

## CHAPTER 3

## SCRIPTURE

Now, I do remember that in the last chapter I poked fun at the idea that what's written needs no interpretation. I don't want you to get the wrong impression. I'm not one of those knuckleheads who thinks there is no actual reality because all the world's a text and any text can be interpreted any which way so we're all caught in a postmodern morass of relativism. I've written my own take on pompous postmodern prattle in my academic books and papers, so I don't think I need to go far into that here.

I've gotten my share of communications from people who take both themselves and their preferred Scripture very, *very* seriously (*The Bible, The Torah, The United States Constitution* ... whatever they consider divinely inspired and holy and not to be questioned). And, frankly, I've heard also from those who are religious believers but think there's some "wobble room" in interpreting whatever holy writ they revere.

But mostly, those who are serious about their religion or ideology, especially those who are literalists or originalists, have no idea what they're dealing with when they contact me. My daddy *was* a preacher (he's long deceased). My brother *is or was* a preacher (he's retired and lives less than an hour's drive from me). My daughter earned a degree in Christian ministries, married a preacher, and became Director of Development for a Biblical seminary. I have other in-laws, uncles, and cousins who were or are preachers. My sister is a Latter Day Saint, and her husband is a Mormon elder. So, what do these people who write to me about the Dr. Laura letter assume? That I don't know my Bible? I admit that religion didn't "take" on me for some reason. I know, I know... I

won't think it's so funny when I'm burning in the lake of fire (I don't believe this is going to happen, although some of the people who know me and some of those who have written to me obviously do).

I mean, for crying out loud, "carrying coals to Newcastle" doesn't quite capture the act of sending me Scriptures and essays thereon! It's more like "hauling brimstone to Hades." Which makes me wonder where all that brimstone for the perpetual lake of fire will come from. I know, I know... God will take care of that little detail. He can do whatever he wants, so no problem. Need more brimstone? He can just make it. Maybe already has, in which case He can just order it up. No, the brimstone won't be ordered in by train or plane or ship or truck. We just don't understand, but it'll be there for the eternal torture of unbelievers like me.

Well, maybe I won't be tortured or martyred at the hands of the holy. For, after all, "Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19)—or, if you want an Old Testament Scripture, probably the source for the Apostle Paul's statement in his letter to the Romans, "To me *belongeth* vengeance, and recompence" (Deuteronomy 32:35). So, God Himself will do the torturing or killing. Then, again, God seems to get things done in this world by his servants' action. So, if He needs a little help in punishing infidels, I can imagine some true believer saying, humbly like a prophet of old who hears God's voice, "Here *am* I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). Or just doing the Lord's work without offering overtly to be sent. For my part, I hope to be just left alone by the zealots. Really. No torturing, please. And, please, no killing, even in the name of your God.

But, brace yourself. There are serious folks with serious axes to grind ‘till the cows come home (or, using their terminology, for all eternity). To me, these essays are quite tedious, but I realize that they may not be so to all readers, and these essays certainly weren’t perceived to be or intended to be tedious by their writers. I find a lot of books and articles on religion, morality, philosophy, and history not to be tedious at all. So, I admit my bias against the sort of stuff I reproduce here, as opposed to some of the other things I read.

If you haven’t the stomach for what I present here (yes, all of which I’ve read), I understand. Just skip some or all of it. Go to the next chapter. Save yourself the ecstasy or the agony.

Ok, here goes. I’ve warned you. It’s a long journey and a tortured path. But that’s the kind of road you take to heaven, right?

Here, to kick this chapter off, is a message from “down under,” OZ, Australia (a beautiful place to which I’d love to return, but a land with its religions. And, apparently, a land of fatwas, too).

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May 23, 2010

Hi James,

I read your ‘tongue-in-cheek’ dissertation on the Old Testament. Very humorous and well thought out.

However, I feel you err by being too literal. Of course you can keep a slave, except it has been frowned on since Mr Wilberforce politicked against. At least

with the 'humanising' of the penal code in most countries, you would not need to fear 'stoning'.

As far as 'Slavery' is concerned, what would you class the USA's dependence on illegal immigrants from Mexico, non union and probably being paid on minimal wages under the threat of be sent back? Seems like a form of duress and taking advantage of someone. Of course I could be totally mistaken.

Some of your other 'examples' of anomalies when translated into 21<sup>st</sup> century mores indicate you obviously have at least a passing knowledge of the Old Testament, but have missed the intention of the requirements. Suggest you try reading in depth instead of superficially.

As for Homosexuality. If the reference cited was the only occurrence, then perhaps what you have written could have some validity, but there are numerous direct prohibitions and several allusions to the undesirability of the practice. Read on. Read on, and keep reading.

I would not suggest you treat the Koran in such a 'light-hearted manner' otherwise you'll probably find a 'fatwah' issued on you so be thankful that you live in a country that has to date no Sharia Law as its governing principle and has instead be founded on at least a base of Christian principles, some of which have been eroded. Your defence of Homosexual practice, albeit by inference, does your position no credit, unless of course you have a vested interest.

Regards

Xxx. [Yes, a period after the name; yes, defence (an antiquated or British spelling, but I don't know that homosexual is usually capitalized by the Brits); is there an h on the end of fatwa?]

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[Later May 23, 2010 from the same person after I sent my standard reply]:

Hi James,

You obviously type faster than me. Well done.

The sin of ONAN refers to failing to carry on his brother's line by the practice of withdrawal before ejaculation.(coitus interruptus) Nowadays the practice would seem to carry the potential of psychological damage in addition to STDs as well as the good chance of unwanted pregnancies.

However, as we live in an age which has all sorts of sexual aberrations, no doubt, things will only get worse.

I apologise for attributing to you the letter that you did not write. One can only go on what is presented.

Regards

Xxx.

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Thanks for the apology. An apology is always welcome when someone falsely condemns me. But "one can only go on what is presented?" Presented where? And by whom? Does "presented" mean that it appeared on the Internet? Some people are reasonably skeptical of what they see on the Internet, even if they aren't skeptical of Scripture (see Chapter 5).

And Onanism. Psychological damage? It increases risk of sexually transmitted diseases? I thought it was coitus with a partner who has an STD that carried that risk, not the interruption of it. But, as I understand it, Onanism generally, at least today, refers not only to coitus interruptus but to sexual self-stimulation or masturbation—also sometimes referred to obliquely by those who condemn masturbation as sin with such quaint expressions as “self-abuse,” “touching yourself,” “interfering with yourself,” and so on.

I suppose that sexual behavior is one of the topics about which people become most exercised and that many religions, especially the more fundamentalist varieties of them, are particularly prurient. Certainly, believers in many of the more conservative religions take an extraordinary and, in my view, unhealthy interest in sexual matters and have very strict prohibitions of conduct that they consider sinful (things like homosexuality, fornication, adultery, and masturbation). Alas, many are those who preach God’s disapproval of those who do X (fornication, homosexuality) are, themselves, found doing it. I suppose all of us need to recognize our human frailties. Those who feel they need God’s forgiveness may ask for it. Those who don’t just need to realize they’re not superior to those who do ask God’s forgiveness (and vice versa).

I find it disquieting that some religions proscribe with a vengeance the sexual behavior that many people, if not most, consider normal and acceptable, whether it’s contraception or masturbation or homosexuality or other innocuous sexual practices of consenting adults (no, this is in no way a defense of pedophilia or rape or other criminal sexual behavior). The emails I’ve received and printed here reveal some of this kind of prurience, but you could go to web sites (e.g., do a search for Mormonism and

masturbation to find advice for overcoming masturbation) that roundly condemn what many people consider innocuous sexual behavior. Dr. Joycelyn Elders, once President Clinton's Surgeon General, paid a heavy price (lost her job) for her suggestion that masturbation shouldn't be proscribed and is preferable to early sexual intercourse. Criticism of her for suggesting that youngsters masturbate instead of having intercourse reveals a regressive, Puritanical attitude toward sex that is deeply engrained in the American psyche.

But, I digress. Here are some other responses to the Dr. Laura letter:

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My 84 year old father –in-law sent me your note to Dr Laura. I really enjoyed it and hope you enjoy my reply.

Please forward this to the tribe and for that matter anyone else you exchange emails with. It is important that people in this country get over their biblical ignorance.

Yes all of the things listed below by the Professor, are mandated under the law as set forth by the writer, to Dr Laura. Actually I have heard her a few times on the radio and I am a little surprised she would take this position. I am sure that she like everyone else I know either ignores or condemns the reset of the provisions of what is called the purity code in Leviticus

It has been my life long experience that those who use the Bible to justify any specific position they take are at best biblically ignorant. Everyone I have ever met, if they are honest either does not pay attention to, ignores, or just out right violates the Scriptures they claim to violate so highly.

They are only a few brief references to homosexuality contained in the Bible. The one in Leviticus is the most popular one to cite. The only mention of homosexuality in the New Testament is a criticism made by Paul of the members of one of the churches Paul founded because Paul heard some of the church members were engaging in homosexual acts ( I do not have time to look it up right now I think it was the members in Corinth).

