

**Intro:**

We come now to Leviticus 19.

In my NASB, I have these headings for the chapter: chapter “Idolatry Forbidden” 1-8 “Sundry Laws” 9-35

When you read the chapter, at first glance, it may seem only a confusion of various laws on various topics.

Nevertheless, the chapter has this assessment from a commenter named Rooker:

“Leviticus 19 has been called the highest development of ethics in the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> This chapter perhaps better than any other in the Bible, explains what it meant for Israel to be a holy nation (Exod 19:6). The chapter stresses the interactive connection between responsibility to one’s fellow man and religious piety, the two dimensions of life that were never meant to be separated.”<sup>2</sup>

With this high praise in mind, let’s read the entire chapter. I want you to listen for four notable characteristics that should stand out to your minds as we read it.

Read Lev 19

The four characteristics are these:

1. The call to holiness based on God’s holiness: be ye holy, for I am holy
2. A repetition of much of the Ten Commandments
3. The repetition of the phrase “I am the Lord (your God)”
4. The second great commandment: love your neighbour as yourself (18)

I have given this message this title:

*The Commandments Expanded*

Perhaps we could have considered it on other headers, but this one in particular seems to me to give us a clue as to God’s mind for us which should lead us to an even greater conclusion about our need for God.

**Proposition:** The law of God so expresses God’s mind for men that men should fall on their faces and plead for God’s great mercy for them.

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<sup>1</sup> J. West, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 156.

<sup>2</sup> Rooker, p. 250, quoted in Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible*, Le 18:24 (Galaxie Software, 2003; 2003).

## I. The essential characteristics of God's proposition (2)

A. God's people are called to holiness ('be ye holy')

"This statement weds ethics to theology forever."<sup>3</sup>

B. God's people are called to imitation of God ('for I am holy')

"Every biblical statement about God carries with it an implied demand upon men to imitate Him in daily living."<sup>4</sup>

C. God's people are *God's* people ('I am the Lord your God')

## II. The consequentially essential commandments on God's people

A. Honour father and mother – 5<sup>th</sup> commandment (3)

B. Keep the Sabbath – 4<sup>th</sup> commandment (3, 30)

C. Make no grave images (no idolatry) – 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment (4)

D. Thou shalt not steal – 8<sup>th</sup> commandment (11, 13)

E. Thou shalt not bear false witness – 9<sup>th</sup> commandment (11, 15-16)

F. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain – 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment (12)

G. Thou shalt not kill – 6<sup>th</sup> commandment (16)

H. Thou shalt not commit adultery – 7<sup>th</sup> commandment (20-22, 29)

I. Thou shalt not covet any thing that is your neighbour's – 10<sup>th</sup> commandment (17-18)

J. I am the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, you shall have no other gods before me – 1<sup>st</sup> commandment (2, 36b-37)

I call these "consequentially essential commandments" because they are the necessary consequences of being in covenant with a holy God.

These commandments are God's will for men.

<sup>3</sup> John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1:201 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985).

<sup>4</sup> R.E. Clements, "Leviticus," in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, 2:51, quoted in John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 1:201 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985).

Notice the diverse application and interpretations of these commandments found in this chapter: notice the connection of slander with murder, for example (16).

- “All ten commandments are quoted or alluded to, and sometimes expounded or developed in a new way.”<sup>5</sup>

Consider how our Lord Jesus Christ dealt with these commandments in the Sermon on the Mount

- Thou shalt not kill – nor even say ‘thou fool’ (Mt 5.21-26)
- Thou shalt not commit adultery – nor even think it (Mt 5.27-32)

The essential commandments – the ten commandments – have implications for holiness in every aspect of life, even to the extent of applying to such things as not mixing breeds of cattle, or kinds of seeds, or kinds of cloth (19).

### III. The constant call of our attention to God

#### A. Holiness is our identification with God

1. The theme verse [for all of Leviticus] (2)
2. I am the Lord your God
  - a. Verse 3
  - b. Verse 4
  - c. Verse 10
3. I am the Lord
  - a. Verse 11
  - b. Verse 14
  - c. Verse 16
  - d. Verse 18
4. I am the Lord your God
  - a. Verse 25

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<sup>5</sup> Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, p. 264.

5. I am the Lord
    - a. Verse 26
    - b. Verse 30
  6. I am the Lord your God
    - a. Verse 31
  7. I am the Lord
    - a. Verse 32
  8. I am the Lord your God
    - a. Verse 34
    - b. Verse 36
  9. I am the Lord
    - a. Verse 37
- B. Holiness demands application of God's character to every aspect of life
1. The demands of holiness are New Testament as well as Old Testament demands (see connection to Sermon on the Mount, mentioned above)
  2. The changes in culture do not reduce or lessen the demands a relationship with a holy God places upon us
  3. The changes in Testaments do not lessen our obligations to our Great God

#### IV. The constant need for mediation between us and our God

- A. Holiness is impossible: we are deeply fallen and flawed
- B. Holiness is demanding: we tremble and quake before the repetition of the divine name: "I am the Lord."
- C. Holiness provides a means for sinning man to relate to a Holy God
  1. The sacrificial system (Lev 1-10)
  2. The laws of cleanness (Lev 11-15)
  3. The day of Atonement (Lev 16)
- D. Holiness condescends to provide a permanent, once for all solution to the barrier between holy God and sinning man

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<sup>KJV</sup> **Jn 3.16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

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