

Handout 1: Leviticus Lesson 8

Outline of the Leviticus Holiness Code in Chapters 17-26

- I. Prologue: laws concerning right worship and blood prohibition (Lev 17:1-16)
- II. Commands concerning sexual unions (Lev 18:1-30)
- III. Code of religious and secular laws (Lev 19:1-37)
- IV. Laws concerning religious offences (Lev 20:1-27)
- V. Laws pertaining to the priesthood (Lev 21:1-22:9)
- VI. Laws concerning eating sacred food (Lev 22:10-33)
- VII. Laws governing the Liturgical Calendar (Lev 23:1-44)
- VIII. Laws for the Holy Place and concerning blasphemy (Lev 24:1-23)
- IX. Laws concerning agriculture and land stewardship (Lev 25:1-26:2)
- X. Epilogue: covenant blessings and curses (Lev 26:3-46)

The Holiness Code in Leviticus chapters 17-26 resembles the Book of the Covenant (Ex 20:19-23:33) and the Deuteronomy Code (Dt chapters 12-28).

Theme	Book of the Covenant	Holiness Code	Deuteronomic Code
Prologue: right worship	Ex 20:19-23:9	Lev 17:1-16	Dt 12:1-19
Duties toward the Land	Ex 23:10-11	Lev 19:9-37; 25:23-34	Dt 15:1-11; 24:19-22; 26:1-15
Liturgical Calendar	Ex 23:12-19	Lev 23:1-44; 25:1-22	Dt 16:1-7
Epilogue: covenant blessings and curses	Ex 23:20-33	Lev 26:3-46	Dt 28:1-69/29:1
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The Holiness Code is organized for the most part in patterns of seven. Leviticus chapter 18 lists twenty-one (seven times three) laws of sexual prohibitions. Leviticus 19 is divided into two sections: Lev 19:1-18 and Lev 19:19-37 each contains twenty-one (seven times three) laws concerning moral and religious duties and obligations that echo the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments in Ex 20:1-17	The Holiness Laws in Lev 19
Do not worship idols (vs. 4)	Do not worship idols (vs. 4)
You will not misuse the name (vs. 7)	Do not swear by my name (vs. 12)
Keep the Sabbath (vs. 8-11)	Keep the Sabbath (vs. 3)
Honor father and mother (vs. 12)	Honor father and mother (vs. 3)
Stealing (vs. 13)	Stealing (vs. 11)
Deceitful conduct (vs. 14, 16-17)	Deceitful conduct (vs. 11-13)
False oaths (vs. 16)	False oaths (vs. 12)
“I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you lived as slaves (vs. 1-2)	“I am Yahweh your God who freed you from the land of Egypt (vs. 36)
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Blood prohibition is repeated five times in Leviticus but nine times in the Pentateuch: Gen 9:4; Lev 3:17; 7:23; 17:10, 14; 19:26; Dt 12:16, 23; 15:23.

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Lev chapter 17 = five laws. The goals of Law #1 in Lev 17:1-9:

1. To promote fellowship with God through the sacred meal of the communion offering which must be sacrificed on God's one Altar of Burnt Offerings within the Sanctuary and through the blood ritual executed by Yahweh's ordained priesthood.
2. To discourage the former practice of setting up altars whenever and wherever they wanted to offer Yahweh sacrifice.
3. To discourage offering these animals in pagan sacrifice for communion or burnt offerings.

Three reasons for the prohibition against consuming blood in Law #3 (Lev 17:11):

1. Blood sustains life.
2. God has given blood shed on the altar as the means for expiation.
3. Blood is what expiates for a person's life.

The blood prohibition is found eight times in the Pentateuch (Gen 9:4; Lev 3:17; 7:23; 17:10; 19:26; Dt 12:16, 23; 15:23).