All of self righteous people that use the Bible, to condemn gays conveniently, ignore a much more prevalent sexual sin practiced even by the most devout (even many clergy members) in most Christian Churches. It might interest everyone to know that Jesus never actually spoke out against homosexuality I can only guess he did not view the practice as wicked enough to be worthy of a comment by him however Jesus expressly prohibits the sexual practice I am referring to, the practice of divorce and remarriage. Jesus thinks this “sin” is enough of an abomination that he forbids it in both Matthew and Luke. Matthew reports Jesus as saying divorce and remarriage is expressly forbidden by Scripture except in cases where the divorcing party caught their spouse in the act of adultery. In Luke, Jesus prohibits divorce and remarriage under any circumstance. Jesus pronounces that people who divorce and remarry are living in and are committing adultery (which is on the top 10 list of sins, the ten commandments, and the ten commandments do not list homosexuality as a sin!).

In short, I find it interesting that most, if not all church members, do not mind the divorced among them violating the ten commandments and the instructions of their Lord and Savior on a daily basis. However these same Bible thumpers are



absolutely certain that gay people must adhere to only one provision of the purity code while these same self-righteous people absolutely ignore or in many cases violently condemn the other provisions listed in that same code. (although a lot of them might not object to executing all football players even if they wear gloves since these players are also violating the Sabbath) Jesus actually had a term for church members like this Jesus called them Sadducees and Pharisees and Jesus really did not enjoy associating with them if he could avoid them . Jesus also had some very good advice for these type of church members “why don’t you remove the log from your own eye first and then you can see more clearly to remove the splinter from the eye of your neighbor.

Them is the facts and only the facts!

When anyone uses the bible as a weapon against people simply because they do not like them you can 1. Bet they are misinterpreting the Bible and 2. Have never even bothered to read the whole book cover to cover!

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Oh, Golly Gee, just when you thought it was safe to come out, interpretations of the Bible strike again! This time it’s a strike against those of us who are divorced. It’s ok to be homosexual, but not to divorce? Because of what the Scripture says? Scripture is such... well, no, actually, no interpretation required? My interpretation is right? The Bible just says what it says, them’s the facts?

Oh, and I forgot! “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering” (I Corinthians 11, 14-15). So, these guys with ponytails or

whose long hair gives them that “hippie” look are living in sin. And women who cut their hair are living in sin. Both are unnatural. Them’s the facts. Words is words.

And how could I forget “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak: but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law” (I Corinthians 14:34). Or “In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (I Timothy 2:9-14). Them’s the facts. If women just would shut up, stay out of schools where they’re often asked to speak up, be subservient to men, not wear expensive clothes and jewelry, not drink... well, it’s *women’s* fault that the world is no longer Eden! Adam knew what he was doing; Eve didn’t! Contrary to the person who wrote to express the opinion that oral sex was the Original Sin (you’ll get to that letter after a while if you keep reading), I think it was women asserting themselves and speaking and imagining somehow that God saw them as the equal of men! (Surely, you understand that I jest.) And nowhere in the Bible does Jesus speak of guns or improvised explosive devices. Those are facts!

Say what you will about the Taliban, those guys are downright Biblical in their treatment of women (this is not a jest). They could be said to pay attention to strict, literal interpretation of *all* verses in the Bible having to do with women’s place (I’m not

sure about the Koran, not having read it myself). You want facts about what the *Bible* says? Well, read those verses I quoted above—straight out of the KJV!

This reminds me of the argument that the Constitution just says what it says, and if any interpretation is required you just don't understand it! This, I admit, just amazes me, but bright people sometimes believe or do some really weird things. I suppose that we could point out that nowhere in the Constitution is the Interstate Highway System mentioned. Neither is penicillin. Or time zone. Or lots of other stuff. Nowhere in the Constitution of the United States are nuclear or biological arms mentioned, just says arms. Period. And, if we get into historical contexts and interpretations and qualifications, we're lost? We should "reason" that if the Founding Fathers had written (paralleling Amendment II regarding the right to bear arms), "The removal of Clothes, being necessary to proper Bathing, the right of the people to remove Clothing, shall not be infringed," then we'd obviously have to let people remove any and all of their clothing at will?" (This would be a great court victory for Nudism, I guess.) The phrase "The removal of clothing, being necessary to proper bathing" obviously has nothing to do with the right to remove clothing whenever, wherever, and to whatever degree an individual wants!

But, back to what I consider reality, I have to say that I'm touched by the agony of people who write with firm conviction, trying to be nice to me—no, being *actually* nice to me, wanting to avoid false accusation—yet obviously trembling with fear of a God whose judgment they believe will certainly fall on unbelievers like me if not on them.

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January 23, 2010

Dear Professor Kauffman,

I recently recieved a letter from a friend quoting a letter from you to Dr. Laura.

Did you write this or was it a prank?

If you did write it , may I respond?

I am not a Doctor or Professor, nor am I even a teacher. I read the words penned and thought it was clever and thought thru, but I wondered if the real issue was....." Why? "

Why were words penned to make God's word look "dated" and silly?

Why was it important to you to show your knowledge ?

Why did you seem to want Dr. Laura look silly and old fashioned?

I believe the answer is : " human beings justify their Morality through their Theology."

It is very clear to me: God gave his law to cause the Jews to be a holy and separate people ,to show other nations God's glory and his Love. He gave them laws and his standard. It is obvious they were not able to keep that standard : they sinned and God gave them a promise. The promise was one day He would send his standard in the temple of the flesh of man ,and pay the price for their sin and then they would have a new covenant:

One based on not their being Good but His provision of a Savior,who would not pretend that their sin wasn't there;but be the perfect sacrifice to pay their debt in full thus setting them FREE to really love, serve and fellowship with God. I hope you will do what Jer29:13 says, If you seek with ALL your heart, you will find

him... The Truth.( That is what happened to me.) I pray you will not neglect so great a Salvation.

And it is written " woe to him who calls evil good and calls good evil."

I am very sorry if you did not in fact write Dr. Laura and someone put your name on a letter on the Internet . If that is the case, please forgive this letter addressing the issue.

May the Lord Bless you and keep you and cause His Face to shine on you, may he grant you Truth, not reasoning and an obedient heart to his love.

Sincerely "the heart of a child", Xxx

PS. Y'shua actually fulfilled all those statutes that you mentioned ,by dying as the perfect Passover Lamb on the Roman Cross of torture in our place.

Sin is so serious, it merited death. After Y'shua died, he ushered in God's NEW covenant, ( Moses spoke of ).

The New Covenant does still count immorality as serious enough for God to say in 1corinthians "Him will God distroy." And the book of Revelation speaks of those who practice certain sins will be kept outside the city and even cast into a Lake of Fire because they did not obey by faith. These verses certainly changed my Life years ago. May your heart recieve him.

Thank you for reading this letter.

Sent from my iPhone

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It's too bad that people must live in fear and trembling. I do feel sorry for those who believe that they and others will experience either eternal bliss or eternal torment depending on their beliefs. I think it's an agonizing way to live (one that I experienced in my earlier years).

Gosh, I guess Dr. Laura just doesn't understand that there's a New Covenant! Otherwise, she'd know her place and not make a ruckus. She'd understand that a woman's role is to be silent and submissive and that woman is the source of all sin.

But, then, there are those who are "people of faith" but see the humor in the letter they assume I wrote and don't think God wants us to be scared of Him.

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February 14, 2010

Hi,

I just had to say it- your letter was amazing.

The ironic thing is that I am a person of faith, and I realize that this is a tough thing to do in light of many stories that are found in the Bible. I guess that's hard to understand, even for me, but that's where I find myself and most of the time I'm okay with this.

Just the same, it's great that you know your stuff and have an unbelievable sense of irony and humor. I enjoyed your thoughts immensely. Due to your area of study, my guess is that it's pretty tough for you to hear someone who is clearly not as educated as yourself (is she really a DR? PhD? anything>) rant to people about how wrong they are without considering the deeper feelings and motives behind their actions... without much compassion really. So yeah, good for you for maybe

putting her in her place. Good for you for being a thinker and using the brain that God (or whatever you want to say- luck, genetics, the universe) gave to you. I hope you're not getting too much hate mail... I hope you're not getting any, but despite my being a theist, I'm not that naive.

Peace,

Xxx

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May 27, 2010

If you are the chap responsible for the letter flying around the internet - well done - I cried with laughter - tolerance is a great thing sadly lacking in a large part of humanity - Laura whatshername must be spinning in her chair - complete adherence to any sort of doctrine is dangerous and she has shown herself to have a lack of intellect which is breath taking - once again thanks for the giggle - have passed it on to many friends - we aren't a very god fearing lot in the UK - but I don't think the idea was that he wanted us to be scared of him?

Xxx

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But, again, some of my correspondents assume I need tutoring in the law, some sort of correction so that I understand just what Scripture requires. Or they offer a different religion or even an obviously fake one, sometimes with good humor.

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February 15, 2010

Unlike other religions, Judaism has an oral tradition. In this way, things can't be

taken out of context as you have to learn from a learned person. The answers are given in the name of their Rabbi, who learned it from their Rabbi, etc. I think in RAMBAM's Mishne Torah this oral tradition can be traced from Rabbi to Rabbi for many generations.

And there is the danger of understanding these Torah concepts from an english translation.

