

Leviticus 21:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:

Analysis

And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:

This verse falls within the section on **Priestly Holiness**. Higher standards for priests due to their sacred role, including restrictions on mourning practices and marriage.

The Aaronic priesthood mediated between God and Israel, offering sacrifices and maintaining the tabernacle. This prefigured Christ's superior priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 9-10 explains how Christ's once-for-all sacrifice supersedes the repeated Levitical offerings, providing permanent cleansing from sin.

Historical Context

Higher standards for priests due to their sacred role, including restrictions on mourning practices and marriage. 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 tabernacle's design parallels ancient Near Eastern temple architecture, yet its portable nature and absence of divine images distinguished it from pagan temples.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's superior priesthood, prefigured in this verse, assure you of access to God and effective intercession?
2. How does this verse reveal God's character, and how should that revelation shape your relationship with Him?
3. In what ways does this verse challenge contemporary cultural values or your personal attitudes?

Interlinear Text

וַאֲמַרְתָּ	יְהוָה	אֶל	מֹשֶׁה	וַאֲמַרְתָּ	אֶל	הַכֹּהֲנִים
Speak	And the LORD	H413	unto Moses	Speak	H413	unto the priests
H559	H3068		H4872	H559		H3548
בְּנֵי	אַהֲרֹן	וַאֲמַרְתָּ	אֶלֶּהֶם	לְנַפְשָׁם	לֹא	
the sons	of Aaron	Speak	H413	for the dead	H3808	
H1121	H175	H559		H5315		
וְלֹא	יִטְמָאוּ	בְּעַמִּי:				
unto them	There shall none be defiled	among his people				
	H2930	H5971				

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 44:25 (Parallel theme): And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves: but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves.

Leviticus 21:11 (Parallel theme): Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;

Leviticus 19:28 (References Lord): Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.

Numbers 19:14 (Parallel theme): This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.

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