

## **Study and Comments from Authors: Dave Jackson, Matthew Vines, Colby Martin, Pastor R.D. Weekly, James Brownson, Kathy Baldock**

Lev 18: 22. "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.  
Lev 20:13 If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act they shall surely be put to death. Their blood guiltiness is upon them.

### **Dave Jackson**

Don't we have to look at hermeneutics - to whom it was written and why?  
Leviticus 18 - intro in vs. 2 "You shall not do what is done in the land of Egypt where you lived, nor are you to do what is done in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you; you shall walk not walk in their statutes."

So - don't do what they did, and then lists what they did in **Egypt and Canaan.**

Lev 20:2 "You shall say to the sons of Israel, 'any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens sojourning in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones.'" And then begins the list of things that those who worshipped **Molech** did. Primarily child sacrifice but also sexual promiscuity as in worship of Baal. The entire chapter is about avoiding idol worship and thus all behaviors included are idolatrous, or part of fertility cults, or ritual prostitution related to worship of those idols.

Molech was god of fire - Baal and Asherah were fertility Gods and supplicants would visit shrines and pay to use male and female cult prostitutes (p. 141 Jackson). Baal was said to practice bestiality

Vs 22 aligns with Deut 23:17 No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute.

P. 142 states that scholars in the last century people read Lev 18:22 to be about shrine prostitution.

Gagnon (primary anti-gay scholar) says "**homosexual cult prostitution appears to have been the primary form in which homosexual intercourse was practiced in Israel.**"

p. 144 Rabbi Chaim Rapoport says "The Bible does not condemn homosexuality in general, but it does condemn 3 things: homosexual rape,

the ritual prostitution that was a part of the Canaanite fertility cult that was apparently, at one time, in Jewish practice as well, and homosexual lust and behavior on the part of heterosexuals.”

Jackson says we don't see any evidence in case law....“If the law was meant to prohibit life-long same-sex relationships, we would expect to see similar prosecutions, purges and denunciations by the prophets or in narratives.”

Yes, Israel was called to be holy.

### **Pastor RD Weekly**

p 18 Explains this was what happened in Egypt and what had happened in Canaan and God was dealing with the idolatry that he detests. Israel was called to set themselves apart and to be holy.

The entire law was given to teach Israel how to worship.

In many cases, **the only thing that made it an abomination was the association with the idolatrous cults** of Egypt and Canaan. There was nothing wrong with certain types of meat or fabric other than that it associated with the way of life of idolatrous people. Goes on to say **tattoos** and **body piercings** had been associated with gothic subculture and death. The tattoos weren't offensive, it was what they represented that was offensive.

Also, female-female sex was not condemned in Lev, so must mean that was not prevalent then in idolatrous cultures near Israel.

Today - is homosexuality associated with idolatry? No.

**Colby Martin** - p 84- These chapters in Lev are about violating the family dynamic. Protect the family dynamic, the family ethos, the sacredness of the family. These laws were not arbitrary but had a purpose in pointing us toward loving God and your neighbor as yourself.

P.86 explains some of the words used “as with a woman” is different than saying “lie with ish(man) as you with a woman (ishshah). Suggests a nuance. Not a sweeping condemnation against any and all same-sex sex acts.

P. 89 and following. Abominations (toevah) implies violation of cultural divisions. Each culture has their own behaviors that are toevah. Thus, toevah had a relative nature.

Lists in Deuteronomy 25 have many **abominations (toevah)** that we would not consider to be inherently sinful (like a wife grabbing the testicles of someone while trying to aid her husband.)

p. 92 Toevah had something to do with identity and God wanted the identity of the Israelites to be clear.

p.94 These 2 verses have been used to condemn the LGBTQ community when in reality they were to help a group of liberated slaves understand how they were to be a uniquely called out nation in the world.

**James Brownson** P. 270 texts are injunctions against idolatry and the urgency of avoiding the practices of surrounding nations. Toevah is closely linked to idolatry.