Homosexuality uses the term Toevah - abomination! A rare and harsh term which indicates its severity. Many sexual situations are a sin, like sleeping with your father's wife, brother's wife, etc., but the word Toevah is not used. Nor is it used for eating shellfish. That is reserved for homosexuality, bestiality and idol worship. These other prohibited sexual relations are prohibited because they are relatives and would be ok if not relatives as it is between a man and women.

Same sex or with animals is never ok.

Slavery is really a paid servant. These "slaves" have to be fed before their masters, can sue their masters, etc. The owners have to educate them and send them away with gifts, etc. Much different than our modern concept of slavery.

One final example - in the past week's parshat is the famous concept of "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth". If taken literally there would have been a lot of blind and toothless people. The actual Hebrew is Ayin Tachat Ayin which means "Eye Under Eye". If you look at the Hebrew alphabet and the letters under/after the work Ayin - it spells the word kesef, which means money. (Peh, caf, samech) In Biblical times and afterwards, the monetary equivalent was the standard for all punishments short of death.



Have a great day and Chodesh Sameach!

Xxx

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December 5, 2009

Hi. *Verrry* funny letter. Now, this relates more to Christianity than Judaism, but you might get a kick out of my articles, *Where is the Christ in Christianity?* and *Jesus Freaks*, available on my website, [deleted]. Who knows, we might even get another funny letter out of you over them.

Best,

Xxx

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No, actually, I am not a son of Israel, as the following email seems to assume (and my name, as my family spells it, is Kauffman, not Kaufmann, which is sometimes a clue, though not a clincher).

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May 7, 2010

Shalom James, as I cannot find an email address for Dr Laura ( is there anybody in the USA who is not a doctor something) could you do the honours and pass my comment to her.....please.

Sincerly,

Xxx

----- Original Message -----

**From:**

**To:**

**Sent:** Thursday, May 06, 2010 10:39 PM

**Subject:** Re: Biblical Instructions- A Judaeo -Christian brief comment, from a distance.

Shalom from Ireland Laura, esteemed daughter of the older Testament. Your response regarding practical application of the Biblical Instructions on Homosexuality, Lev 18:22 is a literal interpretation 'as the Orthodox Jewish Rite teaches and sees it.I believe.

James Kaufmann esteemed professor and I presume a son of Israel rightly challenges your 'take' on the Scriptures and cleverly cobbles together a number of brief parables to shake your orthodox pulpit and caution your use of religious fundamentalism as an Amen answer to the reality of the victims of confused sexuality and lack of accommodation, understanding and compassion for them. Hitler was also was quite fundamentalist in his solution for homosexuals. In our world torn apart in the 20th century by war, religious persecution, power and greed should'nt you both recite the SHEMA together and ask God to empower you to be instruments of Love and Peace.

To the non committed observer reading your Biblical duel the New testament (rooted in the older T.) may cause less indigestion for their spiritual appetite.

PACBENE

Xxx

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May 9, 2010

Professor Kaufmann,

Your answer to Dr. Laura was magnificent. I am launching a new faith, a way of life called Axiom. Attached are the basic principles of Axiom and it will be a great honor if I could have your critique.

Thank you sir. The world is a better place having humans like you around.

Regards,

Xxx

[attachment explaining Axiom]

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May 9, 2010

Re: Dr. Laura letter

How amusing! It seems you have become an unintentional celebrity! Thank you for your reply nevertheless. I myself have the personal conviction that all religions do more (unintentional) harm than good. Us vs them being the chief difficulty. That's why I'm a Pastafarian! Hey, it's no less outrageous than most any other religion out there!

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The reference to being a Pastafarian may require some explanation. "Pastafarian" refers to a belief in the Flying Spaghetti Monster. That is, the "believers" in the Pastafarian "religion" have made up a new religion just to point out how ridiculous it is to believe in something with the characteristics like those attributed to deities in other accepted or standard religions.

But, let us continue the communications sent to me.

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May 11, 2010

Wouldn't it be great if we could sit together over a cup of coffee and talk over, around and through this issue?

There are two degrees of law according to the Baha'i teachings: one is eternal law, the other is contingent on the changing needs of humanity.

Have you heard of Progressive Revelation, a succession of Divine Teachers, Adam, Abraham, Noah, Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad and now, since 1844, The Bab and Baha'u'llah? As a child grows, (humanity advances) his teachers must introduce him to new knowledge. Each

Manifestation of God assigns the appropriate laws during His dispensation. Some of what was prescribed in the time of Moses was abrogated by Jesus because the needs of humanity change from age to age. The failure of each successive generation is to cling tenaciously to the past.

Knowledge of the current Revealer of God's prescription for humanity will give us what is needed to advance civilization in an orderly fashion. Maybe we can finally determine which laws are eternal and which are necessary for today.

I hope Dr. Laura enjoyed your letter as much as I did.

Xxx

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May 12, 2010

Subject: Levitical Law

Hello - a friend recently forwarded me a copy of a letter I think you had written to Dr. Laura (not sure though). The reason it surfaced was that my friend invited her son to a Bible study. The Levitical Law letter was used kinda like a club to ward off the invitation. Is it your opinion that all Bible study is whacked?

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I don't know why my opinion of Bible study should be asked. But, given the question, I suppose I could offer my views. I suppose the study of nothing is or should be considered foolish unless someone is looking for something that just isn't there. I guess that Bible study is whacked when you expect it to reveal the truth about something. My opinion is that the value of the study of anything depends on what you expect to find by studying it. For example, don't waste your time studying the train schedule if you expect it'll reveal the bus schedule to you; don't study Huckleberry Finn if you expect it will tell you something about telephones; don't study the Bible if you want useful information about any of the sciences.

But, again, back to the communications I've received. To me, it's rather amazing how some people mix up my professional work with their understanding of Scripture. And, as for tedium, I'm not sure that the most arcane of my publications exceeds the tedium of some of the communications I've received.

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May 16, 2010

Dear Mr. James M. Kauffman,

I would like to start this letter off by thanking you. Your lifetime passion for the education of our children has surely had an immense impact upon our society. As

any parent, uncle, aunt or any other adult who has had a hand in teaching children would know it takes a large amount of patience to work with young minds who do not always comprehend the lessons trying to be taught to them or the ramifications of doing things their own way.

But your passion seems to run to a particularly difficult group of children, the Special Ed and behaviorally challenged children. Children who so often have not had the benefit of growing up in a loving home; children who very often find themselves fighting against law and order because that is the only way they know how to survive in this world. It is to this group that your life's work has been dedicated to bring them back into society as whole person. As a person who can not only function as an adult but whom is also no longer looked at as different, strange, an outcast, or a minority.

In this regard I commend you, your heart, and your passion and life's work.

I recently had an opportunity to read one of your literary works. I must admit it did raise my eyebrows a bit, and invoked a great deal of thought within me. I too am quite a passionate person, and although I do not have the years of institutional education that you have enjoyed nor the degrees or diplomas, I would very much so like to discuss some point that I found worthy of debate.

The literary work was a simple letter to Dr Laura Schlessinger about some Biblical ponderings you had. I am sad to say the letter was very heavy laden with sarcasm, which in my opinion is another term for hypocrisy; at least in the sense of one saying one thing but doing and meaning something different.

It is also my opinion that sarcasm is an awful disease that all too often languages

suffer from. Here in America this disease has become ramped and has almost completely taken over our language to the point of robbing our words of all its power and meaning.

Obviously we all live different lives with different experiences and these experiences lead to our understanding of the world around us and in turn this shapes and molds our belief system. An example of this would be the experiences of the children whom you touched early on. Together you were able to change their belief system and thus changed their life's destiny from a path of destruction to a path of prosperity.

Below are the discussions points that I would like to cover with you:

1. Leviticus 25:44 states that I may possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?

Leviticus 25:39 " If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave. 40 He is to be treated as a hired worker or a temporary resident among you; he is to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. 41 Then he and his children are to be released, and he will go back to his own clan and to the property of his forefathers. 42 Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. 43 Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God. 44 " Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. 45 You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of

their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. 46 You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them bondservants, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.

It is important that we understand the slavery system as set up by God in the Scriptures. In our minds we think of slavery as the system that was around during the pre Civil War era. However the system that God set up is much closer to the slave system we have today in America.

If a man was poor and owed others then he could sell himself as a slave to another man. The selling of himself would consolidate his debt to the individual that he sold himself to. The now “owner” of the man’s debt would pay off all the debtors and the now slave would work for his owner until his debt was paid off. This is much how our credit system works today, and any man who has owed a debt collector money will understand this parallel.

There is an interesting twist to all this. It is the concept of the bondservant. A bondservant is a slave who is a slave for life. Abraham’s slave Eliazar was a bondservant. Bondservants have a special place in the household. They are not considered a slave, yet a family member and as such they share in the inheritance of the family. This is why Eliazar stood to inherit all of Abraham’s possessions, because at the time Abraham did not have a son, so it would go to the next in line which was Abraham’s bondservant.

Today we, the United States of America, do not have any kind of laws in place for this kind of slavery. In fact it is against our laws to help such individuals out in this kind of manner. Therefore it would not be advisable to take on slaves from



either Mexico or Canada.

2. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7.

