

Leviticus 19

Verses 1 - 4

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

² “Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. ³ Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths; I am the Lord your God.

⁴ Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods; I am the Lord your God.

² “Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

How many parents have said, “as long as you live in our house you will follow our rules”. As parents we expect our kids to obey the rules we have set down. Well, God created heaven and earth, as long as we live in His house, we should follow His rules.

³ Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths; I am the Lord your God.

Two of the commandments are mentioned here.

1. Respecting our parents is the 5th commandment.

The home is the basic unit of all civilization and when the family unit is strong, so goes the town. As the town goes, so goes the state. As the state goes, so goes the nation. When the family unit falls apart, the state of the nation is not far behind.

2. Keeping the Sabbath is the 4th commandment. This should have been an easy commandment for the Jewish people to follow but we know it wasn't. Even people that have no time for God understand the importance of having a day of rest.

⁴ Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods; I am the Lord your God.

This is the 2nd Commandment.

It took nearly a thousand years (860 to be exact) for the people of Israel to give up their obsession with idols. This included the time from when Israel became a nation (1446 BC) until their deportation to Babylon in 586 BC.

People often see the God of the Old Testament as being “mean” but they fail to recognize that the nations that were judged in the Old Testament were given many centuries to repent of their sins but failed to do so. The fact that these nations reaped what they had sown was a matter of justice. The period of the New Testament only covered about 100 years so we do not see the judgment of many nations like we see in the Old Testament. The one exception to this is the Jewish nation which was judged in 70 AD for rejecting the Son of God. In the last 2,000 years many other nations have been judged by God but those accounts are not a part of scripture.

Verses 5 - 8

⁵ ‘Now when you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. ⁶ It shall be eaten the same day you offer it, and the next day; but what remains until the third day shall be burned with fire. ⁷ So if it is eaten at all on the third day, it is an offense; it will not be accepted. ⁸ Everyone who eats it will bear his iniquity, for he has profaned the holy thing of the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from his people.

The peace offering was the only sacrifice that could be eaten by the general population. When one offered a peace-offering to God it was expected that he would share it with family and friends.

Given the lack of refrigeration one might wonder if it was safe to eat meat the next day. However, the Jewish day ended at sunset so any meal prepared that day (let’s say between noon to 7pm) could still be eaten after sunset (the next day). But what remained until the third day was to be burned with fire. This was a practical command to prevent anyone from eating spoiled meat.

Verses 9 - 10

⁹ ‘Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God.

Leaving some grain in the field and fruit in the vineyard was God's way of helping the poor. Some people today argue that the government should not be involved in providing a safety net for the poor but what they fail to consider, or it escapes their notice, is that the majority of people are no longer involved in agriculture. Therefore, some of the responsibility of helping the poor falls on the government because charitable organizations cannot do it alone.

Verse 11

¹¹ **You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.**

This is the 8th commandment.

Did you know that the top 5% of income earners cheat on their taxes more than any other group of people?

How about the corporate raider that takes over a company and then steals the money in the employees' pension plan leaving them with no retirement. And according to congress there is nothing they can do to stop it. Really!

Verse 12

¹² **You shall not swear falsely by my name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the Lord.**

This is the 3rd commandment.

This can mean several things:

1. Using the Lords name in vain when swearing.
2. Using God's name to convince others that you are telling the truth when in fact you are telling a lie.
3. Telling a lie in court that favors the rich man over the poor.

Verse 13

¹³ **You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob *him*. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning.**

Oppressing and robbing your neighbor goes well beyond the 10th commandment which tells us not to envy or desire the things that our neighbor may have or own. This includes dominating someone by unjust authority or power and taking things of value from him.

The exploitation of the working man was not allowed. Many workers depended on the income of that day in order to pay for their shelter and meal that night. If that money was held back till the morning they had to go without.

Verse 14

14 You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.

See John 9:24 – 34

²⁴ So for a second time they summoned the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this Man is a sinner.” ²⁵ He then answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” ²⁶ So they said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” ²⁷ He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear *it* again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?” ²⁸ They spoke abusively to him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this Man, we do not know where He is from.” ³⁰ The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is the amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes! ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners; but if someone is God-fearing and does His will, He listens to him. ³² Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.” ³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and yet you are teaching us?” So they put him out.

