

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 CSB

Introduction

The following pages are taken from a video/powerpoint available on the 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 or ethics as some say.

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.

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Jesus Christ

A Church Council around 50 CE

Letters of Paul

Gospel of Mark

Gospel of Matthew

Gospel of Luke

The Crucifixion

Christianity and Industry

Other World Religions

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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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

Is Christian Morality Unique?

Is a Question

that everyone probably needs to explore
at some stage

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

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No. 6

Influencing e.g.
Beijing

Dubai etc.



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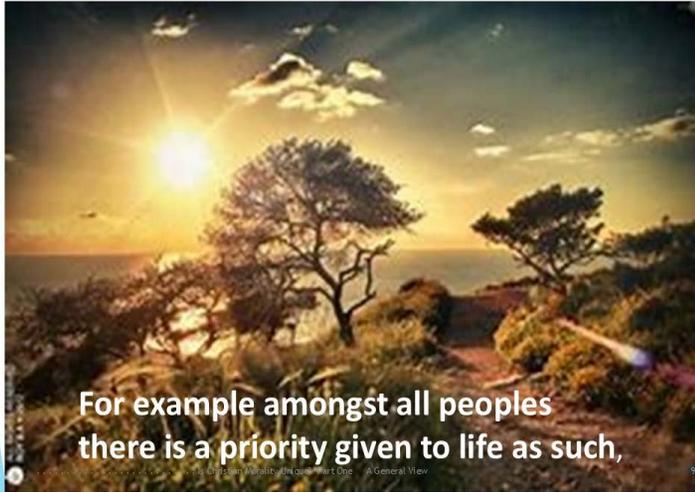
If we consider what universal morality would be,
a few key things emerge.

universal morality

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No. 11

No. 12

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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Some “rights” and needs go along with the priority of life in itself

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



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



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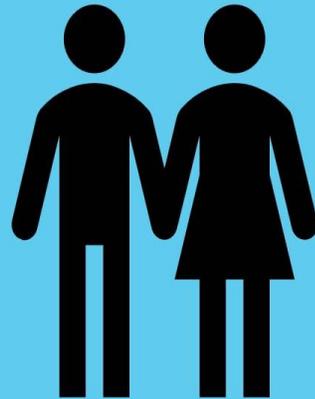
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In turn a key ingredient for a family is the life partnership that exists between parents.

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



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

Life itself
Basic social support group

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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.

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- ▶ What would be the next
- ▶ “needs” and “rights”
- ▶ area of someone’s life.



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There is the question of property

property



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



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Clothing and housing etc.



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So much of government legislation
revolves around
rights of ownership



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We have basic human rights to:

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

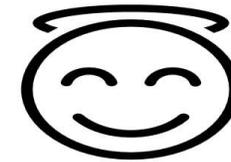
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That is, there is:



life itself

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There is a prime social group



Prime Social Support Group

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Possessions



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These would be tied to: a universal morality



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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).



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A General View

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We hear of Morality Essentials for all Cultures such as:

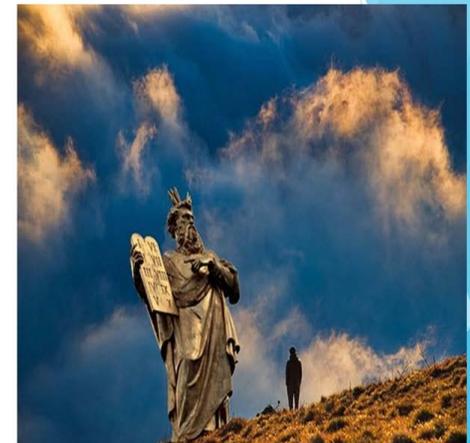
- ▶ “Do unto others as you would have them do to you”

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- ▶ 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. C.13th BC).



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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>

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

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Money,
 Power,
 Sex

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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>

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



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



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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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Some Questions

If you were asked to name three basic values for a society would you name something else?
In such case would such a value e.g. justice, fit in with the three values discussed above?
Would you have given priority to the values discussed above before doing this workshop?

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Is Christian Morality Unique ? Part 1

The Emergence of

Christian Morality

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Money, Power, Relationship

► Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

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

What do you know about the social situation in Palestine in the first Century CE?

Can you think of something about Palestine at that time that was unique?

As a clue, Palestine was Jewish but it was also dominated by the Roman Empire?

Anything unique about that? (Unlike elsewhere the Jews retained their own religion)

The following workshops explores how, in Palestine, two very different world views existed side by side - that is, Judaism and Greek philosophy (which had been adopted by the Roman Empire)

No. 45

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



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The Emergence of Christian Morality

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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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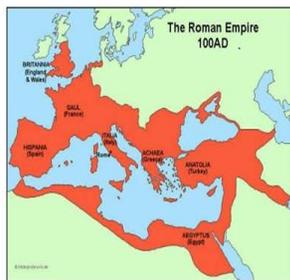
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No. 47

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

Greek philosophy.



▶ Palestine

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- ▶ The Jews of C1st 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

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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

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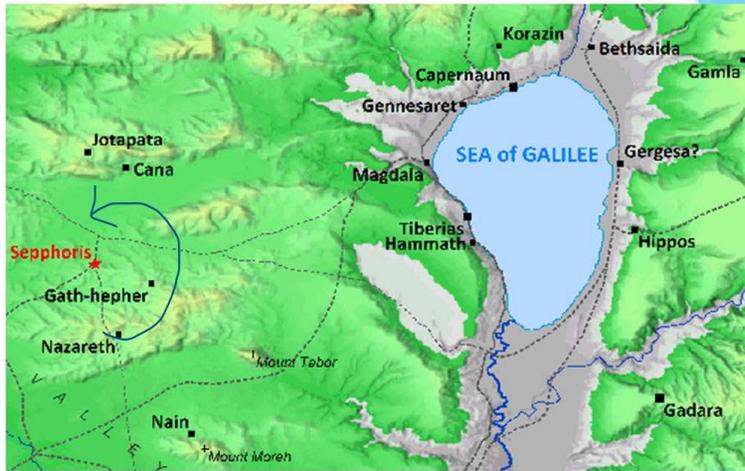
Jesus would have been quite aware of the Roman presence. At the time, near Nazareth, there was a Greek style of city being built by the Romans. This was Sepphoris.

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.



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Ancient scroll



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



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Jewish symbol



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Greek symbol



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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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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Jesus said the society of his day was "ripe for the harvest"

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What did Jesus mean by this?

A reading of the gospels tells us about his complaints about the Jewish leaders of the day. Their society was based on "the law", that is, the Commandments. However, as Jesus pointed out. They would place great stress on details of the law but fail to observe its main points. Jesus often called them hypocrites.

On the other hand what was faulty about the ethics of the Roman Empire? History books and videos tell us there was a lot of cruelty, promiscuity and theft (e.g. when a people were conquered).

Could you agree that in general people would have been looking for a better morality (ethics) system?

Is Christian Morality Unique Part 1

A Church Council in the 50's CE

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



Have you ever wondered?

What happened to the followers of Jesus immediately after Jesus had died, risen and ascended into heaven?

We know Jesus had appointed Peter as leader.

But then a brilliant young Jew called Saul was converted, changed his name to Paul and began preaching to the Gentiles (non-Jews).

Soon there were many non-Jewish followers of Jesus.

At the time there were a large number of groups within Judaism - the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians and even the Essenes.

Some now called the followers of Jesus "the Nazarene sect"

But what was fairly inevitable with all these new converts who were non-Jewish followers of Jesus?

- ▶ 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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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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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.

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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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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)

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- ▶ 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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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.

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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).



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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?

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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.

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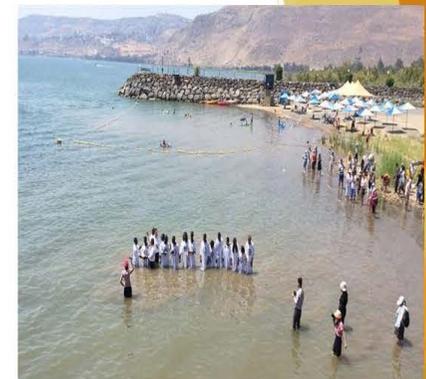
What happened at the Council?



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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).



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- ▶ 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)

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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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- ▶ 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

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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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However, on the other hand, it would appear that others at the Council, including Paul and people such as Luke who later wrote up an account of the Council, saw the **implications** of what was being proposed by James.



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Avoid



Blood, Fornication, Strangling

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What did this mean?

When the threefold prohibition for Gentile converts against "blood" "fornication" and "strangling" was put to the Council by James (Acts 15:20) everyone there agreed.

This was a milestone for the Church.
But what did it mean?

In fact The three prohibitions against "Blood, fornication and strangling" went further than what was set out in regulations about Gentile visitors centuries before.

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Avoid Blood

Consider the proposal to avoid "blood".

Consider also the Roman Empire of the day and the environment in which the Gentile converts were living.

In the Roman Empire there was an entrenched culture of "blood sports".

For instance any sizeable city of the day would have an Amphitheatre where animals and prisoners were forced to kill and be killed for the entertainment of the crowd.

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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.



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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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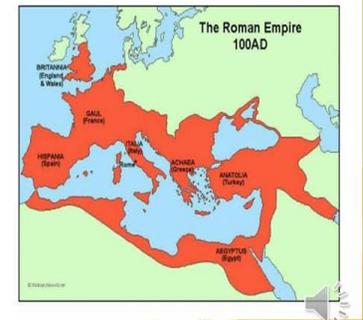
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The proposal was against blood sports and cruelty as such



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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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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

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Blood, Fornication, AVOID 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).

