

# Money, Power Relationship

## Is Christian Morality Unique?

### Part One

### A General View

Part 1  
Slide Set 1 of 10

..... Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One A General View

Michelle Nallon CSBs

## Introduction

The following pages are taken from a video/powerpoint available on the [www.realitysearch.com.au](http://www.realitysearch.com.au) websites.

They are designed to outline basic Christian teaching about morality, largely for people in the workplace.

In some ways the powerpoints (and these pages) are assuming a readership that is not necessarily familiar with more recent gospel studies or in fact any gospel studies at all. This is because on the one hand church attendance (and gospel study) has dropped off in the lives of many people (for some reason the Anglo's especially!). But at the same time people have a much wider span of knowledge because of continual contact with the media.

Part One of *Is Christian Morality Unique?* deals with a quite basic outline of morality

This leads into Part Two which explores how the gospel texts are structured to reflect a tension that exists between the component parts of Christianity, that is Judaism and Hellenism (Greek Philosophy). Part Two explores how such tension extends further into something similar to the tension that exists between time and place.

It also explores how an "alignment" between time and place has been attempted over the aeons of human cultures. This is to be found in the remnants of their worship places. The suggestion is made that such an "alignment" between time and place, is re-enacted in the celebration of the Eucharist, also known as "the Mass".

These days some people prefer to work with digital media only. However a hard copy is sometimes helpful, hence the following pages.

# Have you ever wondered?? What are the most basic of values i.e. the foundation building blocks for all value systems including Christianity and/or

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## Is Christian Morality Unique?

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### A General View

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Money, Power, Relationship

Is Christian Morality Unique?  
Part One

Michelle Nailon CSB

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..... Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One A General View

No. 4

Is Christian Morality Unique?

## Is a Question

that everyone probably needs to  
explore at some stage

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No. 5

Judaic-Christian world view(s)  
are at the base  
of Western civilisation

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No. 7



► At the same time, as we look at the skyscrapers around the world and consider the cultures and the world religions practiced within them, we are likely to recognize

► there is a “commonality” amongst all peoples in their basic morality.

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No. 6

Influencing e.g.  
Beijing



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Dubai etc.



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No. 8

If we consider what universal morality  
would be,  
a few key things emerge.

universal morality

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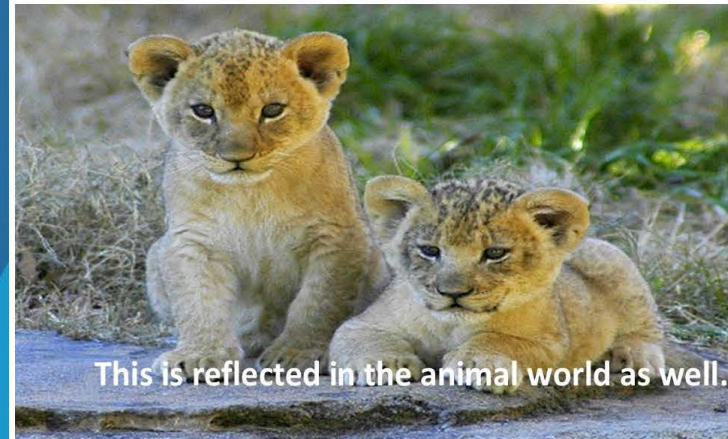
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No. 9



No. 10



No. 11

There is on-going **debate** of course as to **WHO** has a right to life

► Recent debate has centred around the right to life for:

- The Unborn
  - Wildlife
  - Murderers
  - Feral animals
  - Domestic animals etc.
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No. 13



No. 14

There are  
Things connected to life in itself  
such as  
Health, safety and self-determination and the education needed for self-determination etc.

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No. 15

We could wonder what priority could be next in line to life in itself



No. 16

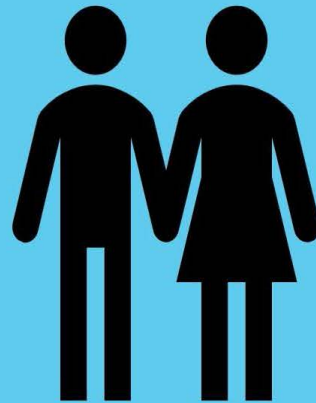
Consider the people amongst whom our life has special importance and the social support group we find most life-giving.



No. 17

In turn a key ingredient for a family is the life partnership that exists between parents.

In fact if a “blood” family is to exist there needs to be such a bond in (hopefully) an on-going way.



No. 18

We could suggest here that this social support group usually goes under the name of

“F a m i l y”

Social mores continue to shift around what constitutes a family.

No. 19

In any case, so far we have considered that Key needs (and morality requirements) are:

?

Life itself  
Basic social support group

No. 20

- ▶ What would be the next
- ▶ “needs” and “rights”



- ▶ area of someone’s life.



No. 21

There is the question of property

# property



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No. 23

Clothing and housing etc.



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No. 22

We all need material goods of some kind  
such as food .



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No. 24

So much of government legislation  
revolves around  
rights of ownership



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No. 25

We have basic human rights to:

Life Itself	Social Support	Material Goods
-------------	----------------	----------------

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No. 27

There is a prime social group



Prime Social Support Group

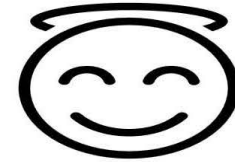
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That is, there is:



life itself

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*Possessions*



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No. 29

These would be tied to: a universal morality



No. 30

We hear of  
Morality Essentials for all Cultures  
such as:

- “Do unto others as you would have them do to you”

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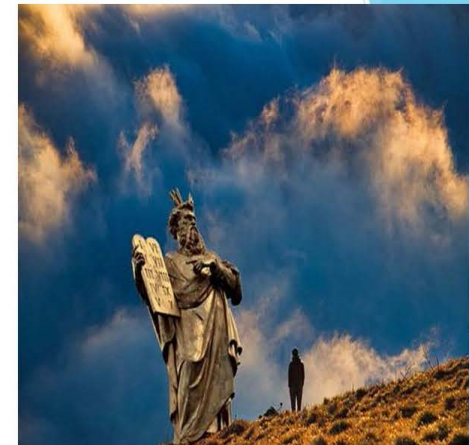
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- ▶ In fact, these needs and rights became embedded into the basic values of society e.g. as in the Babylonian Law Code of Hammurabi
- ▶ (1755 BC).



No. 32

- ▶ These rights were also embedded into the Commandments of Judaism, with the Commandments of
  - ▶ “Thou shalt not kill”,
  - ▶ “Thou shalt not commit adultery”,
  - ▶ “Thou shalt not steal”
- (cf. C13th BC).





No. 33

Needs/Rights	Commandments - Designed to protect
Right to Life	<i>"Thou shalt not kill"</i>
Right to Basic Social Group	<i>"Thou shalt not commit adultery"</i>
Right to ownership	<i>"Thou shalt not steal"</i>

No. 34

Put these in a different order and we have what politicians are warned about i.e.  
money, power and sex

No. 35

Money,  
Power,  
Sex

No. 36

Needs/Rights	Commandments - Designed to protect
Power	<i>"Thou shalt not kill"</i>
Sex	<i>"Thou shalt not commit adultery"</i>
Money	<i>"Thou shalt not steal"</i>

One would expect these warnings to be at the base of Christian morality as well

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No. 39

In what ways does **Christian** morality revolve around:

- ▶ Life itself
- ▶ One's prime social group
- ▶ Basic possessions ???

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In dealing with the question raised here, we are looking in particular, at Christian values.

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No. 40

What special perspective is given to these basic human rights by Christianity ??

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# This brings us to a 2nd set of questions about - The Emergence of Christian Morality

No. 41

Can this question about the Christian perspective on morality

be explored and “telescoped”

into simple language and in

a series of ten short PowerPoints?



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Money Power Relationship  
Is Christian Morality Unique ? Part 1

## The Emergence of Christian Morality

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The Emergence of Christian Morality

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Money, Power, Relationship

► Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

## The Emergence of Christian Morality

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Jesus Christ lived from roughly  
0 to 33 CE in the Common Era.



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No. 46

He was born and lived in Palestine.  
Palestine had been a Jewish country but  
at that time it was dominated by the  
Roman Empire.



Palestine

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The world view and value system of the Roman  
Empire was heavily based upon



► Palestine

Greek philosophy.

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- The Jews of 1st CE adjusted to their situation by adopting much of Greco/Roman culture such as its architecture, clothing, customs, economic system etc.
- For instance their Jerusalem Temple was based upon Greek architecture

No. 49



At the same time, the Jews continued to see themselves as God's chosen people.

They remained faithful to the moral law as set out in the ten commandments, that were given to them by Moses in about 1300 BCE.

No. 50

Jesus grew up in a Jewish family in Nazareth.



No. 51

Like other Jews at the time, his family would have carefully observed the Commandments.

Commandments - Designed to protect	Needs/Rights
"Thou shalt not kill"	Right to Life
"Thou shalt not commit adultery"	Right to Basic Social Group
"Thou shalt not steal"	Right to ownership

No. 52

Jesus would have been quite aware of the Roman presence. At the time, near Nazareth, there was a Greek style of city being built by the Romans. This was Sepphoris.

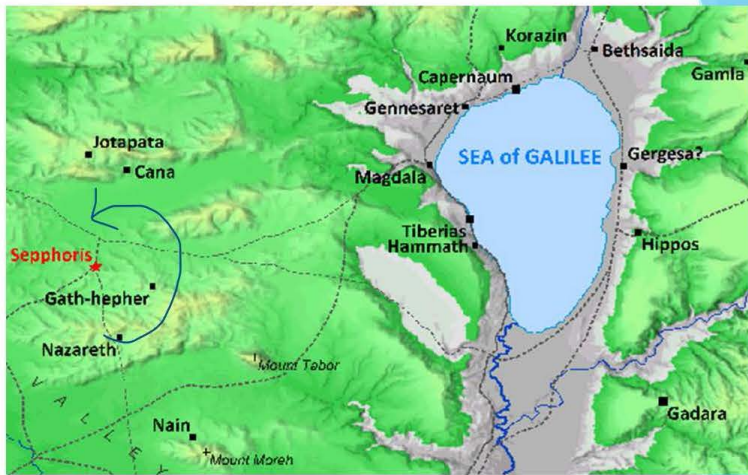
We know that as a child, he was intensely curious. For instance at the age of 12 he had stayed on at the Temple in Jerusalem to ask questions of the scholars there.

Jesus might even have worked there as a tradesman. If so, he would have come into contact with Greek thinking.





No. 53



No. 55

Quote re Greeks looking for Jesus

- ▶ In any case, in his teaching and lifestyle, Jesus did more than adjust to the dominance of the Roman Empire and its philosophy.
- ▶ He incorporated aspects of Greek philosophy into his teaching, especially its elements of common sense.
- ▶ It seems some Greeks recognized this
- ▶ The gospel says some of them came looking for Jesus.
- ▶ But it was not yet time for his message to spread throughout the world.

(cf. John 12:20-50)



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No. 54

## Ancient scroll



Also, as a regular visitor to the Jerusalem Temple, (cf. Luke 2:41) it is likely Jesus had some access to the manuscripts of Greek philosophy there.

The Jerusalem Temple was a building acclaimed throughout the known world. It would have incorporated some sort of library.

In fact, the builder of the Temple, the Jewish King Herod, had been very interested in Greek philosophy and culture.

No. 56

In the years to come the implications of the incorporation of Greek philosophy into the teaching of Jesus gradually became more apparent.

His teaching was based upon, but distinct from Judaism.





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Jesus introduced  
**IDEALISM**  
Into the practice  
of the Commandments

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The Emergence of Christian Morality

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No. 59

Jewish symbol



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

The stories and the  
teaching were written  
up in the gospels.

These were to provide  
a foundation for both  
a Jewish-style of  
community and a  
Greek-style of society.

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Greek symbol



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In the years after Jesus had died people re-told stories  
about what he had done and what he taught.



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No. 60

After Jesus had died his message and  
morality spread quickly around the world.  
As he had said, "The harvest is plentiful"

(Mt. 9:38)



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# How were the Followers of Jesus to be Different from the Jews?

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Is Christian Morality Unique Part 1

## A Church Council in the 50's CE

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Church Council in early 50's CE

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

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- ▶ Much of the book of the Acts of the Apostles is taken up with the on-going tension between Jewish converts to a following of Jesus and Gentile converts.
- ▶ There is stress in particular on the difficulty that the apostle Paul had with the Jews of the day and even Jewish Christians
- ▶ (cf. his letter to the Galatians)



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No. 65

Like Jesus, Paul continued to teach the commandments to the Gentiles, especially those which protected basic human rights,

Commandment

Protection of rights

Notation cf. Catholic tradition

5. Thou shalt not kill

Protect life

6. Thou shalt not  
commit adultery

Protect a basic family  
support structure

7. Thou shalt not steal

Protect property

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

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Around the middle of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, Luke the writer, tells of a Church Council that was held to deal with this issue of circumcision and the myriad Jewish regulations (Ch 15 Acts of the Apostles).

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No. 66

But the Jews of the day (C1st CE) surrounded these key commandments with multiple rules and regulations. (cf. Galatians 2;11-13)

Amongst the rules in particular was the requirement that all male Jews had to be circumcised.

Also, it was expected that once a Gentile (i.e. non-Jew) was circumcised, they would keep all the other Jewish regulations as well.

No. 68



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

Tensions about the issue had mounted to a head when people from Jerusalem, had gone to Antioch, the first place where the followers of Jesus were called Christians

(Acts 11:20-21).

The visitors told the Gentile Christians in Antioch that they should become circumcised.

(Galatians 2)



No. 69



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

- ▶ When these people arrived they claimed to be coming from James in Jerusalem.
- ▶ Apparently, James was by then the apparent leader of the emerging Church (Gal. 2:7-10).

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No. 70



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

One of these Jewish Laws forbade Jews to eat with Gentiles.

But this law conflicted with the remembrance meal of the followers of Jesus.

Here, both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians were expected to gather and eat together.