Evidence linking same-sex eroticism to cultic prostitution. And **“there is no literary evidence for consensual male-male sexual relations in the land of Israel and surrounding regions specifically, apart from the cultic context”**

P. 272 if this is all about violation of gender, then why are women not mentioned? **Male-male sex is linked with the behavior of alien nations, with idolatry and cultic prostitution and with the degradation of distinctive male honor.**

## **Vines**

Vines. p79 references Acts 15:29 saying the council said Gentiles are not bound by OT law except for 4 things - Abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals, and from sexual immorality. So then, the question is, what defines sexual immorality?

Also Galatians 5:6 says circumcision is not important either, the only thing important is faith being expressed in love.

pages 85 - **toevah most often refers to idolatrous practices of Gentiles. It is not an ethical term, but a boundary marker or taboo.**

Says much has to do with gender complementarity theory.

Philo in first century AD thought these verses had to do with pederasty and with males being treated like women during intercourse. The passive

male partner in same-sex relations was seen as a “man-woman who adulterates the precious connate of his nature.” And that the greatest of all evils were “unmanliness and effeminacy”

Clement (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD) passive men - suffer the things of women.

Hebrew linguist Saul Olyan says this is prohibition against anal penetration. p. 89 Philo rebuked the passive partner for becoming feminized and the active partner for enabling that feminization. p. 90 these passages are about proper ordering of gender roles in a patriarchal society

**Kathy Baldock** p. 227 goes further to say that “Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the social and religious focus of how people participated in sex was centered on what role a person took (active or passive) and whether the sex act was procreative or not. And in Leviticus, the prohibitions were related to a pagan culture where a man taking the role of a woman was degrading.”

### **DeYoung - Takes the traditional stance**

Explains that there are no qualifications to the laws against sexual sin in Lev. 18 (p40). He goes on to say that the only consideration is that of gender. In Lev 20:13 where both man and woman have committed an abomination, condemns both active and passive roles in homosexuality, especially since both receive the death penalty. He further comments that if it were homosexual rape that only the aggressor would receive the death penalty. Much of his discussion is about God’s plan in the garden being for 1 man and 1 woman.

### **Counters to DeYoung**

P. 43 point 1. The OT sets the stage for NT but Hebrews 10:16 is clear that the law is written on our hearts and in our minds. The underlying principle (end of point 1) is that we are to worship the 1 true God and not those of Canaan, Egypt or Moloch or Baal.

P. 44 point 2 - Yes, Jesus referred to Lev 19:18 that includes love your neighbor as yourself, but he did more than that - he established it and love the Lord God into the 2 overriding laws.

Page 44 point 4 abominations are many Proverbs 6:16 lists haughty eyes, lying tongues, hands that kill, wicked hearts, feet that run to evil, false witnesses and those that spread strife among brothers.” Yet if homosexual sin was to be called out as the words (p. 45 “only male-male sex is singled out”) then, why is it not listed throughout the scripture as some of these others are?

P. 46 point 6 Why is polygamy not listed in Leviticus **if this was to be a listing of do's and do-nots?** If marriage is truly between 1 man and 1 woman, why was this overlooked? Why were concubine marriages allowed as well as marrying the virgin that someone has raped? Those are also outside the 1 man : 1 woman perfect complementarian relationship. We also see the blessings given to David and to others with multiple wives. The Levirate Marriage Code calls for a man to marry his brother's wife after he dies. Most often, this would mean a 2<sup>nd</sup> wife for him.

Could it be because these Leviticus verses had to do with idolatrous behavior and Israel setting themselves apart?

### **Study Questions**

1. Where is Leviticus in the Bible?
2. Why do we reference it today?
3. Why is it important? Or, is it important?
4. How often do you look at it?  
What about Pastors? Other Believers? The world?
5. How often and when did Jesus refer to it?
6. To whom was it written and why?