In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?

Exodus 21:7 "If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is not to go free as menservants do. 8 If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself, he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, because he has broken faith with her. 9 If he selects her for his son, he must grant her the rights of a daughter. 10 If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. 11 If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.

This is an interesting passage that you bring up. To answer your question I believe it would vary upon the reason for selling your daughter. If you sell her because you are poor and need to clear debt then I believe it would fall under the question we covered earlier. However if you are "selling" her to be a bride for either the man or his son, then the bride's price would be appropriate.

Obviously here in America these concepts are completely lost upon our culture. However throughout the world the concept of a Bride's Price is still in use. We might think of it as a dowry but paid to the father of the bride.

Unfortunately the translation from Hebrew into modern English lacks a bit and the term "sell" is a pretty rough and harsh translation. One does not really wish to think of a daughter as "goods to be sold", and by no means is that implied in this text. In fact the bulk of the text is dedicated to protecting the daughter against injustices. It should also be noted at this time that a daughter traditionally always

has the final word as to whom she will be marrying.

We can see a very nice example of this played out in the story of Abraham sending his bondservant Eliazar to get a wife for his son Isaac. Eliazar was sent with many “gifts” in which he bestowed them upon Rachel & her father. Abraham in this sense bought Rachel for his son Isaac through his beloved and trusted bondservant Eliazar.

3. I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of Menstrual uncleanness - Lev.15: 19-24. The problem is how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.

Leviticus 15:19 " 'When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening. 20 " 'Anything she lies on during her period will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean. 21 Whoever touches her bed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. 22 Whoever touches anything she sits on must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. 23 Whether it is the bed or anything she was sitting on, when anyone touches it, he will be unclean till evening. 24 " 'If a man lies with her and her monthly flow touches him, he will be unclean for seven days; any bed he lies on will be unclean.

We live in a much different society today, and this is an almost taboo subject unless you are making a TV commercial, or you have a standup comedy act.

However I should clarify for you some points.

One is not prohibited from all contact with a woman while she is on her period of

Menstrual flow. If however you do come in contact with a woman during this time you will not be clean until the sun sets. Also if you decide to sit in a place or lay down in a place in which her flow of blood has been in contact with then you will not be clean.

If a child is playing with a frog, turtle or any reptile we tell the child that he is unclean and must wash his hands before eating lunch. This is much the same thing this passage is telling us. It's not something to be mocked or made fun of; it's simply a sanitary health issue that the Lord is addressing with us. To make light of this would be the same as the people of the Dark Ages making fun of baths and disposing of trash in a proper manner, and then wondering why the Bubonic Plague was running ramped.

4. When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord - Lev.1:9. The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

Leviticus 1:9 He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Unless you are a priest you should not be doing this. And if you are a priest it is to be preformed upon the Lord's alter, which is not in operation today.

5. I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself, or should I ask the police to do it?

Exodus 35:1 Moses assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them,

"These are the things the LORD has commanded you to do: 2 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death. 3 Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

Is your neighbor part of the Israelite community?

6. A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination, Lev. 11:10, it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this? Are there 'degrees' of abomination?

Leviticus 11:9 " 'Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams, you may eat any that have fins and scales. 10 But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales—whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water—you are to detest. 11 And since you are to detest them, you must not eat their meat and you must detest their carcasses. 12 Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be detestable to you.

A point of clarification; eating shellfish is not an abomination to the Lord. We are to detest them however. Do you eat lizard, squirrel, hamster, jellyfish, or bees?

Would these things be detestable to you if they were served on your plate at dinner time? Everyone has things that they find detestable, and we all have our idea of what is and is not food. This passage is part of a larger passage where the Lord is telling His people what is good for them to eat and what is not good for them to eat. Shellfish has large quantities of mercury in the meat and if you eat enough of it the next morning you will feel like you have a hangover because of

the mercury buildup inside your brain.

But to answer your greater question about varying “degrees” of abominations, it all depends on how you are measuring your “degrees”. Sin, which is an archer’s term for missing the bull’s eye, separates us from God, and we have all sinned. In this kind of measurement all sin is the same. However, in terms of consequences for our actions there are many different “degrees”.

Take a thief for example. According to Torah if someone steals from you there are different punishments. If it is money then the thief owes double what he stole, but if it is something used to make a living with like an Oxen then he owes 5 times what he stole. Exodus 22 deals extensively on this subject and what I wrote is a very quick paraphrasing of the chapter.

7. Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle-room here?

Leviticus 21:16 The LORD said to Moses, 17 "Say to Aaron: 'For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. 18 No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; 19 no man with a crippled foot or hand, 20 or who is hunchbacked or dwarfed, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. 21 No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the offerings made to the LORD by fire. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. 22 He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; 23

yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.

Are you a descendant of Aaron? If not then you should not worry about this law because you are not in a position to offer sacrifices upon the alter of the Lord.

If you are a descendant of Aaron then you should ask your question to the High Priest of Israel and allow him to make a determination as to what degree of eye sight loss may be considered an eye defect.

8. Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev. 19:27. How should they die?

Leviticus 19:27 You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard.

Leviticus 21:5 " 'Priests must not shave their heads or shave off the edges of their beards or cut their bodies. 6 They must be holy to their God and must not profane the name of their God. Because they present the offerings made to the LORD by fire, the food of their God, they are to be holy.

Deuteronomy 14:1 You are the children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead, 2 for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.

When looking at scriptural laws it is important to look at all the Scriptures dealing with the subject matter so you have a clear understanding of the law its self as well as how it has been implemented in the past.

My opinion of this law is that it is applying to the Priesthood, and to the pagan death rituals of shaving ones head and cutting one's self for the deceased.

However with my opinion set aside; there is no commandment for one to be put to death that violates this law.

You should not put your friends to death.

9. I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

Leviticus 11:6 the rabbit also, for though it chews cud, it does not divide the hoof, it is unclean to you; 7 and the pig, for though it divides the hoof, thus making a split hoof, it does not chew cud, it is unclean to you. 8 'You shall not eat of their flesh nor touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.

This is an excellent observation. You are correct that touching a football made from pig skin is an unclean thing, and therefore will make you unclean as well. Much like we discussed concerning a woman's menstrual flow. In the same manner baseballs are made from Horse flesh and should also be avoided. Most soccer balls I believe are made from cowhide however and are fine.

But remember it is the flesh that is unclean. The hair of an animal is okay, as we see represented by the camel hair belt that Elijah and John the Baptist wore.

10. My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev.19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? Lev.24:10-16. Couldn't we just burn them to death at a

private family affair, like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)

Leviticus 19: 1Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup>"Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

19 'You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.

Deuteronomy 22:9 "You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, or all the produce of the seed which you have sown and the increase of the vineyard will become defiled. 10 You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. 11 You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together.

Once again we should read all the Scripture pertaining to this subject; which in this question of yours you cover several areas, so we will take it one part at a time.

As is most all of Torah's commandments these commandments are for the health and well being of the Lord's people. When one mixes plants together much of the nutrition is lost and often what is not good for health is multiplied.

The common American ear of corn is an extremely good example of this. The native corn to America was small and very healthy to eat, but due to combining many types of corn together what we are left with today is a very large ear of corn that is high in saturated fats and is no longer as healthy for you.

When dealing with the mixing of clothing materials there are two main Scriptures



that is involved here. The first one that you pointed out is a general Scripture and covered most all the bases for that time period, but the second Scripture clarifies the first a bit more. One should not mix wool & cotton together. Science has proven that mixing these two materials together causes skin rashes and will drain the body of energy. So once again this is a commandment for our health and well being.

There is no consequence of death for violating these laws of Torah, except for what you will bring upon yourself, an unhealthy life. However just to be clear your uncle is indeed breeding plant life against Torah and the produce of his crops will not be clean for him. Yet your Aunt, according to Torah, is just fine in the clothing she decides to wear. Polyester is not from wool but is an oil based product so it is okay to mix it with cotton, just as leather from clean animals is okay to mix with cotton.

Leviticus 24:10 Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the sons of Israel; and the Israelite woman's son and a man of Israel struggled with each other in the camp. <sup>11</sup>The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name and cursed. So they brought him to Moses. (Now his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) <sup>12</sup>They put him in custody so that the command of the LORD might be made clear to them. <sup>13</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>14</sup>"Bring the one who has cursed outside the camp, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then let all the congregation stone him. <sup>15</sup>"You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If anyone curses his God, then he will bear his sin. <sup>16</sup>Moreover, the one

who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall certainly stone him. The alien as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

First we need to understand that the Lord does have an actual name not just a title. Most Jewish people will not speak His name because they love Him dearly and do not wish to be mistaken for blaspheming His name. So for respect to any future Jewish readers I will not say His name here. However most of the time when you read an English translation of the Scriptures and you see “LORD” or “Jehovah”, the Name of the Lord is what is being translated in the text.

Like I said at the beginning the words & meanings of our language has lost most all of its power; so when someone hears a curse it means very little to us in America. But a curse is an extremely powerful thing. It conveys our true feelings and emotions of a subject matter or of a person.

What this young man did would be similar to a young teenager turning around and spitting on a fireman who just rescued him from a fiery death.