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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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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

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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

119

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”.

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

118

At the council (around first century 50CE the major people pushing for the circumcision of all male "followers of Jesus" were the Pharisees. In mainstream Judaism, after the fall of Jerusalem in 70CE, the Pharisees became the strongest group and leaders of Judaism. They put great stress on literal observance of the Jewish laws.

James proposed that the laws to be observed were to avoid blood, fornication and strangling. These laws were similar to ancient laws in the book of Leviticus which applied to visitors to Palestine.

Do you think the Pharisees at the Council could have been confused here? Because of the parallels with Leviticus, they agreed to the proposal. But they didn't fully realise the implications about "raising the bar" of the Commandments. On the other hand do you think it much more likely that people like Paul at the Council, did see the implications about "raising the bar of the Commandments"?

Do you think that "raising the bar" of the Commandments would have related to following "the way" (of Jesus) that Paul referred to in Acts?

In Acts, Paul is accused of being a leader of "the Nazerene sect". But he contradicts this and says he is a follower of "the way" (Acts 22:4; 24:14)

At one stage Paul says they had great difficulty explaining "the way" to people (cf. Acts 19:23). Do you think this fits in with what appeared to be going on in Antioch when, after the Council, people were still trying to make the Gentile converts get circumcised?

Some may describe "the way" as following Jesus. But in terms of the Commandments what do you think this means?

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

Is Christian Morality Unique Part I

Letters of Paul



Slide Set 4 of 10

Michelle Nailon CSB



The book of Acts, written by Luke, describes the early years of the church. After the Church Council (around 49-50CE), most of the story is about Paul. Why do you think this is so?

Before his conversion Paul had been a well-known brilliant scholar. After his conversion would you expect that Paul would be trying to re-interpret the teaching of the Bible to fit with the following of Jesus and "the way"?

Some present theologians suggest that he re-wrote the map of morality

In the light of a "raising of the bar" have you any clues as to how he would have done this?

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Letters of Paul

Michelle Nailon CSB

Part I
Slide Set 4 of 10

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul

After the death of Jesus, a person emerged in the late 40's CE who was to clarify the teaching of Jesus.

This man was to "re-draw" the map of Jewish morality in order to incorporate the world view of Greek philosophy.



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part I The Letters of Paul



The person who emerged was called Saul. He was a very highly educated, Jewish Pharisee. Saul, later renamed Paul, had started out by trying to capture followers of Jesus and sending them to prison.

However on his way to Damascus to continue this, he was struck down by a blinding light. A voice called to him "Saul Saul why are you persecuting me? Saul answered "who are you Lord? The voice replied. I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting."

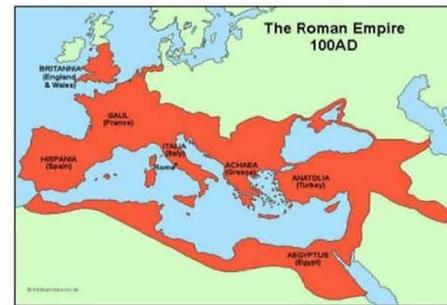
“Paul your great learning is making you mad”
(quote from the Roman Governor Festus)



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.

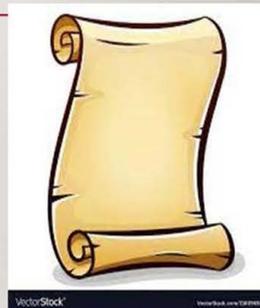
But now he began to reinterpret the law in order to make it more practical and relevant to the wider population and Greek philosophy of the Roman Empire.

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

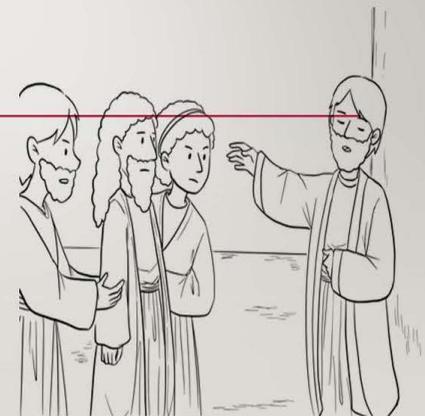


To the present day Paul’s letters continue to clarify the basics of Christian morality.

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



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



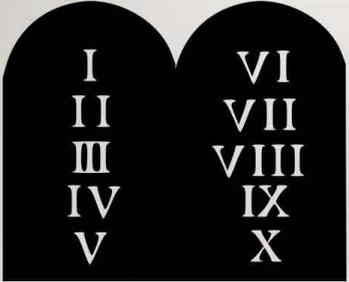
St Paul attended the Jerusalem Council (end 40's)

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

No. 105.

No. 106

What was Paul's Approach ?



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

No. 107

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"
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No. 108

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

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.

No. 110

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

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1 The Letters of Paul

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 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).

Page 28

"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.

<p>© Christian Morality Unique! Part I The Letters of Paul</p> <p>“Thou shalt not kill”</p>		<p>Protect self-determination</p>
<p>Paul went further than a prohibition on killing others. Rather he stressed the need for people’s self-determination.</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 should be free</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

No. 114

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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

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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

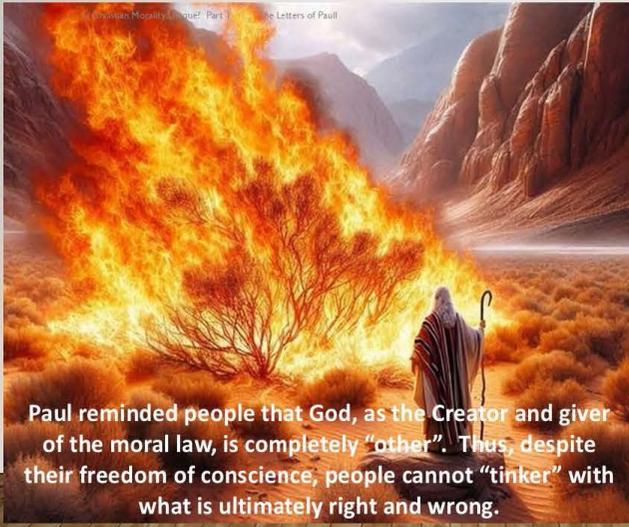


“I am who am”



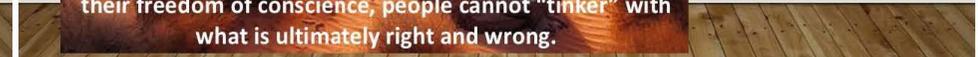
Page 29

© 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”

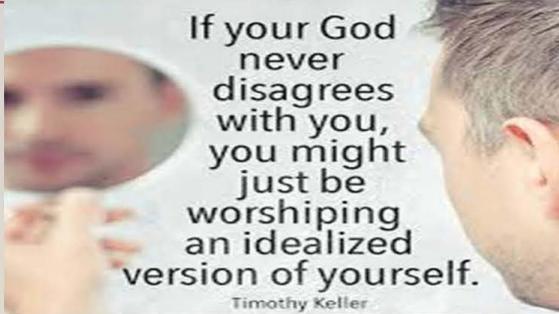


No. 119

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



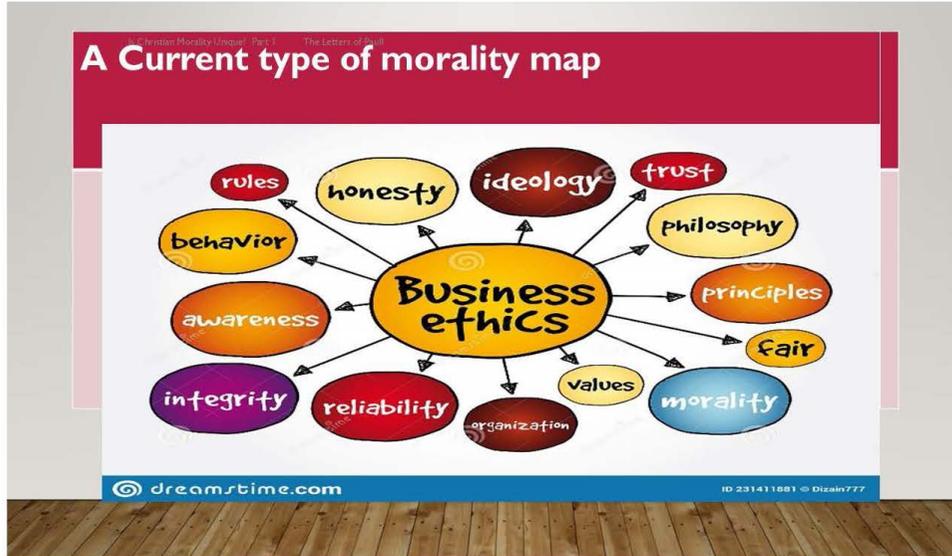
No. 121

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. 122

No. 121.



No. 123

No. 122

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

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

No. 124

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

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

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.

No. 126

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....

..and the gospel message was taken to the world



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A few comments about the world of the Roman Empire in first century CE. Because of the order imposed by the Empire, it was actually easier (and safer) to travel around the known world at that time than it was in the centuries beforehand and in centuries to follow.

As the century progressed the followers of Jesus faced a range of persecutions. However they could still communicate with each other and share their insights as their understanding of Jesus evolved.

One can assume that copies of Paul's letters, written in the 50's CE, were circulated around the followers of Jesus and reflected upon.

