

# Salt and Light for the King

## 7: Ethical Conflicts?

May 3, 2020

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### Ethical Conflicts?

#### - Perspectives on conflict:

1. Nonconflicting Absolutism
2. Conflicting Absolutism
3. Graded Absolutism (hierarchicalism)
4. Moral relativism

	Nonconflicting Absolutism	Conflicting Absolutism	Graded Absolutism	Moral Relativism
<b>Genuine conflict between absolute command A &amp; B?</b>				
<b>Obey command A</b>				
<b>Disobey command B</b>				

## - The life of Jesus

- Temptation (Heb 4:15)

Heb 4:15 “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

- Jesus is without sin (Jn 8:29, 46; 15:10; 1 Pet 2:22)

John 8:29, 46 “And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him....But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.”

John 15:10 “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”

1 Peter 2:22-23 “He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.”

## - Biblical examples of *supposed* conflict between moral absolutes:

- Obedience to authorities?

- Government (Rom 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13; Daniel 3, 6; Exodus 1:15-22)

Rom 13:1-7 “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.”

1 Peter 2:13-17 “Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”

- Parents (Luke 2:41-52)

- Sabbath

Mark 2:23-28 “One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?” And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?” And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.””

- Lying

Joshua 2:1-7 “And Joshua the son of Nun sent two men secretly from Shittim as spies, saying, “Go, view the land, especially Jericho.” And they went and came into the house of a prostitute whose name was Rahab and lodged there. And it was told to the king of Jericho, “Behold, men of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land.” Then the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, “Bring out the men who have come to you, who entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.” But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. And she said, “True, the men came to me, but I did not know where they were from. And when the gate was about to be closed at dark, the men went out. I do not know where the men went. Pursue them quickly, for you will overtake them.” But she had brought them up to the roof and hid them with the stalks of flax that she had laid in order on the roof. So the men pursued after them on the way to the Jordan as far as the fords. And the gate was shut as soon as the pursuers had gone out.”

- Murder

- Samson (Judges 16:28-30)

Judges 16:28-30 “Then Samson called to the Lord and said, “O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this once, O God, that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes.” And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. And Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines.” Then he bowed with all his strength, and the house fell upon the lords and upon all the people who were in it. So the dead whom he killed at his death were more than those whom he had killed during his life.”

- Abraham and Isaac (Gen 22)

- **Does God want us to prioritize his commands or obey all of them?**

- *Prima facie* duties: prioritize greater/higher over lesser/lower

Matt 23:23-24 ““Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!”

Matt 5:18-19 “For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

- Scripture asserts and expects that we obey ***all*** of God’s commands (Ps 1:2; 19:7-11; 103:17-18; 119:1-3, 6, 13, 35, 86, 128, 172; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Deut 5:10, 29; Lk 1:6; Mt 28:20; 1 Jn 5:2; James 2:10)

Psalm 1:2 “but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.”

Psalm 19:7-11 “7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; 8 the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”

Psalm 119:1-3 “Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!”

Psalm 119:6 “Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.”

Psalm 119:13 “With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.”

Psalm 119:35 “Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.”

Psalm 119:86 “All your commandments are sure; they persecute me with falsehood; help me!”

Psalm 119:128 “Therefore I consider all your precepts to be right; I hate every false way.”

Psalm 119:172 “My tongue will sing of your word, for all your commandments are right.”

2 Tim 3:16-17 “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

Deut 5:10, 29 “but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. ... Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!”

Psalm 103:17-18 “But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.”

Luke 1:6 “And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.”

Matt 28:20 “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. ...”

1 John 5:2 “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments.”

James 2:10 “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.”

- Scripture exhorts us ***to flee*** from temptation and sin

1 Cor 6:18 “Flee from sexual immorality. ...”

1 Cor 10:14 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”

1 Tim 6:11 “But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.”

2 Tim 2:22 “So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

- God’s moral character and revealed standards in the Bible:

- No conflict or contradiction within God himself
- Nor does his Word contradict itself

***Christians will not face situations of impossible moral conflict***

*Next time: How does a Christian make ethical sense of the Old Testament - esp. the Mosaic Law?*