

Contextualizing Sexual Love Values in Leviticus 18:1-14 for Nigerian Christians of the 21st Century: A Pragmatic Option

Samson Olugbemiga Dada

Abstract

Nigerians and indeed Africans, irrespective of their religious affiliations and beliefs have 'sacred' value for sexual acts. Among Nigerians (Africans), sexual matters are hardly openly raised (in general or religious platforms), except when insinuation warrant so. When as a matter of necessity it is raised, such is treated 'cautiously'. It is not only considered a disrespect against the 'norms' but perceived as a sign of sinful/corrupt life, sometimes a taboo, that sexual matters be wholly examined. Much more, when sexual perversions like incest, rape, homosexuality and bestiality occurs, it is strongly frowned at.¹⁷⁸ This paper explores the Jewish worldview and values for sexual-love that provided the structure for Christian Church view of marital sexual acts. Through a descriptive-hermeneutical approach, the study promotes the age-long virtue and admonishes ideal/godly qualities necessary to uphold African worldview in sexual matters.¹⁷⁹ It upheld the Jewish family sexual bounds in Leviticus 18:1-14 as basis for early church's position on sane sexual-union. The paper noted this time-tested basis for 21st

¹⁷⁸Gwamna D. Je'Adayibe. "Biblical Teaching on Marriage and Sex: A Case Study of Leviticus 18 & 20" in *Biblical View of Sex and Sexuality from African Perspective*. Gen. Ed. S. O. Abogunrin, (NABIS Biblical Studies Series No. 5), 38.

¹⁷⁹Mathews A. Ojo. "Sexuality, Marriage and Piety among Charismatic in Nigeria" in *Religion*, 1997, 27; 76, p. 40.

Century Nigeria Christians to defend marital sexual-love, in the face of outrageous sexual adoptions on-going under globalization pretext. It finally raised recommendations for appropriate sexual conduct in the family for marital-sexual love relationship among Nigeria Christians.

Key Words and Phrases: - Incest, Sexual-Love, Contextualizing, Globalization, Postmodernism, Nigeria-Christians.

Introduction

This writer once lives in a neighborhood that had two cases of incest acts, not too long after one another. In view of the fact that the persons involved were Christians, the church intervened in order to salvage the situation. At least to rescue the victims and consequently began restorative/rehabilitative sessions, while the abusers were set to be disciplined in line with Church's rule for such abnormalities. Then came worries upon the families/peoples involved and the discreet sessions became emotionally charged because of the type of personalities involved. Even then the restorative/rehabilitation/disciplinary steps had to be carried out discreetly and conducted among selected few. Throughout the course of the restoration process, the gravity of familial sexual absurdity (incest) was deeply felt by this writer and the counselors involved. Unfortunately, church's reparative efforts on issues like this have not been fully embraced or change the situation. Insinuations and concurrent 'voices' among young ones (especially young girls) still attest that incest goes on in muted tunes in the society and that people have only chosen to 'silence' it away. Reportorial in the Nigerian and foreign press affirms this, while internet/social media is evident with numbers of cases.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰Samson O. Dada, "The Law of Incest in Leviticus 18:1-14 and its Lessons for the Redeemer's Baptist Association, Ogbomoso, Nigeria" (M.Th. Thesis, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, 2013), 75, 77; See also R. Okoye. "Dad Caught Having Sex with Daughter". *Sunday Express*, 1, 45, 2012: 6;

Regrettably, the near global licensed freedom-in-sexual-acts and Western world endorsement of rabid sexual deeds¹⁸¹ have worsened African sane 'fears' for purity in sexuality.¹⁸² Meanwhile, the Church in Nigeria, as a major arm of the Church in Africa has continually endorsed Biblical traditional values for human sexuality.¹⁸³ Thus among Nigerian-Christians, sex is basically in conjugal union and for pleasure; reproduction and fulfillment of married couples and within the marriage confines. Unequivocally, the average Nigerian-Christian subscribes to due honour and understanding accorded by Yahweh for sexual matters at creation, as regulated in the Levitical codes, celebrated in the wisdom literatures and accordingly respected by the entire New Testament corpus.

In the Levitical codes, pursuant to Yahweh's quest to raising his holy nation by the mediation of Moses and as a marked identity, God declared, "You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan" (Leviticus 18:3, NIV). Hence, as the sacrificial rules of worship and ordination of priests were dealt with in Leviticus Chapters 1-17, family sexual identity was taken up in Chapter 18. This for the emerging nation sets forth a family-life foundation that is fixed on the prism of divine directives.¹⁸⁴ It buttresses the fact that, familial/conjugal sexual acts are not only honoured of God, but have respected identity among God's own people.

Taiwo Jimoh, "General Overseer Impregnates 15-year-old daughter twice". *The Nigerian Compass*, Wednesday August, 28, 2012; www.vanguardngr.com/2016/06/started-sleeping-daughter-frustration/ accessed 2nd August, 2017.

