

ADULT STS LESSON 79

THE CALL TO HOLINESS

MEMORY VERSE: “And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine” (Leviticus 20:20).

TEXT: Leviticus Chapters 20 to 22

Leviticus 20:1-10

God is holy and desires that His people be holy. He does not leave them in doubt of the details of the standard lifestyle He expects of them. In the text, He prescribes the relationships He expects among the children of Israel and constantly warns them against imbibing the evil practices of the Canaanites as going against his prescription attracts divine judgment. Likewise, we as believers today ought to live a life of constant holiness in order to be at peace with God and enjoy his blessings.

1. PUNISHMENT FOR VIOLATING GOD'S COMMAND

Leviticus 20:7,22

Punishment awaits the unrepentant who violates God's precepts. God warned the children of Israel and by extension present day believers to abstain from the religious practices of the heathen and maintain sexual purity. This is a great warning to believers not to commit sin or cover up those who live in sin.

Some specific heathen practices the children of Israel and we as believers are warned against include:

- False worship
- Idolatry
- Occultism
- Adultery
- Incest (Sexual relationship between close relatives)
- Sodomy
- Bestiality (Laying with animals)
- Spiritism - interested in knowing what the future holds, others seek information about missing items or concerning the dead, seeking guidance, favor, healing, protection, and power from evil sources.

All these are prohibited by God in His word. Those who get involved in them must repent or they would be cut off from God forever.

Sanctification is a work of grace that can be only done by God when we pray and desire it in faith. From the passage we read in v7 the bible tells us that we should sanctify ourselves, that is we separate ourselves from sin and objects of sin and draw close to God in total consecration and then verse 8 God tells us "I am the Lord which sanctify you". After a believer has done his part, he or she can then pray in faith to God who sanctifies.

Question 1: Why is holiness compulsory for everyone?

Question 2: Mention some heathen practices God prohibited in our text.

2. PURITY AND PHYSICAL FITNESS OF PRIESTS: A MODEL OF THE BELIEVER'S PERFECTION

Leviticus 21:8

God gave specific rules to govern the priesthood. The priest must be free from physical defects, moral or ceremonial pollutions and social entanglements. We believers today are New Testament priests. The standard of holiness God expects of all His people is essentially the same in terms of moral perfection. He, however, expects that those in position of leadership go the extra mile to become models of moral excellence and self-denial. This is to be expected because a higher privilege demands higher responsibility. Those who are privileged to occupy leadership positions in the church are also under a special obligation to maintain a higher standard of devotion to God in character and service.

From the passage we read, some of God's instructions to the priests include:

- Priests and the animals for sacrifice must be perfect.
- They were prohibited from pagan funeral customs.
- They were to avoid Ceremonial uncleanness.
- They were required to maintain holiness in their marriage relationship and family life.
- They were not allowed to marry pagans.
- They were forbidden from marrying divorcees.

3. PRECEPTS CONCERNING THE PRIESTS AND THE ANIMALS FOR SACRIFICE

Leviticus 22:20,21

God warned the priests against profanity in handling holy things by presumptuously carrying on in ministry with ceremonial uncleanness. Aside from physical defects, leprosy, or bodily discharge, contact with a carcass or unclean animal rendered a priest unfit for service. Such priests who were defiled must undergo the prescribed purification rites before they could come back to service. This is a clear rebuke to believers who are

conscious of definite impurity in their lives but continue in service without seeking God for cleansing. God warned that such people would be cut off from His presence.

The animals also to be sacrificed was to be perfect without blemish or defects. This informs believers to offer their best unto God. We should give God the best of our time, talent, treasure, offering. Give God your best, not what is left! The Psalmist says he won't give to God that which costs him nothing; that should also be our resolve.