Then, Mark's gospel was written in about 70CE.

Matthew and Luke (writing around 85CE) both based their gospels on the gospel of Mark. Matthew's gospel was written for Jewish Christians and Luke's gospel was written for Gentile Christians. John's gospel was written around 100CE.

In the Acts.... Paul said how he had made an agreement with Peter that while Peter would preach to the Jews, Paul would preach to the Gentiles.

To what extent do you think it likely that over the first century CE, Church leaders discussed and decided about what would need to be written and for whom?

The First Gospel

The Gospel of Mark

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

Michelle Nailon CSB

Slide Set No 5 of 10

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 1st 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.

Gospel of Mark
70 CE

Ministry of Paul
50's CE

Death of Jesus
33CE

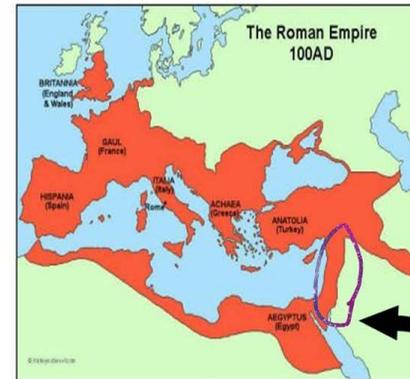
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark



No. 131

No. 130



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

▶ Palestine

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark



No. 132

Jerusalem 70 CE



▶ 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.



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.

No. 134

No. 136

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



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).

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The First Gospel - Mark

Also, the church held a council about 50 CE

(Acts 15).

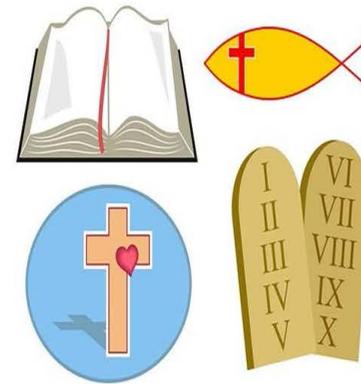


No. 139

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.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

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.

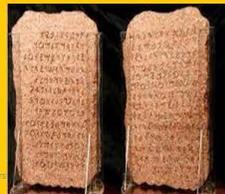
In 70 CE the Christian leadership would have been anxious to show that they were not the same as the Jews, who were now facing the wrath of Rome

Jewish candlestick



Is Christian

The Comandments



The Fir

Roman wreath



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

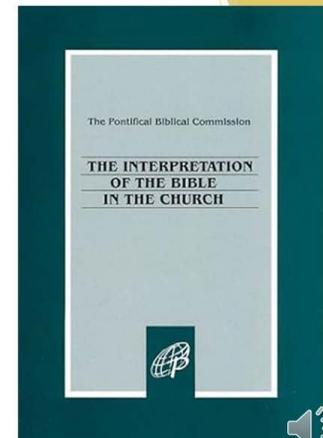
No. 142

- ▶ 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)

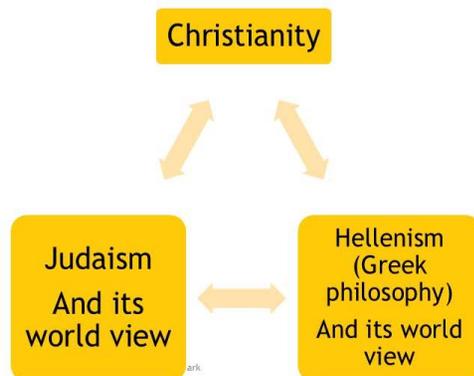
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1 The First Gospel - Mark



No. 144



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



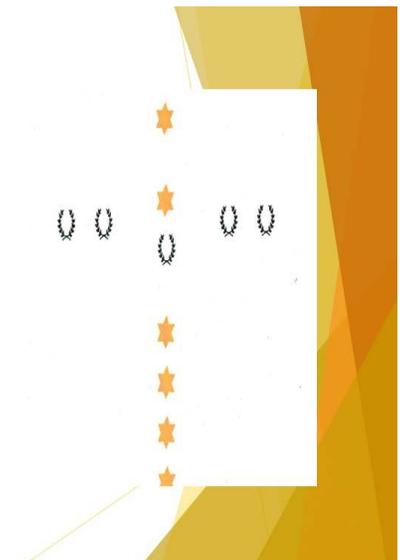
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1 The First Gospel - Mark

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. 146

“Thou shalt not kill”

Avoid blood (cf. cruelty)

“Thou shalt not commit adultery”

Avoid fornication (cf. uncommitted sex)

“Thou shalt not steal”

Avoid strangling (cf. unjust business practices)

Paul taught
Protect self-determination

Paul taught
Control sexuality

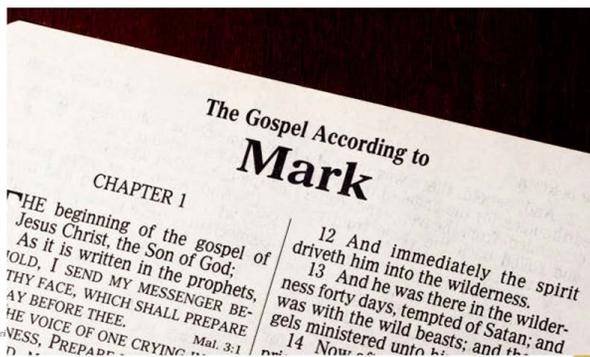
Paul taught
Donate to the needy

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

Mal. 3:1

No. 148

▶ 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

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.

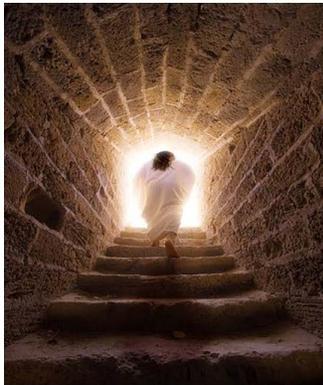


Jesus then said "Go sell what you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me" (Mk 10:21), . This compares with --

- ▶ 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")



The Other



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

How would you define a "follower of Jesus"

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

The Gospel of Matthew



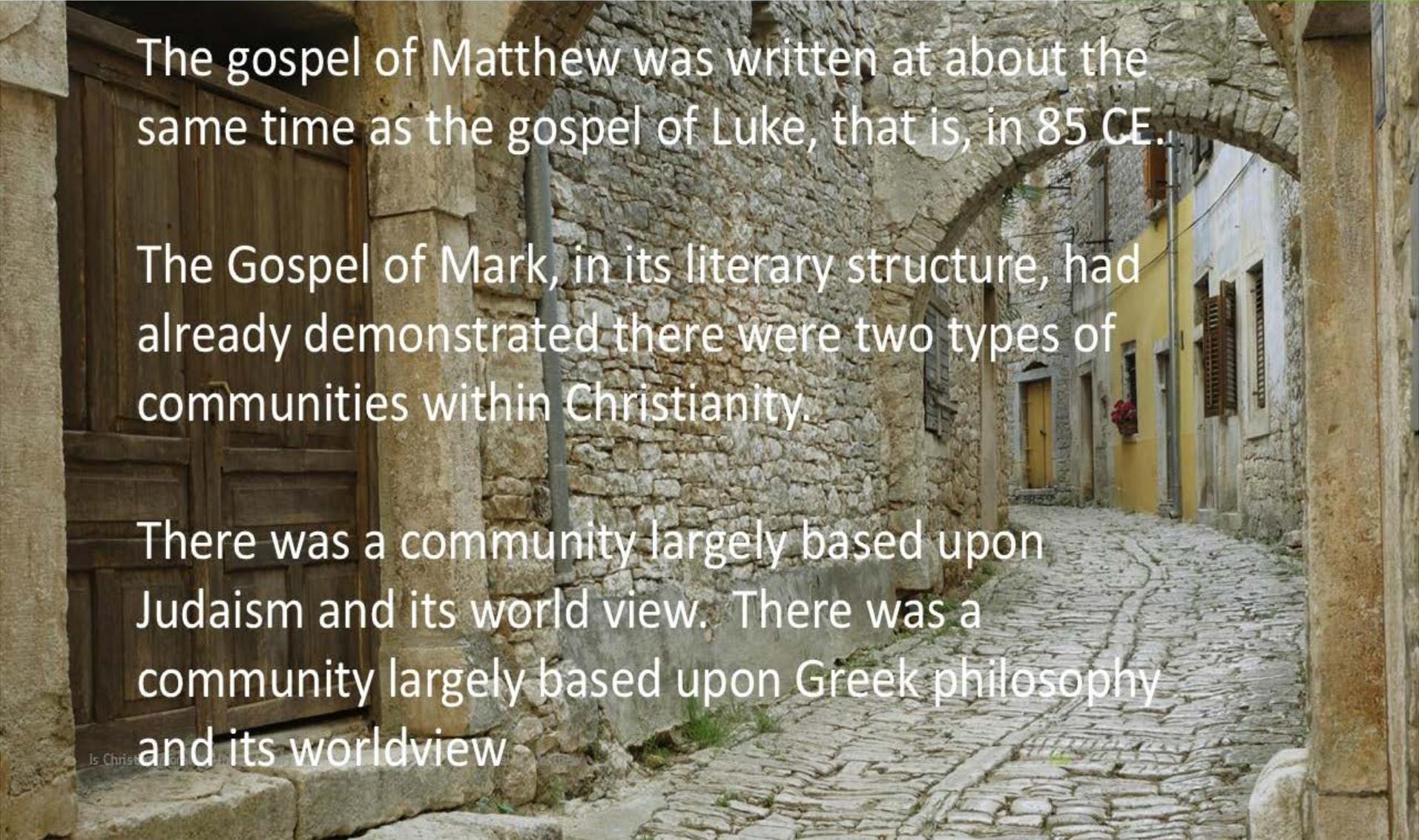
Slide set 6 of 10

Michelle Nailon CSB

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

153



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

If you were Matthew, the writer, what sort of things would you want to highlight in the writing of this gospel?

