

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Leviticus 18: 19-30

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Leviticus chapter 18, and today we'll read from verse 19 to verse 30.

Indeed, God's people are called to live holy lives because God Himself is holy. In establishing moral laws, God prioritizes the prohibition against incest, outlining specific familial relationships to preserve family ethics and order. This respect for family boundaries is foundational to a healthy family structure, which in turn supports a healthy nation. If family integrity crumbles, so does the nation's strength.

God's laws against immoral sexual behaviors aim to uphold the sanctity of relationships. Sexual intimacy is the closest bond between two people, intended to be rooted in mutual trust and a commitment to honor each other. Within a faithful marriage, sexual unity is a beautiful gift from God, blessed and enriching. However, this unity must be carefully protected. Any breach of faithfulness disrupts this bond, impacting not only the individuals involved but also the larger community. In Leviticus, God's instruction on these matters reflects His desire for His people to remain distinct and pure. This reminder applies to believers today, as we also aim to honor God through faithful relationships grounded in His love and holiness.

Verse 19: "Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as long as she is in her customary impurity."

In Leviticus 15:19, it states, "If a woman has a discharge, and the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. " This guidance sets a period of ceremonial uncleanness during menstruation. If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her period,

Leviticus 15:24 explains, "And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean".

These rules emphasize that even within marriage, there should be a respect for natural cycles, seen here as a reminder of God's created order. Observing these guidelines signified reverence for God's design and laws, recognizing both the physiological rhythms He established and the spiritual dimension of purity and holiness. This observance ultimately reinforced a lifestyle centered around honoring God's wisdom and boundaries.

Verse 20: "Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her."

Engaging in adultery with a neighbor's wife violates the seventh commandment, "You shall not commit adultery," and the tenth commandment, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." This act defiles oneself and is an offense against God. Therefore, God strictly commands against such behavior.

Verse 21: "And you shall not let any of your descendants pass through the fire to Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord."

The phrase "making your daughter pass through the fire to Molech" can be challenging to understand. The Chinese Union Version translates this as "the fire to Molech" following the KJV's "pass through the fire to Molech." However, in the original text, the word "fire" is not present. Some biblical scholars interpret this phrase as meaning that daughters were burned on the altar as sacrifices to Molech. If this interpretation is accurate, then the act is tied to idolatry. But why would God address this in a section about sexual impurity? To properly interpret this verse, we first need to understand what Molech represents. This passage is the first mention

of Molech in the Bible, so examining this word and exploring other references to Molech throughout Scripture can help us grasp its true meaning.

First, in 1 Kings 11, we read about King Solomon, who, in his later years, took many wives—700 wives and 300 concubines. In verse 1, it mentions that some of these women were Moabite and Ammonite. If we remember, these Moabites and Ammonites were the descendants of Lot's daughters, born from their incestuous relationship with their father. Lot's daughters grew up in Sodom, a city rampant with sexual immorality, which God destroyed with fire and brimstone. Only Lot and his two daughters survived, eventually giving rise to the Moabites and Ammonites.

Here, we see that Solomon took wives from among the Moabites and Ammonites. In 1 Kings 11:7, it says, "Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon." Not only did Solomon marry women from Moab and Ammon, but he also built high places for Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, and Molech, the god of the Ammonites, and offered sacrifices to these gods. Here we see that Molech was the god of the Ammonites, a deity likely originating from the city of Sodom. From the time of Solomon, Israelite kings allowed high places for these gods to remain, until the time of King Josiah of Judah.

Recorded in 2 Kings 23:1-3, King Josiah sent for the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, as well as priests, prophets, and all the people, to gather at the temple of the Lord and listen to the Book of the Covenant. After hearing it, the entire nation was called to commit wholeheartedly to obeying the Lord, following His commandments, statutes, and decrees. King Josiah removed the priests who worshiped idols and tore down the high places. In verse 7, it says, "Then he tore down the ritual booths of the perverted persons that were in the house of the Lord," and in verse 10, it adds, "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech." By putting these passages together, we can make a reasonable assumption.