¹⁸¹<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2012/apr/16/incest-legality-ethics> accessed 2nd August, 2017; www.charismanews.com accessed 2nd August, 2017.

¹⁸²David O. Fakeye. *Globalization and Cultural Erosion: Impact on Sexuality in Nigeria*. Conference Proceedings, SlovakEdu ISBN 978-80-971580-0-2.

¹⁸³Wilbur O'Donovan Jr. *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*. (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1996), 283-284.

¹⁸⁴Gwamna D. Je'Adayibe. "Biblical Teaching on Marriage and Sex: A Case Study of Leviticus 18 & 20", 33.

In the face of unpleasant reported cases (examples/sources) of incest in Nigerian media and the wider society, this paper sees the urgent need for Christian families to be ardent and adequately equipped on sex and sexuality matters. The paper is a clarion-call to the Nigerian-Christians to guard against untoward sexual conducts by being adequately equipped and informed. It is a call to the Nigerian-church, the custodian of divine-societal rule, to speak up against abnormalities echoed by the globalized media against godly-sexuality in this 21st Century. This has become imperative in view of the rabid sensuality that the so-called advanced worlds have brought upon the ‘altar of sacrifice’.

Definition of Key Words and Phrases

The following words and phrases have been defined in this piece in line with the content and spirit of the paper. These are – Incest, Sexual-Love, Contextualization, Globalization, Postmodernism and Nigerian-Christian.

Incest: Generally defined, it is an act of sexual affair with persons of close familial relationship. In other words, it is sexual activity between individuals that for moral or genetic reasons are too closely related to have such a relationship.¹⁸⁵ For many a culture and particularly in Nigeria, incest is a serious taboo and totally deplored. The international literary piece, “*The God’s Are Not to Blame*” by Ola Rotimi has portrayed the gravity at which an average Nigerian (and Africans) reacts to cases of incest. In the drama-piece, Odewale the main-actor was caught up in a consanguineous relationship and the gods of the land reacted by banishing him out of the city.¹⁸⁶ Be that as this may, in Nigeria, cultures still differ to the extent at which marital sexual contacts may be allowed between relatives. By and large

¹⁸⁵“Incest”. *Microsoft Encarta*. Microsoft Corporation, 2009.

¹⁸⁶OlaRotimi.*The Gods are Not to Blame*. (London: Oxford University Press Plc, 1971), 68, 72.

however, Africans and indeed Nigerians still frown at sexual consanguinity of ‘close’ relations in blood lineage.

Contextualization: here means expressing Christian truths in relevant and intelligible language to the context of people that are to practice it in real life.¹⁸⁷ It is making the message of the scripture understandable and acceptable within the cultural and customary milieu of a people, without demeaning the truth of the scripture. It is an “effective transposition of Biblical message to the African *sitz im leben*”.¹⁸⁸ Better- still, it is relating the church’s message and practice to its local historical milieu. Contextualization takes the worldview of a people into specific consideration in the presentation of the (Christian) message. Thus the people’s cultural, religious, social, political and economic milieus are measured in the attempt to interpret what the scripture says to them.¹⁸⁹ Summarily therefore, contextualization may be said to be, efforts at making God’s message relevant to a peoples situation and life experiences.

Sexual-Love: It is described here as a deep emotional relationship between persons of opposite sex rooted in marital covenant which usually climaxes in erotic satisfaction.¹⁹⁰ It is the conjugal exchange of loving advances between married couples that may culminate in sexual intercourse.

Globalization: is making the world into a global village...bringing the world at one’s doorstep.¹⁹¹ Abioye sees this as fossilized in the

¹⁸⁷Osadolor Imasogie. *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa*. (Ibadan: University Press Limited, 1986), 12.

¹⁸⁸ _____. “Biblical Teaching on Marriage and Sex...”, 38.

¹⁸⁹Don. M. McCurry. *The Gospel and Islam*. (Monrovia CA: MARC Pub. 1978), 146.

¹⁹⁰Olusayo B. Oladejo. “Towards An African Christian Ethics of Sexual Love” in *Indigenization of the Church in Africa: The Nigerian Situation*. Papers in Honour of Dr. Ezekiel A. Bamigboye. Eds. Adelani A. Akande, Moses Audi and Olusayo B. Oladejo. (Ogbomoso: NBTS, 2102), 58.

¹⁹¹Andrew O. Igenzoa. “Globalization, Contextualization and Theological Education” in *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*. No. 10, December 2005:25.

boundless inter-relationship of humanity that began with the European exploration of the world and other continents some centuries ago. It was equally strengthened by the Trans-Atlantic trades that elicited intermingling of human cultures, economic positions, trade exchange, religion and knowledge. A liberalization of values across the nations of the world therefore began to emerge with its attendant implications.¹⁹² This has equally been fostered today through the limitless access to internet world, where ideas, information and knowledge are ‘freely’ accessed and exchanged. It has made the world into a ‘global village’, tending towards making the world share common identity. Despite its vast advantages, these are not without its attendant consequences upon the identity and values of life of the third world nations, especially in Africa.

