

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

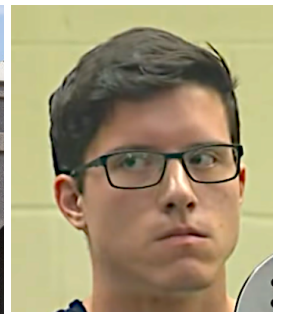
Galatians 6:10

Lesson #18

Church and state

05/05/2019

Applying the O.T. Law to both church and state



John Earnest

Theonomy - Reconstructionism - Kinism

The Law of Moses was specific in calling for the death penalty for:

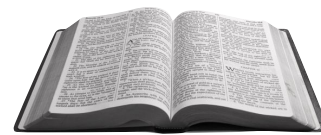
- A foreigner too close to the tabernacle
- Persists in disobeying parents
- Worship false gods
- False prophecy
- Blasphemy
- Sabbath breaking
- Premarital sex
- Homosexual acts

Why shouldn't we "obey" these laws?



2

How to read the Old Testament



Social ethics of the Old Covenant through Christian eyes



3

The purpose in this class is not:

- to give **definitive answers** to the challenging ethical questions that come from being broken people in a broken world.

The purpose in this class is:

- to equip Christians to be **Bereans** - "rightly dividing the Word of Truth".

This class is to teach us how to **swim not how to float or find a boat.**



4

1.

Conscience (natural law) plays a role in ethical decisions.

Romans 2

"14 ... these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that **they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness**, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,"

- All who bear the image of God have a built in antenna tuned to heaven.

5

“Human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. They also know that they do not behave that way.”

C.S. Lewis



6

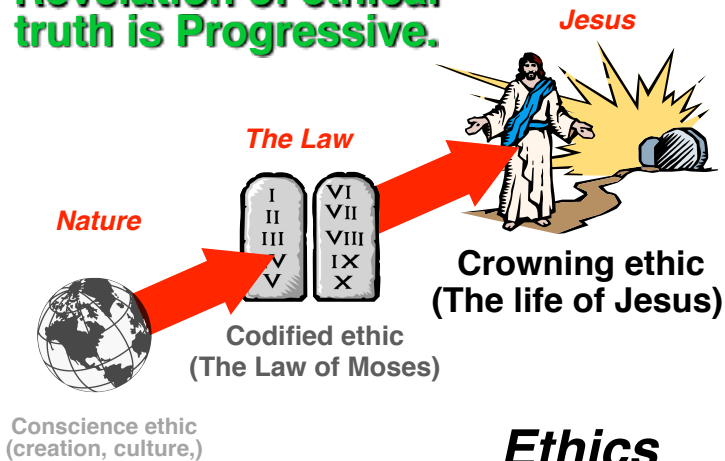
“When I do good, I feel good; when I do bad, I feel bad, and that is my religion.”

Abraham Lincoln



7

Revelation of ethical truth is Progressive.



Ethics

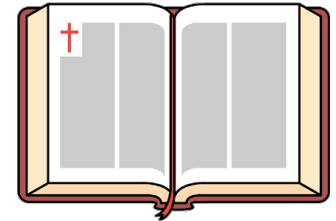
8

God reveals His will through both *natural* and *special* revelation.

Nature



Scripture



9

Implications:

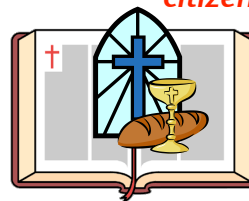
How should we argue a social ethic before a secular audience?



Capital punishment
Homosexuality
Gender roles
Free speech
Nationalism
Diversity
Marriage
Abortion

10

Christian alien ambassadors have multiple citizenships which often conflict.

