

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Philosophy 1100: Introduction to Ethics

### Exercise 2: Morality and the Bible

**Due Date:** Friday, September 12

**Proportion of Final Grade:** 5%

This exercise has two objectives. First, and as was noted in the previous exercise, many people find it somewhat difficult, initially, to approach religious writings in a critical fashion. The present exercise is designed to give you additional practice in doing that.

Secondly, each of us is faced with an important choice with regard to how he or she should approach the task of deciding what moral beliefs to accept, of determining what values should guide his or her life. Very different answers have been advanced on this matter. Thus, on the one hand, most philosophers feel that what is crucial is the dispassionate consideration of alternative views, and the critical evaluation of arguments for and against the various alternatives. But many other people feel that such an approach is at best unnecessary, and quite possibly ill advised. For they believe that the Bible - or some other scripture, such as the Koran, or the Torah - is an unerring source of moral truths. A second objective of the present exercise, accordingly, is to encourage you to grapple with this issue in a serious way.

The exercise has two parts. The first involves locating passages that contain what appear to be problematic moral beliefs. The second focuses upon passages where what appear to be morally problematic actions are attributed to God.

#### Part 1: Problematic Moral Beliefs in the Bible

1. **Before reading the following selections from the Bible**, read all of the questions listed below in Part 1, so that you will know what questions you are to answer, and will have those questions in mind as you do the reading.

**Readings:** *Exodus*, chapters 20-23; *Leviticus*, chapters 18-20, *Deuteronomy*, chapters 21-22; *1 Samuel*, chapter 15; *Matthew*, chapter 5, verses 27-32; chapter 15, verses 19-20; chapter 19, verses 3-12; *Mark*, chapter 10, verses 2-12; *Ephesians*, chapter 5, verses 21-33; *Romans*, chapter 1, verses 18-32.

2. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible is currently available at the following address:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/browse.html>

The King James Version of the Bible is available online at

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/kjv/browse.html>

Either version should be fine, although I think the Revised Standard Version is the better translation.

3. For each of the following thirty-five questions, find a passage that contains an answer. In each case, state the location of the passage, and then describe, **very briefly**, **and in your own words**, what the passage says.
4. Each correct answer is worth **one** point.
5. The order of the questions corresponds to the order of the readings.

## Questions

1. Is there anything problematic about making a likeness of something?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Is it permissible for God to punish children for the sins of the fathers?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Is it morally wrong to own a slave?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Is it permissible for a man to sell his daughter into slavery?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What should be done to a person who strikes his father or his mother?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Should a person who kills his slave always be punished?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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7. How should witches be treated?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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8. What should be done in the case of a person who has sex with an animal?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Is it morally permissible to sacrifice to a deity other than Yahweh? What should be done?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. How bad is it to destroy sacred things associated with other religions?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Are tattoos acceptable?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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12. What should be done to a person who reviles his father or his mother?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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13. How should people who commit adultery be treated?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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14. What should be done if a mother and her son have sexual intercourse?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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15. How should male homosexuals be treated?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What should be done if a man has sexual intercourse with a mother and her daughter?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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17. How should spiritualistic mediums be dealt with?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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18. What is the situation with regard to women who are captured in war?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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19. Is polygamy always wrong?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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20. How should the problem of a rebellious son be handled?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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21. Is cross-dressing problematic?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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22. What should be done in the case where a woman is not a virgin when she marries?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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23. Should a woman who has been raped ever be punished?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What should happen when a man rapes a virgin who is engaged to another man?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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25. What should happen when a man rapes a virgin who is not engaged?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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26. Is genocide always seriously wrong?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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27. How wrong is it to look at a woman lustfully?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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28. What should you do if you find that some part of our body is leading you into sin?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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29. When is it morally permissible for a man to divorce his wife?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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30. Is it morally permissible for a man to marry a woman who has been divorced?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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31. Is premarital sexual intercourse morally problematic, and, if so, to what extent?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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32. When is it morally wrong for a divorced person to remarry?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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33. What is the nature of the relation between a husband and his wife? Is the marital relation one of equality?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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34. Is it morally permissible for a person not to believe in God?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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35. Is male and female homosexuality an acceptable alternative life style, and, if not, how bad is it?

Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Part 2: Morally Problematic Actions Attributed to God

1. Carefully read the selections from the Bible that are listed below.
2. In doing so, try to find passages where God is described as either performing some action of a sort that appears to be morally wrong, or as being willing to perform such an action.
3. List the 4 passages that, in your judgment, **best** satisfy the above condition.
4. In each case, you should both give the location of each passage, and describe very briefly, in your own words, exactly what the morally problematic action in question is, and why it might be thought morally problematic.
5. Each correct answer is worth **two** points.

**Readings:** *Genesis*, chapters 6 and 7; *Exodus*, chapters 10 and 11, and chapter 12, verses 12-36; *Exodus*, chapter 20, verses 1-17; 1 *Samuel*, chapter 15.

1. Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

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