

We Don't Hate Sin So We Don't Understand What Happened to the Canaanites

An Addendum to "Divine Genocide" Arguments

CLAY JONES

Christian Apologetics Program

Biola University

La Mirada, California

The new atheists herald God's ordering of the destruction of the Canaanites as evidence for "divine genocide." Paul Copan's article, "Is Yahweh a Moral Monster?" in a recent issue of *Philosophia Christi*, along with his reply to Wes Morriston's response in this issue, helps surface some important considerations in this discussion.¹

But I think that some related yet underappreciated factors deserve a closer look. For example, do we genuinely comprehend the depth of Canaanite sins? Do we understand the significance of God's having all but destroyed Israel for committing Canaanite sins? Could it be that because our culture today commits these same Canaanite sins we are inoculated against the seriousness of these sins and so think God's judgment unfair? How might a theology of the human heart and its sinful condition illuminate a motivation for "divine genocide" claims? In short, most of our problems regarding God's ordering the destruction of the Canaanites come from the fact that God hates sin but we do not. If so, are "divine genocide" claims more of a

ABSTRACT: Skeptics challenge God's fairness for ordering Israel to destroy the Canaanites, but a close look at the horror of Canaanite sinfulness, the corruptive and seductive power of their sin as seen in the Canaanization of Israel, and God's subsequently instituting Israel's own destruction because of Israel's committing Canaanite sin reveals that God was just in His ordering the Canaanite's destruction. But Western culture's embrace of "Canaanite sin" inoculates it against the seriousness of that sin and so renders it incapable of responding to Canaanite sin with the appropriate moral outrage.

1. Paul Copan, "Is Yahweh a Moral Monster? The New Atheists and Old Testament Ethics," *Philosophia Christi* 10 (2008): 7–37; Wes Morriston, "Did God Command Genocide? A Challenge to the Biblical Inerrantist," *Philosophia Christi* 11 (2009): 7–26; and Paul Copan, "Yahweh Wars and the Canaanites: Divinely-Mandated Genocide or Corporate Capital Punishment? Responses to Critics," *Philosophia Christi* 11 (2009): 73–90.

rationalization of the human condition and do not responsibly reason about the rightness of God's actions toward the Canaanites?

If that is the case, it seems that we need to understand the horror of sin, especially our sin, if we are to reconcile what appears to be God's harsh judgment. "When we merely say that we are bad," C. S. Lewis said, "the 'wrath' of God seems a barbarous doctrine; as soon as we perceive our badness, it appears inevitable, a mere corollary from God's goodness."² It is not enough, then, for us to dispassionately say that the Canaanites were bad or even wicked; for the impact of those words are diminished in our culture.³ Even the significance of particular types of sin, like bestiality, is somewhat lost on us. For there often is a certain "whatever that's about" dismissal that familiarly punctuates a response to modern confrontations of "ancient evils," perhaps as a way of coping with our denial of what really is the case.

What I am suggesting is not merely vibrant language usage that better captures the brazen experience of evil. Although it is interesting to note that when language becomes diluted, morally, it can help tame and pacify our outrage toward evil.⁴ I have come to discern that as a matter of attitude or outlook, we need to look much more frankly at human evil than we customarily do, especially when we are engaged in philosophical reflection on the problem of evil.

Thus, in this paper I try to offer frank evidence that documents and illustrates the seriousness of Canaanite sin and thereby attempts to help form a reason for why God reasoned and acted in the way that He did toward the Canaanites and their sin. I do try to illustrate the depths of Canaanite depravity in a matter of fact and nontitillating manner as possible.⁵ Yet much of what follows is admittedly disturbing. And if it is not disturbing to us, perhaps

2. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 46.

3. Consider that "my bad" is now often used jokingly and "wicked" is applied by surfers to particularly big waves or skiers to particularly challenging ski slopes.

4. Moreover, there is biblical precedence for using language that frankly talks about sin. For example, in Ezek. 23:20–1, the Lord condemns Jerusalem who prostituted herself and "lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses." Elsewhere we read of a Levite dismembering his concubine after the men of a town gang-raped her (Judg. 19), of the men of Sodom (a Canaanite city) trying to rape angels (Gen. 19), of Onan's *coitus interruptus* and his widow playing the prostitute to have sex with her father-in-law (Gen. 38).

5. Morrison wrote that "the most accurate and up-to-date translations of the Ugaritic texts" do not "provide evidence of a particularly 'debauched' or 'cruel' culture. . . ." ("Did God Command Genocide?" 18). But Morrison did not look closely enough at what the two sources he referenced actually said. Pardee did write that "The fertility cult so dear to the heart of older generations of Hebrew and Ugaritic scholars shows up clearly in *neither corpus*; the sexual depravity that some have claimed to be characteristic of the Canaanite cult in general has left no trace in any of the Ugaritic texts translated above. . . ." (*Ritual and Cult at Ugarit*, ed. Theodore J. Lewis [Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2002], 233, emphasis added). But Pardee was only claiming that depravity did not occur in the texts *he* translated. From other Ugaritic texts we learn of incest and bestiality among their gods. As for Delbert Hillers's article ("Analyzing the Abominable: Our Understanding of Canaanite Religion," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 75 [1985]: 253–69),

there is something more disturbing about our lack of being rightly disturbed? Moreover, there is a historiographical temptation with the literature about Canaanite culture (or in its usage) to understate, sometimes deny, or even eliminate evidence of Canaanite evil. It is for that reason that I also seek to offer this contribution with prudential care.

Canaanite Sin

God tells Israel in Deuteronomy 9:5 that it was not because of “your righteousness or your integrity” but “on account of the wickedness of these nations” that he was driving out the Canaanites. The Bible is unambiguous concerning what sins they committed, including idolatry, incest, adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality.

Idolatry

Incontrovertibly, the Canaanites worshiped other gods by not worshipping Yahweh. When Israel worships as the Canaanites do, Yahweh sends his prophetic spokespersons, and declares, for example, “But my people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols. Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror” (Jer. 2:11–12; cf. 2:8).⁶ Yahweh derides these handmade gods; gods that cannot speak and must be carried because they cannot walk.⁷ The OT frequently denounces them as no more than sticks or pottery made by human hands that could not “see or hear or eat or smell” (Deut. 4:28). While impotent to give life indeed, Yahweh declares that such idols potently corrode those who follow and imitate them: if you follow after what is worthless, you will become worthless (cf. Jer. 2:5, 10:8, and Jon. 2:8).⁸

Idolatry is not some mere individualistic, private religious hobby that a person does (for example, “he committed an act of idolatry”). To the contrary, it can form an entire group identity and a way of life because those who commit idolatry do so as a result of being *idolatrous*. Idolatry is a form of worship because it involves ascribing attention and affection to something considered worthy. Worship, regardless of its object, is inescapably whole-life formational.