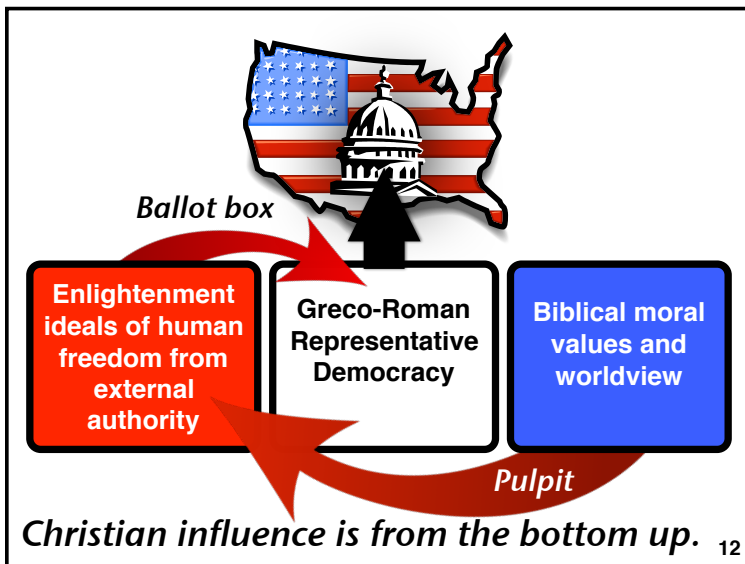


Citizens of the Kingdom of God

1 Peter 1:1
“To those who reside as aliens ... chosen of God”



11



2. Scripture plays the primary role in ethical decisions.

2 Timothy 3

"16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, **for training in righteousness**; 17 **that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.**"

Romans 12

"1 I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And **do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

13

The nature of God (like redemption) does not change but **its fullness is revealed progressively over time.**

- We should NOT read the Bible as an **encyclopedia** of "proof texts".
- We make a mistake when we read the O.T. as we do the N.T. Epistles - as though it all was written **TO** us or **ABOUT** us.
- Bereans must know what **grade level** of Biblical theology they are reading.

1 Corinthians 13:11

"When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; **when I became a man, I did away with childish things.**"

14

Implications:

The church must dance with the culture but not give up the lead.

1 Corinthians 5

"9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; **for then you would have to go out of the world.** 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one."

15

3. Change in covenants often play a key role in ethical decisions.

Mark 2:21

"**No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment**; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results."

Galatians 3:3

"Are you so foolish? **Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh (the Law Covenant) ?**"

16

Galatians 3

"23 But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. 24 Therefore **the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ**, that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

The Law of Moses was given, not to reform society but to drive us to the Gospel where we could be justified by faith.

17

Jesus exposition of the Law Covenant

- ➔ The Sermon on the Mount is full of warnings about failing to fulfill the spirit of the Law. “whoever shall say ‘you fool’ shall be **guilty enough to go into the hell of fire.**” (Matt.5:22-23).
- ➔ Matt.5:29-30 “And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for **it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.**” (also Matt. 18:8-9)
- ➔ Matt.6:14-15 “But **if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**”
- ➔ Matt.7:19 “Every tree that does not **bear good fruit** is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

is not to reform us but to break our heart and draw us to the Gospel of the Cross.

18

The Apostles saw Pentecost as **the beginning of the Gospel community (the Body of Christ - the church).**

Acts 11:15

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us **at the beginning.**”



Old Testament - Gospels

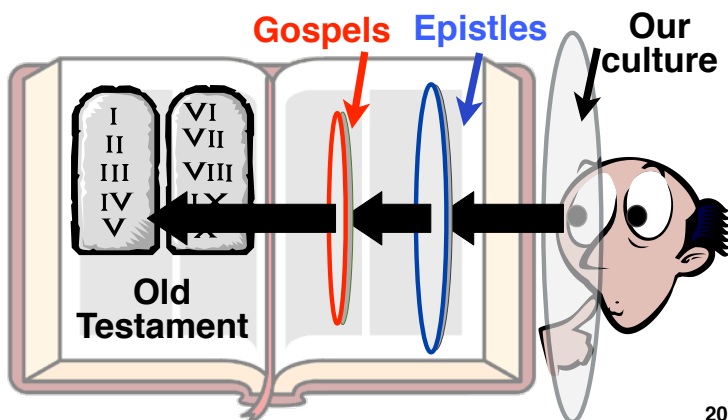
Paul's Gospel

Old Covenant

Acts - Epistles

19

We read the O.T. through the lens of the N.T.



20

Implications:

The single biggest key to navigating O.T. social ethics is to understand the domain of Old & New Covenants.

Galatians 3:23

“But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law,”

Bondage



Freedom

Old Testament - Gospels

Paul's Gospel

Old Covenant

Acts - Epistles

21

4.