Postmodernism: is a fallout of the enlightenment era that the world witnessed and an aftermath of the 2nd world war crisis.¹⁹³ It came along with a philosophical objection to the know-ability of truth or right judgement, as all claims now ‘are/can be relative’. A cultural phenomenon also spurred on by the information age. Ango describes postmodernism as attitude that characterized human thinking after the “modern” era – that is, 19th and 20th centuries. It is where trust in human reasoning and experience plus advanced technology drives ideas characterized by massive rural-urban migration, especially to the western world.¹⁹⁴ It deposes traditional and Judeo-Christian values, and foisting women liberation, cultural relativism, and hyper sexual activity with no boundaries upon family lives of humanity. To this writer, it is a de-construction of conservative values by way of insisting that humanity is only a social being and products of their environment and culture. Hardly could this be differentiated from

¹⁹²Pius O. Abioye. “Globalization in Africa and Biblical Perspectives” in *KOERS: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*. Jg./Vol. 2. No. 2, 2007.

¹⁹³Josh McDowell. *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 611-613.

¹⁹⁴Samuel P. Ango. “Strategies for the Great Commission in an Era of Globalization, Postmodernism and Terrorism”. Paper delivered at the 38th Graduation Ceremony, Baptist College of Theology Oyo, 11 June 2016.

mere animals. This perspective has brought sane reasoning into irrelevance and likened humanity to any other creature besides man.

Nigeria-Christian: The ‘Nigeria-Christian’ here refers to that which characterizes an average Nigerian form of practicing his or her Christian faith. This Nigerian Christianity is a sub-set of the 4th Century AD initial inroad of Christian faith into Africa and the 3rd phase of Christianity in Africa which came with a great thrust inward into the heart of Africa and particularly the western coasts of the continent. The Nigerian form of Christianity is a follow-up of the Protestant missions and the Evangelical awakening of the 19th century. This mission was championed by Bishop Ajayi Crowther and James Johnson.¹⁹⁵ The African Christianity of which Nigerian is one, can be typified to that which has been described by Roman Catholic Bishops conference of 1969 held at Rubaga Cathedral, Gaba, Kampala Uganda - characterized by originality – in language, mode and culture. It is adapted into the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities¹⁹⁶. This describes the ‘Nigeria-Christian’ in simplified terms.

The Jewish Expression of Sexual-Love

The Torah gives guide and controls the expression of marital sexual love among the ancient Israelites. Judaism, the religion of ancient Israelites permits sexual love relations only within the framework and context of marriage. Gordon-Bennett wrote that, sex in a Jewish family must also be engaged in with the right and proper intentions.¹⁹⁷ Of course, the Jews have a conservative view of sex and regard it as a

¹⁹⁵Gyang D. Pam. *A Compendium of Theology*. (Jos: Sele Printing and Publishing House, 2012), 246-248.

¹⁹⁶_____, quoting Aylward Shorter, *African Christian Theology*. (London: Geoffery Chapman, 1995), 20 who was citing Paul VI, 1969 ‘Closing Discourse to All-Africa Symposium’. *Gaba Pastoral Paper, No. 7*, 50-51.

¹⁹⁷Chaviva Gordon-Bennett. “A Guide to Sex in Judaism” in <https://www.thoughtco.com> accessed 7th July 2017.

“divine gift” from God, healthy and necessary in marital union.¹⁹⁸ Sex therefore is entered into for companionship, pleasure and procreation, not evil but must be expressed appropriately in time, place and manner. Sexual appetite is equated to that of hunger or thirst which is healthy for human beings.¹⁹⁹ When therefore sexual-love is so expressed mutually, meeting appropriate desire and in the appropriate place, it is termed *mitzvah* – an act of goodness or a meritorious act.²⁰⁰ Summarily for the Jewish couple, sex is not just a way of pleasure but an act of immense significance, commitment and responsibility. Added to these, the New Testament corpus perspective of sexual acts of married couples among the Christians is gracious and mutually respecting.

Additionally, Nelson has noted that a common expression *Yod-Dalet-Ayin* meaning “to know” in Jewish sexuality indicates a union of heart, mind and the body, which can only be possible in the context of marriage. Thus, “to uncover [one’s] nakedness” connotes sexual intercourse, both of which express positive sexual relationship in the context of marriage. Further on in Judaism, sex right in marriage is the woman’s and should not be withheld from her, among her other basic rights as shelter and food. She does not also have absolute right to withhold it either.²⁰¹ Indeed the *Talmud* specifies the quantity and quality of sexual expressions to be accorded the woman, while the *halakah* rules that “seed” should not be wasted. Meanwhile, sexual act is only forbidden during the (*niddah*) menstrual flow.²⁰² Obviously therefore, sex according to Judaism, is divine ordained and cannot but be in the confines of marriage. Anything short of this is an

¹⁹⁸Wendy Nelson. “Sexuality in Judaism” www.mesacc.edu accessed on 7th July 2017.