Hillers was largely just arguing about how Ugaritic studies should proceed while objecting that the moral judgment on the part of the historian is out of place in such studies.

6. Jer. 2:11–12. All Scripture quotations from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

7. Jer. 1:16 and 8:2–5.

8. Concerning idolatry, Joseph Gorra made this comment to me: “Yet how tragically ironic, but not accidental, that in the very way of ascribing worth to worthless things, the worthless confers worthlessness to the very ones ascribing due worth. What cyclical emptiness!”

Moreover, the concept of idolatry lends itself to a polytheistically formed mentality and culture that has pervasive social consequences. In such a context, “worshipping the one, true God” is a morally, culturally and socially unpersuasive (if not also a repulsive) idea. *Within* polytheism, a person *cannot* be idolatrous. If polytheism were true, it would not make any sense in what way someone or some act could be considered idolatrous. Moreover, a follower of polytheism can even happily engage in falsehoods (for example, worshipping deities that are contradictory) or calling something otherwise “unnatural,” “natural” (for example, bestiality), which is evidenced by Canaanite culture.

The Canaanites take seriously the testimony of the OT witness of Yahweh and his revelation, if for no other reason than to intentionally transform the scriptural depiction of Yahweh into a castrated weakling. In his dissertation for the University of Chicago, Ulf Oldenburg sums up the formational consequences of Canaanite polytheism:

By the time of the Hebrew Exodus Ba'al had already usurped El's power in Canaan. When in Canaanite religion El lost the dynamic strength expressed in his name, he lost himself. Most Ugaritic texts describe him as a poor weakling, a coward who abandons justice to save his skin, the contempt of goddesses. One text depicts *El* as a drunkard plashing ‘in his excrement and his urine’ after a banquet.⁹

If polytheism is a way of being idolatrous, even though within polytheism being idolatrous looks odd and incoherent, would it be surprising that idolatry can negatively effect a person's capability to appraise responsibly? Under such influence, “divine jealousy” and hatred for idolatry can even look like the result of a needy, divine inferiority complex even when that is not the case, or commands against idolatry can sound like the result of a cosmic killjoy who is a busybody bent on controlling free creatures and their pleasures even though that is not the intention of the divine being. Idolatry

9. Ch. Virolleaud, “Un Conte populaire de Ras Shamra: Le banquet du Père des dieux,” *Comptes rendus du Groupe linguistique d'Études chamito-sémitiques* 9 (May 1962): 51–2, quoted in Ulf Oldenburg, *The Conflict Between El and Ba'al in Canaanite Religion* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1969), 172. Oldenburg later comments that “El and Yahweh were originally identical and not two originally different gods who were secondarily identified. Furthermore, we conclude that Yahweh was identified with El in his original glory and omnipotence, before knowledge of El was defiled by Canaanite apostasy” (175). In a footnote on this same page Oldenburg comments that “I had to change my view in this respect” (see also 183–4). So also Marvin Pope: “In so far as YHWH was identified with El, the Israelites certainly did not recognize or admit of such a degradation as represented in the Ugaritic myths. . . . The struggle between Yahwism and Baalism in Israel was preceded by several centuries at Ugarit by a conflict between El and Baal in which the younger God was victorious.” El was “banished” to the “netherworld” by Baal (Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* [Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1955], 104).

ends up mugging people with a delusion, even in the face of available evidence to the contrary.¹⁰

I think Richard Dawkins exemplifies this confusion when he complains that “God’s monumental rage whenever his chosen people flirted with a rival god resembles nothing so much as sexual jealousy of the worst kind. . . .”¹¹ But, does anyone think that if Dawkins’ wife left him for a gingerbread man of her own baking, and then she began to tell everyone that he liked to play with his excrement, that Dawkins would tolerate the characterization of his feelings as no more than “sexual jealousy of the worst kind”?

Seriously, though, I have tried to show that Canaanite idolatry—as evidenced by its polytheism—was not some petty, individualistic, private affair. That mentality was theologically conducive to (if not motivational for) the formation of Canaanite practices, including the practices of incest, adultery, incest, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality, such that these practices are not incoherent with Canaanite idolatry.

Incest

Like all ancient Near East (ANE) pantheons, the Canaanite pantheon was incestuous. The god El (considered the father of the gods) had seventy children by Asherah. From that union came Baal¹² and his sister Anat with whom Baal had sexual relations. After Baal reported to his father El that Asherah had tried to seduce him, El encouraged Baal to have sex with her to humiliate her, which Baal did.¹³ Baal also had as a consort his first daughter Pidray.¹⁴ None of these incestuous acts of the gods is presented pejoratively.

Although early Canaanite laws proscribed either death or banishment for most forms of incest, after the fourteenth century BC the penalties were reduced to no more than the payment of a fine.¹⁵ This decriminalization of

10. Contrary to delusional explanations of divine jealousy, see Erik Thoennes, *Godly Jealousy: A Theology of Intolerant Love* (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2005).

11. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 243. Later Dawkins writes, “One cannot help, yet again, marveling at the extraordinarily draconian view taken of the sin of flirting with rival gods. . . . The tragic-farce of God’s maniacal jealousy against alternative gods recurs continually throughout the Old Testament” (246).

12. Other texts say he came from Dagon.

13. For the story of Baal having sex with Asherah see: “El, Ashertu and the Storm-god,” trans. Albrecht Goetze, ed. James B. Pritchard, in *The Ancient Near East: Supplementary Texts and Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 519.

