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## **Leviticus 19**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Leviticus 19.

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### FOCUS: GENERAL LAWS FOR ISRAEL AND TREATING STRANGERS

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**Topics:** this chapter focuses on laws concerning:

- Honouring mother and father, keeping the Sabbath, idols and gods.
- Peace offerings, stealing, deceiving, lying and profaning God's name.
- Oppressing a neighbor and causing the deaf and blind to stumble.
- Being just to all people, slandering a neighbor and bearing grudges.
- Seeking vengeance, and different kinds of cattle, seeds and garments
- Sex and slave women, eating blood and interpreting omens.
- Cutting the beard, tattoos and making a daughter a prostitute.
- Mediums, familiar spirits, wizards and just weights and measures.

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**INTRODUCTION:** the book of Leviticus is about ceremonial rules and civil laws that God gave to Moses after He had given him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

- These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. (Lev. 26:46).

Either on Mount Sinai or when he met with him in the Tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting) when they were in the wilderness near the Mountain. Moses was to give these ceremonial laws to the Levitical priesthood, they embrace rules concerning sacrifices, offerings and worship; the ordination of Aaron and his sons and their ceremonial cleanness; the Day of Atonement; feasts and holy days and the Year of Jubilee. The civil and social laws and laws of justice he was to give to the government of Israel to implement within their society. The ceremonial and civil laws were not given to the secular world but are laws God gave to the nation of Israel. The central message is that God is holy and requires His people to be holy. The book also shows that God graciously provides atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the giving of the Law (about 1445 B.C.).

**NOTE:** For information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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**The previous chapter:** speaks against uncovering the nakedness of a close relative, a father and mother, a father's wife, a step sister, a son's daughter and a sister by birth. A father or mothers' sister in law, a brother's wife, a daughter in law, a wife's sister, a woman during her menstrual uncleanness and against lying sexually with a neighbor's wife. Offering children to Molech, lying with a man as with a woman and lying with an animal. The chapter ends warning Israel not to commit any of these abominations lest the land becomes unclean and the LORD vomits them out.

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**BE HOLY**

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**LEVITICUS 19:1-2**

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- **Leviticus 19:1-2:** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>"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.

The laws that follow are intended as guards to protect God's chosen people from the defilements of the surrounding nations, many of them have been covered in previous chapters, but Moses is here rehearsing them here so that all of Israel clearly knows them.

**Speak to all the congregation:** (v2) obviously the entire nation of Israel could not be all spoken to at the same time. The expression, "speak to all the congregation," most likely means one of the following four ideas, Moses spoke to:

1. One tribe at a time, one after another.
2. The heads of the twelve tribes who then spoke to the heads of the families who then spoke to their families.
3. The twelve heads of each tribe and they spoke to their tribes.
4. The heads of each family and they in turn spoke to their families.

In this way the laws of the LORD would have been spread throughout the nation.

**You shall be holy:** (v2) these words are addressed to the whole nation of Israel and express the keynote to the whole book of Leviticus. The expression, "Be you Holy," carries the following ideas: -

- Separate yourselves from all pollution, defilements, idolatry and religious superstition in all actions.
- Do not let your speech and conduct be in contradiction to God's holy nature and of mercy, love and justice.
- Let your life and your speech reflect the holy image of God.
- Be obedient to all his laws and remain unspotted from the following list of defilements.

In the New Testament Jesus said:

- You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt 5:48).

This is said in the context of loving and praying for your enemies, and therefore means be perfect in love as God is perfect in love making his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

And the apostle Peter wrote:

- As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. (1 Peter 1:15).

**For I the LORD your God am holy:** (v2) means God is holy in, essence, spirit, heart and nature, in justice and actions and in all His laws. In simple language it means God is just and good in all He does, in contrast to the gods of the surrounding nations that were unholy in their laws, their religious practises and their worship. Though there are some ceremonial laws mentioned in this chapter that don't apply to us today, most of the laws do, for they are detailed explanations of the ten commandments.

- **Leviticus 19:3:** Every one of you shall revere (fear in KJV) his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.

It is interesting to notice that the mother is mentioned first, this perhaps is to give honour to the mother as the woman who gave birth to the children and who nurtures them, while the father goes about his daily duties to provide and protect his family.

**You shall revere his mother and his father:** (v3) the list in this chapter begins with the fifth commandment:

- Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Exod. 20:12).

The first law mentioned in this list to attain to the holiness God calls His people too is for children to reverence their parents. The apostle Paul refers to this commandment as the first commandment with promise.

- Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise). (Eph. 6:2).

This command means, respect and obey, show dignity and esteem your parents and do not stand against them, or oppose and rebel against them nor speak in a demeaning and degrading manner against them. Parents are God's representatives and their children's protectors and for these reasons should be held in honour and respect. The command to honour your mother and his father is most likely mentioned first for the following two reasons:

1. Mankind has their beginning in the world from their first parents Adam and Eve, and by them children are trained up in the ways of God and His laws.
2. Parents have the most influence over their children, since a young child loves their parents unconditionally, they not only believe every word they say but also embrace it as truth without question.

The King James Bible says, "You shall fear every man his mother, and his father," the word fear in this context carries the idea of having an inward reverence and respect towards one's own parents, it means to esteem and be obedient to them and take care to please them and make their life pleasant easy and enjoyable. The punishment for rebelling and disobeying parents was death.

- Anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him. (Lev. 20:9).

Naturally, this punishment would be age appropriate, obviously a five-year-old child would not be put to death for misbehaviour, the penalties of God's laws apply to children old enough to know right from wrong and with this knowledge consciously, wilfully and deliberately choose to do wrong.

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## KEEPIN GODS SABBATHS

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**You shall keep my sabbaths:** (v3) it was on the Sabbath days of rest when no work was to be done that parents could take the time to teach and instruct their children in the ways of Israel's faith through outward rites, ceremonies, sacrifices and worship, and in the fear and warnings of the LORD, and in attaining to God's holiness which is the keynote of this chapter. Violation of the Sabbath is charged as one of the greatest sins that the Israelites could commit for the penalty of defiling it was death.

- You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, "Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you. <sup>14</sup>You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. (Exod. 31:13-14)

**The expression, "You shall keep my sabbaths,"** is expressed in the plural number, because there were various Sabbaths, such as:

- The seventh day Sabbath.
- The seventh year Sabbath.
- The jubilee Sabbath, which was once every forty-nine years.

Sabbath days, especially the seventh day Sabbath gave parents time to teach their children why Israel keeps the sabbaths, and time to train them in the ways of the LORD. The two laws honour your mother and father and the command to keep the LORD's Sabbath are the only laws in the Ten Commandments that come with a positive blessing. Those who honour their mother and father are promised long life (Exod. 20:12), and the LORD promises to bring to His holy mountain those who keep the Sabbath and make them joyful in His house of prayer and accept their sacrifices. (Isaiah 56:6-7).

- The foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—<sup>7</sup>these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. (Isaiah 56:6-7).

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## IDOLS AND GODS

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### LEVITICUS 19:4

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- **Leviticus 19:4:** Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal (molten gods in KJV): I am the LORD your God.

This command corresponds with the second command of the Ten Commandments.

- You shall have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup>You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (Exod. 20:3-4).

To not turn to idols means Israel was not to turn their heart, mind, affections, thoughts or eyes from the true God to false ones, that deceive and lead to death, nor address their prayers to them, bow down to them or seek their help.

- You shall not make idols for yourselves or erect an image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the LORD your God. (Lev. 26:1).

The apostle Paul in his letters wrote:

- Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one. (1 Cor. 8:4).

Paul clearly shows that an idol is nothing, meaning they have no power to do good or to do evil, and are therefore of no worth and no value, of no importance and no usefulness to their devotees for the gods they represent only exist in the mind and imagination of the worshipper.

**The Living Bible and idols:** when speaking of idols the Living Bible says:

- Foolish man you chop down a tree and use some of the wood to build your homes, some to cook your food, some to warm your hands and some you carve into an idol and bow down before it to worship it, can't you see it's just a block of wood (Isaiah 44:19).

The service of idols is so absurd and illogical that it is enormously difficult for a person with a sane mind to understand how anyone in their right mind chooses the service of idols before the service of God. It is common for cultic religions to be heavily laden with ritualism. This is because a

heavy focus and adherence to outward ritual and ceremony gives the worshipper a sense of reverence and a close connection and adoration to their god. These rituals may involve candles, occultist symbols, mystical rites, drinking the blood of bull, chicken-beheading, prayers, songs and such like things, but the most seductive is sexual ritual that involves all sorts of sexual immorality since this type of ritual appeals to the lowest level of the flesh (i.e., the lower nature of mankind). One of the reasons people do choose a false faith is because idols and false gods do not put demands upon their outward lifestyle, as long as the believer adheres to their ceremonial rituals and outward religious practises they are accepted by their god and free to live as they please.

**The mind and idols:** idols have no real power they are a creation of human hands. Both pagans and Jews at various times believed in idols and false gods, this is because belief creates a false, but real image of the god people believe is behind the idol in the imagination of the mind, but these spiritual gods only exist in the mind of those who believe in them. They are an entity of the mind created by imagination through a false, but strong belief in them. The stronger the belief the stronger the power the imaginary god will have over the person. The false image in the mind will affect a person's emotions and feelings accordingly, if they believe the god to be on their side they will have good emotions, but if they believe the god is against them they will feel emotions of fear, because the human nervous system cannot tell the difference between a real image of the mind and a false one.

The imaginary, but real images of the mind creates a real entity that affects the emotions and feelings through the human nervous system. These feelings convince those that believe in idols that there are evil gods and spirits, but in reality, they do not actually exist, they are an entity created by a false belief of the mind, but to the person believing in idols and false gods they are very real entities. There is only one real God and creator of all that exists, and His Name is: "I AM the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob," every other god is an illusion of the mind created by a strong believe in them. Psalms also state:

- Those who make them become like them (are like unto them in KJV) so do all who trust in them. (Psalm 115:8).

The words, "Those who make idols are like them," means they are as ignorant and stupid, and void of all sense and reason, as the lifeless images they make in that they do not make proper use of their eyes, ears and mind and the ability to reason that God has given them. Nor can they see the invisible things of the true and living God in the works of creation. They do not hear the voice of His providence and grace or that of the day and the night, which, in every speech and language, declares his glory:

- The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. <sup>2</sup>Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. (Psalm 19:1-3).

Not only do they have no understanding that a lifeless and dead image which their own hands have made, must be weaker and in every way inferior to themselves, but also are so spiritually blind that they cannot even see that it has no power to offer them any type of help in the time of their need. They are as much without sense as are blocks of wood and lifeless stones. For further information see the title:

- Demons.

In Satan and his Family (ON WEBSITE MENU).

- **Leviticus 19:5-8:** "When you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted (you shall offer it at your own will in KJV). <sup>6</sup>It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or on the day after, and anything left over until the third day shall be burned up with fire. <sup>7</sup>If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is tainted; it will not be accepted, <sup>8</sup>and everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned what is holy to the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from his people.

There is a natural transition here from the prohibition of idolatrous worship to peace-offerings being offered in an improper manner. It is not enough to mechanically offer peace offerings to the LORD from a sense of duty or to offer them contrary to the laws of the LORD. When the Israelites brought their peace-offering to the LORD it must be offered according to the law of Moses.

**You shall offer it so that you may be accepted (you shall offer it at your own will in KJV):** (v5) this command carries the following ideas:

- Though this sacrifice was required, what they offered was left to their choice it could be of the flock, or of the herd, a male or a female so in this sense they could offer what they pleased.
- You shall offer it willingly, a voluntary freewill offering, of your own accord, and not by force.
- You shall offer it in the manner God has prescribed so it will be accepted, and you will secure His divine favour
- No matter how inconvenient offering a sacrifice may have been, they were not to offer them to suit their own convenience, but according to the LORD's prescribed manner (v3-7).

Following are the two types of peace offerings.

1. **If the peace offering was a thanksgiving offering:** it was to be offered with unleavened loaves, wafers and loaves of fine flour all smeared or mixed with oil. One loaf from each offering was to be given to the LORD, as a gift and then given to the priest who threw the blood of the peace offerings on the altar. The flesh (meat) of the peace offerings was to be eaten on the day that it was offered none was to be left until the morning. (Lev. 7:11-12).
2. **If the peace offering was a vow offering or freewill offering:** it could be eaten on the day that the sacrifice was offered, and on the next day, but whatever remained on the third day was to be burned up with fire. If anyone did eat it on the third day it would not be credited to the person who offered, it and whoever ate of it would bear their iniquity for it was tainted. (Lev. 7:16-18). Following are two possible reasons for the remaining meat to be utterly burnt on the third day:
  1. To prevent the meat being set aside for some form of mysterious superstitious worship because it had been offered on the altar to the LORD.
  2. To prevent anyone from becoming sick by eating meat that may have become polluted and to make sure no meat was left lying around the camp to attract flies and insects etc.

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## REAPING FIELDS AND GLEANING THE HARVEST

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### LEVITICUS 19:9-10

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- **Leviticus 19:9-10:** "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. <sup>10</sup>And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

Religious works should always be followed by acts of charity according to our ability. Those in God's Kingdom should not be covetous or greedy with what is rightfully theirs. This law, in addition to other laws connected with the ceremonial law, formed a compassionate provision for the support of the poor. To attain to the holiness God calls His people to the Israelites were too consider the poor and needy. The poor here embraces needy Israelites strangers (i.e., foreigners) and travellers who had no supplies of their own since they were only passing through the land. The following verses shows that this law also provided for the widow and the orphan, and that the Jewish religion was far more humane than many conceive, because of the lives of its corrupt rulers and legalistic scribes and religious leaders.

- When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. <sup>20</sup>When you beat your olive trees; you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. <sup>21</sup>When you gather the grapes of your vineyard; you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. (Deuteronomy 24:19-21).

**You shall not reap the harvest of your land:** (v9) the harvest of the land here embraces all edible and nutritious plants, vegetables and fruits.

**The gleanings of the harvest:** (v9) the word gleaning comes from the Hebrew word (*laqat*) and means to pick up, to gather, especially to glean meaning to collect and pick up. In the context of these verses it refers to whatever falls from the hand of the worker or from the sickle during the time of harvesting and the time of gathering in the clusters of grapes. The following verse shows that the poor could even walk into a field or vineyard and help themselves to the food available.

- If you go into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes, as many as you wish, but you shall not put any in your bag. <sup>25</sup>If you go into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbor's standing grain. (Deut. 23:24-25).

This law is based on honesty and integrity of heart, in that only those who were genuinely poor would take advantage of this act of charity. In contrast to some today who take advantage of other people's generosity in that they could afford a meal, but simply think, "why pay for one when I can get if free." Immediately after saying, "you shall leave them for the poor," the LORD says, "I am the LORD your God," the idea is that God prospered Israel's land and gave the owners of it the harvest, with the expectation that they would give part of all they receive to the poor.

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## STEALING, DECIEVING AND LYING

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### LEVITICUS 19:11

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- **Leviticus 19:11:** "You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another.

This command forms the eighth command of the Ten Commandments

- You shall not steal. (Exod. 20:15).

Whatever we have in the world, we must see that we get it honestly, for we cannot be truly rich before the LORD with that which is gained dishonestly and deception. Since this command, "not to steal" immediately follows the poor being given permission to help themselves to the crops, fruits and grapes of an owner's field or vineyard, it is very likely a caution to the poor to abide by the law concerning the generosity shown to them as well as a general law for the entire nation. There is no doubt it would be very tempting for the poor to carry a basket to put extra food into, but such an act would be theft.

