

2. What about the Old Testament prophetic teaching? Does it have any relevance today? Does it provide a standard of moral conduct?

As we surveyed the prophetic teaching of the Old Testament earlier in these notes, we looked at two key words: "justice" and "righteousness." We saw that each of these words is defined in context by the Law of God.

We then looked at some key passages, and discovered the same thing. Again and again the standard of moral conduct is defined by the Law of God.

Upon reflection, we note that the moral principles found in the Old Testament prophetic teaching are nothing other than the values and norms of the Mosaic Law (specifically the Ten Commandments). It would thus seem that whatever is reminiscent of or developed from those values and norms forms part of the standard of moral conduct binding on human beings who lived during the prophetic period.

3. What about Jesus' teaching, especially in the Sermon on the Mount? Does it have any relevance today? Does it provide a standard of moral conduct?

When we looked at Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, we found that He did not intend to abolish the law and the prophets, but rather to fulfill them. We discovered that He did not contrast His teaching with that of the Law of God, but with that of the oral law of Judaism (the "tradition of the elders"). His teaching was infinitely higher than that human tradition, but no higher than the Law of God. In fact, He attempted to uncover the pure Law of God from the oral accretions that had been added to it, layer by layer, in order to reveal the true meaning and force of that divine Law.

Our Lord cut through "what was said" to "what was written." And curiously enough, what He uncovered was the values and norms of the Mosaic Law, especially as incorporated in the Ten Commandments!

It would thus seem that whatever of Jesus' teaching is reminiscent of or developed from the values and norms of the Ten Commandments forms part of the standard of moral conduct binding on human beings living during the time of His earthly ministry.

4. What about the New Testament Teaching? Does it provide a standard of moral conduct? If so, what is it? Is it related to the eternal moral law of God? If so, does it incorporate the values and norms of the Law of God?

When we looked at the teaching of the New Testament (not including the Gospels), we discovered five important facts:

(a) The New Testament writers allude to the values and norms (both positive and negative) of the Ten Commandments many times.

(b) In the New Testament, sin is constantly defined by law, either the Law of God in general or the Ten Commandments in particular. In Romans 3:20 Paul says that the knowledge of sin comes through the Law.