

Chapter 3 – A Critical Analysis of Leviticus 19

Holiness, not happiness, is the chief end of man – Oswald Chambers, Scottish theologian

No, the holiness the New Testament is concerned with is centered on being Christlike, living in outrageous, self-sacrificial love. If you make this your life aspiration, you will certainly be peculiar – about as peculiar as a Messiah dying on a cursed tree! You will be a ‘resident alien’ – Gregory Boyd, senior pastor, Woodland Hills Church

3.1 – Introduction

Chapters 17-27 comprise what is commonly known as the Holiness Code and is referenced as (H) in the literature. The motto of Leviticus, as dubbed by Wenham (1979:18), is ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’ Milgrom (2000:1596) emphasizes: “The call to holiness is found only in chapters 19-22 and in two other H passages (11:44-45; Num. 15:40).” He (2004:213) states: “Leviticus 19 provides the prescription to effect a transformation to holiness.” Kiuchi (2007:40, 41) suggests three conclusions in regards to holiness throughout the book of Leviticus: “The sacrificial idea intimates that the essence of holiness lies in death, especially the death of one’s egocentric nature; when one is pronounced clean, this is only a temporary state, and the egocentric nature, symbolized by the leprous disease, remains latent; ‘Love your neighbour as yourself,’ in 19:18b can be observed only when one dies to one’s egocentric nature.”

Kiuchi suggests that for holiness⁵⁶ to be achieved, the egocentric nature must be eliminated. The egocentric nature, according to Kiuchi (2007:34) is the *nephes*. He

⁵⁶ Sider writing about salvation in the NT suggests that transformation must be realized in all relationships of one’s culture. He (2005:65) states: “In the power of the Holy Spirit, God creates a new social order, a new

states that the *nephes* is connected to the *karet* (cutting off) penalty and is not directly associated with *mwt* (death). Kiuchi (2007:35) continues: “That *nephes* is not directly associated with *mwt* may well reflect the circumstance that it is a term referring to a person’s spiritual side, which does not perish or disappear with the person’s physical death.” He equates *nephes* with a person’s soul, that aspect of a person that does not cease to exist after death. He (2007:35, italics MB) understands “that it (*nephes*) essentially refers to the egocentric nature that assumedly appeared after the fall. With the ‘sin’ of the first man and woman their souls were dead, separated from an intimate presence of God.” With this in mind, the *nephes* has the potential toward sin and for defiling itself. Because of its propensity it reacts “consciously or unconsciously, against God. Therefore I use ‘egocentric nature’ to explain the term, but in translation, ‘a soul’” (Kiuchi 2007”36).

A critical examination of the concept of holiness in P (chpts. 1-16) compared to H’s depiction of holiness produces stark differences. Milgrom (1996:67) comments:

H introduces three radical changes regarding P’s notion of holiness. First, it breaks down the barrier between the priesthood and the laity. The attribute of holy is accessible to all Israel. Secondly, holiness is not just a matter of adhering to a regimen of prohibitive commandments, taboos; it embraces positive, performative commandments that are ethical in nature. Thirdly, Israel as a whole, priests included, enhances or diminishes its holiness in proportion to its observance of all of God’s commandments.

community of believers, where all relationships are being restored to holiness.” For him, holiness is something that has been lost in relationships and must be regained through a life of discipleship.

Kiuchi takes issue with Milgrom over his interpretation of the differences in P and H. He (2007:45, italics original) states: “Milgrom’s third postulate is not true to the test; unless one observes *all* the commandments one is not holy...The second postulate is inexact; for instance, Lev. 1 does not belong to ‘taboo’. The first is, in my view, wrong and derives from an unawareness of the relationship between outer and inner holiness.” For Milgrom holiness is derived from a works or observance of commandments ideology. While Kiuchi (2007:45) sees holiness as a gradual movement of “inner holiness of the Israelites and the priests in the following way.”

Milgrom sees holiness as attainable by all Israel and is accomplished by the ethical⁵⁷ commandments contained within H. Kiuchi on the other hand visualizes the Law as a means for the Israelites to become aware of their egocentric nature. He (2007:46) reiterates the destruction of the egocentric nature will lead “them to a state of holiness characterized by a heart free of selfish motives...[W]ithout uncovering oneself any efforts made toward holiness become futile and hypocritical, and places one within the vicious realm of legalism.” The journey of holiness for Milgrom (2000) is adherence to the commands of YHWH, while Kiuchi (2007) emphasizes an introspective journey for the one seeking to be holy as YHWH is holy.

The following grammatical analysis of Leviticus 19 will be divided into two units with eight sections. Four sections (vv. 2-10; 19-25; 31; 33-34) contain the longer

⁵⁷ Douglas (2000:129) states: “The impression given is that the priestly writer of the first part of Leviticus did not spontaneously support ethical principles. P’s idea of holiness did not entail righteousness; he would have been surprised when Isaiah spoke of holiness and righteousness in one breath.” Commenting on how *tame* (impure) relates to holiness, Douglas (2000:146) states: “The danger is two-edged: the people might break through or the Lord might break out, and in either case people will die. This is the effect of holiness.”

formula אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם - 'I am YHWH your God' - and four sections (vv. 11-18; 26-30; 32; 35-37) contain the shorter formula אֲנִי יְהוָה - 'I am YHWH.' Each of these units is divided by religious (cultic) duties (long formula אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם) and ethical duties (short formula אֲנִי יְהוָה).

Hartley (1992:308) divides the chapter around three topics: "faithfulness in worship (vv 3a β -8, 12,21-22, 27-28, 30-31), expression of love and respect in interpersonal relationships (vv 11, 13-14, 17-18, 19-20, 29, 32-34) and practice of justice in business and at courts (vv 15-16, 35-36)." He indicates (1992:308) that the verb שמר (to keep) signals the three divisions of this speech: 'keep my Sabbaths' at the beginning of the first and third divisions (v.3a β and v. 30a α) and 'keep my decrees' (v. 19a α) along with the conclusion in v. 37.

Milgrom (2000:1596) suggests this chapter contains three sections and is subdivided into 16 units. He (2000:1597) states these 16 units are "equally divided between those that end with אֲנִי יְהוָה and those that close with the longer formula אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם." He concurs that the longer formula indicates the religious duties and the ethical duties are represented by the shorter formula. He points out four units that do not end with this formula (vv.5-8, 19, 20-22, 29). Milgrom (2000:1597) states that "v. 1-18 and 30-37 represent two parallel panels with two of the elements in chiastic relation, thereby locking the panels...The chapter, therefore, takes on an AXA' pattern, the center X being the intermediate vv. 19-29." As pro-

posed above, the following grammatical analysis will divide the text according to the long or short formula.

Commentators have viewed this chapter to be either the most important chapter in the entire book (Douglas 2000:239) or the source (Milgrom 2000:1366) of the Holiness Code itself. Whatever the case, these statements reiterate the fact that this chapter is an important section within the Holiness Code. With an allusion to the Decalogue⁵⁸, personal purity is emphasized through religious and ethical instructions within the community of Israel. The sons of Israel are contrasted by the holiness of YHWH. The sons of Israel, as holy, are a presentation of a holy sacrifice in a material sense, while YHWH is by his very essence in a continual state of holiness.

3.2 – YHWH speaks to the sons of Israel in verse two⁵⁹.

2 דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹשִׁים תְּהִיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Personal Translation

2 You speak to the entire congregation of the sons of Israel, and you will say to them: Holy to God you will be (are), for holy am I YHWH your God.

⁵⁸ Milgrom (2000:1602) states: “Thus, the first five commandments are accounted for. It therefore stands to reason that the author of Lev. 19 knew the Decalogue and made use of it.” Other commentators (Hartley 1992:310; Clendenen 2000:252; Wenham 1979:264) are willing to find evidence that all ten of the commandments are quoted or at least alluded to in this chapter. Hartley (1992:311) suggests, “it may be stated that in its canonical context this speech is an exposition of the Decalogue.”

⁵⁹ The *Personal Translation* will follow a formal equivalence translation. This is a word-for-word or literal translation. At times the phrases may be shifted to give an ‘easier’ reading. The intention is for the reader to get a ‘feel’ for how the audience would have heard the text read publicly. The desired effect is for the emphasis to fall where the original author intended.

The following text (vv. 2-10) will be divided into four parts by the *inclusio* אָנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם that occurs in the Hebrew text. Each section will be dealt with in the confines of these *inclusios*. Verse one is an address to the community or congregation of the sons of Israel, as are all the chapters of the Holiness Code, excluding chapter 26. Clendenen (2000:251) states: “That a new section begins with chap. 19 is apparent, given the characteristic formula of divine speech: ‘The LORD said to Moses.’” Verse one employs the *waw* consecutive, which serves as a narrative function (Kelley 1992:211). This rhetorical device is utilized 17 times in chapter 19. The narrative element attributes this section to a divine utterance to the entire congregation of the sons of Israel through the prophet Moses.

This chapter opens with YHWH instructing Moses to speak to the עֵדָת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל – assembly of the sons⁶⁰ of Israel. This is the construct form of the noun עֵדָה. Hartley (1992:303) states: “This is the only place that עֵדָת, the official assembly of Israel, occurs in a commission-to-speak formula in Leviticus.” Schultz (1980:649) defines this noun as: “Used only of things posited to establish permanence and unequivocal facts such as ownership, an agreement and a covenant with God.” This designation for the sons of Israel is not used again in the Holiness code. Hartley (1992:312) states: “The content of this speech, laws for the oral instruction of the community in the requirements of living a holy life, definitely fits the setting of a covenant renewal ceremony like other speeches in Lev 17-26.” Milgrom

⁶⁰ Joosten (1996:31) states: “Although women are made subject to the law, it is the men that are made responsible for their observance of the laws. The intention behind the use of the phrase עֵדָה בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל is not, therefore, to exclude women – as if they should not hear or keep the laws – but rather to subsume them under the person of the man in whose household they live.” Or it is simply a collective noun used generically.

(2000:1603) sees the utilization of עֵדָת as significant due to the fact that the legislations that follow are the means by which the nation can become holy.⁶¹ Joosten (1996:39) suggests: “We will not be far wrong, therefore, if we ascribe to the *‘edah* a social, even a political function. As a result, we may say without exaggeration that Lev 19:2 lays down the blueprint for a nation.”

The עֵדָת⁶² of the sons of Israel will be holy due to the holy essence of YHWH. The lemma תִּהְיֶינָה⁶³ is qal active imperfect 2mp. The imperfect can be translated in two ways. It can be translated in the simple future – ‘you will be’ – or in the ongoing present (Futato 2003:64) – ‘you are.’ The future would indicate a state of being to be anticipated. The ongoing present is a state of being realized now, and its continuation is dependent on the holy essence of YHWH.

⁶¹ Milgrom comments that holiness is used both positively and negatively in this chapter. He (2000:1604, italics MB) states: “Thus holiness implies not only a separation from but separation to, and since YHWH is the standard by which all holiness is measured, the doctrine of *imitatio dei* (*God is different from humans so Israel is to be different from the nations*) takes on wider dimensions...[T]he observance of the commandments will lead Israel, negatively, to be set apart from the nations,...and, positively, to acquire those ethical qualities, such as those indicated in the divine attributes enumerated to Moses.”

⁶² Joosten (1996:36-38) argues that the utilization of the noun עֵדָה was “common in priestly texts, where it is used mainly as a designation for the Israelite community...Since the noun occurs already in Ugaritic with the precise meaning of ‘assembly,’ one may no longer claim that it was invented by priestly writers in the exile...The view that P created the term in exile may be countered by three arguments. Firstly, the description P gives of the *‘edah* is not exactly one of a religious community...Secondly, the word *‘edah* is never used in those parts of the OT known to date from the exilic or post-exilic period...The later biblical books use the word *qahal* instead of *‘edah*...This indicates that *‘edah* in the sense of ‘assembly’ is an older word that fell from use in the exilic period...Thirdly, the sporadic occurrence of the word in the historical books accord with the conception of P.”

⁶³ Hartley (1992:312) affirms “the use of the verb הָיָה, ‘be, become,’ captures the maturing dimension of holiness on the human plane.”

The condition for a possible covenant renewal will be based on the essence of YHWH – holiness.⁶⁴ The עֲדַת of the sons of Israel are to be holy⁶⁵ (קְדוּשִׁים) unto God because his character is a perpetual state of being holy. Procksch (1983:92) states: “The thought of the holy people emerges even more clearly in the Holiness Code (Lv. 17–26) than in Deuteronomy. Here everything derives from the basic statement in Lv. 19:2: Ye shall be קְדוּשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. Yahweh’s holiness demands the holiness of His people as a condition of intercourse. If the cultic character of holiness is prominent in this code, chapter 19 shows us that cultic qualification is inconceivable without purity. Cultic purity, however, demands personal purity.” Harrington (1996:215) elaborates the personal dimension of holiness: “Thus, holiness is not an innate condition inherent in one’s classification as a priest or Israelite. The power of the human will is essential to the creation of holiness in this world. God defines and requires holiness, but its actualization is under human control.” Wenham (1979:265) quotes Hertz who captures the spirit of a theology of transformation:

Holiness is thus not so much an abstract or a mystic idea, as a regulative principle in the everyday lives of men and women...Holiness is thus attained not by flight from the world, nor by monk-like renunciation of human relationships of family or station, but by the spirit in which we fulfill the obligations of life in its simplest and commonest details: in this way – by doing

⁶⁴ Hartley (1992:312) emphasizes: “Holiness is the quintessential quality of Yahweh. In the entire universe, he alone is intrinsically holy. The nominal sentence, Yahweh is holy, points in this direction...God’s holiness is contagious. Wherever his presence is, that place becomes holy.”

⁶⁵ Maccoby (1996:154) states: “The holiness of Israel means that Israel shares in the holiness of God, so that Israel in its land functions like priests in a Temple where God’s presence rests; or, if the royal metaphor is adopted, like courtiers in the palace which is the special residence of the King. Thus all the purity regulations may be likened to the special procedure and vestments of priests or courtiers – a kind of etiquette or protocol of Temple or palace.”

justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God – is everyday life transfigured.

Procksch (1983:89) continues: “The root קדש is probably not originally Hebrew but Canaanite being thus taken over from an alien religious circle” and “most closely related materially to קדש or holiness is the term טהר (‘purity’).” This signifies that these two terms are different from the ethical, which exist in the realm of persons. Procksch (1983:89) states: “From the very first קדש is very closely linked with the cultus. Anything related to the cultus, whether God, man, things, space or time, can be brought under the term קדש.”

קדש is not used in the Genesis account where the cultus does not have a central role. But קדש is found “frequently in the story of Moses” (Procksch 1983:90). In Exodus 3:5 אֲדַמְתִּי-קֹדֶשׁ (‘the ground which is holy’) is used of the area around the burning bush that is declared holy. This is an early occurrence of this word at the Sinai experience.

כִּי indicates a clause that “provides the reason for a preceding expression or expressions by marking with כִּי the *motivation given by speakers* to explain something they have said. The causal relation is thus not due to natural laws but is due to the speaker’s own reasoning. כִּי can usually also be translated *for*. Speakers base their motivation for a *directive action* (request, command, summons, exhorta-

tion, etc.) on *what they or someone else is doing, has done or will do*” (Van der Merwe, Naude & Kroeze 1997:302, italics original). The phrase קדושים תהיו כְּ קדוש is based on the author’s understanding of the essence of YHWH - holiness. This phrase is an exhortation/command for the sons of Israel קדושים תהיו for קדוש אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. This phrase also clearly demonstrates the author’s intent based on the imperfect lemma תהיו. The author’s explanation for his directive action by the nominal clause for the sons of Israel is founded in קדוש אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

Milgrom stresses this exhortation קדוש אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם gives understanding to *imitatio dei* as to live a godly life. This style of living is seen through acts of love or compassionate deeds by providing the basic essentials of life – namely food and clothing (Milgrom 2000:1605). Milgrom (2000:1605) stresses “Israel should strive to imitate God, but, on the other hand, it should be fully aware of the unbridgeable gap between them.” The concept of *imitatio dei* is “the observance of the divine commandments leads to God’s attribute of holiness, but not to the same degree – not to God, but to godliness” (Milgrom 2000:1606).

3.3 – The sons of Israel are admonished to reverence their mother and father in verse three.

3 אִישׁ אָמוּ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:
<p>Personal Translation 3 Each of you will reverence your mother and your father and you will keep vigilantly my Sabbaths, I am YHWH your God.</p>

This verse provides two indications of personal purity for the sons of Israel. Since holiness is a state of being for the sons of Israel, purity is an outward manifestation of this state. The first part of this verse reverses the word order from the Exodus and Deuteronomy account (אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ) of the fifth commandment. The Leviticus account has mother preceding father. This seems odd in the midst of a patriarchal society (Hartley 1992:304). [The author possibly inverted the order to maintain the chiasmic structure (Milgrom 2000:1608)]. Could it be that women, or more especially mothers, were being neglected or is the purpose of this to demonstrate the importance of women in this patriarchal society? For personal purity and cultic holiness to be relevant and for the sons of Israel to be different than the surrounding culture, they must honor/fear women within their society.⁶⁶

The writer of Leviticus chose יָרָא whereas the writers of Exodus and Deuteronomy utilized כִּבֵּד to describe the manner in which children should relate to their parents. כִּבֵּד is derived from כָּבַד which conveys the meaning of ‘heaviness like a stone.’ This depicts a child ‘weighing’ their parents down with honor and respect, while יָרָא has the connotation of standing in awe of a person.⁶⁷ A person can stand in reverential awe of YHWH or of their parents. Wenham (1979:265) suggests: “As far as a child is concerned, his parents are in the place of God: through them he

⁶⁶ Milgrom (2000:1610) commenting on the inversion of fourth and fifth commandments states: “An ancillary purpose may have been to illustrate from the start that ethics (respect for parents) and ritual (observance of the sabbath) are of equal importance.”

⁶⁷ Milgrom emphasizes that the difference between יָרָא and כָּבַד cannot simply be ignored. He (2000:1608) states: “The verb *yare* acknowledges that inferiority of the subject; the verb *kibbed* acknowledges the superiority of the object.” The verb כָּבַד is used in a positive sense of giving homage or acting on behalf of someone and the verb יָרָא is used negatively in the sense of punishment for wrong acts.

can learn what God is like and what he requires.” Durham (1987:291), commenting on the use of these two verbs, states:

To ‘give honor’ to father and mother means more than to be subject to them, or respectful of their wishes: they are to be given precedence by the recognition of the importance which is theirs by right, esteemed for their priority, and loved for it as well. As Yahweh is honored for his priority of all life, so father and mother must be honored for their priority, as Yahweh’s instruments to the lives of their children. Lev. 19:3, in the chapter of the Holiness Code that gives special application of the Decalogue, even uses יִרְא ‘have reverence for, stand in awe of,’ instead of כִּבֵּד in the repetition of the fifth commandment.

Kiuchi (2007:349) commenting on the use of כִּבֵּד states: “‘Fear’ is normally used to describe one’s attitude towards God...(but) it is the Lord’s intention to push the Fifth Commandment to its extreme by commanding people even to fear their own mother, who is usually the object of affection, not fear.”

The second half of this verse deals with שַׁבְּתַי. This phrase is translated ‘my Sabbaths.’ This is an expansion of the phrase אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת in Exodus and Deuteronomy – ‘the day of the Sabbath.’ Clearly the Exodus and Deuteronomy accounts are focusing solely on the seventh day that was set aside as a day of rest for all the people and livestock in the care of the sons of Israel. But the Leviticus account has expanded this to mean more than the seventh day only. Kiuchi (2007:349) states: “*Sabbatot* (pl.) includes not just the seventh day, but also the various fes-

tive days dealt with in ch. 23. On these occasions the Israelites are to rest completely, but here ‘my’ is important: those days belong to the Lord, not to the Israelites.”

This being the case, YHWH has now included the observance of all the festivals as an indication of purity that flows from personal holiness. This would be an outward signal to those around Israel that their allegiance is to YHWH alone. Along with honoring/fearing one’s parents as a sign of obedience, observation of ritual festivals would also be an indication of one’s humility in worshipping YHWH. YHWH also acknowledges that these Sabbaths belong to him. This would give added emphasis in the way in which these days are to be observed. Now a holy God is in possession of these ‘holy days.’ This fact in itself would invoke the sons of Israel to approach these days with reverence and awe.

Milgrom reiterates his understanding that observances of the commandments will transform the nation into a holy nation. The guarding of the Sabbath indicates one’s obligation to God.⁶⁸ The word translated ‘guarding’ is the verb שמר and in “the context of the Sabbath, it connotes the existence of prohibitions that must not be violated” (Milgrom 2000:1611). Kiuchi sees the plural שְׁבֻתוֹתַי as referring to the holidays while Milgrom (2000:1611) states: “*samar* is never used with the holidays. Rather, *samar* is a stylistic earmark of H⁶⁹ and the passages influenced by H.” Hartley (1992:313) points out: “In the Decalogue the command is ‘to remember’ זכר the Sabbath so as to observe it as a holy day to worship Yahweh. Here

⁶⁸ Milgrom (2000:1612) states: “The contrast of *his* parents, *my* Sabbaths, and *your* God emphasizes the covenantal relationship between a person and his parents, on one hand, and between Israel and its God, on the other.”

⁶⁹ This is a representation for the Holiness Code.

the verb is שָׁמַר, ‘to keep,’ meaning to observe the special customs and practices of that day.”

3.4 – The Israelites are commanded not to worship idols and molten images in verse four.

4 אֱלֹהֵי-תַפְנוּ אֱלֹהֵי-אֱלִילִים וְאֱלֹהֵי מַסֵּכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Personal Translation

4 Do not turn to worthless idols, and you will not make for yourself gods of cast metal, I am YHWH your God.

The imperfect lemma תַּפְּנוּ is qal 2mp and is prefixed with the negative particle אֵלֹ. Practico and Van Pelt (2001:170) state: “The negative particle אֵלֹ is also used with an imperfect verb to express an immediate, specific and non-durative prohibition.” The אֵלֹ particle differs from the לֹא in its translation. The אֵלֹ particle is translated ‘do not’ while the לֹא particle is translated ‘will not’ indicating, “prohibitions (that) are permanent and absolute” (Practico and Van Pelt 2001:170) as in the case of the Decalogue. Milgrom (2000:1612) states: “Also it is possible that אֵלֹ was chosen over לֹא to indicate that this prohibition is only a warning, since there is the

lesser, divine penalty of *karet*⁷⁰ for ‘turning’ to idols, but not the death penalty mandated for serving as a necromantic medium.”

פָּנָה has the idea of ‘turning one’s face’ or ‘facing in the direction’ of something. ‘Turning one’s face’ towards something or someone has the connotation of worshipping the object one might be facing. This would be a clear violation of the first and second commandments. Hartley (1992:313) states: “Possibly the choice of the verb פָּנָה, ‘turn,’ is to call to mind the phrase עַל-פָּנַי ‘before me,’ in the first commandment. אֵל פָּנָה means to change directions; in passages with worship it means to focus one’s attention on serving another deity.” That which the people are not to turn to is אֱלִיל. This noun is used as a derogatory and diminutive term – ‘little god’ or ‘godling.’

The lemma תַּעֲשֶׂהוּ (‘you will make’) is qal active imperfect 2mp and is prefixed with אֶל particle. This particle, according to Practico and Van Pelt (2001:170), indicates prohibitions that are permanent and absolute. The sons of Israel are commanded not to fashion any representative image out of molten metal⁷¹ מִסֵּכָה. This would have reminded the sons of Israel of the מִסֵּכָה calf Aaron made in Exodus 32:4

⁷⁰ Douglas (2000:146) characterizes *karet* as: “The holy thing that is not correctly guarded and fenced will break out and kill, and the impure person not correctly prepared for contact with the holy will be killed.” YHWH’s punishment is meted out to the individual that breaks divine law or approaches the holy in an impure state.

⁷¹ Clendenen (2000:254) states: “Small bronze images of Baal and Resheph and other deities have been uncovered at different archaeological sites.”

(Hartley 1992:313). They would have also been reminded of how their forefathers worshipped this מִסְכָּה calf as their deliverer from Egypt (Milgrom 2000:1613).

3.5 – Stipulation are given in verses 5-10 for peace offerings, gleaning and reaping.

5 וְכִי תִזְבַּחוּ זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם תִּזְבַּחְתֶּהוּ:
6 בַּיּוֹם זִבְחְכֶם יֵאָכַל וּמִמָּחֳרָת וְהַיּוֹמָה עַד-יוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בָאֵשׁ יִשָּׂרֶף:
7 וְאִם הָאָכַל יֵאָכַל בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי פְגוּל הוּא לֹא יִרְצָה:
8 וְאִכְלִיו עֲוֹנוֹ יִשָּׂא כִּי-אֶת-קֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה חָלַל וְנִכְרַתָּה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מֵעַמִּיהָ:
9 וּבִקְצֹרְכֶם אֶת-קִצְרֵי אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה פֶּאֶת שְׂדֵךְ לְקַצֹּר וּלְקַט קְצִירֶךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט:
10 וְכִרְמֶךָ לֹא תַעֲזוֹלֵל וּפְרֹט כִּרְמֶךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט לְעֵנִי וְלִגְרֵי תַעֲזוֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Personal Translation

5 And supposing you will slaughter a sacrifice of peace offerings for YHWH, you will slaughter it for your acceptance. 6 On the day you sacrifice, it will be eaten and the day after, and that which is left on the third day will be burned by fire. 7 And if any part of it will be eaten on the third day, he will be ceremonially unclean and he will not be accepted. 8 And the one who eats it will bear the punishment of his iniquity, for he defiled the holiness of YHWH and the breath of life was cut off from her peoples. 9 And when you are reaping the harvest of your land, do not finish the edge of a cultivated field by cutting down and gathering and do not glean your crop. 10 And do not go over your vineyard a second time and do not glean the fallen grapes in your vineyard; you will relinquish the poor and the emigrant, I am YHWH your God.

Both Milgrom and Kiuchi divide this unit (vv. 5-10) into two separate units (vv. 5-8 and vv. 9-10). Milgrom (2000:1623) offers an explanation for this division: “Why is the closing formula missing here? As has been pointed out by Schwartz, it occurs in only second-person prescription; as indicated by the second-person suffix on אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, it has to be directed to ‘you.’ It would, therefore, be incongruous grammat-

ically to attach it to a prescription ending in the third person. That is why this formula is absent in vv. 19, 22, and 29.”

Another possible way of viewing these verses is consideration of the five *waws* that occur at the beginning of these six verses. The *waw* has as one of its functions the concept of joining together ideas (Futato 2003:51). The previous three units function independently and are devoid of the *waw* conjunction and each unit ends with the divine formula. Verses 11 and 12 are joined together with the *waw* conjunction and end with the divine formula. If the author was joining these two pieces of legislation concerning food regulations (eating of peace offering and gleaning), then it is plausible to consider these six verses as one unit. The proposed unitary division echoes the joining of the ethical and religious aspects as was seen in verse three. The regulations concerning the peace offering reflect the vertical or religious aspect of the cultus while the gleaning stipulations focus on the horizontal or ethical demands within the community.