14. W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1968), 145.

15. This coincides well with those who give a later date for the exodus. The debate regarding the date of the exodus has recently been taken up in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (see particularly Rodger C. Young and Bryant G. Wood, “A Critical Analysis of the Evidence from Ralph Hawkins for a Late-Date Exodus-Conquest,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51 [2008]: 225–44, and Ralph K. Hawkins, “The Date of the Exodus-Conquest Is Still an Open Question: A Response to Rodger Young and Bryant Wood,” *Journal of*

incest coincided with the centuries between God's word to Abraham that the sins of those who lived there had "not yet reached its full measure"¹⁶ and the Exodus. By delaying judgment God expressed patience and demonstrated that His judgment "is neither capricious nor unwarranted."¹⁷

Even though the rest of the ANE may have legislated against incest (after all, it results in deformed children), that doesn't mean that incestuous fantasies were considered abhorrent. For example, consider the Egyptian dream book written for men that lists many types of dreams and the omens associated with them. It begins with "If a man sees himself in a dream . . .

. . . having intercourse with his mother: Good. His companions will stick to him.

. . . having intercourse with his sister: Good. It means that he will inherit something.

. . . having intercourse with a woman: Bad. It means mourning.¹⁸

Remember that Sodom was a Canaanite city, and, after it was destroyed for its wickedness, the next thing we read is that Lot's daughters get Lot drunk and have sex with him.¹⁹ Lot and his daughters imitate the sexual practices of Canaanite culture, and the Canaanites (not accidentally) ape their deities.

the Evangelical Theological Society 51 [2008]: 245–66). Harry Hoffner writes that from the fifteenth or fourteenth century BC "various cities and towns within Hittites' sphere of control had different traditions regarding punishment of *hurkel* [sexual offense concerning incest or bestiality]. Some executed the offender(s), others banished. From the 17th through the 14th century no Hittite document records any option for the city other than executing or banishing." But, writes Hoffner, "It is therefore highly interesting that there have recently turned up tablets and library catalogue entries for tablets containing rituals to remove the impurity of bestiality and incest from a man. For this constitutes primary evidence for a further development in the religio-legal attitude towards incest and bestiality among the Hittites" (Harry A. Hoffner, Jr., "Incest, Sodomy and Bestiality in the Ancient Near East" *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. Harry A. Hoffner, Jr. [Germany: Neukirchen Vluyn, 1973], 85). Hoffner points out that in time a bird was "offered not to a deity but for an aspect of the sin or its effect: for sin, for the curse, for anger, for weeping; or for some aspect of the hoped-for reconciliation: for peace (*takšul*)." After the fourteenth century the laws changed so that "the human offender could continue to live in the city without bringing the wrath of the gods upon it" (90). "The same pattern of ameliorating the older and more rigorous penalties and replacing them with simple fines can be seen again and again in Hittite laws themselves" (90n). This also coincides with what William F. Albright said was happening in Egypt at the time of the Exodus where Egyptian "kings such as Akhenaten and Ramses II married one or more of their daughters as late as the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C." (Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 128).

16. Gen. 15:16.

17. Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1b (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2005), 175.

18. Papyrus Chester Beatty III recto (BM10683) from about 1175 BC, quoted in Lise Maniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt* (London: Routledge, 1987), 100.

19. Gen. 19:30–8.

Adultery

Canaanite religion, like that of all of the ANE, was a fertility religion that involved temple sex.²⁰ Inanna/Ištar, also known as the Queen of Heaven, “became *the* woman among the gods, patron of eroticism and sensuality, of conjugal love as well as adultery, of brides and prostitutes, transvestites and pederasts.”²¹ Jonathan Tubb, curator of Syria-Palestine within the Western Asiatic Department of the British Museum, points out that “According to texts from Ugarit, the practice of the cult involved priests drawn from priestly families and also sacred prostitutes, both male and female.”²² Tubb says Anat was “promiscuous” and “El seduced two women who gave birth to Dawn and Dusk.”²³

The priests probably attended to their rituals while naked, and sex was certainly a large part of the ceremonies.²⁴ As University of Helsinki professor

20. Morrision points out that we do not hear about temple prostitution from Ugarit, but since the OT testifies to it and it was rampant throughout the rest of the ANE then what more do we need? I call it temple sex rather than temple prostitution to side step recent controversy concerning whether it was prostitution or just sex. Some today argue that it was never prostitution, but I find their arguments beg the question. E.g., Stephanie Lynn Budin writes, “What is ultimately important to remember, though, is that sacred prostitution did not exist” (Budin, *The Myth of Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity* [London: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 3). What Budin means is that sacred prostitution never, ever, happened in all of the ANE. Not even once. But to make the case that the world’s oldest profession was never involved where sexual practices and greed abounded is almost beyond comprehension. The only way one can argue that sacred prostitution never occurred is to discount absolutely every report of it and the only way one could do that is to already know that it never happened and thus argue in a circle. But Budin does this. She disregards the early Christian testimony from Paul to Clement to Athanasius and Augustine as no more than self-interested polemic presenting paganism “in the worst possible light” (261) and therefore concludes that “references to sacred prostitution” are not “historical evidence” but “condemnatory rhetoric” (261). “I doubt that many of the authors who contributed to the sacred prostitution myth entirely believed what they wrote. . . . But in the end, what is more important for the rise of the myth is that their readers believed what they wrote. . . .” (286). She similarly discards Herodotus’s account by simply asserting that he made it up. She grants that “extensive archaeological excavations . . . have shown that many of Herodotus’ accounts to have been correct. . . .” But she argues that Herodotus must have made some of it up. Her “most clear” example of this alleged fabrication occurs in book 3.79–83, “wherein Herodotus recounts the debate held by three Persians on the best form of government: democracy, oligarchy, or monarchy. That Herodotus had access to this ‘transcript’ seems unlikely to extremes, whereas the arguments proffered read far more like Greek political debates. . . .” (61).

21. Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 57 (emphasis in original).

22. Jonathan N. Tubb, *The Canaanites* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 76.

23. Tubb, *The Canaanites*, 74. Whether they were gods or mortals is not clear. See Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1955), 35–6.