¹⁹⁹Tracey Rich. “Kosher Sex” in www.jewfaq.org/m/sex.h accessed on 7th July 2017.

²⁰⁰Wendy Nelson. “Sexuality in Judaism”

²⁰¹Ibid.

²⁰²Tracey Rich. “Kosher Sex”

abnormality, aberrant, a sin and damnable. Going by the above, marital sexual union cannot be for selfish ends.

Despite this timeless Jewish conservative approach on sex and sexuality however, contemporary developments have seen heated debates, probably as after-effect of the global influence. Liberal Jews are taking different positions on the issue of sex and sexuality.²⁰³ According to Daniel Estrin's documented interview with Ribner and Rosenfeld, the Jewish conservative approach to sexuality has made it difficult for any form of dialogue on it. These further noted that, literatures available for sexuality education are allegorically 'coded', and having no plain instructions. According to them, this has denied the ultra-religious Orthodox Jews good education on sex, which definitely creates "a barrier of shame" ...over important issues of life. In the attempt to protect the sanctity of marital sexual relationship, conservative Jews have become hardened against sane sexual education. Summarily then, it may be adjudged here that the New Testament corpus approach to the knowledge in sexuality is sincere, plain, gracious and should be acceptable to all Christians (1 Corinthians 7:3, 4; 1 Tim. 4:3-5).

Exegetical Analysis of Leviticus 18:1-14

The Book of Leviticus, in the Septuagint is referred to as 'Leui'tiko'n' (LXX), meaning "relating to the priests". However, in the Hebrew Bible the work is titled 'waayyiqra:', meaning "and he called", in line with the Hebrew standard of titling literary pieces with the first word occurring in it.²⁰⁴ Noth, wrote that Leviticus concerned itself with issues of ritual forms, religious festivals and priestly order requirements for service.²⁰⁵ A cursory look at the arrangements of the

²⁰³Daniel Estrin. Documented interview conducted on authors of *The Sex Manual for Ultra-Orthodox Jews* of 22 April 2013 in www.bbc.com.

²⁰⁴N. Kiuchi. "Book of Leviticus" *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Eds. T.D.Alexander and D. W. Baker. (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press 2003), 522.

²⁰⁵M. Noth. *Leviticus: A Commentary*. (London:SCM Press Limited, 1965), 9.

book revealed that these have traditionally often been held (see also Exodus 22:16, 17). In his view, Tidball typify's the volume as a legal document in like manner of ancient Near East nations. Thus it's civic, cultic, religious, moral, criminal, family and ritual contents are as expressed.²⁰⁶ On this, even though the LXX presupposed a priestly document and the contents have ceremonial laws, studying the work carefully revealed that the book exceeded the legalistic codes. Actually, the document expresses a covenant relationship. Leviticus may have ceremonial rules and guides but is clearly a continuation of the Exodus volume, hence the Hebraic title, '*waayyiqra*' referring to Yahweh's word to Moses.

As for dating and authorship, the Documentary Hypothesis (JEDP theorists), had ascribed the work to the P (Priestly) documents of the Hellenistic Era.²⁰⁷ Meanwhile, Crossley opined that the book of Leviticus cannot be outside the Mosaic era. He noted that the work does not reflect Ezra-Nehemiah's but is fond of Prophet Ezekiel's (Ezekiel 22:26/Leviticus 10:10; Ezekiel 20:11/Leviticus 18:5; Ezekiel 34/Leviticus 26), which were far earlier than as P-Document proposed.²⁰⁸ Therefore, the emergence and authorship cannot go beyond the traditional view. For his traditional view, Elliger in his literary analysis noted that, the Holiness Code which is part of the Priestly document never had a separate existence and that it was composed for its present location and rather went through expansion severally.²⁰⁹ This view then correlates with the traditional view of Mosaic authorship and in dating the document around 539BC.

²⁰⁶D. Tidball. *The Message of Leviticus*. Ed. Alec Motyer. (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 20.

²⁰⁷B. T. Arnold. "Pentateuchal Criticism. History of," *Dictionary of Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Eds. T.D. Alexander and W. Baker. (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), 622-631.

²⁰⁸G. Crossley. *The Old Testament Explained and Applied*. (England: Evangelical Press, 2002), 102-109. See also G. J. Wenham. *The Book of Leviticus*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979), 8, 9.

²⁰⁹Karl Elliger. *Leviticus* as reviewed by J.A. Emerton in *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 17, Fasc 4 (Oct. 1967), 489.