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 Matthew 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 Luke 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 Matthew 159

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. 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. 163



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

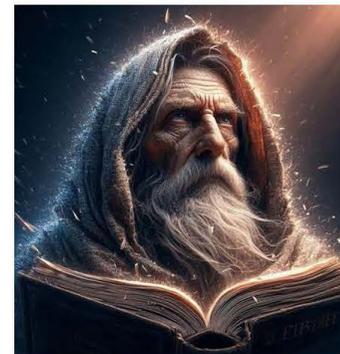
- ▶ "Where to from here?"
- ▶ Were they still God's chosen people?

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One
Matthew

Gospel of

163

No. 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.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One
Matthew

Gospel of

164

No. 165



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew

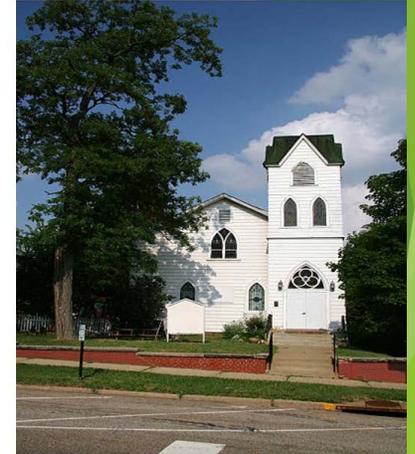
165

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

No. 166



Gospel of

166

No. 168

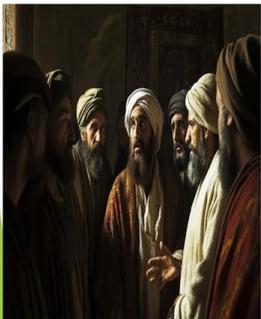
No. 167

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



200



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
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



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One
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. 171

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).

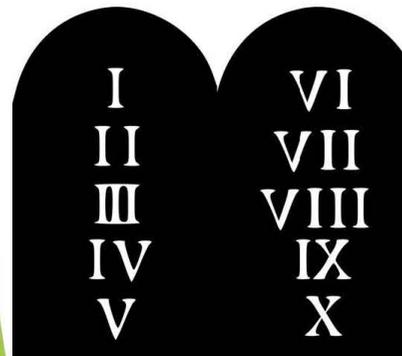


Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Gospel of Matthew



171



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One
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. 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 174

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. 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

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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



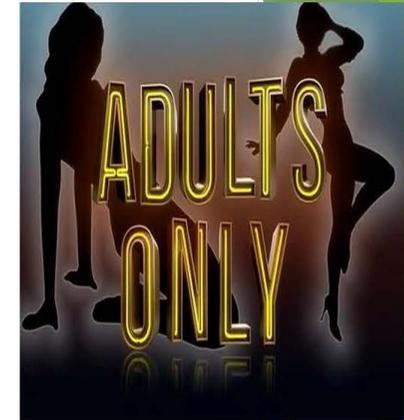
Gospel of

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

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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”.

No. 182

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

Internalise the Law

No. 184

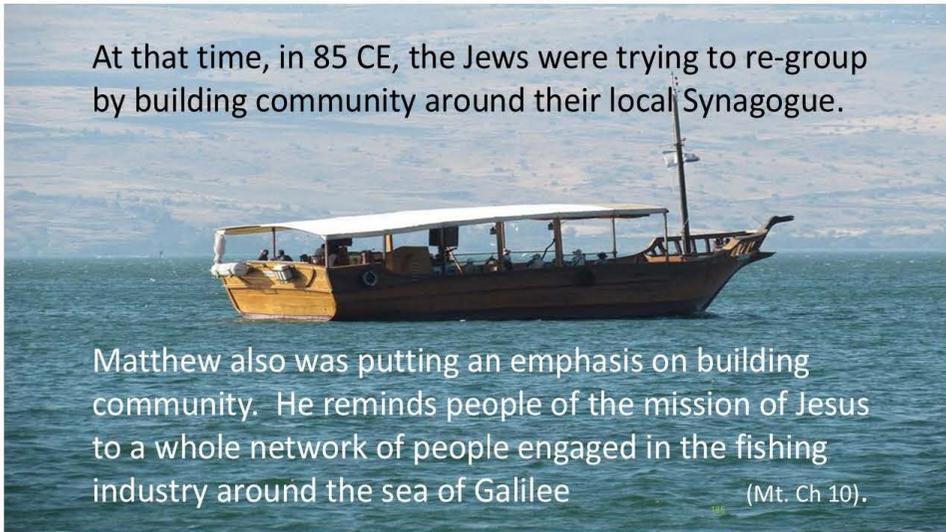
In Matthew’s gospel Jesus challenges his followers to aim for a better quality of

Relationship

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

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 Gospel of

No. 188

Would agree Matthew puts stress on community and the

Spirit of the Law

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One
Matthew Gospel of

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The Gospel of Luke

Michelle Nailon CSB

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

Slide set 7 of 10

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

No. 190

No. 191

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Michelle Nailon CSB

Part 1
Slide Set 7 of 10

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke

>

No. 192



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.

Luke was writing his gospel for Gentile (Non-Jewish) Christians.

Could you name about five things that he would need to take into account in addressing these people?
e.g. in terms of their knowledge of Jewish traditions?
their possible affluence
doubts about whether or not they could be entrusted with and pass on, the message of Jesus

Can you see any parallels with present times in the history of the church?

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

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 1

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 1

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. 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. 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.



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

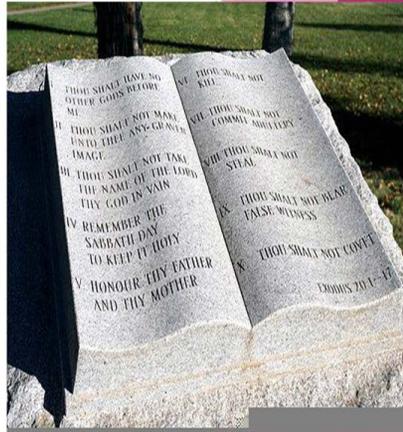


No. 201

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".



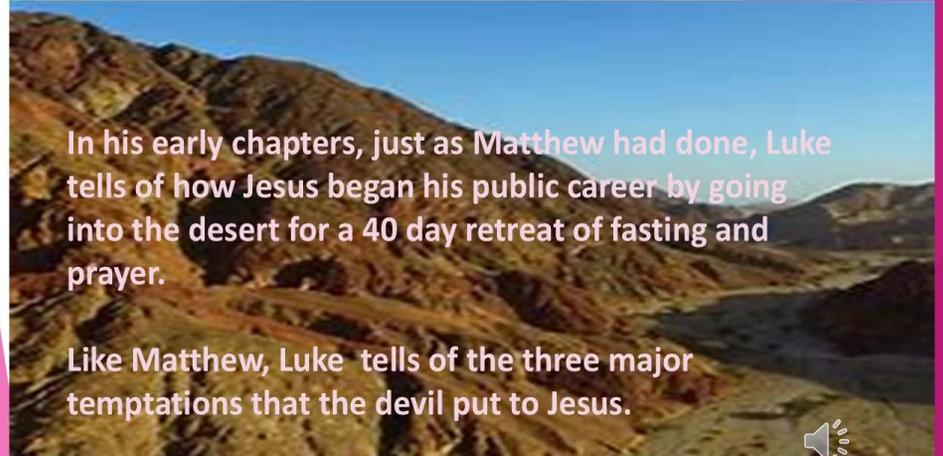
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

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

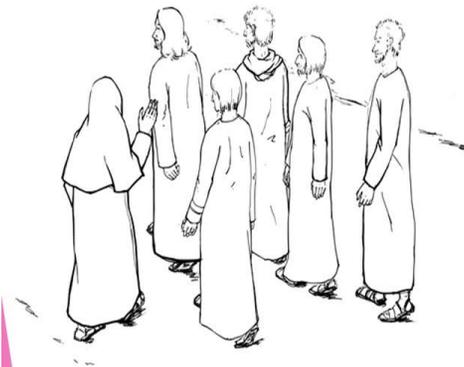
- ▶ money,
- ▶ power and
- ▶ relationship

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke



No. 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."