Verse five begins with the conditional participle and *waw* conjunction וְכִי. The protasis and apodosis verbs are both in the imperfect. Therefore when it is offered, it should be offered in such a way that the one offering the sacrifice would be accepted. The peace offering is not placed in a position of acceptance but the worshipper who is giving the sacrifice. Kiuchi (2007:349) states: “This offering, by presenting its symbolic depiction of its offerer’s egocentric nature’s destruction, concerns a person’s spiritual salvation before the Lord.” Hartley (1992:313) presents another explanation for the occurrence of the peace offering in this context: “Laws about זָבַח שְׁלָמִים, ‘the sacrifice of well-being,’ may occur here because humans of-

fer this type of sacrifice as a spontaneous or promised response to God’s blessing.”

Verses six and seven give stipulations for the consumption of the זָבַח שְׁלָמִים. Even eating the peace offering must be broached by awe that exudes from personal purity, stemming from one’s obedience towards a God whose essence is holiness. In verse seven, יִרְצָה is translated as ‘it will be accepted’ by the New Living Translation (NLT) and English Standard Version (ESV). These translations view the offering as what is being accepted instead of the worshipper. If the 3ms prefix is instead translated ‘he,’ then the verse takes on an entirely different meaning. It would indicate that the worshipper has intentionally been put in a position of not being accepted.⁷² As Kiuchi (2007:348) states: “The key to understanding the idea of holiness is found in the holiness of sacrifices and offerings that symbolize the existential condition of the offerer, and refers to the condition of the human heart.”

It seems that verse eight is a cruel and unusual punishment for the crime of eating. For Kiuchi (2007:350), “The severity of the punishment associated with this rule suggests that the Lord’s holiness must not be infringed upon even when offering what was apparently the most common sacrifice.” According to Milgrom and Kiuchi this seemingly common offering held more internal importance for the worshipper than meets the eye. This זָבַח שְׁלָמִים (well-being offering) “is the only holy object that the lay person is allowed to handle” (Milgrom 2000:1615). This offering

⁷² Milgrom (2000:1620) states: “In typical priestly style, the verb is repeated, but in chiasmic relation to its first appearance. The added effect of this repetition (תִּזְכָּרוּ) is to stress that the responsibility for the sacrifice’s acceptance to YHWH rests with the offerer, not the priest.”

is allowed in the home and to be eaten by the family if they are in a state of purity. Milgrom (2000:1616) continues: “In a sense, the sacred meat has transmitted the holiness of the sanctuary into the home. Thus the family must treat every act of eating a meat meal as a sacred rite.” This being so, the meat itself becomes a symbol of YHWH’s holiness. Again, it is not the object that transmits holiness but the state in which the family was in when the object arrives.

The punishment for violating the sacredness of the peace offering is קָרַת (‘cut off’) from the covenant עם (‘people’). This profaning (הִלֵּל) of this sacred meal, in verse eight, brings the most severe punishment. Kiuchi (2007:350) elaborates: “Reference to the *karet* penalty means, in view of 18:29, this violation is virtually as serious as that made against the Lord in the abominations listed in ch. 18.” The violation in question is eating the meat of the sacrifice on the third day. This brings פְּגוּלָה (‘impurity’). This noun describes something in an unclean or contaminated state. Milgrom (2000:1620, 1621) states: “The meat has been desecrated, as explicitly stated in the next verse, but perhaps I should side with the rabbis who claim that ‘its appearance changes’ and that it is ‘disgusting because it has begun to decay...Thus פְּגוּלָה is also a pejorative, but it is still a technical term, limited to sacrificial meat eaten after its legal limit.”

In verse eight, the lemma יִשָּׂא is qal imperfect 3ms. This is a change from the

2mp⁷³ in verses 2-4. Those prohibitions were given to the entire עֵדָת of the sons of Israel. The legislation now shifts from corporate holiness to individual holiness within the community of Israel. Obedience to YHWH's stipulation for partaking of the peace offering is now an individual responsibility. The one not obeying YHWH's ordinance will be punished accordingly. The entire עֵדָת of the sons of Israel will not experience this punishment.⁷⁴ Kiuchi (2007:350) states: "Paradoxically, then, the road to holiness begins with an awareness of one's selfishness." For Kiuchi, the sin is selfishness or egotism that is being punished which could possibly be equated with over consumption or greed/gluttony.

כִּי is employed by the author to indicate the following exhortation or command ('the breath of life was cut off') which is being given because of the son of Israel's disobedience or blatant disregard for YHWH's holiness. The worshipper חָלַל defiled/profaned (piel 3ms) YHWH's holiness through disobeying the legislation for the partaking of the זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים. This defilement of YHWH's holiness carries a severe punishment from the law – 'to be cut off from one's people.' Milgrom (2000:1622) questions: "How long does its sanctity last? According to this verse,

⁷³ Joosten (1996:47) comments on the interspersed use of singular and plural verbs: "Such 'variation of number' has often been used as an index for source-analysis, the underlying ideas being that an author would retain the same grammatical number while addressing an audience, and that a later redactor would preserve the grammatical number used in his sources...It has been pointed out that the mixing of styles is typical of all biblical law codes, and is found also in Ancient Near Eastern texts which are not suspect of being composite...[T]he whole principle of dividing up a given text to correspond to several sources is beginning to be abandoned in favour of approaching the text in its final form."

⁷⁴ Milgrom (2000:1623) comments: "The sacred food must be eliminated lest it putrefy or contract impurity; in either case, not only is its offerer punished by *karet*, but the entire community stands in jeopardy of destruction by God." The lemmas in verse eight are 3ps. The consequences appear to be aimed at the individual and not the community. It could be that Milgrom envisions the same type of depravity mentioned in verse 29 of a person profaning their daughter thus causing the land to be filled with depravity.

it lasts as long as it exists. Thus it must be either eaten or eliminated (by burning); otherwise, even in a putrefied state, it technically is still *qodes* holy!”

The lemma וְנִכְרְתָהּ is niph'al perfect 3fs prefixed with *waw* conjunction. This lemma is translated ‘and she was cut off’ and suggest being separated from one’s people. The noun has the connotation of a tree being uprooted violently from the ground. The lemma is in agreement with מֵעַמֶּיהָ that has the 3fs pronominal suffix – ‘from her peoples.’ The ESV has adopted the masculine pronoun to translate the 3fs pronominal suffix – ‘from his people.’ The NLT simply translates this ‘from the community’ in a gender-neutral way. The NRSV also utilizes a gender-neutral translation – ‘from the people.’

Treating the holy in profane ways exacts from YHWH a person’s most valuable asset – הַנְּפֶשֶׁת. The severity of this punishment echoes the punishment demanded in chapter 18:29 וְנִכְרְתוּ הַנְּפֹשׁוֹת הָעֹשִׂים מִקְרֵב עַמָּם – ‘and the life of those who did this were cut off from in the midst of their people.’ Those profaning the peace offering statutes will suffer the same punishment as those who do all the abominable and detestable acts of the Gentiles that YHWH has warned against.

Unlike the previous verses that dealt exclusively with the personal holiness of the sons of Israel, verses nine and 10 deal with the ethical responsibilities which should be normal ‘holiness’ overflow for the sons of Israel to have for those who are easily marginalized and overlooked in society – לְעַנֵּי וְלִגְרֵי. This passage begins to open a window into the layers of society that existed. This passage also unveils

the ideal societal organization and social welfare institution that the author imagined to be what YHWH desired or commanded of society. Hartley (1992:314) comments: “On the other hand, the poor and the foreigner maintain their dignity, for in place of a handout they are given the privilege to labor for their own needs.” Joosten (1996:61) adds: “Being landless – a displaced person – he is generally dependent for his well-being on the goodwill of the inhabitants of the land...The meaning of the term *ger* cannot be open to doubt. It refers to the foreigner who has settled in Israel and who has been granted the right to stay in the land.”

The author uses the adverbial negative אַל twice in verse nine to give the prohibitions the strength of an enduring command. תְּכַלֶּה can be translated ‘you do not finish’ or ‘you must not finish’ and תִּלְקֹט can be translated ‘you do not glean’ or ‘you must not glean.’⁷⁵ The author is now addressing the individual within the congregation of the sons of Israel. The passage has moved from a hypothetical 3ms to a definite 2ms person in the community of Israel. These lemmas indicate that personal holiness will be expressed through personal purity. Personal purity as demonstrated in society will be assessed by the way the sons of Israel treat and dignify those marginalized by society at large. Milgrom (2000:1624) points out: “The roots *qds* ‘holy’ and *hll* ‘desecrate’ do not appear in this unit (vv. 9-10). Their very

⁷⁵ Milgrom (2000:1627) quotes an article from the *Los Angeles Times* (Aug. 31, 1983) headlined ‘Needy Americans Gleaning Unwanted Agricultural Harvest’ which “reports that active gleaning programs have now taken hold in 11 states...that take its guidance from Lev. 19:9-10...in response to what the General Accounting office calls an ‘unmet need’ for food among Americans who do not qualify for government food systems.” As a pastor there were many of our members who were farmers. We forged an agreement to come in after the harvest and glean what was left and take it to a center for indigent persons. This proved a vital service to the community and encouraged the church to outreach into the community. A nationwide organization for gleaning is The Society of St. Andrew. They deliver gleaned food to 23 states with the assistance of 30,000 volunteers. For more information about this group visit www.endhunger.org.

absence is significant: an indispensable step toward the achievement of holiness is concern for the indigent.”

The author indicates a double command in verse 10 by using the adverbial negative לֹא. These commands are still aimed at the individual within the greater community of the sons of Israel. They are not to תַּעֲוִלֶּל (‘you go over a second time’) and תִּלְקֹט (‘you glean’). The sons of Israel’s cultivated fields, the field’s edge,⁷⁶ their vineyards and the fallen grapes⁷⁷ are all being declared holy unto YHWH. These are all off limits except to the עֲנִי and גֵר who have exclusive rights to this area that has been deemed holy unto YHWH. Milgrom (2000:1628) remarks: “In the priestly texts, this is the only place (and in its copy, 23:22) where the poor are mentioned.” As זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים was the only holy item the עֲדַת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל could handle, so these zones of the sons of Israel’s possessions⁷⁸ were only to be handled by the עֲנִי and גֵר.

Who are these לְעֲנִי וְלְגֵר that the community is to make concessions for in verse 10? The NLT translates these as ‘the poor’ and ‘the foreigners,’ while the ESV translates them as ‘the poor’ and ‘the sojourner.’ Klingbeil (1996:837) states: “The

⁷⁶ Milgrom (2000:1626) illustrates: “The rabbis ordain that the פאה should minimally be one-sixtieth of the field, but more should be set aside, taking into account the size of the field, the abundance of the yield, and the abundance of the poor.”

⁷⁷ Hartley (1992:304, italics MB) states: “פרט occurs only here (v. 10) in OT; it refers to loose grapes, grapes not in a cluster, those growing singularly or those that have fallen off.” Milgrom (2000:1627, italics MB) concludes: “Thus עללזת (v. 10) in the vineyard is the semantic equivalent of פאה in the field.”

⁷⁸ In the Hebrew text אֲתָם immediately precedes the divine formula in verse 10. Milgrom (2000: 1629) asserts: “This אֲתָם refers to all four compulsory gifts of vv. 9-10: the edge of the field, the fallen stalks, the leftover grapes, and the fallen grapes.”

nom. *ger* occurs 92x in the OT, always in the sense of a sojourner or alien...The alien also appears together with the orphan and the widow as deserving of justice and charity.” The גֵר is viewed as an emigrant who has settled down but does not have civil rights as a natural born citizen. Klingbeil (1996:837) continues: “The sojourner in Israel does not possess land and is generally in the service of an Israelite who is his master and protector. He is usually poor, but as a resident enjoys the rights of assistance, protection, and religious participation.⁷⁹ He has the right of gleaning (Lev. 19:10; 23:22), participation in the tithe (Deut. 14:29), the Sabbath year (Lev. 25:6), and the cities of refuge (Num. 35:15).” Schmidt (1967:842) states: “The noun (גֵר) denotes the state, position or fate of a resident alien, ‘dwelling abroad,’ ‘without civil or native rights.’”

Ramirez Kidd (1999:24) argues that the verb גור has the characteristics of emigrant (an Israelite who leaves his or her country of origin to live in another place without settling permanently there) while the noun גר embodies the idea of immigrant (one who goes into another country in order to settle there). Ramirez Kidd (1999:24, italics original) elaborates on this idea: “The verb גור was used, mostly, in association with those (Israelites) who left their original towns and *went* to sojourn temporarily abroad. It is associated with the idea of emigration. The noun גר on the contrary, designates the legal status granted to those (strangers and fo-

⁷⁹ Ramirez Kidd (1999:71) affirms: “The religious duties required of the גר in the Holiness Code represent rather, the minimal request of the Israelite hosts to the גר in order to ensure the preservation of holiness in the land, which is a central motif of the Holiness Code.”

reigners) who *came* to sojourn and were ruled by the internal regulations of an Israelite community. It expressed rather the idea of immigration.”

Commentators argue whether the גר⁸⁰ indicates a proselyte or convert to Yahweh-ism during Old Testament times or not. Knauth suggests according to Exodus 12:48-49 the גר participated in Passover on account of being circumcised. Knauth (2003: 31) asserts: “Thus, on the condition of circumcision, the alien here would seem essentially to have been allowed to become an Israelite (a ‘convert’ or ‘proselyte,’ as translated in the LXX), since the circumcision indicated full covenantal commitment and integration.” Ramirez Kidd, on the other hand, argues quite the contrary. He (1999:30, 31) accentuates: “It is true that in the Rabbinical Hebrew of the Hellenistic world the meaning of גר as ‘converted foreigner’ came to be so well established, that the verb גייר II (Piel ‘to make a Proselyte’, Hithp. And Niph, ‘to become a proselyte’) was formed from it. In the Old Testament, however, this does not seem to have been the case.”

Ramirez Kidd argues that the mention of the גר in the laws within the Holiness Code serve to preserve holiness within the community of Israel. Ramirez Kidd (1999:57, italics original) states “in the Holiness code the noun גר is mentioned in two kinds of laws: (1) laws given *to the Israelites for the protection of the* גר and (2)

⁸⁰ Rendtorff (1996:81) commenting on Lev. 25:25-54 concludes: “First, the *ger* is taken to be a permanent figure in the context of the society to which these laws are addressed. As such he is accepted and integrated in the rules of the daily life of the community. Second, he is still different. This is particularly clear if a member of the majority becomes financially and socially dependent on the *ger*. Then there are special rules to make it easier to be extricated from this situation. But all this is formulated in the law without any bias.”

laws addressed equally to the Israelite and the גר *for the preservation of holiness.*”

When one compares the texts that mention the גר in the Holiness Code the primary concern is with the preservation of holiness⁸¹ (Ramirez Kidd 1999:59). Of the 18 references to the גר in the Holiness Code “four cases are reformulations of previous laws; in four cases the noun גר is used simply as a term of comparison (Lev. 25,35.47.47.47); ten cases are laws concerned with the preservation of holiness” (Ramirez Kidd 1999:59).

The עני⁸² is possibly a natural born Israelite who is suffering from affliction. Coppes (1980:1652) states: “The עני is primarily a person suffering some kind of disability or distress. The עני connotes some kind of disability or distress.” The distress that עני is living under could simply be poverty since this is one meaning of the masculine noun עני. Coppes (1980:1652) continues: “We see that financially the עני lives from day to day, and that socially he is defenseless and subject to oppression.” The עני is quite possibly a son of Israel, who for whatever the circumstance, has become an indentured servant.

⁸¹ The priestly concept of holiness is based on the degree of holiness from the center (the Holy of Holies outward). Ramirez Kidd (1999:61, italics original) commenting on this states: “The *spatial* notion of holiness is important to understand the place of the גר in the Holiness Code: the same principle which explains the sequence outwards (Israel => the nations), explains inwards, the arrangement of the different social groups of the Israelite society. These groups may be ordered according to their *distance from the holy realm of the cult*: Priest => Levites => other tribes => unclean Israelites = the גר and the nations.”

⁸² Baldwin (1972:165) commenting on the prophecy of Zechariah states: “With that in mind it is no surprise to read that the king is *humble* (Heb. עני). This word is more often used in the sense of ‘poor’ or ‘afflicted’, and though when the Servant is described as ‘afflicted’ (Is. 53:7) another word is used.”

If עָנִי carries the meaning of ‘disability,’ it is possible that the author imagined a society, as well, that would take responsibility and care for those with various types of disabilities. These individuals would be unable to perform the necessary tasks to provide for their basic needs. They would be more susceptible to abuse, exploitation and neglect than, say, the widow or the emigrant. These individuals would need extra care, depending on the severity of their disability. If this was a reality, and one can safely assume that disabled people existed in ancient Israel, then the author is calling the sons of Israel to defend and provide for this vulnerable group in society.

It seems reasonable that the author would include both the עָנִי and גֵר since they would have represented the natural born and the emigrant layers of society. These groups would also be the most vulnerable and easiest to oppress. It would have been of no consequence for these two groups to be exploited and marginalized. The socialization of society that the author was imagining, included the personal responsibility the sons of Israel had to these people, would have been a reflection of their purity and obedience to the holy essence of YHWH.

3.6 – An introduction to verses 11-18⁸³

The *inclusio* אָנִי יְהוָה demarcates the subsections of this unit. This short formula is an indication that ethical duties are being presented. The author is putting in place

⁸³ Milgrom (2000:1629) states: “‘James made conscious and sustained use’ of vv. 12-18.” A following chapter will deal with Jesus, Paul and James’ use of ethical responsibilities in the NT.

for the sons of Israel a moral system of standards and values to further demonstrate the inner purity and holiness that must characterize the אֱלֹהֵי-כָל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Wenham (1979:267) has uncovered a pattern of the various nouns used for ‘neighbor’ in this section.

11-12	countryman	בְּעַמִּיתוֹ	
13-14			companion רֵעֵךְ
15-16	countryman	בְּעַמִּיתְךָ	people בְּעַמְּיָךְ
17-18	brother	אָחִיךָ	countryman בְּעַמִּיתְךָ
		people	בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ
			companion רֵעֵךְ

Wenham (1979:267) states: “The slight delay in mentioning ‘neighbor’ for the third time should make the listener specially alert for the great command to love his neighbor as himself (v. 18).”

3.6.1 – The Israelites are warned against acts of deception in verses 11 and 12.

11 לֹא תִגְנוּבוּ וְלֹא תִכְחָשׁוּ וְלֹא תִשְׁקְרוּ אִישׁ בְּעַמִּיתוֹ:
12 וְלֹא תִשָּׁבְעוּ בִשְׁמִי לְשָׁקֵר וְחָלַלְתָּ אֶת-שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

Personal Translation

11 You will not steal and you will not deceive and you will not deal harshly a man to his countryman. 12 And you will not swear an oath of deception by my Name thereby you will defile the Name of your God; I am YHWH.

The author is once again focusing his address toward the אֱלֹהֵי-כָל-עַדְתַּת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל. The author employs the adverbial negation לֹא four times in these verses alone. The use of the adverbial negation לֹא is an indication that the prohibitions being stated are to be acknowledged and accepted as commands. The final lemma in verse 12 וְחָלַלְתָּ is 2ms piel perfect prefixed with *waw* consecutive. Though the community of Israel is being addressed, the responsibility for personal purity falls to the individual for insuring the Name of YHWH will not be defiled.⁸⁴

The phrase translated ‘and you will not deal harshly, a man toward his countryman’ (וְלֹא-תִשְׁקַר אִישׁ בְּעַמִּי) utilizes the verb שָׁקַר. Kiuchi (2007:351, italics original) states this verb “occurs five times in the OT, and means to ‘lie’, the opposite of loyalty. In this context the preposition *be* in the adverbial clause *is ba’amito* (to one another) means ‘against’, suggesting hostility.”

Milgrom (2000:1634) attests that the name of YHWH, as with the meat of the peace offering, is the only thing the people of Israel can utilize. The profaning of אֶת-שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ “nullifies whatever holiness has been achieved through the observance of the other injunctions in this chapter” (Milgrom 2000:1635).

3.6.2 – How an Israelite is to relate justly to those in his or her realm of influence is the cause for concern in verses 13 and 14.

⁸⁴Milgrom (2000:1634) asserts: “It should not be forgotten that since an oath was always taken in the name of a deity, its violation was considered a mortal sin not only in Israel, but also among Israel’s contemporary and anterior neighbors.”

13 לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂק אֶת־רֵעֶךָ וְלֹא תִגְזֹל לְאֶתְלִין פְּעֻלַּת שְׂכִיר אֶתְךָ עַד־בֹּקֶר:
14 לֹא־תִקְלַל חֵרֵשׁ וְלִפְנֵי עוֹר לֹא תִתֵּן מְכַשֵּׁל וְיִרְאֵת מֵאֲלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

Personal Translation

13 You will not exploit your companion and you will not deal in violence; the wage of the day laborer will not remain with you until morning.
14 You will not show contempt for the deaf and before the blind you will not put a stumbling block, and you will reverence your God: I am YHWH.

The reader is introduced to four groups of individuals that have not appeared in this text until now. They are the רֵעֶךָ (companion), the שְׂכִיר (day laborer), חֵרֵשׁ (deaf) and the עוֹר (blind). The instructions on how these individuals are not (לֹא) to be treated are addressed to the individual in the community of Israel by the use of the 2ms for direct speech for the lemmas. The adverbial negation gives the address a sense of command.

One is לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂק אֶת־רֵעֶךָ – ‘you will not exploit your companion.’ The verb עָשָׂק has the connotation of ‘oppress,’ ‘wrong,’ ‘exploit’ or ‘extort.’ Milgrom (2000:1637) comments that this verb can mean “continually deferring payment.” The lemma could be translated as ‘you (as an individual Israelite) will not (qal imperfect 2ms) oppress, exploit or extort (אֶת־רֵעֶךָ).’ The noun רֵעַ has various shades of meaning: ‘a companion,’ ‘a friend,’ or ‘a lover.’⁸⁵ Is it possible the author is allowing the reader to ‘see’ into the Israelite home? If holiness is to accompany the meat of the

⁸⁵ Gesenius defines רֵעַ as a companion, a friend, with whom one has intercourse. Is the author suggesting that even sexual exploitation must be avoided? Or do we see the true motive in verse 20 with the hypothetical situation involving sexual misconduct with a slave who has been ‘assigned’ (ESV) to someone else?

peace offering while it is being eaten in the home, it is very possible that the relationship between husband and wife must be handled with the same purity of heart so as not to violate the holiness of YHWH. The verb would also indicate that in dealing with fellow Israelites or someone of intimate relations, they must be treated with the same purity of heart (motives) that one would partake of a holy meal.

The individual within the community is *וְלֹא תִגְזֹל* 'and you will not deal in violence.'

The verb *גָּזַל* has the idea 'to tear away,' 'to strip skin from flesh,' 'to flay,' 'to seize,' 'to rob,' or 'to take violent possession of something.' This verb has an overtone of some form of overt violence being done to another. This verb also implies the meanings of 'kidnapping for servitude' or 'human trafficking,' 'mugging' or 'taking possession of an object by force.'⁸⁶ This action is not to be aimed at a companion, friend or a lover.

The next individual the reader is introduced to is the *שָׂכִיר*. The NLV and ESV translate this along the same lines as 'hired worker' or 'servant.' Swanson (2001:8502) defines *שָׂכִיר* as a "hired worker, hireling, i.e., a worker under contract to work for a wage, usually of lower social/economic status". Preisker (1985:697) defines *שָׂכִיר* as a day laborer or a Mercenary. The verb *שָׂכַר* has the idea of 'hire,' 'to hire oneself out' and 'to earn wages.' The nouns *שָׂכִיר* and *שָׂכָר* both have the

⁸⁶ Milgrom (2000:1637) states the verb *גָּזַל* has the connotation: "I have (what is yours), but I will not give it to you."

idea of hire or wage. שָׂכָר indicates the wages of a servant, shepherd, soldier or a beast.

The שָׂכִיר, whether natural born, emigrant or immigrant is not clear in this passage. Whatever the situation, it seems apparent that this individual was in need of receiving his or her wages at the end of each and every day. Sirach 34:22 reads: “To take away a neighbor’s living is to murder him; to deprive an employee of his wages is to shed blood.” This passage equates withholding the פְּעֻלָּת (wage) of the שָׂכִיר (employee) with homicide. Again, the author is making application of holiness as something that overflows from the heart as a result of personal purity (2ms pronoun). In this case, holiness is interpreted as handing over the wage earned at the end of the day instead of oppressing a person by withholding that which he or she needs for each and every day’s survival.

The verb קָלַל⁸⁷, in verse 14, can be interpreted as ‘disdain,’ ‘be in a state of contempt for an object,’ ‘showing little regard’ or ‘value to an object,’ ‘revile i.e., invoke divine harm to an object, implying anger or showing great displeasure towards an object’: when the focus is on slandering or insulting the reputation of another (Swanson 2001:7837).

The author is employing 2ms piel imperfect when addressing the sons of Israel. The individual Israelite is commanded not to devalue or insult a person who is תַּרְשָׁ

⁸⁷ Commenting on this verb, Clendenen (2000:257) asserts: “The word occurs 128 times in the Old Testament and is semantically opposite the root *kbd*, which means ‘to make heavy’ and by extension ‘to honor.’” The root *kbd* is used in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 for respecting or honoring one’s parents.

(deaf). The reader is impressed with the notion that personal purity and holiness is an overflow from the heart that reaches to every tier of society, in this instance even those who have a congenital birth defect or deafness due to sickness or injury. MaCalister (1979:897) states: “Physical deafness was regarded as a judgment from God (Ex.4:11; Mic. 7:16), and it was consequently impious to curse the deaf (Lev. 19:14). In NT times deafness and kindred defects were attributed to evil spirits (Mk. 9:18ff.)”

If the ideology of deafness, being a judgment or curse from YHWH, was embedded in the psyches of the sons of Israel, the author is now imagining a society in which the deaf would not be insulted or be the objects of ridicule. They are to be accepted and treated as a full-fledged member of society whether the deafness is a direct or indirect action of YHWH or evil spirits.

The author utilizes the qal imperfect $2ms$ תִּתֵּן to stress the future treatment of the עֵוֶר. The noun עֵוֶר can have the understanding of a physically blind person in a literal sense or the helpless in a figurative sense. It is apparent that the author is dealing with literal individuals – thus the interpretation will follow that עֵוֶר has the intent of a physically blind individual. MaCalister and Harrison (1979:525) state: “Blindness, defects of sight, and diseases of the eye are frequently mentioned in the Bible and were common maladies in the ancient world...The most common eye disease in Palestine and Egypt was probably a purulent ophthalmia, a highly infectious inflammation of the conjunctivae, a malady that affected people of all ages, but especially children.”

