

## **LEVITICUS CHAPTER 19**

### **“Worldly Saints”**

Leviticus 19 is one of the world’s greatest ethical charters. It has been described as the Old Testament counterpart to the Sermon on the Mount. Here we are given a comprehensive series of laws concerning our conduct towards God and our conduct towards each other. The previous chapter dealt with ethical issues to do with the family, the basic building block of society. This chapter is all about creating a healthy society based on the principles of love, respect and justice. It is a call to become worldly saints.

#### **Call to holiness v1-2**

The Lord commanded Moses to speak to the entire covenant community about the holiness of God and how it should affect their lives. Holiness is not some abstract, ethereal quality remote from the real world. The laws which follow demonstrate that holiness is a very practical thing, which consists in loving our neighbour as ourselves. Here we see true holiness in action.

#### **Uniting these laws**

It may appear that what we have here is a hotch potch of laws with no semblance of connection one to another. There are in fact a number of ways in which this collection is organized and held together. The phrase “I am the LORD your God” and its shorter form, “I am the LORD”, punctuates the entire collection. “I am the LORD your God”, appears three times in the first half (19v3,4,10) and four times in the second half (19v25,31,34,36), while the shorter form, “I am the LORD”, is found four times in the first half (19v12,14,16,18) and three times in the second (19v28,30,32). This results in the refrain being found seven times in each part. Seven is the number of completion and perfection. These phrases are used to keep our minds focussed on the holiness of God and what it means to be holy like God.

#### **The Ten Commandments**

The best way to view the unity of these laws is to see them as a perfect exposition and application of the Ten Commandments.

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|-------------------------|------------|
| 1. No other gods        | 19v4a      |
| 2. No graven images     | 19v4b      |
| 3. No blasphemy         | 19v12      |
| 4. Remember the Sabbath | 19v3b,30a  |
| 5. Honour parents       | 19v3a      |
| 6. No murder            | 19v16b     |
| 7. No adultery          | 19v20      |
| 8. No stealing          | 19v11a     |
| 9. No false witness     | 19v11b,16a |
| 10. No coveting         | 19v17,18   |