

Leviticus 19:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

Analysis

Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.

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).

The central theme of Leviticus is God's holiness and the call for His people to be holy. The Hebrew word qadosh (קָדוֹשׁ) means 'set apart' or 'sacred,' emphasizing both separation from sin and consecration to God's purposes.

The New Testament reveals that Christ's sacrifice accomplishes what the Levitical system could only symbolize—complete forgiveness and restoration of relationship with 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

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's holiness, as revealed in this verse, shape your understanding of worship, obedience, and daily living?
2. How does this verse help you understand both God's justice and His mercy in salvation?
3. How can you use this verse to worship God more fully, obey Him more faithfully, or love others more sacrificially?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁרָא לְבָנָי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל כָּל תְּעִדָּת

Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel

H1696

H413 H3605

H5712

בְּנֵי

H1121

וְשָׁרָא לְ

of Israel

H3478

וְאָמַרְתָּ מִשְׁמְךָ קָדְשָׁךָ אֶלָּךְ וְאַתָּה קָדָשׁ

and say **am holy** **for I the LORD**

H559

H413

H6918

H1961

H3588

am holy

H589

H3068

אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

your God

H430

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 20:7 (Holy): Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the LORD your God.

Matthew 5:48 (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Leviticus 20:26 (Holy): And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.

Exodus 19:6 (Holy): And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Leviticus 21:8 (Holy): Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy.

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Holy): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.