The individual Israelite is not to put מְשָׁל before a blind person. The מְשָׁל can be a literal object of some description that would cause a blind person to physically stumble and fall. In the figurative sense this noun can be a misfortune or calamity. Goldstein (2006:25) comments: “Jewish law interprets this verse broadly to include any action which takes advantage of another’s ‘blindness.’ For example, the prohibition of knowingly giving bad advice is included under this law, as well as causing another person to sin.” The theological sense of the noun refers to the worship of idols. The individual in the community is strongly admonished לֹא תִתֵּן ‘you will not put.’ The verb נָתַן means ‘to give,’ ‘set’ or ‘put.’ This verb is used of giving land to someone, a bill of divorce, hand delivering something or the giving of a woman to a man as a wife. The verb has the idea of physically giving or putting something in close proximity to someone. The Israelite is commanded not to place an object in close proximity to a blind person that would cause him or her to stumble. Hartley (1992:315) accentuates this point: “The arrangement of the decrees in this verse is two specific prohibitions followed by a general command. This pattern reveals that a pious life leads to a high regard for human life and encourages compassion for those who suffer from a serious handicap.”

The motivation for this behavior is found in the qal active perfect 2ms lemma prefixed with *waw* consecutive וַיִּרְאֶת ‘and you will fear.’ The verb יָרָא is the same verb used in verse three for the reverence and honor one is to show his or her parents. It is one’s fear of YHWH that keeps a person from maltreating or causing misfortune to fall upon one who is handicapped. This section concludes with the short

formula אָני יהוה as a reminder of the ethical duties of the individual within the community of Israel.

3.6.3 – Verses 15 and 16 instruct against injustice based on a person’s social status.

15 לא־תַעֲשׂוּ עוֹל בַּמִּשְׁפָּט לְאֶת־נֶשֶׂא פְּנֵי־דָל וְלֹא תִהְדָּר פְּנֵי גָדוֹל בְּצֶדֶק תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּיתְךָ:
16 לֹא־תֵלֵךְ רְכִיל בְּעַמִּיךָ לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל־דַּם רֵעֶךָ אָני יְהוָה:

Personal Translation

15 You will not commit injustice through litigation and you will not disdain the reputation of the one of low social status and you will not inflate the reputation of the powerful; you will govern your countryman in righteousness.

16 You will not walk among your people slandering and you will not stand for the blood of your companion: I am YHWH.

In verse 15 the reader is introduced to three new layers of society: דָּל (one of low status), גָּדוֹל (powerful) and עַמִּית (countryman). All these societal layers could possibly involve manipulation if they are not handled with right motives and purity of heart. The lemma תַעֲשׂוּ ('you will commit') is the only verb in qal imperfect 2mp. The remaining three lemmas in verse 15 are all qal imperfect 2ms. The legislation concerning litigation is directed toward the entire community of Israel signifying that the holiness of the nation would be shown by the non-use of the litigation system. Issues within the community must be resolved within the community and not the legal system. The remaining legislative commands are directed toward the individual within the community.

All of the individuals mentioned in verse 15 occupy a specific status in society. דל possibly refers to an individual that holds a low socio-economic tier of society or a person who ekes out a living on a meager wage. The גדול⁸⁸ can be translated as great or powerful. The noun translated as countryman עמית can also be understood as ‘associate,’ ‘neighbor,’ ‘companion’ or ‘someone who is a distant relative by close clan or national relationship.’ However one might choose to interpret these nouns, it is clear that they are speaking to different levels of society and the status of each group as they relate to כָּל-עֵדָת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל. Kuykendall (2005:34, 58) states: “So, the individual not only looks and behaves according to his status; he feels his status...Social status is the significant variable, and race relations are really status relations. Hence, status is the primary determinant in situations of race relations.”⁸⁹ This statement being true, כָּל-עֵדָת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל are being reminded of the existing status⁹⁰ of the various groups. They are also being commanded how these groups are to be or not to be treated. The author is warning against favoritism due to one’s status in society.

This verse is concerned about an injustice (עוֹל) being committed due to a person’s status in society, whether they are poor or great. Injustice, according to Milgrom

⁸⁸ Hartley (1992:316) adds: “דל, ‘poor,’ and גדול, ‘great,’ are used to include everyone...The inner strength of a nation resides in the integrity of its judicial system.” It has also been observed that these two nouns are an unusual pair. It is more common for דל to be paired with עשיר, ‘rich’ and גדול to be in tandem with קטן, ‘small;’ a probable rhetorical device employed by the author (Hartley 1992:304).

⁸⁹ Ramirez Kidd (1999:32, parenthesis MB) asserts: “These specific designations (*Jezreelite, Sharonite and Bethlehemite*) define the person from *the point of view of their own origin*. The noun גר, instead, is a generic term which defines the person from *the point of view of the Israelites*, for whom the גר was a new element in their midst. Being גר means *being perceived as גר*.”

⁹⁰ Ramirez Kidd (1999:51) contrasting the “difference between the priestly and the deuteronomistic attitudes towards the גר is probably not a result of historical development, but rather one of definition of status.”

(2000:1642), “leads to five things: It pollutes the land, desecrates the Sabbath, removes the divine presence, defeats Israel by the sword and exiles it from its land.” Justice needs to be shown by צדק (‘righteousness,’ ‘honesty’ or ‘fairness.’)

Both of the verbs in verse 16 are qal imperfect 2ms. The author is directing his instructions to the individual within the congregation of Israel. The author uses תִּלְךָ and תִּעַמַּד. תִּלְךָ has the idea of a person literally ‘moving around by proceeding, walking or running.’ Kiuchi (2007:352) explains: “The idiom *halak rakil* occurs five times in the OT. It refers to people who slander and reveal secrets.” The lemma תִּעַמַּד does not always suggest literal movement but can mean to ‘stand in opposition,’ ‘stand together,’ or ‘take a stand.’

דָּם is the word for the blood that circulates through a person’s body. The phrase לֹא תִעַמַּד עַל־דַּם רֵעֶךָ can be translated as, ‘you will not stand for the blood of your companion.’ This phrase carries the meaning of ‘you will not take the life of your companion’ or “to seek to destroy the life of your neighbour” (Kiuchi (2007:352).

The author appears to be equating the activity of slander with murder. The old adage states ‘what comes out of one’s mouth is a reflection of one’s heart.’ The purpose of slander is to damage or destroy another’s character or reputation. This action can be as detrimental to a person as taking their life. Goldstein (2006:25) remarks: “For instance, even otherwise powerful people are vulnerable to slander and ignorance. Thus, the Jewish laws of slander are very strict, in that it is forbidden under Jewish law to say anything derogatory about one’s fellowman even if

the information being conveyed is true and there are no serious repercussions.”

The author is holding before the community a standard of holiness that proceeds from social action spurred on by personal purity.

3.6.4 – The Israelites are urged to resolve personal infractions in a timely fashion in verses 17 and 18.

17 לֹא־תִשְׁנֵא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְךָ הַזֶּה תֹּכַח אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חָטָא:

18 לֹא־תִקַּם וְלֹא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ וְאַהֲבֵת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹד אֲנִי יְהוָה:

Personal Translation

17 You will not loathe your brother in your heart and you will openly confront your companion, and you will not hold an offense against him.

18 You will not avenge and you will not be angry perpetually toward the descendants of your people and you will have love for a companion as yourself; I am YHWH.

The author continues his address to the individual Israelite within the community.

The lemma לֹא־תִשְׁנֵא is qal imperfect 2ms prefixed with the adverbial negation. The

verb the author chooses שָׂנֵא has a sundry of meanings: ‘shun,’ ‘not love,’ ‘be in

open hostility and strife with another,’ ‘intense dislike,’ ‘detest,’ ‘loathe’ or ‘be an

enemy.’ The legislation now moves from the outward manifestations of holiness to

a direct instruction for the ‘son’ of Israel not to harbor hate within his or her heart.

This is an order that cannot be enforced but must be a deliberate or conscious act

from the individual. The author is charging the individual Israelite to live and con-

duct his or her life with purity of heart.

The noun אָחִיָּא can mean many types of relationships. It can represent a brother or a sister or a half-brother or sister, aunt or uncle, cousin, member of the same clan, a friend, associate or a countryman. The author seems to choose a noun that would represent any relationship⁹¹ within the confines of the nation of Israel. The noun לֵבָבָא is translated ‘heart.’ It has the connotations of mind, soul, spirit, volition, or will. The author is appealing to that aspect of an individual that has the capacity to decide, between right and wrong or love and hate.

The lemma הוֹכַח is hiphil active infinitive absolute and the following lemma תוֹכִיחַ is hiphil imperfect 2ms. The infinitive absolute that precedes the finite verb (perfect or imperfect) intensifies the idea expressed through the verb. Van der Merwe et al (1999:159) states: “By uttering *instructions and requests* speakers commit themselves to *the fact that they want to have an instruction, request or wish carried out*” (Italics original). This phrase can be translated as, ‘you will plainly’ or ‘openly discipline’ or ‘rebuke your companion.’ The NLT captures the idea: ‘Confront your neighbors directly.’ Proceeding from verse 15 by adopting the translation, ‘You will not commit injustice by litigation’ then the use of rebuke or discipline gives the reader a reinforced idea of not taking an individual through the litigation process but resolving conflict through direct confrontation and resolution.

The noun עֲמִיתָךְ has a similar range of meanings as אָחִיָּא. אָחִיָּא “does not primarily mean a blood brother but ‘a brother’ in a figurative sense” (Kiuchi 2007:352). They

⁹¹ Kiuchi (2007:352) argues: “Vv. 17-18 show that *amit* (a fellow) is synonymous with *rea* (neighbour) and *ah* (brother), and in this case it refers to non-relatives.”

both have the connotation of a fellow Israelite of close or distant relations. If one takes an alternative meaning of עֵמִית to be ‘comrade,’ then this could be an individual who fought jointly in some freedom struggle. This comradeship forged a relationship out of some difficult situation or circumstance that both parties would have strove to overcome. This being the case then the relationship must be dealt with in a fashion deserving of dignity from both parties involved.

The purpose of disciplining one’s companion plainly or openly is to rid the offender of wrong that was incurred from the offender. The verb תּוֹכִיחַ “is generally found in a forensic sense, in judicial procedure, where it has the sense of ‘set right.’ It is also found in a nonlegal, pedagogic sense as ‘reprove,’ which characterizes its use in this verse” (Milgrom 2000:1646). The bearing of a grudge for a wrong brought about by a companion displaces purity of heart. Since holiness is a reflection of one’s heart, then this verse demonstrates that the heart is not large enough to accommodate purity and hate.

Verse 18 deals with two possible outcomes for an individual Israelite that refuses to openly confront his companion. These outcomes spawn from an impure heart that is nursing a grudge towards another. These two lemmas are both qal active imperfect 2ms prefixed with the adverbial negation: לֹא-תִקַּם וְלֹא-תִטָּר. The individual within the community of Israel is not to תִקַּם. Swanson (1997:5933) defines the verb נָקַם as “vengeance, avenge, i.e., pay harm with another harm, with a focus on justice and punishment of guilt, real or perceived.” Kiuchi (2007:353) comments:

“Taking vengeance means that one takes the initiative in repaying the wrong received from a neighbour.”

The verb נָטַר implies maintaining anger or a grudge against someone for an extended period of time. It also has the idea of keeping something like a vineyard or anger perpetually. The individual Israelite is instructed to deal with these powerful emotions that have the potential of destroying peace and harmony within the community, as well as literally destroying a person’s life or relationship.

Both נָקַם and נָטַר are not to be directed towards אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ. This phrase can literally be translated as ‘the sons of your people.’ The noun בֶּן can have several familial connotations in translation. It can mean a child or son as either an immediate offspring or a term of endearment, or a descendant. This noun has the effect of communicating that an individual within the ranks of Israel is not to be the object of one’s perpetual anger or vengeance. The בְּנֵי are members of עַם. The עַם can be seen as “a nation, people, i.e., a very large kinship group, regarded as related biologically as well as language and other cultural common features” or as a “group, i.e., a number of people assembled together as a bunch, with no particular focus on the kinship relationships” (Swanson 1997:6639). Keeping in the same vein of thought, the אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ seems to fit into a translation as ‘a descendant of your people.’

Milgrom (2000:1653) points out that the verb אָהַב “signifies not only an emotion or

attitude, but also deeds.”⁹² Therefore, the translation of this verb as either ‘to love’ or ‘to like’ could be acceptable. Hartley (1992:318) writes: “לֹאֵהֵב means ‘be of use to, be beneficial to, assist’” and “with לֹאֵהֵב centering on helpful action that is motivated by concern for another.” One can understand אָהַב as ‘covenantal love’ (Milgrom 2000:1653). This love is experienced in deeds, as one is faithful in practicing the aforementioned behaviors in verses 9-18. Kiuchi (2007:354) accentuates: “But the context of hatred requires the addressee to envisage a situation where one ought to love one whom he does not love, which is impossible; if one cannot observe the commandment in v. 17.” As one begins to live a life characterized by holiness, then one will, as the verb can also be translated, reach out or befriend another.

The motivation for this attitude towards others is בְּמוֹדָה. How can it be possible to love, like, reach out or befriend a person if one is unable to do these things for himself or herself? For a person to show אָהַב⁹³ to another that person must first show אָהַב to himself or herself. This seems such a basic premise that even Paul stresses this same thought in Ephesians 5:28 when addressing husbands: “In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his

⁹² Stott (1983:171) commenting on 1 John 4:21 states: “Jesus Himself taught this twofold commandment. It was He who united Deuteronomy vi. 4 and Leviticus xix. 18 and declared that all the law and the prophets depended upon them.”

⁹³ Milgrom purports that c. 19 is the possible source of the Holiness Code. He (2000:1656, italics original) also asserts: “This injunction (v. 18b) falls in the middle of chap. 19, containing thirty-seven verses. It is ‘the culminating point’ of H as well as the apex of Leviticus... Within its own pericope (vv. 11-17), it serves as the climax in the series of ethical sins: deceit in business (vv. 11-12), oppression of the weak (vv. 13-14), evil judgment, and hatred leading to planning and executing revenge. The remedy: *doing good* (love). The result: a giant step toward achieving holiness.”

wife loves himself” (ESV). A person demonstrates his love for himself as he demonstrates love, through deeds, towards another person.

3.7 – Specific guidelines for properly handling personal property are offered in verses 19-25.

אֶת־חֻקְתִּי תִשְׁמְרוּ בְּהִמָּתְךָ לֹא־תִרְבִּיעַ כְּלָאִים שְׂדֵךְ לֹא־תִזְרַע כְּלָאִים וּבָגַד כְּלָאִים שֶׁעֵטְנִי לֹא
19 יַעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ:
וְאִישׁ כִּי־יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־אִשָּׁה שֶׁכָּבַת־זֶרַע וְהוּא שֶׁפָּחָה נְחֻרְפֶּת לְאִישׁ וְהִפְדָּה לֹא נִפְדָּתָה אוֹ חֲפָשָׁה
20 לֹא נִתְּוֶלָה בְּקִרְתַּת תְּהִיָּה לֹא יוֹמְתוּ כִּי־לֹא חֲפָשָׁה:
21 וְהָבִיא אֶת־אֲשָׁמוֹ לַיהוָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֵיל אֲשָׁם:
22 וְכֹפֵר עָלָיו הִכְהֵן בְּאֵיל הָאֲשָׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַל־חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וְנִסְלַח לוֹ מִחַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא:
וְכִי־תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וְנִטְעַתֶּם כָּל־עֵץ מֵאֵכֶל וְעִרְלַתֶּם עֵרְלָתוֹ אֶת־פְּרִיֹו שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים יִהְיֶה לָכֶם עֵרְלִים
23 לֹא יֵאָכֵל:
24 וּבִשְׁנָה הָרְבִיעִית יִהְיֶה כָּל־פְּרִיֹו קֹדֶשׁ הַלֹּלִים לַיהוָה:
25 וּבִשְׁנָה הַחֲמִישִׁית תֹּאכְלוּ אֶת־פְּרִיֹו לְהוֹסִיף לָכֶם תְּבוּאָתוֹ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Personal Translation
19 You will obey diligently my decree; you will not intentionally crossbreed two different kinds of your domestic animals; you will not sow in a cultivated field two different kinds; and a garment of two different kinds of woven material will not be intentionally worn by you.
20 And a man, if he will lie with a woman sexually, and she, a female slave, being promised to another man and indeed she was not redeemed or freedom was not given to her, an inquisition will take place; they will not be put to death because she was not freed.
21 And he will bring his guilt offering of a ram to YHWH into the doorway of the tent of meeting.
22 And the priest will make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the face of YHWH for his sin, which he was guilty and he will be forgiven from his sin, of which he was guilty.
23 And when you will come into the land and you will plant any tree for food and you will regard its fruit as uncircumcised for three years and it will be for you uncircumcised; it will not be eaten.
24 And in the fourth year all its fruit will be a holy praise offering to YHWH.
25 And in the fifth year you will eat its fruit so that its yield might increase for you, I am YHWH your God.

These verses form an *inclusio* of the longer form אָנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם that indicates this legislation is dealing with religious duties of the community of Israel. This passage deals with a difficult text concerning sexual misconduct with a slave girl. When one compares the treatment of Israelites in chapters 18 and 20 about sexual misconduct within or toward members of the community of Israel, the reader finds that the legislation for this conduct with slaves seems like a mere slap on the wrist. An Israelite, who committed this act with another Israelite, would have felt the full brunt of the law.

Carmichael (1996:182-184) considers verses 20-26 a strange sequence of rules. He views the sexual misconduct with a slave as a reoccurring theme from generation to generation of Israelites. He illustrates this with the example of Joseph, the Egyptian slave, and Potiphar's wife's sexual advances toward him. He also recounts the story of Abimelech, who is a product of Gideon and a Canaanite slave girl.

The author spells out in this section, for the community, how the personal ordinance of YHWH must be obeyed. The author is giving specific guidelines in how the sons of Israel are to handle personal 'property,' even if one of these properties happens to be another human being. The author begins with the agricultural segment of this society. The intent of the repetitive use of בְּלֹאִים (3x) in verse 19 seems apparent. The author is stressing that things that are not of the same kind must not be joined together either through mating or sowing⁹⁴ or even by weaving.

⁹⁴ The crossbreeding of livestock or seeds always involves uncertainty as to the quality or vigor of the next generation. This hybridization of plants or animals raises the chances that the next generation will produce

Milgrom interprets mixtures as belonging to the realm of the sacred. In Exodus 26:1, 31 the curtains for the tabernacle were made of woolen and linen fabrics. The priest's garments are made of the same types of fabrics in Exodus 28:6, 15 and 39:29. It is recorded in Numbers 15:37-39 that the Israelites could put a blue thread on the tassel of their garments. Milgrom (2000:1660, italics original) asserts: "Whenever Israel sees the blue thread in any of his tassels, he is reminded of the blue cord *banding* the plate that bears the inscriptions 'holy to YHWH', and thus he is constantly called to seek holiness by fulfilling the divine commandments...Thus the priestly (H) command to add a blue thread to the fringes that must be worn by all Israelites indicates H's avid desire to inspire all Israelites to aspire to a life of holiness – the theme of this chapter."

The use of the hiphil tense prefixed with the adverbial negative indicates that the prohibitive action must not be intentionally carried out. Kiuchi (2007:355, italics original) sees the prohibition in Deuteronomy 22:9 as having significant impact on this legislation: "Rather it seems the reason for the Deuteronomic prohibition lies in that to do so would make both the crop and the yield *holy*, with the result that they are forfeited and useless to the Israelites. This suggests the law in Leviticus 19:19 means that sowing two kinds of seed in the field is an act of making the whole crop holy." This causal tense seems to indicate that a premeditated act on the part of the individual Israelite will threaten the holiness of the entire community.

mongrel varieties. This procedure will also reduce (or vital genetic material will be lost) the genetic variance that is vital for maintaining quality assurance. This has been a strong argument against genetically modified (GM) varieties of late. Another interesting reasoning for this legislation is that wheat and barley were taxed at a different rate. If the field had only a small portion of one of the other crops then the taxation would be diminished.

There are three problems arising from verse 20. First, the normal word for slave⁹⁵ girl, אָמָה, has been substituted with, שְׁפָחָה. Swanson (2001:9148) interprets שְׁפָחָה as a female slave with some societal rights. (Is it possible that this woman was in fact a גֵּר?) אָמָה is interpreted as a female slave being merely property (Swanson 2001:563). If this is the case, this slave could have possibly been an indentured servant (Israelite or non-Israelite) who had fallen on difficult financial times and was working off an incurred debt.

The second problem is the notion of her freedom. Milgrom (2000:1665-1670) suggests that the required אָשָׁם is the key to understanding this dilemma. This suggests that a sin against YHWH has been committed and the guilt offering is required. The use of שְׁפָחָה is a term being applied to a legal case being tested. This is accentuated by the fact that both שְׁפָחָה and אִישׁ are unqualified. The ideology from Milgrom is in the degree of freedom the woman has attained. Milgrom (2000:1670) states: “The more the ransom has been paid or the more she is free, the more her liaison borders adultery, requiring an expiatory אָשָׁם. If, however, it is determined that she is mainly a slave, no sin against God has been committed and an אָשָׁם is not required.” Kiuchi (2007:356, italics MB) commenting in a similar fashion states: “The slave-girl is regarded as the possession of another man who

⁹⁵ It is of interest to note that if post-exilic editions are attributed to the book of Leviticus then the legislation on slave treatment is of special significance. When the exiles returned from Persia, as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah, 1/6th of the returnees were slaves. Though the Exiles cried out to YHWH, because of their enslavement, they were themselves, at the same time, enslaving people (see Ezra 9:8, 9 and Neh. 7:66, 67).

has betrothed⁹⁶ her, so it is not *exactly* the same as adultery.” This *inclusio* contains the longer form אָנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם that indicates that this section is listing important religious (cultic) responsibilities. This makes the use of the noun שְׂפָחָה as a legal term more plausible.

A third problem encountered in this passage is the use of בְּקִרָּת. This is the only use of this term in the Hebrew Bible. This noun is derived from the verb בָּקַר, which is generally translated as ‘inquire’ or ‘seek.’ The NLT and ESV translate this noun as ‘compensation.’ The NRSV, however, translates this noun as ‘an inquiry.’ It seems appropriate to utilize the NRSV’s translation due to the verbal stem’s meaning ‘inquire’ or ‘seek.’ If this is simply a legal test case, then an inquiry to determine the degree of freedom that has been purchased for the woman seems the likely factor. This would also determine the punishment that the man must pay to the owner⁹⁷, as well as to YHWH, since the man has ultimately violated YHWH’s holiness (Milgrom 2000:1670). Kuykendall (2005:92) comments on the idea of punishment:

However, the negation of wrong, and hence crime, is punishment. And punishment must negate the wrong not in the shallow sense of deterrence, reform, retribution, revenge, or vendetta, but rather in the sense of correction that is rehabilitative. Thus, punishment is an act of justice, and justice requires reckoning. However, it is not reckoning in the absurd sense of an

⁹⁶ The verb תָּרַי describes a woman who has been designated to be the wife of a future husband. This verb does not carry the same weight as betrothal. Since the dissolving of a betrothal would need to be certified with a bill of divorce. Sexual intercourse with a betrothed woman would issue in the punishment of adultery with a married woman – death penalty.

⁹⁷ The penalty would follow the legislation in Exodus 22:16 or Deuteronomy 22:28 (which gives more detailed stipulations).

eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth, but reckoning in the rational sense of restoring, strengthening, and confirming what is right.

This section concludes with the fruit of planted trees being posited as forbidden or uncircumcised.⁹⁸ For the first three years the fruit will be regarded as uncircumcised. The adjective עָרֵל, ‘having foreskin,’ is derived from the verb עָרַל, ‘uncircumcised.’ The phrase וַעֲרַלְתֶּם עָרְלָתוֹ, translates as: ‘and you will regard him as uncircumcised his foreskin.’ The author is using terminology that would remind the reader that this fruit is to be considered unclean or forbidden for the first three years.

The fourth year⁹⁹ its fruit will be a קִדְשׁ הַלְוִיִּים לַיהוָה.¹⁰⁰ The yield of the fourth year is to be consecrated to YHWH as a thanksgiving offering. This giving of all the fourth year’s yield to YHWH reminds the reader of a passage like Joshua 2:10. The verb in this verse is הָרַם and has the meaning of ‘devoting or exterminating objects or persons for religious purposes.’ To an agrarian society it would seem senseless to allow an entire season’s yield to be given as an offering or allowed to rot on the tree, as it does to a society to completely devote people or objects to YHWH through seemingly senseless genocide. These do pose another difficulty in understanding the ways of YHWH. In understanding YHWH’s holiness, it

⁹⁸ Milgrom (2000:1679, italics original) accentuates: “Thus we must conclude that the foreskin is the fruit while it is enclosed in its bud...The closed bud, then, is the foreskin that should be plucked before the fruit emerges. I checked with the Berkeley Horticultural Nursery, and this is precisely what is done. The juvenile tree is *not pruned* – but its buds are removed.”

⁹⁹ Wenham (1979:271) states: “Old Babylonian law (LH 60) also reckons it takes four years for an orchard to develop its potential.”

¹⁰⁰ Milgrom (2000:1682) comments: “The pejorative use of this root in *holelim* and *holelot* provides grounds for the assumption that originally this term described the unbridled, orgiastic celebration characterizing harvest time before it became sublimated into praises sung to God at the sanctuary.”

serves the reader well to remember that YHWH demands sacrifices from his people and also those who do not serve him.

The fifth year will be the year the community will be able to capitalize on the fruitage of their labor of four years. This would require great patience and discipline on the part of the community. It is possible YHWH is testing the obedience of the community in regards to his ordinance or demanding the community to depend on him for their basic necessities. Either way the fifth year would prove to be the fulfillment of years of waiting to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

3.8 – In verses 26-28 stipulations are outlined as to the Israelite’s relationship to the supernatural world.

<p>26 לא תאכלו על־הדם לא תנחשו ולא תעוננו: 27 לא תקפו פאת ראשכם ולא תשחית את פאת זקנד: 28 ושרט לנפש לא תתנו בבשרכם וכתבת קעקע לא תתנו בכם אני יהוה:</p>
<p>Personal Translation 26 You will not eat over blood and you will not practice magic and you will not practice divinations. 27 You will not make round the edge of your head and you will not crop the edge of your beard. 28 And you will not put in your flesh a cut for the deceased and you will not put on you a mark or a tattoo of mourning, I am YHWH.</p>

These verses contain the shorter form אָנִי יְהוָה, which concern ethical responsibilities within the community of Israel. Verses 26 and 28 contain verbs that are 2mp, which addresses the entire community of Israel. In verse 27 the first verb is 2mp – a command to the entire community of Israel – and the second verb is 2ms – a

command to the individual. This is understandable since not all of Israel would have a beard.

These verses contain seven adverbial negations לא. This grammatical feature serves as an indicator that what follows is to be adhered to as an imperative or command. The interpretation of the phrase לא תאכלו על-הדם hinges on the meaning ascribed to על. If translated as ‘with’ it is simply a prohibition against eating anything with blood in it. This preposition can also mean ‘over.’¹⁰¹ This would render the prohibition to be the eating of the meat before the blood is sprinkled on the altar as an offering. This rendering would be determined by the context. In this case, it could be the occultic practice of pouring blood in the necromancer’s pit and waiting for the predictions by the spirits that would gather there (Milgrom 2000:1685). Kiuchi (2007:358) sees this phrase as a form of idolatry since the blood is the source of atonement for the worshipper.