70

No. 71

As it was, even when all the followers did gather for this remembrance meal, there were problems. Paul for instance wrote to tell his converts in Corinth off about this.

He said some people were so busy with their own concerns at the remembrance meal that some people there would go hungry while others would get drunk

(1 Corinthians 11:20-22).

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

In Antioch, with pressure from the Jerusalem visitors, even Peter, who had been nominated by Jesus as head of the apostles, avoided eating with the Gentile converts.

Paul publicly accosted him about this

(Galatians Ch 2).

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

The Church council, convened to sort out the issue about circumcision and all the Jewish regulations, was held in Jerusalem in the late 40's - early 50's CE

(cf. Acts 15 and Gal. 2).

According to Acts, **the Council did resolve the problem.**

# How so?

73

No. 75

Paul and Barnabas were sent to the Council by the church in Antioch (Acts 15:2).

At the same time, there were Pharisee converts there, who wanted Gentile converts to be circumcised (i.e. made into Jews first of all) cf. Acts 15:1.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE



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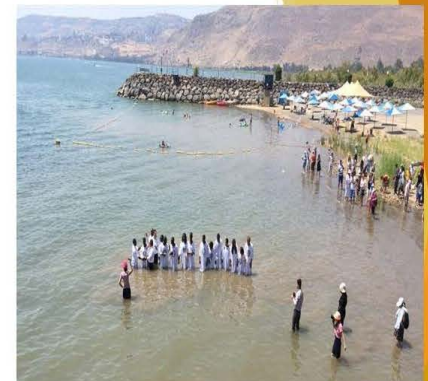
## What happened at the Council?



No. 76

At the Council Paul gave an account of the many Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) converts who were coming into the Church

(Acts 15:4).



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

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No. 77



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

- ▶ According to Luke's Acts of the Apostles, Peter addressed the gathering of the Church council.
- ▶ He said that most of the people there, including himself, were never able to keep all the rules and regulations of Judaism anyway.
- ▶ So why should these rules be imposed on Gentile newcomers?

(Acts 15: 7-10)

77

No. 79

**Keeping the letter of the law  
was not good enough**

James recalled that the prophet Amos challenged the people of the day. He pointed out the wealthy may not be stealing outright from the poor.

But, they were "squeezing" the poor in such a way as to keep them desperate.

In other words, as James pointed out, keeping the letter of the law was not good enough.

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

- ▶ Then James, who it appears, was the leader of the Church by that time, addressed the Council.
- ▶ He recalled how the prophet Amos (some centuries beforehand) had railed against exploitation of the poor (Acts 15:15-17).
- ▶ These same exploiters apparently thought they were keeping the law

78

No. 80

**Blood, Fornication, Strangling**

James went on to say that the new Gentile converts should avoid **"blood, fornication and strangling"** (cf. Acts 15:20).

And, as well as the worship of the one God, that was all they needed to do !

This sounded similar to the requirements of visitors to Palestine as laid out in the Old Testament many years before (cf. Leviticus 17-18).

So it seemed, for some in the audience, that there was not any seismic shift between what was required of the Gentile converts and what was required of the visitors to Palestine centuries before.

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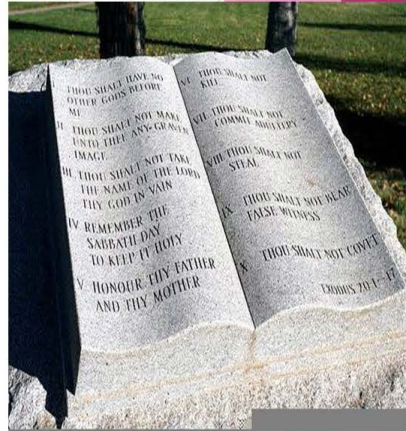


No. 201

At the same time, in his gospel, Luke tried to remind his listeners/readers about the importance of keeping the Commandments.

He put special focus on the three Commandments of:

- ▶ **"Thou shalt not kill."**
- ▶ **"Thou shalt not commit adultery" and**
- ▶ **"Thou shalt not steal".**



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

No. 202

In his early chapters, just as Matthew had done, Luke tells of how Jesus began his public career by going into the desert for a 40 day retreat of fasting and prayer.

Like Matthew, Luke tells of the three major temptations that the devil put to Jesus.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

No. 203

Jesus refused to turn stones into bread

(cf over-reliance on material goods  
*"Thou shalt not steal"*)

He refused to worship Satan despite the promise of world power

(cf. *"Thou shalt not kill"*)

He refused to throw himself from the temple roof and assume that his father would save him

(cf. taking family for granted in  
*"Thou shalt not commit adultery"*)

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

As with Matthew, threaded through the Gospel of Luke, there is the same theme of stressing these three Commandments about

- ▶ **money,**
- ▶ **power and**
- ▶ **relationship**

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke



No. 85

In the context of the Roman Empire and the teaching of Jesus, “blood” implied more than eating meat with blood in it, which was something the Jews avoided.

Rather, “blood” would imply any violence and cruelty and coercion as such.



No. 87

## Avoid Fornication

In James’ statement about “fornication” he goes further than prohibiting adultery, which is sex with someone who is already married and committed to somebody else.

He challenges people to avoid sexual relations outside of marriage where there is no commitment. Temple prostitution for example was an institution of the day.



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No. 86

The proposal was against blood sports and cruelty as such



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No. 88

Avoiding fornication implies control of sexuality in respect for “the other”

Paul for instance warned his converts in Corinth  
“Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 6:19)

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No. 89

# Avoid Strangling

- ▶ What did James mean by his proposal to “avoid strangling”?
- ▶ At one level the word “strangling” implies the Jewish avoidance of eating strangled meat.
- ▶ That is, animals had to be bled out before being eaten which ensured meat would be fresh.



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# Avoid Strangling

- In the context of talking about Amos the prophet, the word “strangling” implies “squeezing” the poor people with unjust business practices.



Is Christian Morality

No. 92

# Blood, Fornication, Strangling

After the Council agreement, the message about “avoid blood, fornication and strangling” was sent out to the churches around the Empire, including Antioch. People there welcomed the outcome. (Acts 15:22-29).

The people in Antioch were also told that the visitors who had caused such an upset had not been authorized to do so (Acts 15:24).

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

## What were the implications for the Gentile converts?

Rather than keeping all the rules and regulations of Judaism they were challenged to “raise the bar” of the key social commandments of

“Thou shalt not kill”,  
 “Thou shalt not commit adultery”,  
 “Thou shalt not steal.”

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No. 93

That is,

“Thou shalt not kill”

Avoid violence and cruelty

“thou shalt not commit adultery”

Avoid abusing others sexually

“Thou shalt not steal”

Avoid unjust business practices

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The bar of the Commandments was being raised!

Thou shalt not kill	Thou shalt not commit adultery	Thou shalt not steal
Avoid blood	Avoid fornication	Avoid strangling
Avoid blood sports/violence/cruelty	Avoid sex outside marriage/commitment	Avoid unjust business practices

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

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Avoid blood sports/violence/cruelty	Avoid sex outside marriage/commitment	Avoid unjust business practices
⤴⤴ Avoid Blood	⤴⤴ Avoid Fornication	⤴⤴ Avoid strangling
⤴⤴ Thou shalt not kill	⤴⤴ Thou shalt not commit adultery	⤴⤴ Thou shalt not steal

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Church Council in early 50's CE

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# Raise the Bar

The Jerusalem Council did more than solve the immediate problem of pressure on Gentile converts to be circumcised, and regulated and thereby become Jews.

It clarified and defined the approach that Jesus had taken and which Christians would also be taking to the Commandments well into the future.

It changed the negative of the “Thou shalt not” in the Commandments into an on-going, idealized “raising of the bar”.

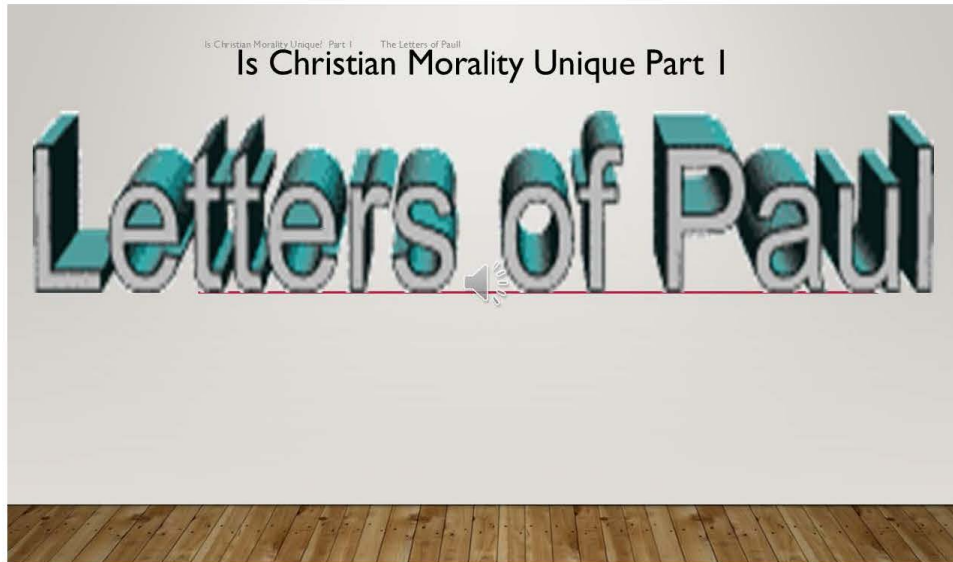
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# St Paul attended the Jerusalem Council (end 40's) He welcomed and taught its mandate as a clarification of "the way"

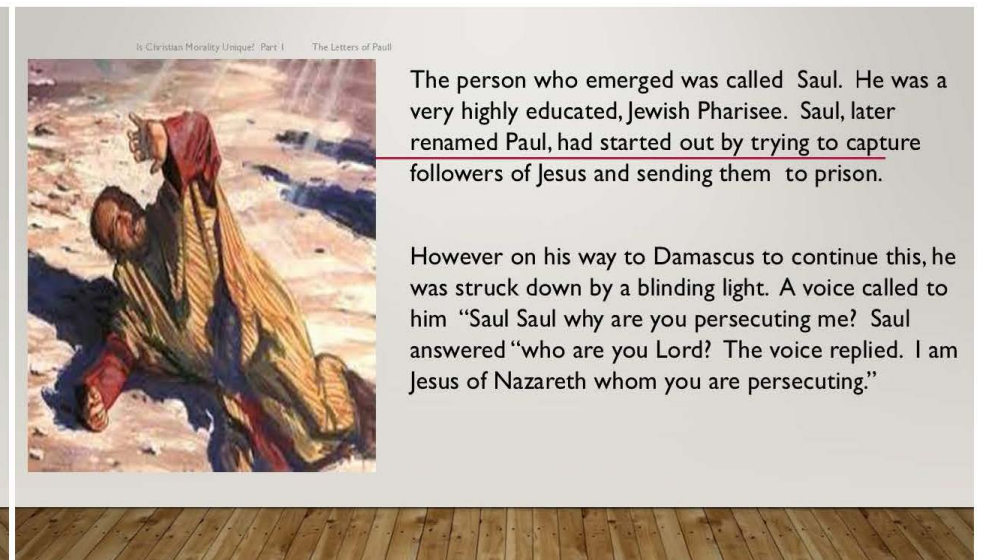
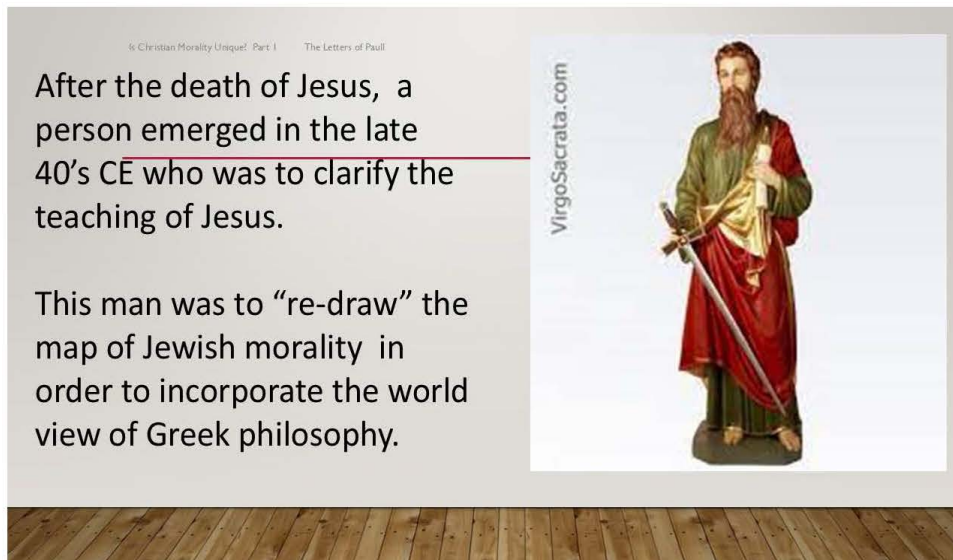
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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

**“Paul your great learning is making you mad”**  
(quote from the Roman Governor Festus)



After the vision, Saul now renamed Paul, became a leading follower of Jesus. As a Pharisee he was well versed in the Jewish moral law and he had practiced this meticulously.

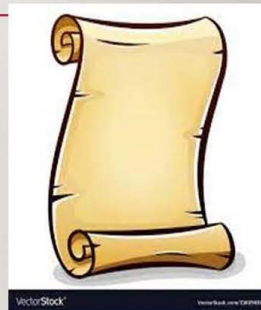
But now he began to reinterpret the law in order to make it more practical and relevant to the wider population and Greek philosophy of the Roman Empire.

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

To the present day Paul's letters continue to clarify the basics of Christian morality.

His teaching is to be found in his letters to the Thessalonians, the Corinthians, the Galatians and the Romans etc.