Regulations concerning sexual prohibitions in Lev 18 are divided into three main topics:

1. Sexual conduct within the family/incest (verses 6-16)
2. Sexual unions with women who are closely related (verses 17-18)
3. The last set includes practices of that are detestable to God including adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality and bestiality (verses 19-23)

The series of twenty-one (seven times three) laws in Leviticus chapter 18 begins and ends with the statement: "I am Yahweh your God" (Lev 18:3, 30)

"I am Yahweh your God" Lev 18:3	Twenty-one laws (seven times three)	"I am Yahweh your God" Lev 18:30
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Topics of commands and prohibitions for sexual relations within families and other prohibitions in chapter 18:

1. Reject sexual immorality of Egyptians and Canaanites	8. No sex with half-sisters	15. No sex with a living wife's sister
2. Keep the Law; life in the Law	9. No sex with a father's sister	16. No sex with a menstruating woman
3. No sexual contact with close relatives	10. No sex with a mother's sister	17. Adultery forbidden
4. No sexual relations with father or mother	11. No sex with an uncle's wife	18. Child sacrifice forbidden
5. No sex with your father's other wives	12. No sex with a daughter-in-law	19. Homosexuality forbidden
6. No sex with a sister	13. No sex with a sister-in-law	20. Bestiality forbidden
7. No sex with granddaughters (understood to include daughters)	14. No sex with step-daughters or step-granddaughters	21. Command for sexuality purity according to the Law
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The laws in Lev 19 are broken up into units by the statement “I am Yahweh/I am Yahweh your God.” In Lev 19:1-18 “I am Yahweh/I am Yahweh your God” is repeated seven times in a list of twenty-one (seven times three) laws.

1. “I am Yahweh your God” Lev 19:3	2. “I am Yahweh your God” Lev 19:4	3. “I am Yahweh your God” Lev 19:10	4. “I am Yahweh” Lev 19:12	5. “I am Yahweh” Lev 19:14	6. “I am Yahweh” Lev 19:16	7. “I am Yahweh” Lev 19:18
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Adapted from Sailhamer’s chart in *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, page 349

Topics of commands and prohibitions in Lev 19:1-18

1. Honor for parents	8. Lying	15. Respect for the blind
2. Keeping the Sabbath	9. Deception	16. Respect for God
3. Idolatry	10. Profaning God’s name/false oaths	17. Perversion of justice
4. Communion offerings	11. Exploitation	18. Slander
5. Gleaning fields	12. Theft	19. Respect for family and neighbor
6. Gleaning orchards	13. Payment of wages	20. Mercy in human relationships
7. Stealing	14. Respect for the deaf	21. Love of neighbor

Adapted from Sailhamer’s chart in *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, page 349

“I am Yahweh/I am Yahweh your God” is repeated seven times in Lev 19:19-37 in a list of twenty-one laws (seven times three). “I am Yahweh” is found a fifteenth time in the conclusion to this series of laws in Lev 19:37.

1. “I am Yahweh your God” Lev 19:25	2. “I am Yahweh ” Lev 19:28	3. “I am Yahweh ” Lev 19:30	4. “I am Yahweh your God” Lev 19:31	5. “I am Yahweh” Lev 19:32	6. “I am Yahweh your God” Lev 19:34	7. “I am Yahweh your God” Lev 19:36
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Adapted from Sailhamer’s chart in *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, page 361

Topics of commands and prohibitions in Lev 19:19-37

1. Mixed breeding	8. Magic/sorcery/the occult	15. Sabbath obligation
2. Mixed sowing	9. Cutting side locks	16. Reverence for the Sanctuary
3. Mixed weaving	10. Trimming beards	17. Mediums/magicians
4. Sexual conduct with a slave	11. Skin gashing	18. Respect for the elderly
5. Planting of fruit trees	12. Tattooing	19. Fear of/reverence for God
6. Eating blood	13. Prostituting a daughter	20. Respect for immigrants
7. Divination	14. Prostitution in the Promised Land	21. Honesty in weights and measures

Adapted from Sailhamer’s chart in *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, page 361.