**You shall not steal:** (v11) in transactions of business, work and in everyday life, stealing is an extreme act of self-centeredness, for it is robbing from a person, for one's own gain, something the owner has worked hard for and in most cases will cause them financial hardship, sorrow and grief.

**You shall not deal falsely:** (v11) in trade, commerce, business and work, in justice, in love and in serving the LORD and His people and in teaching the word of the LORD. In all generations and even today there are those in God's service who in their greed for worldly riches, fame and importance exploit those seeking God with false words (2 Peter 2:3). These highly skilled religious orators lift Scriptures out of their context to formulate doctrines that appeal to pride, ego, and what we all desire, prosperity and success and by these deceptions exploit (i.e., manipulate and take advantage) of their followers for their own gain with false words.

**You shall not lie to one another:** (v11) in speech, conversation, trade and business, the general theme here is that the people of Israel should have respect toward each other and being God's people should treat each other as one would treat a member of their own family.

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## PROFANING THE NAME OF GOD

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### LEVITICUS 19:12

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- **Leviticus 19:12:** You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

This is the third command of the Ten Commandments

- You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. (Exodus 20:7).

The primary focus here is upon making a false promise to God or to man. It is about using the LORD's name to confirm a promise, those who break such a promise bring shame to the name of the LORD for they have used His holy name to confirm their promise and then not kept the promise. However, it is not limited to making promises only, but covers all types of swearing falsely. The previous verse ended with the command, "you shall not steal, deal falsely or lie to one another," swearing falsely maybe mentioned here because stealing, dealing falsely, lying, and swearing false follow one another. One sin leads to another sin, stealing leads to dealing falsely, which leads to lying about it, which to be declared not guilty leads to perjury. A person that steals and lies for their own advantage and gain will easily swear falsely in a court of law to save themselves. However, swearing falsely is not limited to perjuring oneself in a court of law only, but also embraces any rash or vain promise made in common conversation and when anyone who belongs to God's Kingdom commits any of the sins already mentioned or those still to be mentioned they are abusing and profaning God's holy name.

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## OPPRESSING A NEIGHBOUR AND ROBING A SERVANT

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### LEVITICUS 19:13

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- **Leviticus 19:13:** "You shall not oppress (defraud in KJV) your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night until the morning.

Employers are not to use their authority to dominate their employee's in a forceful or violent manner nor are they to oppress them meaning they are not to keep them in subjection and hardship under an unjust exercise of authority, by using tyranny or by treating them harshly in any way. In summary no employer is to ill-treat their workers in any way but treat

them with fairness and justice. This law protects labourers from greedy employers abusing and defrauding their workers for their own gain, and advantage. In the book of Jerimiah, we read:

- 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. (Jeremiah 22:13).

Woe to those who secretly or openly, use deception, force, violence and oppression to defraud workers from what is rightly theirs.

**The wages of a hired servant shall not remain with you all night:** (v13) this must be understood of one that is hired by the day, whose wages are due at night, and who needs his money to buy food for his family. Such a man is spoken of in the following Scripture:

- You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your brothers or one of the sojourners who are in your land within your towns. <sup>15</sup>You shall give him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets (for he is poor and counts on it), lest he cry against you to the LORD, and you be guilty of sin. (Deut. 24:14-15).

This law requiring labourers to be paid promptly, so that struggling workers that are living from day to day are protected financially. The labourer was to be paid at the end of each day before the sun set. It should be highlighted here that this only applies to those who are poor and are temporarily employed daily (i.e., day by day). It does not apply to those permanently employed who agree to be paid every three days, weekly, fortnightly or monthly etc., for those who agree to such terms the employer could hold the wages for whatsoever time was agreed upon between them. In the book of Malachi, it is written:

- Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:5).

Employers must not hold to themselves the wages of their workers or anything else that rightfully belongs to them. This law is not limited to the Old Testament, for James in his letters wrote:

- Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. (James 5:4).

Those who withhold their employees' wages not only rob a person of their wages and cause them great grief, but in some cases rob them of their very life, since many employees are totally dependent upon their wages for food and survival. Added to this every boss who cheats a worker out of what is rightfully theirs brings God's wrath upon themselves. These laws (and the ones to follow) not only manifest the holiness of the LORD, but also manifest the justice of God for those concerning mankind's behaviour toward each other all have one thing in common, in that they protect the innocent from harm and hurt and from being cheated out of what is rightfully theirs. Jesus summed all these laws up in the following words,

- You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Mat. 22:38-39) (Mark 12:31).

No sane person deliberately inflicts pain on themselves, in fact they do all they can to avoid it, likewise Jesus calls us not to inflict pain of hurt of any sort upon others.

- **Leviticus 19:14:** You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

The deaf are especially vulnerable in that they are helpless to defend themselves, against any form of gossip and lies spoken about them and unable to plead their own case, for this reason it is a great sin before the LORD to speak damaging lies against them or accuse them of crimes they have not committed. The blind are also especially vulnerable and helpless in that they are unable to physically defend themselves, so it is also a great sin before the LORD for anyone to physically abuse them in anyway. We should be always ready to help the deaf and the blind as much as we are able when needed, helping such people has always been regarded as an admirable and compassionate act.

**You shall fear your God:** God's people are here called to fear the LORD, everyone who intends to injure a person that is deaf, or blind should be fully aware that God being omnipresent and omniscient sees all injuries done to the vulnerable, innocent and helpless and will avenge them on the day of judgment. This knowledge is intended here to protect the deaf and the blind from being injured.

- Cursed be anyone who misleads a blind man on the road.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' (Deut. 27:18).

The apostle Paul enforce this law in his letters saying:

- Let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. (Rom. 14:13).

Some interpret these words of Paul figuratively to mean do not put a stumbling block before those who are spiritually weak. The best interpretation is to embrace both those who are literally blind and deaf and those who are spiritually blind and deaf, for whoever deliberately puts a stumbling block before those who cannot hear or cannot see and before those seeking God, will bring God's wrath upon themselves and suffer the same judgment.

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## BEING JUST TO ALL PEOPLE

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### LEVITICUS 19:15

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- Leviticus 19:15: "You shall do no injustice (unrighteousness in KJV) in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer (honour in KJV) to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor.

Amongst commentators there are various interpretations of these verses, I have included the most common since they all contain certain truths:

- The rich, because of the pity they feel for the poor are not too influence the judge to give them a lighter sentence because of their poverty.
- Though under the law the rich are obliged to be generous to the poor they are not to feel that they should let the guilty win the lawsuit simply because they are poor and, in this way, feel that they are fulfilling their obligation under the law to be generous to those living in poverty.
- A judge and witnesses are not to allow the poverty of the poor to influence their judgment, even it means that the person will be reduced to greater poverty.
- In a court of law, judges and witnesses are not to allow the wealth of the rich or the noble standing of the person in the community to influence their testimony and judgment.

Various Jewish writers say that God's command that a judge and witnesses were to show no partiality (favour) to the poor or the rich but treat them in judgment equally was taken so seriously that the rich and

the poor would be clothed in the same garments so that no favour would be shown to one more than to another.

- You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. (Deut. 1:17).
- These also are sayings of the wise. Partiality in judging is not good. (Proverbs 24:23).

**In conclusion:** the command, "You shall do no injustice in court, you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. (v15) simply means when it comes to matters of justice judges and witnesses are not to show favour to anyone no matter what their status in life maybe but are to judge everyone according to the law. James in his letters wrote:

- If you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (James 2:9).

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## SLANDERING YOUR NEIGHBOUR

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### LEVITICUS 19:16

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- **Leviticus 19:16:** You shall not go around as a slanderer (talebearer in KJV) among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life (blood in KJV) of your neighbor: I am the LORD.

A talebearer refers to those:

- Who consciously and deliberately go from one person to another for the sole purpose of divulging false, damaging, degrading and demeaning stories about others.
- Who go up and down as a talebearer to carry stories of others, and report them to their disadvantage
- Who carry tales from house to house that that demean and injure others to win favour for themselves.