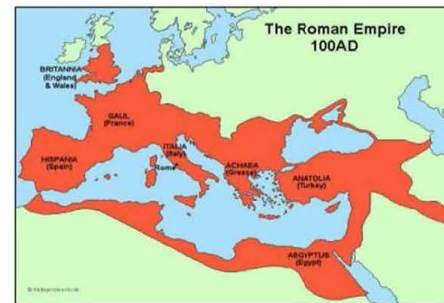


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No. 102

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

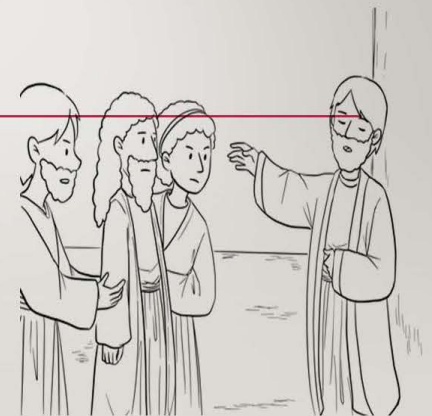
- Paul travelled widely around the empire and founded church communities to whom he wrote letters e.g. a community in Corinth.



No. 104

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

Written during the 50's, Paul's letters would have influenced the writing of the gospels that took place some years later.





# St Paul attended the Jerusalem Council (end 40's)

## He welcomed and taught its mandate as a clarification of "the way"

No. 105.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

### What was Paul's Approach ?

I	VI
II	VII
III	VIII
IV	IX
V	X

As a Pharisee, Paul stressed the ten commandments which had been given to the Jewish people by Moses about 1200 BCE.

No. 107

No. 106

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul



Numbers 5, 6 and 7 (cf. Catholic numerics) are social commandments and they are as follows:

"Thou shalt not kill"	"Thou shalt not commit adultery"	"Thou shalt not steal"
-----------------------	----------------------------------	------------------------

No. 108

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

In fact these rules are basic to the functioning of any society

<p>"Thou shalt not kill"</p> 	<p>"Thou shalt not commit adultery"</p> 	<p>"Thou shalt not steal"</p> 
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Page 27

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

Life itself	Basic social support group	Basic Material Possessions
-------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

As pointed out in a previous set of slides, the Commandments are based upon the "natural law" i.e. the need for life itself, the need for a prime social support group and the need for basic material possessions.

No. 109.

## Keeping the Spirit of the Law

Rather than telling people to keep to a whole gamut of Jewish rules and regulations, Paul stressed the importance of keeping the spirit of the law. His approach had been endorsed by a church council held in Jerusalem possibly in the late 40's CE, early 50's CE. This mandated "avoid blood, fornication and strangling".

No. 111

"Thou shalt not steal"	>>>	Donate to the needy
------------------------	-----	---------------------

For instance he encouraged people in Corinth to give money to the needy in Jerusalem when the people there were facing famine (2 Cor 8).

No. 110

In his letters we find out **how** Paul was shifting the "Thou shalt not" of the Commandments into **positives**.

Thou shalt not  
Thou shalt not  
Thou shalt not

No. 112



"Thou shalt not commit adultery"	>>>	Control sexuality
----------------------------------	-----	-------------------

Paul prohibited adultery in the communities he founded. He also encouraged people to control their sexuality in relation to marriage.

He did not tell people to abstain from sex altogether. But he encouraged them to do so if they believed they were called to this (1 Cor 7).



No. 113.

<small>Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul</small> <b>“Thou shalt not kill”</b>		<b>Protect self-determination</b>
<p>Paul went further than a prohibition on killing others. Rather he stressed the need for <b>people’s self-determination</b>.</p> <p>For instance in Antioch when pagan converts were told to “copy” Jewish circumcision and the many external observances of the law,</p>	<p>Paul insisted that they <b>should be free</b></p> <p>of too many regulations, so that they could determine their own day to day lives.</p> <p>He said the people coming from Jerusalem were trying to take away the freedom of Gentile converts (Gal. 2:4-5).</p>	


No. 115

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

## Paul insisted that God is completely “Other”.

cf. The first three Commandments

1. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain
3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day



“I am who am”

Page 29

No. 114


Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

# Paul challenged the Greeks

## God is OTHER

Paul not only challenged the Jews. He also challenged the Greeks, especially the idea that people share in a divine spark, that is, they share in the divinity of God.

No. 116

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul


“I am who am”

Paul reminded people that God, as the Creator and giver of the moral law, is completely “other”. Thus, despite their freedom of conscience, people cannot “tinker” with what is ultimately right and wrong.



No. 117.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

## God is Other

Paul reminded the Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) Christians that  
“only the Spirit of God can know God”

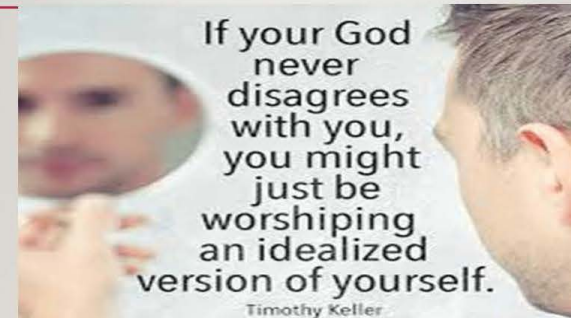


No. 119

No. 118

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

Paul's message was similar to the following



No. 120

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

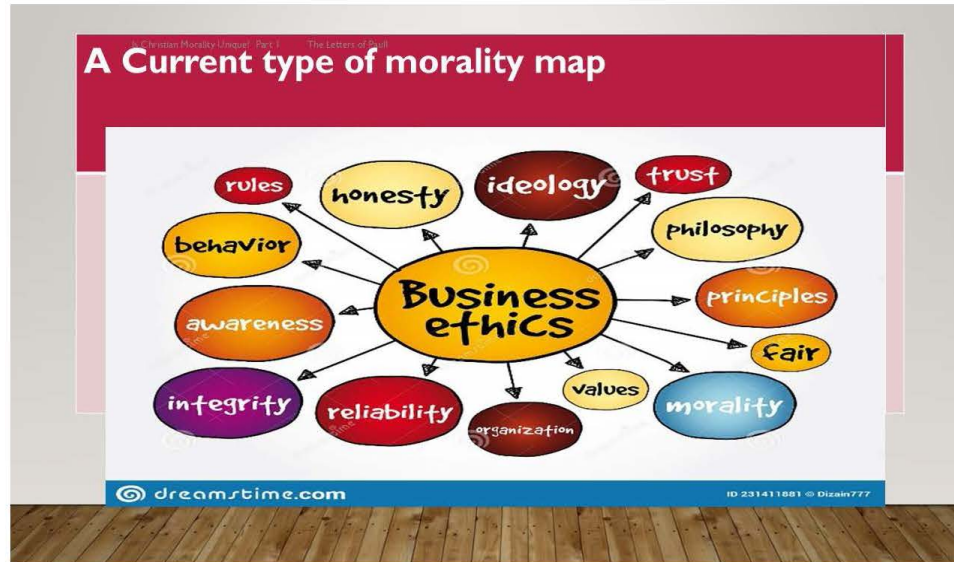
Paul set out his “morality map” so this could be applicable to all



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

Arguably, this map is distinct from some current types of morality maps because it is framed by the Commandments including three main social commandments

No. 121.



No. 123

No. 122

As stated, Paul's "social morality map" is based on natural law and the Commandments

<b>Protect Self-determination</b>  <b>"Thou shalt not kill"</b>	<b>Control Sexuality</b>  <b>"Thou shalt not commit adultery"</b>	<b>Donate to the needy</b>  <b>"Thou shalt not steal"</b>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------

No. 124

<b>Outreach to the other</b>  <b>Protect Self-determination</b>  <b>Avoid blood</b>  <b>"Thou shalt not Kill"</b>	<b>Outreach to the other</b>  <b>Control Sexuality</b>  <b>Avoid fornication</b>  <b>"Thou shalt not commit Adultery"</b>	<b>Outreach to the other</b>  <b>Donate to the Needy</b>  <b>Avoid "strangling"</b>  <b>"Thou shalt not Steal"</b>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

This morality map is orientated towards outreach to "the other"

Page 31

Paul's map of morality  
Raises the Bar of the Commandments

**Paul, described as the first theologian, wrote in the 50's CE**  
**He set out parameters for the gospels, the first one being written around 70CE**

No. 125.

T

From the basis of the Commandments and “Thou shalt not” Paul encouraged people to act out of concern for the other. The negative of the Commandments was turned into a positive.

Based on the teaching of Jesus and outlined and taught by the Church Council in the early 50's CE, this approach was to be taken up and developed further, when the gospels were written some years later....

No. 127

No. 126

..and the gospel message was taken to the world



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No. 128

The First Gospel

The Gospel of Mark

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I

The First Gospel - Mark

Michelle Nailon CSB

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No 5 of 10

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I

The First Gospel - Mark



# In 70CE the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, the centre of Judaism It was time for the Followers of Jesus, to clarify and define, who they were

No. 129.

## Time-line for Mark's Gospel

A re-cap on the timeline of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE in Palestine.

The death of Jesus was approximately 33 CE.

The ministry of Paul was roughly in the 50's.

The first gospel, that of Mark, is estimated to be in 70 CE.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

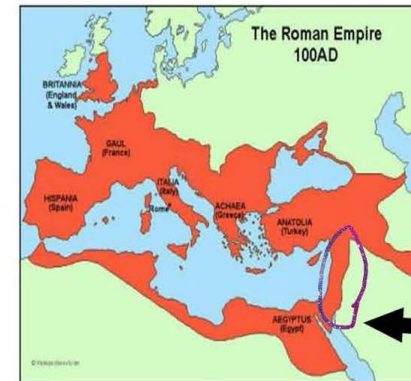
Gospel of Mark  
70 CE

Ministry of Paul  
50's CE

Death of Jesus  
33CE

No. 131

No. 130



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

► At the time when Mark's gospel was being written in 70 CE there was a lot going on in Palestine.

► Palestine

No. 132

## Jerusalem 70 CE



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

► The Jews had revolted against Rome and the army of the Roman General Vespasian, who was to become the Emperor Titus, encircled Jerusalem.

## Jerusalem 70CE

The army starved out the population and killed those trying to escape.

Mark's gospel appears to contain a description of the chaos (Mark 13).

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark



# In 70CE the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, the centre of Judaism

## It was time for the Followers of Jesus, to clarify and define, who they were

No. 133.

The Roman General Vespasian had intended to spare the Jerusalem Temple, one of the wonders of the ancient world.

However, in the mayhem that ensued in taking the city, the Temple was destroyed.

Only one wall survived.

To the present day this wall is venerated by Jews as the "Wailing Wall"



No. 135

By 70 CE, following the ministry of Paul in the 50's CE, the Church had spread rapidly amongst non-Jews (called Gentiles) and throughout the Roman Empire.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

Page 34

No. 134

Where were the followers of Jesus at this time in 70 CE? Many of them had already left Jerusalem because of persecution.

Even so, they would have been well aware of what was going on.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

No. 136

During this time, the stories about Jesus were being told and re-told within small household groups



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel



No. 137.

At the same time, even while the church spread, it retained its leadership

(cf. 1 Cor. 15).

For instance after the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and the subsequent suicide of Judas, someone was selected to take his place

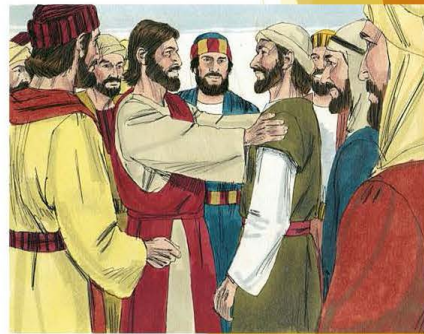
(Acts 1).

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The First Gospel - Mark

Also, the church held a council about 50 CE

(Acts 15).

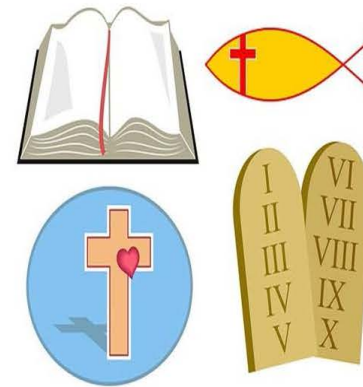


No. 139

No. 138

The leaders in 70 CE would have realized it was time for them to clarify their own position in print, explaining

who they were as followers of Jesus and the connection they had, to Judaism and the Greek philosophy of the Roman Empire.



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The First Gospel - Mark

No. 140

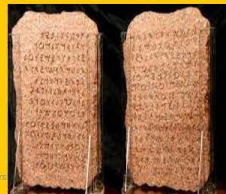
The followers of Jesus had retained the loyalty that existed within Judaism, to the Commandments of God. But they were also incorporating the approach and world view of Greek philosophy, as set out in the teachings of Paul in the 50's CE.

Jewish candlestick



Is Christian

The Comandments

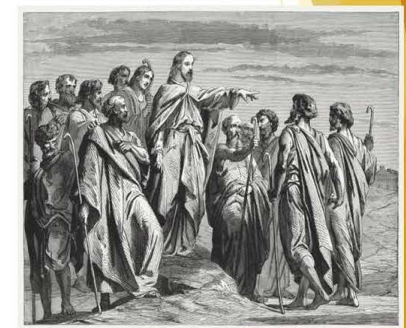


The Fir

Roman wreath



In 70 CE the Christian leadership would have been anxious to show that they were not the same as the Jews, who were now facing the wrath of Rome



No. 141.

However they would have needed to clarify their differences in an oblique way, in order to avoid further persecution themselves.

Arguably, this clarification about similarity and difference, can be found within the **structure** of the Gospels, including the gospel of Mark, which was the first gospel of the Church.