In the New Testament there is but one unforgivable sin, and that is the blaspheming of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 12:31

Although this may seem like a very harsh punishment in today’s times, it was not so long ago that people cried out for strict and harsh punishment to those who set fire to the American flag, or those who spat upon our returning troops from war. And we have seen that without punishment the disdain and disregard for our flag as well as those who serve & protect us has spread and multiplied like wildfire. The violence towards our police force is at an all time high and continues to

increase as we make excuses based upon 1<sup>st</sup> amendment rights. Without punishment lawlessness runs ramped.

This is one law in which the consequence is death, if in fact your Uncle does curse his God, & blasphemes the Name of the Lord.

I know this is long but being a professor I am sure you are use to reading much more lengthy works. Like I said at the beginning I would like to discuss this with you if you have any further insight or questions. I do however have a feeling that due to the sarcastic nature of your original work that you really have no interest in discussing this in honest. I believe you were simply lashing out at one person's beliefs on Homosexuality, and the basis for her beliefs. I hope I am wrong in my assumption though.

Thank you for your time,

Xxx

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Yes, reading this does take a considerable amount of almost anyone's time. I'm not sure it's always time well spent.

But, if someone wants to contact me, is it really that hard to find me? It hasn't been for lots of folks to find me or my email or snailmail address. Nevertheless, here's this (and the odd thing is that although this person wrote "I cannot find you..." he or she obviously *did* find me; or maybe the communication meant the person wasn't sure he or she found the actual author of the letter?). But this person apparently found Jesus!

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April 14, 2005

To: JAMES M. KAUFFMAN

Wherever you are now... I cannot find you...

(Professor emeritus)

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Dear James,

I was sent a copy of your letter to Dr. Laura Schlessinger which was a reply to a comment she made on her show when she said that, "for her as an observant Orthodox Jew, homosexuality is an abomination, according to Leviticus 18:22, and cannot be condoned under any circumstance". I myself did not hear the actual conversation but I want to reply to your corresponding letter to her, since it is now in public domain.

You are right in making the point that the old testament is now obsolete.

To say that "today" there should be some sort of ban or punishment imposed on society like in the Old Testament, which demanded the death penalty, is an incorrect application of the laws and regulations that applied back then, to the Israelites who lived under the Mosaic old covenant)law and in a theo-cratic (God ruled) system. I can understand

anybody's outrage if this is what Laura implies. I too would object to that!. Possibly Laura's inability to see that the Messiah has already come in the person of Jesus Christ causes her to still hold to Old Testament Law. But nevertheless I respect her belief in the Torah as God's word as long as she doesn't think she can enforce these beliefs on others in a legal/punitive sense today.

Neither a Christian or an unbeliever are bound to the old laws of Moses as we are not Hebrews, and are not living under their covenant, but that does not mean to say God has softened on His view of such practices, or made some mistake, as the secular humanist or hedonist would like us to think. On the contrary, the ten commandments, the "moral" laws of God given to Moses at Sinai still stand, and still reveal the Holiness of God, which has not changed - as if He was fickle, or a sinful human who needs to justify himself, albeit an inconsistent one at that? I say let God be true, and every man a liar...No mere man could have dreamed them up! They are impossible to keep.

So I must say that Laura's comment would be totally accepted by any person who desires to follow the God of the bible wholeheartedly - whether Christian or Jew or whatever! But only in the sense that we recognise God's abhorrence of such practice. Even evolutionary thinking would admit that if we are all homosexual it would not be conducive to survival of the fittest and the future of our race! Furthermore genetics proves the contrary. The jury is still out as to whether

homosexuality is unable to be helped due to genetics as both sides of the scientific debate seem to be able to prove their own bias scientifically. Mankind are sinners and as a result of our own lusts and depravity nothing is beyond us I believe. Many are guilty of re-creating God in our "own image" because we cannot accept His terms of what He should be like! You may scoff at God's word as much as you like, as many others have done, but the final reality will be when you stand before Him to give an account some day, with? or without? Christ as your defense. Heaven or hell is the result as none can stand in their own righteousness. Only Christ's atonement can save us by faith in that alone.

I accept that society generally has a different worldview than the religiously minded and do not wish to be told how to live by such a book which they do not even believe to be true, let alone the inspirer of it. Morality today depends on situational ethics and black and white are no longer allowed.

It is only the civil, ceremonial and religious levitical laws of Moses, (you have selected a few of the many levitical ones), which were abolished at the cross when Christ fulfilled every requirement of Mosaic law by becoming the "once and for all" sacrificial lamb which would satisfy all the demands of God's justice - by being punished in man's place - thus satisfying both the holiness and justice of God the father in one act, and allowing the "repentant" sinner to go free. The O.T Law

only foreshadowed and made way for the ultimate fulfillment of those sacrifices (which was Christ) who paid the King's ransom - his life for our's. A righteous man (a lamb without spot or blemish) had to die to enable the guilty sinner to be pardoned.

But in saying all that - whoever does not accept Christ's atoning sacrifice will bear the full brunt of God's wrath on judgement day for not accepting Christ's offer of forgiveness! The impenitent sinner remains guilty for rejecting God's grace because of his unbelief!

Believing in Christ and following him by taking up one's cross (giving your life back to His Lordship or control) is the only escape for mankind. Only faith in what Christ did on the cross can save you.

It is only those who do not want to accept God's offer of salvation that "hate" hearing of God's standards, from his "messengers" who are there to warn them?. Don't shoot the messenger! The Jews also killed their true prophets, and finally their Messiah himself (with help from the gentile Romans)! This is a good picture of all mankind. But in saying that, it was God's will for Him to die, as spoken centuries prior, to show how depraved and wicked man can get! People still try to put God on trial today - how absurd!

Man has been given free choice and with that comes also the consequences of making the wrong choice. God will not violate your right to choose, but He warns of the consequences so that man is without excuse. God cannot go against His word - as if He was a man that He should lie?.

What an unbelieving person decides to live like is entirely their choice as we all have been given a free will...

I think some Christians and Jews practising Judaism expect everybody to live like them and impose their belief system on others, but forget that others have a different worldview and that they must accept the lifestyles of others and love them regardless. The converse is also true - the unbelieving hate the believing person's lifestyle and sometimes belittle the godly, and try to push their own agendas also, and it is these two facts that are the root of the conflict. It will go on until the end of the matter. Christ will sort it out at His return.

The exact context of Laura's comment is very important obviously, but I do not know who she was talking to, or what she meant exactly by it, but as she said she is a Jew, she seems to be keeping to her faith of Judaism and sticking to the religious writings from antiquity, which is part of her identity. One still has the freedom of speech in the USA last time I heard? - as do you also. In regards to her comment, I think the main question is: does she expect mainstream society today to adhere to her views and ban homosexuality or punish it in the same way as recorded in the Torah, or Law of Moses, also called the old testament by Christians? Or was she addressing a fellow believer in Judaism? If she is expecting society to go back to the ways of old, I expect she would be asking something of society which God himself has not specifically asked of them. If you will bear with me, I will explain what I mean when



saying that.

Firstly, the book of Leviticus is a written record of God's Laws which God Himself spoke to Moses at Mt. Sinai to be given to God's chosen, circumcised, covenant relationship people - the Hebrews / Israelites - which He brought out from Egyptian slavery by way of many miracles etc. They were from the seed of Abraham and later called Jews. They were given God's Laws to them as a chosen people, and He promised in return that He would bless them, and in later days, all other nations through them, if they obeyed and followed these laws and commands, etc.

He did not give these laws to any of the other nations, who were later referred to as the Gentiles - thus distinguishing them from the Jews.

God's intent was that Israel would be the custodian of God's recorded Word until the promised Messiah came, who must be from the lineage of Abraham etc., ie. a Jew as the prophets foretold in significant detail as early as 3500 years ago. So national religious and racial purity was a must hence marrying foreigners etc. who worshiped other Gods was not the flavor of the day!

While the 5 books of Moses contained God's Moral commands (eg. 10 Commandments), they also contained civil statutes, religious, and ceremonial regulations to the Israelites - but only the Moral Law ie. the 10 Commandments were to be carried over into the New Testament age I believe. The laws of God are a "mirror" to show His holiness and our corresponding sinfulness (like looking in the mirror). The law cannot

redeem or save us, but it causes us to look for a "cleansing agent" and points us to Christ - the "soap" because Christ at the cross, became the final sacrifice to for all our sin.

The levitical sacrificial system foreshadowed the true sacrifice to come. This is a key to understanding scripture. Even though the Jews "as a nation" rejected Him (especially the religious sects and system of the day, although many of the common people, the masses, did love and follow Him, only some accepted His messiahship) the levitical sacrifices continued eg. The offering up of bulls and goats etc. - right up until the destruction of Jerusalem and their temple in 70AD. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because they had not recognised the time of their visitation by Him. So God rejected them - (but not forever). After 70 and 135 AD the Jews dispersed away from Israel for almost 2000 years until the Nation was reborn in 1948 due to Zionism etc. once again fulfilling the scriptures. To ensure that the old sacrificial laws would become obsolete Christ prophesied that the temple and city of Jerusalem would be destroyed by an army, which was fulfilled in 70AD by the Romans. Even dates etc. can be deduced from scripture as to timing of all these events.

