

# Leviticus 21:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them.

## Analysis

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**Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them.**

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 central theme of Leviticus is God's holiness and the call for His people to be holy. The Hebrew word *qadosh* (קֹדֶשׁ) means 'set apart' or 'sacred,' emphasizing both separation from sin and consecration to God's purposes. The five main offerings (burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt) addressed different aspects of relationship with God, all fulfilled in Christ's comprehensive sacrifice.

The holiness demanded in Leviticus becomes possible through Christ, who both satisfies God's righteous requirements and transforms believers by His Spirit.

## Historical Context

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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. Archaeological discoveries at sites like Ugarit reveal Canaanite religious practices Israel's laws explicitly rejected, confirming the Bible's historical reliability and the distinctiveness of Israelite worship.

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's holiness, as revealed in this verse, shape your understanding of worship, obedience, and daily living?
2. What does this verse teach about the costliness of true worship and dedication to God?
3. How does this verse help you understand both God's justice and His mercy in salvation?

## Interlinear Text

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וְ	אֵל	הַפָּרֹכֶת	לֹא	יֵבֶ אֵל	וְאֵל	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
H389	H413	unto the veil	H3808	Only he shall not go in	H413	unto the altar
		H6532		H935		H4196
לֹא	יָגֵשׁ	כִּי	מִוֹם	וְ	אֵל	בִּי
H3808	nor come nigh	H3588	because he hath a blemish	H0	H3808	
	H5066		H3971			
יְחַלֵּל	אֶת	מִקְדָּשַׁי	כִּי	אֲנִי	יְהוָה	מְקַדְּשִׁים
that he profane	H853	not my sanctuaries	H3588	H589	for I the LORD	do sanctify
H2490		H4720			H3068	H6942

## Additional Cross-References

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**Leviticus 21:12** (References Lord): Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD.