

Leviticus 18
The Difference the Lord Makes

Friday, December 1, 2023 • Read Leviticus 18

Questions from the Scripture text: To whom does YHWH speak in v1? To whom is Moses to speak (v2a)? How does YHWH introduce these laws (v2b)? What two standards does He set belonging to Him over against (v3)? What are they to observe (v4)? What are they to keep (v5)? In what are they to walk? Why? What mustn't they do, generally (v6)? Why? Of to whom else, specifically (v7)? And whom else (v8)? Whose nakedness is she? And whose else's, specifically (v9)? Whose else's (v10)? Whose nakedness would theirs be? Whose else's in v11? Whose else's in v12a? Why (v12b)? Whose in v13a? Why (v13b)? Whose in v14? Whose in v15? Whom in v16? Whose is she? Whose in v17? Whose in v18? When in v19? What sort of lying down does v20 prohibit? What would this do to a man? What else is forbidden in v21? Whose Name would this profane? Why mustn't they? What abomination does v22 forbid? What perversion does v23 forbid? Who were actually doing these things (v24)? What did this do to them? What did it do to the land (v25)? What did the Lord do to it? What did the land do to whom? Whose statutes and judgments should they keep instead (v26)? In order not to do what? Who must not do it? Who had done it (v27a)? With what result (v27b)? What would the land do to Israel, if they repeated the sin (v28a)? Like what with whom (v28b)? What must be done to anyone who does this (v29)? What, therefore, must they do (v30)? In order not to do what? Which would do what to them? Why mustn't they?

What is the first distinction between the people of the Lord and the people of the world? Leviticus 18 prepares us for the evening sermon on the Lord's Day. In these thirty verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **one great difference between the people of the Lord and the people of the world is that the Lord's people are committed to purity in nakedness and marriage.**

The Lord Who makes the difference. Six times, the Lord announces "I am YHWH." At the beginning and end of the chapter, framing and defining the whole, He adds "your God." There are many reasons for them not to do any of these wicked things. But here is the greatest: they are the covenant people of the living God, and their conduct should show the difference that He makes in His people. After all, it is their God Who made man in His image, male and female (cf. Gen 1:27), especially for marriage (cf. Gen 2:23–25). As a people whom He has especially consecrated to Himself, it was necessary that they be holy unto Him and apart from the world.

The shame of nakedness. The sin repeatedly prohibited in this chapter is the "uncovering of nakedness." It is evident that this refers to other actions as well, but that is where it begins, and that is the name by which God calls it. We learn from Him not to speak the shameful things that wicked men do (cf. 1Co 5:1, Eph 5:12). We also learn that the purity that God requires takes into account the current sinfulness of man. Man was created naked and unashamed (cf. Gen 2:25). But when he became a sinner, he immediately knew the danger and shame of nakedness in his new state (cf. Gen 3:7).

This is helpful in thinking about modest dress. Out of due regard to belonging to the Lord, and due regard to the difference that our sinfulness makes, it is important to keep one's own nakedness covered. That is not to say that one would cover whether he is a man or she is a woman. But those parts that convey the manliness of the man or the womanliness of the woman should be covered—not just kept from being exposed, but kept from being outlined in such a way that one's own unique womanliness or manliness would be revealed. This takes wisdom to apply well. But it is an important application that can be drawn from even the language that the Lord uses to describe the sin in this chapter.

Nationality, idolatry, and the need for purity. Obviously, marriage across some of these lines was unavoidable as humanity descended from just one man and one woman. We can study the biology of why corruption in our genetics makes the doubling of those genetics more harmful. But that is not the reason that the Lord gives in this chapter. Rather, the great prohibition is from doing as Egypt did or doing as Canaan did. Israel is to follow YHWH's statutes and judgments (v5, 26, 30) to stop from doing the wickedness of the nations.

The implication is that the nations were doing according to someone, or something, other than YHWH. This is most clear in the one wickedness in the chapter that corresponds more to the sixth commandment than the seventh (v21). There, refusing to murder offspring by fire is tied to the first commandment, which prohibits the worship of Molech, and the second commandment, which prohibits worship in the Molech way (cf. Jer 7:31, 19:5, 32:35). The nations of the land were not in covenant with God in the way that Israel had now come to be, yet the Lord held them accountable for their idolatry and impurity, and made the land to vomit them out (v25, 28).