So, as it turned out, Jesus has been the only person to ever fit the ancient prophecies and was recognised by many Jews who became Christians and then out from there, and the rest is history. Christ is Greek for Messiah which is Hebrew for the "anointed one" of God. He is the

fulfilment of the Abrahamic blessing and only He can reconcile mankind back to God. The orthodox Jew, however does not recognise Jesus Christ as the messiah because they were looking for a Messiah "King" to deliver them from their Roman oppressors, not a "suffering" Messiah. Such is the two-fold nature of the messiah. It is ironic that this person that the most part of the Jews rejected 2000 years ago is to come again and become their Messiah "deliverer" in times to come, thus fulfilling the latter part of the prophecies about Him.

During His first advent Christ spoke of His soon rejection, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension back to heaven prior to these immediate events, as well as the destruction of Jerusalem (in 70AD), and then on to His second coming at the time of the end to deliver Israel from the invading armies at Armageddon when the nations of the world surround Israel to destroy her for once and for all.

Now you may not believe anything I have said and may view the biblical writings with total contempt, but in light of what I have said in view of scripture, I am also able to answers all of your questions without trying very hard at all. You are right in seeing that these Levitical laws are absurd if followed in this day and age, but they were not written for us. It is obvious you are a learned man with many letters after your name and great accomplishment, but do not throw the baby out with the bathwater just yet...your eternal life will depend on whether you accept or reject what I have to tell you after I answer some of your

questions, which you have thrown at Laura.

Here are some quick answers to your questions - although I've already answered them...

a) When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odour for the Lord (Lev. 1:9). The problem is my neighbours. They claim the odour is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant (old testament) law living in Israel. Christ was the final sacrifice meaning price paid in full by his blood on the altar for the sins of all mankind. Hence no need for levitical laws any more. You may however be a Jew who does not recognise Christ as the messiah which leaves you in a peculiar position as you cannot sacrifice for your own sins at the temple now since it was destroyed in 70AD by the Romans as Christ foretold during His first advent.

b) I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. And slavery was not sanctioned by God, neither was polygamy, but such was the customs of all the nations in those days, that God gave protective commands to protect such a slave by way of fair treatment. Read the context and understand it before you knock it. Much of our judaeo-christian justice system ethics derive from biblical principals -

funny that?.

c) I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanness (Lev. 15:19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offence.

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. Furthermore I would not tell you if I was a woman and you were a stranger neither, but a husband and wife should be communicating better than that? Purity was needed prior to sacrificing for one's and the nation's sin at the altar.

d) Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighbouring nations.

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. Plus slavery is now generally been illegal.

e) I have a neighbour who insists on working on the Sunday (the Sabbath). In the book of Exodus verse 35:2 it clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. And sorry - the Sabbath day of rest was Saturday for the Jew (the last day of week remember?)- Sunday is when christians celebrate Christ's resurrection.

f) A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev. 11:10), it is a lesser abomination than homo\*\*\*uality.

I don't agree. Can you settle this?

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. Shellfish and other scavenger type animals like vultures etc. are not Kosher to the Jew and those old laws were purely for health and sanitary reasons in those days. An "abomination" is not graded. Simply a not done or detested practice.

g) Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle room here?

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. Only the Levitical priests could approach the altar of God in the temple once they had completed their purification rites. The priest represented Christ, who is the new Testament sacrifice on the altar, who had no skin blemishes etc like sores, warts etc. A physical representation of a spiritual condition called sin. Hence the priest needed to be a healthy representative to foreshadow Christ. If he was not up to scratch - God would strike him dead anyhow. Still keen?

h) Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev.19:27. How should they die?

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. The penalty was not death here? You are getting carried away now! Try researching harder next time!

i) I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me

unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. Enough said. Silly reasoning isn't it? Footballs all synthetic now anyhow.

j) My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev. 19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them?

(Lev.24:10-16). Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14).

Answer: No. You are not a Jew under Mosaic Old covenant law living in Israel. You can live how you please. God wanted a holy set apart people who would make the way for the Messianic line. His ways are not ours. Be careful how you mock.

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you again for reminding us that God's word is eternal and unchanging. I welcome your reply.

Final Answer: You are assuming that because the bible says something to a specific group of people at a specific time that it says the same thing to everybody for all time. If I take that thought to the extreme - does that also mean that I should build an ark today because he told

Noah to do it? Much of the old testament is a history of the people of Israel and how God dealt with them. Although we can still learn many things from what God did back then, as to His person and holiness etc, it doesn't mean that He is still saying exactly the same thing to me or you today. If a person uses the bible incorrectly, it appears to be stupid and implies that God himself is stupid. Obviously you are not stupid, so don't miss the whole thing because of somebody else's ignorance.

If Laura was saying this to the Christian Church or to Jewish believers in God (and the caller possibly was an orthodox Jew) then what she said is consistent in terms of what both the old and new testaments say in regards to a "believer's" sexual purity - just as believing heterosexuals should not be committing adultery, fornication, paedophilia, etc. Which did result in stoning back then! Jesus quoted many times from the Law of Moses including Leviticus, and went even further as to say that simply "thinking" of doing these things is sin. We should not as professing believers live like we are unbelievers, or we will be called hypocrites!?. Also when the church is silent on morality issues it is criticised, alternately, when it speaks out there is also an outcry! There was a catholic monk centuries ago who had homosexual tendencies and desires who abstained from practising it, due to his convictions. Very commendable. It was an inward choice to deny his 'old' fleshly lusts.



If you are secure and mature enough in what you believe, you should be big enough to handle the flack of other worldviews. I have gone into each case you have mentioned above but that is not dealing with the main issues at stake here, which are homosexuality and Christianity...not the various Levitical laws that you have singled out that seem absurd in our present context.

It seems to me that you may have been brought up in the church by your grasp on scripture?, or you simply cut and pasted this stuff from a website, or you may be a homosexual now, perhaps just a Christian siding with the gay movement, or an atheist, but whatever the case may be - it is clear that you do not believe the bible to be the inerrant word of God, or you would not carve it up dishonestly or ignorantly as you have done to portray God as a fool, or His word as inconsistent? I do not know if you heard the original conversation either, and you may have just attacked Dr. Laura S. back with your witty reply borrowed from another gay / new age website or something because it is your pet agenda? I must say it was well done! It will achieve what you intended. But as I have shown god is no fool. If you have no respect for God's word this will probably be fruitless?

Perhaps you fully understand what I have said and have faith in God, if that is so, I wouldn't expect you to attack a Jew practising Judaism like this, even if she is not fully up to speed with who her Messiah is. The Jews day will come when He will redeem them because they are the

apple of His eye!!!

If you got this far there may be hope for you yet!

I hope to hear back from you!

Xxx

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Unfortunately, I haven't been all that hard for people to find. And a lot of them have "socked it to me" in spite of the fact that I didn't write the letter. But, I get the impression that, given my standard reply, that doesn't really matter. They'd like to teach me a lesson or two anyway. And my professional work in special education seems to be an issue in some cases.

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April 5, 2006

Dear Dr. Kauffman,

Please find below, an e-mail you apparently penned in response to a radio show by Dr. Laura Schlesinger.

I'd be interested to know if this is a genuine e-mail from you.

After reviewing your vita and other references, I find it hard to believe that someone at your station in life would actually indulge a radio personality with a response requiring such an inquest. That's why I am questioning the validity of the letter.

If this is not a genuine e-mail, I'd like to refer you to several resources that will post on your behalf. IE [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com)

Considering you have been published countless times on emotional and

behavior problems, special needs and special education, this e-mail looks to be out of character. Unlike this letter, your books and white papers offer hope. I have a niece with a severe impairment that often forces the family to survive on faith alone. I'm sure you would agree on the value of faith and hope in ones life.

I can personally testify that my faith has carried me through some of the darkest times in my life. As a fellow educator, I'd be interested in starting a dialog with you regarding my experience.

Finally, of the 31,173 verses in the Bible, this email quotes about a dozen negatively. I believe the true intent of this email was not to educate, but to bash Christianity, the Bible and inflame it's recipients.

I look forward to hearing from you directly.

Sincerely,

Xxx.

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April 18, 2010

Dr. Kauffman,

Were you kidding with the Dr. Laura comments on homosexuality? Or were you unaware that the punishment for ALL sin is death? Christians LOVE homosexuals. We hate sin. We ALL sin. All sin is the same not better or worse. How can I cast the first stone if I am a sinner? As a sinner I am called to LOVE other sinners the way GOD loves me. We are all suffering the consequences of

forgiven sin. God is LOVE. We all fall short.

Xxx

Special Ed. Teacher

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May 24, 2010

Professor Kauffman:

Your response to Dr. Laura's statements about homosexuality were humorous. However as Dr. Laura rejects the New Testament as our divine guidance for today here is what it has to say regarding the subject of homosexuality. This is the instruction applicable to Christians today and forever. Homosexuality is still a sin.

***Romans Chapter 1 beginning at verse 18 and particularly verses 26 & 27***

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May 30, 2010

Dear James M. Kauffman , Ed.D.