The Pharisees of the 1st century had all the benefits that a person might desire in this life. They were wealthy, they were respected, and they had power and authority in the Jewish community. The blind man on the other hand was poor, not respected, and had no standing in the community. So why did the Pharisees who had so much look down on the blind man who had very little if anything?

It is clear from this command that God expected those who are blessed to help those who are at a disadvantage.

Verse 15

¹⁵ ‘You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.

The courts should be impartial, treating everyone fairly and justly.

Verse 16

¹⁶ You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord.

Anyone who attacks the reputation of another can be held libel to the courts.

False testimony in court could cost an innocent person his life so it is imperative that every member of society tell the truth and nothing but the truth.

Verse 17

¹⁷ ‘You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him.

It’s ok to be angry with someone and reprove them, but don’t let it turn into hate.

Verse 18

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

Jesus said this was the 2nd greatest commandment.

See Mark 12:28-31

²⁸ One of the scribes came up and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰ and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

It's interesting that the 2nd greatest commandment is not one of the 10 commandments.

The next question that comes to mind is who is your neighbor? Neighbor, as used here, means your fellow-man.

See Leviticus 19:34

³³ **‘When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.**

³⁴ **The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.**

Did the law include the love of enemies?

See Exodus 23:4 - 5

⁴ **“If you encounter your enemy’s ox or his donkey wandering away, you must return it to him.”** ⁵ **If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying *helpless* under its load, you shall not leave it *helpless* for its owner; you must arrange the load with him.**

Verse 19

¹⁹ **‘You are to keep my statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.**

Each of the three commands forbade the mixing of two different kinds:

1. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle.

This would make Mules and Hinnies unlawful in Israel. Mules are the offspring of a male donkey and a female horse. The Hinny is the offspring of a female donkey and a male horse.

According to most reports, hinnies are sterile and are not capable of reproduction. Mules are 99.9% sterile, although in rare cases, female mules have been known to give birth to foals. So the chance of mules and hinnies reproducing without some outside help is infinitesimally small.

God may have prohibited this because He wanted the people of Israel to be productive.

1905 The Mule

- Mules have 63 chromosomes; horses have 64 and donkeys have 62
- A hinny is the offspring of a male horse and a female donkey (jennet)
- A female mule is called a mare or molly mules



1910 The Hinny



2. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed.

There is a lot of speculation among different commentators concerning this matter but none of it can be verified with additional information from other scriptures. If an answer cannot be found after a reasonable amount of research, it seems best to set it aside for a period of time and move on to something more productive. However, no one should believe that God has established arbitrary commands, because it is not in His nature to do so. He always remains true to His character.

3. Nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.

The same comment can be made here that was just made about the seeds. But let's look at one example that is given to demonstrate how well-meaning commentators have bent the rules of logic to find an answer.

Some commentators have argued that the high priest wore a garment of mixed wool and linen (Ex. 28:6-8, 39:4-5). They say the clothing of mixed wool and linen was exclusively for the high priest and therefore was unlawful for the common person to wear. However, they are making the assumption that "the dyed thread would have been made of wool". Do they have a verse to support that assumption? No they don't.

Another objection to this idea is that they compare the above regulation (not wearing two kinds of material mixed together) to the prohibition regarding the anointing oil. God gave a special recipe for the anointing oil, and it was strictly forbidden to duplicate the recipe for common use. They conclude from this that it was wrong to make a garment that was made from the same two materials. However, this conclusion is flawed because it was not wrong to use the same ingredients that were used for the anointing oil if it was in different proportions.

See Exodus 30:32

³² It shall not be poured on anyone's body, nor shall you make *any* like it in the same proportions; it is holy, *and* it shall be holy to you.

In cases like this, remaining silent on the issue, or saying I don't know why God gave them this command, is better than presenting an answer that doesn't pass the smell test. Just because we don't know why God did something doesn't mean it is arbitrary.

Verses 20 - 22

²⁰ ‘Now if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for *another* man, but who has in no way been redeemed nor given her freedom, there shall be punishment; they shall not, *however*, be put to death, because she was not free.

²¹ He shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord to the doorway of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering. ²² The priest shall also make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the Lord for his sin which he has committed, and the sin which he has committed will be forgiven him.

²⁰ ‘Now if a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave acquired for *another* man, but who has in no way been redeemed nor given her freedom, there shall be punishment; they shall not, *however*, be put to death, because she was not free.

