

Study 6 – Ethics; Evil & Suffering; The Afterlife

I. Ethics—What is the Basis of Ethics and Morality?

A. God the Lawmaker and Lawgiver.

1. Read Romans 11:36 and Revelation 4:11. God is the ultimate authority in the universe and has the right to define what is right and wrong—to make laws universally binding upon all mankind. Why, according to these verses, is this so?

2. Read Daniel 4:35-37. What conclusion did the pagan King Nebuchadnezzar come to regarding God’s authority over men and nations, and their accountability to Him?

3. Read Matthew 5:48 and Psalm 19:7. How high is the moral standard to which God holds man accountable? What is the only written standard that qualifies as a guide to show man how He wants us to live?

4. Read Isaiah 33:22 and James 4:12. What three terms are used of God here? What do these verses imply about the ultimate basis of law, morality, and ethics?
1: _____, 2: _____, 3: _____,

5. Read Genesis 18:25. Why is it good for man to know that God is the ultimate source of law and ethics?

B. The law reflects God’s nature and displays His holiness. One intent of the law is to bring man under conviction of sin as he views himself in the light of God’s righteous demands.

1. Read Romans 7:12. Which of God’s attributes, according to this verse, are reflected in God’s law?

2. Read Romans 3:20. What does the apostle Paul say the law gives us?

3. Read Galatians 3:24. What does the law as “schoolmaster” or “guardian” do?

C. Man is unable to earn his salvation by keeping the law perfectly because of his sinful nature.

1. Read James 2:10. Of what does James warn us?

2. Read Romans 3:20. What cannot be gained by obedience to the law?

- 3. Read Romans 3:24. What is the only means of being justified (declared righteous and therefore acceptable to a holy God)?
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D. The moral law (that aspect of God’s law, summarized in the Ten Commandments, that is God’s standard for man’s holiness and right living in His world) is, however, to be obeyed by all men. For believers, obeying this law is an evidence and fruit of salvation, not the means of it.

- 1. Read Romans 3:31. What effect does Paul say that faith-righteousness has upon our relationship to the law?
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- 2. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. According to these verses, what does and what does not save us? As a result of Christ’s workmanship, what has He created for us to do?
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- 3. Read John 14:15 and 1 John 2:3. What is one way you can tell if you love Jesus Christ and are a true believer?
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E. The Moral Law, summarized by the Ten Commandments, is God’s standard for our conduct and for ethics in general.

- 1. READ Exodus 20:1-17 and the explanation of these commandments as given by the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (a question and answer summary of Bible teaching widely used in early American schools and churches. The whole catechism was published as part of *The New England Primer*. **Download the document entitled *The Westminster Shorter Catechism on the Ten Commandments* from my website: <http://dvburke.weebly.com/>).**

- 2. For each of the commandments, write a one of two sentence summary of each commandment in your own words:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

(7) _____

(8) _____

(9) _____

(10) _____

3. Matthew 22:34-40. How does Jesus summarize the whole moral law?
1: _____ and 2: _____.

II. Evil & Suffering —What is the Cause of Evil and Suffering?

A. God Decree and the Existence of Evil.

1. Read Psalm 33:11, Isaiah 14:24 and Ephesians 1:11. According to these verses, why, ultimately, do all things happen as they do?

2. Read Psalm 5:4, James 1:13-14, 1 John 1:5 and Habakkuk 1:13. While we must admit face up to the fact that evil would not exist if God had not decreed it, why according to these verses do we say that God is not the author of sin?

3. Read Daniel 4:35 and Romans 9:22-23; 11:36. According to these verses, could God stop all evil from happening if He decided to? Ultimately speaking, why doesn't He?

B. God's Creation and the Entrance of Sin and Suffering.

1. Read Genesis 1:31-2:3. As created by God, was sin or suffering part of the original world? Why not?

2. Read Deuteronomy 32:3-4, Job 34:10 and Psalm 92:15. Could sin come into the world by God's direct action? Why or why not?

3. Read Genesis 3:1-5, John 8:44 and 1 John 3:8. According to these verses, what is one reason for the source of evil in the world?

