

## Leviticus 19:19

Ye shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed (diverse) seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.

By Don Haney

The KJV uses the word “diverse” where the NKJV quoted above uses the word “mixed.” While the modern NKJV reads much better today, “diverse” is a much more accurate translation of the Hebrew, and it better explains the spirit of this Statute. Here we have God’s principle of separation of the *diverse* kinds. If the spirit of this Statute was applied today, much of the genetic altering (where the genes of “different kinds” are manipulated and forcefully integrated) would not happen, and our foods would be more healthy for it. The spirit of God’s laws in Genesis, where each only reproduces after it’s kind, would be the followed to our benefit. Neither would we mix diverse seed in our crops or animals. Further, people would also be more careful in picking their mates, friends and business partnerships! When God’s Statutes are followed, blessings and harmony are the natural result.

How would this world be different, if God’s Statutes were followed in spirit and letter?  
How many diseases do we cause, without even knowing it, because of disobeying both the SPIRIT and the letter of God’s laws and Statutes?

Now let’s consider the Statute quoted above from Lev.19:19. God gave us this law out of love and for our good. It will be helpful to begin with a review some of the material in the expanded version of Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary for this verse:

*[Thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed.] This also was directed against an idolatrous practice-- namely, that of the ancient Zabians, or fire-worshippers, who sowed different seeds, accompanying the act with magical rites and invocations; and commentators have generally thought the design of this and the preceding law was to put an end to the unnatural lusts and foolish superstitions which were prevalent among the pagan.*

*But the reason of the prohibition was probably deeper; because those who have studied the diseases of land and vegetables tell us that the practice of mingling seeds is injurious both to flowers and to grains. If the various genre of the natural order Gramineoe, which includes the grains and the grasses, should be sown in the same field, and flower at the same time, so that the pollen of the two flowers is mixed, a spurious seed will be the consequence, called by the farmers chess, and is always inferior, and unlike either of the two grains that produced it, in size, flavour, and nutritious principles. Independently of contributing to disease the soil, they never fail to produce the same in animals and men that feed on them' (Whitelaw).*

*[Neither shall a garment ... of linen and woollen come upon thee.] This precept, like the other two with which it is associated, was in all probability designed to root out some superstition; and accordingly Maimonides (Townley's `More Nevochim,' ch. xii.) informs us that he found it enjoined in old magical books that the idolatrous priests should clothe themselves in garments of linen and woollen mixed together, for the purpose of performing their ceremonies. A **secret virtue was attributed to this mixture**. But it seems to have had a further meaning. The law, it is to be observed, did not prohibit the Israelites wearing many different kinds of cloths together, **but only the two specified**; and the observations and researches of modern science have proved that `wool, when combined with linen, increases its power of passing off the electricity from the body.*

*In hot climates it brings on malignant fevers, and exhausts the strength, and when passing off from the body, it meets with the heated air, inflames and excoriates like a blister' (Whitelaw)."* (emphasis mine throughout)

In other words, WEAVING WOOL WITH LINEN INTO THE SAME CLOTH, when used in a garment, CAUSES EXCESSIVE HEAT, SWEAT AND IRRITATION TO THE BODY - beyond what wool alone would do!

Thus it would be nearly impossible for a priests wearing a wool-linen garment to keep his body pure (clean) in the service of God in the temple. Since the priests were to keep themselves clean and free from sweat, God forbid them from mixing wool and linen in the cloth their garments were made from.

Ezek 44:17 And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, while they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within.

18 They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; **they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causes sweat.** (KJV)

Since pagan priests practiced this combination, thinking it mystically gave them special magical powers, and God wanting Israel to come out of pagan religion and pagan mystical forms of witchcraft, and to keep them clean and healthy - God forbid His people from wearing that diverse combination. This is not to say that mixing different fabrics together, or different fibers into a fabric are wrong. **Only those opposed to each other – like wool and linen – were forbidden.** Cotton for example, mixes well with wool, as do many other fibers. And that elastic band in your briefs – it's just fine as well☺. So let's avoid adding to or taking away from God's Words, as God's Statutes plainly tell us! (Deut.4:2 & Deut.12:32) We have much we can learn from God. The less we manipulate His Words by IMPUTING, the more pure and accurate and helpful for us they are.

What else does this Statute in Lev.19:19 teach us? I believe the bigger spirit of this law has to do with not only paganism – BUT THE UNNATURAL AND DIVERSE UNION OF GOD'S CREATION – WHETHER IT BE BEASTS, THE SEED OF THE FIELD OR GOD'S PEOPLE!

My friends, we would do well to remember a few rules of homiletics:

- a) Always study scripture in it's context.
- b) Let the clear passes on a subject interpret those less clear or less complete on the same subject.
- c) Apply the principle of Here a little, there a little. (Isa.28:9-10)

God tells us through Isaiah to combine His teachings for a more complete and accurate picture of God's Word. We must remember to look "here" in God's word for little truth, and combine it with "there" a little truth in another passage of scripture. So let's do that now.