The Book of Leviticus is then a covenant material set in the framework of God's people in transition and God's word to Moses in the wilderness. It was meant to address various pressing and specific matters in the life of the young nation. Wenham's argument that the contents of chapters 18-27 addressed a sedentary community would not hold. Crossley nevertheless occasioned it in the wilderness, around 1443BC. With Crossley's submission, one can situate Leviticus 18 as belonging to the broad Priestly Code from Exodus Chapter 25 to Numbers Chapter 10. Within this is found the Holiness Code (Leviticus Chapters 17-26), dated by Westermann around 6th Century BC as a document for public worship and a divine discourse that urgently exhorts what has been commanded.²¹⁰ Therefore, Leviticus 18 is a divine discourse in the course of God's people's transition. It is meant to establish the new nation on the prism of family. It sought to protect the matrimonial foundation of the family by wholesome sexuality. The discourse was also to carve a clear and clean identity for God's own people and nation.

Structurally therefore, Leviticus 18:1-14 can be broken to three major sections. These are: Yahweh's Solemn Charge for His Covenant People – (v.1-5); Sexual Love Rule for Covenant People – (v.6); Familial Sexual Boundary within and Beyond the Household ((v.7-14).

Verses 1-5 serve as the prologue for the following verses. It was Yahweh's solemn charge for his covenant people and society, which foundation is based on family values for living. Yahweh addressed Moses in verse 1 but the following verses 2-5 came in a pluralized construct.²¹¹ This is not unusual in view of the audience, wherein Yahweh was addressing his people. In verse 3, God gave reasons for a clear demarcation of Israelites past and future settlements, because

²¹⁰Claus Westermann. *Handbook to the Old Testament*. (London: SPCK, 1969), 64-69.

²¹¹Nathaniel Micklem. "Exposition: The Book of Leviticus" in *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 2. Comm. Ed. George Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), 91.

Israelites belong to him. This was nothing less than raising a unique people from any other nation.²¹² It is also because Israelites as God's-own people, have covenanted to live within Yahweh's bounds of laws and rules. Thus, intensely in the verse, Yahweh set his people apart from the sexual configuration common to the Egyptians (where they once lived [past lives]) and Canaanites, where the covenant people are settling at [life ahead]. In like manner, A. Noortatziji quoting Klostermann²¹³ has submitted that besides the Shittim incident (Numbers 25:1-5), it should be noted that neighboring nations practice several elements of sexual revels. Therefore the solemn commandment at this point is quite appropriate.

The following **verses 6-14** were pronounced in singular form. This is because the emphasis is on individual house-leader, with the opening from verse 6, *îš 'îš* meaning 'man, person, husband, mankind, or people'- the doubling implying "no one" of the house-leaders among the house leaders. It drives home the point under discussion and personalizes the content of the message for every householder. Amidst the Hebrews the family is the most important institution of the society determining religious and ethnic identity²¹⁴, unlike the western world where commerce, trade and industry determines societal life. In ancient Israel, it was not so. This becomes more crucial, as the father-figure amidst the Jews also carry the household heritage. According to Talmud, the father clothes his daughter and provides all she needs for marital life. He keeps custody of the daughter for her marital future. It then becomes a great dishonor and to be punished with stoning to death if a daughter, is not a virgin at marriage.²¹⁵ Consequently, this section becomes a personal message to individual father or father-to-be. Invariably this come to be the culture of

²¹²Don Curtis. "Boundaries of Godly Sexuality (Leviticus 18:6-29)" in <https://bible.org/seriespage/13> accessed 11th May, 2016.

²¹³A. Noortatziji quoting Klostermann in *Bible Student's Commentary – Leviticus*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 7.

²¹⁴Chaim I. Wazman. "The Jewish Father: Past and Present" in www.research.policyarchive.org accessed 13th July 2017.

²¹⁵*Ibid.*

individual family to be lived by and to be taught to on-coming generations.

Verse 6 sets forth the character for sexual-love rules among covenant people, when it objected to *°el-k'l-š®°çr b®'rô* that is, “any flesh of flesh” sexual relationship. This objection used the same connotation as in Genesis 2:24 with regard to blood relationship or persons becoming the same flesh. Accordingly, Keil and Delitzsch, noted that the Levitical prohibition was not just for the married. The unmarried intercourse is also inferred, though the reference is chiefly for the former²¹⁶. One could deduce here therefore that the sexual love family rules have historical tenets earlier than the Levitical codes.²¹⁷ To this writer, this Levitical point in history of the Jews was a consolidation of what God was establishing in the life of the young nation. There is therefore a need for such guidance at the crucial time of the young nation.

Thereafter, the entire verses 7-14 deal with categories of forbidden sexual relationship, which is otherwise called *zimah* (that which is culturally averse and an abomination *to-evah*).²¹⁸ This goes in close concept with *toevah ha-goyim*, “the uncleanness of the Gentiles” (2 Kings 16:3), because they are condemnable acts as traceable in parts of the Old Testament – Gen. 19:30-38, 35:22, 38:8-10; 2 Samuel 13:1ff. Another word described it in *ti-ga-leh*, meaning “uncovering of one’s nakedness”. A act so appalling, disgusting, perverse and wicked. It is a disgrace and abominable. At this juncture therefore, one can safely conclude that, the culture of sane sexuality was not just emerging at this point among the Israelites. It has historical antecedents before becoming a guide or rules for Yahweh’s covenant people.