24. Walther Hinz, *The Cambridge Ancient History: History of the Middle East*, 3rd ed., ed. I. E. S. Edwards, C. J. Gadd, and N. G. L. Hammond (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), vol. 1, part 2, 672. “From the very earliest days numerous priests with the servants were attached to the temple buildings in the acropolis of Susa. Apparently these performed their ceremonies naked, to judge by Elamite seals and several small finds from stratum D at Susa on-

Martti Nissinen writes, “Sexual contact with a person whose whole life was devoted to the goddess was tantamount to union with the goddess herself.”²⁵

The story of El having sex with two women (or goddesses) ends with directions: “To be repeated five times by the company and the singers of the assembly.”²⁶ About this John Gray comments that “We may well suppose that this activity of El was sacramentally experienced by the community in the sexual orgies of the fertility cult which the Hebrew prophets so vehemently denounced.”²⁷

This is not to say that adultery was not against the law. Largely, it was—for the married woman. For the man it was no offense to have sex with an unmarried woman. “Adultery was then an offense not against a man’s own wife but against the husband of the guilty woman, and he could condone it and accept compensation; but mere fornication was no offense in a man, whether married or unmarried. There was then almost absolute liberty for the husband but not for the wife.”²⁸

Lise Manniche, professor of Egyptology at the University of Copenhagen, points out that in Egypt adultery “flourished in the lower classes.”²⁹ Gwendolyn Leick, Assyriology researcher at the University of the Arts London, writes that, “in Mesopotamia, where all sexual behaviour was under the auspices of Inanna/Ištar, sexual acts outside of marriage could be condoned and to some extent institutionalized. The goddess is linked with prostitution in several compositions.”³⁰ Of course, there is no reason to suppose that Canaanites, situated between Egypt and Mesopotamia, were not doing likewise.

wards—that is before the time of the Akkadian empire. A bitumen carving of the period shows naked priests with a sacrificial lamb, crowned with a pair of snakes. On a seal of the governor Eshpum (about 2300, in the reign of Manishtusu) priests are recognizable wearing nothing but a crown of horns, and in some cases loin-covering in the shape of a snake.” See also H. Ringgren, “Kohen,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 7:63: “In the temple of Inanna, there were eunuchs and prostitutes for the cult of the love-goddess. Early pictorial representations show that the priests were often naked when performing their duties.”

25. Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: A Historical Perspective*, trans. Kirsi Stjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 33.

26. John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1965), 101, 102.

27. *Ibid.*, 101.

28. Godfrey Rolles Driver and John C. Miles, *The Assyrian Laws* (Germany: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1975), 38.

29. Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt*, 60.

30. Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 151. In one dialogue between a man and Nanâ, he says to her “When (you) bow down, the hips are sweet.’ ‘When I am standing against the wall—that’s one lamb, when I bow down it is one and a half shekel!” (B. Alster, “Two Sumerian Short Tales and a Love Song Reconsidered,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 82 [1993]: 186–201, quoted in Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 149). Leick goes on to write that “Here we have a case which seems devoid of romantic sentiment and passion, since the sexual act becomes a transaction to be paid for” (150). For more on prostitution see Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 162.

Child Sacrifice

Leviticus 18:21 commands, “Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech.” Molech was a Canaanite underworld deity³¹ represented as an upright, bull-headed idol with human body in whose belly a fire was stoked and in whose outstretched arms a child was placed that would be burned to death.³² It was not just unwanted children who were sacrificed. Plutarch reports that during the Phoenician (Canaanite)³³ sacrifices, “the whole area before the statue was filled with a loud noise of flutes and drums so that the cries of the wailing should not reach the ears of the people.”³⁴ And it was not just infants; children as old as four were sacrificed.³⁵

Kleitarchos says the Phoenicians and especially the Carthaginians who honoured Kronos, whenever they wished to succeed in any great enterprise, would vow by one of their children if they achieved the things they longed for, to sacrifice him to a god. A bronze image of Kronos was set up among them, stretching out its cupped hands above a bronze cauldron, which would burn the child. As the flame burning the child surrounded the body, the limbs would shrivel up and the mouth would appear to grin as if laughing, until it was shrunk enough to slip into the cauldron.³⁶

31. John Day, *Molech: A God of Human Sacrifice in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 62.

32. Some argue that “*molek* was a sacrificial term and not the name of a Canaanite deity” (Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 236). Although it matters little for our discussion since no one is calling into question whether child sacrifice occurred, I think John Day has the better argument: “If the Old Testament has misunderstood the term *mōlek*, it has done so not once, but consistently, in the works of various writers. . . . Although it is conceivable that one writer might have misunderstood the expression, it would be remarkable if all of them had done so, especially since they wrote” when and where it was practiced. Day calls it “surely more scientific to accept the testimony of these first-hand sources, whose authors were well placed to know the facts.” He contends that to argue otherwise is “perverse” (Day, *Molech*, 13, 14).

33. “The word ‘Canaanite’ is historically, geographically, and culturally synonymous with ‘Phoenician,’ the title immediately becomes more impressive, since it also deals with the role of the Phoenicians in the history of civilization” (W. F. Albright, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, ed. G. Ernest Wright [Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1965], 438).

34. Plutarch *De Superstitione* 13, quoted in Day, *Molech*, 89.

35. Shelby Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in Their Mediterranean Context* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic: 1991), 14. “The Carthaginian practice was indeed unique, combining infanticide and human sacrifice in a way unacceptable to others. It was not the act of killing a child which was uncommon, but that of killing a relative often old enough (by Greek and Roman standards) to have been incorporated into the family, and of doing so in a religious context in the expectation of divine favor. . . .” (Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice*, 175).

36. Kleitarchos, scholia on Plato’s *Republic* 337a, quoted in Day, *Molech*, 87. See Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 234–44 for a significant discussion of the nature and archaeology pertaining to child sacrifice.

Oxford professor John Day wrote: “In fact, we have independent evidence that child sacrifice was practiced in the Canaanite (Carthaginian and Phoenician) world from many classical sources, Punic inscriptions and archaeological evidence, as well as Egyptian depictions of the ritual occurring in Syria-Palestine, and from a recently discovered Phoenician inscription in Turkey. There is therefore no reason to doubt the biblical testimony to Canaanite child sacrifice.”³⁷ UCLA researcher Shelby Brown concludes: “No other ancient people, however, regularly chose their own children as sacrificial victims, or equated them with animals which could sometimes be substituted for them. The Phoenician practice indicates a definition of the ‘family’ and the boundaries belonging to it and alienation from it that was incomprehensible to others in the ancient Mediterranean.”³⁸

Although there simply is not room here to fully answer Morrision’s charge “that the Israelites did not believe that Yahweh disapproved of child sacrifice,”³⁹ I must at least mention his comments regarding Jephtha in Judges 11 because Morrision completely misses the point. The book of Judges chronicles the Canaanization of Israel! In Judges 1:11 we learn that the Israelites chose not to drive out the Canaanites but married them (3:6). Yahweh then tells them they disobeyed (2:2), that the Canaanites would be a “snare” to them (2:3), and then by 2:11 we learn that Israel “did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals.” From there it is a downward spiral with each judge being more corrupt than the one before. The lesson of Judges is that Israel was corrupted because they did not eradicate the Canaanites. That Gideon set up an idol, that Jephtha sacrificed his daughter, or that Sampson had sex with Canaanite women is given as evidence of their corruption and hardly condoned.⁴⁰