Let nations learn that the true and living God condemns their idolatry and impurity. And let the people of the Lord note that there is a special danger in the idolatry and impurity of the nation around them, a special offense to God, and a special judgment for committing it (v3, 24–30). The word "abomination" (v22, 26, 27, 29, 30) comes from a root meaning to hate or abhor and shows God's emphatic opposition of Himself to such things. The word "perversion" (v23) comes from a root meaning mixing or confusing and highlights how such sin confuses or corrupts the created order.

What is the biggest reason for you to be pure with regard to nakedness and marriage? To Whom do you belong? What does this mean for your clothing? What does this mean for your heart?

Sample prayer: Lord, have mercy upon us and forgive us and cleanse us from all our unrighteousness. Our sin has made our hearts into factories of idolatry and impurity. And this has even overflowed into our lives. But You are the God Who takes a people for Yourself and forgives and cleanses them. Make that difference in our life, we ask, through Jesus Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP24 "The Earth and the Riches" or TPH24B "The Earth and Its Riches"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Leviticus 18. Then Yahweh spoke to Moses saying. Speak to the children of Israel and say to them. I am yahweh. Your god. According to the doings of the land of egypt where you dwell, you shall not do. And according to the doings of the land of canadian where i am bringing you.

You shall not do. Nor should you walk in there ordinances? You shall observe mine. Judgments and keep my ordinances to walk in them. I am y'all play, you're not. So, therefore, keep my statutes and my judgments, which man does. He shall live by them. I am y'all play. None of you shall approach, anyone who is near of kin to him.

To uncover his nakedness. I am yaha. The nakedness of your father, the nakedness of your mother, You should not uncover. She is your mother. You shall not uncover her nakedness and nakedness of your father's wife. You shall not uncover. But is your father's nakedness, the nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, Where they're born at home or elsewhere, they're nakedness, you shall not uncover.

The nakedness of your son's daughter. Your daughter's daughter their nakedness. You shall not uncover, For theirs is your own nakedness. Then they could miss of your father's wife's daughter forgotten by your father. She's your sister. It's not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister. Here's near of kinetier. Father.

There's anonymous over the nakedness of your mother and sister. She is near of kin to your mother. So not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother, you shall not approach his wife. She is your aunt. Here's another nakedness of your daughter-in-law, she is. Your son's wife. You shall not uncover her nakedness.

You're so not uncover. The nakedness of your brother's wife. It is your brother's nakedness. So, not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter. Nor shall you take her son's daughter or daughter's daughter? To uncover her nakedness, they are near of kin to her. It is wickedness. Nor shall you take a woman as a rival to her sister to uncover her nakedness while the others alive.

Also, you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is in her customary impurity. Moreover, you shall not like harmly with your neighbor's wife to defile yourself with her. You shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to mulak. Nor shall you profane the name of your god.

I am yahweh. Here. So not live with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor shall you mate with any animal to the follow yourself of that? Nor should only woman stand before an animal? Tonight with it, it has perversion Do not defile yourselves with any of these things.

For by all these the nations are defiled which i'm casting out before you For the land is defiled. Therefore, i visit the punishment of this iniquity upon it. And the land vomit out its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep my statutes and it's been my judgments.

And shall not commit. Any of these abominations either? Any of your own? Nation, or any stranger? Dwells monkey. For all these abominations, the men of the land have done. Who were before you and thus the land is defiled. Lest the land vomit you out. Also, when you defile it I was at vomited out, the nations were that were before you For whoever commits any of these abominations the person.

Persons. Who commit them shall be cut off from among? Their people. Therefore you shall keep my ordinance. So that you do not commit any of these abominable customs. Which were committed before you. And that you do not defile yourselves by them. I am yaha your god. Been in this ends, this reading of gods.

Inspired and inherent word.

The main point of this chapter is the difference that Yahwe makes and his people. That because they have been redeemed by him and because they belonged to him, They live according to his rules. Instead of according to the rules of the nations, which come from not only the sinful nature, But even from idols or rather demons posing as idols, Here mulak.

And jeremiah 7, and Um, i think 19 and 33. 32. Rather. Uh bail. And the apostle Paul telling us that it's demons posing as idols. That idols are nothing but demon. Receives that which is sacrificed to them. But that instead of living according to, The. Ideas of manner, suggestions of demons.

Uh, which is how our Confession and catechisms. Uh, rightly summarize. That. The people of the lord, who have been redeemed by the lord, And belong to the lord. Or to live, according to the lord's word. Which is the expression. Of the lord's will. You can see that the six times in the passage, he says, i am yahweh.