²¹⁶Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament (Electronic Version).

²¹⁷Stephen F. Bigger, “The Family Laws of Leviticus 18 in their Setting” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 98/2, 1979:187, 195 and 203.

²¹⁸Je’Adayibe, “Biblical Teaching on Marriage and Sex...” 33-34.

Verses 7-9 and 10-14 set marital sexual boundary within and beyond the household. These two sections contained specific rules for sexual conduct of the house-leader within his immediate family and the extension.²¹⁹ Of course, historically the incest clause is not limited to the Israelites, because the ancient Near Eastern Society laws (SS187-200 Hittite laws, Code of Hammurabi SS154) also bore witness to punishing any of such acts with total banishment of the individuals from the society. Meanwhile amidst the Egyptians, affinal marriage is practiced in the royal family for the purpose of strengthening the royal family lineage and authority. Therefore, one will agree that sexual taboos are set in every culture, by man in honour of the nature that God has endowed man with.²²⁰

Within the verses 7-14 was also a recurring word *tügallĒ*. A verb, piel imperfect form of the word *ga-lah*, meaning “to unveil, to uncover, to open”. It is a Semitic languages family word, meaning “to make manifest, open or emigrate”.²²¹ The word occurred nine (9) times within the verses. Impliedly, in this sense it means, “... to have shamefully uncover, to sexually dishonor and to defile”. It connotes anomalous sexual acts in divergence to Yahweh’s ordained sexual form in the family. Accordingly, these forms of perversions constitute a shameful dishonor of Yahweh’s rule and assault on family lineage/heritage. It is a dishonor of the divinely hallowed conjugal sexuality. It is also a transgression that attracts curses from the Lord God (Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:16, 20, 22 and 23) and eventually punishment by burning at stake the individuals or other forms of execution – Leviticus 20:11-12, 17 and 19-21.

²¹⁹V. H. Mathews. “Family Relationships” Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch. Eds. To Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker. (England, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 297-298.

²²⁰Nathaniel Micklem. “Exposition: The Book of Leviticus” in *The Interpreter’s Bible* Vol. 2. Ed. George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), 91.

²²¹HansJurgen Zobell. “*Gala*” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. II. Eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B.Eerdmans Pub.Coy., 1975), 476-478.

More importantly, God's instructions in the whole passage were with emphatic sense (**verses 1b, 4c and 5c**), thus the house-leader is under Yahweh's obligation to live by this rule. Besides, the rule becomes the lifeline for generations yet unborn to live by. Yahweh's instructions on appropriate marital sexual conduct become an imperative for the fathers and future house-leaders to protect. It draws a landmark difference that cannot be trivialized and far outweighs the neighboring nations rule in regard to sexuality. The position supersedes the ancient Law of Hammurabi view on incestual acts. It sets out who the Israel nation and household stand for among comity of nations in household conjugal union and universally on sexuality. This law establishes unbeatable remark in regard to marital sexual-love identity. It is a purpose and duty to obey.

Contextualizing Leviticus 18:1-14 for Nigeria Christian's view of marital sexual-love.

In the light of Leviticus 18:1-14 exegeses and New Testament's position in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 equating another's standpoint, it has become fundamental that the 21st century Nigerian Christians take a decisive stand. This becomes more precarious in view of current global distortions on sexuality (especially in the western world). The Nigerian Christian of this era must rightly play his or her roles in checkmating the aberrant global anomaly on sexuality.

Pursuant to which the ancient Israelites home-life offers the bastion for the Christian home-life in every generation. Indubitably, Fatokun and Faleye have argued that the Jews and Christians home-life is subsumed into one whole life as made and interpreted in the *Tanak*. This is because there is no separating the religious, social, economic and political life, in ancient Israel.²²² To this extent, the duo noted that young ones are inculcated into the Laws of Yahweh early in life and are made "sons of the Law" by age thirteen. Thus for the ancient

²²²S. A Fatokun and T. A. Faleye. "Jewish Socio-Cultural Influence on the Rise of Christianity". *Transformation* Vol. 1. No. 1. November 2016:32.

Israelites, no aspect of life is exempted from the rules of Yahweh and ditto early Christians too. As early Christians sexual ethics is enmeshed in total allegiance to Yahweh, so does the whole counsel of God on sexuality for the Nigerian Christians in contemporary times.

As the ancient Israel's home rules is the spindle for their whole life, so for early Christians life of faith and indeed for today Christians. Since Jewish synagogues and Torah became the offshoot of the Christian faith in fellowship, worship, education and disciplining²²³ it cannot be an aberration today that Christianity must be faithful to its ancient guide for human sexuality in the homes. Christians thus have unequivocal right and faith to practice the laws of God as recorded in the Old Testament and as interpreted by the New Testament. Though Christians are not under the Torah, but they are under the divine laws of God. Consequently, Pauline abhorrence of incestuous misconduct and illicit sexual act in 1 Corinthians 5:1-2 was addressed to as "*porneia*" from the word "*porneuo*", meaning harlotry, adultery and incest, in this instance, incest. Explaining further, Pam noted that *porneia* as used by Paul in the above passage construe various act of illicit sexual acts and prostitution.²²⁴ So, resolutely for Paul, the church should have mourned and not keep mute on such grievous anomaly within her borders. The perpetrators ought to have been disciplined. The church must then act!

