

Leviticus 19:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

Analysis

Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

This verse falls within the section on **Various Laws of Holiness**. Wide-ranging ethical and ceremonial laws, including the command to 'love your neighbor as yourself' (19:18).

Leviticus 17:11 declares 'the life of the flesh is in the blood,' establishing blood's sacred role in atonement, pointing to Christ's blood shed for redemption.

The access to God's presence that Leviticus carefully regulated is now freely available through Christ's blood, tearing the veil and opening the way to God.

Historical Context

Wide-ranging ethical and ceremonial laws, including the command to 'love your neighbor as yourself' (19:18). 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. Ancient sacrificial texts from cultures surrounding Israel demonstrate the widespread practice of animal sacrifice, but Israel's system uniquely emphasized moral atonement over magical efficacy.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 – God is love

Study Questions

1. How can you use this verse to worship God more fully, obey Him more faithfully, or love others more sacrificially?
2. What does this verse teach about the seriousness of sin, the cost of redemption, or the beauty of holiness?
3. How does this verse help you understand both God's justice and His mercy in salvation?

Interlinear Text

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Additional Cross-References

Exodus 23:1 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

Exodus 23:7 (Parallel theme): Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

Proverbs 20:19 (Parallel theme): He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Ezekiel 22:9 (Blood): In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains: in the midst of thee they commit lewdness.

Proverbs 11:13 (Parallel theme): A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Jeremiah 9:4 (Parallel theme): Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.

Jeremiah 6:28 (Parallel theme): They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters.

Psalms 15:3 (Parallel theme): He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

Exodus 20:16 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

1 Peter 2:1 (Parallel theme): Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,