The habit of slandering others has not only ruined the character and destroyed the life of many innocent people (especially now we have the internet), but also brings to ruin three people with one act:

1. The person who slanders.
2. The person who is slandered.
3. The person who listens to the slander.

Slandering may be from a malicious spirit or proceed only from light-heartedness and talkativeness, but either way injury is done to the person spoken of. In the book of Proverbs, it is written:

- Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered. (Proverbs 11:13).
- Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babblers. (Proverbs 20:19).

**You shall not stand up against the life (blood in KJV) of your neighbor:** (v16) this expression carries the following two ideas:

- Slandering a a person could put their life in danger, from others or by suicide.
- We are not to keep silent when we know that the truth of the matter, especially if the slander is putting the life of the one being slandered in danger.

- We are not to stand against another as a false accuser, or false witness, especially if by standing up against them as slander or giving a false testimony puts their life in danger of being killed.
- We are to be silent and listen to the slandered person's testimony, especially if it could save them from being put to death.

Either way it is interpreted, it carries the idea that we should do all we can to save and protect the life of our neighbour, from verbal abuse and from life threatening danger. The core reason God calls us to confront those who slander another, is that they will see the hurt and harm they are doing to their neighbour and repent of their sinful and slanderous behaviour and thereby their sin and guilt would be removed, for everyone who slanders another will be counted guilty before God.

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## HATING YOUR BROTHER

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### LEVITICUS 19:17

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- **Leviticus 19:17:** "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him (not suffer sin upon him in KJV).

In this context the expression, "your brother," is the same as your neighbour, since it is followed by, "you shall love your neighbor (male and female) as yourself (v18) and Jesus said:

- Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matt. 5:44).

When a friend (especially if they are Christian) inflicts some form of injury upon us in some way, rather than inwardly harbour malice and hate in our hearts toward them we should approach them in an attitude of brotherly love and tell them of their faults in a spirit of kindness and the hope they would see their error and respond accordingly.

**You shall not hate your brother in your heart:** having a hatred toward another is manifested:

1. When we have an inward feeling of malice in the heart toward another even if it is not expressed by words or outward actions.
2. When we remain silent, because by not speaking up we are showing no signs of attempting to give them an opportunity to turn from their wicked ways and be delivered from judgment and save them.

It matters not whether the person intentionally or unintentionally did wrong we should not remain silent but make their wrong known to them. Jesus said:

- Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. (Luke 17:3).

The word rebuke here comes from the Greek word (*epitimao*), which is made up of the words, (*epi and timao*), these two words carry the following two ideas, firstly, censure, (i.e., disapprove and reprimand) admonish, forbid and rebuke, secondly, to prize, to fix a valuation upon and by implication to revere honour and value. The idea is when a brother sins against us or offends or injures us in some way, the right response for a Christian is to rebuke them, but not in a spirit of malice or hate (because of the hurt we may feel), but in a spirit of kindness and with the hope they would repent and change their sinful behavior.

**Lest you incur sin because of him** (not suffer sin upon him in KJV): (v17) the words, "lest you incur sin because of him" (ESB), carries the idea that we will bring guilt upon ourselves:

- If we secretly encourage a sinner to continue in sin.
- If we continue to rebuke the person who has offended or hurt us after we see them showing signs of sorrow, humiliation, regret and repentance.
- If we meditate upon feelings of revenge and cherish the idea of inflicting pain upon the person who has committed the insult or injury against us.
- If we share with others the injury a brother has done to us for the sole purpose of enticing others to despise and hate them, rather than for seeking comfort, counsel and help.
- If, to win the favour of the one slandering we flatter and encourage them, rather than in love make them aware of their fault.
- If our purpose for rebuking them is to heap guilt upon them and cause them to suffer emotionally and mentally rather than to help them see their flaws and bring them to repentance, so they can correct their faults and be a better person because of it.

**The words, "Not suffer sin upon him (KJV): (v17),"** carries the idea that we are allowing the persons sin to remain upon them if we encourage them to continue in their sin when we make no attempt to rebuke them or make them aware of their fault and expose their wrong-doing so that they might come to repentance and forsake their sin. This shows that both the translation of the King James Bible and the English Standard Bible are correct, for two reasons, firstly, if we encourage a sinner in their sin, we incur guilt ourselves and secondly, if we do nothing to expose their wrong-doing we are by our silence allowing their sin to remain upon them. The core reason God calls us to confront those who sin is that they will see the hurt and harm they are doing to their neighbour and repent of their wrong-doing and thereby their guilt would be removed.

**IMPORTANT PRINCIPAL:** all forms of rebuke and correction should begin in private to protect the person from shame and embarrassment and given gently in meekness and tenderness. But if they continue to sin in the same manner, it is OK to openly rebuke them so that others would be deterred from speaking in a manner that demeans and degrades another or has the potential to put another person's life in danger. In the letters of the apostle Paul it is written:

- As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. (1 Tim. 5:20).

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## BEARING GRUDES, VENGEANCE AND LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR

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### LEVITICUS 19:18

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- **Leviticus 19:18:** You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.

The following verse shows that the word neighbour here refers to the people of Israel and foreigners who dwell amongst them, which embraces all people.

- You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. (Lev. 19:34).

Verse seventeen calls us to reprove and rebuke a slander, while verse eighteen forbids us to avenge ourselves even when our rebuke has had no effect on the offender. This requires a great sacrifice on the part of the injured person, especially when everything within screams for revenge. Understanding this the apostle Paul wrote:

- Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." (Rom. 12:19).

The injured person must banish all thoughts of revenge even though the offender has made no compensation and restitution or shown any signs of regret and sorrow. Whenever a person who has suffered some form of injury does not return injury for injury, and when a person who has suffered, because of some form of slander does not return slander for slander and when a person who has been insulted does not return insult for insult they are by their restraint manifesting great acts of love. It can be rightly said of these Christians, that they are suffering in the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**You shall love your neighbour as yourself:** (v18) this principle is the sum of God's divine Law expressed in the shortest possible manner. It forms the core of all God's laws contained in the Bible and the ethical centre around which the nation of Israel was to be formed. The command, "you shall love your neighbour as yourself," can be expressed in the following form, "What you wish that others would not do to you, do not do to them." This is the whole Spirit of the Law, Jesus expressed it with the following words:

- Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matt. 7:12).
- As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. (Luke 6:31).

The apostle Paul wrote:

- Every commandment is summed up in the words, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," for love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom. 13:9-10).

The expression, "Love your neighbour as yourself," does not mean have the same equality of affection for them as you have for yourself, but to treat them as you would treat yourself, in that no sane person deliberately inflicts harm and hurt upon themselves, likewise we should not deliberately inflict harm and hurt upon others.

**IMPORTANT:** the words, "love your neighbour as yourself," (meaning do good to all people and not harm), does not mean we do away with justice. If a person breaks the law, it is right and proper for us to report them to the relevant authorities. The entire law of God and the law of justice is about protecting the innocent, so to report a criminal to the authorities of justice is obeying the command, "love your neighbour as yourself." These laws (and the ones to follow) not only manifest the holiness of the LORD, but also manifest the justice of God for those concerning mankind's behaviour toward each other all have one thing in common, in that they protect the innocent from harm and hurt and from being cheated out of what is rightfully theirs. Jesus summed all these laws up in the following words,

- You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Mat. 22:38-39) (Mark 12:31).

No sane person deliberately inflicts pain on themselves, in fact they do all they can to avoid it, likewise Jesus calls us not to inflict pain of hurt of any sort upon others.

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## DIFFERENT KINDS OF CATTLE, SEEDS AND MATERIALS

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### LEVITICUS 19:19

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- **Leviticus 19:19:** "You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor shall you wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material (a garment mingled of linen and woolen in KJV).

**You shall keep my statutes:** (v19) refers to all God's statutes mentioned in the previous verses and to those following. Though those mentioned in these verses are not of the same high moral nature as the some of the others, it was yet, necessary for Israel to keep them to attain to holiness.

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## DIFFERENT KINDS OF CATTLE

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**You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind:** (v19) the following verses shows that God has made every animal after its kind:

- God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. (Gen. 1:21).
- God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. <sup>25</sup>And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. (Gen. 1:24-25).

God has established a physical distinction between all living creatures. This law forbids breeding animals with a different kind of animal to produce a totally different kind. Cattle do not usually breed with a different kind, as a wolf with a dog, a hound with a fox, a goat with a deer, a horse with a mule, etc., for even though they are like one another, they are of different kinds. Though, dogs do breed with different types of dogs the puppy they give birth to, though different is still a dog, likewise cats breed with different types of cats but the kitten they give birth to is still a cat. The most common and oldest known manmade hybrid is the mule, a jackass (male donkey) with a female horse (mare) which was deliberately bred in ancient times by man. The exact origin of the first mule is unknown, but we do know that it is the oldest known manmade hybrid deliberately bred by man in ancient times. Though Israel was forbidden to breed such animals the following shows that the use of mules was largely employed by the people of Israel.

The sons of King David had their own mules for riding (2 Sam. 13:29), Absalom rode on his own mule (2 Sam. 18:9), King David's son Solomon rode on his father's own mule. (1 Kings 1:33) (1 Kings 1:38) and mules were given to King Solomon as presents (1 Kings 10:25). Ahab the King of Israel searched throughout the land looking for springs of water to save their horses and mules (1 Kings 18:5) and the whole assembly that came up out of the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried captive to Babylonia that returned to Jerusalem and Judah, (Ezra 2:1-2) returned with 736, horses and 245 mules. (Ezra 2:66). These hybrids were either the male donkey coming together with a female horse of their own accord without the aid of the Israelites or were imported from other countries. This law is binding upon the Jews to this day in every country where they happen to live, whether in Palestine or out of it. This was prohibition, was most likely given to restrain man, from changing what God had made, by interbreeding different kinds of animals and preserve the nature of animals as they were created from the beginning.

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## DIFFERENT KINDS OF SEEDS

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**You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed:** (v19) this law about mixed seeds was only applicable to the Holy Land, since the command here is, "you shall not sow in your field," which most authorities confirm that it refers to the fields of their inheritance in the Promised Land. The previous verse show that God created animals to produce of their own kind, the following verses show that He also created plants to produce of their own kind.

- God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. (Gen. 1:11-12).

In the same way that Israel was not to breed different kinds of animals together, nor were they to sow different kinds of seeds in the same field, (i.e., wheat with barley, beans with lentils, etc). Some scientists of agriculture say that the reason for this prohibition may have been because:

- The practice of mingling seeds of vegetables with flowers and grains does not promote their best growth and can be injurious to them, because of bugs, insects, diseases etc.
- To promote the best growth each requires a different quantity of water and fertilizer so to plant them all in the same field, does not allow for ideal watering and fertilising.
- If these are sown in the same field and flower at the same time, the pollen of the different flowers would result in a mix of inferior seeds unlike either of the original seeds. The consequence of this would be that what is produced would be lacking in size, flavour, and nutrition.

This all shows that it is very practical to grow different types of seeds in separate fields. However, it should be noted, seeds that were not intended for human food were exempted from this law.

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## DIFFERENT KINDS OF GARMENTS

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**You shall not wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material:** (v19) (a garment mingled of linen and woolen in KJV). This embraces the idea that the people of Israel were:

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- Not to wear a single garment made of threads of wool and threads linen.
- Not to wear a garment made of wool and a garment made of linen together.

Researches of modern science have proved that wool, when combined with linen, increases its power of passing off electricity from the body and when worn on hot summer days does not absorb body sweat or help keep the skin dry, but rather increases our body temperature, perspiration and sweat. The following verses show that the Levitical priests were not to wear wool when they ministered and entered the temple, because it would cause them to sweat:

- They (the Levitical priests) shall enter my sanctuary, and they shall approach my table, to minister to me, and they shall keep my charge. <sup>17</sup>When they enter the gates of the inner court, they shall wear linen garments. They shall have nothing of wool on them, while they minister at the gates of the inner court, and within. <sup>18</sup>They shall have linen turbans on their heads, and linen undergarments around their waists. They shall not bind themselves with anything that causes sweat. (Ezek. 44:17-18).

Since priests were only permitted to wear linen garments to prevent excessive perspiration and sweat, most suspect that this is the most likely practical reason for the prohibition against wearing wool and linen together. This law laid down in (Deut. 22:9-11) and observed by the orthodox Jews to this day.

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## SEX AND A SLAVE WOMAN

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### LEVITICUS 19:20-22

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- **Leviticus 19:20-22:** "If a man lies sexually (carnally in KJV) with a woman who is a slave, assigned to another man (a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband in KJV), and not yet ransomed (redeemed in KJV), or given her freedom (she shall be scourged); a distinction shall be made. They shall not be put to death, because she was not free; <sup>21</sup>but he shall bring his compensation (trespass offering in KJV) to the LORD, to the entrance of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering (trespass offering in KJV). <sup>22</sup>And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering (trespass offering in KJV) before the LORD for his sin that he has committed, and he shall be forgiven for the sin that he has committed.

**Betrothed:** the word betrothed is only used in the Old Testament and comes from the Hebrew word ('aras) meaning to engage for marriage. Future brides and future grooms may be called the betrothed, a wife-to-be or husband-to-be, or a fiancée or fiancé are all summed up in the word betrothed. If you are betrothed, then, congratulations! As the lyrics say in the song, "you're going to the chapel, you're going to get married." It can refer to a mutual joyful promise between two couples to marry or a master of a slave girl promising her in marriage to another man.

**Espoused:** the word espoused is only used once in the Old Testament (*Hebrew 'aras*) meaning to engage for marriage, betroth and espouse, and used three times in the New Testament (*Greek mnesteuo*) meaning engagement, betroth and espouse. Espouse and spouse are related, meaning to promise to marry or betroth, engage to be married, it can refer to a woman to be a wife or a man to be a husband. It refers to the time between proposal and marriage which could be lengthy or short. During the period between the man proposing and the marriage, a couple is said to be betrothed, affianced, engaged to be married, or simply engaged.

**Bondwoman:** the word bondwoman is only used twice in the Old Testament (*Hebrew 'amah*) meaning a maid-servant or female slave, and used twice in the New Testament (*Greek paidiske*) meaning a female slave or servant

**The King James Bible:** says betrothed to a husband, better is, betrothed to a husband to be, since they are not yet married, but only engaged to be married. The picture is of a man lying sexually with a slave woman not yet set free who is assigned (i.e., engaged) to another man to be married. The words, assigned to another man indicate that the bondwoman (slave woman) may have been assigned by her master to marry a man that he had chosen, perhaps, one of his sons, a friend, or another slave he respected.

**Not yet ransomed (redeemed in KJV):** (v20) meaning she had no legal document that pronounces her to be a free woman. A bill of freedom was given upon payment of money to purchase her freedom or her master could choose to freely grant her a bill of freedom without requiring any redemption money. Either way a bondwoman was only legally free when she received the bill of freedom.

**They shall not be put to death:** (v20) in cases of adultery or seduction of a woman married to a man death was the normal punishment.

- If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. (Lev. 20:10).
- If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman. So, you shall purge the evil from Israel. (Deut. 22:22).

However, since this woman was not truly married, but only promised in marriage she and her partner to be were not yet husband and wife in the true sense. Added to this even if they were it could scarcely be counted as a true marriage, because a slave woman had no choice in the marriage. If her master desired to marry them they were obliged to submit to his authority and marry whoever he chose, and the marriage only continued

to the year of her release. The following verses show that if an engaged woman agrees to secretly meet a man and lies with him she was to be put to death, because she willingly laid with the man, and that the man was also to be put to death because he laid with another man's wife.

- If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her,<sup>24</sup> then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So, you shall purge the evil from your midst. (Deut. 22:23-24).

It is possible the reason these two were not put to death is because the slave girls master choose her husband to be (she may will have had no attraction to him at all) and because she was not a free woman she had no power to choose who she would marry, it is very possible she and the man she laid with were a couple (at least at some level) prior to her master assigning her to marry another man. This is a principle of God's mercy, when free-will is taken from a person the hammer of judgment cannot come down upon them as harshly as it would upon those who have free choice.

**He shall bring his compensation (trespass offering in KJV) to the LORD:** (v21) a ram is a small penalty, for the offence, which means that it is very likely the woman was willing to lay with the man, for Scripture shows that if a man forced himself upon a woman (i.e., raped her) he was to be put to death.

- If in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die.<sup>26</sup> But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. (Deut. 22:25-27).

**She shall be scourged:** (v20) the original text does not clearly determine whether one or both were to be scourged, since it may be rendered, "there shall be a scourging," and both were guilty of sin, which means that it is reasonable to suppose that both should be scourged. Obviously, the simple sense, is that only the woman was to be scourged, and not the man, however, both the man and the woman were guilty, so it is not unreasonable to suppose that both were, and the original text would allow for this idea.

**Scourging:** is said to be done with the leather made from the hide of an ox.

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## EATING FORBIDDEN FRUIT

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### LEVITICUS 19:23-25

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- **Leviticus 19:23-25:** "When you come into the land and plant any kind of tree for food, then you shall regard its fruit as forbidden (as uncircumcised in KJV). Three years it shall be forbidden (uncircumcised in KJV) to you; it must not be eaten.<sup>24</sup> And in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the LORD.<sup>25</sup> But in the fifth year you may eat of its fruit, to increase its yield for you: I am the LORD your God.

When Israel entered the land of Canaan and planted fruit trees they were not to eat any of its fruit until the fifth year, this was to give the trees time to fully grow and mature. The focus here is all manner of trees that produce eatable fruit (i.e., figs, grapes, olives etc.) that Israel planted for food: which means that the following trees were exempt from this law:

- Trees already growing in the land of Canaan.
- Trees the Canaanites planted in the land of Canaan.
- Trees that the Canaanites and Israel planted that do not bear fruit.

- Trees that were not planted but grew up of themselves.

Every gardener will teach us not to let fruit trees bear in their earliest years, but to pluck off the blossoms so that they will thrive the better and bear more abundantly afterwards. Plucking or pinching the blossoms off was generally done by the hand and not a knife.

**You shall regard its fruit as forbidden (as uncircumcised in KJV):** (v23) all Jews were circumcised and counted as being clean as being God's people, anyone uncircumcised was counted and unclean and without God. The expression, "You shall regard its fruit as uncircumcised," simply means as forbidden to be eaten. The metaphorical use of circumcision denotes the fruit has been disqualified and unfit.

The following verse uses the same metaphor for the heart which is stubborn and not ripe (i.e., ready) to listen to the LORDS ordinances and statutes.

- I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity. (Lev. 26:41).

The following verses show that circumcision is also used with reference to lips and ears which do not perform their proper functions.

- Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?" (Exod. 6:12).
- Moses said to the LORD, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips. How will Pharaoh listen to me?" (Exod. 6:30).
- To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised, they cannot listen; behold, the word of the LORD is to them an object of scorn; they take no pleasure in it. (Jer. 6:10).

All, of these verses show that the expression, "count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised," means count it as unclean and not fit to be eaten, but to be taken off and cast away as the foreskin of the flesh is when circumcised.

**Three years it shall be forbidden (uncircumcised in KJV):** (v23) following are some of the most likely reasons plucking or pinching the blossoms off was to be repeated for three successive years.

- When the fruit of the tree is let to grow in the early years the tree is somewhat stunted, and the fruit lacks its full taste.
- Plucking off the fruit and pinching off the blossoms in the early years helps the tree grow stronger and thrive better and in the following years produce fruit more abundantly.
- The roots of a tree grow stronger, faster and better when the fruit and and the blossoms are trimmed off in its early years.

**In the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy:** (v24) it was a principal of God's law to offer the first fruits to the LORD, concerning fruit producing trees the fourth year was counted as its first year of first fruits, and therefore counted as the year to offer all the fruit as a praise offering to the LORD, before any was eaten. The expression, "all its fruit shall be holy," carries the idea that it was to be counted as being clean and fit to offer to the LORD. This may have been done by taking a certain amount to the priests and offering them up to the LORD while the people gathered and praised God for His abundant goodness in blessing and making the trees fruitful and bringing their fruit to perfection.

**In the fifth year you may eat of its fruit:** (v25) after restraining themselves from eating the fruit for the first four years and offering it up to the LORD in the fourth year they were free to eat of the trees abundant fruit in the fifth year.

### LEVITICUS 19:26

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- **Leviticus 19:26:** "You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. You shall not interpret omens (use enchantment in KJV) or tell fortunes (observe times in KJV).

**You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it:** (v26) no flesh was to be eaten until the blood had been properly poured out.

- Moreover, you shall eat no blood whatever, whether of fowl or of animal, in any of your dwelling places. (Lev. 7:26).
- If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. (Lev. 17:10).

Idolatrous practice of various pagan nations that offered sacrifices to idols, drained the blood into basins and then drank it or ate the meat sitting in the blood of the sacrifices, believing it was:

- Special food of the idol's and the gods they symbolised.
- It gave them communion with their gods, and brought to them their favour, friendship and familiarity whereby they might get knowledge of future things.

**You shall not interpret omens (use enchantment in KJV):** (v26) this refers to superstitious people in ancient times who believed certain things would bring them bad luck such as:

- Believing food falling out of a person's mouth or their staff falling out of their hand would bring them bad luck.
- Believing that crystals and certain stones will bring good luck and cure diseases.
- Believing that a child calling out while behind them, or a fox going by on their left will bring bad luck.
- Believing that wearing certain jewellery will bring good luck and wearing religious jewellery, especially crosses will protect a person from danger or evil spirits.
- Believing a deer crossing a person's path or a serpent creeping on their right-hand side would bring bad luck.
- Believing that those who practise divination and fortune-telling can mystically tell them what their future holds.
- Believing that certain days are good days to begin a journey and purchase thing etc., and other days are unlucky.

In summary, it embraces the idea of superstitiously believing in good and bad luck.

**You shall not tell fortunes (observe times in KJV):** (v26) this refers to the practise of superstitiously observing the clouds or the stars to predict and tell a person their future, which was a common way of foretelling whether a person's future was going to be good or bad or otherwise, by esteeming some days lucky, and others unlucky. The command not to interpret omens, use enchantment, tell fortunes and observe times embraces everything mentioned in the following verses:

- There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer <sup>11</sup>or a charmer or a medium or a wizard or a necromancer. (Deut. 18:10-11).

It is not only vain and foolishness to believe in such absurd deep-rooted superstitions and to seek after them, but also shows a total lack of faith and trust in God.

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## CUTTING THE BEARD

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### LEVITICUS 19:27

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- **Leviticus 19:27:** You shall not round off the hair on your temples (of your heads in KJV) or mar the edges (corners of KJV) of your beard.

In Leviticus chapter twenty-one the focus is upon laws for the priests, it begins with the LORD saying to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to the priests that they are not to:

- Make bald patches on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts on their body. (Lev. 21:5).

In the book of Deuteronomy, we read:

- You all the people of Israel) are the sons of the LORD your God. You shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads (between your eyes in KJV) for the dead. (Deut. 14:1).

