

## **Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**

### **Bible Study Notes**

**5-19-21**

### **Leviticus 18**

#### **Introduction To The Commands Regarding Sexual Conduct - Verses 1-5**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. <sup>3</sup> You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. <sup>4</sup> You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. <sup>5</sup> Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.

**18:1-3** The Israelites moved from one idol-infested country (Egypt) to another (Canaan). They also had contact with other cultures (Moab). As God helped them form a new culture, he warned them to leave all aspects of their pagan background and surroundings behind. He also warned them how easy it would be to slip into the pagan culture of Canaan, where they were going. Canaan's society and religions appealed to worldly desires, especially sexual immorality and drunkenness.

**18:4-5** The Israelites were to keep themselves pure and set apart for God. God did not want his people absorbed into the surrounding culture and environment. Society may pressure us to conform to its way of life and thought, but yielding to that pressure will (1) create confusion as to which side we should be on and (2) eliminate our effectiveness in serving God. Follow God by obeying his Word, and don't let the culture around you mold your thoughts and actions.

#### **Incest Among Immediate Family Prohibited - Verses 6-9**

<sup>6</sup> "No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the LORD. <sup>7</sup> "Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her. <sup>8</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father. <sup>9</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.

**18:6-9** Marrying relatives was prohibited by God for physical, social, and moral reasons. Children born to near relatives may experience serious health problems. Without these specific laws, sexual promiscuity would have been more likely, first in families, then outside. Improper sexual relations destroy family life.

**18:6-9** There was both a moral and genetic reason for these commands. "Surveys in different parts of the world where inbreeding occurs have shown that it is accompanied by an increase in congenital malformations and perinatal mortality, for which recessive genes and environmental factors respectively would be responsible."

## Other Applications Of The Command Against Incest - Verses 10-18

<sup>10</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonor you. <sup>11</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister. <sup>12</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative. <sup>13</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative. <sup>14</sup> "Do not dishonor your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt. <sup>15</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her. <sup>16</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother. <sup>17</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness. <sup>18</sup> "Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

**18:10-18** In these verses, God condemns sexual relations between many different family relationships: - Grandparents and grandchildren (by blood or by marriage) - Uncles, aunts, and nieces, nephews - Parents and the spouses of their children - Siblings and the spouses of their other siblings - The children of a spouse - The sibling of a spouse. The principle is related again. The nakedness of an individual belongs to their spouse and no one else, and it is a violation of God's law to give that nakedness to anyone else, or for anyone else to take it.

## Other Laws Regarding Sexual Morality - Verses 19-23

<sup>19</sup> "Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period. <sup>20</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her. <sup>21</sup> "Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molek, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. <sup>22</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable. <sup>23</sup> "Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

**18:19-23** Several detestable activities are listed here: (1) having sexual relations with close relatives, (2) committing adultery, (3) offering children as sacrifices, (4) having homosexual relations, and (5) having sexual relations with animals. These practices were common in pagan religions and cultures, and it is easy to see why God dealt harshly with those who began to follow them. Such practices lead to disease, deformity, and death. They disrupt family life and society and reveal a low regard for the value of oneself and of others. Society today takes some of these practices lightly, even trying to make them acceptable. But they are still sins in God's eyes. If you consider them acceptable, you are not judging by God's standards.

**18:22 You shall not lie with a male as with a woman:** Simply put, God calls homosexual sex an abomination, even as He does in (Romans 1:24-32). Additionally, homosexuality was part of the idolatrous perversions which were allowed in Israel at its times of backsliding (1 Kings 14:24, 15:12 and 22:46).

Many justify homosexual practice on the basis of love. They might say, "How can it be wrong to love someone of my own sex? How can love be wrong?" Yet if someone loves their children, it does not justify sexual conduct with them. The issue isn't love; the issue is of sexual conduct. Of course, the Bible in no way condemns love between people of the same sex, but it does say that sexual conduct between those people is sin.

### **The Urgency To Obey God's Command For Sexual Morality - Verses 24-30**

**<sup>24</sup> "Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. <sup>25</sup> Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. <sup>26</sup> But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the foreigners residing among you must not do any of these detestable things, <sup>27</sup> for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. <sup>28</sup> And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you. <sup>29</sup> "Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people. <sup>30</sup> Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God."**

**18:24-30 Do not defile yourselves:** Our modern culture often refuses to see any aspect of sexual conduct as defiling. The only measure is immediate pleasure, not right or wrong. But sexual sin does defile us and it does harm us. God's laws are given for our best, not in an attempt to merely test us or boss us around.

**For the land is defiled:** One of the reasons God brought Israel to defeat and displace the Canaanites was as judgment against their sexual perversions. In nations that sanction and promote similar sins today, we should expect that the judgment of God would eventually come and the land will vomit out its inhabitants.

**The persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people:** God commanded that in Israel, there should be a strong sense of social disapproval - amounting to exile - towards those who broke these laws of sexual morality.

It isn't that these things were never done in Israel; it is simply that it was clear that society said those things were wrong and should never be allowed. More and more, modern culture refuses to call almost any kind of sexual conduct sin.