On a message board I read your response to the following. "In her radio show, Dr Laura Schlesinger said that, as an observant Orthodox Jew, homosexuality is an abomination according to Leviticus 18:22 , and cannot be condoned under any circumstance. The following"response is an open letter to Dr. Laura, penned by a US resident, which was posted on the Internet.

It's funny, as well as informative."

May I offer you my study of original sin in hopes it will be of value.

**ORIGINAL SIN**

When the peoples of earth do not understand the third chapter of Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve, and the sin that was forbidden for each and every one of us we cannot understand God, goodness, holiness, or the rest of the Bible.

Departing from God and following the ways of Satan is established in Genesis and revisited throughout every story in Scripture. In the Garden there are only two powers available for man to serve. And today, as it has been since Eden, there are only two powers. This truth is restated in the story of Noah and those in the flood – the population of the earth divided into two groups. If Adam and Eve were placed in the story of Noah, they would not be in the Ark with righteous Noah. Adam and Eve would be in the water for they were deceived by Satan. Their sin was sexual for it was a sexually perverse generation in the water at that time and so it is today. And the land was filled with violence as our land is today.

If placed in the story of just and righteous Lot, the first couple would not have been delivered with righteous Lot. Adam and Eve would have been citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. An understanding of this first sin that spread so rapidly is critical for the salvation and well being of mankind, for all sorrows ultimately come from the continuation of original sin.

I believe oral sex was the sin in Eden. Adam and Eve had no one to sin with except each other. Romans 1:28-31 describes men with men and all those who give up the natural use of the body to do that which is not natural. This includes all the sexually perverse: same-sex partners and heterosexual partners married or unmarried who engage in oral and anal sex.

This Scripture goes on to tell us what comes out of the minds of those given to the

sex forbidden by God. “Being filled with” means their minds are filled with the list of evils that is then listed. Below is the list of what fills the minds of those given to unnatural sex.

**All unrighteousness:** (If no one had sinned by this first sin in Eden, the earth would still be an Eden with no need for ten more commandments.)

**Fornication:** (The name of the sexual activities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Gentiles, the mount of Esau, and Babylon.)

**Wickedness:** (The opposite of righteousness.)

**Covetousness:** (Greed)

**Maliciousness:** (Spiteful and cruel.)

**Full of envy:** (Greedy, jealous, full of malice, and resentful.)

**Murder:** (All murder comes from the minds of the sexually perverse. If no one had committed original sin, oral sex, we would still be in a paradise without pain and suffering. When sin ends murder will also end. War will end. Original sin is the root of all that is wrong, all the evils that are committed. It is the root of society’s problems, and until the root of all sin is acknowledged and removed these atrocities will continue. I am not saying all sexually perverse people will commit murder. But all murders come from the minds of those who commit unnatural sexual acts.)

**Debate:** (Their main debate is with God, rebellion against God. They debate truth, leading to all the religions and divisions in religions. The lie they fell for is the opposite of truth, therefore, they change truth. The sexually perverse are the unjust. Jesus is just and the unjust debate with and oppose Jesus.)

**Deceit:** (Lying, injustice, corruption. All corruption in the church, in the business world, and at every level of government comes from those who have disregarded this first law for all mankind.)

**Haters of God:** (Regardless of what they claim; they hate God. To hate God is to break the greatest commandment - to love God.)

**Proud:** (This is the pride God hates. God never walks in a gay pride parade. He never attends a same-sex marriage.)

**Boasters:** (We have all seen this demonstrated.)

**Inventors of evil things:** (This would include pornography, sex gadgets, group sex, etc.)

**Without natural affection:** (Today, many are given to unnatural affection as was the perverse generation in the days of Noah as demonstrated in the molestation of children, incest, rape, same-sex relationships, pornography, prostitution, the high divorce rate, gangs, physical and verbal abusiveness, and the demeaning of women, etc.)

**Unmerciful:** (In the darkness original sin creates those captured by Satan cannot see that they do not care about others. When the Bible says “woe to you,” that does not mean “God will get you.” It means we will have woes: sorry, pain, sickness, injustice, and unhappiness if we as a people choose to sin. Yet, those given to unnatural sex prefer to please their own desires even if it brings all the evils listed above. The greatest commandment is to love God and one another. But those given to the forbidden sex of Eden actually are showing hate for God, self, and also for others. They have little mercy for their fellow brothers and

sisters.

Read the list again and analyze how a nation could put an end to every evil on that list. Isn't the answer simply by putting an end to all unnatural sex? Wouldn't it be much more advantageous to begin a campaign of actions designed to end this so very popular sin rather than to condone, defend, practice, bless, and spread it as many organizations, churches, and our government are doing? However, it is the responsibility of Christianity and not the government to bring an end to sin. A holy Christianity will bring an end to sin. The end of sin will bring heaven to earth.

As stated, there are only two powers available for man to serve, God or Satan. Everyone on earth stands with one or the other and so it will be at the end of this age. In Isaiah 1:9, that truth is stated this way, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom and like unto Gomorrah." There is no fence to sit on, no other group to claim to be a member of, and no place to hide. A remnant is left at the end and at that time almost everyone will have been deceived just as the couple in the garden was. In this darkness many will believe oral sex is not sinful.

The Remnant	Sodom and Gomorrah
A few	The masses
Believe in God	Deceived by Satan
Upright	Fallen
Holy	Profane
The narrow way	The broad way



No unnatural sex	Oral and anal sex.
Truth	Lies
Upright	Fallen
Wheat	Tares
Lambs	Goats
Good	Evil
God	Satan
Christ	Antichrist
Just	Unjust

Adam and Eve were the first to be deceived by Satan and if placed in this illustration they would be part of Sodom and Gomorrah. They would not stand with the remnant who believe in the ways of God. There is no other explanation for the sin in Eden. By removing original sin (the root of all other sins) from the earth all other evils will eventually come to an end.

I can understand why many heterosexual couples who engage in oral sex believe two people of the same sex can marry. After all, the heterosexual and the homosexual couple are committing the same acts. I believe this is why so many heterosexual couples are in favor of same-sex relationships, marriage, and ordination of the homosexual. One major problem is that our society does not see oral sex as sin for each and every one of us.

**Three verses speaking of marriage.**

**Mark 10:6-9**, “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his

wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” From the beginning marriage was designed to be between a male and a female. To disagree with this is to disagree with God. The following two verses give a man and his wife instructions not to sin.

**Ephesians 5:21**, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” The fear of the Lord is to hate evil as simply stated in Proverbs 8:13, “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.” A man and his wife are capable of committing evil when submitting in a sexual way. However, they should not commit evil with each other.

**Colossians 3:18**, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.” This verse means that husbands and wives can do what is unfit. And the cross reference to “as it is unfit in the Lord” sends me to Ephesians 5:3, to explain what is unfit. <sup>®</sup>“But fornication, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you.” Oral and anal sex is forbidden and unfit for husbands and wives for it is stated in Jude 7 that the sex of Sodom and Gomorrah is called fornication, “Sodom and Gomorrah giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh are set forth for an example.” So we can see that God forbids all men and women, all husbands and wives, to use their bodies for fornication, the sex of Sodom and Gomorrah. This truth is reinforced and made clear in 1 Corinthians 6:13 where it declares, “**The body is not made for fornication, but for the Lord.**”

**The purpose of Jesus.**

**1 John 3:8**, “He that committeth sin is of the devil. For this purpose the Son of

God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” The purpose of Christianity should be the same as the purpose of Jesus. And that is to put an end to the sin that began in Eden. The end of sin will bring heaven on earth. My prayer is that Christianity will some day unite, require all members to be holy, and then speak with one voice to put an end to sin.

Xxx

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June 3, 2010

Hey there little lady.

Well for me this is blasphemey.

Because it makes light of God/s word thru ignorance of man.

God's word is spiritually discerned and is not comprehencable thru the carnal mind.

The carnal mind is deep seated hate towards God.

SO men in general are very ignorant and God winks at it because of His glorious love toward man.

But be sure sin will take it's tolle on all who continue in it.

Whether ignorant or deliberate.

God demands and commands all to repent or be destroyed.

Not much options HUH.

I fear God because I know how awesome He is in my life and I fear and tremble at His words.

My heart is grieved when others talk so disrespectfully of God and His Holy

word.

We have the testimony of the whole world during the days of Moses and therefore we all are without excuse before God Almighty.

I choose to give Him Glory and I choose to give Him Praise and worship because He is worthy of all of our bodies spirits and souls and minds to give Him Glory and Honor and Praise always.

I am not to compassionate upon them who do differently.

God has His prophets today just like He had them then and they can do judgement as God wills.

The Bible the word of God Almighty says mock not lest your bands be made stronger.

SO if you think it is tuff now keep mocking and you will see just how tuff it can get..

To God be the Glory!!!!!!! FOrever Amen!!!!!!!

God Bless,

Xxx

[The following was included in the above email and forwarded in response to an email saying that the letter is funny]:

Xxx has asked that we consider these issues in the book of Leviticus. So we are forwarding them to you to kick-start your Bible reading. If you're not acquainted with this book, it will certainly peek your interest in renewed scripture study... :- )

!!

Some have seen this letter before, but if you haven't, it truly will serve to make

you ask yourself: Am I glad I was born a gentile? May it pick up your day, if it needs pickin' up.