Now, this chapter (19) begins with the LORD speaking to Moses, saying, "Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel (v1-2) showing that all the laws laid out in this chapter apply to all the people of Israel and not the priests only as some teach. Rounding off the hair on head, marring the edges and corners of the beard, cutting yourself, or making baldness between the eyes as expression of mourning for the dead were common practices for pagan nations. The people of Israel especially the priests were forbidden to adopt the superstitious customs of Heathens and idolaters to express their mourning and grief for the dead, for the following two reasons:

1. They were the instruments of God's divine will for overcoming death, all their blood sacrifices were a type of the death of Christ, which swallowed up death in victory.
  - When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."<sup>55</sup>"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"<sup>56</sup>The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.<sup>57</sup>But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:54-57).
2. It would therefore have been unsuitable for the people (especially the priests) to adopt the superstitious practices of the heathen nations and idolaters, by making bald patches on their heads, shaving off the edges of their beards, and making cuts on their body to show outward signs of mourning. (Lev. 21:5). The people of Israel (especially the priests) were not to identify themselves with unbelievers in any manner for their outward example was to teach the people that they should not sorrow for the dead as unbelievers without hope did.

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## CUTS AND TATTOOS ON THE BODY

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### LEVITICUS 19:28

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- **Leviticus 19:28:** You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves (print any marks upon you in KJV): I am the LORD.

There are two distinctions here, firstly, cuts on the body to show grief, and secondly, tattoos (i.e., printing marks on the body), the purpose of the first is to show grief for the dead, the second is to identify with idols

and gods. We will look at each one separately. The following verses show that the people of Israel were forbidden to put cuts in their body to show grief for the dead:

- You (Israel) shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead (Lev. 19:28).
- You are the sons of the LORD your God. You shall not cut yourselves or make any baldness on your foreheads for the dead. (Deut. 14:1).

The following verses show that cutting oneself was an expression of lamentation:

- Both great and small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried, and no one shall lament for them or cut himself or make himself bald for them. (Jer. 16:6).

After Ishmael struck down the Judeans:

- Eighty men arrived from Shechem and Shiloh and Samaria, with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, and their bodies gashed, bringing grain offerings and incense to present at the temple of the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah came out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping (Jer. 41:3-6).

It was a universal practise among the heathen nations to make deep gashes on the face, the arms the legs and on the body in time of bereavement for the following purposes:

- It was deemed a becoming mark of respect for the dead.
- It was a way of outwardly expressing a person's deep grief and sorrow.
- It was believed to be a way of soothing and pacifying the deities who presided over death and the grave and of gaining their favour.

In the East the custom of cutting the flesh for the dead appears to have been very common, even today those in the East who are bereaved make cuts and incisions in their bodies to outwardly express their mourning for the dead. Whipping their bodies, especially the back was another method of cutting the body, but this was not done for the dead, but as an outward act of repentance.

**Tattoos and marks to identify with idols and gods:** (v28) according to the ancient authorities, the mark, tattoo, print or impression was made in the following ways:

- A hot iron, or by cutting incisions and punctures in the skin to impress certain figures or words into the flesh on various parts of the body.
- The cuts, incisions or punctures were filled up with coloured ink, paint or black lead.
- The marks engraved into the flesh were commonly of flowers, leaves, stars, and various other images, that identified the person with their idol or god.

The practice of tattooing prevailed among the Egyptians, and nations both civilised and uncivilised of ancient times. It was the idolatrous practice and superstitious custom of the Gentiles in ancient times, to imprint upon themselves the mark of an idol for the following reasons:

- To honour some idol, god or deity and show that they were his servants.
- To appease the infernal deities and give them satisfaction for the deceased.
- To win their favour and outwardly show their devotion to their god.

When Elijah mocked the prophets of Baal, telling them to cry aloud, to their god the prophets of Baal:

- Cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. <sup>29</sup>And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention. (1 Kings 18:27-29).

Tattoos were also used to identify a person; masters of slaves had their initials impressed upon the slaves' body so if he fled, he could be easily identified. Soldiers would have a mark of a general they idolised and honoured as a protector, guardian tattooed on their flesh. Though God's law:

- Strongly forbids Israel to voluntarily make any such disfigurement and mark of apostasy on their body.
- Declares that it is an extreme offence to the LORD.

The Mosaic Law introduced phylacteries which the people of Israel could bind upon their arm or forehead as a memorial sign between their eyes, that they would lay up the words of the LORD in their heart and in their soul. (Exod. 13:9) (Deut. 11:18) (Exod. 13:16) (Deut. 6:8). The Jews at various times embraced the superstitious practise of marking themselves with pagan tattoos.

**NOTE:** though it is wise to avoid tattoos altogether, since our mind and character changes over the years, this commandment of God against tattoos does not mean that every person today who has a tattoo stands guilty before God because of the tattoo. The tattoos that are condemned in the Bible are tattoos that a person places upon their body to identify themselves with their idol or god, it is not about tattoos that a man or woman put on themselves as a fashion statement or worn as one wears jewellery, since these have nothing to do with religion of any kind.

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## MAKING A DAUGHTER A PROSTITUTE

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### LEVITICUS 19:29

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- **Leviticus 19:29:** "Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute (be a whore in KJV), lest the land fall into prostitution (whoredom in KJV) and the land become full of depravity (wickedness in KJV).

Amongst commentators there are various ideas as to what this command refers to, following are the four most common:

- 1 The degrading worship of Astarte a deity of fertility and sexuality, who eventually evolved into the Greek Aphrodite due to her role as a goddess of sexual love. The worship of Astarte commonly involved lewd and sexually explicit behaviour. A few Biblical passages make a reference to the worship of a "Queen of Heaven," who many suppose may have been Astarte.
- 2 To the wicked practice among the Phoenicians and Canaanites of setting aside certain young women to be used to prostitute themselves in the temples of their idols.
- 3 Delaying a daughter to marry and by doing so causing her to be a prostitute with the man she desires to marry, however this is unlikely since a woman had to receive money for sex to be classified as a prostitute (whore in KJV).
- 4 A father prostituting his daughter to earn money to bring income into the family home.

It would be foolishness to say one of these is right and another wrong since they all cause a daughter to prostitute herself and are therefore all applicable. Israel's Old Testament history clearly shows that they embraced pagan gods and their sexual idolatrous practises.

**The land become full of depravity (wickedness in KJV):** this is exactly what happen and is why God used Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon as His servant, (Jer. 25:8-9). and the armies of Babylon as His great army (Joel chapter two) to invade the land of Judah, destroy Jerusalem, pillage the gold and sacred vessels of the temple and take them and the people of Israel into captivity to the authority and rule of Babylon for seventy years. The book of Joel contains amazing prophetic prophecies, for greater insights of Babylon and Gods great army, see Joel chapter two in Commentary OT (ON WEBSITE MENU), its sole focus is upon Babylon and the, "Day of the LORD." The following verses show that God called Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon His servant.

- Thus, says the LORD of hosts: Because you (Judah) have not obeyed my words, <sup>9</sup>behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my (the LORD'S) servant, and I will bring them against this land (of Judah) and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. (Jer. 25:8-9).

Israel being taken into captivity to Babylon was because they did profane their daughters by making them a prostitute (a whore in KJV) and allowed the land to become full of all kinds of depravity and wickedness and violated all the laws mentioned in this chapter. (Lev. 19). They worshiped pagan idols and their gods and embraced their sexual idolatrous practises and many other abominable religious customs.

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## KEEPING THE LORD'S SABBATHS

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### LEVITICUS 19:30

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- **Leviticus 19:30:** You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD.

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This does not only apply to the weekly Sabbath, but all other Sabbath Days, since they were holy days of collective repentance, worship and joyful festival days of collective fellowship before the LORD. It carries the idea of Israel being faithful to the LORD and holding His Sanctuary in high esteem, so that their children from generation to generation would remain faithful to the LORD. Whenever superstitious idolatrous practices are mentioned the command, "keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary," is often found close by for the following two reasons: -

1. The sanctuary was the holy place of His glorious Majesty, whose name is holy and who is to be reverend, and therefore not to be defiled by fornication or idolatry
2. It is by the hearing of God's word and the fellowship of like-minded faithful believers that protects a believer from being seduced by false teachers and deceived by twisted and distorted doctrines.