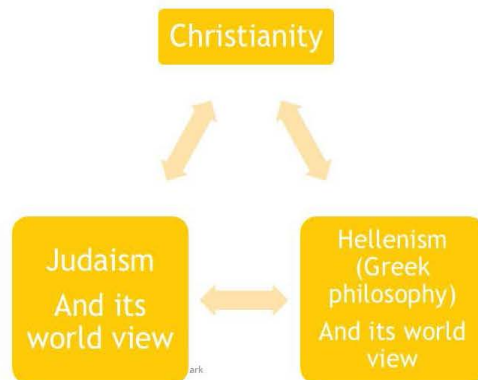


Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

No. 143

A Sociological analysis shows the coexistence of two world views at the base of Christianity



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

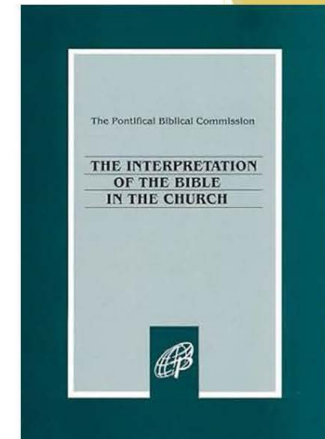
ark

- ▶ A **semiotic** analysis of this and other gospels clarifies the **sociological** differences between Judaism and Christianity and also Hellenism (cf. Greek philosophy) and Christianity.
- ▶ (a sociological approach to the gospels, as also other approaches, was recommended in a Church document of 1993 about the interpretation of Scripture)

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

No. 142



No. 144

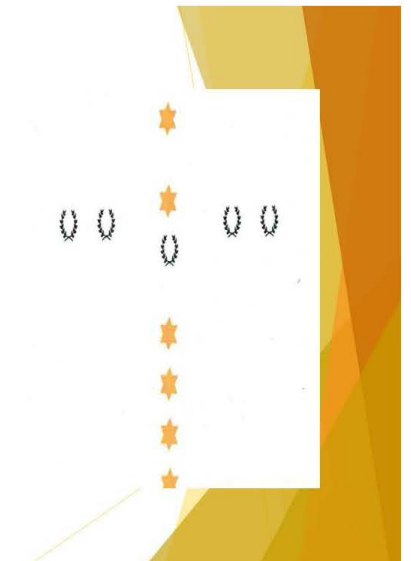
In other words, Christianity is and remains, a hybrid society.

It incorporates two contrasting world views.

(Arguably) one of these is based upon **time** and the other is based on **place**.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark





No. 145

- ▶ Judaism provided a base on which to observe the moral law of the commandments



- ▶ Hellenism provided the flexibility, rationality and idealism of Greek philosophy



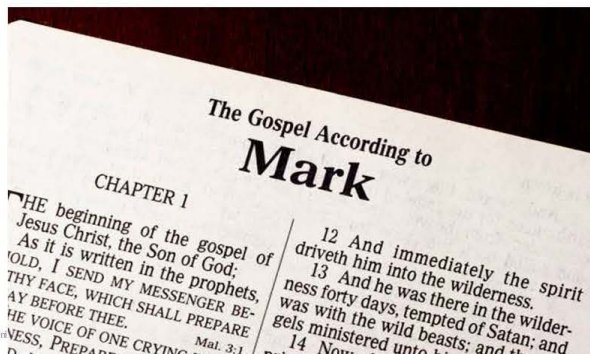
The Apostle Paul had explained a new approach to the Commandments

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

No. 147

Paul's "morality map" was continued on, into the text of the gospel of Mark, written in 70 CE. These were based on the teachings of Jesus, based on the Commandments and incorporating philosophy.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

Page 37

No. 146

"Thou shalt not kill"

Avoid blood  
(cf. cruelty)



Paul taught  
Protect self-determination

"Thou shalt not commit adultery"

Avoid fornication  
(cf. uncommitted sex)



Paul taught  
Control sexuality

"Thou shalt not steal"

Avoid strangling  
(cf. unjust business practices)



Paul taught  
Donate to the needy

No. 148

A "raising of the bar" was also continued on

The Gospel of Mark shows how Jesus had gone further than

- ▶ "Thou shalt not kill",
- ▶ "Thou shalt not commit adultery",
- ▶ "Thou shalt not steal"

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark



No. 149

For instance, in Mark Ch 10 a man approached Jesus asking what could he do to earn eternal life. Jesus said "You know the commandments -

- ▶ Thou shalt not kill,
- ▶ Thou shalt not commit adultery,
- ▶ Thou shalt not steal..."

(Mk 10: 19)

But the young man was looking for more.

The First Gospel - Mark



No. 151

No. 150

Jesus then said "Go sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me"" (Mk 10:21), . This compares with --

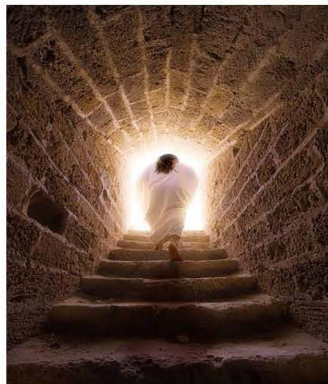
- ▶ Take on poverty for the sake of others (cf. "Thou shalt not steal")
- ▶ Forego setting up your own household (cf. "Thou shalt not commit adultery")
- ▶ Commit yourself to the empowerment of others (cf. "Thou shalt not kill")

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

No. 152

## The Other



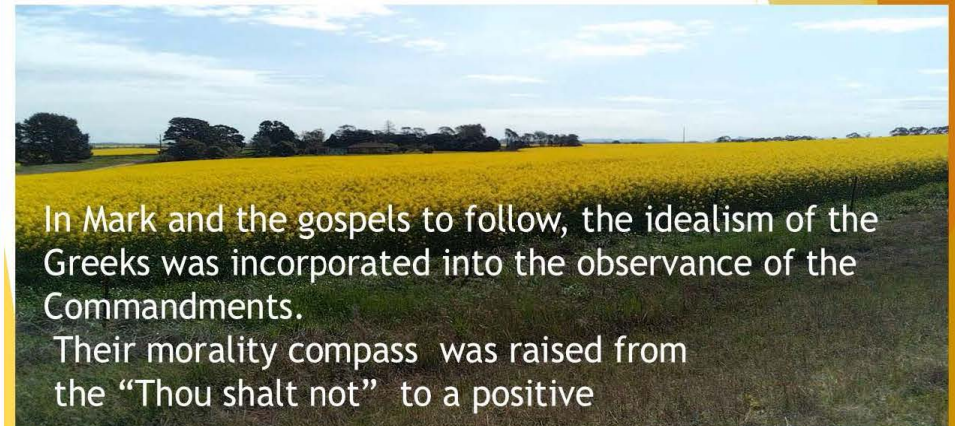
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

Mark's gospel shows

the hallmark of a follower of Jesus was to be their concern for the well-being of **others**..

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In Mark and the gospels to follow, the idealism of the Greeks was incorporated into the observance of the Commandments.

Their morality compass was raised from the "Thou shalt not" to a positive



# What about the Gospel of Matthew?

## Did that also "raise the bar" of Commandment observance?

No. 153

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

## The Gospel of Matthew



Michelle Nailon CSB

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

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No. 155

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Part 1  
Slide Set 6 of 10

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

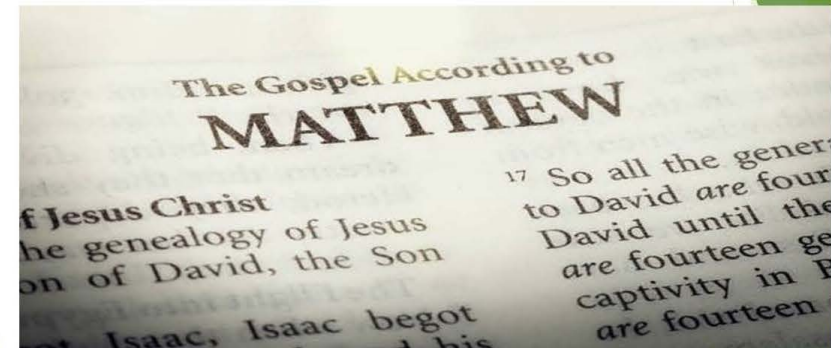
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Michelle Nailon CSB

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No. 154

## The Gospel of Matthew



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Gospel of Matthew

No. 156

The gospel of Matthew was written at about the same time as the gospel of Luke, that is, in 85 CE.

The Gospel of Mark, in its literary structure, had already demonstrated there were two types of communities within Christianity.

There was a community largely based upon Judaism and its world view. There was a community largely based upon Greek philosophy and its worldview

# What about the Gospel of Matthew?

## Did that also "raise the bar" of Commandment observance?

No. 157

The Gospel of Matthew was written from the base of a Christian Jewish Community. It has a focus on the challenges there.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

157

No. 159

No. 158

### Gospel of Mark

As with Luke's gospel, Matthew's gospel was heavily based on the gospel of Mark, the first gospel, which had been written about 70 CE.

Gospel of Matthew  
ca. 85 CE

Gospel of Luke  
ca 85 CE

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

158

No. 160



At that time in 85CE, the Jews were still reeling from the loss of their Temple in 70CE.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

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The Jerusalem Temple, prior to 70 CE - was one of the wonders of the ancient world



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

160



# What about the Gospel of Matthew?

## Did that also "raise the bar" of Commandment observance?

No. 161



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

161

No. 163



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

163

At the time in 85 CE, Jews in general were trying to understand

- "Where to from here?"
- Were they still God's chosen people?

No. 162

But now in 85 CE, with the Temple gone, so it seemed, was its whole Jewish infrastructure.

For the Jews there were no more priests offering sacrifice. The scholars and scribes etc that had gathered at the Temple were gone. Given the size and status of the Temple it can be assumed it had a substantial library. But that was gone as well.

The population of the city itself had been decimated.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

162

No. 164



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

164

One section of the Jewish population which had remained largely intact in 85CE, was the sect of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees, with their strict following of the law, now emerged as the leaders.

No. 165



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

165

The Pharisees encouraged and indeed insisted upon meticulous practice of the law and regulations by the rest of the Jews.

The new focal point for Jews in general was to be their own local synagogue.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew



Gospel of

166

No. 166

No. 167

In a way similar to what was going on in the life of Jesus, the Pharisees remained hostile to the freer, Christian approach.

They told mainstream Jews that Christians did not keep the Jewish law.

In the 50's the Pharisees had accused Paul of not keeping the law and had tried to kill him because of it.

Even Jewish Christians had been very hostile towards Paul (cf. Acts 23:16)



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

167



Around 85 CE there was an edict put out by the Jewish leadership that the local Synagogues were to pray a curse against Christians.

This effectively drove out the Christian Jews, most of whom had deep roots within Judaism. These people thought of themselves as Jews first of all and were deeply hurt by the exclusion.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew





The gospel writer Matthew, writing in the Jewish Christian milieu, needed to work out where the Christians stood, especially Jewish Christians, who were being forced out of the Synagogue.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Gospel of Matthew

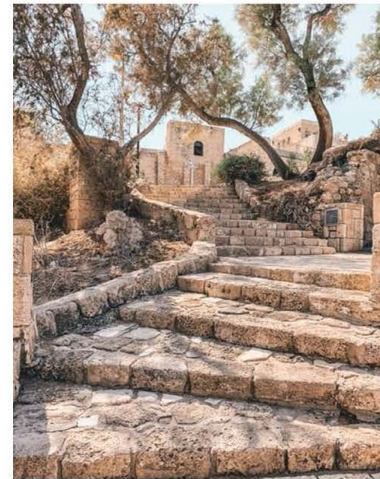
No. 169

In his writing Matthew put a focus on the need for close **discipleship** of Jesus and the need for a sense of **relationship and community** amongst the followers of Jesus.

Gospel of

169

No. 171



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Gospel of Matthew

No. 170

In his Gospel, Matthew insisted that Jesus did keep the law.

Jesus was born a Jew and he had a Jewish heritage.

Gospel of

170

No. 172

In the early chapters of the gospel, Matthew describes how, at the start of his ministry, Jesus went into the desert on a 40 day retreat. He was tempted by the devil there (Mt.4:1).

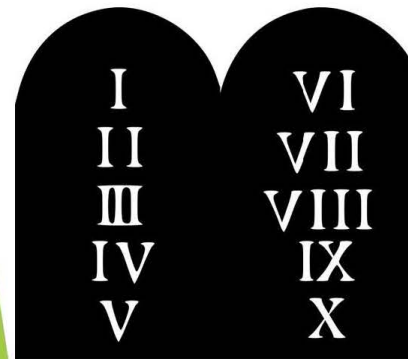


Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew



171



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Gospel of Matthew

Jesus resisted temptations that relate to

“Thou shalt not kill”

“Thou shalt not commit adultery”

“Thou shalt not steal”.

Gospel of

172

No. 173

- Jesus refused to turn stones into bread (Mt 4:3)

(cf material wealth and

“Thou shalt not steal”)



Gospel of

173

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

No. 175



In the Temptations Jesus refused to worship the devil, despite the devil's promise to give him power over all the world (Mt.4:8-10).

This temptation to power has a link with the commandment of “Thou shalt not kill” which is also about power and its misuse.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

175

No. 174

- He refused to jump off the Temple roof in order to show that his Heavenly Father would save him

(a temptation for taking family support for granted and cf. the Commandment of

- “Thou shalt not commit adultery”).

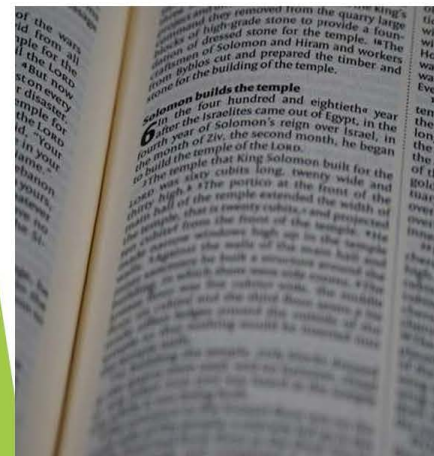


Gospel of

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

No. 176



A focus on these same three social Commandments is to be found throughout the Gospel.