Xxx

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Of course, there's the matter of context. Some of my correspondents have concluded that what the Bible says in the book of Leviticus makes sense, it's just that I(?) have misunderstood the context.

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June 6, 2010

Friends,

thanks for forwarding Prof. Kaufman's

<<http://people.virginia.edu/~jmk9t/VITA.pdf>> letter to Laura whats-her-face, but pretty much, I think the Biblical quotes are taken out of context:

1. the one about possessing slaves is in the context of human relations in times of dependency. the whole section needs to be read, beginning with Leviticus 25:35
2. the whole section from Exodus 21:1 to 21:12 needs to be read. the Jews had just escaped centuries of slavery in Egypt. by commandment, "slaves" of Jews, if there were to be any, were not to be of the same kind; they had rights and were to be freed after six years.
3. the whole section, Leviticus 15 has to do with survival, in this case maintaining health and hygiene in ancient times when the germ theory was not yet known. it is not about placing stigma on women during menstrual cycles. there are many conditions where bodily discharges can and do transmit contagion.

4. all of the section, Leviticus 1:1-17 should be read. the Ten Commandments forbid murder; animal sacrifice replaced the human sacrifice story of the early Bible, and also became a ritual observance of Nature and thanks, could be carried over to the Thanksgiving turkey of today. at any rate, it was to be done in the Temple, not in a backyard barbecue, so there were no neighbors to object.

5. actually, the Sabbath is by Commandment the most holy of days, moreso than any yearly holiday, and breaking it was considered an act of capital disobedience. this is difficult for many people to understand today, but it doesn't diminish the importance of a day of rest each week.

meanwhile, suicide is forbidden; death sentences were the responsibility of the courts that took their work seriously, with all rights of the defendant to explain himself/herself. pretty much, everything in the ancient culture was arranged to permit "solemn rest" on the Sabbath, unlike today when people are pressured to keep working. therefore, observing the Sabbath was the norm, not the exception.

6. the actual translation of Leviticus 11:10 in my Oxford version is that eating shellfish is "detestable" not "abomination". the terms are used differently. in the subsequent verses, eating birds of prey is considered "abomination." to my knowledge, there is no evidence of degrees of abomination, and there is no evidence of comparison between the kosher laws and sexual behavior.

7. the whole chapter, Leviticus 21 needs to be read. the Temple priests were few and far between; they were considered to be [or become] holy and were entrusted with the Ark. for this, they were to be as perfect in appearance, thought, discipline and behavior as humanly possible. it is difficult for people to imagine

these days - except for the Dalai Lama - but among Jews, the responsibility and the potential are still there, passed through the "Cohanim" family name Cohen, Cohn, etc. Jewish law always permits "wiggle room" when it's required for health and survival, but it's not taken lightly.

8. all of Leviticus 19 should be read to understand the whole set of ethics conveyed by the Ten Commandments. the hair-cutting thing is part of a set of prohibitions against self-mutilation. it has to do with self-respect, not fashion.

9. Leviticus 11:6-8 acknowledges that fooling with carcasses of unkosher animals are also to be avoided. there are good reasons for that. a debatable point concerns the use of pig hearts and valves in cardiac transplantation. I'm not up on this but would guess that rabbi's would rule on the side of saving lives, if pig parts were the only alternative.

10. Leviticus has to do with overcoming all kinds of superstitions and rites practiced by other tribes and cultures in the Middle East. these included agricultural practices, meant to cast spells or destroy crops. Leviticus 19:19 prohibiting mixing seeds in fields may have to do with protecting the genotypes so that true-bearing crops can be propagated year after year. seed-savers know the value of maintaining distances among crops that could intermix.

I don't know the reason or interpretation for prohibiting garments of different materials. one source says that it was specifically against wool and linen mixes because it tended to restrict adequate ventilation in desert climates.

11. all of Leviticus 24 needs to be read in order to understand the context of blasphemy, ethics and civic behavior. this relates to the Commandment against

taking the name of God in vain. blaspheming God = Israel, is considered an offense against the whole community or nation. therefore, the punishment has to be conducted by [restricted to] only those who heard the curse. the story cited is dramatic because the defendant is the son of an Israeli mother and an Egyptian father, and the Bible goes to lengths to detail the family's identity.

the professor is wrong in his interpretation of Leviticus 20:14 because there is mention that punishment is to be a "private family affair." unlike other cultures that allow husbands to kill their wives, etc., Judaism prohibits families from taking the law into their own hands.

. . . . .

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What kind of people write to me? Well, all kinds, as it has turned out. The next chapter is focused on that—the diversity of views expressed, and I suppose the diversity of the people who express those views.

But here's one more on the Scripture side, this from another person with an advanced academic degree who apparently didn't bother to find out about the origins of the letter but is quite certain I wrote it and that his or her interpretation of Scripture is correct. Notice the misspelling of my name (perhaps out of habit) in the greeting. And, this person has the chutzpah to intimate that although I've broken the golden rule by writing the letter to Dr. Laura, he or she has not done so by false accusation and that his or her letter contains none of the tongue-in-cheek character of the original letter! Oh, well... I'll take it as a joke, just as I did the original letter to Dr. Laura.

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June 20, 2010

James M. Kauffman, Ed.D. Professor Emeritus,  
Dept. Of Curriculum, Instruction, and Special Education  
University of Virginia

Dear Dr. Kaufman,

I was given access to your letter to Dr.Laura Schlesinger and I don't know if she responded to you. Therefore I will attempt to answer your questions in a sense of interfaith dialog.

You should realize that if you are not Jewish, there is no expectation that any of the rules, regulations, or even suggestions of the Hebrew Bible are applicable to you. If you find that it offers you good advice (be concerned for the welfare of the least fortunate in your community), you should certainly follow it to the best of you ability. It is history of the Israelite people and their contract with their deity.

If you are a Christian, you should know that most Christians believe that the Covenant of the Hebrew Bible was superseded by the New Covenant in Christ Jesus.

If you are a follower of any other faith, I'd suggest you adhere to the widely found principle, treat others as you would be treated.

However, since you expressed specific information regarding certain Biblical passages, I will answer you to the best of my ability.

You wrote,

I do need some advice from you, however, regarding some other elements of

God's Laws and how to follow them.

1. Leviticus 25:44 states that I may possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify?

Why can't I own Canadians?

1. Answer, You must know that "may" is permission, not a mandate.

Unfortunately, if you wanted to possess slave you would be running afoul of American law. Judaism holds that "the law of the land is the law" unless it specifically requires violation of an operative Jewish Law or Mitzvah. If you truly wish to own a slave, I believe this would be legal today in any of several Muslim countries. Regarding the problem of Canadians, you will have to ask your friend since it is his rule.

2. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price for her?

2. Answer. If you truly have a daughter you would like to sell, her value would depend on her age. If she is a minor, I'd recommend that you go to a child pornography site and let your desires be known. If she is an adult, her price would be reflected in the political office she is elected or appointed to.

3. I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of Menstrual uncleanness - Lev.15: 19-24. The problem is how do I tell? I have tried asking, but most women take offense.

3. Answer. Judaism believes that the appropriate venue for sex is within marriage. You should really discuss this with your wife. 4. When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord - Lev.1:9. The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

4. Answer According to the Bible, animal sacrifices can only be offered in the Temple in Jerusalem. Since its destruction in the year 70 CE there is no animal sacrifice in Jewish worship. If you are looking for aromas, you might try the Catholic Mass which uses incense that is linked to the Temple service. Regarding your neighbors, if you would have the animal properly butchered and invite your neighbors over for the barbecue, most of them (except for the religious Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and vegetarians) would probably enjoy it.

5. I have a neighbor who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35:2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself, or should I ask the police to do it?

5. Answer. If your neighbor is Jewish, you might ask him why he does not want to share the sabbath joy with his family and friends. Under no circumstances should you act individually or even call the police. You should take the matter to a bet din (rabbinical court) in your community (but only if you are a Jew). Even the Bet Din would require testimony from two acceptable witnesses.

6. A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination, Lev. 11:10, it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this? Are there 'degrees' of abomination?

6. Answer. Yes, if you accept that there are degrees of being pregnant.

7. Lev. 21:20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20, or is there some wiggle-room here?

7. Answer Are you a Cohan? Otherwise you had better not approach the altar.

On the other hand, "You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Mathew 7:5

8. Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev. 19:27. How should they die?

8. Answer. Peacefully at the age of 120.

9. I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

9. Answer. Go back and read the second paragraph.

10. My uncle has a farm. He violates Lev.19:19 by planting two different crops in the same field, as does his wife by wearing garments made of two different kinds of thread (cotton/polyester blend). He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary that we go to all the trouble of getting the whole town together to stone them? Lev.24:10-16. Couldn't we just burn them to death at a private family affair, like we do with people who sleep with their in-laws? (Lev. 20:14)

10. Answer. Your uncle is either a poor farmer or has mastered inter cropping.

Now I have a question for you.

How do you like it when people ridicule your special education students?

If you know nothing else about Judaism, take this teaching of Hillel to heart, "do not unto others, that which is hurtful to you."

Sincerely,

Xxx, Ph.D.

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