The ethical responsibility now shifts to the spiritual or supernatural world. The lemmas תַּעֲוֹנוּ and תִּנְחָשׁוּ have similar shades of meanings. The verb נָחַשׁ seems to have a more superstitious element to it than עָנָן¹⁰². The practitioners of נָחַשׁ follow the tradition of palm readers, or those who interpret signs and omens through other occult means, e.g. fortune tellers, tarot cards, etc. Those who ascribe to עָנָן are

¹⁰¹ Hartley (1992:320) asserts: “In the worship of chthonic deities, the animal was sacrificed on the ground, rather than on an altar or stone, and the blood drained into a deep trench dug out near the place of sacrifice and allowed to soak in before the meat from the sacrificial animal was eaten. This blood rite was to draw the spirits to the surface and to enhance their power of foretelling.”

¹⁰² Hartley (1992:320) states עָנָן “is an onomatopoeic word for the sound that a necromancer makes while engaged in communicating with a spirit.”

those who delve into deeper, darker occult practices. Those practicing this occult art are calling forth the dead to appear before the living. This practice is known as necromancy (see 1 Samuel 28). A primary definition of עֲנִן is to cause something invisible to become visible as a sensory event. A function of a necromancer is to cause something that was previously invisible to a client to suddenly become visible.¹⁰³

Verse 27 is a unique verse, not in its ethical instructions but in the noun that is used. It is the same noun (פְּאֵת) that is used in verse nine that gives instructions on gleaning. The noun פְּאֵת is used twice in this verse. It is possible the author is employing a rhetorical device for the sons of Israel to remember their ethical responsibilities to the poor and the emigrant.¹⁰⁴ Each time an Israelite would look at another Israelite they would be reminded that the פְּאֵת belongs to YHWH whether it is a שָׂדֶה (field) or a רֹאשׁ (head) or a זָקֵן (beard). It may well be that the author is employing a symbol for the nation to ‘wear’ in their physical bodies. Rinquest (2001:67) states:

They (symbols) are, in essence, a utilitarian means for abbreviating and conveying meanings that might have required extensive words (and letters, words, sentences, all languages are examples of symbols!) to convey an intended meaning. Their absence would make existence all the more laborious for understanding and tedious for communicating. A good symbol

¹⁰³ Clendenen (2000:261) comments: “The Israelites had access to information about future events only if God chose to reveal this information to them. Thus revelation is diametrically opposed to divination.”

¹⁰⁴ Milgrom (2000:1691) reiterates: “Moreover, the hair symbolized the life force of the individual, and locks of hair were laid in tombs or funeral pyres in pre-Islamic Arabia and ancient Syria as well as brought to the sanctuary as dedicatory offerings. In other words, these prohibitions ban idolatrous rites.”

makes it become possible in a moment to capture the idea of a message and cause its observer, within the same frame of reference, to understand concepts being conveyed.

Instead of having to remember this command, the community simply needed to look upon the face of Israelite men to be struck with the responsibility they had to those in need around them. This would be an incredible symbolic prompt of the theology of transformation that was expected of them to practice.

The noun שָׂרֵט is a word for an incision that is made in one's body with a sharp instrument in verse 28. Milgrom and Hartley are in agreement that this prohibition is against pagan rites of mourning. The rite of cutting the body during mourning was a universal act in the ancient Near East. The NLT, ESV and NRSV all take liberties with the text and add 'for the dead.'

The nominal phrase קָטַעַת כְּתֹבֶת¹⁰⁵ is a designated mark for mourning. Wenham (1979:272) sees something deeper than simply cutting: "Man is not to disfigure the divine likeness implanted in him by scarring his body." Milgrom (2000:1694), on the other hand, points out that slaves and captives in Egypt were tattooed with the name of a god or Pharaoh; also a worshipper of a god would be tattooed with that god's name. He (2000:1695) continues: "Thus instead of searching for a mourning rite to explain the juxtaposition of tattooing to laceration, tattooing should be re-

¹⁰⁵ Hartley (1992:321) states: "While the exact meaning of קָטַעַת is unknown, it could refer either to making tattoos on the body or to painting the body...Bodily markings also served as a sign of belonging to a certain cult."

garded as an independent prohibition aimed, perhaps among other objectives, at the abolition of slavery in Israel.”

There are two phrases that express dying in Hebrew: מִפֶּחַ נָפֶשׁ and יָצָא נָפֶשׁ. These phrases signify the point in time when life stops and death begins. The phrasing in verse 28 is simply לְנַפְשׁוֹ. This phrase is literally translated ‘for a soul’ or ‘for a living being.’ There is no indication that death has entered. If the context is considered, then it is implied that the ‘cutting’ of the body is for the person who has died or is possibly at the threshold of death.

3.9 – Verses 29-30 indicate ways the community can prevent defilement and profanity from entering into the land.

These verses also contain the shorter form אָנִי יְהוָה, indicating ethical responsibilities for the community. These verses also contain a mixed address to the community. Verse 29 is addressed to the individuals within the community, 2ms, while verse 30 is addressed to the entire community of Israel – 2mp.

<p>29 אֲל־תִּחַלֵּל אֶת־בִּתְּךָ לְהַזְנוֹתָהּ וְלֹא־תִזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ וּמִלְאָהּ הָאָרֶץ זִמָּה: 30 אֶת־שַׁבָּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּמִקִּדְשֵׁי תִירָאוּ אָנִי יְהוָה:</p>
<p>Personal Translation 29 You will not defile your daughter by making her a prostitute so that the land will not become a prostitute and become full of wickedness. 30 You will keep my Sabbaths and you will reverence my sanctuary, I am YHWH.</p>

These verses are demonstrating how the community can prevent defilement and profanity from entering into the land. This passage shows how personal moral degradation leads to societal decay. There appears to be a connection between personal behavior and the condition of the land. The implementation of a theology of transformation will lead to healing, not only of societal ills, but will also impact positively on the environment in which one lives.

The negated lemma אֶל-תִּחַלֵּל is piel imperfect 2ms. It comes from the root חָלַל. This root means to treat something or someone with contempt. It also carries the idea of violating the covenant. Kiuchi (2007:359) states “the Hebr. verb appears to have a wider meaning, including various types of spiritual idolatry. The cause of the daughter’s depravity is traced to her father.” By forcing one’s daughter to enter this type of life would be a direct violation of the covenant. This would also violate the holiness aspect within society that is demanded by YHWH. This activity would run in direct opposition to purity that would be evident from a life of holiness.

The II piel of חָלַל has the idea of wounding. A person knowingly placing their daughter in this lifestyle is equal to mortally wounding a person. The noun חָלַל represents one who has died and thus, contact with the same brings ritual defilement. חָלַל as an adjective indicates one who is ceremonially impure or unclean due to a sexual moral impropriety. Milgrom does not acquiesce to the idea that the defilement is associated with cultic prostitution. He (2000:1695, 1696) exclaims: “Cultic prostitution, meaning intercourse with strangers as a sacred rite to increase fertility, is nonexistent in the ancient Near East...The fact that at one point *qede-*

sim (cult prostitutes) had special rooms in the Jerusalem Temple, something intolerable to the deuteronomic reformers, indicates that their practice was condoned and encouraged by the clergy, but the motive was economic, not cultic.”

This root לָלַךְ carries a strong idea of becoming ritually and ceremonially defiled.

This type of ceremonial defilement would cause a person to be unable to approach a holy God. A person being forced into this lifestyle would be like a person who has been wounded by an assault with a knife or some other sharp instrument. Milgrom (2000:1696-1697) asserts: “The choice is deliberate, and it accounts for the inclusion of this prohibition in this chapter: she belongs to a people whose goal is holiness, and her father is depriving her of her right and duty to attain this goal.”

Even the land (people of the land) will become as an unfaithful spouse who engages in immorality with one who is not his or her spouse. The verb זָנַח is used of one making their daughter a prostitute (idolatress?) and of the land becoming a prostitute or unfaithful. Kiuchi (2007:359) comments, “this topic is possibly placed within this context as a practical example of loving one’s own soul and of showing reverence to the Lord; if one loves himself as created by God, he would not allow his daughter, who is under his care, to fornicate.” It is as if when an individual violates the covenant, then the land becomes unfaithful and refuses to be a blessing due to the un-holiness and defilement that has crept into the occupants of the land.

Barclay sees this prohibition as an allusion to a daughter who does not marry at a young age. He also suggests that daughters were not wanted because they posed

a problem in finding a suitable husband for them. Barclay (1986:101) states: “Leviticus 19:29, ‘Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot,’ applies, so they said, to him who delays in arranging a marriage for his daughter, when she has reached a suitable age. So much was it a parental duty to find a husband for a daughter that the later law said: ‘When a daughter is an adult, free your slave and give him to her rather than let her remain longer unmarried’ (*Pesahim* 113 a).” The postponement of arranging a husband for a daughter would equate to turning one’s daughter into a prostitute. This seems logical when one considers that the only career available to women would have been marriage (Barclay 1986:101).

If this prohibition is neglected then the land will become full of זָמָה. This feminine noun has two prominent ideas: shameless sexual behavior and scheming evil. Both of these behaviors have the connotation of perverted lifestyles that are premeditated. Once a person engages in shameless behavior, it becomes easier and necessary to perform feats more morally degraded in order to accomplish the same effects. It is also probable, if these behaviors are accepted by the nation, that exile might become a reality (Milgrom 2000:1698).

The author draws the community back to the stable center of ‘keeping’ and ‘fearing.’ These two elements, in society, are to be beacons that guide the community into a place of purity that stems from a lifestyle of holiness. The author has coupled these two lemmas previously in verse three. In verse three, the author admonished the community to ‘reverence’ their mother and father and to ‘keep’ YHWH’s Sabbaths. Verse 30 focuses the community’s attention solely on ethical responsibilities toward their relationship with YHWH.

3.10 – The prohibition against seeking spiritual guidance from spiritists is the focus of verse 31.

31 אֶל־תִּפְנוּ אֶל־הָאֲבֹת וְאֶל־הַיִּדְעֹנִים אֶל־תִּבְקְשׁוּ לְטֹמְאָה בְּהֵם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

Personal Translation

31 You will not turn to either necromancers or to spiritists or will you seek to become defiled by them, I am YHWH your God.

Verse 31 contains the longer form – אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם – that indicates the *inclusio* is giving instructions about religious obligations within the community of Israel. The verb פָּנָה (also in v. four) has the idea of seeking assistance from the object being faced or pledging one’s allegiance to an object or person. The Israelites are not to seek help or give their allegiance to הָאֲבֹת or הַיִּדְעֹנִים (necromancers or spiritists).

The masculine singular noun אִיב can have a dual meaning.¹⁰⁶ It can mean a ghost or spirit. This spirit is unique in that it can speak through or by human mediums. This would be equivalent to a diviner who is ‘possessed’ or ‘inhabited’ by an ancestral spirit. It can also represent an individual who is able to summon spirits from the dead to advise or instruct the living.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Clendenen (2000:263) asserts: “The Septuagint nearly always translates *ob* with the Greek word *egga-strimuthos*, ‘ventriloquist.’ This translation may indicate a deception used on the part of the necromancer to deceive others into thinking he was actually calling up the dead.”

¹⁰⁷ Milgrom (2000:1700) concurs that divination was not a divine prohibition “since it did not attempt to change the divine decisions, but only to read them in advance of their announcement.”

The masculine singular noun יִדְעָנִי indicates the diviner who is capable of contacting and gaining information from the dead or ancestral spirits. Hartley interprets יִדְע as a technical term due to its close association with אֹבֹב. He (1992:7) continues: “The construction of the name for a spiritist from the root יִדְע suggests that such a person was viewed as either having great skill to perform such an exercise or had a close acquaintance with a departed spirit.”

The verb בָּקַשׁ has two varying degrees of interpretation.¹⁰⁸ One way of understanding this verb is when a person gains information from a source and the implication being the diligent procurement of this information. In the present context this information is being gained from prohibited sources. A second way this verb can be understood is by a premeditated rebellion against an authority. The implication is that they will defile a person who consults these sources. The long-term consequences would be the implementation of the *karet* penalty (Milgrom 2000:1701). The motivation for not seeking the counsel of these necromancers or spiritists is YHWH, who is to be the source of guidance and instruction within the community of Israel.

3.11 – Verse 32 emphasizes the virtue of honor within society.

32 מִפְּנֵי שִׁיבָה תִּקּוּם וְהִדַּרְתָּ פָּנֶי זָקֵן וַיִּרְאֵתָ מֵאֲלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

Personal Translation

32 You will arise in the presence of the gray head and you will honor the presence of the elder and you will reverence your God, I am YHWH.

Verse 32 forms an *inclusio* utilizing the short form – אָנִי יְהוָה – indicating that the author is once more dealing with ethical issues within the community of Israel. The author is now focusing the attention of his ethical admonitions to the aged and those who have positions of leadership within the structure of ancient Israel.

All the lemmas in this verse are qal 2ms. The author is addressing the individual Israelite. Personal responsibility and purity are the objects of the author's discourse at this point. The author employs two similar but different nouns to indicate the layers of society to be honored. The first noun שֵׂיבָה, translated as 'gray head,' is closely associated with those who are advanced in years. It is possible that these are members of society that are approaching death. Other associated meanings of this word are wisdom and weakness.

The second noun referring to aged persons is זָקֵן. This noun pertains to a person advanced in years but this person holds a prominent position in society. This noun carries the idea of an elder: one who makes religious and social decisions in the community. Other variations of meaning are chief and dignitary.

These two nouns in tandem form the aged layer of society. These represent the normal person of advanced years and those who serve in leadership positions. Each of these layers of society is to be treated with the utmost respect for the שֵׂיבָה and they are to be תְּקוּם. The verb קוּם suggests that a younger person elevates the status of an older person. Clendenen (2000:263) asserts: "Respect for the elderly is essential for maintaining a decent society, so failure to respect and care for the

aged indicates that a given culture is about to collapse” (see Isa. 3:5). Another idea expressed by this verb is to honor or exalt. The physical rising in the presence of an older person signifies the one rising is giving the individual an elevated status due to his or her age.¹⁰⁹

The verb *הָדָר* means to show high regard and honor for a particular class of people. It carries the idea of showing favoritism to individuals that are of a higher class within society. The context warrants against this shade of meaning especially in light of verse 15.

The Israelite is to *יָרָא* their God. This verb is used four times in this chapter. It is used in the context of familial relations (v. 3), the disabled (v. 14), profaning one’s daughter (v. 30) and now with the aged of society. Milgrom (2000:1703), commenting on the recurrence of this verb, states: “The same warning is found in v. 14. Both the blind and deaf (v. 14) and the aged (v. 32) cannot enforce the dignity they merit, but God will punish those who deny it.” Many of the major relational layers within society are to be approached with a sense of awe and fear.

3.12 – In verses 33 and 34, the people of Israel are instructed to treat the sojourner in their midst as a native born member of society.

33 וְכִי־יָגֹדַר אֶתְדָּ גֵר בְּאַרְצְכֶם לֹא תוֹנוּ אֹתוֹ:
בְּאֶזְרַח מִכֶּם יִהְיֶה לָכֶם הַגֵּר הַגֵּר אֶתְכֶם וְאַהֲבַתְ לֹ כְּמוֹדְ כִּי־גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה
34 אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

¹⁰⁹ The author is reminded of a Greek professor who had served as professor of NT at the Baptist Seminary in Nigeria. He stated that in the culture of Nigeria when a distinguished professor or older person would enter a room the younger audience would all stand out of respect for this individual.

Personal Translation

33 When an emigrant will dwell as a guest with you in your land, you will not oppress him. 34 The emigrant will be like the native born among you as well as a guest, and you will love him as yourself, because you were emigrants in the land of Egypt, I am YHWH your God.

These verses form an *inclusio* that concludes with the longer formula – אָנִי יְהוָה – indicating religious duties. One might consider these verses to be addressing ethical issues within the community. This being the case it is safe to acknowledge that it is an individual's duty to treat the emigrant הַגֵּר as a native born and to love him as oneself. Joosten (1996:61) states: "The *ger* remains a *ger*, but rather than taking advantage of his weak position, the Israelites should treat him as a native." The motive for this attitude is בְּיַגְרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם 'because you were emigrants in the land of Egypt.' This should be a stark reminder to the community of Israel of the harsh and inhumane treatment with which they were subjected for many centuries. But were they able to אָהַב the emigrant as themselves and to remember the days of their ancestors in Egypt?

The Israelites are commanded not to יָנָה the emigrant. יָנָה has a variety of meanings and these have a negative connotation, e.g. to oppress with the idea being to crush or destroy an object completely. It can also mean to mistreat implying to cause the oppression of another person by violating a moral standard. It also has the idea of suppressing another individual. Since a foreigner would be unaware of

local customs and traditions, this individual would be susceptible to exploitation: thus the impetus for this prohibition.

Ramirez Kidd (1999:24) makes a distinction between the utilization of the verb גור and the noun גר¹¹⁰. If one should consider this in interpreting verse 33, then it is possible that this verse is dealing specifically with an Israelite. Ramirez Kidd distinguishes the verb as an individual Israelite who has left his town of origin to dwell abroad as an emigrant. The noun on the other hand is used of a foreigner¹¹¹ who dwells in Israel as an immigrant. This verse could refer to Israelites who have left their homes to dwell temporarily within another Israelite village or town.

The lemma תונג is hifil imperfect 2mp. This command is addressed to the entire community of Israel. They are not to do anything that will cause the emigrant to be or become oppressed or be subjected to maltreatment in any form. Joosten (1996:72-73) states: “His freedom is real: the *ger* may retain his foreign culture and religion with its practices, though he would be welcome to participate in the Israelite religion with its practices...He is not to be excluded from the day-to-day privileges of Israelite life: economic solidarity, the entitlement to bring sacrifices,

¹¹⁰ Joosten (1996:55) comments: “It is practically a technical term: the *ger* is a person (possibly a family or group) conceded a certain juridical status because of the fact that he has settled among a foreign tribe or people.”

¹¹¹ Goldstein (2006:11, 12) states: “When it comes to defining the ‘stranger,’ some Jewish law authorities say that it refers to a non-Jew who has converted to Judaism, while others say that it refers to a non-Jew living in a predominantly Jewish society. Still others argue for an even broader definition and say that sensitivity to the ‘stranger’ should be seen in the broader context of protecting ‘outsiders’-people who come from elsewhere and are unfamiliar with a certain place or society.” The Xhosa language utilizes, *umurhu*, for someone who comes from the rural areas to the urban setting. They are unaccustomed to the way things work or how to make a living in the metropolitan areas. These individuals have the propensity of suffering from undue stress because of this new reality presented to them.

justice. Equity demands that the same law should be valid for the *ger* and Israelite alike.”

The second lemma, וְאַהֲבֵתָּ, is qal perfect 2ms prefixed with *waw* consecutive. The command not to oppress or maltreat the emigrant is for the entire community while the command to love the emigrant in the future is addressed to the individual within the community. This stresses the reality that love¹¹² cannot be demanded from the community as a whole but must come from individuals as they live lives of holiness. Love is a condition coming from the purity of heart.

The motivation for this is indicated by the כִּי. The motivational¹¹³ clause is a reminder of the oppressive conditions the Israelite’s ancestors were subjected to in Egypt. Hartley (1992:7) states: “The prep כִּי, ‘like,’ conveys that ‘the agreement between the things compared is complete.’” As the individual reflected upon the condition of this subjugation, they were to be motivated to love the emigrant. Kiu-chi (2007:361) says “that strangers in the Promised Land ought to be given freedom, just as God liberated the Israelites while they were strangers in Egypt.”

¹¹² Goldstein (2006:16, 17) states: “The Talmud notes that no less than thirty-six times does the five Books of Moses warn against abuse of or mandate kindness towards the ‘stranger.’ In purely quantitative terms, this exceeds any other law mentioned in the Torah, including the commandments to love God, to observe the Sabbath and to refrain from theft.”

¹¹³ Goldstein (2006:18, 19) comments: “These laws of remembrance reflect the vulnerability principle, because one of the main objectives of remembering the Egypt experience is to foster sensitivity to the vulnerable and to provide the impetus for concern with the plight of the ‘stranger’... This verse [Exodus 23:9], according to the interpretation of the Ramban, thus says to a would-be oppressor: ‘*You were strangers in the land of Egypt*’ – You were totally helpless to defend yourselves against the Egyptians, and yet God came to your defense because you could not defend yourselves.”

3.13 – Verses 35-37 demonstrate the vital importance of treating every aspect of life with honesty.

<p>35 לֹא־תַעֲשׂוּ עוֹל בַּמִּשְׁפָּט בַּמִּדָּה בַּמִּשְׁקָל וּבַמְשׁוּרָה: מֵאֲזֵנֵי צֶדֶק אֲבִי־צֶדֶק אֵיפֶת צֶדֶק וְהִין צֶדֶק יִהְיֶה לָכֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם 36 מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם: 37 וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם אֶת־כָּל־חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת־כָּל־מִשְׁפָּטַי וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה:</p>
<p><u>Personal Translation</u> 35 You will not perform dishonesty in judgment, in a measurement, in weight and in amount. 36 It will be to you as an honest set of scales, honest balance-stones, an honest dry measure and an honest liquid measure, I am YHWH your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt. 37 And you will keep all my decrees and all my judgments and you will perform them, I am YHWH.</p>

The lemmas in these verses are all 2mp indicating that these stipulations are an address to the entire community of Israel. These verses are enclosed by the *inclusio* אֲנִי יְהוָה. Tucked away in the middle of these verses is the longer form אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. These two forms indicate that the regulations being set forth are both ethical as well as religious in their focus.

Verse 35 begins with the adverbial negation signaling the following stipulation is to be absolute and permanent. This verse is addressing a standard that should be evident in any just or honest society. Verse 35 with verse 36 comprises a section on settling legal disputes and right business dealings. This section begins with the negative statement of these dealings, while verse 36 gives the positive behavior expected.

The word translated ‘honest’ in verse 36 is צָדִיק and is used four times in this verse. Milgrom (2000:1709) states: “The staccato effect of the fourfold repetition of *sedeq* in this verse hammers away at the quintessential necessity for honest business practices.” This masculine noun has meanings of righteousness, justice, rightness, honesty, accuracy, and fairness. Hartley (1992:322) asserts: “A corrupt merchant would have two sets of weights and measures, using a bigger measure for receiving and a smaller one for distribution...Weak members of society are struck a double blow, getting fewer goods and paying more.” These shed light on the fact that this noun is based upon a set standard. It implies doing what is required of a particular standard and not deviating from this standard. The standard is to be reflected in the use of scales and counter balances to weigh dry and liquid commodities. The form הָיָה לִי has the idea “become, i.e., to change from one state to another” (Swanson 2001:2118). The nation is to transform from a עָוֵל society (evil, dishonest, unjust) to a צָדִיק society (right, honest, just).

The motivation for this transformation is based on the fact that אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. It was YHWH who instigated a standard for the community to imitate. YHWH had brought the nation from the land of Egypt. This would become a rallying cry from the author to remind the people of all that YHWH had done in the past.

The community is instructed to שְׁמַרְתֶּם and עֲשִׂיתֶם ‘you will keep them’ and ‘you will perform them.’ Both of these lemmas are 2mp. The entire community is admonished to keep and perform all of YHWH’s decrees and judgments.

3.14 – Historical setting of Leviticus

There are many arguments in existence as to the setting for the writing of Leviticus. Some accredit the writing to be the exclusive product of the Mount Sinai experience. Modern scholarship espouses a two-part division of the book (P, H). Others would suggest that the composition of the book was a product of many editors or redactors over an extended period of time. This of course would suffice the argument of many differing layers of edition that form the composite of Leviticus in existence today.

How might an interpreter¹¹⁴ view the material in Leviticus? This body of material can be viewed as originating from the time of Moses. Kiuchi (2007:15) states: “Leviticus follows the book of Exodus, which gives an account of the historical exodus, the giving of the Sinai covenant, the building of the tabernacle, and instructions concerning basic ceremonies that would soon be conducted there by the priests. There are unmistakable signs that the two books are continuous.” He continues by suggesting that various literary and thematic relationships exist within both Exodus and Leviticus¹¹⁵. The priestly garments and their consecration are

¹¹⁴ Barstad (1998:41 italics original) emphasizes: “Historians are text *readers* and have to deal with the hermeneutic problem that no text (i.e. historical source) can be understood the way it was ‘originally’ meant.”

¹¹⁵ Smith (1996:19) states: “In the second half of Exodus, in other words, the tabernacle is first set up, while in the first half of Numbers preparations are made to take it down. Leviticus, in between, discloses the constitutive precepts God gave from the tabernacle from where it first stood... We must conclude that the writer or redactor who gave us the Pentateuch in its present form wanted us to recognize Leviticus as a literary uni-

prescribed in Exodus 28-29 and the consecration of Aaron and his sons transpires in Leviticus 8. Kiuchi sees the progressive increase in the manifestation of the presence of God in both books as well. The brief encounter of Moses with God's presence at the burning bush (Ex. 3), for seven days the glory of God remained on Mount Sinai, and "finally, the Lord's visible presence arrives permanently after the first day service recorded in Lev. 9" (Kiuchi 2007:16).

Kiuchi basically views Leviticus as the continuing revelation of the will of God for the people of Israel. Many of the concepts mentioned in Leviticus, for Kiuchi, were anticipated in Exodus. He (2007:16) does suggest that "the material of chs. 9-27 is new." Kiuchi (2007:16) concludes: "Thus Leviticus can be viewed as a further and deeper unfolding of the divine-human relationship that took place at Mount Sinai."

Milgrom sees at least three internal evidences for a pre-exilic dating for Leviticus 19. Two of these evidences are viewed by the lack of support for the Levites and the exclusion of widows and orphans in the humanitarian provision legislation. Milgrom (2004:225) states: "H does not mention the widow and the orphan because during its time (mainly, the latter half of the eighth century), the kin group and the household were tightly controlled." The problems encountered by the widow and orphan begin a century later "when increasing latifundia and urbanization led to the dissolution of family and clan structure, leaving the widow and orphan open prey to exploitation" (Milgrom 2004:225). Joosten (1996:89-90) adds to a pre-exilic date: "The fact that they encompass such matters as the administration of justice and the organization of economic life does not accord well with the conditions of Israel in the Babylonian and Persian periods, when large parts of public

ty, and provided signals to this effect in the text itself corresponding to the thematic distinctions within Exod. 25-Num. 10."

life were directed by a foreign power...[W]e are led to the conclusion that the historical conditions addressed by H are those of the pre-exilic period. It seems likely that the real audience of H should have lived under these same conditions, i.e. before the exile.”

Milgrom gives an explanation as to why the Levites are obviously overlooked in this section of humanitarian concerns. He (2004:225) states: “The dating of H mainly in the eighth century provides the answer. The Levites are gainfully employed in Judah’s regional sanctuaries, residing in their own compound in the Levitical cities.” After the Assyrian captivity this changes with an influx of refugees, Levites, widows, orphans, and immigrants evading capture by fleeing to the southern kingdom.

The third evidence that Milgrom lists is found in verse 30. He understands this verse as equating the Sabbaths with the sanctuary. Milgrom (2000:1698) affirms: “Because the sanctuary exists, the verse is preexilic.” For Milgrom, the conspicuous absence of the widow-orphan-stranger trichotomy, no mention of the humanitarian assistance for the Levites and the existence of the sanctuary is a confirmation of an eighth century date.