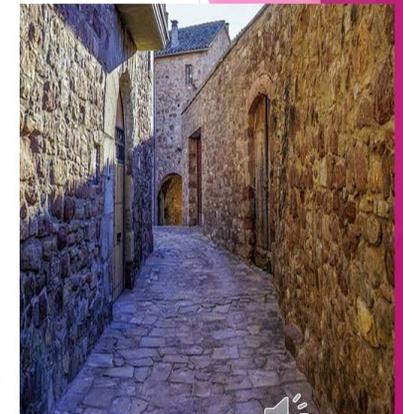
(Lk 9:61-2)

▶ 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

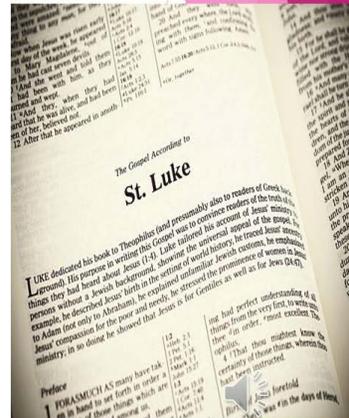
"raising the bar" of **"Thou shalt not commit adultery."**

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1

Gospel of Luke



- ▶ There is an interesting point to be noticed here. Usually the sequence of the three Commandments is “Thou shalt not kill, commit adultery or steal” in that order, or the reverse order.
- ▶
- ▶ The Commandment about power, that is, “Thou shalt not kill” therefore comes either first or third.
- ▶ But in Luke’s story of both the Temptations and in the above passages Luke puts a reference to power cf. “Thou shalt not kill”, second in the sequence.
- ▶ This reflects how **“power”** is a theme that runs through his gospel.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1
Gospel of Luke

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
“Thou shalt not steal”	Material comfort
“Thou shalt not kill”	Having a career
“Thou shalt not commit adultery”	Having a secure family

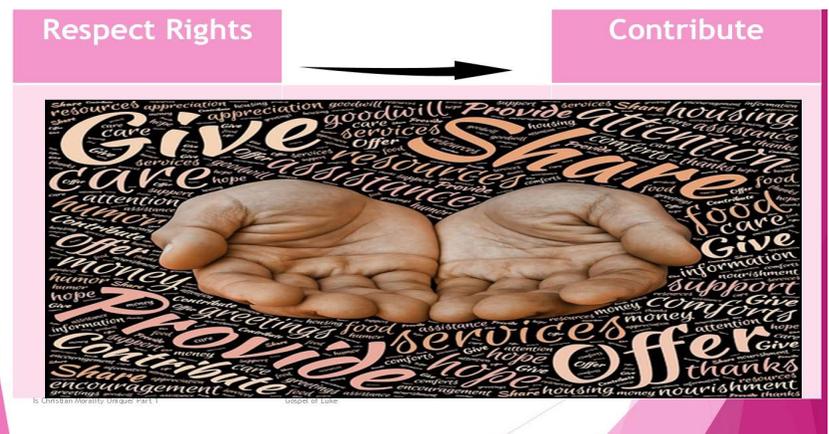
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1
Gospel of Luke

“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.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part 1
Gospel of Luke



Any Comments?

Story of the Crucifixion



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One
Story of the Crucifixion

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Michelle Nailon CSB

In previous pages there has been a discussion about parallels between the common phrase of "money, power and relationships" and the three Commandments of "Thou shalt not kill" (cf. power), "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (cf. relationships) and "Thou shalt not steal" (cf. money).

An attempt has been made to show how from the earliest time, for the "followers of Jesus," the 'bar was raised' with regard to these key social Commandments.

Recall the mandate of the early church council (late 40's CE) to refrain from "blood"(cf. thou shalt not kill), "fornication" (cf. thou shalt not commit adultery) and "strangling" (cf. thou shalt not steal).

Mark is an "introductory gospel" (70CE)
For Matthew whose Jewish Christian readers were now cut off from Judaism, it was important to build up a sense of mutual trust and community.
For Luke, there needed to be a belief that the power of God would enable his Gentile Christian readers to observe and pass on the message of Jesus.
Do you think it possible the three different emphases would be shown by each of these three gospels in the story of the crucifixion?

Consider the story.

In such case "blood" would include violence as such, "fornication" would include uncommitted sex, and "strangling" would include unjust business practices.

To what extent do you see these three Commandments being at the core of the Christian message?

In such case do you consider it likely that the three synoptic gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke could place particular stress on each one of these three?

We have already looked at the three synoptic (meaning similar) gospels

- ▶ 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

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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.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

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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

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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

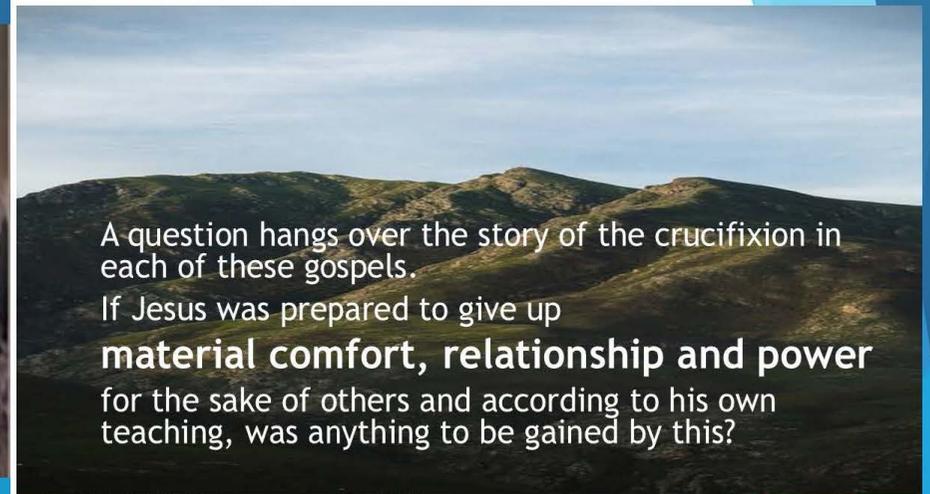
Story of the Crucifixion

Jeering about "the kingdom" in Mark's account

No. 221

No. 222

- ▶ 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*".



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

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

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No. 223

No. 224



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.

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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Story of the Crucifixion

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Jeering about "the kingdom" in Mark's account

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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

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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

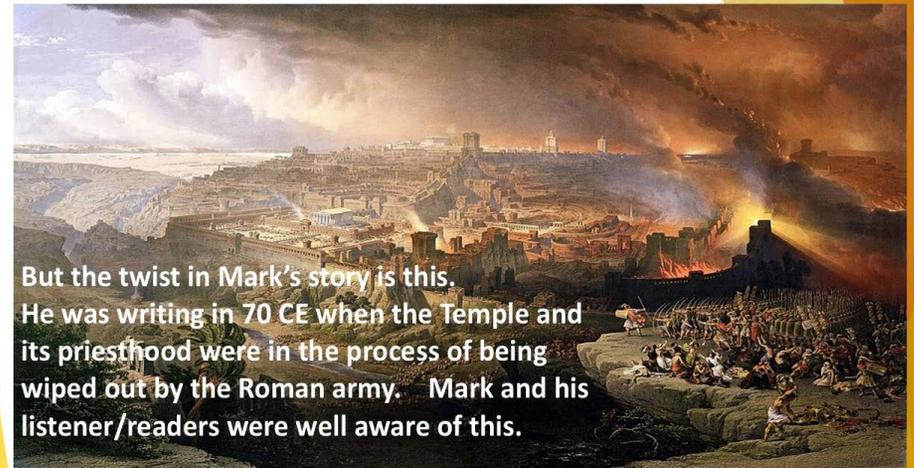
Story of the Crucifixion

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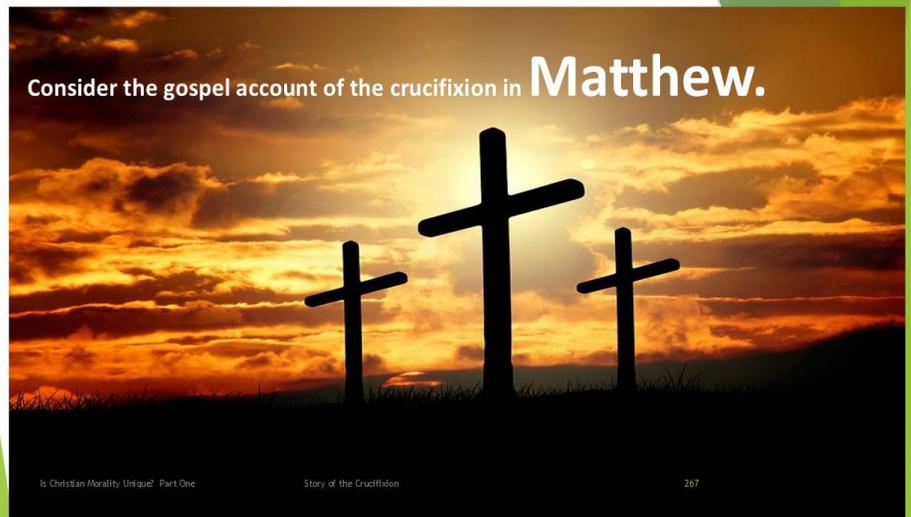
But the twist in Mark's story is this. He was writing in 70 CE when the Temple and its priesthood were in the process of being wiped out by the Roman army. Mark and his listener/readers were well aware of this.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Story of the Crucifixion

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No. 228



Consider the gospel account of the crucifixion in **Matthew.**

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

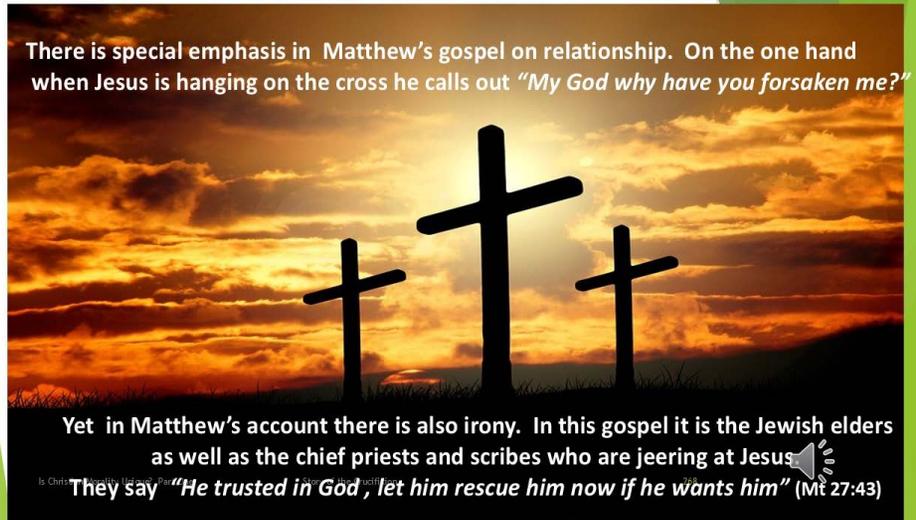
Story of the Crucifixion

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The elders jeering "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?"