It also appears in the texts in which Jesus “raises the bar” of Commandment observance.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

176



No. 177

**"You have heard that you shall not kill.....  
But I tell you...."**

**Consider Chapter 5**

- ▶ Jesus says "You have heard that you shall not kill..... But I tell you...." It is not enough to avoid killing another.
- ▶ Rather, one should not even be angry with another, or disparage them, or call them a fool

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew (Mt. 5:21-24).



Gospel of

177

No. 179

**Jesus goes on to say it is not enough to avoid stealing.**

**Rather, if someone "sues you for your tunic, then give him your cloak also" And "give to those who ask"**

**(Mt.5:40-1)**

**(Imagine these days if you are fined \$200 and you therefore pay out \$400 !!)**

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew



Gospel of

179

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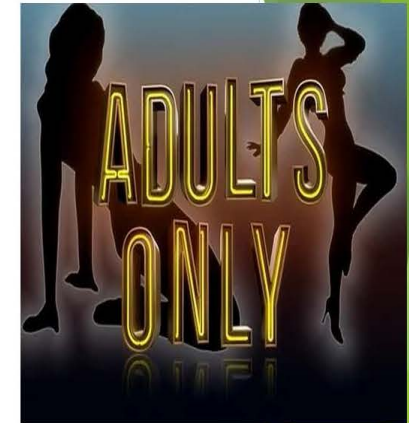
No. 178

- ▶ In the same chapter Jesus says "You heard that it was said: thou shalt not commit adultery. But I tell you...." (Mt.5:27-8)

- ▶ That is, it is not enough to avoid adultery. Rather, even if a man looks lustfully at a woman, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

- ▶ Again the bar is raised.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew



Gospel of

178

No. 180

**In Matthew's Gospel  
Jesus "raises the bar"  
of the Commandments**

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

180

No. 181

"Thou shalt not kill"	"Thou shalt not commit adultery"	"Thou shalt not steal"
Avoid labelling others as a "fool"	Avoid a lustful attitude	Avoid ignoring justice and the poor
i.e.	i.e.	i.e.
Failing to respect fellows	Failing to respect women	Failing to observe justice and empathy for the poor

No. 183

With such emphasis, Jesus and the writer Matthew challenge gospel hearers and readers to "internalise the law".

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

183

No. 182

With such emphasis, Jesus and the writer Matthew challenge gospel hearers and readers to "internalise the law".

## Internalise the Law

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

182

No. 184

In Matthew's gospel Jesus challenges his followers to aim for a better quality of

## Relationship

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Gospel of Matthew

184



No. 185

At that time, in 85 CE, the Jews were trying to re-group by building community around their local Synagogue.

Matthew also was putting an emphasis on building community. He reminds people of the mission of Jesus to a whole network of people engaged in the fishing industry around the sea of Galilee (Mt. Ch 10).

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of

No. 187

The Jews were trying to re-build their community based on the local synagogue,

Matthew showed how Jesus encouraged his followers to build their own community by reliance on the  
**spirit of the law**  
rather than its technicalities.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

Gospel of



187

Page 47

No. 186



- ▶ Workers in the industry included the fishermen, fish processors, carters, the traders, the tax collectors etc.
- ▶ Jesus called them “the lost sheep of the House of Israel”
- ▶ Many of these subgroups were family based.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One  
Matthew

186

Gospel of

No. 188

## Spirit of the Law

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

188

# What about the Gospel of Luke, written around the same time but for a very different readership?

No. 189

## The Gospel of Luke

Michelle Nailon CSB

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

No. 191

No. 190

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Part 1  
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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

No. 192

## The Gospel of Luke

The Urban Gospel

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

Page 48



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

► The gospel of Luke was written at approximately the same time as the gospel of Matthew, that is, around 85 CE.



## From very early times - with Paul in the 50's CE there were Jewish Christians and there were Gentile Christians

No. 193

Gospel of Mark  
about 70 CE

Gospel of Matthew ca. 85  
CE

Gospel of Luke ca 85 CE

As with Matthew's gospel, it was based heavily on the gospel of Mark, the first gospel, which had been written about 70 CE at the time of the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

193

No. 195

Luke's listeners/readers were established in the Roman Empire of the Day. At the start of his gospel he addresses his reader with the Greek name of Theophilus.

He also addresses Theophilus at the start of his second book, called "The Acts of the Apostles". Luke tells his listeners and reader(s) that he is attempting to give an accurate account of the story of Jesus.

Christianity and the Roman Empire

However the community that Luke belonged to was quite different from Matthew's type of community.

While Matthew was based in a community of Jewish Christians, Luke was based in a community of Gentile (that is, non-Jewish) Christians.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I

Gospel of Luke

No. 194



No. 196

In Luke's second book he describes what happened in the early years of the Church after the death of Jesus.

This includes his account of a Jerusalem Council of the Church about 50 CE and the mission of Paul to the Gentiles.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I

Gospel of Luke



No. 197

Luke begins his gospel, like Matthew, by describing the birth and early start in the life of Jesus.

However, while Matthew presents Jesus as a child of Jewish heritage, Luke presents him as **a child of the world.**

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke



No. 199



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

By now, in 85 CE, the Church was growing quickly and the vast majority of "Christians" were from a non-Jewish background.

These people did not know the background stories of the Old Testament.

They did not have the traditions of Judaism nor their focus on keeping the Jewish law.

Page 50

No. 198

Because Luke is writing for Gentile Christians, he is dealing with themes that are different from those of Matthew who wrote for a community of Jewish Christians.

Luke is dealing with questions relating to Gentile Christians.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

No. 200

Church leaders were wondering if the church could be passed on safely to this new generation of Gentile Christians.

In his writing, Luke encouraged them to believe that the power of God would prevail.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

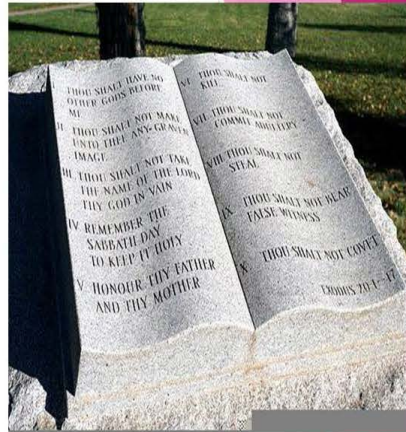


No. 201

At the same time, in his gospel, Luke tried to remind his listeners/readers about the importance of keeping the Commandments.

He put special focus on the three Commandments of:

- ▶ "Thou shalt not kill."
- ▶ "Thou shalt not commit adultery" and
- ▶ "Thou shalt not steal".



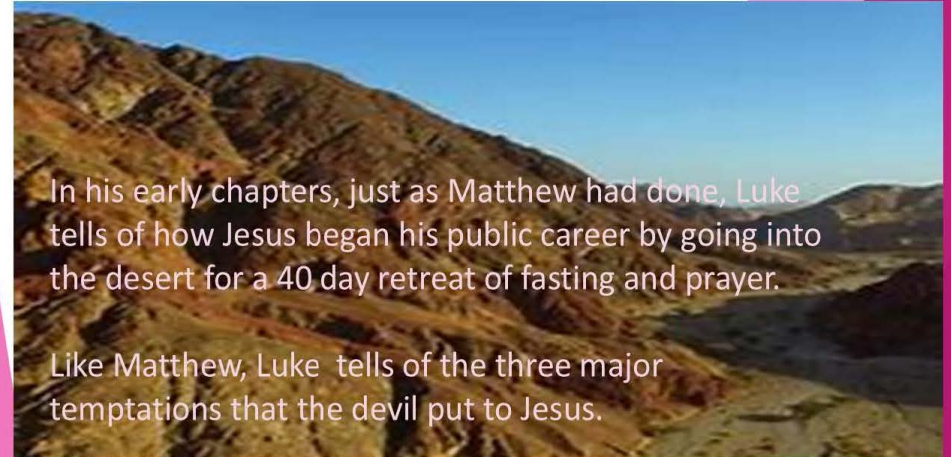
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

No. 202

In his early chapters, just as Matthew had done, Luke tells of how Jesus began his public career by going into the desert for a 40 day retreat of fasting and prayer.

Like Matthew, Luke tells of the three major temptations that the devil put to Jesus.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

No. 203

Jesus refused to turn stones into bread

(cf over-reliance on material goods  
"Thou shalt not steal")

He refused to worship Satan despite the promise of world power

(cf. "Thou shalt not kill")

He refused to throw himself from the temple roof and assume that his father would save him

(cf. taking family for granted in  
"Thou shalt not commit adultery")

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

As with Matthew, threaded through the Gospel of Luke, there is the same theme of stressing these three Commandments about

- ▶ money,
- ▶ power and
- ▶ relationship

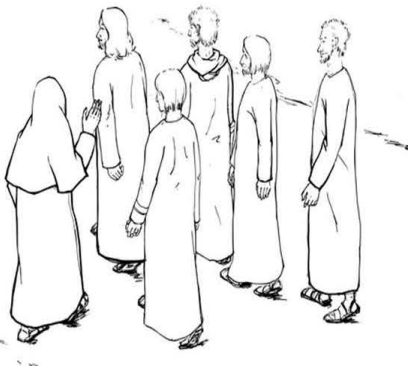
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke



No. 204

No. 205



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke



No. 207

No. 206



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

For example, in the gospel when someone asked if they could follow him, Jesus warned them, "The birds of the air have nests, and foxes have holes. But the son of man has nowhere to lay his head" (Lk 9:57-8)

- ▶ In other words a follower of Jesus needs to be prepared to give up material benefits.
- ▶ This is "raising the bar" of **"Thou shalt not steal".**

No. 208

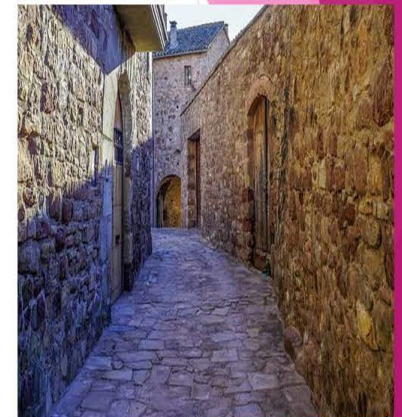
In the same chapter of Luke's gospel, Jesus invited someone to follow him. But they said "Let me go to bury my father first" that is, wait until his father had died. Jesus said "Let the dead bury the dead. Your duty is to go and spread the news of the Kingdom of God." (Lk 9:59-60)

In other words, the man's "career" and will to power needed to be subordinated to the call made to him to spread the gospel. This is "raising the bar" of **"Thou shalt not kill".**

- ▶ Someone else (in the same chapter) who was invited to join Jesus said, "I will follow you sir, but first let me go and say good bye to my people at home".
- ▶ Jesus replied "Once the hand is laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk 9:61-2)
- ▶ An interpretation of this is that the man was challenged to let go of home, family, marriage etc. in order to follow Jesus. Such a challenge was "raising the bar" of **"Thou shalt not commit adultery."**

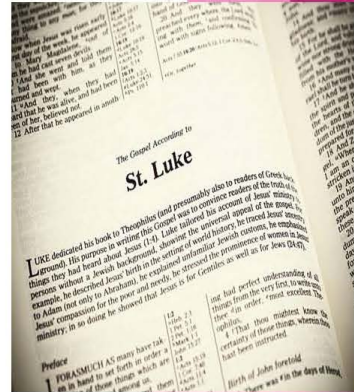
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke





- This reflects how **“power”** is a theme that runs through his gospel.



In the three cases just described, people were challenged to move beyond having --  
material comfort, having a career and having a secure family.

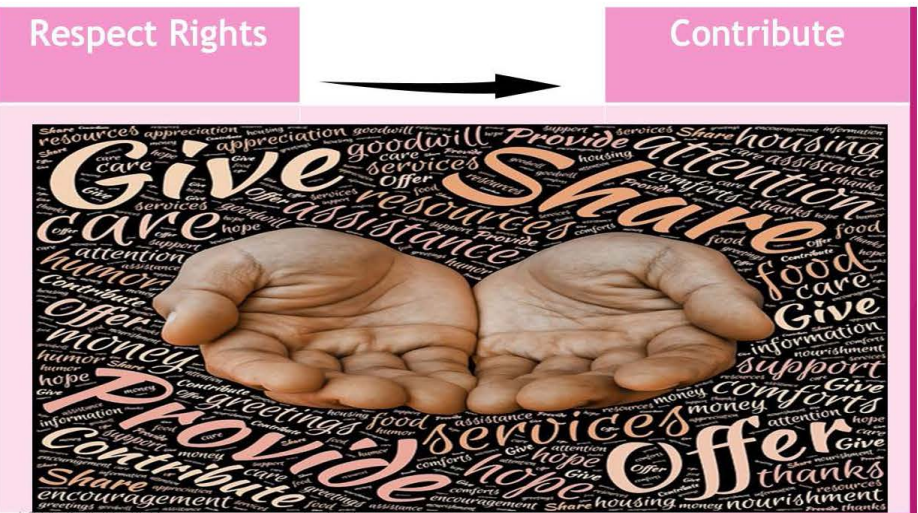
Commandments	Challenge to move beyond
<i>"Thou shalt not steal"</i>	Material comfort
<i>"Thou shalt not kill"</i>	Having a career
<i>"Thou shalt not commit adultery"</i>	Having a secure family

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1  
Gospel of Luke

“Thou shalt not steal”	“Thou shalt not kill”	“Thou shalt not commit adultery”
Be ready to	Be ready to	Be ready to
Give up material comforts	Give up worldly power	Give up home comforts

The Gentile Christians were challenged to not only keep the Commandments but to move beyond them.

For those who were the listener/readers of Luke's gospel their desire for **possessions**, for **power** and for **family**, needed to be subordinated, to the call that has been made to them to follow Jesus.



