

10. God's way, ONLY

March 26, 2009

From the humanistic point of view, if we have all the good laws; encourage people to enhance their self-esteem; educate everyone to love one another; and arrest those who break the laws and put them in some psychological classes to try new lifestyles, then everything would go well. I think not and I know not. It takes far more than good laws and education system to make good people and a good society.

As a matter of fact, any human effort to make a person righteous and holy is a waste of time. It cannot be done.

In our world today, not everything that's legal is moral or biblical. Just about anything is permissible nowadays under the name of cheapened freedom which is a cop-out for not taking responsibilities of what they do and don't do. God will one day judge their abominable sins.

Leviticus 17-20 constituted a legal code for the people of Israel, touching on many areas of their personal and public life. The emphasis isn't simply on justice or civic righteousness, as important as they are, but on holiness. After all, Israel was God's people and the law was God's law.

The motivation for Israel's obedience had to be more than fear of punishment. The people also needed in their hearts a desire to please God and a determination to be a holy people who would bring glory to His name. Obeying the law and having holy character aren't necessarily the same thing.

If we are living holy, we don't have to worry about breaking human laws. But we realize that more and more twisted and ungodly laws are passed in this country and to make a holy and righteous living we will end up breaking the laws of the land.

A. SACRIFICES ACCORDING TO GOD'S WAY

Leviticus 17:1-9 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, 'This is the thing which the Lord has commanded, saying: 3 "Whatever man of the house of Israel who kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who kills it outside the camp, 4 and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord, the guilt of bloodshed shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people, 5 to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them as peace offerings to the Lord. 6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the Lord. 7 They shall no more offer their sacrifices to demons, after whom they have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations." ' 8 Also you shall say to them: 'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9 and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to offer it to the Lord, that man shall be cut off from among his people.

In the pagan world at that time, it was customary to offer sacrifice wherever one pleased. Altars were customarily built on high hills, in forested areas, or at other special places, like in front of a big tree or a rock. When I was growing up in South Korea, I saw many of these altars around the country as well.

Y'all remember what Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did in Genesis. They also built altars wherever they thought it was important and sacrificed animals to the Lord. Did they do wrong? No, because they did without knowing anything about the Ten Commandments. That was B.T.C. – Before the Ten Commandments.

Then why did God give such instructions? Israel was fresh out of Egypt where they had been surrounded by idolatry. They had worshiped the idols of Egypt, and there was always the danger of lapsing back into idolatry. Not only that they were walking into the territories where idol worship is more common than the pebbles in the desert ground.

How to worship and follow the Lord is clearly defined in the Bible. This is not something we can change any way we want according to how we feel or what is going around in this carnal world. Many have tried and are trying and will try to redefine the way of God. God doesn't negotiate with anyone, nor does He have to in order to have more people follow Him. He absolutely doesn't care about that. Either we are on His side or we are against Him. There is no neutral position in the spiritual world.

From this we see that Israel was forbidden to kill any animal in any place but the tabernacle in order to prevent them from making it an offering to any idol.

Moreover, blood speaks of the sacrifice of Christ. Humans sinned and somebody had to take the place of humans because of the sins. The consequence of our sins is eternal death. In spite of human sin, God extended His mercy and grace through His Son's sacrifice. Blood and life are synonymous.

These laws were modified slightly when the nation went into the land of Canaan. In the camp of Israel, nobody would be too far from the door of the tabernacle. It means that bringing an animal for a fellowship offering wouldn't pose a problem. But in the land of Canaan, distance would create a problem. So, the Lord allowed the people to kill animals for food at home without having to bring them to the altar. However, all sacrifices had to be at the altar, and nobody was permitted to eat the blood.

B. THE SANCTITY OF BLOOD

Leviticus 17:10-16 'And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.' 12 Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.' 13 Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; 14 for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel,

'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.' 15 *"And every person who eats what died naturally or what was torn by beasts, whether he is a native of your own country or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean. 16 But if he does not wash them or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."*

The early church included this regulation in its instructions to Gentile converts in Acts 15. In many heathen religions, it was a common practice to use blood for food, which explains why God warned even the non-Jews in the camp not to violate this law. How easy it would be for a Jew to follow the bad example of his heathen neighbor and thus incur the wrath of God!

It appears from history that there were nations which were very fierce, savage and barbarous, such as the Scythians, Tartars, Arabs of the desert and the Scandinavians were known for drinking the blood of their enemies, making cups out of their skulls.