The archaeological evidence also points to an external reason for the conspicuous absence of the widow-orphan-stranger trichotomy suggested by Milgrom. The Israelites enjoyed a more or less equal standard of living or quality of life in the early days of the settlement of the land. De Vaux (1973:72, 73) states: “Excavations in Israelite towns bear witness to this equality in standards of living. At Tir-

sah, the modern Tell el-Farah near Nablus, the houses of the tenth century B.C. are all of the same size and arrangements. Each represents the dwelling of a family which lived in the same way as its neighbours.” The external evidence points to a time of unprecedented wealth – eighth century. Bright (1981:243, 244) affirms: “All the evidence suggests that Israel under the Omrides (876-843/2) enjoyed a considerable material prosperity...but there are signs of a progressive disintegration of the structure of Israelite society, and of a harsh system that tended to place the poor at the mercy of the rich.” DeVries (1997:227) comments on the expansion in Samaria: “But the wealth was concentrated in the hands of a small minority, the landed aristocracy.” This led to the oppression of the poor and the neglect of the widow, orphan and stranger. These societal ills brought about the prophetic age as they spoke out against these atrocities. De Vaux (1973:73) concludes: “The contrast is striking when we pass to the eighth century houses on the same site: the rich houses are bigger and better built and in a different quarter from that where the poor houses are huddled together.” This scene could easily be relived as a person passes through a township in Cape Town such as Barcelona, Joe Slovo, Du Noon or Brown’s Farm to suburbs such as Constantia, Pinelands or Newlands.

Wellhausen suggested four literary sources, J, E, D, P, and these were a reflection of the social and religious setting for the post-exilic community (Kiuchi 2007:16). The priestly material (P) was regarded “as the latest of the pentateuchal sources and therefore less reliable than its precursors, is now acknowledged to be a carefully preserved record of events and procedures” (Harrison 1980:22). Harri-

son (1980:22) relying upon archaeological¹¹⁶ data states: “Modern discoveries have shown that priestly material from the Near East is always early rather than late in origin, and that priestly traditions are usually preserved in a meticulous manner.”

Douglas (2000:36) commenting on the priestly style of biblical material states: “But it would be a mistake always to take formality of style for a sign of belonging to a superior social class.” She continues by addressing the rhetorical techniques available to the priest utilizing a mytho-poetic style. Douglas (2000:46) writing from an anthropological point of view states: “The priestly writing would have used the rhetorical forms that were most highly esteemed in the region. The region is the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean hinterland...[T]he literary forms that Leviticus uses are in an old style that fell out of fashion in the region around the fifth century...If the date of final editing was as late as the fifth century, the style of Leviticus would already have been archaic...An author may have reasons for choosing a nearly obsolete style. In this case, the archaic literary form hallows the teachings and supports the claim to be a text handed down from the time of Moses.” The persuasive element, according to Douglas, would be to convince the reader or audience of an earlier writing from the time of Moses instead of a later editorial addition.¹¹⁷ This viewpoint relegates a class struggle in favor of an ideological stance of an earlier date for the final editing of a text.

¹¹⁶ Barstad (1998:49, 50) states: “Even if we also take the archaeological record and extra-biblical sources into consideration, we are still a long way from having enough empirical evidence from ancient Israel/Palestine to write anything but a very short and very fragmented history.”

¹¹⁷ Dever (2001:280 italics original) reflects on the revisionists’ statement: “They mistakenly take the relative scarcity of early Iron Age written remains as evidence that all of the Hebrew Bible was written later, and is therefore ‘unhistorical.’ Simply put, they do not understand that late *editing* does not necessarily mean late *composition*, much less a late origin for the *tradition* as a whole.”

If this were the situation surrounding Leviticus, then an earlier date would be more appropriate. It would also be probable that the recognition of “the antiquity and authenticity of Leviticus” could be attributed to a “second-millennium BC literary product compiled by Moses, with the probable assistance of priestly scribes” (Harrison 1980:23). One must not devalue the possibility that “an editor or a scribe of a later generation could have arranged the Mosaic material of Leviticus in its present order” (Harrison 1980:23).

Douglas accepts a post-exilic dating for the final editing of Leviticus. For her, the uniting of the nation and the emphasis on solidarity within Israel was the driving force for the Pentateuch. She (2000:7) admonishes: “It helps the reading of Leviticus and Deuteronomy to recall that the books were composed and edited during a long period of continuing political upheaval...the anguish of living with the disasters of war and the need to rebuild solidarity, this would be the context and the impetus for producing the Pentateuch.”

Douglas’ commitment to an extended period of time for the compilation and final editing of the Pentateuch suggests an eighth century date or later for the completion of Leviticus. She (2000:7) continues: “For lack of historical skills in the region the anthropologist can only accept the largest scholarly consensus and this at present points to the post-exilic period, the Second Temple community in the fifth century.”

Considering the divergent arguments on this matter, one must choose between a Mount Sinai, pre-exilic or post-exilic writing which must be based on recent scho-

larship or archaeological evidence. Since we are not in possession of the literary sources proposed by Wellhausen, a combination of the Mount Sinai and pre-exilic view seems more probable. The primary source of the body of material composing the Pentateuch is assumed to be Moses. He possibly had the assistance of priestly scribes in this process. It also seems most probably that the final form that exists today was likely a product of a later generation by an editor or scribe. Or as Kiuchi (2007:18) suggests: "Leviticus has its origin in God. Though this does not in itself reveal the book's date of authorship, in combination with what the book describes it does favour the view that it originates from the time of Moses – more so than traditional critical theories that date it somewhere in the first millennium BC."

3.15 – Summary

This chapter is filled with legislation that is either ethical or theological in content. These stipulations are presented either negatively or positively. Negatively stated the community of Israel would be organized differently than the nation around them. The positive aspect of these stipulations is the community would be holy as YHWH is holy. These were given in order to diagram the essence of a theology of transformation for the community of Israel. This theology of transformation would be characterized by holiness.

The legislation found in this chapter is addressed to the entire community of Israel. This formal address serves as a renewal service in which the community is being given directives by which to order their society and relation with YHWH. The legislation that follows this opening is either targeted at the entire community or to the

individual within the community of Israel. The community is being commissioned to be holy and the stipulations that follow will steer them toward the path of holiness.

The eluding to the Decalogue points to the fact that the author was utilizing it to form the basis for his theology of transformation. By beginning this address with the inversion of the fifth and fourth commandments, the author is stressing the importance of the ethical and theological responsibilities the community had in achieving its goal – holiness.

Various laws concerning the handling of agricultural procedures were stated. The laws restricting the gleaning of one's field was given. This law existed to insure that the social welfare of society was maintained. This also insured that the dignity of individuals was upheld. The legislation concerning the fruit trees not only regulated the optimum time for harvesting but also stressed obedience to YHWH's command to give the equivalent of the first fruits' offering as a sign of gratitude for his provisions.

The author stresses, through various legislative pronouncements, that the religious or theological duties would be visible in a person's upholding of the ethical or societal responsibilities. This was emphasized as a condition of the heart. The community would express its love¹¹⁸ for another by deeds done for those who were unable to provide for themselves. This social support system would reflect not only holiness that comes from internal purity but would be the framework of a theology of transformation to be implemented.

¹¹⁸ It will be argued in a later chapter that love instead of holiness is a possible emphasis of chapter 19. This will be demonstrated by utilizing a double ring construction for chapter 19.

The members of the community are not to exploit or take advantage of any person within the confines of the nation. This treatment was to also take the form of favoritism. A person was not to be moved by pity due to a person's low status as well as be enamored by a person's elevated status in society. James utilizes verses 12-18 to a large extent in his epistle. He also reminds his audience of the dangers of showing favoritism.

Those with physical disabilities as well as the aged in society are to be dealt with dignity and respect. The consequences for negative behavior against these layers of society would be in danger of God's discipline. Though these disabilities were viewed as curses from YHWH, this still did not give license for the Israelites to cause them harm or discomfort in any way.

The Israelites' interactions with those around them were to be characterized by pure motives. The legislation being mandated could not be enforced but must exclude from a conscious or deliberate act towards another. These actions must be a reflection of a life lived with purity and benevolence for those in the community. If individuals within the community do not approach others with purity of heart then the results will be violence, malice or neglect.

A strong concept that comes out midway in this chapter is love. This is not a feeling of intimacy for another but actions that demonstrate concern for others. The concept of love in this passage is of doing, assisting or benefiting another for their good. The deeds that express love will be those behaviors mentioned in this piece

of legislation, e.g. gleaning, not oppressing, not stealing, not lying, respectful treatment of visually and audibly impaired, reverencing parents, not hating, etc.

A difficult situation concerns a slave girl who has experienced sexual misconduct. There was argued a three-fold problem with this passage. The usual noun for slave was not used but substituted with a noun, which gave this situation a legal focus. The second problem was the extent to which she had been granted freedom. In theory the more freedom granted the closer the situation bordered on adultery. The final problem was the interpretation of compensation or inquisition. If this is a hypothetical legal test case inquiry seems most acceptable, but if it were a test of the woman's freedom then compensation would be a better interpretation.

The case of the slave girl falls within a section of prohibitions against mixing different types of things. These prohibitions are due to the fact that mixing is retained only for the realm of the sacred: Priest and tabernacle. The results of mixing prohibited crops would signify that these are deemed holy, thus forfeiting their value and use for the Israelites. The Israelites wore a symbol that would inspire them toward holiness in the form of the tassels on the corners of their garments.

The ethical responsibilities of the community also apply to the spiritual or supernatural world. The consultations of those who interpret signs or omens or delve into the occult world are to be avoided at all cost. These prohibitions include participating in pagan mourning practices or the dependence on the predictions from those who consult the spirit world.

The passage is a reminder that the practicing of certain behaviors brings disgrace upon an individual in society as well as impacting the land and those who occupy the land negatively. This is not only a disgrace but is in direct violation of the holiness demanded by YHWH. The example of forcing one's daughter to become a prostitute serves as an illustration of the practical demonstration of a person not loving themselves and showing no reverence or fear for God.

The reader is reminded that respect and honor is to be a balm that works its way throughout society. This will be demonstrated by how a person treats his or her parents, the things of YHWH, the old and those holding positions within the community. Three of these seem to target the younger element in society. Rebellion, at times, seems to characterize this group. This passage reminds them that for society to continue respect and honor must prevail, or society as they know it is on the verge of collapse.

The motivation for fair and honest business ethics is based on the fact of the fair and honest treatment YHWH demonstrated in bringing the people out of slavery. In dealing with the emigrant or immigrant and in the transactions of business the people must remember that they too were vulnerable to exploitation and oppression while in a foreign land. Their treatment of others should be based on the treatment shown to them by YHWH.

A historical setting for the writing of Leviticus was argued to be a combination of a Mount Sinai and pre-exilic date. This was concluded from the internal evidences suggested by Milgrom and Kiuchi's view that Exodus and Leviticus are continuous

based on the themes of the two books. One problem with adhering to a post-exilic date is the lack of the literary sources that Wellhausen proposed. Archaeological data also confirms that priestly material from the Near East is always early instead of being late in origin. It was argued that the material originated from the time of Moses, who possibly compiled the material, with the assistance of priestly scribes. But one must take into consideration the possibility that a priest or scribe could have edited the final form of Leviticus that is available today in a later generation. Chapter four will focus on a structural analysis of Leviticus 19. This analysis will shed light on an alternative emphasis for this chapter. It will be argued that holiness may not have been the primary focus of the writer. It will be demonstrated that the author was drawing the community of Israel's attention to the tenet of loving one's neighbor and emigrant. There will also be a discussion on how Jesus, Paul and James applied the concept of loving one's neighbor in their societal contexts.

Chapter 4 – Contextualization of ‘neighbor’ in selected New Testament texts

Have we not come to such an impasse in the modern world that we must love our enemies - or else? The chain reaction of evil - hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars - must be broken, or else we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Baptist minister, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

Small peoples are often the victims of injustice. Dragoljub Micunovic, an opposition figure during the Milosevic years

To keep the Golden Rule we must put ourselves in other people’s places, but to do that consists in and depends upon picturing ourselves in their places. Harry Emerson Fosdick, Baptist minister

4.1 – Introduction

Chapter three involved an analysis of the grammatical aspects of Leviticus 19. Various shades of meaning for words or phrases were also included to allow the reader to gain a different perspective on the way in which the original author/redactor could have been communicating a theology of transformation to his audience. The comparison of a literal translation (Personal Translation) with the NLT, the ESV and the NRSV demonstrated the various ideologies expressed by these translations. In essence, a translation or version of the text is, in other words, a commentary on the text itself.

Four prominent themes arose from chapter 19: holiness, reverence, love, and keeping. The community was admonished to demonstrate holiness by a life of purity. Milgrom viewed holiness as something unattainable. One can only approach YHWH in order to achieve godliness. This is only possible through the keeping of the commandments. Kiuchi, on the other hand, suggested that the egocentric na-

ture kept a person from becoming holy. For him, the journey toward holiness was more introspective, having a heart whose motives were pure.

The author introduced many varying layers of society. With each of these layers was attached various negative as well as positive legislations. These legislations outlined for the Israelites a theology of transformation that the author envisioned for the nation. For the nation to be different from those nations around them, they would have to approach the various elements in society in a radically different way.

The writer of Leviticus 19 utilized the Decalogue as a foundation for orchestrating a theology of transformation. The author intertwined the commandments in ethical and religious (theological) responsibilities for the community. Parents and YHWH are to be revered and the aged and elders of the community are to be respected. The community of Israel must adhere to honest business practices and not maltreat the disabled whether they are deaf or blind. The individual within the community is not to profane their daughter or engage in sexual misconduct with a slave girl. The profaning of individuals will have an adverse effect on the entire community as well as the land itself.

This chapter will present a structural analysis of the text of Leviticus 19 drawing upon Mary Douglas' ideas on ring composition. The purpose of utilizing Douglas' ring composition technique is to demonstrate that holiness may not have been the thrust of the author's rhetorical aim. It will be argued that it is possible that the au-

thor was emphasizing love for one's neighbor as well as the emigrant as the intended focus.

After the structural analysis, a following section will focus on how Jesus expanded on this idea of loving one's neighbor. It will also be discussed how Jesus combined deuteronomistic and priestly legislation to stress the importance of loving God as well as loving one's neighbor.

A look at the emphasis Paul places on love and how he applied this concept will comprise another section. Colossians 3:11 will be utilized to demonstrate the layers of society in which Paul attempted to propose a theology of transformation. A final section will focus upon the application that James gave to Leviticus 19 in his socio-cultural context.

The goal of the exegesis and the use of ring composition will aid in a possible alternative emphasis of Leviticus 19. The question could be posed as to the feasibility of a different interpretation for this chapter or how can this substitute understanding of Leviticus 19 be justifiable. Leviticus 19:18b is referred to five times in the synoptic gospels and twice in Paul's letters. This seems to indicate that the writers of these found Leviticus 19:18b to be the point of departure for holiness and that holiness was not in and of itself the thrust of the passage. Peter quotes Leviticus 19:2 in 1 Peter 1:16. Jesus alludes to Leviticus 19:2 in Matthew 5:48 in connection with loving one's neighbor. Even this indicates that loving one's neighbor sets one on the path to holiness. The conclusion to the argument for an alternative focus will be demonstrated through the use of ring composition and how it

highlights Leviticus 19:18b as the central location for the original author's possible purpose for composing this chapter.

4.2 – Structural analysis of Leviticus 19

Mary Douglas (2007:1) states: "A ring is a framing device. The linking up of the starting point and end creates an envelope that contains everything between the opening phrases and the conclusion." She has included a pedimental composition of the Hexateuch by Jacob Milgrom in the preface (Douglas 2007:xiv). This rhetorical device has an ancient origin. Van Otterlo (1948:6) states this literary style "is bound downwards by a time limit (approximately the middle of the fifth century BC)." This technique also has the distinct signature of a specific writer or poet instead of a guild of poets or a conglomeration of scribes (Van Otterlo 1948:6). This is an indication of a distinct ideology or rhetoric of a definite author, scribe or redactor.

Because this rhetoric device did become obsolete, it is easy for the contemporary reader to miss or even misinterpret or view the text as disconnected. Douglas (2007:11) continues: "On the contrary, the disorderly style, as critics take it to be, is all the more esteemed because it is supposed to indicate a spontaneous flow of inspiration." This being the case, a reader or interpreter will need to become acquainted with this style of writing in order to insure that a given interpretation flows with the same inspiration as the original author may have intended. It is imperative that the modern reader also understand that the text was received orally and ring composition was implemented to assist with listening and understanding.

One may wonder why the ancient writers utilized a rhetorical device such as ring composition. Douglas (2007:12) suggests “that something in the brain preserves” this grammatical device. She continues: “It is also possible that reciting or writing in parallels may be good for memorizing.” Since many ancient cultures were oral

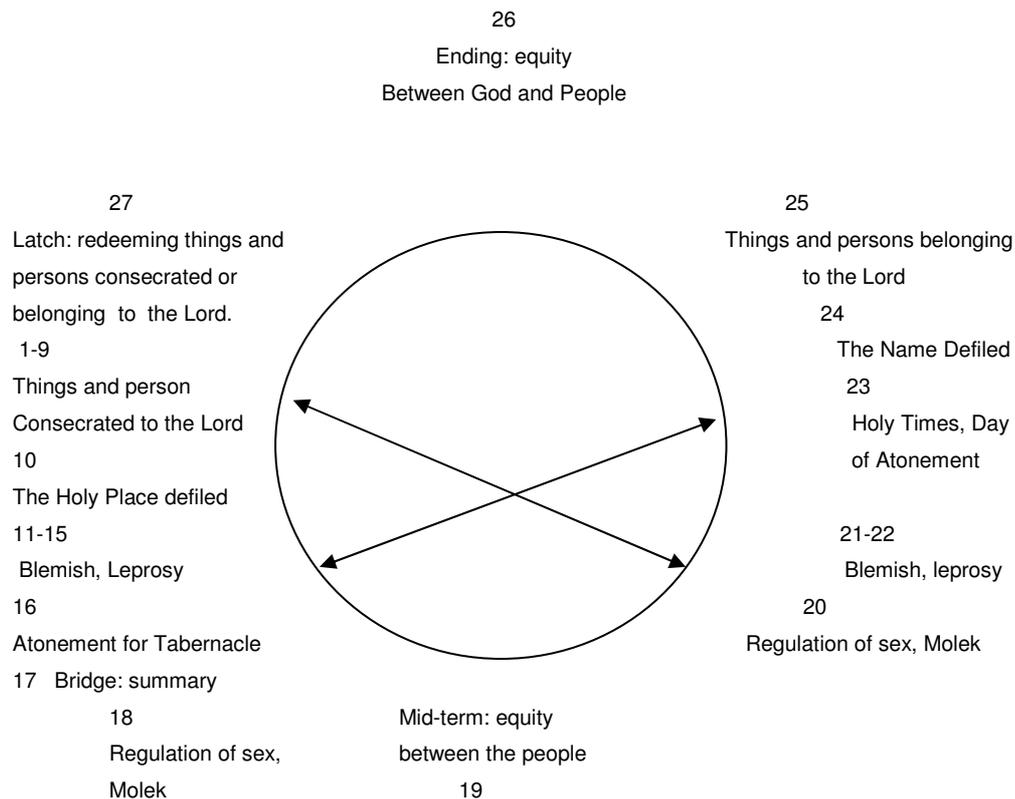


Fig. 1 *Leviticus in a Ring* (Milgrom 2000:1365)

societies¹¹⁹, the writers needed some device that would spur the memories of the audience to be able to remember what had been said. Douglas (2007:13) also

¹¹⁹ Since oral societies used rhetorical devices to encourage memorization, such as ring composition, could it be possible that they organized their entire society in a series of concentric circles, as a mnemonic device? *National Geographic*, February 2008 page 33, featured a farming community (môšāb - Israeli cooperative community) in the Jezreel Valley of Israel. This community is Nahalal and is structured on a circular pattern. The author, Alan Mairson, suggests that this communal design is centuries old. The purpose for this design was for the community to have equal access to the facilities and to their neighbors. The community had at its center the public buildings being shared such as barns and supply sheds. The next ring consists of the private residences of the society. Another purpose for this design would have been for security reasons. The main flaw with this design is its limitation for growth. There would be little room for expansion in such a design since the area designed for the actual farming sites constitutes the outer ring.

states: “I am more concerned to emphasize ring composition’s exegetical function. It controls meaning, it restricts what is said, and in doing so it expands meanings along channels it has dug.”

As one begins to recognize ring composition as a grammatical feature of a text, as well as an aid to listening and understanding in oral societies, the apparent parallelism begins to levitate from the pages of scripture. In addressing the idea of analogies, Douglas (2007:14) states they “are endless; as a pattern of analogies a ring composition constrains the multiple meanings of words. It does so by giving each stanza or sections its parallel pair; the members of a pair are placed on opposite sides of the ring so that each faces the other; each indicates its pair by verbal correspondences.” As a text is outlined in this fashion, the reader or interpreter is enabled to see the parallels that are being placed opposite each other. Needless to say, it does take practice in order to be able to recognize this feature within a text. Douglas has a fine example of a ring composition taken from Genesis 22:1-18 – the story of Abraham and Isaac.¹²⁰ The reader would do well to visit this example of a well-constructed ring composition as an example of form and format (Douglas 2007:20, fig. 4). The reader will find that many times the English transla-

Smith (2007:22) states: “At least two traditions of circle-based urban planning can be identified for the ancient world. The better-known example is in the Near East, where a tradition of circular capitals started with Parthian and Sassanian cultures, and then became incorporated into Islamic city planning with al-Mansur’s plan of Baghdad. A second, poorly understood tradition of circular urban planning is found in towns of the Teuchitlán tradition of western Mexico (circa A.D. 200-700), where numerous circular complexes of shrines and houses cover the landscape. The circular layouts that structure these settlements are unique within Mesoamerica. A different type of circular layout occurs in fortified settlements such as forts and castles. In Iron Age Palestine, for example, the circular fortification walls structured the layout of the houses within.”

¹²⁰ Douglas (2007:21) sees the interpretation of this passage in a different light due to the ring composition: “On my reading of the ring, this is why and how Abraham earned the blessing he gained for his response to God’s command, not for blind obedience but for unswerving confidence in God.” The utilization of the ring composition can give the reader new insights of other possible interpretations that do not violate grammatical rules, as employed by ancient writers.

tion of a text does not easily indicate the parallelisms that are to be found in the Hebrew text.

4.2.1 – Ring composition of Leviticus 19

The composition of Leviticus 19 does not fall into a neat chiasmic format. The text has to be shifted in order to accomplish this feat. But it does form two rings that utilize parallelisms. For the sake of comparison, the text will be divided into six units. Each unit will encompass the long form אָנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם or short form אָנִי יְהוָה as an *inclusio*. The six units are: 1) vv. 2-10; 2) vv. 11-18; 3) vv. 19-25, 31; 4) vv. 26-30, 32; 5) vv. 33-34; 6) vv. 35-37.

An analysis of the following diagram gives the reader a double micro-ring composition design. The first ring consisting of Units 1-3 begins and ends with the giving of offerings זָבַח שְׁלָמִים and אֲשָׁמוּ, with the apex of the ring being the command ‘you have love for your companion’ – וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ. The second ring begins and ends with the command of ‘you will keep’ – תִּשְׁמְרוּ – ‘and you will keep’ – וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם – and the apex of the ring is the command ‘you have love for him’ – וְאָהַבְתָּ לוֹ – referring to the emigrant.

If the author was utilizing a double micro-ring composition as a rhetorical device, then the focus shifts from holiness being the central tenet of this passage. The emphasis would then be upon having love for your companion and the emigrant.

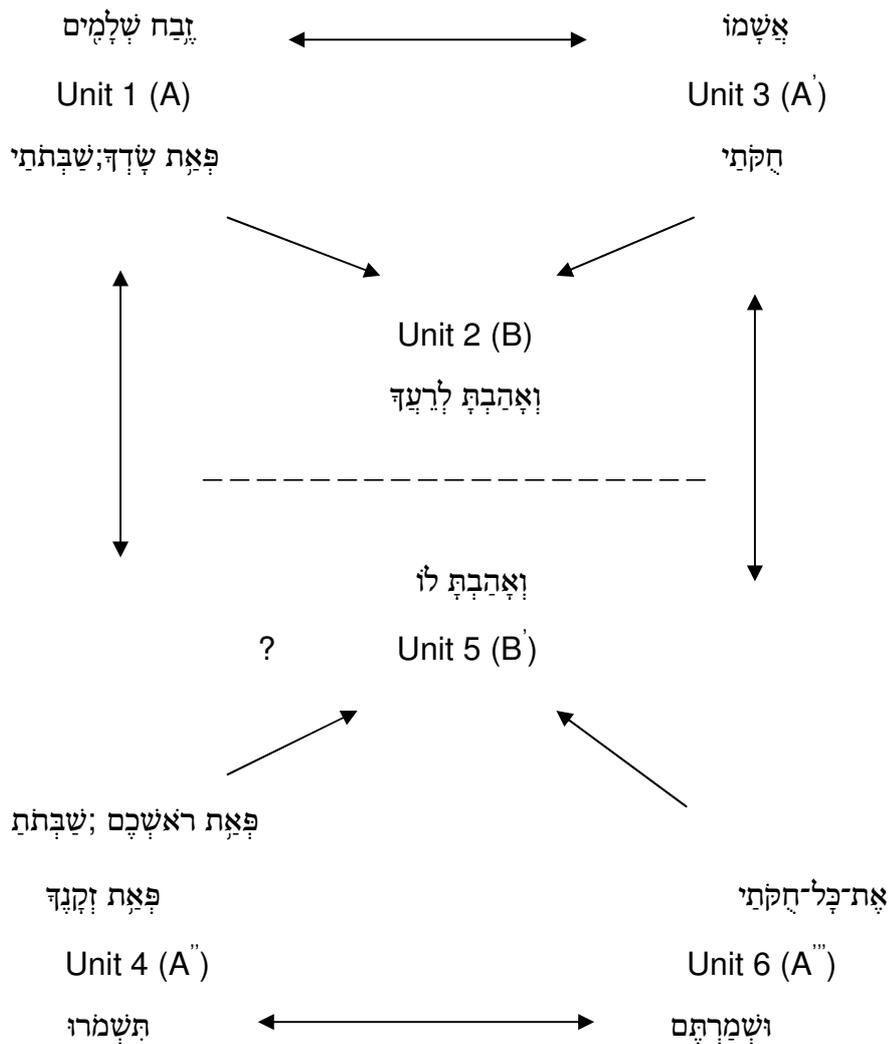


Fig. 2 Double Micro-Ring Composition Diagram of Leviticus 19

Milgrom (2000:1656, italics original) states:

This injunction (v. 18b.) falls in the middle of chap. 19, containing thirty-seven verses. It is ‘the culminating point’ of H as well as the apex of Leviticus...Within its own pericope (vv. 11-17), it serves as the climax in the series of ethical sins: deceit in business (vv. 11-12), oppression of the weak (v. 13-14), evil judgment, and hatred leading to planning and executing revenge. The remedy: *doing good* (love). The result: a giant step toward achieving holiness.

Each of the outside units (1, 3, 4, 6) has legislation on how a son of Israel was to demonstrate love for those around him. The problem comes with Unit 4. These verses seemingly do not focus on one's treatment of the emigrant. As argued in chapter three, the author may simply be utilizing a symbol as a reminder to the community of their social responsibilities to the less fortunate and emigrant. The word פֶּאֶה ('edge') is used in verses nine and 27 for legislation on gleaning and personal grooming.

By dissecting units 1-3 utilizing Douglas' method for recognizing ring composition, it becomes apparent that this chapter has a possible ring structure.

Douglas (2007:31) states: "A major ring is a triumph of chiasmic ordering." The above-demonstrated micro-ring substantiates the chiasmic ordering and parallelism of this section of chapter 19. Douglas (2007:31) continues: "The other prime test of a well-turned ring is the loading of meaning on the center and the connections made between the center and the beginning." Both the center and beginning are full of meaning, as the congregation will be blessed (produce of the land will increase and you will not incur sin) if they obey the instructions of the LORD.

Verses 11-18 are a clearly defined turning point. Verse nine to verse 17 have been leading up to the exhortation (which the NT writers utilized on eight occasions) of 'loving your neighbor as yourself.' The micro-ring is divided into parallel halves that form chiasmic parts. Douglas (2007:34) states: "Part of the strategy of construction is to divide the whole piece into two parallel halves that will be chiasmically related...Essentially, ring composition is a double sequence of analogies."

v.25

But in the fifth year you may eat of its fruit,

To increase its yield for you:

I am the LORD your God

vv.2-4 Speak to all the congregation
of the people of Israel and say to them,
'You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God
am holy.

vv. 23-24 ...And in the fourth year all its
fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise
to the LORD.

vv. 5-8 When you offer a sacrifice of
peace offering to the LORD...

vv. 20-22 ...And the priest shall make
atonement for him with the ram of the
guilt offering before the LORD...

vv. 9-10 When you reap the harvest
of your land, you shall not reap your
field right up to its edge...

v. 19 ...You shall not sow your field with
two kinds of seed...

vv. 11-18

...but you shall love your neighbor as yourself:

I am the LORD.

Fig. 3 Leviticus 19 in a ring of units 1-3

Douglas (2007:36-37) suggests seven components¹²¹ that make up the construction of a ring composition. The author of chapter 19 introduces a command that is to be followed: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.' The micro-ring is divided into two chiasmically related halves. The greatest obstacle "for the composer of a ring is to arrange the two sides in parallel" (Douglas 2007:36). This can be observed in both sections of the double micro-ring composition.

¹²¹ These seven components are: exposition or prologue, split into two halves, parallel sections, indicators to mark individual sections, central loading, rings within rings, and closure at two levels (Douglas 2007:36, 37).

It is imperative that each section or *inclusio* have a repetitive phrase to conclude each section. The writer did this by using the long and short forms representing the religious and ethical duties. The ‘central loading’ or turning point is one indication “that the middle has been reached is that it uses some of the same key word clusters that were found in the exposition” (Douglas 2007:37). Some key words and phrases that are used in the turning point that were also used in the exposition are profane, *nephesh*, people/sons of Israel and reverence your God.

Chapter 19 follows Douglas’ sixth convention in ring construction. This chapter has a ring within a ring or what has been indicated by a double micro-ring composition. The closure according to Douglas (2007:37) “signals its arrival at the end by using some conspicuous key words from the exposition.” The closure of this chapter comes in the form of ‘I am the LORD your God,’ which is used extensively throughout the exposition (15x). Douglas (2007:38) closes her section on conventions by stating: “The seven conventions are drawn from the style of large ring form prevalent in the literature of the Mediterranean eastern hinterland in the eighth to the fourth centuries.”

4.2.2 – A new path of interpretation illuminated by ring composition.

The ring composition, as argued for the structural analysis of chapter 19, shines a different interpretative light upon this passage. The interpretation would then be a demonstration of love that sets one on the path for achieving holiness. Without love, one is unable to accomplish the legislation set forth in chapter 19 and there is no possibility of that person achieving the desired goal of holiness. With this in

mind, we will now focus attention on how the NT writers utilized and applied the writer of Leviticus' admonition to 'love your neighbor as yourself.'

4.3 – Jesus' application of 'neighbor' in the synoptic gospels

This section will deal with how Jesus applied the idea of 'neighbor' and coupled it with the command of the *Shema*. The combining of these two commands gives equal weight of importance for loving both God and humanity. Lipson (2007:92) states: "Conversely, Plaut quotes a Hasidic source observing that of the three times the Torah asks us to love, two are in Leviticus (19:18, 34) and concern loving human beings. Only one, in Deuteronomy (6:5), concerns loving God. This, he says, indicates that loving people comes first. Only after we have learned to love people can we hope to achieve love of God." Possibly in the same vein of thought Jesus contextualizes these two great commandments for the foundations of a theology of transformation.

4.3.1 – The recipients of the synoptic gospels

4.3.1.1 – The original recipients of the gospel of Matthew

Matthew is the most Jewish of all the gospels and was written for the Jews (Barclay 1975a:5; Hendricksen 1987a:98). Hagner (1986:286) says there is a "high probability that Matthew was written to a Jewish-Christian community." This is based on the fact that the themes addressed in Matthew are concerns that a Messianic Jewish community would have raised. Some of the concerns that would

have been put forth are Jesus' fulfillment of the OT prophetic stipulations regarding the Messiah, Jesus' role of not destroying or abolishing the Law but to fulfill it and that he was "sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 15:24 – ESV).

Another possibility is that the "readers were Hellenistic Jews" (Hagner 1986:287). This originates from the fact that Matthew was written in Greek. If this is the case, it is probable these are Messianic Jews in the "Diaspora rather than Palestinian Jews" (Hagner 1986:287). If this indeed was the socio-context in which Matthew was penned, then the primary reason for writing this letter would have been to "strengthen the faith and spiritual life of his congregation" (Hagner 1986:287).

4.3.1.2 – Mark written to an unidentified audience

Mark is the earliest and shortest of the Synoptics. There is really no way to answer the 'who' or 'where' of the gospel, but Martin (1986:254) states the "external and internal evidence imply that Mark wrote in Rome and for a gentile constituency." Hendriksen (1987b:13) affirms this idea of a non-Jewish audience because "the fact that such Semitic terms and expressions as *boanerges* (3:17), *talitha cumi* (5:41), *corban* (7:11), *ephphatha* (7:34), and *Abba* (14:36) are by Mark translated into Greek."

Barclay (1975b:6, 7) gives a summary of the characteristics of Mark's gospel. Mark appears to give his recipients a biography of who Jesus was. He is also very clear from the beginning of his account of whom he believes Jesus to be – the

Son of God (1:1). Mark allows his readership to also experience the human or emotional side of Jesus (6:34). As one reads the gospel of Mark, one cannot help but be struck with the vivid details which would indicate an eyewitness account of that event (9:36; 10:13-16; 10:32; 4:38).

4.3.1.3 – Luke, a Greek writing to gentiles

Luke, ‘the beloved physician’ (Col. 4:14), wrote as a Greek (2 Cor 8:18; 12:18; Gal. 2:3) to gentiles. In Paul’s list of fellow workers in Colossians 4:10-17, only Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus are the ones who were among the circumcision. This gives evidence that Luke was probably a Greek and demonstrates the reason why his gospel would not be difficult for a non-Jewish audience to understand. Of all the gospels, Luke’s is the easiest one to understand.

Luke sets out to provide an ‘orderly account’ for Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4). Hendriksen (1988a:15 italics original) states: “The idea has been suggested that Luke’s Gospel is *a defense brief* or *apologia*, and that the evangelist as it were ‘dedicated’ it to Theophilus in order to prove to him that in no respect was there any conflict between the Christian religion and the interests of Rome.”

It is possible that Theophilus was a ‘code word’ for a larger body of ‘seekers’ about the Christian faith. Luke’s immediate purpose would have been to “enlighten earnest enquirers and to strengthen the faith of believers, especially those who had been or were being gathered from the Greek-speaking Roman world” (Hendriksen 1988a:16). It is feasible to presume that some enquirers had already come

into the church. In this light, Luke is giving further instructions on the Christian faith and teachings.

Luke's "message was directed to the Church and to issues important for the Church" (Ellis 1986:183). For the purpose of this study, only three will be mentioned. In Leviticus the 'divine trichotomy' (stranger-orphan-widow) is noticeably absent. The prophets on the other hand drew attention to this trichotomy indicating neglect for these people of society. Luke's gospel stresses the importance of these three groups in his writing. He emphasizes women's place in first century society (10:38-42; 7:11; 21:1-4). He also mentions children on numerous occasions (1:5ff; 26ff; 2:41ff; 8:40ff; 9:48; 18:15-17). Morris (1984:41) states: "But it is interesting that he (Luke) finds God's plan in events that concern children." Luke is also concerned with the plight of the poor (4:18; 7:22; 2:8ff; 2:24; 1: 53; 6:30; 14:11-13, 21; 16:19ff).

4.3.2 – Matthew 5:43-48 – Jesus' revolutionary love that would conform ordinary disciples into radical followers.

Jesus begins this section by quoting a seemingly popular phrase that had become embedded into the psyche of the Jewish people. The phrase 'hate your enemies', according to Hagner (1993:134), "not taught in the OT, is an inference that was commonly drawn, for example, from such passages as Pss 139:21-22; 26:5; or Deut. 7:2; 30:7." It is possible that 'enemy' had become the vernacular equivalent for a 'non-Jew' while a 'neighbor' was considered a Jew.

In this passage Jesus was intent on establishing an alternative social order instead of ushering in an age of social transformation. (More on this idea will follow in chapter six.) He was contrasting the normative standard being practiced with the expected character of a follower of Christ. Jesus gave a command (imperative) to ἀγαπᾶτε – ‘love’ – your enemy instead of μισήσεις ‘you will hate.’ He wanted his audience to reflect the standard by which the heavenly Father related to all people. Boyd (2005:41) comments: “When put into practice (*Satyagraha*¹²²), however, loving one’s enemies and returning evil with good has a power to accomplish something the kingdom of the sword can never dream of: namely, freeing the enemy from his hatred and stopping the ceaseless cycle of violence that hatred fuels.”

Jesus used an example of how the Father causes the rain and sun indiscriminately to be enjoyed by all people. Verse 45 lacks the definite article in the Greek text. Hendriksen (1987a:314) comments on this textual feature: “Thus special emphasis is placed on the character of these people.” This accentuates the character of God and how he relates to all people regardless of their character. Boyd (2005:42) emphasizes the human element in this text: “Jesus says we are to love without consideration of others’ moral status. We are to love as the sun shines and as the rain falls – in other words, indiscriminately.” The text would literally read: “because his sun arises on evil ones and good ones and rains on righteous ones and unrighteous ones.” Hendriksen (1987a:314) continues: “In order to make the marvelous nature of the Father’s love stand out all the more conspicuously the two pairs

¹²² *Satyagrah* means power of love and truth which was the concept utilized by Gandhi in his nonviolent resistance.

of objects are arranged chiasmatically, the emphasis falling neither on the evil nor on the good.”

Jesus moved his audience away from the vertical relation to the practical horizontal relationship within society. To love a person who is considered a ‘neighbor’ while at the same time hating an ‘enemy’¹²³ reduces one to become what they most loathe. In the first century a woman was exempt from the study of the Law. This is the reason for the Jewish prayer which is so often unfairly quoted, “I thank thee that thou hast not made me a Gentile, a slave, or a woman (Menaboth 43 b)” (<http://www.keithhunt.com/Jewish1.html>). This prayer is often misquoted but the impetus behind it was the love a man had for the law and contempt for women.

Matthew, being a former tax collector, would have known the extent of hatred the Jews had toward certain segments of society. Speaking from experience, Matthew was encouraging his readers, whether Messianic Jews or Hellenistic Jews in the Diaspora, to exhibit an “ethical standard of the kingdom (which) calls the disciples to a much more radical love that includes even one’s enemies – the unrighteous and the evil” (Hagner 1993:135). How easy it would have been for these first century Jews, whatever their situation, to become so ethnically or religiously isolated as to disregard the ‘other’ as enemy and only worthy of contempt.

Jesus desired his followers to conform to the ethical standard of τέλειοι. The plural form comes from the singular adjective τέλειος. Delling (1983:67) states: “The adjective means ‘whole,’ of sacrifices, ‘without blemish,’ then ‘complete’ in compass,

¹²³ Boyd (2005:32) states “there is no greater power on the planet than self-sacrificial love. Coming under others has a power to do what laws and bullets and bombs can never do – namely, bring about transformation in an enemy’s heart.”

with no part outside, nothing which belongs left out.” This term is used in an academic sense as well as a biological sense. In the academic arena it relates to the various stages of learning from beginner to a mature scholar (Delling 1983:68). Biologically, the term refers to a person who is fully developed or mature. Delling (1983:72, 73) continues: “In the LXX the word means ‘unblemished,’ ‘undivided,’ ‘complete,’ ‘whole’ while in the Dead Sea Scrolls תמים refers to him who is ‘without defect’ in spirit and body.”

Blomberg (1992:115) states: “‘Perfect’ here is better translated as ‘mature, whole,’ i.e., loving without limits.” While Walvoord (1972:51) reiterates: “While sinless perfection is impossible, godliness, in its biblical concept, is attainable.” These words echo Milgrom’s comments on holiness, e.g. holiness is unattainable but godliness is a real possibility if one observes the law and commandments. Hagner (1993:135) adds: “τέλειος is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word תמים (*tamim*), used often in the OT to refer to perfection in the sense of ethical uprightness.” This should remind the reader of the words in Leviticus 19:2: “You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy” (NRSV). As indicated by Milgrom, holiness or godliness can only be attained by following the Law of Moses.

Barclay (1975a:177 italics original) states “the Greek idea of perfection is *functional*. A thing is perfect if it fully realizes the purpose for which it was planned, and designed, and made.” Humanity needs to realize that it was created and designed for a purpose: to do as the heavenly Father does. As the Father demonstrates his love through acts and deeds of undeserved kindness, how much more should we

as fellow human beings show the same to those we classify as ‘neighbor’ or ‘enemy?’

4.3.3 – Matthew 19:16-22 – A man’s preoccupation with possessions led to a forfeiture of pleasing God.

The writer begins verse 16 with the expression ἰδοὺ. He begins the pericope with this narrative device that enhances a Hebrew narrative by emphasizing an idea or calling attention to a detail. James 5:4 uses ἰδοὺ to draw attention to the cries of the exploited workers and their withheld wages. The writer of Matthew is calling attention to what the man is seeking. Matthew informs his readers that an unidentified person approached Jesus with a question. While Luke 18:18 identifies the man as a ruler – ἄρχων (judge, or member of Sanhedrin, or an official in charge of the local synagogue [Hendriksen 1987:723]). For whatever reason Matthew does not identify this individual except he was young (v. 20) and he had great possessions (v. 22).

The man is seeking eternal life – ζωὴν αἰώνιον. He is assuming that something must be done from his side. He qualifies this by stating what good deed must be done. In Hellenism ἀγαθὸν indicated ‘salvation’ while ἀγαθός signified ‘pleasing to God’ when applied to persons (Grundmann 1983:12). Is this man really asking Jesus what he must do to ‘earn’ salvation or what must occur for him to ‘please God?’

Hagner (1995:557) understands Jesus' reply – 'There is only one who is good.' – as "perhaps an allusion to the Shema of Deut. 6:4. God, who is alone the ultimate measure of good, has already defined what is good in his commandments." The man is given a list, although not comprehensive, of the commandments in which he is to follow. They are all taken from the 2nd table of the Decalogue. Barclay (1975b:214 italics original) says these are "the commandments which govern our *personal relationships* and our *attitude to our fellow-men*."

It is of interest to note that the 5th commandment is last in the list of commandments. It was argued that the inversion of the order of mother and father in Leviticus 19:3 suggested that the author was possibly emphasizing the importance of the mother to be revered as much as the father. Could it be possible that the writer of Matthew is highlighting a growing problem among the young upward mobile middle class against the dangers of *Corban*? Since Matthew was writing to a Jewish audience he would not have needed to mention the term as Mark 7:11 does to his Gentile audience. *Corban* is a transliteration of the Hebrew קֶרְבָּן which means 'to offer as a sacrifice to God in the Sanctuary.' It represented a regulated system of bringing gifts to God (Rengstorf 1984:860, 861). Hutchinson (1988:772) states:

In Jewish tradition, [corban is] a word used to declare something dedicated to God. In the Gospel story Jesus castigates the Jews for their practice, justified in their legal tradition, of pronouncing their property 'corban' and thus rendering it unable lawfully to be used for the material support of aged parents, even though it did not then need actually to be offered to God but could be retained for personal use.

Barclay (1975b:215) quotes a passage from the Gospel according to the Hebrews about a certain rich man:

The second of the rich men said to him, ‘Master, what good thing can I do and live?’ He said unto him, ‘O man, fulfil the law and the prophets.’ He answered him, ‘I have kept them.’ He said unto him, ‘Go, sell all that thou ownest, and distribute it unto the poor, and, come, follow me.’ But the rich man began to scratch his head, and it pleased him not. And the Lord said unto him, ‘How sayest thou, I have kept the law and the prophets? For it is written in the law: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; and lo, many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, are clad in filth, dying of hunger, and thine house is full of many good things, and nought at all goeth out of it unto them.’

This young rich man had followed the letter of the law but he had failed in the spirit of the law. His attitude toward his ‘neighbor,’ which for the audience of Matthew would have been a fellow Jew, was askew. It seems a fair question as to how this young man obtained all his many possessions. Is it possible the nature of this conversation is such due to the fact that the young man had acquired his great wealth through the exploitation of the poor – withholding wages, indenturing his fellow Jew, etc.? This question does not require an answer because the young man was a slave and lover of his many possessions. This attitude caused the young man to miss his entrance into life.

Jesus concludes his conversation with the man by stating a conditional clause – εἰ θέλεις τέλειος εἶναι – ‘If you want to be complete.’ The word for complete or perfect (ESV, NRSV), as discussed in Mt. 5:48, has the idea of perfection being functional. When an individual realizes their purpose in life they are considered perfect in

Greek understanding. This man forfeited his opportunity for this, which is indicated by the “periphrastic construction $\eta\nu\ \epsilon\chi\omega\nu$, with its emphasis on continuing action, suggests a preoccupation with his wealth” (Hagner 1995:558). This young man becomes a living, breathing illustration of Mt. 6:24.

4.3.4 – Matthew 22:34-40 (Mark 12:28-34) – A transforming theology will lead one to show compassion for others as if their very life depended upon it.

It seems a bit odd that this expert in the law, a Sadducee, began this conversation with such a random, unprovoked question, until it is understood that this was an on-going debate among the religious elite. They were constantly trying to expand the commandments and at the same time trying to reduce them. The Rabbis had been taught that there were 613¹²⁴ commandments, 365 were negative and 248 were positive (Brooks 1991:197; Barclay 1975c:293). Hillel was once asked by a Gentile to teach him the extent of the law while he stood on one leg.¹²⁵ Hillel replied: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor; that is the whole Torah, while the rest is the commentary thereof, go and learn it” (Brooks 1991:197; Lipson 2007:93; Strobel 2005:183). Strobel (2005:184) comments on the negative form of the Golden Rule: “under the negative versions, a person could merely live a passive, detached, and un-involved life by simply not doing harm to others. However, the Golden Rule calls on us to go on the compassion offensive by grab-

¹²⁴ Goldstein (2006:22) states: “The obligation to perform acts of kindness for others is based on the fact that the Talmud says that God performs acts of kindness, and therefore is categorized as one of the 613 Divine commandments of Jewish law.”

¹²⁵ Strobel (2005:183) quotes three additional teachings of the negative form of the Golden Rule – 500 years before Christ Confucius stated: “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others;” 400 years before Christ an Athenian philosopher stated: “Whatever angers you when you suffer at the hands of others, do not do to others;” 300 years before Christ the Stoics taught: “What you do not want to be done to you do not do to anyone else;” 200 years before Christ Hillel taught a similar negative version. No one before Christ had ever taught the version that is attributed to Jesus’ teaching of the positive rendition of the Golden Rule.

bing the initiative and deliberately choosing a policy of being kind toward other people.” This conversation that we are privy to was a common exercise in determining the lighter and heavier stipulations of the law.

The expert in the law asked in Mark what commandment is the first of all and Matthew records the great commandment. The text records the expert’s question in Mark v. 28c as ἐντολή πρώτη πάντων – ‘the first complete commandment.’ In essence he wanted to know which one was of absolute importance. Matthew’s account in v. 36 is clearer – ἐντολή μεγάλη – ‘the commandment of greatest importance.’ In both accounts the *Shema* is quoted. Matthew quotes only Dt. 6:5 while Mark quotes Dt. 6:4, 5. This was a passage very well known, since it formulated the foundations of Israelite monotheism, and is still quoted at the beginning and ending of each day (Lipson 2007:xx, xxi).

Jesus states a person seeking the kingdom of God must love him with heart, soul and mind and Mark adds strength. The NRSV translates Dt. 6:4, 5: “Hear. O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” By Jesus stating that the *Shema* is the commandment of greatest importance, he is not putting himself at variance with the religious leaders, since both of these gospels were written for Jewish recipients.

Lipson, writing from a Messianic Jewish perspective, gives insight into how the *Shema* can be understood. She (2007:65) defines the heart as “the essential center, the hub, and the core of our being. It is the seat of self-consciousness...It is

the seat of intellect, emotion, and attitude...It is with the heart that we think, feel, and make decisions.” This basically instructs one to willfully decide to love God no matter how one might feel. This is a conscious, rational decision of abandonment to love God.

The word translated soul is the Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ – ‘life.’ Lipson (2007:73) relying on Rabbinic Anthology states: “*nefesh* is the seat of the passions, appetites, and personality. It is the soul, the life; it is the person himself.” To love God in this way “is to offer up to him the whole of our being, our personality, and our life” (Lipson 2007:78). Recalling Kiuchi’s explanation of *nephesh*, he stated it was representative of the egocentric nature and ‘Love your neighbour as yourself,’ in 19:18b can be observed only when one dies to one’s egocentric nature.’ In a similar fashion Strobel (2005:12 italics original) states: “Technically, we aren’t being asked to *like* the other person, because that would require an emotion that we sometimes can’t conjure up, despite our best intentions. But in effect we are to treat them *as though* we like them – because that’s a decision of our will.”

The NRSV translates מאד (strength) which can mean ‘muchness,’ force,’ or ‘abundance.’ Lipson (2007:83 italics MB) states: “Loving God with all our might, or *resources*, means loving him with all our possessions. It is an instruction to be generous with what God has given us, and to be willing to lose everything if he asks it of us.” Boyd (2005:39 italics original) commenting on these verses states: “By neighbor Jesus meant anyone we happen to come upon in need of our service – and he says that everything hangs on sacrificially loving this person.” This comes into stark contrast with the rich young ruler who left sad (or scratching his head)

because he had great possessions. His possessions were in essence useless to him since he was not willing to meet needs around him with his abundance of resources.

Jesus attaches Leviticus 19:18b to the *Shema* as being ομοια – ‘pertaining the idea of being of a same nature or quality.’ Jesus seems to indicate that it is impossible to love God and hate a person or love a person and hate God. These two commandments, on which the Law and the Prophets depend (ESV), summarize the foundational movement for a theology of transformation. One without the other will leave a void in one’s efforts for transformation. Lipson (2007:93 italics original) states: “Love motivates us to *want* to treat other people well. Not only doing, but also caring, is involved; not only physical, but also social needs are to be our concern.” We can be like the young ruler who went away and missed his chance at life because his relationships were not in order. Or we can be like Zacchaeus, described by Luke as a rich tax collector, who gave away half his wealth to the poor and paid back all to whom he had robbed. Because of his actions, loving God and humanity, Jesus declared that salvation had come to the house of Zacchaeus. Evans (2001:267) states: “The highest ethic of the Law is not sacrifice or other cultic activity; it is loyalty to God and compassion for human beings.”

4.3.5 – Luke 10:25-29 – Look for yourself! What do you see written?

Luke begins this pericope with Καὶ ἰδοὺ, which serves as a narrative marking device to call attention to a detail. This same device was encountered in Mt. 19:16 and James 5:4. Jesus draws attention to the – νομικός – scholar in the law who

was an individual responsible for interpreting Jewish Law. He comes, interestingly enough, seeking an interpretation from Jesus about eternal life and what must be done to earn this type of life.

Jesus asked him two questions for interpretation. The first asks – ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τί γέγραπται – ‘In the Law, what has been written down?’ The second probes on a personal level – πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις – ‘How do you read it in public?’ Bultmann (1983:343) states: ἀναγινώσκω in Gk. means ‘to know exactly’ or ‘to recognize,’ and for the most part it is used with the sense of reading or public reading.” Nolland (1993:583) adds to this sentiment: “Uniquely in the NT, ἀναγινώσκειν ‘to read,’ means here not the act of reading as such, but the perceiving of the sense of the text that has been read.” It seems as if Jesus asked this interpreter of the Law how exactly he understands what the essence of the Law is really composed of; what is his interpretation of the Law.

Barclay gives an interesting interpretation of, ‘How do you read?’ He (1975d:140) states: “Strict orthodox Jews wore round their wrists little leather boxes called phylacteries, which contained certain passages of scripture...So Jesus said to the scribe, ‘Look at the phylactery on your own wrist and it will answer your question.’” This we cannot be sure of but Josephus (Antiquities 4, 8:13) writes: “They are also to inscribe the principal blessings they have received from God upon their doors, and show the same remembrance of them upon their arms; as also they are to bear on their forehead and their arm those wonders which declare the power of God, and his good will towards them, that God’s readiness to bless them may ap-

pear everywhere conspicuous about them.” If this is the case, the orthodox were still wearing phylacteries well into the 2nd CE.

Lipson (2007:125, 126 italics original) describes these phylacteries or tefillin: “The tefillin are square boxes, with straps, made of leather from kosher animals, usually cattle or sheep...Inside each box are four tiny parchment scrolls, each containing a Torah passage: Exodus 13:1-10 concerns keeping of *Pesach*; Exodus 13:11-16 concerns the redemption of the first born; Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is the first part of the Sh'ma; Deuteronomy 6:13-21 contains the command for Isra'el to be faithful to *ADONAI*, their God, throughout their generations.” If the scholar is wearing these tefillin he only needed to look to his forearm or forehead to know what the Law had to say. It would serve as a reminder that the Scriptures were concealed within. Even so, the emphasis of this exchange could possibly rest not on knowing the Law but on the interpretation the scholar had given to it. Could it be that he is espousing the view that one should love their fellow Jew and hate the Gentile who was their neighbor? Or possibly was he also a subscriber to the practice of *Corban*?