 4. Read Genesis 3:6-7 and Romans 5:12. According to these verses, what is another reason for the source of evil and suffering in the world?

 5. Read 1 John 2:15-17 . According to these verses, what is a third reason for the source of evil and suffering in the world?

 6. Read James 1:13-15. Who, according to James, are we NOT to blame for our sin? Why not?

- C. A Christian's View of Suffering.
1. Read Genesis 45:5-9; 50:20 and Romans 8:28. While evil and suffering are not in themselves good, what do these verses tell us about God's sovereign, gracious work for His people through evil and suffering?

 2. Read Acts 3:13-26. What is the supreme example that God ultimately overrules human sin for his glory and the ultimate good of mankind? Explain.

 3. Read Acts 14:22 and Philippians 1:29. Are suffering and trials unusual experiences for Christians? Explain.

 4. Read Matthew 5:10-12 and Hebrews 12:5-8. According to these verses, how are we to regard trials and suffering, including persecutions?

 5. Read Romans 5:3-5, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 and James 1:2-4. List some of the things God accomplishes for the believer through suffering.

III. The Afterlife—What Happens to Man at Death?

- A. The Intermediate State (Man's condition between his death and the Second Coming of Christ).
1. The bodies of all men return to dust and undergo corruption at death.
 - a) Read Genesis 3:19. What did God tell Adam would happen at his death?

 - b) Read Acts 13:36, 37. How are the deaths of David and Christ contrasted?

 2. The souls of all men maintain consciousness and existence after death. The souls of believers enter immediately into a state of blessedness—heaven.

- a) Read Job 19:26, 27. What did Job believe he would experience after his death?

- b) Read Luke 23:43. What promise did Jesus make to the repentant thief?

- c) Read 2 Corinthians 5:8. Where did the apostle Paul believe his soul would be at death?

3. The souls of the wicked (unbelievers) enter immediately into a state of torment—hell—at death.
- a) Read Luke 16:19-31. Understanding that this is a parable, what does this passage teach about the state of the unbeliever after death?

- b) Read 2 Peter 2:9. What does Peter tell us about the unrighteous between their death and the final judgment?

- B. The Final State (Man's condition after the final judgment and Second Coming of Christ).**
1. There will be one final judgment of both the saved and the lost, the dead and the living.
- a) Read 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. What happens to believers who have already died at Christ's return? _____ What happens to living believers? _____
- b) Read 2 Corinthians 5:10. What does Paul say will happen to all at Christ's return?

- c) Read Matthew 25:31-46. Describe the final judgment as pictured by Jesus.

2. The bodies of all the dead (saved and lost) will be raised up at Christ's return.
- a) Read Daniel 12:2. What does this verse say will happen to the dead?

- b) Read John 5:28, 29. What are the two types of resurrection mentioned here? Are these presented as separate events?

- c) Read Acts 24:15. Who will be involved in the final resurrection?

3. Believers, both those who have already died, and those who are alive at Jesus' final coming, will receive resurrection bodies and live with Christ eternally in His kingdom. Heaven is a real place and not merely a condition.
- a) Read 1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 35, 42, 44. What do these verses tell us about

the body at the resurrection? _____

b) Read Philippians 3:21. What will Christ do for the bodies of believers? Whose body will theirs be like?

c) Read Revelation 21:1-4, 10-27 and 22:1-5. From these verses, what will heaven be like?

4. Unbelievers will be “resurrected unto judgment” (John 5:29) and will be eternally separated from Christ and eternally punished in hell.

a) Read Matthew 13:41-42. How is hell described here?

b) Read Matthew 8:11-12. What does Jesus say here about the future punishment of unbelievers (NOTE: In context, the “sons of the kingdom” is a reference to Jewish unbelievers)?

c) Read Matthew 25:46. What adjective is used to describe the punishment of the wicked? _____

5. Both the righteous and the lost will receive degrees of reward or punishment respectively.

a) Read Luke 19:11-26. In this parable, what does Jesus teach about faithful stewards?

b) Read Luke 12:41-48. In verses 47 & 48, what does Jesus say will be the punishment of the willfully disobedient?