

# WITNESS THROUGH HOLINESS

## GET READY!

- This passage starts with a warning of what's to come – “prepare your minds for action” (NIV loses anazōnnyimi = “gird up your loins”) – THINKING AHEAD!

*As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'*

- This is a quote from **Leviticus**, from the giving of the Law.
- Holiness/law → a long list of stuff not to do?
- But that's not an accurate picture. How does Peter expand this? “Live as foreigners”.

## PURPOSE OF THE LAW

- How to get our heads around this?
- It's popular to say that Christianity isn't a **list of dos and don'ts** – but these very passages that Peter refers to in Leviticus are long lists of dos and don'ts!
- Lev 11 – food purity laws; Lev 19 – mostly relationships within community; Lev 20 – mostly laws on sexual relationships.
  - **Some of these are found throughout Scripture**, not just in the period of the Law – for instance, not hating your fellow man, speaking truthfully, seeing the marriage relationship as an exclusive covenant.
  - **Some occur only from the giving of the Law through the rest of the OT**, some are explicitly set aside by Jesus, and many more are seen as no longer binding by the council of Jerusalem in Acts 15.
  - How does that work?
- Three lenses for the Laws:
  - **Nature/character of God** – God is a covenant God, so don't break covenants (marriage, truth/lies, ...)
  - **Understanding of the world** – we were slaves and foreigners but God chose us, so don't mistreat slaves or foreigners; all our possessions and land were a gift from God, so every 50 years we give property back to the original owners.
  - **Reminder of God in everyday life** – tassels on clothing to remind them of commandments; but also not eating camels or rabbits. This reminder was for them AND for others – why do people live this way?

## OK, BUT WHAT ABOUT US?

- Really helpful when reading OT Law to remember what Paul writes in Gal 3:24 – **the Law was a guardian until Christ came!**
  - When we parent younger children, we have to start with behaviour. “Don’t hit your sister” comes before a full understanding of good relationships; “Pick up your toys” comes before an understanding of responsibility. Through rules we start to work on the heart.
  - As children grow up, this changes. We start to work more on their understanding, and encourage them to work that out in their actions. Understanding responsibility and stewardship is the motivation for tidying their room; understanding their bodies is the motivation for eating healthily. And so we hope that when they leave home, and have a huge range of choices to make, they’ll make lots of sound choices based on good understanding. Through the heart, they work out the rules.
- The Mosaic Law taught Jews to orient their whole lives to be “God-first”, in ways that were both visible and invisible. And it taught them to choose God’s ways over competing customs, fashions and culture.
- It also taught them to live lives that pointed to the very real existence of a loving, just, covenantal God.
- But God’s people were always supposed to grow out of The Mosaic Law.

## SO 1 PETER THEN...

- So we receive this call to set aside ignorance and evil, and to live as foreigners.
  - But we don’t have 613 commandments. A few are timeless moral rules, but for most of them, we’re supposed to study them and then work out how they play out in our lives.
  - Like the Jews, we are called to march to a different drum – to be motivated by different things.
  - We’re called to believe in things we don’t see – not just believe with our heads, but with our actions.
  - This comes out in all kinds of ways – e.g. HG discussion on Amazon Prime.
- Why should we be different?
  - God is impartial – “he doesn’t excuse bad behaviour by favourites while picking on others, so we all need to live up to the family name” (ABC)
  - **Our lives have been valued as worth far more than silver or gold, so don’t sell out for silver or gold!**
  - Our faith is not in worldly things, but in God.
  - We are made for eternity, and have an eternal destiny. Rope illustration.

## SO, WHAT DO OUR LIVES SAY?

- If I spend all my time focused on this little piece, are you really going to believe that I have a full rope?
- My parents are cycling advocates and climate change campaigners. Go to their house, and there's an ugly heat pump outside. They drive a Prius that can't fit much gear in the boot. They cycle in the rain.
- In the same way, the way we live points people to what we really believe.

## THINKING TIME!

- What are the different areas of our lives that display our priorities?
- What are our lives like in those areas?