Yet in Matthew's account there is also irony. In this gospel it is the Jewish elders as well as the chief priests and scribes who are jeering at Jesus. They say "He trusted in God, let him rescue him now if he wants him" (Mt 27:43)

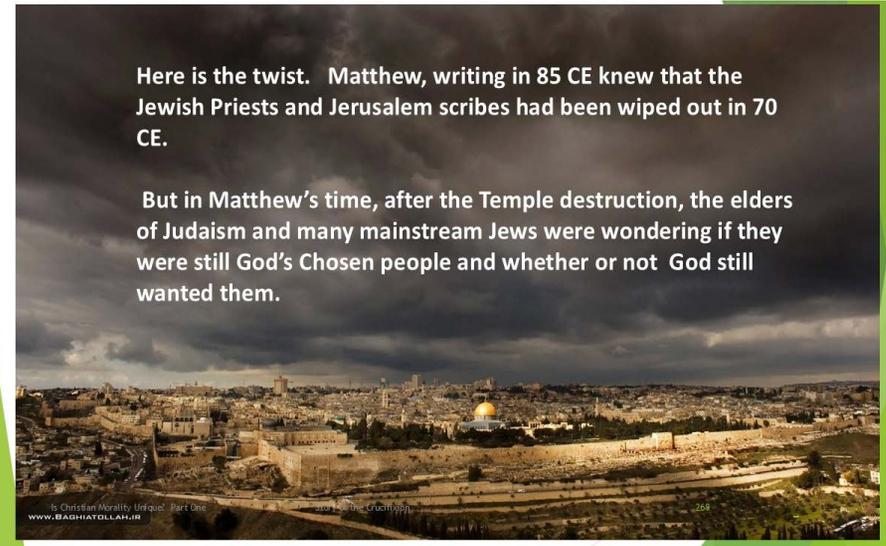
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Story of the Crucifixion 229

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.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Story of the Crucifixion 230

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 232

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)

- ▶ 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. 236

No. 235



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

(Lk 23:24)

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)

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 Any Comments?

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

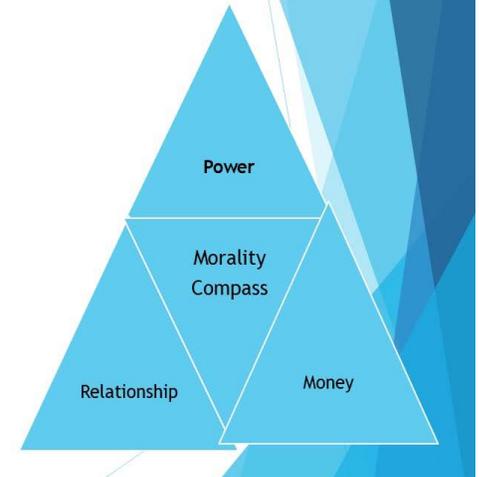
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This in itself shows how central these three morality values are to the message of the gospel stories about Jesus Christ.

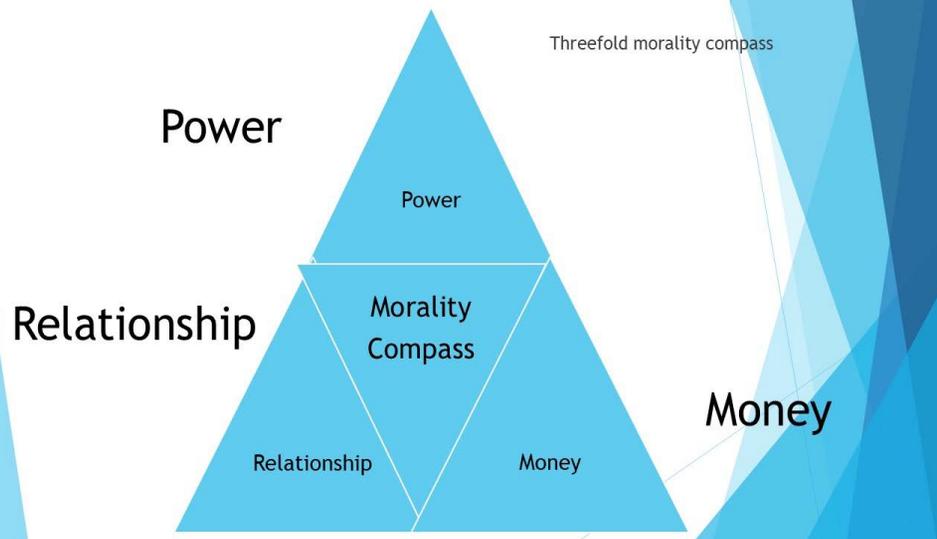
- ▶ Mark *"Thou shalt not steal"*
Money
- ▶ Matthew *"Thou shalt not commit adultery"*
Relationship
- ▶ Luke *"Thou shalt not kill"*
Power

No. 238

Threefold morality compass



No. 239

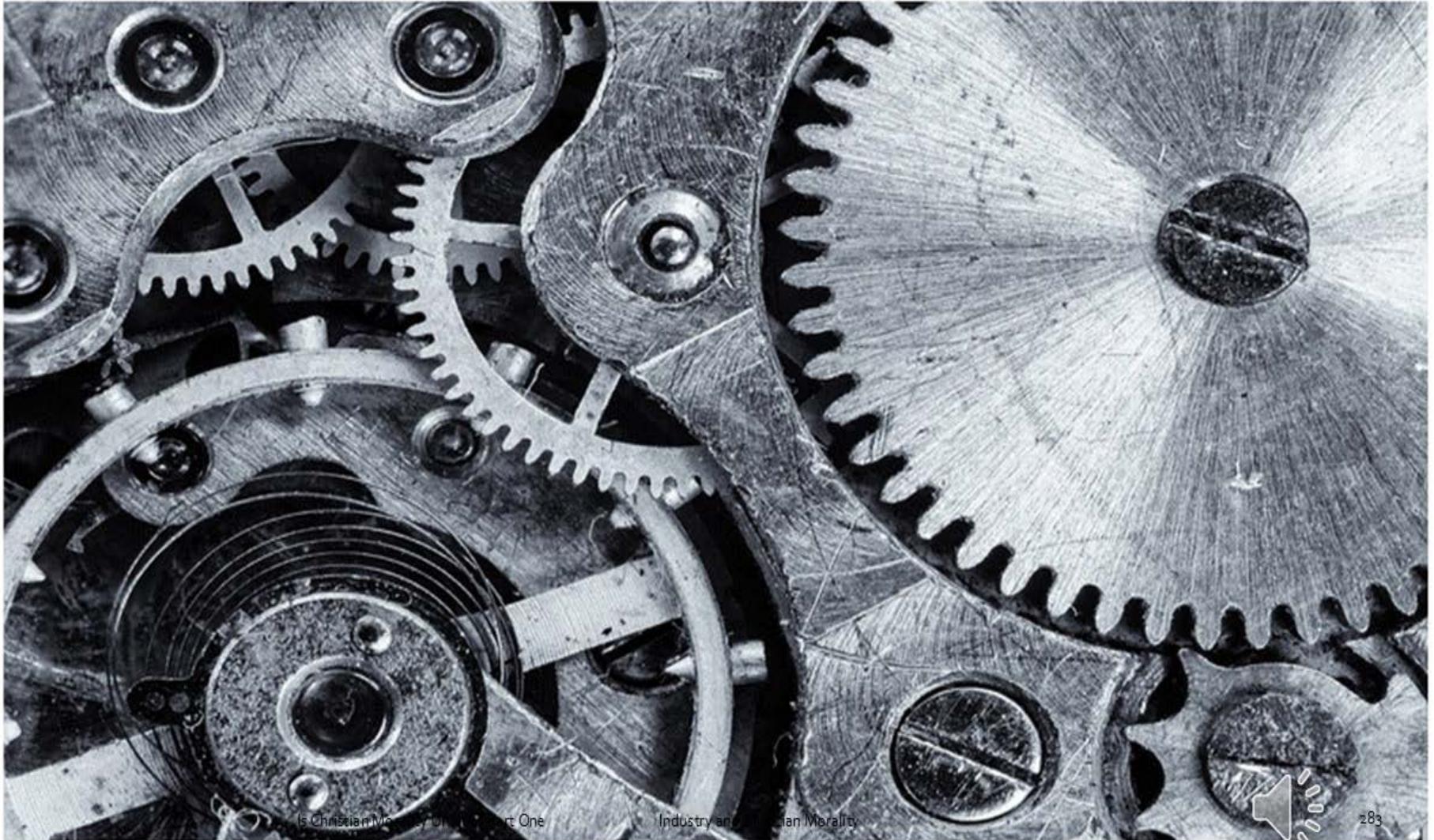


No. 240

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



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One
Industry and Christian Morality