Change in circumstances often play a role in ethical decisions.

Mark 10

“⁴ And they said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.” ⁵ But Jesus said to them, “**Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.**” ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, God “made them male and female. ⁷ For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh”; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

22

Jesus put compassion above Sabbath Laws.

Matthew 12

“⁵ Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple **break the Sabbath, and are innocent?** ⁶ But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ But if you had known what this means, ‘**I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,**’ you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

23

Deception (lying) is (arguably) condoned in some circumstances.

- Sporting events
- War
- Conflicting moral values can't be avoided.
 - ★ Corrie ten Boom hides Jews
 - ★ Heb.11:23 Baby Moses is hidden
 - ★ Rahab hid the Jewish spies

James 2:25

"in the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?" (Josh.2:4,6,15)

24

Implications:

Fixed moral principles must always be flexible in their application.

- Occasional local customs
- Degree of spiritual development
- Unavoidable moral conflicts

Galatians 5:18

"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

25

Note the implications.

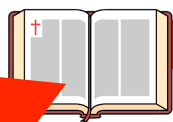
The challenge comes with knowing when and how to apply this perspective.

The Church today

The Bible



The World



Women are respected



Women are emancipated

Women were property

Gender roles?

26

5.

Change in venue can have a role in ethical decisions.

1 Corinthians 5

"9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; **for then you would have to go out of the world.** 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler – not even to eat with such a one."

27

Social ethics were most often focused on relationships within the faith community.

- When there was a famine in Jerusalem, it was the Jerusalem church that received the aid from other churches. *Acts 11:27-30, 1 Cor. 16:1-4, 2 Cor.8:1-9:15. Rom. 15:14-32*

Amos 3:1

"Hear this word which the Lord has **spoken against you, sons of Israel**, against the entire family which He brought up from the land of Egypt."

Amos 5:24

"But **let justice roll down** like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

28

love one another (John 13:35 - this command comes 16 times)
 be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)
 honour one another **above yourselves** (Romans 12:10)
 live in **harmony** with one another (Romans 12:16)
 build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
 be **likeminded** towards one another (Romans 15:5)
 accept one another (Romans 15:7)
 admonish one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16)
 care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)
 serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
 bear one another's **burdens** (Galatians 6:2)
 forgive one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)
 be **patient** with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)
 be **kind and compassionate** to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
 speak to one another **with psalms, etc.** (Ephesians 5:19)
 submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5)
 consider others **better than yourselves** (Philippians 2:3)
 look to the **interests** of one another (Philippians 2:4)
 bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)
 teach one another (Colossians 3:16)
 comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
 encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13)
 stir up one another to **love and good works** (Hebrews 10:24)
 show **hospitality** to one another (1 Peter 4:9)
 employ the **gifts** for the benefit of one another (1 Peter 4:10)
 clothe yourselves with **humility** towards one another (1 Peter 5:5)
 pray for one another (James 5:16)
 confess our faults to one another (James 5:16)

The vast majority of the Scriptures concerning social ethics has to do with relationships within the community of faith.

The two greatest commands, on which, according to Jesus, all the others depend, are concerned with relationships, with God and one another

(Matthew 22:36-40)

29

Matthew 25:40

“And the King will answer and say to them, “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of **these brothers of Mine**, even the least of them, you did it to Me.””

- “These brothers” refers to members of the community of faith.

Mark 3

“³³ Answering them, he said, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴ Looking about at those who were sitting around him, he said, “Behold my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ For **whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.**”

30

6.

Core principles can have a role in ethical decisions.

Romans 12

“¹ I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

31

Implications:

**The main thing
is to keep the main thing
the main thing**

Matthew 22

“³⁷ And He said to him, “You shall **love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.** ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.””

32

“It’s not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are.”

Roy Disney



33

Foundation of Biblical social ethics

**Building and preserving
Godly communities**

**Sanctity and dignity
of all who bear God’s Image**

34

**Building and preserving
Godly communities**

- Sanctity of marriage and family.
- Compassion and cooperation over consumption and competition.
- truth, transparency, trust, trustworthiness, thankfulness, tolerance, tenderness, tenacity.

35