

Belonging to God

Leviticus 18:1-5

November 23, 2008

Intro

The book of Leviticus begins with instructions on how Israel was to worship God through offerings and sacrifices. God had told them that he would give them the land which he had promised to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He also promised that his presence would go with them and as unmistakable evidence of his presence; they were to construct the tabernacle according to the directions that God had given Moses on Mount Sinai.

They built the tabernacle exactly as God had instructed and they began to worship God there. But as he was preparing them to enter into the land of promise, he also gave them other instructions about how they should live their lives.

He gave these instructions for living for two reasons; first, that they might be a distinct people from all other people on the earth. In other words, God wanted it to be clear that Israel belonged to him, that he was their God and they were his people. Secondly, God gave them instructions that would help them to live well, to keep them from diseases.

God also gave them instructions for how to have good and godly character. He wanted them to understand how to take care of one another. If they were to be God's people, then they must have God's heart.

Illus – We can see good sense when God told them not to eat bats or rats or snakes or spiders. But we also see God's heart when he told them not to harvest the corners of their fields, to leave that to those who were in need.

Here in chapter 18, God explains his heart for them, why he gives them instructions for how to live their lives.

I. I'm My Beloved's and He is Mine

- 1 That's actually the words of a song we used to sing in church when I was young, but it communicates the point of what God is trying to say here in verse 2.
- 2 Three times he says, "I am the Lord your God" in just these first few verses.
- 3 What he is saying is that because they belong to God and God belongs to them, then that should make a difference in how they live their lives.

A. We're made from his dust

- 1 There is a very good reason why we should consider that we belong to God and that we owe Him our heart and our allegiance –
- 2 Because we are breathing His air and living on His planet...

Psalm 24:1, The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in

it.

Deuteronomy 10:14, Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.

- 3 If the universe and the earth in particular are the products of random chance, then we could certainly do whatever we wished without any concern whatsoever.
- 4 But the evidence for God's fingerprint is everywhere around us, so that man has no excuse.
- 5 In fact, the more we know, the more we can see the evidence for the amazing intelligence of God.

Romans 1:20, For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Illus – if you were to take a walk on the beach and see the ripples in the sand, you would conclude that this was a pattern of randomness. But if you were to see there on the sand a big heart with the words, “Rich loves Jordi,” you would conclude that there is great intelligence behind such a clever design.

Illus – in fact, the DNA of the human body is an amazing declaration of the greatness of our Creator. The DNA is a three foot double helix that is encoded with a four character chemical language which is the most efficient information storage system in the universe!

- 6 So the point is that if we are made from God's dust, and we are breathing God's air, then we owe God our hearts and our allegiance.

Illus – I was witnessing to a man in Russia named Valary. He was so close to accepting the Lord up, but there was still some resistance. So we sat down and I asked...

B. Don't live like those without God

- 7 In verse three, The Lord instructed Moses to say that they should not do what is done in the land of Egypt or in the land of Canaan.
- 8 In other words, the things that were being done in Egypt and in Canaan were both very offensive to God and very harmful to themselves.
- 9 The rest of chapter 18 speaks of some of the practices of those lands. For example, they commonly practiced incest, adultery, bestiality, and burning their own children as offerings to Molech or other gods. There was rampant homosexuality.

10 It was for these reasons that God said that they must be removed from the land.

11 If we belong to God, then there is also on us the same call that we should not live as the world lives.

12 We use the word 'worldly' to describe the condition of being like the world around us. And there is a lot of pressure to conform to the world.

Romans 12:2, And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

13 The word 'conform' here means to be molded as someone molds clay, by pressuring the clay to become what he wants it to become.

Illus – Consider the molding pressure that so many teens feel from their peers; pressure to fit in, to be accepted, to be cool.

The problem is that it teaches them to be more concerned about what other people think than what God thinks.

14 God wants us to understand the importance of being different than others in a godly way. Do the right thing, even if you're the only one doing it.

Illus – When Jesus healed ten lepers, only one went back to say 'thank you.'

15 But God says that we should not be molded –conformed to the world; but be transformed - made new, by the renewing of our minds.

16 The reason, God says, is because the world is passing away. It is pursuing death, therefore it is dying.

1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world

1 Finally, God promises us that if we will live differently than the world, then we have the opportunity for a deep relationship to God.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18, Therefore, "Come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord, "and do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me," says the Lord Almighty.