Michelle Nailon CSB

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

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Industry and Christian Morality

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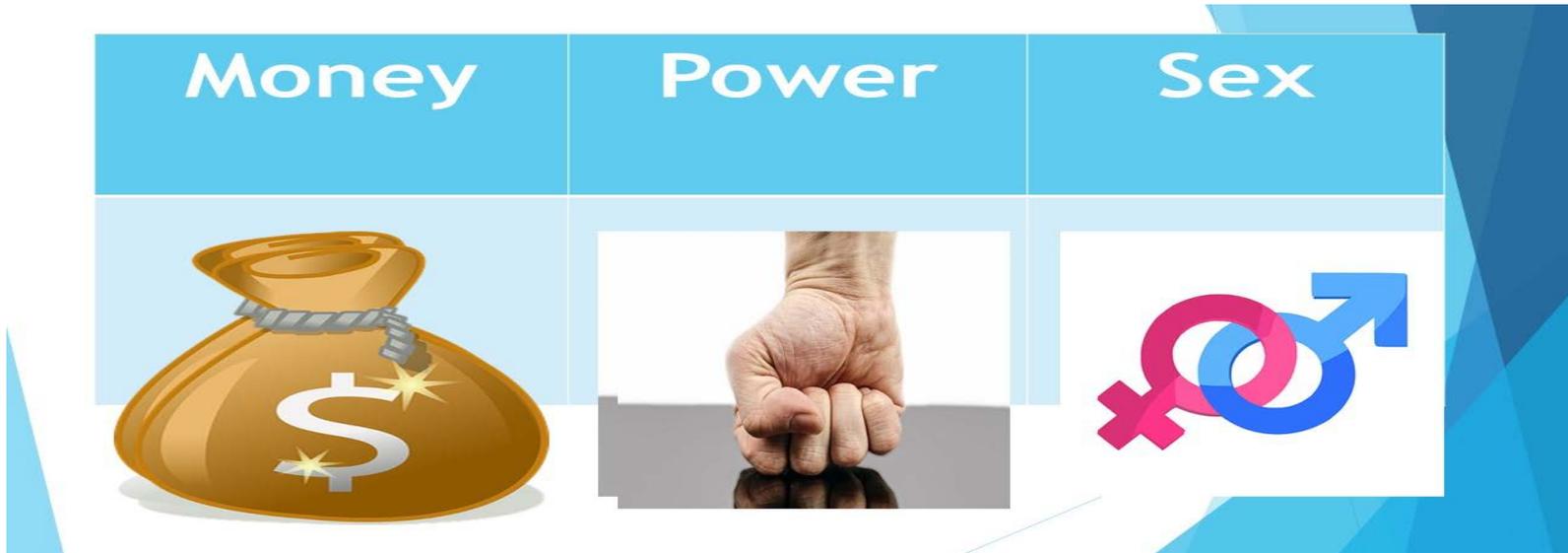
Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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

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No. 246

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?



Let us a re-cap of previous workshops and a sociological analysis of the gospels cf. www.realitysearch.com.au

The gospel of Mark gave an introductory outline of the Christian message showing it was structured on the basis of authority and law (cf Judaism) It was also structured on the sense of order (cf. the Greek philosophy of the Roman Empire)

Matthew gave an outline of the strengths and weaknesses of a society based upon Law. Luke gave an outline of the strengths and weaknesses of a society based upon order.

Rather than on the details of Jewish law an early Church council put focus on three key Commandments (Thou shalt not kill, commit adultery, or steal)

The Council and teaching to follow challenged the followers of Jesus to constantly "raise the bar" of these Commandments.

People were challenged to avoid "blood", that is, cruelty as such
They were challenged to avoid "fornication", that is, sexuality without commitment,
They were challenged to avoid "strangling", that is, unjust business practices.

A dynamic was set in place to constantly try to improve on the following through of the Commandments,that is:

Institutionalise compassion. Support social foundations. Improve on the production and distribution of material goods.

Would you expect this dynamic to play out within the social organism of society over the centuries?

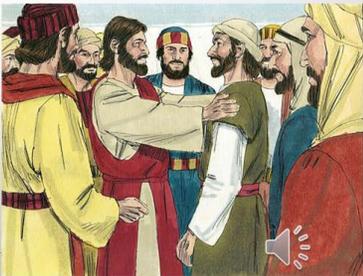
No. 247

No. 248

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 Mor

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

"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 289

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 290

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

291

No. 252

Consider an outline ANZSIC the Australian and New Zealand Industry Classification

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

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 292

"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)

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

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

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

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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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

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Behavioral Organism

(Ability to move and adjust)

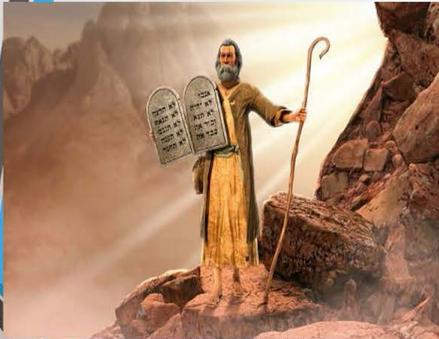
This deals with **adjustment** e.g. the economy

- 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,

"Raise the bar in a social organism"

No. 257

Where do these fit with the Commandments?



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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

259

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.

and

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

"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,

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,

N Administrative and Support Services.



No. 263

No. 262

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



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality



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No. 264

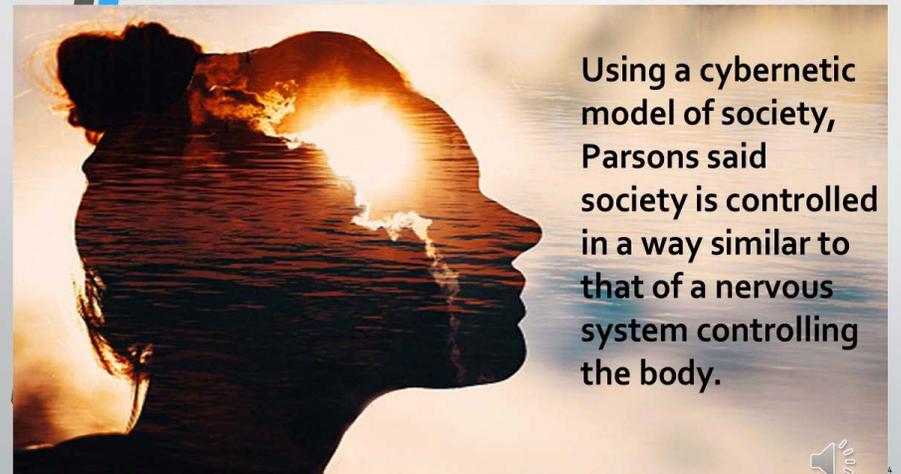
Consider Parsons' first "function", that is,
the need for values maintenance, a cultural system and
..... a **Sense of Direction**



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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.



4

"Raise the bar in a social organism"

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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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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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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



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

Giving Direction and Helping to "empower"

In Religion, the Arts, Health, Education



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

"Raise the bar in a social organism"

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Giving Direction and Helping to "empower"	In Religion, the Arts, Health, Education
Providing Social support	In Administration and Defence

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 309

No. 270

Giving Direction and Helping to "empower"	In Religion, the Arts, Health, Education
Providing Social support	In Administration and Defence
Providing for Material Needs	In Production of material goods In Distribution of material goods

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 310

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 be a right

- Empower
- Provide family security
- Provide material benefit



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality 311

No. 272

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 312

"Raise the bar in a social organism"

No. 273

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Why are the three Commandments usually found together?



Empower

Give Social Support

Give Material Support

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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Empower

Give Social Support

Give Material Support



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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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



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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Tripod



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Industry and Christian Morality

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Why the three together



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Tripod



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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

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



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

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- 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")



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

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



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

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)



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

Christian Moral Teaching would claim



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"

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

What about Other World Religions?



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Industry and Christian Morality

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

Comparison with Other World Religions

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

Slide set 10 of 10

Michelle³²⁶ Nailon CSB

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Slides 10 of 10

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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In previous workshops we looked at the essential needs for the individuals of a society. They need to be protected from violence.

They need a social support group. They need material goods such as food and shelter.

We considered how the Commandments of "Thou shalt not kill, commit adultery or steal" protected such rights.

We considered how from their earliest days, the followers of Jesus sought to turn these Commandments into positives.

How universal are these three morality issues?

Influenced by the idealism of Greek philosophy they sought to empower others through defense, health and education. They sought to reinforce social grouping. They sought to improve both the production of goods and housing and the distribution of these.