The scholar gave the correct ‘Sunday School’ answer: The *Shema* and Leviticus 19:18b. Nolland (1993:585) comments: “Luke 10:25-28 emphasizes the fact that Christian faith builds itself squarely on the best instincts of the Judaism out of which it emerged.” Jesus told him ‘to do this’ (imperative) and ζήση – ‘You will be alive as you conduct yourself in the way you have just described.’ The scholar had a felt need to δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτὸν – ‘to show himself to be morally just.’ He asked Je-

sus exactly who was his neighbor.¹²⁶ Morris (1984:188 italics original) states: “The *neighbour (ho plesion)* means more than the man who lives nearby. There is the thought of community, of fellowship.” The scholar understood his neighbor to be his fellow Israelite. But he needed an interpretation of this from Jesus. Instead of providing the answer, Jesus told a story and allowed the scholar to interpret for himself the answer to his own question. Ladd (1974:132, 133) states:

Love for God must express itself in love for neighbor. Judaism also taught love for neighbor, but such love does not for the most part extend beyond the borders of the people of God. The command to love one’s neighbor in Leviticus 19:18 applies unequivocally toward members of the covenant of Yahweh and not self-evidently toward all men...Jesus redefines the meaning of love for neighbor: it means love for any man in need, and particularly one’s enemies. This is a new demand of the new age Jesus has inaugurated...This law of love is original with Jesus, and is the summation of all his ethical teaching.

As one looks at the story that Jesus told, it may take on a new perspective for some if they see the story through the eyes of the wounded man¹²⁷ (Nolland 1993:591). It is probable, since the story is known as the Good Samaritan, that the wounded man¹²⁸ has been ‘playing second fiddle’ to the Samaritan in most reli-

¹²⁶ Stein (1992:317) states: “It is quite possible that he saw Jesus in the parable twisting this improper question, ‘Who is my neighbor?’ (i.e., what must a person do to qualify that I should love him as a neighbor?) into a proper one (‘What must I do to be a loving neighbor?’)”

¹²⁷ Strobel (2005:191) states: “This is what I’ve found: the Golden Rule becomes the most natural response in the world once you see life from the other person’s vantage point.”

¹²⁸ Addressing the ‘unexpected contrast between Rahab and Achan,’ Spronk (2007:201) states: “These may help us to keep asking questions and not to submit to the threat of accepting violence and the abuse of human dignity as unavoidable facts of a broken world, but instead to keep searching for creative solutions. I believe we are dealing here with an important biblical theological theme which can be found in many biblical texts, both in the Old and the New Testaments. A good example in the New Testament is the story of the Good

gious circles. In this story Jesus highlights the various layers of society: unseen criminals, a man (Jew or Gentile unknown), a Samaritan, a Levite, a Priest, and an Innkeeper. This is a window into many different segments of society and how they were (or how they should) interact with each other. It is interesting that Jesus leaves the identity of the victim up to the scholar and the readers of the parable.¹²⁹ Sirach 12:1 states: “If you do a kindness, know to whom you do it, and you will be thanked for your good deeds,” continuing in v. 4, “Give to the godly man, but do not help the sinner.” If the reader sees the victim as a sinner, a good deed might be hard to administer, but if he is deemed a godly person, then a righteous deed returns the same.

Jesus presents this parable in such a way as to focus the listener or the reader to examine the foreboding illusiveness of neighbor-love by those who follow the letter of the Law. If ceremonial purity or focused attentiveness to the activities of religious life overrides one’s responsibility to those in community, then the fulfillment of the law of love or the ‘royal law,’ as James labeled it, has been violated and transgressed.

The story has a progression of reactions by the various players in this parable. The Priest for instance, seemed to avoid the man altogether, though he does see his condition. The Levite appears to approach the man, sees his condition but reacts as the Priest by leaving him there. They were not affected by the wounded

Samaritan.” Spronk is commenting on the idea of humans being in the image of God and destroyed in the name of God.

¹²⁹ The NLT takes liberties to translate Αἰθιοπίας (which occurs in the text without the definite article or modifier) as: “A Jewish man.”

man's plight. But the Samaritan¹³⁰ approached the man as the Levite, saw his conditions as the Levite did but he ἐσπλαγχνίσθη – (in that moment – aorist tense) – had compassion. Because of this compassion in that moment (γεγονέναι 'to have become') he became different; he exhibited a certain characteristic. He was transformed by the condition of the man, he had become a neighbor. He interrupted his journey to assist and he continued to assist in his absence and agreed to continue to assist when he returned.

Jesus asked the scholar his interpretation of who became the neighbor in this story. Nolland (1993:596, 597) comments: "In the Lukan form the lawyer is being asked to carry away with him the approach to the question of neighbor that emerges from the parable (look at things from the perspective of the victim), and to love his neighbor, as now newly understood, with the kind of concrete expression of compassion that has just been exemplified by the Samaritan." Jesus' response echoes the words addressed to the woman caught in adultery recorded in John 8:10-11. Jesus asked her where her accusers were, but they had already left. He did not condemn her but told her to practice a different kind of life. Jesus is asking not only the scholar and adulteress to practice a different kind of life; he is asking the Church today to practice a different kind of life. The question that arises from this passage is: Is the Church today moved by the 'wounded-ness' it sees in society? If so, what reasons does the Church give each and every day for 'passing by on the other side?'

¹³⁰ Venter (1993:45) states: "He (Jesus) introduces the Samaritan in the parable to show the Jewish religious scholar that a Samaritan understood the spirit of the law better than the Jewish scholar did."

4.4 – Paul’s interpretation of ‘neighbor’ in Romans 13:8-10 and Galatians

5:13-15

4.4.1 – Romans 13:8-10 – Fulfillment of the law comes by loving one another

Paul wrote his letter to the Romans circa 57/58 CE from Corinth. As indicated by chapter 1:13, Paul had never been to Rome, though a Roman citizen, and he states that he had been prevented from making this journey. According to chapter 15:24, it was his desire to use Rome as a home base, much like Jerusalem, to continue his missionary activities into Spain. Paul did finally make it to Rome but not in the way he had imagined nor did his journey to Spain become a reality.

The church¹³¹ in Rome was a possible church plant from the ‘visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes’ (Acts 2:10c, 11a). It would not be a far cry of the imagination to speculate that some of the 3,000 converts on the day of Pentecost were these ‘visitors’ from Rome (Acts 2:41). Hendriksen (1988b:18 italics original) states: “It will have become evident that in its earliest beginnings the Roman church was probably started not (except indirectly) by any apostle but by the rank and file of those Jews and proselytes who had witnessed the miracles of Pentecost and had afterward returned to their homes in Rome. It should be stressed that these ‘lay’ people were *Jews* or, in some cases had at one time been converted to the *Jewish* religion.” It is also possible to imagine that, since all roads led to Rome, that the Christians from Antioch (Acts 11:26) could have possibly led

¹³¹ Hendriksen (1988b:18) states: “A fourth century A.D. Latin father known as ‘Ambrosiaster,’ in the Introduction to his *Commentary on Romans*, informs us that the roman church was founded not by the apostles but by certain Jewish Christians who imposed a ‘Judaic form’ on it.”

missionary activity into a cosmopolitan Rome with an estimation of between 1-1.5 million inhabitants. This would have been a natural desire for these disciples in Antioch to reach out to such a vast un-reached city. Acts 13:1 records that there were many trained and equipped men to carry out such an endeavor (prophets and teachers).

Taking into consideration the cosmopolitan city of Rome and the record in Acts, it is feasible that the recipients of the book of Romans were a mixed group of Jews of the Diaspora – living as immigrants, and Gentiles, some of whom had embraced circumcision. This would account for the lengthy, systematic way in which Paul developed this letter to the Romans. The text in consideration falls within the section (chapters 12-15) that gives a description of how Christianity should affect one's everyday life.

In vv. 1-7, Paul had been addressing the issues of civic duties. He reminded his readers of the importance of submitting to government authorities because in so doing one is actually submitting to God's authority. He also admonished the same readers to pay taxes and revenues and this was to be coupled with giving honor and respect to those who were deserving of these virtues. In the following text, Paul encourages the Roman church to owe no one anything except to love each other, which is the fulfilling of the law.

Paul introduces this pericope with a double negative – Μηδενὶ μηδὲν ὀφείλετε – 'no one nothing you (all) owe' – that "usually reinforces the command" (Dunn 1988:776). He then continues with an exhortation – εἰ μὴ – 'except' – which brings

“out the idea that love of the other is not merely an obligation but a responsive obligation, an obligation which arises from what those addressed have received” (Dunn 1988:776). Paul surely has in mind his earlier words in 5:8, “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (ESV). His readers had experienced this love of God and they were now obligated to do no less than what they themselves had been recipients.

Paul utilizes a form of the word for love five times in these three verses – ἀγαπάω, the verb three times and ἀγάπη, the noun twice. It is in loving ‘each other’ or ‘another’ that the law is fulfilled. The word for fulfilled is πληρόω and has the meaning of completing or fulfilling something or “exhaustively complete” (Dunn 1988:777). The phrase νόμον πεπλήρωκεν translates as ‘the law is completed or fulfilled.’ When the debt of love is paid, then the law is ‘exhaustively complete.’ There is nothing left for a person to do to further fulfill the law.

In verse nine, Paul quotes the 7th, 6th, 8th and 10th commandments while Mark 10:19 and Matthew 19:19 quote the 5th-9th commandments and James 2:11 lists the 6th and 7th commandments. Since Paul and James both wrote to the Jewish community in the Diaspora, these well-known commandments “strongly suggests that this was the order in which the commandments were widely known in the diaspora” (Dunn 1988:777). It was discussed in Luke 10:25ff that the Jewish community wanted to condense the Law to its essential form. They also debated what the higher and lower stipulations of the Law were. It is not a far-fetched idea that this was also a topic of discussion in the church at Rome. All of the abovementioned

tioned lists of commandments come from the 2nd table of the Decalogue that deal with ethical, human relationships.

All of these commandments, which in essence summarize the entire law, can be ‘summed up in this word’ (Rmns. 13:8, ESV). The word for ‘summed up’ (ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται) is a rare word. Schlier (1984:681) states: “This term is rich in allusion and significance. It is rare in secular Gk. and unknown outside literary sources. In accordance with its meaning, it signifies ‘to bring something to a κεφαλαιον,’ ‘to sum up,’ ‘to give a comprehensive sum,’ also ‘to divide into the main portions.’” ἀνακεφαλαιοῦται could be translated into a modern day idiom – ‘to bring something to a head.’ This word would thus mean to bring something to its main or concise point or meaning or to its culminating point. Murray (1979:162, 163 italics original) comments on this idea: “When Paul says that all the commandments are ‘summed up in this word,’ it is not certain whether he means that they are summarily *repeated*, that is recapitulated, or whether he means simply summed up in the sense of condensed. In any case, the main thought is that when love is in exercise, then all the commandments receive their fulfillment and so they can all be reduced to this demand.”

The ethical table of the Decalogue is ‘brought to a head’ in λόγῳ τούτῳ (‘this word’). Paul used λόγος in chapter 9:6 (word of God), 9:9 (word of promise) and 9:28 (word of the Lord) in reference to divine revelation. It may be that he is using λόγος in this same way in this passage. Could it be that Paul is suggesting that these ethical stipulations of the law are a culmination of divine revelation, which is demonstrated by loving your neighbor as yourself?

Paul concludes this pericope with the negative statement of the ‘Golden Rule’ – ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται – ‘Love for the neighbor does not do wrong.’ In Tobit 4:15 it is stated: “And what you hate, do not do to anyone.” Hendriksen (1998b:440 italics original) understands this phrase as “a figure of speech called *litotes*. This means that a negative expression of this type implies a strong affirmative.” Conversely this could be understood, as the tremendous benefit love has toward one’s neighbor. The word κακός (wrong) carries the implication of ill effects, immoral acts and being harsh. Love does not have ill effects or does not perform immoral acts and it is not harsh to one’s neighbor. But only things done for the positive outcome and kindness to one’s neighbor is to be considered. Strobel (2005:190) states: “When we follow it (the Golden Rule) even though it’s inconvenient, others may be impacted in deep ways. Why? Because living it out is so thoroughly unexpected – so absolutely against the grain – in our every person-for-himself society.”

If this happens, then πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη – ‘Love (becomes or is) the content of the law.’ πλήρωμα connotes what fills something up or completeness or end. The law of love is what fills up the law, completes and is in essence the content of the law. Dunn (1988:783 italics original) sums up this section by stating:

The call to love the other is in fact *limited* to the neighbor. This still does not involve a restriction by physical proximity or ethnic acceptability, but it does not broaden the outreach of love to everyone. The neighbor is the person encountered in the course of daily life who has a need which lays claim to the believer’s resources – a claim, it should also be said, which can never

be regulated or limited by rules or code of practice and that often has an unexpected quality for which no forward planning is possible.

4.4.2 – Galatians 5:13-15 – Freedom serves as a base of operations for loving service

It is possible that Galatians was one of the earliest (48-58 CE), if not the earliest, surviving letters that the church has of Paul. Unlike Romans, it was written to a group of believers in which Paul was the founder (1:8-11; 4:13). These believers had come out of a pluralistic background. Petersen (2006:1705) writing in his introduction to Galatians states: “Before meeting Paul, the Galatians practiced a mix of local and Greek customs in what is now central Turkey.” In 4:8-11 Paul is reminding his recipients of their idolatrous background from which they were enslaved. It appears that these young believers (1:6) are deserting the gospel that Paul preached for a different one. This gospel that they are beginning to follow is laced with a heaping dose of legalism. Due to the nature of 5:2 and 6:12, it is presumable that Judaizers¹³² had infiltrated these collective groups of believers and were insisting that they accept circumcision as necessary for salvation. Ridderbos (1982:381) comments on this fact: “All the evidence indicates that these false teachers were Jewish Christians who tried to combine the gospel with the observance of the Jewish ceremonies, above all with circumcision.” These false brothers (2:4) had ‘slipped in’ in order to bring these young believers back into slavery.

¹³² The only NT use of the term for Judaizer is found in Galatians 2:14. The ESV and NRSV translate *Ἰουδαῖζω* as ‘live like Jews,’ while the NLT translates as ‘the Jewish law,’ and the *Message* translates as ‘Jewish customs.’ Gutbrod (1984:383) states: “Outside the NT *ἰουδαῖζειν* implies conversion to Judaism, especially by circumcision, or sympathy with Judaism which leads to the total or partial adoption of Jewish customs.”

Paul's poignant words in 5:12 summarize his opinion and desire for these false brothers: "I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves" (ESV)!

Paul has just reminded his readers of their freedom they have in Christ (5:1-7). The reminder also ushers in for them the reality that accepting circumcision would mean that they must keep the whole law. For embracing circumcision, a lapse into legalism would mean they are forfeiting their freedom, or their liberty of grace, and "Christ will be of no advantage to you" (v. 2b ESV). Paul in 5:7 wants to know what happened. They were progressing well in their newfound freedom. He is encouraging them to revert back to following the message he shared in the beginning.

This pericope, vv. 13-15, seems to indicate there was a spirit of libertinism that had invaded the assemblies of these new believers. Hendriksen (1987c:209) states: "The Christian religion resembles a narrow bridge over a place where two polluted streams meet: one is called legalism, the other libertinism." These new believers are confronted with a choice to either use their freedom for libertine purposes or they could use it in service to one another. The temptation would be greatest in their current societal environment to give license to sin. As Paul wrote in Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means" (ESV)!

Paul writes in verse 13a: "Ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐπ' ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐκλήθητε, ἀδελφοί," – 'You (all) indeed toward freedom were invited brothers.' Longenecker (1990:238, 239) states: "The postpositive conjunction γὰρ may be thought to connect 5:13ff. with what has gone before by providing reasons for the preceding statements. More

likely, however, it should be seen in a continuative sense as reintroducing the theme of freedom that was declared in v 1a.” Paul has been drawing the reader’s attention to the follies of embracing the teachings of the Judaizers in vv. 1-12, now he wants them to look back and reflect upon the freedom that they had once enjoyed; the freedom that set them free from legalistic slavery. He is not brow beating these young believers, but he is affectionately (ἀδελφοί) persuading them to reconsider and begin to run well again (v. 7). The freedom Paul is suggesting is a freedom from legalism toward brotherly service.

Paul gives the recipients a warning in v. 13b: “μόνον μὴ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν εἰς ἀφορμὴν τῆ σαρκί,” – ‘only (do) not (use) the freedom toward (an) opportunity (for) the flesh.’ Bertram (1983:472) defines ἀφορμή in formal terms as ‘start,’ ‘origin,’ ‘impulse,’ ‘pretext,’ or ‘logical starting-point.’ He (1983:473) states: “In Gl. 5:13 the σάρξ occupies the position of the malicious opponent and seeks a ‘pretext’ in ἐλευθερία.” Longenecker (1990:239) continues: “The noun ἀφορμή was originally a military term that meant ‘the starting point’ or ‘base of operations’ for an expedition, but came generally to mean ‘the resources needed’ to carry through any undertaking.” Schweizer (1983:133) states: “σάρξ is for Paul everything human and earthly, which includes legal righteousness. But since this entices man to put his trust in it, to find security and renown thereby, it takes on for Paul the character of a power which is opposed to the working of the Spirit. The sharpest formulation is in Gl. 5:13, 17, where σαρκίς is an independent force superior to man. Paul realises, of course, that this power which entices away from God and His Spirit is not just a power alien to man. It belongs to man himself.”

Paul, in vivid fashion, is exhorting his readers not to allow one's freedom in Christ to give legalism or the former way of life the resources it needs. Nor is it to be a springboard to draw them away from the life they have been living. The *flesh*, as used by Paul on this occasion, is as Bertram described a malicious opponent and seeks a pretext in freedom. A person's personal desires must not supercede the responsibility to serve others. Paul exhorts his readers not to use their freedom "as a pretext for indulging the sinful nature" (Fung 1988:244).

A believer's freedom should spur them on to reach out to others based on love. Paul is now emphasizing a change in the ethical way these young believers are to conduct themselves: ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης δουλεύετε ἀλλήλοις – 'but for the sake of love, you (all) serve as slaves to each other.' Cousar (1982:129 italics original) states: "If freedom is the basis of Christian ethics, then *loving service is the proper exercise of freedom.*" Paul is exhorting these young groups to become servants because of love.

Paul states in v. 14a ὁ γὰρ πᾶς νόμος ἐν ἐνὶ λόγῳ πεπλήρωται, ἐν τῷ – 'For the whole law, in one word, has been completed in this.' In Romans 13:8b he states: γὰρ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἕτερον νόμον πεπλήρωκεν – 'By loving one another the law has been completed.' In Galatians, Paul states that the law is completed in the word that is to follow, while in Romans he clarifies by loving each other the law is completed. He continues by listing commandments from the 2nd table of the Decalogue, which is then followed by the negative statement of the 'Golden Rule.' These commandments that Paul quotes are all in the negative. He also uses a negative example of what they 'shall not do' in Galatians. In both Romans and Galatians, Paul

seems to indicate that love will be accompanied by beneficent deeds done for the 'other.' In Romans he does not give examples of what these deeds might be. But in Galatians he gives the example of the fruit of the Spirit in which love heads the list.

He admonishes the Galatians: εἰ δὲ ἀλλήλους δάκνετε καὶ κατεσθίετε, βλέπετε μὴ ὑπ' ἀλλήλων ἀναλωθῆτε – 'but if you (all) bite and devour each other, take notice so that by one another you might not be destroyed' (5:15). Paul chooses an interesting word for devour. The root κατεσθίω conveys the idea of acquiring things dishonestly, exploiting others or wasting resources. Lipson suggests that to 'love God with all of one's might', in essence, means to love him or her with all of one's resources. If Paul has this understanding of the *Shema* in mind, it is possible that he wants his readers not to refuse to use their available resources, materially or physically, to help another. It is a reminder of the Priest and Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan and of how these characters refused to utilize their resources for their neighbor. In Paul's words, these men devoured this wounded man.

The only sure way of not destroying each other is that we love others as ourselves. Longenecker (1990:244) states: "The hyperbole pictures wild beasts fighting so ferociously with one another that they end up annihilating each other...Perhaps their fighting stemmed from differing attitudes toward the Judaizers' activities among them. More likely, however, it was an expression of their own indigenous and loveless libertine attitude." It is through their freedom in Christ that they would have been able to love in a way that completely exhausts the demands

of the law. It is no wonder that Paul lists love as the first fruit of the Spirit. It is “not one virtue among a list of virtues, but the sum and substance of what it means to be a Christian” (Cousar 1982:131). The Torah is not nullified in Paul’s mind, but it is put in a new perspective by the call of love. Cousar (1982:132) concludes by stating: “It is not Christian love if I ignore the social, economic, or political forces which have created the conditions under which this one lives and offer only palliatives or perhaps only spiritual support. In such an instance love demands justice, and acts of love are transposed into efforts to bring relief from a form or forms or tyranny.”

These words demonstrate the new perspective that Paul called the young believers in Galatia, as well as calling the 21st century Church, to utilize its resources in order to bring about a theology of transformation. The biblical writers encouraged this through an alternative, changed society.

4.4.3 – Societal layers in Paul’s time

The city of Colosse had become a cosmopolitan city by the time of the early 60s CE, which is a proposed date for the writing of Colossians. According to Josephus (Ant 12. 147-53), Antiochus the Great transported 2,000 Jewish families from Babylon and Mesopotamia and settled them in Lydia and Phrygia (Barclay 1977: 93; O’Brien 1982: xxvii; Hendriksen 1987c: 14). The indigenous population of Phrygia worshiped numerous deities and the Jewish settlers were forced to mingle with this pagan population. The Jewish population was able to become prosperous in their immigrant status. By the year 62 BCE, the population of Jewish immigrants

numbered 50,000. These immigrants, due to their prosperity, sent the equivalent in gold to Jerusalem in order to pay their temple tax. Flaccus, the Roman governor, sought to end the exportation of gold by placing an embargo on these shipments. Barclay (1977:93) states that Flaccus “seized as contraband no less than twenty pounds of gold which was meant for the Temple at Jerusalem. That amount of gold would represent the Temple tax of no fewer than 11,000 people. Since women and children were exempt from the tax and since many Jews would successfully evade the capture of their money, we may well put the Jewish population as high as almost 50,000.”

In Colossians 3:11, Paul employs four pairs of class designations: Greek/Jew, circumcised/uncircumcised, barbarian/Scythian¹³³ and slave/free. All of these terms indicate a different layer of society. It would seem apparent that Paul is opening a window on an existing 1st century caste system. These designations are pairs of binary opposites. Three pairs of these opposites are frequently encountered throughout the NT. But who were these barbarians and Scythians? For the answer to this a study of where these people came from and their actions within society will be necessary. The use of selected apocryphal text will help to identify the behavior and reputation of these people.

All of these binary opposites represents and signifies barriers in the ancient world. If the Christian faith is to be an agent of a theology of transformation, then it must be a religion that prides itself in the removal of every barrier and obstacle within

¹³³ This pairing of Scythian and barbarian has another possibility as a contrast “between southern and northern peoples or even black and white” (Windisch 1983:552).

society. As the world faces many barriers today, especially with the influx of immigrants, so the ancient world was enamored with many obstacles of its own.

Barclay (1977:155) states: "The Scythian was notorious as the lowest of the barbarians; more barbarian than the barbarians, the Greeks called him; little short of being a wild beast, Josephus calls him." The Scythians were a great warring tribe. Michel (1983:447) states: "For 28 yrs. the Scythians terrorised the Near East but they did not establish any lasting kingdom." It is also believed they made an "alliance with Nabopolassar and helped in overthrowing the Assyrian empire" (Michel 1983:447). Michel (1983:447) continues: "The alliance of Babylonians, Medes and Scythians took Assur in 614, Nineveh in 612, and Haran in 609."

Michel (1983:448) states: "According to the saga of the Pontian Greeks Hercules visited the Scythians." Scythes was the son of Hercules and Echidna and began to rule a people who became known as the Scythians after him. The Scythians were known for their modesty in life, sharing of their goods but their reputation revolved around crudity, excess and ferocity (Michel 1983:448). They were also known for their practice of scalping their victims. Recounting the martyrdom of one of the seven brothers who defied Antiochus, 4 Maccabees 10:7 states: "Since they were not able in any way to break his spirit, they abandoned the instruments and scalped him with their fingernails in Scythian fashion." Hendriksen (1987d:154) gives a vivid description of the barbarity of the Scythian: "They drank the blood of the first enemy killed in battle, and made napkins of the scalps, and drinking bowls of the skulls of the slain. They had the most filthy habits and never washed with water."

The Greek name of the town of Beth-Shan, on the eastern edge of the Plain of Jezreel reflects a time of occupation by the Scythians. The Greek version of Beth-Shan is Σκυθόπολις, written Σκυθων πάλις. The Greek spelling of the noun for Scythian is Σκύθης. The ferocity and blood mongering reputation of the Scythians was well known in Palestine. 3 Maccabees 7:5 records: “They also led them out with harsh treatment as slaves, or rather as traitors, and, girding themselves with a cruelty more savage than that of Scythian custom, they tried without any inquiry or examination to put them to death.” According to Michel (1983:448) this “royal letter condemns the tyranny of the enemies of the Jews who slay their victims without investigation and in so doing behave so cruelly that they surpass the Scythians in ferocity.”

The Scythians bore the reputation of being more barbarian than the barbarian. So who were these people compared to the Scythians? The basic meaning of the word βάρβαρος is ‘stammering,’ ‘stuttering,’ or ‘uttering unintelligible sounds.’ The most important usage of this word is ‘of a strange speech,’ or ‘the one who speaks a strange language.’ An article written by Pius Adesanmi appeared in the February 22, 2008, *Cape Argus*, page 15, entitled ‘Black SA has turned old friends into foes.’ In this article Adesanmi writes:

Makwerekwere is the derogatory term used by Black South Africans to describe non-South African blacks. It reminds one of how the ancient Greeks referred to foreigners whose language they did not understand as the Barbaroi. To the Black South African, makwerekwere refers to Black immigrants from the rest of Africa, especially Nigerians. I was confounded by the

fact that Black South Africa had begun to manufacture its own k*****s so soon after apartheid.

These words ('manufacture its own k*****s so soon after apartheid') echo what Kuykendall refers to as the absorption of the oppressor within the oppressed. Kuykendall (2005:18) elaborates:

The situation of oppression produces an adhesion to, and identification with, the oppressor. The oppressed absorb the oppressors within themselves. This impairs the perceptions of the oppressed about themselves and their situation. At this point, the oppressed do not see themselves as the antithesis of the oppressors, but rather see the oppressor as a model. This partly explains why the oppressed occasionally become oppressors or sub-oppressors of their friends, associates, and companions; and why the oppressed are attracted toward the oppressor's way of life striving to resemble, imitate, and follow the oppressor. In this way, the oppressor lives within the oppressed...This adhesion to the oppressor creates within the oppressed a fear of freedom.

Being unable to disassociate oneself from the stigma and trauma of oppression or barbarianism or Scythianism will lead a person to actually become what they most loathe: oppressor, barbarian, or Scythian.

The understanding of barbarian as one 'who speaks a strange language' naturally evolves to signify 'one of a strange race.' According to Windisch (1983:547), the phrase "ο βάρβαροι are the other peoples who are different in nature, poor in cul-

ture, or even uncultured, whom the Greeks hold at arms length, and over who they are destined to rule.” Those who are poor or even uncultured lead one to an ideology of those who are “wild,’ ‘crude,’ ‘fierce,’ ‘uncivilised” (Windisch 1983:548).