# Money, Relationship and Power are key themes of Mark, Matthew and Luke

## These themes are also cleverly woven into the story of the Crucifixion

No. 213



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

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No. 214

## Story of the Crucifixion



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

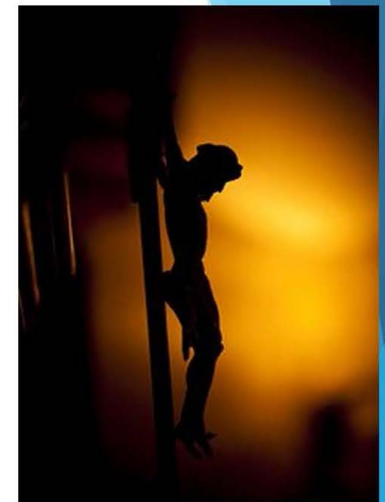
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Michelle Nailon CSB

No. 216

- ▶ Jesus died for others. In his immediate situation, he knew that plans were afoot to kill off the leadership of his followers, as well as himself cf.
- ▶ Lazarus, (Jn 12:9-11),
- ▶ James (Acts 12:1-2) and
- ▶ Peter (Acts 12:3-19).

His death would help to pre-empt this.





# Money, Relationship and Power are key themes of Mark, Matthew and Luke

## These themes are also cleverly woven into the story of the Crucifixion

No. 217

All four gospels include the story of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ (33 CE). In ancient times special note was taken of the way in which a prominent person died.

Across the gospels the accounts of the crucifixion are quite similar. The original writer of the story was Mark (70 CE), and his account of the crucifixion was copied by Matthew and Luke (around 85CE) and sometime later by John (around 100 CE).

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

217

No. 218

- ▶ Because of the efforts of the gospel writers to keep the story much the same, any deviations from Mark's version by the other writers, would be significant and would relate to their own key themes.



218

No. 219

- ▶ In Mark's account of the crucifixion, there is a heavy emphasis on suffering and the "stripping away" of all material comforts.

- ▶ This picks up on the theme of *"Thou shalt not steal"*



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

219

No. 220

- ▶ In Matthew's account there is emphasis on the "aloneness" of Jesus. For instance Matthew notes that "all the disciples fled".
- ▶ Matthew also recalls the words of Jesus on the cross "My God My God Why have you forsaken me?"
- ▶ This picks up on the Matthew's theme of relationship and the Commandment

*"Thou shalt not commit adultery".*



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

# Jeering about "the kingdom" in Mark's account

No. 221

- ▶ In Luke's account, the theme of **power** throughout his gospel is picked up in his story of the crucifixion.
- ▶ On the cross Jesus appears to be powerless as the Roman Army carries out his crucifixion.
- ▶ This picks up on the theme of power and "*Thou shalt not kill*".



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

221

No. 222

A question hangs over the story of the crucifixion in each of these gospels.  
If Jesus was prepared to give up **material comfort, relationship and power** for the sake of others and according to his own teaching, was anything to be gained by this?

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

222

No. 223



If we take just one snippet from each Crucifixion account, we can pick up the **sense of irony** on the part of the writers.

As Jesus hangs on the cross, people around him are jeering and making fun of his situation.

However there is a "twist" in their ridicule. Consider.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

223

No. 224

In Mark's gospel, as Jesus hangs on the cross naked, suffering and stripped bare of all material comfort, passers-by joke about how he had compared his body to the Temple saying "Destroy this Temple..." etc.

The Chief Priests and scribes there ask about his kingdom ... "If you are the King of Israel..." (Mk 15:29-32).

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

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# Jeering about "the kingdom" in Mark's account

No. 225

Where is the irony?  
Recall that when Jesus was teaching back in about 33 CE, the Chief Priests and their Temple were central to Judaism .  
The Jews comprised about a tenth of the population of the Roman Empire and many regularly visited the Temple. .



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

225

No. 226



But the twist in Mark's story is this. He was writing in 70 CE when the Temple and its priesthood were in the process of being wiped out by the Roman army. Mark and his listener/readers were well aware of this.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

226

No. 227

- ▶ So, even as the chief priests and scribes jeered in Mark's story, written up in 70 CE, they themselves were being wiped out and soon the Jewish priesthood was to be no more.
- ▶ At the same time in 70 CE, Christian communities around the Empire, after the missionary efforts of Paul and others, were doing well.
- ▶ The "Kingdom of Jesus" was in fact, on the rise.

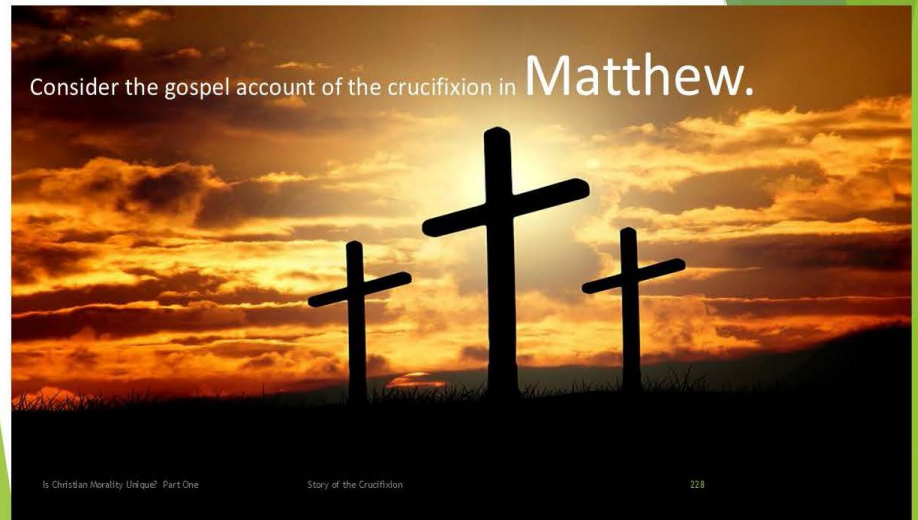


Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

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No. 228



Consider the gospel account of the crucifixion in Matthew.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

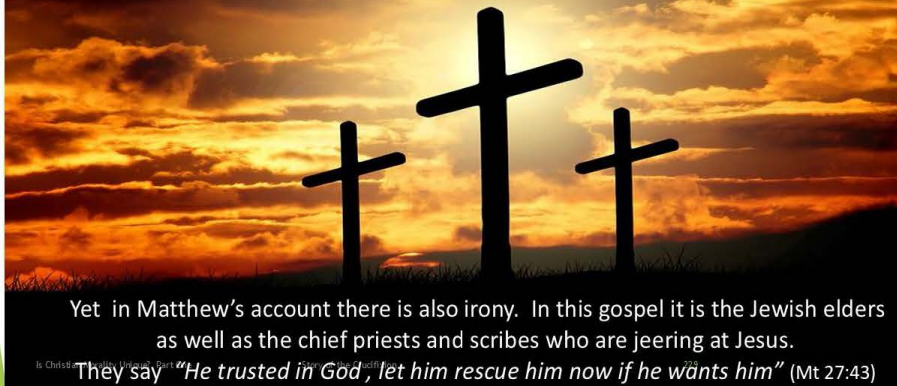
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# The elders jerring "If God wants you"

No. 229

There is special emphasis in Matthew's gospel on relationship. On the one hand when Jesus is hanging on the cross he calls out *"My God why have you forsaken me?"*



No. 231

No. 230

Here is the twist. Matthew, writing in 85 CE knew that the Jewish Priests and Jerusalem scribes had been wiped out in 70 CE.

But in Matthew's time, after the Temple destruction, the elders of Judaism and many mainstream Jews were wondering if they were still God's Chosen people and whether or not God still wanted them.



No. 232

- ▶ At the same time in 85 CE, the followers of Jesus were building up their own support communities, independently of Judaism.
- ▶ By cultivating their discipleship of Jesus and their relationship with each other, they were assured that God did in fact still want them.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

231

Consider **Luke's** story of the Crucifixion

*"And the people stood by watching"* (Lk 23:34)



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

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# In Luke, "If you are the Chosen One"

No. 233

## Consider Luke's story of the Crucifixion



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

Like Matthew, Luke was writing in about 85 CE. Luke was writing for Gentile Christians who were in a quite secular environment.

In Luke's gospel, when Jesus is hanging on the cross it is the people, rulers (implicitly secular) and soldiers who are jeering at Jesus. They call out *"If this man is the Christ, the Chosen One..."*

(Lk 23:35)

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- ▶ In fact at the time, the name of "Chosen One" was given to the Emperor of the day.
- ▶ Thus on the one hand, Jesus appeared to be totally powerless on the cross. between two common criminals with the Roman Army around him.
- ▶ He appears to be the opposite of *"the Chosen One"*.
- ▶ But again there is a twist. Despite all the Emperor's political power he has no power over the after-life, even if he thought of himself as a God.

No. 234



No. 235



Luke points out that Jesus, on the other hand retains his own power to forgive.

(Lk 23:34)

Jesus also has power over the after-life and he promises one of the thieves

*"This day you will be with me in paradise."* (Lk 23:43)

No. 236

Thus, for the followers of Jesus, even if their efforts do not appear to reap a result,

**The positive result is there!**

# In Mark - money, In Matthew - relationship, In Luke - power

The stories of the crucifixion show that each of the gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke pick up on each of

the three key morality values

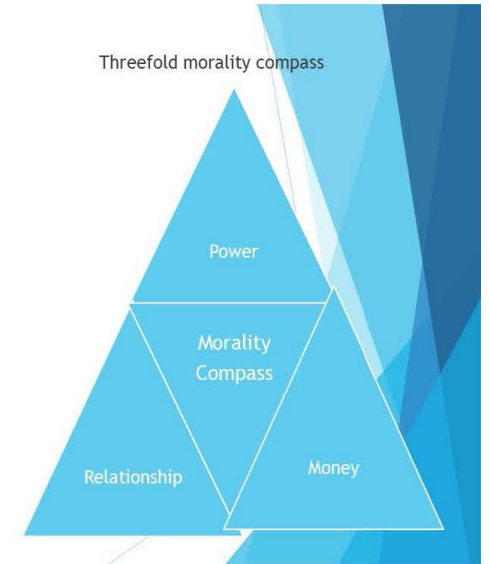
No. 237

This in itself shows how central these three morality values are to the message of the gospel stories about Jesus Christ.

- ▶ Mark "*Thou shalt not steal*"  
Money
- ▶ Matthew "*Thou shalt not commit adultery*"  
Relationship
- ▶ Luke "*Thou shalt not kill*"  
Power

No. 238

Threefold morality compass



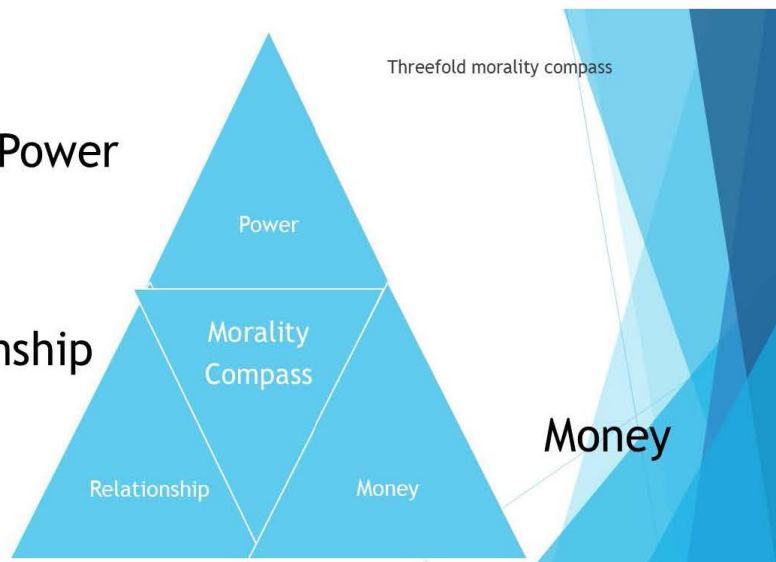
No. 239

No. 240

Power

Relationship

Threefold morality compass



Via their key themes the gospel writers have embedded these three key social Commandments into the Christian story.

Putting the names of these three key themes into colloquial language we have

Money

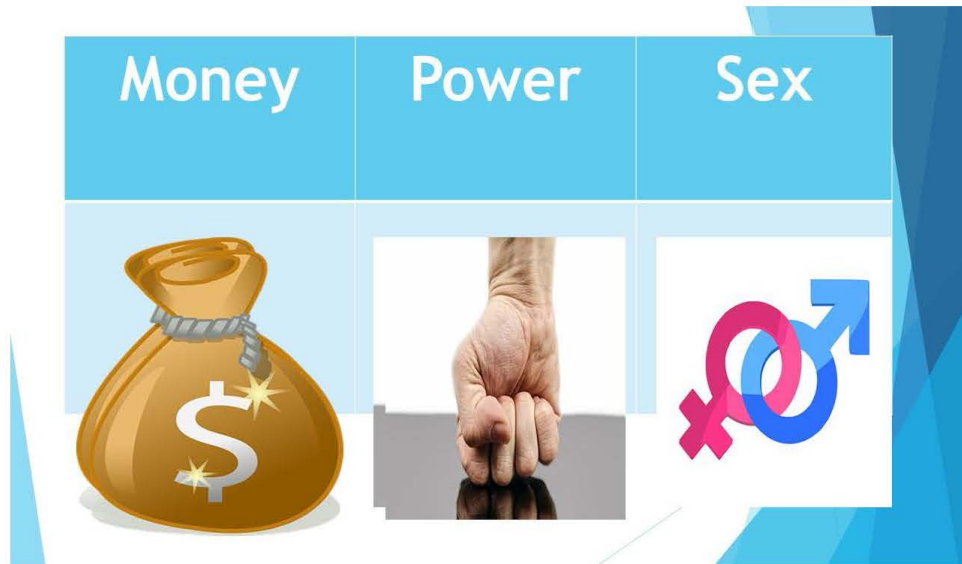
Power

Sex



# Has the Christian approach to morality shaped the development of industry?

No. 241



No. 243

No. 242

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No. 244

## Industry and Christian Morality

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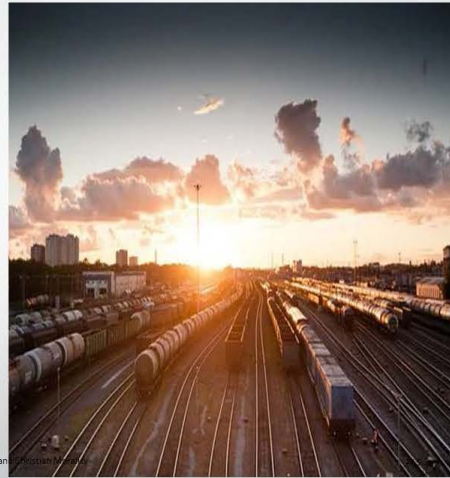
# Has the Christian approach to morality shaped the development of industry?