II. The Creator Knows the Best Design

1 If God is the Creator of the universe and we see the depth of His amazing

knowledge, then can God not design our lives in awesome ways to bless our lives beyond our imagination?

- 2 God designed animals with instinct that directs them in what to do and how to live.
- 3 Birds know where to fly without ever learning the directions; bears know how to hibernate, etc.
- 4 But we are given a choice. God lays out the best and asks us to choose the way which is right.

A. Perform the judgments of God

- 1 The word 'judgment' has several meanings. It can mean determining guilt or lack of guilt, right or wrong; thus the idea of condemnation. But it can also mean, *the operation of the mind, involving comparison and discrimination, by which a knowledge of the values and relations of things, whether of moral qualities, intellectual concepts, logical propositions, or material facts, is obtained;*
 - 1 Ultimately, one leads to the other...

Illus – in the book of Daniel, the king of Babylon Belshazzar had a feast and was drinking with the golden vessels of the Jewish temple and the words *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin* appeared on the wall. Daniel was called and interpreted the words, “You have been weighed in the scales and have been found lacking...”

- 2 We make thousands of decisions in our lives and what God is saying is that He wants us to live by using the discernment and judgment of God.
- 3 We need to learn how to grow in discernment and judgment so we know how to live more godly – more like God, in all that we do.

Hebrews 5:10-14 learning to discern

- 1 This is important to understand because there are many people who misunderstand faith and how it relates to using good judgment in life.
- 2 Many make unwise decisions and say, “I will trust God to work this out.” But God is giving good judgment so we don’t get into those situations in the first place.

Illus – a builder in another state went out of business because he didn’t use God’s judgments.

James 1:5, But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- 1 We need both faith and wisdom.

B. Live in accord with God's Word

- 2 What he says next in verse four is very important as well. He says that Israel should live in accord with them.
- 3 What that means is that they are to live in agreement with the judgments and statutes of God, rather than being in opposition or resistance to them.
- 4 This would be what God was referring to when he asked Saul, who later became Paul, why he was "kicking against the goads."
- 5 This is what Stephen was referring to when he said of the Jews after Jesus was crucified...

Acts 7:51, "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did."

- 6 This is what God meant when he said that He would make a new covenant and that He would write the law upon their hearts.

Jeremiah 31:33, "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

- 7 When the law is written on your heart, you want to do what God wants you to do. You delight to do his will.

Psalms 40:8, "I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart."

C. Living is good

- 8 Verse 5 contains the promise that of any man will keep the judgments and statutes of the Lord that he will live. (**Galatians 6:7-8**)
- 9 In other words, life comes from God's ways because he knows the way to keep us from death.
- 10 When Israel was about to enter the Holy land, God asked Moses to present both good and evil before them...

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 Choose life

Joshua 24:15, "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Dr. Charles McCombs, Ph.D. Organic Chemistry

“There is another problem with DNA and how it works in the human body. As part of the normal replication process for DNA, an enzyme travels down the DNA strand so that a copy strand of DNA can be produced. The enzyme reads the sequence of molecules along the strand, and if an incorrect nucleotide is detected in the strand, there is a mechanism that uses other enzymes to cut out the bad nucleotide and insert the correct one, thus repairing the DNA.

Let's look at DNA and this repair mechanism to see if indeed they were formed from random chance natural processes. If the repair mechanism evolved first, what use is a repair mechanism if DNA has not evolved yet? If DNA evolved first, how would the DNA even know it would be better off with a repair mechanism? Can molecules think? DNA is not a stable chemical molecule, and without a repair mechanism, it would easily deteriorate by chemical oxidation and other processes. There is no mechanism to explain how DNA could exist for millions of years while the repair mechanism evolved. DNA would just decompose back into pond scum before the alleged billions of random chance mutations could ever form the repair mechanism.

Once we realize that design does not happen by chance, then we realize that the entire universe is not the product of a random, chance process; it is the result of an omnipotent Creator who created everything by just His Word. I hope you are beginning to see the problem. Evolution can give you a theory that might on the surface seem possible, but when true science gets involved and scientists start asking questions, the problems and false logic of the theory become apparent. This is why evolution just hopes you don't know chemistry.”