

The background features a dark blue field with several overlapping, concentric circles and intersecting lines in a lighter blue hue, creating a complex geometric pattern.

Integrative Christian Ethics

Thinking About How Christian Ethics
Integrate with Theoretical Normative
Ethics

Overview

- The nature of the Bible
- The nature of the Bible's ethical teaching
- The modality of that teaching
- Some key passages

The Nature of the Bible

- Collection of books written by many authors over roughly 1500 years of time
- Divine revelation given by inspiration and received and understood by illumination, by careful exegesis and by proper hermeneutical methods
 - **Part** of that divine revelation could be called theological ethics—fuller information and clarity than one might get through general revelation alone

The Nature of the Bible's Ethical Teaching

- How do we “receive” these teachings?
 - General revelation—built in structure into nature? Law written on our hearts?
 - Special Revelation—giving clarity and “thickening” the ethical communities moral insights
 - Personal—Jesus
 - Propositional—the Bible
 - Narrative—story—but reducible to propositions
 - Poems, songs, etc.
 - Illumination is where we discover what God meant to communicate
 - Application comes when we bring or live out those properly interpreted ethical principles and virtues in our contemporary setting

The Nature of the Bible's Ethical Teaching

- Conclusion: Besides general revelation about moral principles we have special revelation about these principles, virtues, and so forth

The Modality of That Teaching

- Why do we have to do systematic theology?
 - Is there a reason the Bible has the form it does (stories, propositions, commands, etc.) **all mixed together**?
 - Some take the form of the Bible to argue for a “contextual” view of knowledge—a no foundations view where the most substantive part of our noetic structure is shaped by the interpretive community—I don’t particularly hold this view
 - Actually the form it takes might be that stories and propositions do a more complete job of explanation than only one form—but that doesn’t mean there aren’t foundations to knowledge

How Are Ethics Taught in the Bible?

- Mainly through Divine Commands & Narratives
 - The Ten Commandments (Ex. 20 ff)
 - The Great and Foremost Commandments (Matt. 22: 37-39)
 - Apostolic Scripture, Epistles, etc.
 - Some of which appear to be absolutes
 - Thou shall have no other gods before me (Deut 20:3)
 - Some of which appear to NOT be absolutes (that is, without exception or exemption)
 - Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy (Ex. 20:8)

How Are Ethics Taught in the Bible?

- Some of which appear to be teleological
 - Honor your parents that your days may be. . . (Deut 5:16)
- Some of which appear to be deontological
 - Children obey your parents for this right (Eph. 6:1)
- Some which appear to have a virtue ethic perspective
 - Proven character doesn't disappoint. . .Rom. 5: 1-5
- It appears that virtue ethics are also taught through stories or narratives
 - Jesus
 - Joseph