No. 245

A question arises.

Key emphases in Christianity were continued on, into the centuries following the first century CE.

Were these precepts incorporated into the structure of Western civilization?



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

No. 246



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

No. 247

If so, what influence did the three Commandments discussed above, have on the shape of industrial development, especially in the West.?

*"Thou shalt not kill"*

*"Thou shalt not commit adultery"*

*"Thou shalt not steal"*

Also, what about the insistence within Judaism and with figures such as St Paul, on the "otherness" of God and a focus on "the Other" as shown in the lifetime of Jesus?

?



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

To what extent does modern industry fit with a positive, "raising of the bar" approach to

*"Thou shalt not kill"*



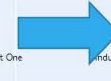
Heal and empower

*"Thou shalt not commit adultery"*



Protect and administer social support systems

*"Thou shalt not steal"*



Produce material goods and distribute them

?

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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# "Raise the bar in a social organism"

No. 249

How to gauge this?

Consider a Sociological View

One sociological approach is to consider the functions of a society as being similar to that of a social organism.

cf. The Sociologist Talcott Parsons

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 249

No. 250

As a "social organism" society needs

A Sense of Direction

Social Cohesion

Productivity

The Ability to move and adjust

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 250

No. 251

**Parsons listed four major social systems/functions**

- 1. Cultural System -**
  - this deals with "ultimate reality" and includes art and defining a sense of **direction**
- 2. Social System –**
  - This deals with the **integration** of people
- 3. Personality system-**
  - this deals with goal attainment and **productivity**
- 4. Behavioral Organism-**
  - this deals with **adaptation** e.g. the economy

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 251

No. 252

**Consider an outline ANZSIC the Australian and New Zealand Industry Classification**

A Agriculture,	K Finance, Insurance,
B Mining,	L Rental, Real Estate,
C Manufacturing,	M Professional, Scientific and Technical Services,
D Electricity, Gas and Waste Services,	N Administrative and Support Services.
E Construction.	O Public Administration and Safety
F Wholesale Trade,	P Education and Training
G Retail,	Q Health and Social Assistance
H Accommodation and Food Services,	R Arts and Recreation Services
I Transport, Postal	S Other (e.g. Religious, Personal)
J Information, Media and Telecommunication	

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 252

# "Raise the bar in a social organism"

No. 253

## Cultural System

Roughly speaking, do the industries listed by ANZSIC fit in with Parsons' analysis? Consider:

this deals with "ultimate reality"  
and includes art and defining a  
sense of **direction**

R Arts and Recreation Services  
S Other (e.g. Religious, Personal)

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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No. 254

## Social System

(Social Cohesion)

this deals with the **integration**  
of people

N Administrative and Support Services  
O Public Administration and Safety  
P Education and Training  
Q Health and Social Assistance

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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No. 255

## Personality system-

(Productivity)

this deals with goal attainment  
and **productivity**

A Agriculture,  
B Mining,  
C Manufacturing,  
D Electricity, Gas and Waste Services,  
E Construction.

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No. 256

## Behavioral Organism

(Ability to move and adjust)

This deals with **adjustment**  
e.g. the economy

F Wholesale Trade,  
G Retail,  
H Accommodation and Food  
Services,  
I Transport, Postal  
J Information, Media and  
Telecommunication

K Finance, Insurance,  
L Rental, Real Estate,  
M Professional, Scientific and  
Technical Services,

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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# "Raise the bar in a social organism"

No. 257

Where do these fit with the Commandments?



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Industry and Christian Morality

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**Thou shalt not**  
**Thou shalt not**  
**Thou shalt not**

No. 258

Consider the positive of:

*"Thou shalt not kill"*

Leading to **Empowerment**

As in:

S Other (e.g. Religious, Personal)  
R Arts and Recreation Services  
Q Health and Social Assistance  
P Education and Training

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

No. 259

Consider the positive of: **Social Security**

*"Thou shalt not commit adultery"*

As in:

O Public Administration and Safety



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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No. 260

Consider the positive of:

*"Thou shalt not steal"*

Leading to

**Material Benefit**

**Productivity Industries**

A Agriculture,  
B Mining,  
C Manufacturing,  
D Electricity, Gas and Waste Services,  
E Construction.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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# "Raise the bar in a social organism"

No. 261

Consider the positive of:

*"Thou shalt not steal"*

Leading to`

**Material Benefit**

## Adjustment Industries

- |                                    |                                                    |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| F Wholesale Trade,                 | J Information, Media and Telecommunication         |
| G Retail,                          | K Finance, Insurance,                              |
| H Accommodation and Food Services, | L Rental, Real Estate,                             |
| I Transport, Postal                | M Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, |
|                                    | N Administrative and Support Services.             |

No. 263

No. 262

Having another look,  
How do the Commandments  
fit in with these industries?



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Industry and Christian Morality

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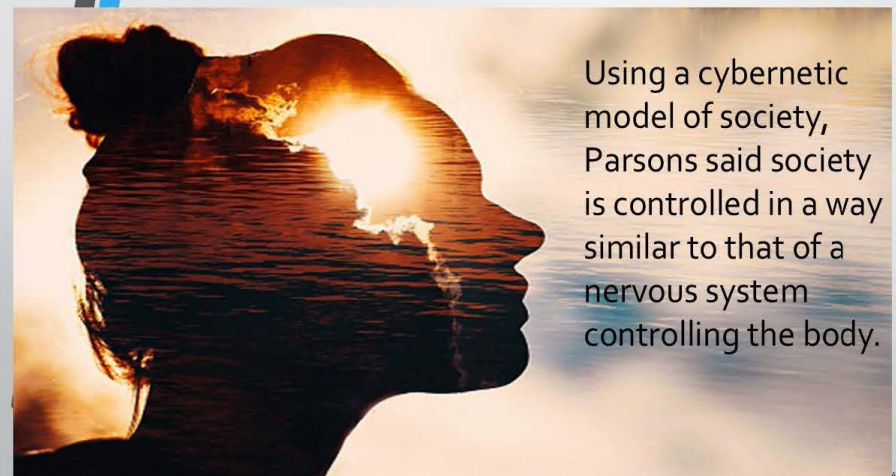
Consider Parsons' first "function", that is,  
the need for values maintenance, a cultural system and  
..... **a Sense of Direction**



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Industry and Christian Morality



Using a cybernetic  
model of society,  
Parsons said society  
is controlled in a way  
similar to that of a  
nervous system  
controlling the body.



# "Raise the bar in a social organism"

No. 265

This can remind us of St Paul talking about the  
"Body of Christ"  
with Christ  
and his dynamic values  
at the head

(cf. 1 Cor. 12:27)



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Industry and Christian Morality

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No. 266

## Using the imagery of Parsons

Parsons said Key values influence the direction of the whole, like the tiller of a ship.



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Industry and Christian Morality

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No. 267

If the Christian, positive approach to the Commandments sits at the cybernetic level of a society, then there is a constant, on-going drive to "raise the bar" of industry performance



No. 268

i.e. "raise the bar" of improving on

Giving Direction and Helping to "empower"

In Religion, the Arts, Health, Education

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

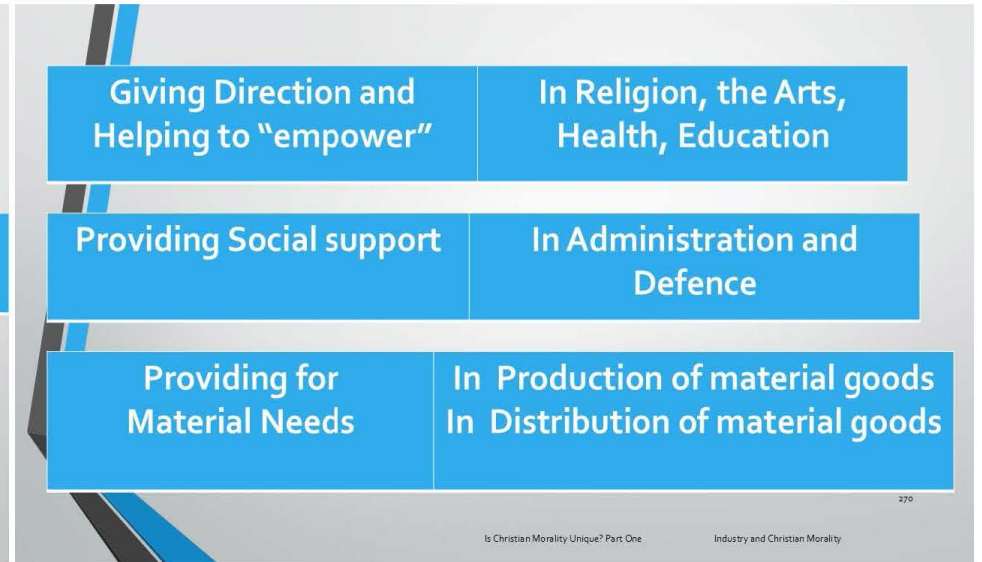
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# "Raise the bar in a social organism"

No. 269



No. 270



No. 271

Of course **all** three Commandments and the driving force to improve on them, apply to **all** the industries.

e.g. full home ownership should help to

- Empower
- Provide family security
- Provide material benefit



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 271

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**In any case,** the three Commandments are usually mentioned together

Empower
Give Social Support
Give Material Support



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 272



# "Raise the bar in a social organism"

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Why are the three Commandments usually found together?

Empower

Give Social Support

Give Material Support

**Why**

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 273

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Empower

Give Social Support

Give Material Support

**Why**

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No. 275

Because Over-stress on the one Commandment can undermine the others

The three key social commandments are like a tripod.


With a tripod when there is over-focus on one leg **the whole thing** topples over



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**Tripod**

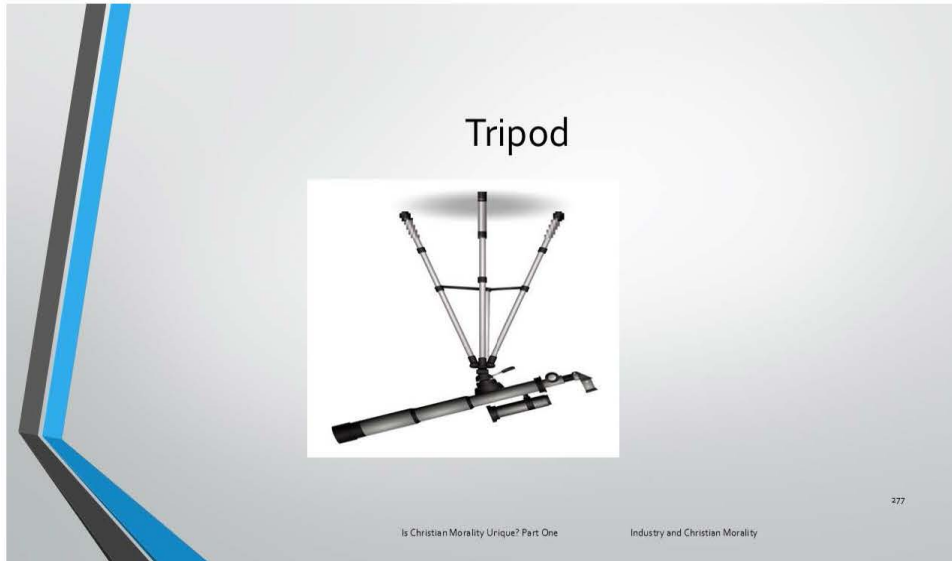


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# Why the three together



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No. 278

In a parallel way  
in industry - there are of course multiple  
connections between all the industries and all  
the Commandments.

There needs to be!  
On the one hand there can be special focus  
on one function  
**BUT**  
over-focus on the one function can also be  
to the detriment of the rights of others and  
even oneself

No. 279

- Over-focus on making **money**
- Can lead to theft and destruction of habitat etc.  
*(cf. "Thou shalt not steal")*
- Can lead to destruction of people, health etc.  
*(cf. "Thou shalt not kill")*
- It can lead to destruction of main social support groups  
*(cf. "Thou shalt not commit adultery")*

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- Over-focus on **power**  
can lead to **killing**.
- It can destroy **social support groups**
- It can deprive people of **basic material needs**



# Why the three together



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- Over-focus on  
**sex and  
relationship**

can affect **relationships**

can restrict  
**self-determination**

**restrict productivity**  
(and so on)



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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that in a functional society the following  
Core Values should be found in Religion and the Arts  
and in all the other industries as well!!

**Empower**

cf. **"Thou shalt not kill"**

Provide social support

cf. **"Thou shalt not commit  
adultery"**

Provide material support

cf. **"Thou shalt not steal"**

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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Christian Moral Teaching would claim



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What about Other World Religions?



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

# How universal are these three morality issues?

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Are these values found in other World Religions as well?



