

Session #5 Call of Abraham, Exodus & Mt. Sinai vs. Secular Theories of Religion, Ethics & Law

1. Review & Introduction

2. The Call of Abraham, the Exodus, and Mt. Sinai

God's historic words & works ("show-and-tell") so we need to mentally skim through these great events with their ideological information.

a. Call of Abraham ca 2000 BC

Genesis 12:1–3 God defines Abraham's identity; God begins revelational exclusivism & a counter-culture

15:4b–6 God initiates—elects—the plan for all humanity through the end of history. And since it is God's work, all Abraham can do is believe.

15:7–18 Faith must have truth as its object so here we see the dawn of a "contract" that is verifiable in history for providing us adequate foundation for our faith

b. Exodus ~1400 BC

Exodus 3:2–15 The un-burning bush pictures the holy God's total independence of needing any support outside of Himself, so thus He is the I AM (Yahweh); The Exodus is a testimony to God's 600 years of faithful documented performance to Abrahamic covenant; Egypt was a "divine" state with Pharaoh as the mediator between heaven and earth.

11:9 Each plague was an attack on a god/goddess of the Egyptian pantheon

12:40–41 The super-power of Egypt was unable to cope with I AM

14:1–31

c. Mt. Sinai

Deuteronomy 5:1–3 This contract is "conditional" compared to the Abrahamic "unconditional" contract

5:4–5 Note this amazing public revelation is NEVER mentioned in secular education in spite of the fact that it is the cornerstone of Western Law! A major clash between paganized Noahic civilization with man-defined ethics and law and Israel's God-revealed ethics and law.

5:6–21 The ethical pattern of the 10 commandments shows a distinct design of social structure. Underlying a society's ethical life lies the prevalent heart attitude toward God which cannot be changed by force of civil government. The next expression of the heart attitude is the essential characteristic that separates man from animal—the use of language—with integrity to say honestly what one thinks or feels, or to misrepresent & fabricate, whether in speech, in writing, in accounting, or in judicial testimony.

Depending upon the use of language, business involving labor, contracts, private property comes next. Families come next for their proper functioning depends upon integrity of language and acquisition of enough wealth to survive and prosper. Then, with all these elements in place, there is the generation, training, and protection of life for the coming generations. Each layer depends upon those under it.

BIBLEFRAMEWORK

Chiastic Structure (X)

5:6-10 God alone is worthy of worship and service
 5:11 Accuracy in language about God
 5:12-15 Management of labor and property
 5:16 Society depends upon functional marriage & family
 5:17 Life is to be respected & preserved
 5:18 Marriage is to be protected
 5:19 Property is to be protected
 5:20 Accuracy in language of judicial proceedings
 5:21 Self is not worthy of worship and service

BIBLEFRAMEWORK

God's Design of Society

LIFE (<i>protected</i>)	LIFE (<i>jeopardized</i>)
MARRIAGE & FAMILY (strong & functioning)	MARRIAGE & FAMILY (weak & dysfunctional)
LABOR & PROPERTY (respected & productive)	LABOR & PROPERTY (demeaned & wasted)
INTEGRITY of COMMUNICATION (consistently states truth)	INTEGRITY of COMMUNICATION (deceitfully professes truth for agendas)
HEART ALLEGIANCE (to God)	HEART ALLEGIANCE (to self)

3. Secular Theories of Religion

a. Either a religion is revealed or it is created by man. Only the Bible presents a religion

BIBLEFRAMEWORK

The Exclusivity "Argument"

1. All knowledge is derived from empirically-sensed reality
2. Religious ideas concern extra-sensory reality (God's existence).
3. Therefore all religious ideas are mere private speculations
4. Therefore no religious idea can claim to be true knowledge.
5. Therefore no religious idea can claim superiority over all other religious ideas

revealed in history and those religions claiming to derive from the Bible (e.g., Mormonism and Islam). Judeo-Christianity goes beyond the subjective because it has written contracts with follow-up records of adherence or non-adherence to them. It has 2000 years of historical record keeping by 66 authors in 3 languages, in different locations, under varied situational conditions. Its large set of surviving manuscript evidence is very close to its major

events. And surviving manuscripts show a very conservative transmission of manuscripts without redactions and rewrites (unlike the Book of Mormon and the Koran).

b. All secular theories of religion deny that God and man can exchange information between minds via language.

4. Secular Theories of Ethics

Same problem as the secular theories of religion—there is no source external to finite, fallen man for ethical standards. God's righteousness and His capability to communicate the implications of that attribute has been suppressed. Question for skeptics: why should I comply with your ethical judgments?

5. Secular Theories of Law

Problem: What is the ethical justification for law?

a. The Nuremberg Dilemma 1946—what law did the Nazi leaders break? Was such a law just?

- b. Without revelation there are three trends to try to ethically critique laws:
 - (1) Natural Right Theory: [Augustine] somehow man having evolved from animals, has a unique value which standard must be protected by law (why?)
 - (2) Social Good Theory: [J S Mill] somehow social good as the goal of just laws can be calculated clearly enough to be the standard for law (“do no harm” but how to calculate?)
 - (3) Positive Law Theory: (recent) the law is the standard—nothing “above” it (problem with 3rd Reich-type situation)
 - c. The general ethical principles of the Mosaic Law address all three of these problems
6. Conclusion
- a. The new “counter-culture” called into existence by God provides the foundation for religion, ethics, and law. And has done so in Western civilization!
 - b. But it is challenged by the pagan culture that suppresses God’s attributes. So how do we worship our Lord if our minds are filled with these products of rebellious suppression of Him? How can our lives glorify Him if we live within this mold of our present age?