If the woman was not a slave, the death penalty would have applied to both of them. But because she was a slave there was a lesser penalty for both. It is quite possible that the innocent party (the other man) had a say in the penalty for the man who slept with her since she (the slave woman) was his property.

²¹ He shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord to the doorway of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering.

A ram was the second most expensive offering. So the man was punished and it cost him a good bit of income.

Verses 23 – 25

²³ ‘When you enter the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden to you; *it* shall not be eaten. ²⁴ But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the Lord. ²⁵ In the fifth year you are to eat of its fruit, that its yield may increase for you; I am the Lord your God.

This law was practical since most new fruit trees take 3 to 5 years to produce fruit. So the first fruit went to the Lord and then future crops could be eaten.

Verses 26 - 28

²⁶ ‘You shall not eat *anything* with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying. ²⁷ You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard. ²⁸ You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the Lord.

²⁶ ‘You shall not eat *anything* with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying.

Animals had to be killed in a special way to make them Kosher.

Divination is attempting to foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge by occult or supernatural means. Soothsaying is predicting the future by magical incantations.

²⁷ You shall not round off the side-growth of your heads nor harm the edges of your beard.

See Pics 1915 Tonsure



What if someone did it unknowingly? See Pics 1920 & 1925

1920



1925



Thanks to the Home Alone movie crew for their special insight into this verse. ☺

28 You shall not make any cuts in your body for the dead nor make any tattoo marks on yourselves: I am the Lord.

The priests of Baal on Mount Carmel in the contest with Elijah cut themselves but it was not for the dead. They did it to evoke a response from Baal. However, this was also foolish and did not help.

See 1 Kings 18:28

28 So they cried out with a loud voice, and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until blood gushed out on them.

Tattooing was also a device of paganism. Some followers had the logo of their god inscribed on their body.

Verse 29

29 'Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, so that the land will not fall to harlotry and the land become full of lewdness.

Pagan religions of that time had sacred prostitutes that were a source of income for the pagan temples. A poor man could be tempted, by the money, to devote his daughter to such a life.

Verse 30

30 You shall keep my Sabbaths and revere my sanctuary; I am the Lord.

Keeping the Sabbath was the 4th commandment and the sanctuary was the only place that the people were to offer their sacrifices.

Verse 31

31 'Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

A medium or spiritist serves as a link between the living and the dead and seeking them out was forbidden.

See 1 Samuel 28:3 – 7

³ Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had removed the mediums and spiritists from the land. ⁴ So the Philistines assembled and came and camped in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they camped in Gilboa. ⁵ When Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. ⁶ So Saul inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him, either in dreams, or by the Urim, or by the prophets. ⁷ Then Saul said to his servants. "Find for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at En-dor."

Verse 32

³² **'You shall rise up before the gray headed and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the Lord.**

Respect your elders. When Rehoboam rejected the counsel of the older advisors the kingdom was divided.

See 1Kings 12:6 - 8

⁶ And King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, "How do you advise *me* to answer this people?" ⁷ Then they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to this people today, and will serve them and grant them their request, and speak pleasant words to them, then they will be your servants always." ⁸ But he ignored the advice of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who had grown up with him and served him.

Since God is the creator of the universe, the first and the last, the one that brought Israel out of Egypt with great signs and wonders it should go without saying that Israel should hold Him in the highest regard.

Verses 33 - 34

³³ **'When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.**

³⁴ **The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.**

In verse 18 above it says, **you shall love your neighbor as yourself.**

In this verse (34) it says, **you shall love the foreigner as yourself.**

This command to love the foreigner did not apply to the initial takeover of Canaan because God was judging the people of that land for their sinful culture. However, people who came to Israel after the initial capture were to be treated fairly. Israel was to love the foreigner as they loved themselves.

Verses 35 - 36

³⁵ **You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity.**

³⁶ **You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt.**

Israel was told to love their neighbor and the alien among them. It seems obvious that they would not cheat those whom they love, but God makes it plain for those who are not logical thinkers.

God then reminds them that He has taken them out of slavery. The correct response to that should be thanksgiving and loyalty to Him.

Verse 37

³⁷ **You shall thus observe all my statutes and all my ordinances and do them; I am the Lord.**”

This would have required some serious dedication. There are 613 laws, commands and ordinances in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.