Several of them. He says, i am yahu your god including And verse 2 and verse 30 at the book ends of the passage As is commonly done. In hebrew literature. And bible literature. To give us the theme of the passage. This is one reason why. Uh, when you hear people, Who pick up on?

Polls reference to. Leviticus 18, verse 5. You shall therefore. Keep my statutes and my judgments of man. Does he shall live by them? I am yahweh. Yeah, paul you also paul uses makes reference to it. Um, In ramens. In the section that we are in actually, at the end of Chapter 9 beginning of chapter 10.

Um, We're talking about the law, that would lead. To righteousness. But the jews. Red, leviticus 18 5 as Presenting them with a worksprinciple. That. If you do these things, you merit life. Uh, whereas Uh, the holy spirit by Moses here and leviticus 18. And of course, And by the apostle, paul.

There's not seeing this as presenting a work principle. Uh, but rather A law that comes in the context of having been redeemed. And is the good and right. Instruction of our redeemer. Um, who not only graciously. Gives us his wisdom. Uh, to live by but works graciously in us.

To produce that living in that life.

So, the first thing that we see here, About this chapter, is that the Primary theme, is that it is the lord. Who makes the difference? So, if we're thinking about how we live, We definitely should live differently than the rest of the lord world. Because we belong to a lord who makes a difference.

But if we're trying to live according to his word and not finding it in us, In ourselves to do so. Well, that's not surprising. Because it's not ourselves to make the difference. As the chapter teaches it is the lord who makes the difference. And what i help then to the christian who's Um, Not finding it in himself.

He was looking in the wrong place to begin with.

Like the apostle we find a quote, unquote law at work in our members. And what we find in ourselves. Is disobedience. The filement abomination perversion, But we do find that we are in christ. And that christ is in us by his spirit. And the spirit therefore wars. Against the flesh.

And so, It's important to remember that the lord makes a difference when we're thinking about how to live. Or. Um, and what manner to live? It's important for us to remember this lord, who makes the difference. And figuring out by what power to live. And of course, it is important to remember that?

It is the lord. He makes a difference. In determining. Oh, how to credit or what to think about when we do live. Uprightly. Uh, so that we would not be puffed up. And have spiritual pride. But that we would remember that it was the lord. Who graciously and mercifully made the difference.

Therefore, Any right? Living in a fruit of that that we enjoy. Uh, we respond to not with pride, but with further gratitude, With the humility that knows that we did not do that. So that's one of the major reasons, one of the major points here. Uh, and so the believer himself then is consecrated In chapter 17 as we came into the section of holy versus unholy in the book of leviticus.

And you don't first with animal blood. But here it is with Uh, the believer's life, the believers identity. And the believer being sold and body. Particularly. Um, Nakedness. And the holiness. Of marriage. Um, The sanctity. Of marriage. And so one of the great differences then that the lord makes and his people.

Is. He produces a people. To our committed to purity. With regard to nakedness and marriage. Now, the sin repeatedly prohibited in this chapter is Referred to or described. As the uncovering of nakedness. There are many other Actions. Worse, actions that are Uh, proscribed prohibited. Uh, by these laws. But the uncovering of nakedness is where it begins.

The uncovering of nakedness is the name. By which god himself calls it. And we learn from him. How to speak? In reference to some of the abominations and perversions. In particularly, Um, in particularly In particular. In our own culture. As efficians 5 verse 12. Reminds us that it is shameful even to speak.

Of the things that those who dwell in darkness, do those who are in, Walk in darkness, do And so rather than speak of those things, We may follow god's example. By referring to those things. With the language, the uncovering of nakedness. This is. Something that does not just refer to.

Modesty. Or. Uh, lost guarding our eyes, starting our hearts. But it also reminds us That the great problem is the sin in the heart. You remember when God made, man the end of genesis 2 Said he was naked and, or they were naked and not ashamed. But when he became a sinner, he immediately knew the danger.

And shame of nakedness in his new state. In chapter 3.

And so, It was sin itself sinfulness in man itself. That brought the shame of nakedness and the danger of nakedness. Now, this helps us. Think about one of the purposes for and establish parameters for Modesty and how we dress. Out of due regard to belonging to the lord and do regard.

To the difference that our sinfulness has made. It is important to keep one's own nakedness covered. Now god makes them male and female. And we need not dress in such a way. That obscures whether we are male or female in fact, doing so is also against god's law. But dressing in such a way that That which Is your own unique.

