 stars. I was given the book by Book Fun (The Book Club Network) and this is my honest review.

What is the Law? Where does it get its authority? With unparalleled scope and minute detail, *Historical Theological Foundations of Law* studies the earliest origins of Law in the legal systems of ancient societies all across the earth, explores their common threads and differences, traces their development through history, and notes common trends that should cause hope or alarm today. Volume I: Ancient Wisdom. Book I, *The Foundation* begins by exploring the laws of ancient civilizations: Egyptian stability, Babylonian precision, Persian enlightenment, Indian philosophy, Chinese Taoism/Buddhism/Confucianism, Polynesian kapu, Incan absolutism and efficiency, Mayan oligarchy, Aztec judicial independence, Cheyenne volunteerism, and the Iroquois Confederacy's sage balancing of power. How did these systems arise? What are the trends? Polytheism to monotheism, or monotheism to polytheism? Decentralization or centralization of power? Fewer laws or more laws? Gentleness or brutality? Book II, *The Cornerstone*, focuses on a unique people who many believe have influenced the world more than any other. In a canon of 39 books, the Hebrews established the Tanakh (Old Testament). How did the Hebrew constitution function, and upon what precepts was it based? Are the Ten Commandments truly the foundation of Western Law? Why is their influence so often overlooked today? Volume II: Classical and Medieval. Book III, *The Structure*, turns to Greece and Rome. Hailed as the birthplace of democracy, the Athenian system was unstable, inefficient, and short-lived. Nevertheless, Plato laid a philosophical basis for natural law, and Aristotle provided a foundation for justice. Rome had a genius for law and organization, but the constitutional constraints of the Republic gradually gave way to the Empire. However, the followers of Christ, once a persecuted minority, came to rule the Empire and put a Christian stamp on Roman law. Out of Roman law the rise of the Canon law of the Church occurs. The Sharia law of Islam is also surveyed. Book IV, *The Centerpiece*, begins with the Dark Ages—the darkness of the womb, out of which was born the Common Law. From the Celtic mists, with the Druids and their Brehon lawyers, St. Patrick and the *Senchus Mor*, the Anglo-Saxons in the forests of Germany with their *witans* and juries which they brought to Britain, Alfred the Great who began his *Book of Dooms* with the Ten Commandments, to the Norman Conquest and the warfare between the centralizing Norman kings and their opponents, the precepts and institutions of the Common Law took form. What is the Common Law? If it is so common, why is it so seldom defined? How does it relate to Canon law or civil law? And is it Christian, Roman, or a fusion of both? Volume III: Reformation and Colonial. Book V, *The Pinnacle*, examines the Lutheran and Calvinist Reformations, whereby the doctrines of justification by grace through faith and the priesthood of all believers led to republican concepts of government by consent of the governed, social contract, God-given rights, and justified resistance against tyranny. Constitutional jurists such as Selden, Milton, Coke, Althusius, Grotius, Locke, Montesquieu, and Blackstone fused Biblical theology with the Common Law. To take root and grow, the Common

Law needed fresh soil. In Book VI, *The Beacon*, the Anglicans establish the Common Law in Jamestown and the Southern Colonies, Puritans in the New England Colonies, Presbyterians, Quakers, Catholics, and others in the Middle Colonies. In 1776 they took the ultimate republican step of declaring independence. When, in 1787, 55 delegates gathered in Independence Hall to draft a Constitution, they did not write on a blank slate. Rather, they were prepared with thousands of years of "echoes of Eden," Holy Writ, and the Common Law. The event, Washington said, was "in the hands of God." This book provides information and answers, but just as important are the questions it raises about the nature, purpose, and source of law. Jurists have articulated it, philosophers have theorized about it, theologians have explored the moral principles that underlie it. Statesmen have enacted it, judges have interpreted it, sheriffs have enforced it, soldiers have defended it, kings have implemented it. And then, after the fact, people have written about it, to try to explain what it is, and what it should be. This is a journey worth taking, for its insight into mankind's legal heritage. The truths contained in these volumes will reverberate to future generations who may well need reminding, even as needed today, of the foundations as well as the Founder of the unique American system of Law.

John Eidsmoe's *Historical and Theological Foundations of Law* will, I believe, become a cultural landmark in centuries to come, because it will long serve as a lighthouse, beaming desperately needed historical and legal and governmental good sense, based on unchanging principles of divine truth. It shines out light in a time of educational darkness and political storms and confusion. It is a rare and happy day when a scholar of massive erudition and genuine humility is able to bring into his vision a multitude of facts and underlying principles from broad fields of culture, and think them through together, giving his readers a bright and harmonious synthesis of truth from thousands of years, thereby making sense of competing national histories and world religions. . . . I have felt that the synthesis he offers is not forced, but naturally flows out of the massively documented content (which somehow never overwhelms the reader). None could properly accuse Colonel Eidsmoe of Eurocentrism, for one of the qualities of his book is the lucid discussions on the development of Law in China, Polynesia, South America, and what particularly piqued my interest law systems among the North American Indian confederations: the Cheyenne and the Iroquois. Throughout these large volumes is an intelligent and fair-minded discussion of this underlying question: does the evidence support the evolutionary scenario of development of law (and the religion behind it) from primitive, polytheistic sources, or does it rather indicate a Creator God, who imprinted his moral standards into the human conscience across space and time? One quote will summarize the debated point: . . . If the people of the ancient world possessed such sophisticated knowledge of building construction, writing, medical skills, and so many other forms of knowledge, is it not possible, is it not likely, that they possessed sophisticated systems of law as well? In fact, would not a sophisticated system of law and government be a prerequisite for the other achievements? If so, then modern Darwinian theories that law evolved from the simple to the complex, definitely need to be re-examined. (Douglas F. Kelly, Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC) Eidsmoe's massive work chronicles the development of law from widely disparate cultures (e.g., Egyptian, Chinese, Mesopotamian, Indian, Polynesian, Mayan, Cheyenne and Iroquois) through the common law basis of the United States Constitution. Throughout Eidsmoe courageously argues that there are universal features within particular legal codes and systems that point to a nonnatural source for human law, a source oftentimes apprehended more clearly at the origins of these civilizations and subsequently occluded as governmental power centralizes. This book should be of significant interest to those who take the reality of God seriously, who believe that human beings are created in the image of this real God, and who venture to claim that truth about God's relationship to culture must be unitary, that is, that theological claims about God's primary intentionality for human beings must be ultimately consonant with the moral and legal understandings present among the divergent cultural traditions of humankind. (Dr. Dennis Bielfeldt, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Institute of Lutheran Theology) Law is a back stage pass to theology, as one man put it. John Eidsmoe has, with meticulous research articulated in plain language, granted us VIP seats in the theater of theology playing in the legal culture. He connects the contextual dots, thereby allowing us to see how the WHATs of legal history are linked to the WHENs, WHEREs, and WHYs animating that history. And, in doing so, he provides much needed clarity and context in the sea of relativist confusion. This project underscores with Paul, that we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully (1 Tim. 1:8, ESV). (Jeffery J. Ventrella, Esq., Senior Vice President, Strategic Training, Alliance Defense Fund) About the Author John Eidsmoe, M.Div., brings the combined disciplines of the soldier, jurist, theologian, and historian. A retired Air Force Lt. Colonel and Colonel (MS) in the Mississippi State Guard, Eidsmoe is a professor for the Oak Brook College of Law Government Policy, an adjunct professor for the Handong International Law School in South Korea and for the Institute of Lutheran Theology, senior counsel for the Foundation for Moral Law, and is in-demand as an international speaker.