Molech was an idol worshiped by the Ammonites, originally one of the many idols worshiped by the people of Sodom. Offering sacrifices to Molech involved making

one's children "pass through fire," perhaps requiring them to walk through or near flames as a ritual to dedicate them to Molech. These children would then live in the temple of Molech; boys would serve as temple prostitutes, and girls would serve as temple priestesses, specifically for the sexual gratification of the people of Sodom. The idol worship of that time was inseparably tied to sensuality, forming a perverse ritual in the worship of Molech. Given such depravity, it is no surprise that God had to destroy Sodom. Shockingly, through the incest of Lot's daughters, these corrupt rituals and customs survived and were even practiced by some Israelites within Jerusalem itself, an act that greatly offended God. Through Moses, God clearly instructed the Israelites not to offer their children to Molech, as it profaned His holy name. Here, God emphasizes, "I am the Lord." He is a holy and jealous God, and His people must also be holy.

Verse 22: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."

Here, God directly commands, forbidding a man to engage in sexual relations with another man as he would with a woman. God abhors homosexuality, and this standard applies equally to women. Paul also speaks about this in Romans 1:26-27, stating, "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due." Scripture is God's Word, clear and without compromise.

Now, as we approach the end of the world, it seems we are in the days of Lot, similar to the days before the destruction of Sodom. Society's morality has declined, with even some churches mirroring the world by accepting homosexuality and ordaining homosexual clergy. Dear brothers and sisters, as we witness this, let us recognize that the day of the Lord's return is near, and we must prepare ourselves to receive Him.

Verse 23: “Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion.”

Do not engage in bestiality, whether male or female; it is a defilement of oneself. Such acts reject the dignity of being human, contradicting the nature given by God, and reducing oneself to the level of animals, thereby entirely losing the perfect image and the high calling and purpose God has given to mankind. Following this command, in verses 24 through 30, God opens a window for us to understand why, during the time of Moses, He led the Israelites out of Egypt into the Promised Land. God intended to use His chosen people to execute judgment in that era.

Many people reading the Bible for the first time feel that the God of the Old Testament seems harsh. When God commanded the Israelites to enter the Promised Land, He instructed them to remove the Canaanite inhabitants. The following verses reveal the reasons for this command. Because this explanation is embedded within Leviticus, many skip over it and miss the insights provided by this “window” that God opens. As we read this part of Scripture, it is my hope that each of us pays close attention, so we might understand why God commanded the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites of that time.

Verse 24: “Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you.”

In all these matters—especially the issues previously mentioned regarding incest and unrestrained sexual behavior—God declares that we must not defile ourselves. Other sins may affect us outside our bodies, but sexual sin defiles our very bodies. Our bodies were created in the image of God, and, for believers under the New Covenant, they are also temples of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, indulging in sexual immorality brings serious consequences. God says, "For by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you".

Here, God is speaking prophetically, promising to fight on Israel’s behalf. As they enter the land of Canaan, God assures them that He will go before them and drive

out the nations because they have defiled themselves through such sinful practices. In the days of Lot, the people of Sodom were also defiled through rampant sexual sin. If we read Genesis 19, we see that the entire city of Sodom was so corrupt that they even sought to abuse the two angels sent to rescue Lot. As a result, God judged that city. Now, 500 years later, the inhabitants of Canaan have nearly followed the same path, defiling themselves with unrestrained behavior.

Verse 25: “For the land is defiled; therefore, I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants.”

Because the sins of the inhabitants of Canaan were exceedingly great, they not only defiled their own bodies but also corrupted the entire land of Canaan. The land was originally created by God to yield various crops and sustain the people He created. However, when humanity's sins become so deep that even the land is defiled, God will come to reckon with the sins of the land, causing it to "vomit out" its inhabitants. This expression is particularly striking, as it implies that the land is conscious and has the right to decide how to treat those who dwell upon it. When the moral state of the inhabitants declines too far, the land can expel them.