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Industry and Christian Morality

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## Comparison with Other World Religions

Michelle Nailon CSB

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*Money, Power, Relationship  
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One*

## Comparison with Other World Religions

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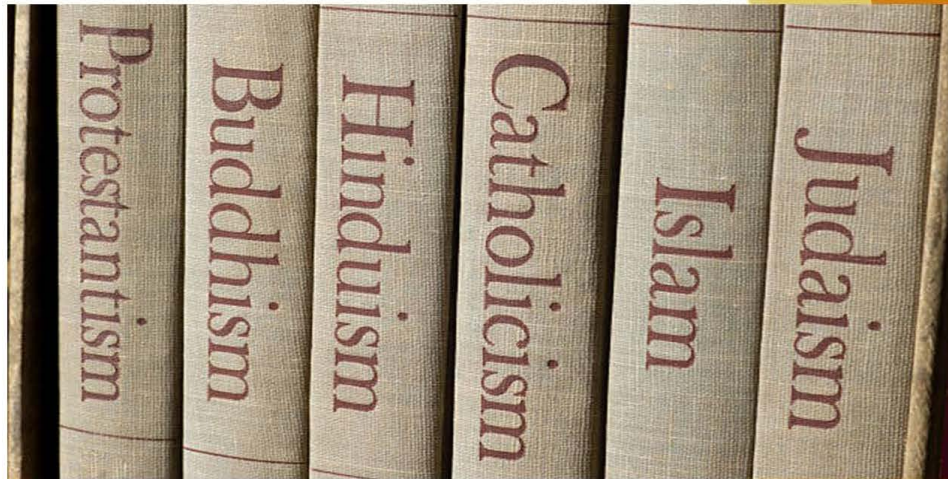
Comparison with Other World Religions

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# How universal are these three morality issues?

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Comparison with Other World Religions

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There are parallels here with other life species as well.

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Comparison with Other World Religions

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## Three key things essential for life

There is the need for **life itself** and safety.

There is the need for a reproductive **social support** group.

There is the need for **material supports** such as food, clothing, housing etc.

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## Three social Commandments of Judaism protected basic rights

5. **“Thou shalt not kill”**  
Life itself

6. **“Thou shalt not commit adultery”**  
Social Support

7. **“Thou shalt not steal”**  
Material Support



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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In early Christian teaching onwards, There has been a process of “raising the bar” of the Commandments

- |    |                                         |                                                    |
|----|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 5. | <b>“Thou shalt not kill”</b>            | Avoid cruelty and help people’s self-determination |
| 6. | <b>“Thou shalt not commit adultery”</b> | Control sexuality and support basic social group   |
| 7. | <b>“Thou shalt not steal”</b>           | Provide material supports                          |



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In reflecting on this on-going process of development, one wonders whether or not other world religions have “homed in” on the same three basic survival needs.

Have they “raised the bar” of these precepts as well?

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Consider Judaism, the basis of both Christianity and Islam



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**Judaism**



Using the traditional Catholic sequence of Commandments we have already looked at the numbers. 5, 6 and 7 Commandments about **kill**ing, **adul**tery and **steal**ing.

However if we look at the three commandments that follow these three there is arguably a “raising of the bar” here.

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Comparison with Other World Religions

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## Commandment Number Eight

8.

*“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour”*

(cf. killing off the reputation and self-determination of another)

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Is this “raising the bar” of Commandment

5. *“Thou shalt not kill”*

?

Comparison with Other World Religions

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## Commandment Number Nine

9.

*“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife”*

(cf. failure to control one’s attitude to sex)

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Is this a “raising of the bar” of

6. *“Thou shalt not commit adultery”*

?

Comparison with Other World Religions

## Commandment Number Ten

10.

*“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s goods”*

(cf. failure to control one’s avarice)

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Is this a “raising of the bar” of

7. *“Thou shalt not steal”*

?

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- ▶ We can see from commandments 8. 9. 10 that the **attitudes** of people are also being taken into account with the Commandments.
- ▶ In this sense there is a “raising of the bar” towards respect for “the other”.



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This focus on “attitude” is reflected in the prayers of Judaism as well cf.

“He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly

Who despises the gain of oppressions

Who shakes his hand lest they hold a bribe **Stealing** cf. money

Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed **Killing** cf power

And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil” **Adultery** cf sex

Isaiah 33:15

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# Islam is heavily based upon Judaism

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Consider another world religion such as  
Islam.



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It has a strict belief in the  
Otherness  
of the One God

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Islam is based on Judaism and it holds the  
Commandments in special regard.

In its own laws set out in the *Koran*, Islam

- has concern for the welfare of the poor
- has a strong opposition to adultery
- has emphasis on the protective stability of family

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Consider **Hinduism** and its Scriptures.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One



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**What about Hinduism?**

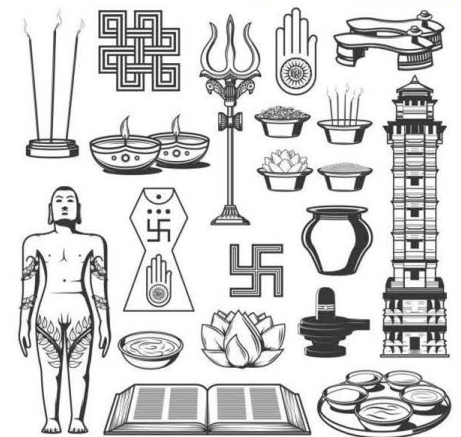
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In the *Gita* there is a strong emphasis on **duty**.

This involves respect for the lives and welfare of others especially **family members**

(cf. "Thou shalt not commit adultery")

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One



Comparison with Other World Religions

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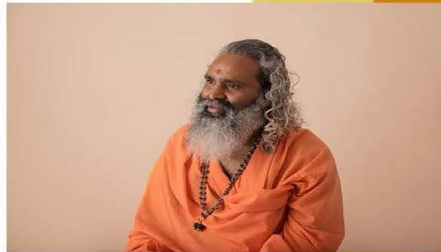
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In the Hindu *Upanisads*  
there is the sense of an  
**all-encompassing Spirit** beyond this  
world

This reminds people that  
**material wealth is  
secondary**

(cf. "Thou shalt not steal")

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One



Comparison with Other World Religions

Hindus have a strong  
belief in **Dharma**, i.e.

"a cosmic law underlying right  
behaviour and social order."

This reminds people there is  
ultimate accountability for  
one's

**treatment of others**

(cf. "Thou shalt not kill")

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# Consider Taoism, a philosophic religion based in China

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Consider Chinese **Taoism** and its philosophy



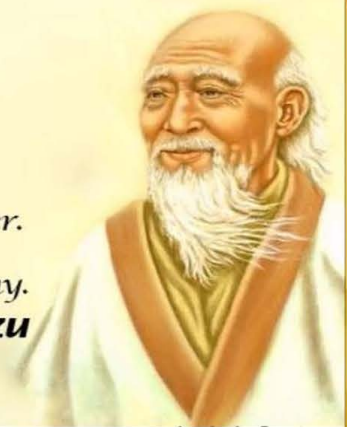
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No. 318

Watch your thoughts;  
They become words.  
Watch your words;  
They become actions.  
Watch your actions;  
They become habits.  
Watch your habits;  
They become character.  
Watch your character;  
It becomes your destiny.  
**Lao Tzu**



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In **Taoism** the Sage says  
“I have three things that I cherish. These are:

Compassion

Respect for relationships  
cf. *“Thou shalt not commit adultery”*

Frugality

cf. *“Thou shalt not steal”*

Not daring to take  
a lead in the empire.”

*Tao Te Ching Bk 2 LXVII*

control of one's wish for  
power  
cf. *“Thou shalt not kill”*

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**The Buddha founded an offshoot of Hinduism**

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No. 326

Buddhist nuns and monks take **public vows** of

Poverty	<i>As opposed to</i>	Over-focus on material wealth
Chastity	<i>As opposed to</i>	Lack of sexual control
Obedience to leaders	<i>As opposed to</i>	Violence towards others

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Buddhist Vows	Encourage <i>Opposition to</i>	They endorse the Commandments
Poverty	Over-indulgence in material goods	<i>"Thou shalt not steal"</i>
Chastity	Lack of sexual control	<i>"Thou shalt not commit adultery"</i>
Obedience to leadership	Violence towards others	<i>"Thou shalt not kill"</i>

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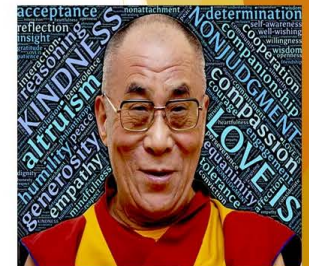
Because of the allegiance Buddhists have to the lifestyle of their monks and nuns, they in turn try to avoid

- over-indulgence in material wealth,
- lack of control with regard to sexuality and
- cruelty towards others.



This approach is echoed in their teaching  
For example

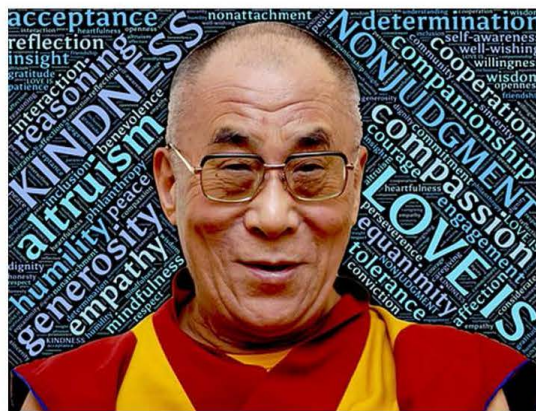
In a talk given at the Buddhist monastery in Footscray Melbourne, the Dalai Lama of Tibet opened with the sentence



*“Have compassion for all sentient beings!”*



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No. 330

At the core of Buddhism  
is the Religious community

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## Some Parallels?

In fact there are strong parallels between the lifestyle of nuns and monks in Buddhism and the lifestyle of nuns and monks within the Catholic Christian tradition.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

Catholic Vows	Encourage Opposition to	They endorse the Commandments
Poverty	Over-indulgence in material goods	<i>"Thou shalt not steal"</i>
Chastity	Lack of sexual control	<i>"Thou shalt not commit adultery"</i>
Obedience to leadership	Violence towards others	<i>"Thou shalt not kill"</i>

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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Do these public vows  
have any leverage over the  
value system of  
society in general??

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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- ▶ If we look at the imagery used by sociologist Talcott Parsons, we remember his comparison between the key values of a society and the tiller of a ship

- ▶ The ship's tiller (cf. key values) determines the direction of the whole.

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## Strongly upheld core values can determine the direction of the whole

No. 337

There can be a similarity here with the people who take on an extreme application of :

Poverty cf. *"Thou shalt not steal"*

Chastity cf. *"Thou shalt not commit adultery"*

Obedience cf. *"Thou shalt not kill"*

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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No. 338

Over the centuries Christian Religious Orders have attempted to "raise the bar" of the Commandments . They have set up and run according to their charism:-

schools	(cf. education)
Hospitals	(cf. health) and
Orphanages etc.	(cf. social services) etc.

As one African woman put it

*"I'm not going to criticize the Church.  
It is the only organization that helps us"*

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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These days in developed countries the above "needs" in society are largely met by government funding and other dedicated people.

But Catholic Religious continue to look for a "cutting edge" in service where they can "raise the bar" of Commandment Observance

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**Do Religious Orders hold special significance in today's world?**

## Strongly upheld core values can determine the direction of the whole



Are there other key differences between a general effort to control and direct money, power and sex and the efforts made by Religious?

Religious join a lifelong, focused "social organism" within the "social organism" of the Church.

Together they try to promote the Authorized, Living Word of Jesus Christ within and amongst themselves, in the Church and in the world.

Despite their diminishing numbers, they continue on, this basic, Christian dynamic

..... Is Christian Morality Unique? Part Or

**Part Two of *Is Christian Morality Unique?* explores how the structures of the gospels have set up the Dialectic Tension that gives momentum to this dynamic**



## Some Questions Relating to Part 1 of *Is Christian Morality Unique?*

01 To what extent do you think the vast array of do's and don'ts relating to social interaction can be summed up in the the three Commandments of "Thou shalt not Kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal"?

02 In the first century CE, the Jerusalem Temple was one of the wonders of the known world. The family of Jesus visited Jerusalem and its Temple every year. The Temple's builder, King Herod, had a keen interest in Greek philosophy and culture. On the one hand Saul (later called Paul) studied in Jerusalem under the Jewish scholar Gamaliel. But as well as this Paul knew enough about the philosophy of the Greek Stoics to challenge this philosophy in his first letter to the Corinthians. Given such a background, do you think it likely that the Temple's library held some Greek texts as well as the Hebrew ones and Jesus had access to these?

03 As most people in first century Palestine were illiterate, do you think that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was probably illiterate as well? Or, could she have been taught literacy and weaving etc. by people such as Anna who lived at the Temple for decades?

Remember that many scribes were based there, providing a background of reading and writing. Also, recall that the garment that Jesus wore at the crucifixion was seamless from top to bottom. Indeed the weaving of this garment was so "special" the soldiers did not want to tear it. Does this suggest there was a "higher" level of education amongst the members of Jesus' household?

04 At the first Church Council in the late 40's CE, it was decided that the Gentile followers of Jesus would not need to undergo circumcision and observe the many rules and rites of Judaism. Rather they would need to avoid "blood, fornication and strangling". The Gentiles were relieved about this. But would these rules be enough on which to base the whole morality of their lives? Or, would it make more sense that these rules inferred that to:

"avoid blood" also meant to avoid the blood sports and cruelty of the Roman Empire.

"Avoid fornication" also included avoiding Temple prostitution and unmarried sex.

"Avoid strangling" also included avoiding unjust business practices, especially those that oppressed the poor ??

## **Some Questions Relating to Part 1 of *Is Christian Morality Unique?***

**continued**

05     How does our own culture measure up to these standards?

06     As the message of Jesus spread across the Roman Empire people said "See how these Christians love one another". Do you think they said this because the help that Christians were giving to others extended beyond their own family and ethnic group?

07     Why do you think so many of the advances in the modern world have come from "the West" and its Christian heritage?

08     Do you think there is an inner dynamic within Christianity "pushing" people towards improvement?

09     Does it make sense to you that the basic morality rules in the world's major religions are similar?

10     What are some of the obstacles this type of "worldwide morality" is likely to face into the future? What would be some ways in which people can anticipate such obstacles and deal with them?

11     Why do you think the new Pope adopted the name of Leo XIV?

---

**going back to the question ----considered in Part 2 of *Is Christian Morality Unique?***

**What indeed is the nature of the Christian Dynamic?**

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