

Name: _____

Philosophy 1100: Introduction to Ethics

Exercise 2: Morality and the Bible

Due Date: Thursday, September 13

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://quod.lib.umich.edu/k/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. Note that the order of the questions corresponds to the order in which you will run across good answers to questions in the readings.
6. Given that there are a number of different readings, however, it occurred to me that it would also be good to know, with regard to the 35 questions in Part 1, where the breaks come. These are as follows:

<i>Exodus</i> , chapters 20-23:	Questions 1 to 10.
<i>Leviticus</i> , chapters 18-20:	Questions 11 to 17.
<i>Deuteronomy</i> , chapters 21-22:	Questions 18 to 25.
<i>1 Samuel</i> , chapter 15:	Question 26.
<i>Matthew</i> , chapter 5, verses 27-32:	Questions 27 to 30.
<i>Matthew</i> , chapter 15, verses 19-20:	Question 31.
<i>Matthew</i> , chapter 19, verses 3-12:	Question 32.
<i>Mark</i> , chapter 10, verses 2-12:	Question 32.
<i>Ephesians</i> , chapter 5, verses 21-33:	Question 33.
<i>Romans</i> , chapter 1, verses 18-32:	Questions 34 and 35.

7. Finally, in the case of some of the questions in Part 1, there are equally good answers – or in some cases better answers – in other places. So if you found an answer in a different book than the one mentioned below, that's fine.

Questions

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

3. Is it morally wrong to own a slave?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

7. How should witches be treated?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

9. Is it morally permissible to sacrifice to a deity other than the LORD (= the Jewish god, Yahweh)? What should be done?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

11. Are tattoos acceptable?

Passage: _____

12. What should be done to a person who curses his father or his mother? (Some translations read: "reviles", or "repudiates", rather than "curses".)

Passage: _____

13. How should people who commit adultery be treated?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

15. How should male homosexuals be treated?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

17. How should spiritualistic mediums be dealt with?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

19. Is polygamy always wrong?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

21. Is cross-dressing problematic?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

26. Is genocide always seriously wrong?

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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

Passage: _____

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: The readings for Part 2 are listed below, and each reading contains at least one action attributed to God that one might well think was morally problematic:

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|---|----------------------------------|
| <i>Genesis</i> , chapters 6 and 7: | (At least one strong candidate) |
| <i>Exodus</i> , chapter 10: | (At least two strong candidates) |
| <i>Exodus</i> , chapter 11, and chapter 12, verses 12-36: | (At least one strong candidate) |
| <i>Exodus</i> , chapter 20, verses 1-17: | (At least one strong candidate) |
| <i>1 Samuel</i> , chapter 15: | (At least one strong candidate) |

1. Passage: _____

2. Passage: _____

3. Passage: _____

4. Passage: _____