Accordingly, this writer submits that the apostle in the use of the word was actually condemning (specifically) the incestuous relationship. By extension, all apparent forbidden sexual conducts amidst God's people are condemned. This without doubt was in the spirit of the Levitical laws in Leviticus Chapter 18! As a result, the New Testament's stand in outright condemnation of incest is not different from the Old Testament. By way of inference, Jesus' position in the 7th commandment and the ethical interpretation of the Decalogue is

²²³S. A. Fatokun and T. A. Faleye. "Jewish Socio-Cultural Influence on the Rise of Christianity"... 32.

²²⁴G. D. Pam. *The Christian and Pornography*. (Jos: Chipat Graphics, 2011), 43.

fulfilled. So, in the context of the divine law, incest is totally outlawed. The 21st century Nigerian Christians as major stakeholders in the church of Africa must therefore take a firm and strong stand against all forms of anomalous sexuality in promotion by the western world.

Taking their biblical stand on marital sexual-love expression therefore, Nigerian Christians of this age must note well the following–

- That the scripture absolutely condemned incestual acts of any form, whether legalized culturally, by a country or nations of people²²⁵;
- That incest still occurs in muted tones in our society and Christians are sometimes involved;
- That wherever this has occurred, there is need for repentance of the parties involved; discipline where necessary, while rehabilitative/corrective measures should be put in place; and
- That the Church and her leadership remain true custodians of the Nigerian Christians in regard to family sexuality matters. Hence, the church should be accorded due honour to handle such heartbreaking incidents wherever it occurs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Contemporary global development on sexual matters is worrying to rational minds. It is glaring that religious sexual guides which have always been treated with sanctity are now jettisoned for postmodern

²²⁵(Australia became the 26th western world nation behind USA, UK, Germany and others to publicly adopt same-sex marriage on 15th Nov. 2017 accessed from <http://news.sky.com/story/australia-votes-to-legalize-same-sex-marriage-11127088> accessed on 16th November, 2017).

sexual views. Libertine approaches to interpreting sexual conducts operating in the so-called advanced nations of the world are tacitly pushed as the global view. Meanwhile, this paper has endeavored to distance family sexual conduct from the global amoral perspectives. It has committed itself to the Christian sexual-love values as inherited from her Jewish foundation, being the only safe-way from global sexual pandemonium! Nigerian Christians are therefore saved from outrageous sexual exhibitions, promotions and perversions ongoing when they remain committed to the biblical view for family sexual relationship. Therefore, the following has been recommended for a sustainable sexual love relationship in Nigerian Christian families and the society at large:-

- That the law guarding sanctity of sexual-love in homes remain sacrosanct and should be pronounced and promoted loudly by the Nigerian Christians and the church;
- That Christian homes should be made the best settings for godly sexual education against winds of post-modern teachings;
- That married couples should, with all godly virtues, be acquainted with appropriate sexuality education rather than godless profiting in the things of the world;
- That Christian spouses should stop being timid, evasive or overprotective in educating their growing wards from time to time on proper sexual conduct and matters;
- That in the privacy of the homes, minimal contact should be maintained among family members. Especially, growing teenagers, adolescents and parents should have their privacy from one another;
- That strict regulation must be maintained on access to cable and satellite television services, free media and internet accessibility. This is to guard against

- inappropriate access to amoral sexual information circulating free globally in the media;
- That the Church should play her vital roles by exhorting and educating Christian families on keeping sane sexual-love values; and
 - That the Church should play her critical roles by rebuking, reprimanding, reforming and rehabilitating (as necessary) parties involved in account of sexual misconduct, especially incestual acts.

