**Ethics: Theme 1 – Ethical Thought**

**Starter: The Story of the Fall of Jericho**

Watch the Clip below and summarise the story.[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruqGz1480uc**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruqGz1480uc)

**Task 1:** Answer the following questions using the link above and your own research if you need it:

What issues does the story raise for the divine command theory?

**Hints:**

1. What did Joshua’s men do when they ‘devoted the city to the Lord?’
2. Is there such a thing as a command that we would never follow no matter who told us to do it?
3. Would we have followed this command to kill men, women and children?
4. How do we decide which of God’s commands to follow and which to ignore?

**Task 2: Meta-ethical Theory**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOoffXFpAlUWatch> the above theory and summarise the information. You will need to know what the Meta-ethical Theory is at the end of the video.

Read page 108 of the ‘Philosophy of Religion and Religion of Ethics’ book for guidance.

Write, in your own words, what the ‘Meta-ethical Theory’ is below.

Meta-Ethical Theory is what we will be studying in Theme 1 of Ethics this year. We have already covered the Divine Command Theory in the double lesson we have before we left school due to Covid-19. Therefore you will need to ensure you complete the double lesson to understand the rest of the course.

**Task 3:** Read pages 109-110 of the ‘Philosophy of Religion and Religion of Ethics’ book.

There are 7 Key Terms in the text. Can you define them using **your own words**? Can you then put each one into a sentence.

**Task 4:** Can you interpret the below quotes?

Divine Command Theory

1. Introduction

“The unexamined life is not worth living” – Socrates

“Two things fill me with wonder: the starry sky above and the moral law within” – Kant

“Our duty can be defined as that action which will cause more good to exist in the universe than any possible alternative” – Moore

“A man without ethics is a wild beast loosed upon the world” – Camus

1. Ethical Theories

“At the descriptive level, certainly, you would expect different cultures to develop different sorts of ethics and obviously they have; that doesn’t mean that you can’t think of overarching ethical principles you would want people to follow in all kinds of places” -Singer

“An ethical dilemma arises when two or more causes of conduct may be justifiable in any given set of circumstances, possibly resulting in diametrically opposed outcomes”- Mason and Laurie

1. Divine Command Theory

“Proponents of the view sometimes hold that ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ mean, respectively, commanded and forbidden by God, but even if they do not define ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ in this way, they all hold than an action or kind of action is right and wrong if and only if and because it is commanded or forbidden by God, or in other words, that what ultimately makes an action right or wrong is its being commanded or forbidden by God and nothing else” – Frankena

“God sets moral rules and God’s rules apply to all, irrespective of time and place. The problem here is that, actually there are reasons to believe that God, if he exists, is the greatest relativist of them all” – Baggini

1. Modified Divine Command Theory

“I reply that hatred, theft, adultery, and the like may involve evil according to the common law, in so far as they are done by someone who is obligated by a Divine Command to perform the opposite act. As far as everything absolute in these actions is concerned, however, God can perform them without involving any evil. And they can even be performed, meritoriously by someone on earth if they should fall under Divine Command, just as now the opposite of these, in fact, fall under a Divine Command” – William of Ockham

“There are, however, certain exceptions to the law against killing, made by the authority of God himself. There are some whose killing God orders, either by law, or by an express command to a particular person at a particular time” – Augustine

“Any action is ethically wrong if and only if it is contrary to the commands of a loving God” – Adams

“On the Modified Divine Command theory, the moral law is a feature of God’s nature. Given that the moral law exists internal to God, in this sense God is not subject to the external moral law, but rather is the moral law. God therefore retains his supreme moral and metaphysical status. Morality, for the modified Divine Command theorist, is ultimately grounded in the perfect nature of God’ – Austin

1. Challenges to the Divine Command theory

“For regressive avoidance, morality must not have ultimate grounds in obedience to independent commanders: God must possess moral characteristics in want of no further authority…why is morality seen as needing an external lawgiver when, finally, a moral rabbit is pulled from a divine hat, a rabbit in no need of external anything? – Cave

“The idea that God could just decree that all that we thought evil was in fact good and vice versa seems to make a mockery of the seriousness of ethics. It makes right and wrong ultimately arbitrary” – Baggini

“If there are reasons why God deems an action to be ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ then it is really those reasons that provide the account of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ and not God’s will” - Driver

**Task 5:** Using the information in the ‘Philosophy of Religion and Religion of Ethics’ book from Theme 1 of Ethics. Make notes on the 4 categories below, be as thorough as you can. (Pages 108-113)

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| Meta-ethical Theory – including key terms. | Divine Command Theory |
| Robert Adam’s ‘Modified Divine Command Theory’ | Challenges to Divine Command Theory |