37. John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 211–12.

38. Brown, *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice*, 75. See also Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 152. Brown further comments: “Rather than ceasing with time and contact with other peoples, the rite continued at Carthage until the city’s destruction in 146 BC and survived in North Africa into the third century AD even under Roman rule” (13). Brown later writes: “The longevity of child sacrifice and the tenaciousness with which Carthaginians and other Phoenicians adhered to the practice despite their frequent contacts with neighbors who abhorred them for it suggests that the ritual was crucial to Phoenician religion and to the well-being of a city and its inhabitants” (171). Brown cites archaeological evidence that many thousands of children were victims but that “modern scholars are perhaps overly eager to exonerate the Phoenicians from a ‘crime’ (in our eyes) that, by Phoenician standards, was simply not an offense” (75).

39. Morrision, “Did God Command Genocide?” 14–15.

40. For a great exposition on the Canaanization of Israel see the commentary on Judges from Daniel I. Block, *Judges, Ruth*, The New American Commentary, vol. 6 (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1999).

Homosexuality

Although we have little from Ugarit about homosexual practice, the OT tells us the Canaanites practiced it and no ANE text condemns it. Additionally, some texts show there were those in the temple for use by the same sex.⁴¹

Even Uruk, the dwelling of Anu and Ishtar, city
of prostitutes, courtesans, and call-girls,
Whom Ishtar deprived of husbands and kept in
her (*lit.* their) power:
Sutean men and women hurl their abuse;
They rouse Eanna, the party-boys and festival
people
Who changed their masculinity into femininity to
make the people of Ishtar revere her.⁴²

Then there is the odd proverb, “When the *kalûm*-priest wiped his anus, (he said) ‘I must not excite that which belongs to my lady Inanna.’” Edmund Gordon, Research Associate, Near Eastern Section, University of Pennsylvania Museum, comments that this was “probably a derisive allusion to the *kalûm*-priest’s role as a sacred catamite . . . in the service of the goddess of love and fertility, Inanna.”⁴³

From the Babylonian magical text (pre-seventh-century BC) we read the following omens:

41. Davidson: “The role of the male cult functionaries . . . has been debated: earlier scholarly literature refers to them as ‘cult prostitutes,’ but more recent research suggests that these functionaries served as musicians, dancers, and thespians (actors) who preformed as part of the cultic festivals but were not cult prostitutes. They dressed like women and wore female makeup, usually carried with them the female symbol of a spindle, and took part in ecstatic dances and self-torture. Regardless of their other responsibilities, as highlighted in recent research, and whether or not they regularly engaged in ‘sex for hire’ or prostitution, the evidence seems inescapable that these individuals did participate in ritual homosexual intercourse” (Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 137). Wold: “In fact, I am unaware of any specific reference to homosexuality in Mesopotamian law before the end of the second millennium B.C.” (Donald J. Wold, *Out of Order: Homosexuality in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998], 44).

42. Stephanie Dalley, “Erra and Ishum IV,” in *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 305. Dalley comments that this text is probably eighth century BC. Also, “To turn a man into a woman and a woman into a man are yours, Inanna” (A. W. Sjöberg, “in-nin šà-gur-a: A Hymn to the Goddess Inanna,” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 65 [1976]: 161–253, quoted in Rivkah Harris, “Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites,” *History of Religions* 30 (1991): 265).

43. Edmund L. Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs: Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia: The University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1959), 248. Gordon comments, “Probably a derisive allusion to the *kalûm*-priest’s role as a sacred catamite . . . in the service of the goddess of love and fertility, Inanna” (248–9). About the word “excite” Gordon comments: “Literally, ‘stir up’ . . .” (249). See also Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World*, 33, and Gordon, *Sumerian Proverbs*, 248–9.

If a man has intercourse with the hindquarters of his equal [male], that man will be foremost among his brothers and colleagues.

If a man yearns to express his manhood while in prison and thus, like a male cult-prostitute, mating with men becomes his desire, he will experience evil.

If a man has intercourse with a cult prostitute, care [troubles] will leave him.⁴⁴

And again, let us remember that with the Canaanite city of Sodom that the problem was not just sex among consenting adults: the men of Sodom, both young and old, joined together to try to rape the visitors.⁴⁵

Bestiality

Probably the ultimate depravity is sex with animals. Hittite Laws 199 states, “If anyone has intercourse with a pig or a dog, he shall die. If a man has intercourse with a horse or a mule, there is no punishment.”⁴⁶ And, as was the case with incest, the penalty for having sex with animals lessened about the time of the Exodus.

There should be no surprise that bestiality would occur for the Canaanites since the god they worshiped practiced it. From the Canaanite epic Baal cycle we learn:

Mightiest Baal hears;
He makes love with a heifer in the outback,
A cow in the field of Death’s Realm.
He lies with her seventy times seven,
Mounts eighty times eight;
[She conceiv]es and bears a boy.⁴⁷

And there were absolutely no prohibitions against bestiality in the rest of the ANE.⁴⁸ On the contrary, there were incantations used to aid a man who “is not able to achieve and/or sustain an erection due to some bewitchment,” which include a woman having sex with animals.⁴⁹ “Some rituals specify that

44. A. Kirk Grayson and Donald Redford, *Papyrus and Tablet* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 152.149.

45. Gen. 19:5.

46. Hoffner, “Incest, Sodomy and Bestiality in the Ancient Near East,” 82.

47. Mark S. Smith, trans., in *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*, ed. Simon B. Parker (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997), 148. In the same volume see also “Baal Fathers a Bull,” trans. Simon B. Parker, 181–6, and “A Birth,” trans. Simon B. Parker, 186–7. Albright says that in “the light of several Egyptian accounts of the goddess, unquestionably translated from an original Canaanite myth,” that Baal raped Anath while she was in the form of a calf (Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, 128–9).