Windisch interprets the pairings in verse 11 as an indication of various tiers within society. Windisch (1983:552) understands the pairings of Greek/Jew and circumcised/uncircumcised as the tier representative “of nationality and of salvation history and religion.” The pairing of slave/free indicates the sociological layer of the 1st century. The most difficult pairing to comprehend is Scythian/barbarian. This layer of society is likely suggesting the racial element of society (Windisch 1983:552).

Hendriksen (1987d:152,153) suggests a similar delineation of these binary opposites. The Greek/Jew and circumcision/uncircumcision represents the racial-religious layer. He designates Scythian/barbarian as the cultural tier of society. Hendriksen agrees with Windisch that slave/free comprises the social aspect of 1st century society.

Leviticus 19 outlined a theology of transformation that would, in theory, abolish all barriers that could possibly divide society – racial, religious, cultural and social. O’Brien (1982:192) calls this obliteration of societal barriers as the ‘new humanity.’ These known social distinctions in the 1st century demonstrate “the kind of frictions the Christian faith had to overcome” (O’Brien 1982:192). The 21st century has ushered in its own unique ‘frictions’ through economic and forced migration otherwise known as globalization.

The final phrase of verse 11 reads: “but the all and in all (is) Christ.” This phrase is to be understood in two halves. The first half states that Christ is ‘absolutely everything’ or ‘all that matters.’ The second half (‘in all’) should be understood that Christ “permeates and indwells all members of the new man, regardless of race, class or background” (O’Brien 1982:192). This phrase emphasizes the essential element for a theology of transformation to become a barrier-obliterating process. Christ as ‘all that matters’ “guarantees the creation and gradual perfection in each and in all of ‘the new man, who is being renewed for full knowledge according to the image of him who created him’” (Hendriksen 1987d:154).

4.5 – James’ use of Leviticus 19

It is apparent that James made conscious use of Leviticus 19:12-18 as indicated by the correlating verse: Lev. 19:13-James 5:4; Lev. 19:15-James 2:1, 9; Lev. 19:18b-James 2:8. A brief discussion of these three references to Leviticus 19:12-18, will demonstrate James’ interpretation and application to the socio-contextual situation in which he wrote.

James addressed his letter to the ‘twelve tribes in the Dispersion.’ This is a clear indication that his intended readers were Jewish. Schmidt (1983:98) states: “It refers in the first instance to the Jewish dispersion, i.e., to the scattered Jews living outside Palestine.” Kistemaker (1987:7) asserts: “If we assume that James wrote his epistle to the Jewish Christians who were persecuted following the death of Stephen, the conclusion is that this epistle dates from the first part of the first century.” James would have been aware that these people were living as immigrants

in a foreign land and possibly existing as indentured servants. They were probably living in poverty and were at the mercy of rich landowners for their subsistence. It is plausible that these people are in the same situation as those to whom Paul addressed his letter to the Colossians.

4.5.1 – James 2:1-13 – Partiality rules when impartiality should be the dominate force.

The writer of Leviticus 19:15 warns his readers that they are not to be moved by pity because a person is of low status (poor). The readers are also cautioned not to favor a powerful person. To do either one of these would be the cause of a great injustice. Justice must be administered equally and fairly to all tiers of society. James on the other hand biases his interpretation toward the rich. προσωπολημψία originally meant to accept a person with favor or in a positive manner. But the use of the word soon began to have negative connotations. Barclay (1976:63) states: “It soon began to mean, not so much to favour a person, as to show favouritism, to allow oneself to be unduly influenced by a person’s social status or prestige or power or wealth.” Sirach 10:23 states: “It is not right to despise an intelligent poor man, nor is it proper to honor a sinful (rich) man.” Barclay (1976:63) asserts: “The Old and New Testaments unite in condemning that partiality of judgment and favouritism of treatment which comes of giving undue weight to a man’s social standing, wealth or worldly influence.”

James employs the Greek word προσωπολημψία for ‘partiality’ in verse one. This word is a combination of two Greek words that express the Hebrew idiom אַשְׁרֵי פְּנֵים,

which can be translated 'to lift faces.' The Greek phrase λαμβάνειν πρόσωπον, which can be interpreted as 'to accept' or 'to take face,' is utilized to translate the aforementioned Hebrew idiom. This noun "is found for the first time in the NT but was probably in use already in Hellenistic Judaism" (Lohse 1983:779). God's judgment is referred to, as προσωποληψία to which there is no respect of person (Romans 2:11). His salvation is also readily available to Jew and Gentile alike without partiality. The Christian community is not to be an organism that shows partiality. James gives a poignant example in chapter 2:2-4 of showing favoritism based on outward appearances and social status.

James is stating that when an individual, whether they are poor or rich, comes to your 'church meeting,' there needs to be impartiality. He is reminding his readers that when one stands before God, they receive impartial, unbiased justice. The use of συναγωγή has divided opinion over whether James is discussing a legal setting where the church has gathered to engage in litigation¹³⁴, or if the people are assembled to worship.

James appears to be specifically warning his congregation against showing partiality while gathered for worship and not about unwarranted favoritism in legal matters. He uses the word συναγωγή, which translates 'assembly' by NRSV and ESV, while the NLT translates 'meeting' in verse 2. This noun means 'the congregation of the Jews' or 'synagogue.' The question might be considered as to the

¹³⁴Martin (1988:58) states: "[T]he scene in these verses is that of a congregation gathered to dispense justice and found Jewish parallels as evidence of the need for impartiality, which would be called in question by the litigants who dressed themselves in fine clothes to impress the assembly and were given good seats as a mark of respect... The forensic-social language reads more naturally if the scene is one of a church met to consider some legal problem." Davids (1982:109) continues in the same vein of thought: "The assembly is a judicial assembly of the church and both litigants are strangers to the process."

reason James uses συναγωγή instead of εκκλησια, which is the noun used for people gathered. Schrage delineates συναγωγή as used either for assembly or congregation in NT times. He (1983:828) states: “συναγωγή in the sense of assembly is extremely rare in the NT. We find it in Ac. 13:43 for an assembly of Jews to which the god-fearing proselytes mentioned there also had access.”

In Acts 9:2 the dispersed Jewish Christians are in the συναγωγάς (synagogues) at Damascus. Schrage (1983:828) states Acts 26:11 “also presupposes that in the first instance the Christians constituted themselves within the synagogue, and were not yet independent of the Jewish synagogue congregations.” This fact, along with an early dating of the book of James, would seem most appropriate as the place of meeting¹³⁵ for Jewish Christians, instead of assuming that James is addressing the church in litigation procedures.

The lemma εἰσέλθῃ is aorist active subjunctive 3ms. This lemma forms the protasis beginning in verse two: εἰάν γὰρ εἰσέλθῃ. The use of the subjunctive could indicate a hypothetical situation.¹³⁶ The ESV translates this phrase: ‘For if a man comes into’ and the NRSV translates it: ‘For if a person comes into.’ The NLT translates this phrase: ‘For instance, suppose someone comes into.’ All of these versions give the idea of a hypothetical situation instead of James addressing a current or persistent problem within the church.

¹³⁵ Schrage (1983:830) states: “In the overwhelming majority of instances συναγωγή in the NT means the Jewish building. At most one could only ask whether sometimes the gathering or congregation might not be implied too.”

¹³⁶ Martin (1988:63) asserts: “But there is no proof that the use of εἰάν in vv 2-3 constitutes a hypothetical situation. More than likely, James is referring to an oft-repeated scene and the use of εἰάν may be his way of conveying to his readers his hope (or conviction) that such ill-mannered practice will not take place any more.”

It is also possible that James is, in a polite way, recalling events that had happened in the past, and the certain possibility of the same occurring in the future, without naming names as Paul in 1 Cor. 1:11. The use of ἐάν + subjunctive signals the introduction of a third class conditional sentence into the text. Hewett (1986:170) states: “Because the subjunctive is used, some uncertainty exists as to the future fulfillment of the condition, but that is tempered by the distinct expectation that the condition will be realized.” If James is simply stating a hypothetical situation, it is remotely possible that the receiving audience had been aware of a similar situation that had previously occurred.

James’ apparent motivation is to contrast two individuals from opposite extremes of the social-economic spectrum. The first man is described as χρυσοδακτύλιος¹³⁷ – ‘gold-fingered’ – this Greek word is found nowhere else (Adamson 1976:106). During the time of James’ writing, the ring was the sign of considerable social status (Martin 1988:61; Adamson 1976:106). He is depicted as wearing ἐσθῆτι λαμπρᾷ – ‘clothes glamorous.’ λαμπρᾷ can also mean elegant, shining, or sparkling. This type of clothing is descriptive of a senator or possibly a person seeking office as a magistrate (Martin 1988:61). If the lemma εἰσέλθῃ is referring to a hypothetical situation then Davids (1982:108) is spot on in interpreting the description of this man dressed in elegant clothes “plus the ring form a composite stylized description of a wealthy person.”

The second man is described as πτωχὸς which means poor, destitute, or worthless. He is dressed in ῥυπαρᾷ ἐσθῆτι – ‘filthy clothes.’ The adjective ρυπαρᾶ can

¹³⁷ This word is a *hapax legomenon*, which is a word or a phrase occurring only once in a text or other written record.

mean dirty or shabby. (It also has moral implications of being morally impure, vile-ness or moral filthiness.) James is utilizing this hypothetical situation to draw his congregation's attention to the stark realities of the super rich and the utterly destitute. The congregation has to face the reality of a possible future situation. If they side with the rich then they are guilty of participating in partiality. They are also joining alliances with those who are opponents and oppressors. This illustration serves as a warning to these congregants that biasing themselves against the poor, simply because they are poor, is to place themselves in direct confrontation with YHWH.

By paying special attention to the rich man, the incrimination of partiality is heightened. The verb is addressed to the entire assembly (2 person plural aorist subjunctive): 'you (all) might pay special attention to.' The attention is focused on seating the rich man in a place of high status or honor, while having the poor man stand in a place away from the speaker. The noun ὑποπόδιον represents a footstool and the poor man is directed to sit there on the floor which "suggests a rank of submission or disgrace...Whether he stands away from the speaker or at his feet, the poor man has received the brunt of the social snobbery and discrimination of those Christians in the synagogue" (Martin 1988:62). This noun also has a figurative meaning of being under someone's control.

The verb διακρίθητε in verse four is derived from the root διακρίνω. This root according to Buchsel (1984:947) is the "attitude, which the NT expresses, by διακρινεσθαι in the sense 'to doubt' is seen in prayer and action, not in reflective thought." The verb can also mean 'to prefer' or 'to make a distinction.' The NRSV

and ESV translate this lemma as ‘have you made distinctions.’ James uses the same verb stem in 1:6 twice – διακρινόμενος – ‘the one doubting.’ Martin (1988:63) states the use of διακρινεσθαι by James is a reflection of “the inner conflict of one who lacks firm faith. The instability mentioned suggests a person who is divided in his or her loyalties to God and the world.” In this verse the one doubting is as erratic and unpredictable as the waves of the sea driven by the wind. Likewise, the one who makes a distinction between the rich and the poor is equated with one whose faith is as unsure as the tossing of the waves.

Due to their partiality toward the rich the readers became κριταὶ διαλογισμῶν πονηρῶν – ‘judges of morally corrupt pondering or thinking within oneself.’¹³⁸ The same verb stem is found in Luke 12:17 – διελογίζετο – ‘he thought’ (ESV) and of Mary’s consideration of the angel Gabriel’s message – ‘she tried to discern’ (ESV) or ‘she pondered’ (NRSV). It is possible that James had the injunction of Lev. 19:15 in mind: “You will not commit injustice by litigation, you will not disdain the reputation of the one of low social status and you will not inflate the reputation of the powerful, in righteousness you will govern your countryman.” This can be conjectured by the fact that James places this indictment in close proximity to verse eight which is a reference to Lev. 19:18 (Davids 1982:110; Adamson 1976:108).

James, in verses eight and 12, contrast two laws – ‘royal law’ and ‘law of liberty.’ James recalls Leviticus 19:18 and calls this commandment the ‘royal law.’ The phrase James employs for ‘royal law’ is νόμος βασιλικός. This is a common literary expression especially in ancient philosophy (Schmidt 1983b:591). Schmidt

¹³⁸ The noun διαλογισμός can also mean doubt. Martin (1988:63) states: “While faith means an unwavering trust in God, doubt implies that the professed believer trusts in riches for security.”

(1983b:591) states: “It signifies the law as given by the βασιλεύς. This controls access to him, and it thus invests with royal dignity...More generally it might refer to the predominant significance of law. Yet it is better to give it the more specific sense and thus to see in it a reference to God as the βασιλεύς who makes law.” Barclay suggests various meanings for the phrase ‘royal law.’ He (1976:69, italics original) elaborates: “It may mean the law which is of *supreme excellence*; it may mean *the law which is given by the King of the kings*; it may mean *the king of all laws*; it may mean *the law that makes men kings and is fit for kings*.”

The law in which verse nine has been transgressed is the ‘royal law.’ If an individual shows partiality then he or she is in direct violation of this law, which James alludes to the fact that God, as King, is the lawgiver. The Old Testament idea of ‘love’ is not an emotive response to a person but expresses itself in deeds done toward others. If a person favors the rich over the poor, then they are negatively stating, through actions, they love the rich more than the poor. If this is the case, then the verdict of guilty has been given and the violator has instantaneously become a transgressor of the law, which God or YHWH has established as his ideal for humanity.

James is commanding his readers: ‘ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου’ – ‘you will love your neighbor.’ James is addressing the individual reader signified by his use of the 2ms future. The idea of love is expressed in the OT verb אהב – ‘to love.’ This verb expresses or demonstrates love for another by deeds done for the one who is unable to do these for themselves, e.g. laws of gleaning, withholding of wages, bearing grudges, honest business ethics, etc. James uses the verb ἀγαπάω (‘to love’)

to express a similar idea. He demonstrates how love is to be expressed by giving the laborers their wages, praying for the sick and to restore a wayward brother (5:4, 14, 19).

James warns in verse nine that if a person προσωποληψία ('receives faces' or 'shows partiality'), he commits sin and is convicted as a transgressor. The word James uses for sin is ἁμαρτία and has the idea of missing the mark or ideal God desires for a person. The sin that James is warning his readers against is becoming enamored by a person's wealth, power or social status and influence. The law (Lev. 19:15) states that a person is to judge another by righteousness. This means to base one's judgment of their neighbor on honesty, justice and fairness despite their social status or influence. To show partiality is a violation of this law and thus brings retribution in the form of a transgressor (lawbreaker) of the law.

Verse 10 reiterates the consequences of becoming a lawbreaker. To break one law is to become a transgressor of the entire law. James illustrates this point by quoting two commandments in verse 11. The reversal of the commandments follows the sequence in the LXX. These commandments are steeped in ethical implications. Martin (1988:69) states: "These two commandments do not concern outward ritual but penetrate to the core of ethical behavior." These acts would be directed towards one's neighbor who is to be the object of love. The committing of these acts would be a sign that one does not love their neighbor thereby invoking the full penalty of the law.

The readers are admonished to ‘speak and...act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty’ (NRSV). Kistemaker (1987:84) states: “James is not interested in the content of the spoken word but rather in the act of speaking. He tells the readers to put word and deed together.” James uses the noun ἐλευθερίας for liberty. Paul uses this term in Romans for being free from sin, the law and death. Freedom that shows itself in deeds of love is a freedom that is divorced from the law (Schlier 1983:501). Schlier (1983:501) asserts freedom is the “law of Christ (Gl. 6:2). Its claim is that of the accomplished love of Christ. It is thus the ‘perfect law of liberty’ (Jm. 1:25; cf. 2:12). It is the Law of God which is active in the sphere of freedom and which constantly mediates freedom. Hence its fulfillment brings blessedness with it. We may thus say that the proof of freedom from the Law is fulfillment of the law of liberty.” Kistemaker expands the NRSV’s translation as ‘the law that gives freedom.’ He (1987:85) continues: “In the freedom of the law of love the child of God flourishes...The Christian, then, assesses every word he speaks and every deed he performs by the measure of God’s law. His entire life is governed by the law of love.” James rightly classifies this law as the ‘royal law.’

James clarifies how judgment is to be shown by quoting a common proverb (Davids 1982:118). The LXX commonly uses ἔλεος to translate the Hebrew רַחֵם. Bultmann (1983:478) states: “In the OT רַחֵם denotes an attitude of man or God which arises out of a mutual relationship. It is the attitude which the one expects of the other in this relationship, and to which he is pledged in relation to him.” This mutual relationship is based on the covenantal relations that exist between people. Bultmann (1983:478) asserts: “רַחֵם is not primarily a disposition but a helpful act

corresponding to a relationship of trust, and faithfulness as the appropriate attitude.” In later Judaism, the Rabbis understood $\tau\sigma\eta$ to be equated with acts of love (Bultmann 1983:481). $\tau\sigma\eta$ can also be understood as being the equivalent of God’s grace and mercy.

Bultmann interprets verse 13a as James’ way of utilizing the traditional Jewish formula or as Davids understands this to be a ‘free-floating proverb.’ Bultmann (1983:483) asserts that the use of $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ in this passage can be understood as ‘mercy’ as well as ‘loving-kindness.’ Sirach 28:2-4 captures the essence of this noun: “Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. Does a man harbor anger against another, and yet seek for healing from the Lord? Does he have no mercy toward a man like himself, and yet pray for his own sins?” The prophets Hosea, Micah and Zechariah admonished the people of Israel to love mercy, act justly, show compassion and walk humbly with their God. James is, in the same way, exhorting his readers to show mercy and compassion laced with justice toward the poor. Sider (2005:62) states: “The rich often neglect or oppose justice because it demands that they end their oppression and share with the poor.” Are the words of these prophets and apostles falling on deaf ears today as they did in their day?

4.5.2 – James 5:1-6 – The riches of this world cry out in protest against the exploitation of the marginalized.

James opens his reprimand in this chapter by utilizing the phrase $\omicron\iota\ \pi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\omicron\iota$ for the generic classification of the rich. It is in stark contrast to his description in

chapter two. There he describes a specific rich person as ‘gold-fingered’ wearing ‘elegant clothing.’ This description represented a person of considerable social status and possibly a member of the senate or one seeking public office. The word James has chosen in chapter five signifies someone who has an abundance of material goods or wealth.

The major concern that James has with the rich, not with riches, is the way in which they acquired their wealth – exploitation of the τῶν ἐργατῶν (hired laborer), τῶν θερισάντων (the ones who harvest grain) and τὸν δίκαιον (the righteous – the ones following God’s law)¹³⁹. The wealth and material goods of these people are now crying out against them like a μαρτύριον which acts as a witness that is providing evidence of the Rich’s exploitation of these people.

The way in which James describes the fate of the material goods of the rich seems to indicate they were hoarded so that the poor or marginalized were denied access to them. It indicates the lack of distribution of these goods wasted while those around lived in want.¹⁴⁰ James also focuses on the three major avenues that one could use to acquire wealth in the first century. He alludes to grain supply, clothing and precious metals. Their abundance σέσηπεν (‘has rotted’ – perfect tense), τὰ ἱμάτια ὑμῶν σιτόβρωτα γέγονεν (‘your garments have been eaten by

¹³⁹ The inter-testamental writing of The Wisdom of Solomon 2:6-13 comments: “Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that exist, and make use of the creation to the full as in youth. Let us take our fill of costly wine and perfumes and let no flower of spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither. Let none of us fail to share in our revelry, everywhere let us leave signs of enjoyment, because this is our portion, and this our lot. Let us oppress the righteous poor man; let us not spare the widow nor regard the gray hairs of the aged. But let our might be our law of right, for what is weak proves itself to be useless. Let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions; he reproaches us for sins against the law, and accuses us of sins against our training. He professes to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a child of the Lord.”

¹⁴⁰ This is a reminder of the parable that Jesus told of the Rich Fool who built larger barns to store his grain and goods. The end of it all was that riches rob him of his soul and he lost everything.

moth larvae’) and your gold and silver κατίωται (‘have become tarnished’). It is ὁ ἰὸς αὐτῶν (‘the tarnish of them’) that is the foolproof evidence of the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Barclay (1976:116) states: “Then comes the grim sarcasm. It is a fine treasure indeed that any man who concentrates on these things is heap- ing up for himself at the last. The only treasure he will possess is a consuming fire which will wipe him out.” Kistemaker sees this as a window into the judgment of God. He (1987:158) comments: “James alludes to the judgment of God that is coming upon them. That judgment they cannot escape.”

James begins his admonition to the rich with a stern warning – ἄγε νῦν (Coming soon! Pay attention! Now listen!). What are they to expect in the not so distant fu- ture? ταλαιπωρίαῖς ὑμῶν ταῖς ἐπερχομένας – ‘the hardships that are coming upon you.’ Because of this, the rich are to κλάσσετε (weep as in a ritual mourning – im- perative) and ὀλολύζοντες (crying aloud, wailing, howling – present active parti- ciple). Kistemaker (1987:155) likens James to an Old Testament prophet by his pronouncement of the impending fate of the oppressive habits of the rich. Barclay (1976:115 italics original) commenting on the participle ὀλολύζοντες , “which is onomatopoetic and carries its meaning in its very sound. It means even more than to wail, it means *to shriek*...and depicts the frantic terror of those on whom the judgment of God has come.”

What are the rich being charged with? – ἀπεστερημένος (having been defrauded, cheated or withheld)¹⁴¹. What is it that is being withheld? – μισθός (wage). James

¹⁴¹ Kistemaker (1987:161) comments on the perfect passive participle of ἀποστερεω denoting “an action that began in the past and continues in the present.” The act of defrauding has become a lifestyle for the rich in their exploits of the poor.

is drawing attention to his readers by using $\iota\delta\omicron\nu$. This is introduced to liven up a Hebrew narrative and is used to emphasize an idea or call attention to a detail. James seems to say, 'Look! Can you not see the distress you are causing the poor and helpless? Do you not know they need their wages daily to survive? Your deprivation of wages are crying out against you along with the destitute pleas of your laborers.' Petersen writes in *The Message*: "All the workers you've exploited and cheated cry out for judgment. The groans of the workers you used and abused are a roar in the ears of the Master Avenger." Kistemaker (1987:159) states: "James takes the readers out to the open fields, as it were, where no one can hide. Here they can see the injustice poor people suffer at the hands of the rich."

The condemnation comes via the injustice done to these workers. This section echoes the writer's imperative in Leviticus 19:13: "You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning" (ESV). The prophet Jeremiah writes in 22:13: "Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice, who makes his neighbor serve him for nothing and does not give him his wages" (ESV). The inter-testamental writers spoke strongly to this issue. Sirach 34:22 states: "To take away a neighbor's living is to murder him; to deprive an employee of his wages is to shed blood." Tobit 4:14 admonishes: "Do not hold over till the next day the wages of any man who works for you, but pay him at once; and if you serve God you will receive payment."

Who is it in heaven that is hearing these cries? The one who hears on the part of the oppressed is κυρίου σαβαώθ – Lord Sabaoth. This is the transliteration of the Hebrew into Greek. The ESV translates this as the ‘Lord of host’ while the NIV translates it as ‘Lord Almighty.’ This title expresses “God the omnipotent is on the side of the downtrodden. He puts his majestic power to vindicate his people and to mete out swift justice to their adversaries” (Kistemaker 1987:160).

4.6 – Summary

It was argued at the beginning of this chapter that the author of Leviticus could have been using ring composition as a rhetorical device. The use of this rhetorical device opens new avenues of interpreting and applying scripture. If this was the case, then the thrust of the chapter shifts from holiness to love. If the author’s intent was to admonish his recipient to love one’s neighbor, then the emphasis on love becomes the path to which individuals journey towards holiness or godliness.

The gospel writers wrote their accounts to a diverse audience: Jewish immigrants, Gentiles, and Messianic Jews. Jesus addressed commonly held issues of prejudice represented by well-known phrases upheld by the religious institution of his day. Jesus demonstrated a desire to establish an alternative social environment. This society would be devoid of favoritism due to status or ethno-linguistic or socio-religious biases. He affirmed that all enjoyed the Father’s love whether they were considered good or evil by the present-day society.

Jesus was basically calling for a maturing of the religious elite and his followers. People are to love without limits and meet needs of those who might cross their path. One becomes a neighbor when the wounded-ness of others stirs compassion deep within due to their plight. For this process to come to fruition, humanity in general and the Church in specific must realize the purpose for which they were created: to demonstrate love through acts and deeds of kindness.

When Jesus was pressed to reduce the Law to its finite point he was unable to separate the Shema and Leviticus 19:18b. For him it seems that these two are inseparable. To love God is to be demonstrated through acts of benevolence to those less fortunate. By doing this would be an act of love and compassion to someone who has become a neighbor. These acts must be done with all of one's being and resources. If someone has something that another is in need of and is unwilling to release this object, an opportunity to become a neighbor has been passed by. These acts of kindness have the potential to form the foundation for a theology of transformation. The performance of these acts will insure that the ethos of a nation, a community or a person will forever be transformed in the light of another's needs.

Paul also wrote to Jewish immigrants, Gentiles and proselytes. He has an affinity for utilizing love in his writings. His understanding is that in loving each other the law stands fulfilled. Paul accentuates this fact by suggesting that the Decalogue is summed up or brought to a head by the fact that loving one's neighbor does not do wrong. By expressing the Golden Rule in the negative Paul strongly affirmed

that loving one's neighbor is an imperative that expresses itself in acts of kindness toward others.

Paul not only postulates that love is the fulfillment of the Law but that love performed out of freedom causes the free man or woman to become servants to others. Being servants of each other allows the utilization of resources for the good of those who have become neighbors. This has the effect of reducing the risk of exploiting those in vulnerable positions of life.

Insight was given into the various layers of 1st century society. The various terms employed indicate that sociological, national, racial, cultural or religious barriers must be eradicated. These same barriers exist today. Centuries have past and social transformation of these relational obstacles remain elusive. An ethos reorientation seems the only viable option through a theology of transformation. The destruction of these social barriers has the potential to usher in a new humanity the likes of which before have been consciously or unconsciously shunned.

James approached the Leviticus passages from the eyes of Jewish immigrants. He warns against elevating those who are the very ones administering injustice and oppression. He is warning them, or perhaps reminding them, of a scene common to the readers of showing undue favoritism to the rich and powerful in the synagogues or Christian worship. He demonstrates this by describing the poles of the socio-economic strata. To side with the rich would signal participation in partiality and forming alliances with their oppressors. Opposing the poor, would be juxtaposed to the compassion of YHWH.

If a person is in violation of the 'royal law' (love of others), by exploiting the less fortunate, that individual stands in judgment and is guilty of transgressing the law and will be judged by the law of freedom. This is a judgment James warns cannot be avoided. The material goods, which were gained on the backs of cheap labor, will be the very witness that speaks out against these exploiters. Before James the message of the prophets echoed the same sentence against those who sow injustice. In the end justice will be meted out by the Lord of hosts (Sabaoth).

Chapter five will be an analysis of the events that transpired during the two weeks of xenophobic violence of May 2008 in South Africa. Various explanations from a host of commentators will be elucidated as to the reasons for this violence. Also unheeded prophetic voices will be given a platform and the message which these prophets delivered that was ignored will also be 'heard.' Attention will also be given to the Southern African Migration Project document 50 which highlights the tendency of South Africans to be predisposed to xenophobic mentalities.