Sources

- _____. *The Christian and Pornography*. Jos: Chipat Graphics, 2011.
- “Incest”. *Microsoft Encarta*. Microsoft Corporation, 2009.
- Abioye, Pius O.. “Globalization in Africa and Biblical Perspectives” in *KOERS: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*. Jg./Vol. 2. No. 2, 2007.
- Ango, Samuel P. “Strategies for the Great Commission in an Era of Globalization, Postmodernism and Terrorism”. *Paper delivered at the 38th Graduation Ceremony*, Baptist College of Theology Oyo, 11 June 2016.
- Arnold, B. T. “Pentateuchal Criticism. History of,” *Dictionary of Old Testament: Pentateuch*.
- Baptist Association, Ogbomoso, Nigeria” Ogbomoso: Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, *M.Th. Thesis*, 2013: 75, 77.
- Bigger, Stephen F. “The Family Laws of Leviticus 18 in their Setting” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 98/2, 1979:187, 195 and 203.
- Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm.B.Eerdmans Pub.Coy., 1975.
- Crossley, G.. *The Old Testament Explained and Applied*. England: Evangelical Press, 2002.
- Curtis, Don. “Boundaries of Godly Sexuality (Leviticus 18:6-29)” in <https://bible.org/seriespage/13> accessed 11th May, 2016.
- Dada, Samson O. “The Law of Incest in Leviticus 18:1-14 and its Lessons for the Redeemer’s
- Eds. T.D. Alexander and W. Baker. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.
- Elliger, Karl. *Leviticus* as reviewed by J.A. Emerton in *Vetus Testamentum*, Vol. 17, Fasc 4. Oct. 1967.
- Estrin, Daniel. Documented interview conducted on authors of *The Sex Manual for Ultra-Orthodox Jews* of 22 April 2013 in www.bbc.com.
- Fakeye, David O. *Globalization and Cultural Erosion: Impact on Sexuality in Nigeria*. SlovakEdu ISBN 978-80-971580-0-2, Conference Proceedings.

- Fatokun, S. A and Faleye, T. A. "Jewish Socio-Cultural Influence on the Rise of Christianity". *Transformation* Vol. 1. No. 1. November 2016:32.
- Gordon-Bennett, Chaviva. "A Guide to Sex in Judaism" in <https://www.thoughtco.com> accessed 7th July 2017.
- <http://news.sky.com/story/australia-votes-to-legalize-same-sex-marriage-11127088>. "Australia became the 26th western world nation behind USA, UK, Germany and others to publicly adopt same-sex marriage on 15th Nov. 2017 accessed on 16th November, 2017.
- <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2012/apr/16/incest-legality-ethics> accessed 2nd August, 2017.
- Igenzoza, Andrew O. "Globalization, Contextualization and Theological Education" in *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology*. No. 10, December 2005:25.
- Imasogie, Osadolor. *Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa*. Ibadan: University Press Limited, 1986.
- Je' Adayibe, Gwamna D. "Biblical Teaching on Marriage and Sex: A Case Study of Leviticus 18 & 20" in *Biblical View of Sex and Sexuality from African Perspective*. Gen. Ed. S. O. Abogunrin, NABIS Biblical Studies Series No. 5: 38.
- Jimoh, Taiwo "General Overseer Impregnates 15-year-old daughter twice". *The Nigerian Compass*, Wednesday August, 28, 2012; www.vanguardngr.com/2016/06/started-sleeping-daughter-frustration/ accessed 2nd August, 2017.
- Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament (Electronic Version).
- Kiuchi, N. "Book of Leviticus" *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Eds. T.D.Alexander and D. W. Baker. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press 2003.
- Mathews, V. H. "Family Relationships" *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Eds. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker. England, Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- McCurry, Don. M. *The Gospel and Islam*. Monrovia CA: MARC Pub. 1978.
- McDowell, Josh. *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999.
- Micklem, Nathaniel. "Exposition: The Book of Leviticus" in *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 2. Comm. Ed. George Buttrick New York: Abingdon Press, 1953.
- Nelson, Wendy. "Sexuality in Judaism" www.mesacc.edu accessed on 7th July 2017.
- Noortatziji, A. quoting Klostermann in *Bible Student's Commentary – Leviticus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.
- Noth, M. *Leviticus: A Commentary*. London: SCM Press Limited, 1965.
- O'Donovan, Wilbur Jr. *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*. Carlisle: The Paternoster Press,
- Ojo, Mathews A. "Sexuality, Marriage and Piety among Charismatic in Nigeria" *Religion*. 27. 1997: p. 40, 76.

- Okoye, R. "Dad Caught Having Sex with Daughter". *Sunday Express*, 1. 45; 2012: 6.
- Oladejo, Olusayo B. "Towards An African Christian Ethics of Sexual Love" in *Indigenization of the Church in Africa: The Nigerian Situation*. Papers in Honour of Dr. Ezekiel A. Bamigboye. Eds. Adelani A. Akande, Moses Audi and Olusayo B. Oladejo. Ogbomoso: NBTS, 2102.
- Pam, Gyang D. *A Compendium of Theology*. Jos: Sele Printing and Publishing House, 2012.
- Rich, Tracey. "Kosher Sex" www.jewfaq.org/m/sex.h accessed on 7th July 2017.
- Rotimi, Ola. *The Gods are Not to Blame*. London: Oxford University Press Plc, 1971.
- Tidball, D. *The Message of Leviticus*. Ed. Alec Motyer. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
- Wazman, Chaim I. "The Jewish Father: Past and Present" in www.research.policyarchive.org accessed 13th July 2017.
- Wenham, G. J. *The Book of Leviticus*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1979.
- Westermann, Claus. *Handbook to the Old Testament*. London: SPCK, 1969. www.charismanews.com accessed 2nd August, 2017.
- Zobell, HansJurgen. "Galal" *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. II. Eds. G. Johannes