48. Hoffner, “Incest, Sodomy and Bestiality in the Ancient Near East,” 82.

49. Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 205.

an actual animal be tied to the bed: ‘At my head a buck is tied. At my feet [a ram is tied]! Buck caress me! [Ram], copulate with me!’⁵⁰ Leick explains, “Here a woman’s voice is speaking . . . She speaks to the famously excitable male animals to arouse their ardour . . . [and then] she invites them to copulate with her.”⁵¹ How this continues is so disgusting that I cannot relate it.⁵²

Above I quoted the Egyptian dream book for men regarding omens related to incestuous dreams, but the dreams are not mostly about sex with humans. The dream book then lists what happens if a man has intercourse with a female jerboa, a kite, or a pig. All of which are “Bad.”⁵³ Manniche then explains:

The dream book composed for women is written on Papyrus Carlsberg XIII in Copenhagen from the second century AD. As we have just seen, the tradition of dream books goes much further back in time. The papyrus scroll is somewhat damaged, but a number of interesting erotic combinations remain along with the heading:

The manners of intercourse to be dreamt of when a woman dreams

If a woman dreams that she is married to her husband, she will be destroyed. If she embraces him, she will experience grief.”

Notice that a woman dreaming about the kind of sex the Bible condones is considered a bad omen. It is also a bad omen for a woman to dream about intercourse with various rodents, birds, reptiles, and a wide variety of animals. But, good things would happen if she dreamed of intercourse with a baboon, wolf, he-goat, and so forth.⁵⁴ In short, their sexual fantasies involved everything that breathes.

If this evidence is sound, then it turns out that Yahweh’s command to kill in certain cities everything that breathes is responsive to the actual perversion found in ANE practices. Thus, I disagree with Copan’s comment that

50. R. D. Biggs, trans., *ŠĀ.ZI.GA.: Ancient Mesopotamian Potency Incantations* (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, 1967), 31, quoted in Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 206. After listing the passages related to the one just mentioned, A. Kirk Grayson and Donald Redford, conclude their chapter on Mesopotamian attitudes toward sex by writing, “By this time the reader should be impressed with the absence of sexual inhibitions on the part of ancient Mesopotamians. Sex was merely part of a normal healthy life. Certain types of sexual behaviour were considered antisocial, of course (such as adultery), but apart from these few strictures both man and God enjoyed lovemaking to the full” (A. Kirk Grayson and Donald Redford, *Papyrus and Tablet* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973], 152).

51. Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, 206. Biggs comments: “Bestiality was certainly practiced in Mesopotamia, as in Palestine. . .” (Biggs, *ŠĀ.ZI.GA.*, 34).

52. Biggs, *ŠĀ.ZI.GA.*, 14:5–10, 33. I prayed often and sought the counsel of trusted friends and pastors about the material here presented regarding what was okay to relate.

53. Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt*, 100–1.

54. *Ibid.*, 102 (emphasis in original). For more on Egyptian bestiality see Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt*, 28, 43–4. I wonder about a society where this kind of dream might even occur. I will bet most people have never had even one dream about having sex with an animal in their entire lives.

this was “clearly hyperbolic” (25). If they were having sex with just about every living thing they could get their hand on, and they were, then all had to die. Dawkins objects that it adds “injury to insult” that “the unfortunate beast is to be killed too.”⁵⁵ But, what Dawkins and others do not grasp is that no one would want to have animals around that were used to having sex with humans.

In an embarrassing moment, psychologist Robert Yerkes told about a female gorilla named Congo: “throwing herself on her back she pressed her external genitalia against my feet and repeatedly and determinedly tried to pull me upon her In this activity she was markedly and vigorously aggressive, and it required considerable adroitness and strength of resistance on my part to withstand her attack.” Yerkes went on to comment that “her insistence on sexual contact [was] extremely embarrassing . . . and somewhat dangerous because of her enormous strength”⁵⁶ Now, if Congo had never had sex with a man (of course, we do not know) and acted this way, I cannot imagine how determined she would be if she had.

This would explain why the Hittites needed to clarify that humans might not be at fault: “If an ox spring upon a man for intercourse, the ox shall die but the man shall not die If a pig spring upon a man for intercourse, there is no punishment.”⁵⁷ This kind of behavior may explain why God used a flood to destroy what Dawkins called the “presumably blameless” animals in the days of Noah.⁵⁸

Israelite Sin

Israel was warned not to let the Canaanites live in their land but to completely destroy them (Exod. 23:33; Deut 20:16–18) because otherwise the Canaanites would be (1) “barbs” in the Israelites’ eyes (Num. 33:55), (2) the Israelites would intermarry with the Canaanites, and then (3) the Israelites would consequently learn the Canaanite ways (Exod. 34:15–16). Yahweh warned that if the Israelites then began to worship other gods, the land would “vomit” them out so that they would be scattered and most would be destroyed, just as it had vomited out the nations before them (Num. 33:56; Lev. 18:28; Deut. 4:23–29, 8:19–20).

But the Israelites did not drive the Canaanites out (Judg. 1:28) but worshiped other Gods and followed their practices (Judg. 3:5–6; 2 Kings 17:7). As a result Israel “did evil” (Judg. 10:6, 1 Kings 14:22) and set up “Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree” (2 Kings 17:10).

55. Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 248.

56. Robert M. Yerkes, “The Mind of the Gorilla,” pt. 3, *Comparative Psychology Monographs* 5, no. 2 (1928): 68–9.

57. Hittite Laws 199.

58. Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 237–8.

There were “male shrine prostitutes” (1 Kings 14:22), they committed acts of “lewdness,” adultery and incest (Jer. 5:7; Hos. 4:13–14; Ezek. 22:10–11; Amos 2:7), and even Solomon set up altars for all his foreign wives and even set up an altar to Molech (1 Kings 11:5, 7–8). In time the Israelites sacrificed their sons and daughters (2 Kings 16:3, 17:17; 2 Chron. 28:3, 33:6; Jer. 32:35; Ezek. 20:26, 31). Instead of repenting when things went badly for Judah, they concluded that it was because they stopped burning incense to “the Queen of Heaven,” Inanna/Ištar (Jer. 44:18). So the Lord said that Israel became “like Sodom to me” (Jer. 23:14).