Of course, there was a vital health issue in eating blood of animal. A person could get many diseases by doing that.

Some of you may think about Jesus' commandment to use about baptism:

Matthew 26:26-30 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." 30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

If you have noticed, Jesus didn't tell us to eat blood, rather 'drink' His blood. What is the difference? The people whom God was pointing out in the Book of Leviticus were literally eating real blood. But the blood Jesus mentioned here is a symbol of the fruit of the vine that represents the blood of Jesus Christ, not the literal blood of Jesus like the idea of transubstantiation of Roman Catholics. Jesus gave us His blood so that we may have eternal life in Him. Indeed, there is life in the blood.

This is a great, eternal truth. This explains why Abel's sacrifice was more excellent than Cain's. It is the blood that make an atonement for the soul. The blood of Christ is the only thing that can wash away sin.

Some people who do not know the Bible and Christianity take offense from all the comments about the blood of animal sacrifice and the Atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. There is nothing offensive about the blood. The true offense is in our own sins.

I consider verse 11 one of the key verses of this book.

C. NOT YOUR WAY, BUT GOD'S WAY

Leviticus 18:1-5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the Lord your God. 3 According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. 4 You shall observe My judgments

and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. 5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord.

Up to this point the laws concerning ceremonial cleansing have been given. In chapters 18, 19 and 20, we find a special section which applies the Ten Commandments to life situations. God is now dealing with the moral aspects of the lives of His people. We are getting right down to the nitty-gritty.

We are living in a sex-saturated society. You can not open newspaper without seeing something that suggest sex, or watching TV without it. Decency has gone out the window long ago. People encourage divorce, abortion for the sake of convenience. They promote and endorse adultery, fornication and casual sex as common things people should enjoy.

From v1-5, the Lord clearly tells us why we should not do the things that are mentioned in v6-23. Let me put it this way. When we were kids, we protested to our parents what they told us to do was not fair and we didn't like it. Then our parents said this phrase to us which we ourselves used to our own kids:

"As long as you live under my roof, you will do what I say. When you have your own house and your own family, you can do whatever you want."

Three times in this passage God said, "*I am the Lord.*" That is all the authority we need for the standards and rules we have to abide. We may disagree with Him. But as long as we live on His earth, breath His air, exist in His universe without paying a penny for the rent and usage, He can do whatever He wants to do and we should obey Him. If we can create a whole new universe out of His universe system from scratch, and live in our own planet, breathing our own air, then we would have a right to set our own standards and rules to redefine what we think it should be done.

The things that God said were immoral in the Ten Commandments almost thirty five hundred years ago are still immoral. God's truth never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

D. PROHIBITING SEXUAL IMMORALITY

From v6-18, the Lord prohibits incest. Other than being immoral, incest causes high rates of malformations and retardations due to recessive genes like the Japanese Emperor families in the 19th and 20th Centuries. V20 talks against adultery.

V21 talks against human sacrifice, mainly child sacrifice. The pagan god Molech – more accurately demon – was worshiped by heating a metal statue representing the god until it was red hot, then by placing a living infant on the outstretched hands of the statue, while beating drums drowned out the screams of the baby until he or she was burned to death. The people in America now may say, "We don't do such a primitive thing. We are civilized people." Yes, Americans still allow the burning of babies, not on a pagan god statue, but inside of their mothers' wombs with chemicals for the sake of convenience.

V22 warns against homosexuality. What amazes me is that homosexuals have their own churches and they completely ignore what the Bible says against homosexuality because they are absolutely driven by their sexual perverse passion. 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?" It is wrong because God

says, "It is wrong," and it is against what God intended. It is an abomination. The best commentary on homosexuality is Romans 1:24-32.

V23 seems completely out of possibility for any normal human being. But then again, because we are utterly wicked sinful humans, we are all capable of it.

E. THE URGENCY TO OBEY

Leviticus 18:24-30 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. 25 For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. 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 27 (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. 29 For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. 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.'"

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 sexual immorality today, we should expect that the judgment of God would eventually come and the land will vomit out its inhabitants. America is out of excuses for her sins. God will judge her severely.

F. APPLICATIONS

- 1) We must remember that God doesn't negotiate with anyone, nor does He have to in order to have more people to follow Him. He absolutely doesn't care about that. Either we are on His side or we are against Him. There is no neutral position in spiritual world.
- 2) We must remember that which God said were immoral in the Ten Commandments almost thirty five hundred years ago are still immoral. God's truth never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.
- 3) We must remember that God always has the final word and authority in every aspect.