The Rabbi's know to interpret Lev.19:19 in light of Deut.22:10-11. The teachings of Leviticus came before those of Deuteronomy. Exodus, Numbers and Leviticus began from the exodus out of Egypt and through out their wandering in the wilderness. Then after Israel's wandering in the wilderness was about complete, Moses recapped, reminded, explained **and expounded** many of God's Statutes, Judgments and Testimonies from Exodus, Numbers and Leviticus - in what is called Deuteronomy. In this summary of the previous teachings of the Pentateuch, Moses often explains these previous passages by adding a bit of clarification by way of additional information and by context. Thus Deuteronomy complements the previous three books, like the gospels complement one another. So let's see the parallel Statute to Lev.19:19 in Deuteronomy.

Deut 22:9 You shall not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.

10 You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together.

11 You shall not wear a garment of divers sorts, of wool and linen together.

Notice verse 9 gives us the point of these Statutes of separation – to protect us from DEFILEMENT! There are certain types of seed, that if mixed together will cause them to be defiled because they are DIVERSE in nature. Others can actually complement each other.

God’s point is to avoid the unnatural harmful union of things that don’t complement each other. (This especially applies to people, as we will see!)

This word “divers sorts” in Hebrew is “shah-at-naze,” which literally means spun linen and wool into one fabric. This is a “diverse” mixture where **the two fabrics are not compatible!** Either material by itself is fine. It is the combination that is a problem.

The word translated “diverse,” or “mixed” from the Hebrew is “kala`” which comes from the root word meaning to refrain or restrain, to hold back and restrict.

This is talking about mixing seeds, or fabrics, or oxen – OR PEOPLE in a way that will HOLD THEM BACK causing defilement, friction, and a constant struggle. Other mixtures that are not “diverse” in nature are not prohibited.

Notice here this principle is expanded and explained by Moses by placing it right alongside the prohibition against the unnatural union of yoking the ox and the ass together. The spirit of this statute is against any unnatural or contrary union. It is also against imitating the pagan mystical practices – which is another form of UNNATURAL UNION BETWEEN BAAL AND GOD – paganism and God’s Truth.

That is why Paul made the comparison he did when referring to these Statutes. Notice Paul uses this Statute of not yoking an ox and an ass together (a clean animal with an unclean animal – see Deut.22:10 & Lev.11), to teach God’s principle of not yoking believers together with unbelievers.

2 Cor 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore **come out from among them, and be ye separate**, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (KJV)

Paul was teaching God’s Statutes and their spiritual application to the new Gentile converts in Corinth! Paul showed the principle of not mixing things that are diverse in nature to teach against harmful marriages between Christians and those who don’t accept Christ as the Messiah, or who worship a god other than the LORD. (Sadly, these verses have been twisted beyond what is written to deny marriages between people who come from a different fellowship in Christ, but who share the same beliefs. Sadly, it has also been ignored by many who put their will over Gods to their own hurt.) You can also be unequally yoked in business relationships or friendships. As Paul said: “Do not be deceived, bad company corrupts good character.” (1 Cor.15:33)

The Bible shows us that the main point is how the principle of these laws APPLY TO PEOPLE, even more than to mixing diverse seed, fabrics or animals!

Paul often used God's Statutes to teach God's valuable laws of love to the Gentiles and Jews alike, in a way that makes it clear that they DO apply today, and that they are more **for people** than animals or agriculture! Paul also used the Statute of not muzzling the ox that treads out the grain (Duet.25:4), to defend the principle of receiving an income for the work in the gospel by way of their offerings.

1 Cor 9:4 Do we have no right to eat and drink?

5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?

6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?

7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

8 Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about?

10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? (NKJ)

Notice that Paul makes the good point (verses 9-10) that the primary reason for this Statute is to teach the principle FOR OUR SAKES – not for the sake of the oxen! It is FOR OUR SAKES that God gives us these Statutes – BECAUSE HE IS CONCERNED FOR US!!!

Let's not make the shortsighted mistake of limiting God's Laws ONLY to the strictness of the letter. Let's do like Jesus and His apostles did and magnify God's laws showing the principle and spiritual intent of them, because as Paul said, they are FOR US by a loving concerned God. They are our wisdom and our heritage, and keeping them will make us a wise and understanding people! (Deut.4:5-9)

If we practice the SPIRIT of these Statutes, we strive to keep ourselves clean from unnatural opposing unions in our business partnerships, marriages with those who are contrary to God, and even unrestrained friendships in the world. We will also keep our livestock and seed pure and healthy, as farmers or agricultural stewards.

This is the same spiritual principle of law that Christ inspired John to record for us in the book of Revelation.

Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (KJV)

If one has open eyes and is familiar with God's Statutes, Judgments and Testimonies, they will soon see that the book of Revelation is literally FILLED with God's Statutes, Testimonies and Judgments! When you read Revelation do you recognize God's Statutes? Can you see that much of the book of Revelation comes from or is rooted in the Pentateuch?

God's Statutes are given to us by a loving God **for our good**. (Duet.6:24) When we keep them like Jesus and the apostles did, we come to know the very character of God. (1 Jn.2:3-6) Let's do it!