In doing this, over the centuries, they helped to advance societies where the dynamism of Christianity flourished

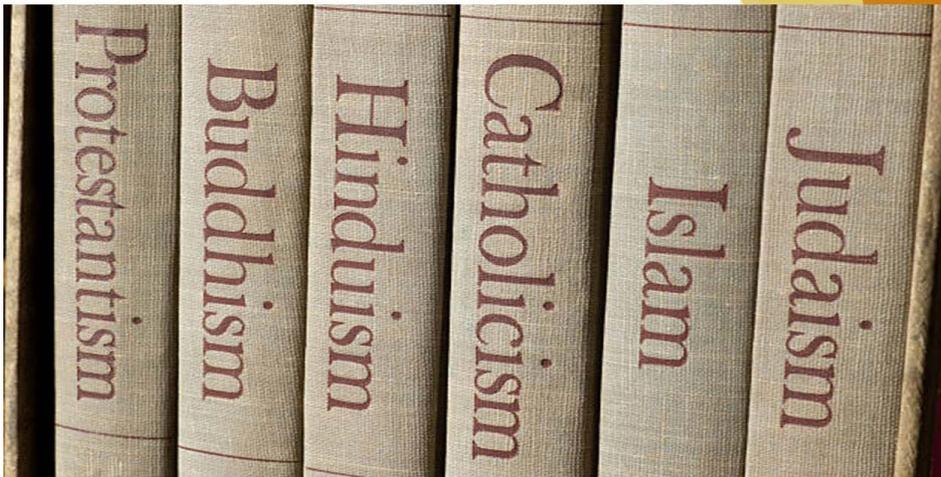
Even so, we need to consider whether these values have also existed in other types of societies.

Are these values found in other World Religions as well?



How universal are these three morality issues?

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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There are parallels here with other life species as well.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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No. 290

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.

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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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?



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Consider **Judaism**, the basis of both Christianity and Islam



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Judaism

No. 297

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.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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)

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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”*



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Comparison with Other World Religions

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Commandment Number Ten

10.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s goods”

(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”*



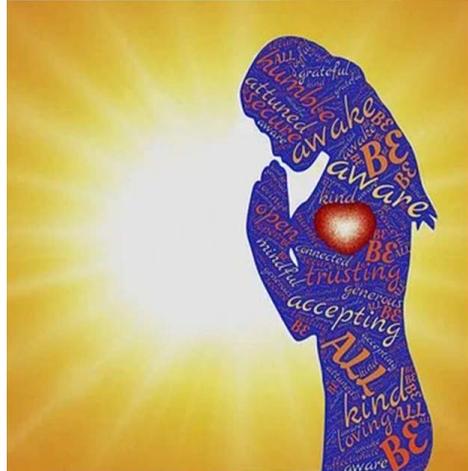
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Comparison with Other World Religions



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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”.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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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

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Islam is heavily based upon Judaism

No. 305

Consider another world religion such as
Islam.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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No. 306

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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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Comparison with Other World Religions

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Consider **Hinduism** and its Scriptures.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One



Comparison with Other World Religions

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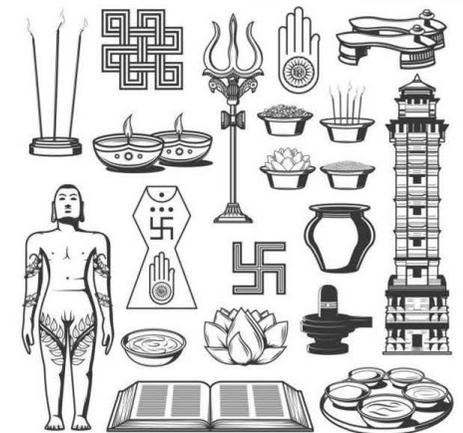
What about Hinduism?

No. 312

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")



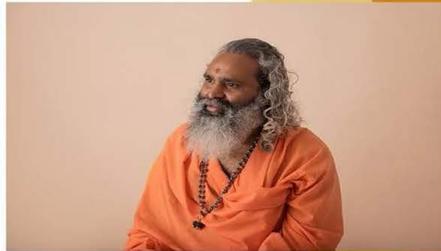
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Comparison with Other World Religions

No. 313

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

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No. 315



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

No. 314

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")



Comparison with Other World Religions

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Consider Taoism, a philosophic religion based in China

No. 317

Consider Chinese **Taoism** and its philosophy



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

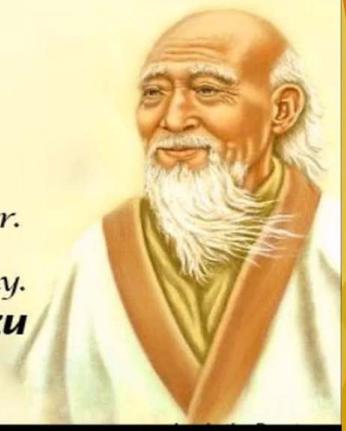
Comparison with Other World Religions



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*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



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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

Compassion	Respect for relationships cf. <i>“Thou shalt not commit adultery”</i>
Frugality	cf. <i>“Thou shalt not steal”</i>
Not daring to take a lead in the empire.” <i>Tao Te Ching Bk 2 LXVII</i>	control of one’s wish for power cf. <i>“Thou shalt not kill”</i>

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

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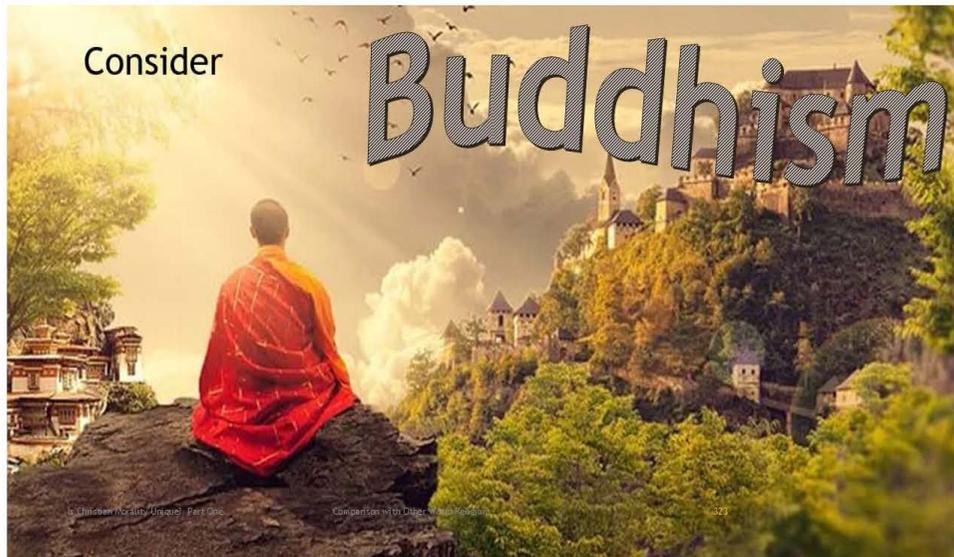
Comparison with Other World Religions

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No. 322

The Buddha founded an offshoot of Hinduism

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Consider

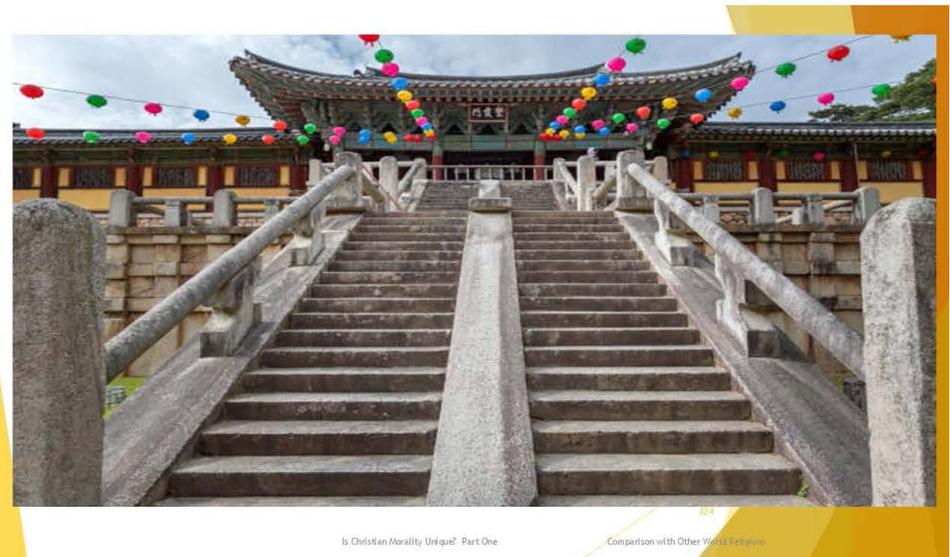
Buddhism

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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No. 325

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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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Comparison with Other World Religions

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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.



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Buddhist 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>

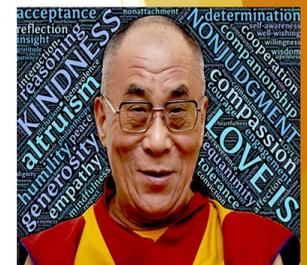
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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One Comparison with Other World Religions

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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

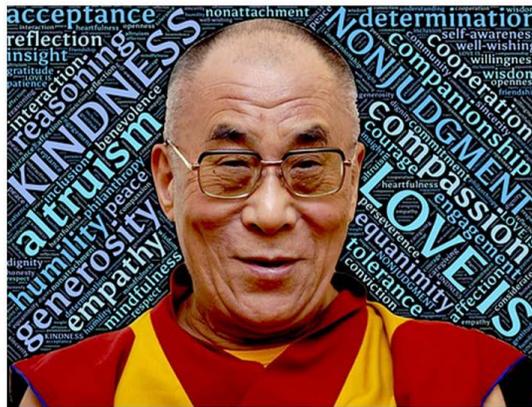
“Have compassion for all sentient beings!”



Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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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

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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

Comparison with Other World Religions

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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

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Comparison with Other World Religions

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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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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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

Comparison with Other World Religions

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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

Comparison with Other World Religions

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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

Is Christian Morality Unique? Part One

Comparison with Other World Religions

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No. 340

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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