Uh, womanliness or your own unique. Manliness. Yeah, the shape of those. Of those parts is either exposed or outlined. So that your own nakedness is uncovered or revealed or communicated to others. This is a modest. This flies in the face of All of the prohibitions. In this chapter, It's not just a question of taste.

It's not just a question of fashion. It's not even just a question of wisdom. It is fundamental morality. The the womanly parts or the manly parts are not to be. Uncovered. Or communicate it. Um, Each one's. Uh, unique ones. And then it means of course that if somebody is dressed, And that way.

That you are to avoid. Looking upon thinking upon. How they're dressed. And what is communicated?

There are many, who If you are careful about this in your life, there are many in the churches. Who will use? Words like prude. That are supposed to be negative, but there's an abbreviation of Being prudent.

Don't bother yourself. With what people think of you on that point. There is shame and danger. To nakedness. We are sinners.

Now. One of the places then that This was a great distinction for israel was It was a distinction between doing. As egypt or the various canonite nations did. And as Israel was to do. Now, egypt is as we Um, Remember, even the In the song that the lord has given us for this week, psalm 105, and His providence.

The children of ham. Then you remember, this was the great sin of him, when noah Had gotten drunk. Was the uncovering or Gazing upon. Even his father's. Nakedness. And so israel is following, you always statutes and judgments in part. Specifically to stop from doing the wickedness of the nation's.

So you have the initial prohibition, not to do as egypt, or can in. And then you have the relationship of following the one in order not to do the other.

Particularly in. Verse 26. You saw therefore, keep my statutes and my judgments. And shall not commit any of these abominations. And verse 30. Therefore, you shall keep my ordinance so that you do not commit. Any of the abominable customs which were committed. Before you

The nations were doing. According. To the flash, according to The. Commands, the doctrines of demons. This is actually most clear in the whole chapter. Not with the uncovering of nakedness, but In verse 21, where None of their offspring were to be offered to molec the past through. To molec.

It was worshiped by an offering. Of fire.

Heating the arms of. Iron idle. Up so hot that they would put the baby on and the baby would Burst into flame. And worship of a demon.

And so there's a nationality that is to be refused here. They're not to be a nation according to ham. They are not to be a nation according to the flesh. They're not to be a nation according. To molok. Those nations were being vomited out of the land were being judged by god.

Even though they were not, In particular, covenant, with god the way. The israelite nation was. Now, that's significant for us because even though america Is not. In covenant with god. And the way that israel was America is accountable to god. Accountable to god for idolatry. Accountable to god for abominations.

Accountable to god for perversions. Accountable to god for murder. And of all these things, the land is dreadfully guilty. And it will be punished. It will be visited with special judgment. Just as every nation before it. That has fallen into the same sentence has been visited by god. With special judgment.

God's people. However, When they're among such nations, as is the case in Leviticus 18, And as is the case for the church in our country at our time. Must then heed the warning of god. Not to participate in the same abominations and perversions That are bringing the wrath of god upon the country.

Any individual who does so Is to be x, communicated as is communicated in this passage. Uh, with the language cut off from among their people. Where's 29? Any congregations. That tolerate, it are warned. Even by several letters from the lord jesus in chapter 2 and 3 of the book of revelation, the revelation of jesus christ.

That they will be excommunicated their lamp stand. Will be removed, the whole congregation. Will be cast off by the lord jesus christ and come under his wrath.

And so, we must pay special attention to the word abomination, which appears Five times verse 22, 26 27, 29 and 30. Yes, these things are perversions as well as appears in verse 23. And the word perversion. Refers to confusing or corrupting. The created order. And so does self-destructive. It is against nature.

As especially. Pertains to the sins in verse 22 and verse 23. Even more than many of the other uncoverings of nakedness and chapter. But, whereas, he only refers to that once he refers to Abomination, five times. There's a much greater emphasis on god's hatred of what has done. Than of the corruption or self.

Harm. Of what is done? Both are true. But it is a much more serious consideration. That such activity is hateful. To go out.

Let's pray. My gracious god and our heavenly father. We thank you. For not only redeeming us. And giving. Christ's life for us. But also for instructing us, In the way of living by the grace and life.

Love the lord jesus. We pray that you'd help us to do so. Especially in this matter of, Nakedness and marriage. So that we would be different. With the difference that you make in your own people. Which we ask in jesus name, amen.