Subsequently, prophets began to warn the northern kingdom (usually referred to as Israel or Samaria) of impending doom, and when they did not repent in 722 BC the king of Assyria captured the Northern kingdom, deported most of the inhabitants, and filled the land with conquered peoples from other nations.⁵⁹ Since the southern tribes (usually referred to as Judah) had some righteous kings after Solomon, and sometimes heeded the warning of the prophets, their ultimate corruption and then destruction did not occur until Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon breached the walls of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

But it does not stop there. In Luke 20 Jesus warned the Jews in the parable of the tenants and the vineyard that servants were sent to them but had been mistreated and so the owner of the vineyard sent his son but the tenants killed the son. Jesus then asked, “What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” Then, in 70 AD, forty years after Jesus was killed, the Roman emperor Titus destroyed Jerusalem and Josephus tells that the Jews in Jerusalem

were first whipped, and then tormented with all sorts of tortures, before they died, and were then crucified before the wall of the city. This miserable procedure made Titus greatly to pity them, while they caught every day five hundred Jews; nay, some days they caught more. . . . So the soldiers, out of the wrath and hatred they bore the Jews, nailed those they caught, one after one way, and another after another, to the crosses, by way of jest, when their multitude was so great, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses wanting for the bodies.⁶⁰

Titus then renamed the region Palestine and for almost 1,900 years one could not find “Israel” on the map. In AD 135 the Romans built a city on the ruins of Jerusalem and called it Aelia Capitolina. Then Emperor Hadrian decreed: “It is forbidden for all circumcised persons to enter or stay within the terri-

59. For a thorough documentation of the deportation and repopulation see Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Reichert, 1979).

60. Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Hartford, CT: S. S. Scranton, 1905), 822.

tory of Aelia Capitolina; any person contravening this prohibition shall be put to death.” They were forbidden to see Jerusalem even “at a distance.”⁶¹

This is important for three reasons. First, it shows that what God commanded Israel to do to the Canaanites was not genocide—it was capital punishment. God warned Israel that if they committed the same sins, the land would also vomit them out. God is no respecter of persons. Second, there is a cosmic lesson: God hates sin because sin leads to rebellion and the worst kinds of evil. Third, this also answers the misunderstanding that there is some discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments. In both Testaments God hates sin and will punish it.

Our Sin

A cursory read of at least the idea currents in American culture often reads like a sequel to Canaanite practices. Of course, it is not as though people with Canaanite ancestry, who happen to live in the United States, are the culprits writing the sequel. Indeed, the sequel gets written in every generation, regardless of culture, ethnicity or people group. It persistently gets written because it flows from the human heart and its condition. But perhaps hypocrisy, with all of its rationalizing potency, does not help us see the heart and its real condition clearly.

For example, in a culture that gravitates to “Desperate Housewives,” adultery Web sites like Ashley Madison’s, which boasts “over 3,180,000 like-minded members,”⁶² leads with the motto, “life is short, have an affair.” This, of course, does not trouble the enlightened atheists. Dawkins writes that “We humans give ourselves such airs, even aggrandizing our pokey little ‘sins’ to the level of cosmic significance!”⁶³ Dawkins asks why evangelical Christians are “obsessed” with “private sexual inclinations such as homosexuality, which didn’t interfere with anybody else’s life.”⁶⁴ And the apparently not obsessed Christopher Hitchens considers “dangerous sexual repression” so serious that he calls it one of the “four irreducible objections to religious faith.”⁶⁵ Thus Judith Levine in her 2002 *Los Angeles Times* book prize winner, *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex*, argues that “normal is what a particular culture or historical era calls it: male homo-

61. Rendel Harris, “Hadrian’s Decree of the Expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 19 (1926): 202. For more on the expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem see Paul Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World*, rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), 158–60.

62. AshleyMadison.com. Accessed 17 January 2009. When I first visited the site in October 2008 they boasted only 2,400,000 members.

63. Dawkins, *God Delusion*, 238.

64. *Ibid.*

65. Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (Boston: Twelve Books, 2007), 4.

sexuality was regarded as normal in classical Greece; intergenerational sex has been normal as sexual initiation in many preindustrial societies; even rape has historically been normal in wartime.”⁶⁶

Consider the problem of incest. Although no one I know actively advocates incest (it causes birth deformities), some like Levine say that some types of incest might not be harmful,⁶⁷ and many others seek the age of consent to be decreased, which would enable more incest.⁶⁸ After all, if an eight-year-old boy can give a non-family member consent then he could give a family member consent. There is even “a forum for people who are engaged in scholarly discussion about the understanding and emancipation of mutual relationships between children or adolescents and adults.”⁶⁹ Many popular movies have turned incest into either a joke or a turn on.⁷⁰ So it is no wonder that in our society “research indicates that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys will be sexually victimized before adulthood.”⁷¹

When I first studied Molech, I thought it impossible that someone would sacrifice their child to the flames, but then I considered that in the United States almost 50 million babies have had their body parts suctioned off, been burned with saline, and even had their brains suctioned out through partial birth abortion. Arguably, the “gods” deserving of the sacrifice are varied: my career, choice, and “I wanted a boy.”

Now someone like Morrision might object that abortion does not justify infanticide, yet Princeton ethicist Peter Singer would not object. He has

66. Judith Levine, *Harmful to Minors: The Perils of Protecting Children from Sex* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth, 2003), 66.

67. “Even incest between siblings . . . is not ipso facto traumatic” (Levine, *Harmful to Minors*, 57).

68. Levine: “Sex is not harmful to children. . . . There are many ways even the smallest children can partake of it” (Levine, *Harmful to Minors*, 225).

69. <http://www.ipce.info/ipceweb/index.htm>. Also consider the words of UCLA professor of psychology Dr. Paul Okami: “More to the point, at least some people claim that their childhood sexual experiences with adults have advanced their sexual self-determination, not overwhelmed it. I’ve interviewed such people (Okami, 1991). So what do we do with these claims? . . . What is the true origin [of the hatred of pedophilia]? I suspect that it is multiply determined, but the Western version probably has origins in the sexual heritage of St. Paul and St. Augustine, which characterizes sex as dangerous, dirty, sinful, ugly, destructive, and so forth (Rubin, 1984)” (Paul Okami, “The Dilemma of the Male Pedophile,” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 31 [2002]: 473-477, quoted in Fred S. Berlin, Wolfgang Berner, Vern L. Bullough, Alan F. Dixon, et al., “Peer Commentaries on Green (2002) and Schmidt (2002),” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 31 [2002]: 492-3, 494).

