

Leviticus 18:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.

Analysis

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.

This verse falls within the section on **Unlawful Sexual Relations**. Prohibitions against various sexual sins, distinguishing Israel from Canaanite practices and protecting family sanctity.

The holiness demanded in Leviticus becomes possible through Christ, who both satisfies God's righteous requirements and transforms believers by His Spirit.

Historical Context

Prohibitions against various sexual sins, distinguishing Israel from Canaanite practices and protecting family sanctity. Chapters 17-27, often called the 'Holiness Code,' expand covenant obligations beyond ritual to encompass all of life—sexuality, economics, justice, and relationships. The repeated refrain 'I am the LORD' grounds these laws in God's character and covenant relationship with Israel. Israel received these laws while encamped at Sinai, before entering Canaan. The laws prepared them for life in the promised land, distinguishing them from Canaanite practices and establishing their identity as God's holy nation. The portable tabernacle, central to Levitical worship, accompanied them through wilderness wanderings and eventually found permanent form in Solomon's temple.

The Israelite dietary laws in Leviticus 11 have no exact parallel in surrounding cultures, though some ancient cultures had food taboos, suggesting unique revelation rather than borrowed customs.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. In what ways does this verse challenge contemporary cultural values or your personal attitudes?
2. How does this verse help you understand both God's justice and His mercy in salvation?
3. What practical steps can you take this week to apply the principles taught in this verse?

Interlinear Text

עָרֵת תִּתְגַּלְלֵה	לֹא	אַחֲרֵי bָrother's	אֲשֶׁר	בָּרָךְ יְהוָה	אֲחֵךְ	אֲשֶׁר	עָרֵת תִּתְגַּלְלֵה
nakedness	wife	it is thy brother's		H3808	Thou shalt not uncover	nakedness	
H6172	H802				H1540		H6172
אֲחֵךְ	בָּרָךְ יְהוָה:						
it is thy brother's	H1931						
H251							

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 25:5 (Parallel theme): If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.

Leviticus 20:21 (Parallel theme): And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.

Mark 12:19 (Parallel theme): Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Matthew 22:24 (Parallel theme): Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.