In reality, the heavens and the earth that God created bear His imprint and operate according to the order He established. The cycles of the seasons, the rising and setting of the sun—all follow the paths ordained by God, maintaining a balance among all things. The relationships within the ecological environment are harmonious. However, when human morality decays, greed runs rampant, and resources are taken without restraint, the ultimate result is that the land will expel its inhabitants, making it impossible for them to survive.

God used the inhabitants of Canaan as a negative example to remind the Israelites. By having the Israelites enter Canaan and drive out its inhabitants, God fulfilled what He had said to Abraham in Genesis 15:16: "But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." The Israelites were to return to Canaan and drive out its residents.

Verse 26: “You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you.”

Therefore, God once again spoke to the Israelites, commanding them to observe His statutes and judgments. Matters of incest and unclean sexual acts are abominations, which the Israelites must not practice, nor should the foreigners resid among them.

Verse 27: “For all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled.”

The inhabitants of the land before them, the Canaanites, acted with great lewdness in all these abominations, particularly in sexual conduct, disrupting God's order, including both ethical and natural orders; therefore, the land was defiled by them.

Verse 28: “lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.”

When people sin against the natural laws and moral laws established by God, the land becomes defiled. When the land is defiled, it will spew out the inhabitants residing in it. This applies to the Canaanites and the Israelites alike. In fact, this statement from God serves as a serious reminder to those of us living in the last days. If humanity does not respect the natural order established by God to a severe degree, the land may also expel us. In recent years, we have seen uncontrollable wildfires during the summer, with record-breaking temperatures occurring every year, consecutive Category 5 hurricanes, and hundred-year floods happening almost annually. The climate has become extremely erratic, leading to repeated destruction of the environments where people live. This could very well be a precursor to the land expelling its inhabitants, so we should heed God's warning.

Verse 29: “For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people.”

Therefore, God said to the Israelites that anyone among them who commits such evil acts, it is sufficient for just one to be cut off from among the people. This means they are to be expelled from the community of the Israelites, in order to preserve the purity of the people before God. This message also applies to the church today. In the time of Moses, God intended for the Israelites to replace the Canaanites and to inherit the land of Canaan. Similarly, in the last days, God wants the church to maintain its holiness before Him. At the return of Christ, He will judge this world and reign with the overcomers in the church. God aims to establish a kingdom of righteousness and justice on earth, replacing all current political systems. This will be the Millennial Kingdom lasting for a thousand years, and it will be the final Kingdom on earth before leading humanity into eternity.

Verse 30: “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 the Lord your God.”

God’s instructions to the Israelites are indeed earnest and persistent, repeatedly reminding them to keep His statutes and judgments and not to follow the abominable customs of the Canaanites. The Canaanites defiled themselves by practicing such evil acts, and the Israelites were not to do the same, for the Lord was their God. Today, God conveys the same message to His people, urging us to value His Word, to live by His Word, and to resist the customs and trends of the world while maintaining the holiness of the church. The church is the body of Christ, holy and without blemish. Christ is our Savior, God is our Father, the Holy Spirit dwells within us, and we belong to God; therefore, we should be holy.

Let us pray together: Lord, we are so grateful to You. The words You spoke to the Israelites in Leviticus are the same words You speak to the church today. As we live in the last days and see the world increasingly descend into degradation, we recognize that the day of Your return is near. Help us to heed Your reminders, to not

conform to the customs and trends of this world, and to uphold the holiness of the church. Thank You, Lord! You have not called us to change this world, for we truly cannot do so. You want us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, attracting people to Your house and maintaining its purity. When Christ returns, the victorious saints will judge the world alongside Him and reign with Him. This is Your promise to us and our hope. Guard the church to which I belong, that it may be holy and without blemish. I pray this in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!