70. E.g., *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan* (2007), R; *National Security* (2003) R; *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* (1999), R; *Analyze This* (1999), R; *Joe Dirt* (2001), PG-13; *Freddy Got Fingered* (2001), R; *Eurotrip* (2004), R; *Not Another Teen Movie* (2001), R; *Mission Impossible III* (2006), PG-13; *The Departed* (2006), R; *Date Movie* (2006), PG-13; *Superhero Movie* (2008), PG-13.

71. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, “FAQ: Child Sexual Exploitation,” http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=2815. Of course, not all the victimization is from family members, some of it is from strangers and caretakers.

“admitted” that “the position I have taken on abortion also justifies infanticide.”⁷² Of course, this is one of the few times that the pro-life movement will think Singer has spoken with utter clarity and leads naturally to his conclusion that “killing a disabled infant” is “very often not wrong at all.”⁷³ I am sure those Canaanites who had deformed children as a result of incest would praise Singer’s book. But for Singer the child does not even have to be disabled because “the intrinsic wrongness of killing the late fetus and the intrinsic wrongness of killing the newborn infant are not markedly different.” For Singer this does not justify “randomly killing babies” because legitimate “infanticide can only be equated with abortion when those closest to the child do not want it to live.”⁷⁴

Nothing more needs to be said about homosexuality.

Leviticus 18 lists bestiality last and indeed it is the ultimate degradation indulged when everything else has been tried. Thus, the Humane Society reports that many pornographic sites include the sexual abuse of animals: “One [bestiality] site provided almost 200 links, and this site alone reports receiving approximately 46,000 visits per day.”⁷⁵ Of course, most realize there is animal porn, but bestiality is no longer shunned and is getting societal approval.

Even ethicist Peter Singer thinks it okay: “We are animals This does not make sex across the species barrier normal, or natural, whatever those much-misused words may mean, but it does imply that it ceases to be an offence to our status and dignity as human beings.”⁷⁶

Consider *Los Angeles Times* film critic Kenneth Turan’s comments about the 2007 movie “Zoo”:

“Zoo,” premiering before a rapt audience Saturday night at Sundance, manages to be a poetic film about a forbidden subject, a perfect marriage between a cool and contemplative director . . . and potentially incendiary subject matter: sex between men and animals. Not graphic in the least, this strange and strangely beautiful film combines audio

72. Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 173.

73. *Ibid.*, 191.

74. *Ibid.*, 173.

75. The Humane Society of the United States, “Animal Sexual Abuse Fact Sheet,” <http://www.vactf.org/pdfs/bestiality-factsheet.pdf>. By sexual abuse they do not mean that the animal has suffered permanent physical harm.

76. Peter Singer, “Heavy Petting: Review of Midas Dekkers, ‘Dearest Pet: On Bestiality’ (London, 2000),” *Nerve.com*, 2001, <http://www.nerve.com/opinions/singer/heavypetting/main.asp>. That more humans in our culture may not actually participate in bestiality is not the point. The major point is that so many, although perhaps grossed out by the idea of bestiality, will approve the behavior of those who do it. Cf. Rom. 1:32: “Though they know God’s decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them but approve those who practice them.” After all, which is worse, to be caught up in the lust of the moment or to dispassionately approve the behavior of those who do?

interviews with elegiac visual recreations intended to conjure up the mood and spirit of situations.⁷⁷

Also consider the 2007 movie “Sleeping Dogs Lie,” where a young woman who had sex with her dog one day decides to be honest and tell her fiancé about it—after which he calls off the marriage. Peter Travers of *Rolling Stone* wrote that the movie “possesses a quick wit and an endearing tenderness toward Amy as honesty wrecks her life. It’s sweet, doggone it.” Notice that for Travers it was not sex with a dog that wrecked Amy’s life but honesty.⁷⁸

Then there are songs like “So What?” on Metallica’s *Garage Inc* album. The 1998 album went triple platinum.⁷⁹

And I’ve f***ed a sheep,
I’ve f***ed a goat
I rammed my c*** right
down its throat
So what, so what
So what, so what, you boring little
F***⁸⁰

From a cursory read of the above ideas, we can see that Morrison is right about one thing: “It is striking that there is nothing uniquely ‘Canaanite’ about them. All, or nearly all, of these practices—from sexual intercourse during a woman’s menstrual period to homosexual behavior to bestiality—are still common.”⁸¹ But that’s my point: we do not appreciate the depths of our own depravity, the horror of sin, and the righteousness of God. Consequently, it is no surprise that when we see God’s judgment upon those who committed the sins we commit, that complaint and protest arises within our hearts: “This is divine barbarism!” or “This is divine genocide!” But study-

77. Kevin Turan, “‘Zoo’ Is Not Just ‘Eew,’” *Los Angeles Times*, January 22, 2007.

78. There are a host of movies that treat bestiality as either a joke or a turn on: *Clerks II* (2006), R; *Scary Movie 3* (2003), PG-13; *Wild Hogs* (2007), PG-13; *American Wedding* (2003), R; *The Animal* (2003), R; *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* (2005), R; *Anger Management* (2003), PG-13; *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story* (2007), PG-13; *Hostel* (2005), R; *Pushing Tin* (2007), PG-13; *Austin Powers in Goldmember* (2002), PG-13; *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* (1999), R; *Grind* (1999), R; *Nutty Professor II: The Klumps* (2000), PG-13; *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story* (2005), PG-13; *The Dukes of Hazzard* (2005), PG-13; *Deuce Bigalow, European Gigolo* (2005), R; *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan* (2007), R; *Freddy Got Fingered* (2001) R; *Scary Movie 3* (2003), PG-13; *Date Movie* (2006), PG-13.

79. Plugged in Online, <http://www.pluggedinonline.com/music/music/a0000685.cfm>.

80. Plugged in Online, http://www.asklyrics.com/display/Metallica/So_What_Lyrics/310411.htm. Other albums that mention bestiality: Blink-182, *Enema of the State*, “Anthem” (a top ten album); Barenaked Ladies, *Maroon* (rock, peaked at number 5); Insane Clown Posse, *The Amazing Jeckel Brothers* (rap, peaked at number 4).

81. Morrison, “Did God Command Genocide?” 16.

ing these things over the years has led me to wonder if the Canaanites might not stand up at the Judgment and condemn this generation.⁸²

82. This does not give us the ability to divine that horrors like 9/11 are God's judgment on the world. We can, however, be assured that His judgment will come. Consider Luke 10:13–15: “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.” Tyre and Sidon were Canaanite cities.

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