God's love, mercy, grace and favour dwelt in the heart when the people of Israel kept the LORD's Sabbath days holy and revered His sanctuary.

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## MEDIUMS, FAMILIAR SPIRITS AND WIZARDS

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### LEVITICUS 19:31

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- **Leviticus 19:31:** "Do not turn to mediums (familiar spirits in KJV) or wizards; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them (to be defiled by them in KJV): I am the LORD your God.

**Mediums (familiar spirits in KJV):** (v31) the expression, "familiar spirits," is thought to have originated from the ability of ventriloquists to project and speak with different voices.

It was and still is believed that:

- Spirits indwelt human bodies and used their voice to speak.
- Those who practised this craft were visited by an invisible spirit that was subject to their call to give them supernatural information.
- The spirits dwelling in the inviable world inhabited the bodies of those who practised this craft and enabled them to foretell things to come and reveal secret mysteries concerning a person's life.

Those who believe they have communication with spirits dwelling in the invisible world and are able to communicate with them and thereby foretell the future fate of those who come to them are either spiritual religious imposters and pretenders or truly deceived.

**Wizards:** is a word that carries the idea of, cunningly knowing. In this context it refers to cunning people that claim to have mystical and secret knowledge and the ability to foretell events that will come to pass in a person's life and tell them their fortunes (good or bad) and what will befall them in the afterlife. According to ancient tradition, these wizards ate or drank certain mixtures of herbs or surrounded themselves with burning incense, that produced fumes which sent them off into a mental trance, and then while in this state of heightened ecstasy foretold future events.

The word wizard is another name that expresses the same things as a charmer, necromancer and medium and those who practise divination, but with differing manners of operation.

#### **A Medium and Familiar Spirit.**

- A man or a woman who is a medium (hath a familiar spirit in KJV) or a wizard shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones; their blood shall be upon them." (Lev. 20:27).

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Here a medium is a person with a familiar spirit, it was supposed that those who practised this craft were visited by an invisible spirit who was subject to their call to give them supernatural information and the ability to foretell secret mysteries concerning a person's life and future things to come.

#### **Divination, Enchanter, Sorcerer, Medium, Wizard, Necromancer.**

- There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes (observer of times KJV), or interprets omens, (enchanter in KJV) or a sorcerer (witch in KJV) <sup>11</sup>or a charmer or a medium or a wizard (consultant with familiar spirits in KJV) or a necromancer, <sup>12</sup>for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you. (Deut. 18:10-12).

Here, the titles: divination, enchanter, sorcerer, medium, wizard and necromancer all stem from the same family, since they all involve, having the ability to mystically speak of secret events, or predict future things to come concerning a person's life or of the world in general by the following three abominations:

1. Contacting mystical spirits that communicate to them (usually while they are in a trance like state).
2. Contacting the spirits of the departed, especially of a departed loved one.
3. Observing the heavens, the stars and various objects or events that are considered lucky or unlucky (i.e., a Roman general believed his army would have victory in battle, because an eagle with a twig in its mouth flew over the armies of his enemies and dropped the twig over them).

The one thing that those who practice divination and those who are referred to as an enchanter, sorcerer, medium, wizard or necromancer all have in common is that they are not speaking from the inspiration of Gods Spirit, but speaking from:

- A mental trancelike state often induced by some form of drug or the fumes of incense.
- A heightened state of mental ecstasy brought on by meditation.
- A strong belief that one has contact with spirits that dwell in a totally different realm to mortal mankind.

God's law clearly cautions the people of Israel that whoever seeks after those who claim to communicate with spirits would be stoned.

- A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones; their blood shall be upon them." (Lev. 20:27).
- There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer <sup>11</sup>or a charmer or a medium or a wizard or a necromancer, <sup>12</sup>for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. (Deut. 18:10-11).

Those who trust in the words and predictions of a medium, a wizard and those who practice divination, fortunetelling, interpreting omens and a sorcerer, charmer or necromancer, and believe it to be the word of some divine spirit trusting and expecting what has been said will come to pass according to the words and predictions spoken are guilty of gross sin and bring judgment upon themselves according the law.

Everyone who confesses to believe in God, that has any part of any one of these practises not only manifest their total lack of faith and trust in God, but also make themselves an extreme offense to Him.

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## AN OVERVIEW MEDIUMS, FAMILIAR SPIRITS AND WIZARDS

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The following two columns show the various translations used in the English Standard Bible concerning mediums, familiar spirits and wizards compared with the translations used in the King James Bible.

**English Standard Bible    King James Bible.**

Medium	Familiar spirit. (Lev. 20:27).
Wizard	Wizard. (Lev. 20:27).
Tells fortunes	Observer of times. (Deut. 18:10-12).
Interprets omens	Enchanter. (Deut. 18:10-12).
Sorcerer	Witch. (Deut. 18:10-12).
Wizard	Consultant with familiar spirits. (Deut. 18:10-12).
Mediums	Familiar spirits in KJV. (1 Sam. 28:3).
Necromancers	Wizards in KJV. (1 Sam. 28:3).
Medium	Familiar spirit in KJV. (1 Sam. 28:7).
Mediums	Familiar spirits in KJV. (1 Sam. 28:9).
Necromancers	Wizards in KJV. (1 Sam. 28:9).

Fortune-telling	Observed times in KJV. (2 Kings 21:6).
Omens	Enchantments in KJV. (2 Kings 21:6).
Mediums	Familiar spirits in KJV. (2 Kings 21:6).
Wizards	Wizards in KJV. (2 Kings 21:6).

Following is a summary of the above translations of the English Standard Bible compared with the translations of King James Bible.

**English Standard Bible    King James Bible.**

Fortune-telling	Observed times.
Interprets omens	Enchanter.
Medium	Familiar spirit.
Necromancers	Wizards.
Omens	Enchantments.
Sorcerer	Witch.
Tells fortunes	Observer of times KJV. (Deut. 18:10-12).
Wizard	Wizard and consultant with familiar spirits.

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**HONOURING THE ELERLY**

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**LEVITICUS 19:32**

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- **Leviticus 19:32:** "You shall stand up before the gray head (hoary head in KJV) and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

The Bible teaches good manners and obliges us to pay to all what is owed, respect to whom respect is owed and honor to whom honor is owed (Rom. 13:7). Jesus taught his followers to honor their father and mother and love their neighbour as themselves. (Matt. 19:19) (Matt. 22:39) (Mark 12:31), and the apostle Paul wrote, "Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom. 13:10) and states that, "the whole law is fulfilled in the following words: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Gal. 5:14). James Jesus brother said:

- If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well." (James 2:8).

Throughout the Old Testament the law of the LORD teaches, that we are not to oppress, rob, show injustice or hate or take vengeance on a neighbor, nor bear a grudge or do any wrong to them, but love our neighbour as ourselves. (Lev. 19:13, 15, 17, 18) (Lev. 25:14) (Deut. 5:20). Showing respect and honour to the aged, is especially highlighted for the following reasons:

- They are a wealth of experience, understanding, knowledge and wisdom.
- They are often frail and lacking in physical strength.
- They have experienced many things that those who are much younger have not, and therefore make good counsellors.
- For God's sake, who requires this reverence and whose blessing old age is, and not necessarily because of any worth in themselves.

It is not the intention here to limit the law of God to respect and honour the aged only, but to shine a spotlight upon the importance of showing respect to those who have lived a long life, in the book of Proverbs it is written:

- Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life. (Prov. 16:31).

**Honor the face of an old man:** carries the following two ideas:

1. Honor their character and withered and frail countenance.
2. Do not despise the aged because of the many wrinkles in their face, which there is a danger for those of the younger generation (consciously or unconsciously) to do.

To this day orthodox Jews, all stand up when an aged person enters a house where young people are, and will not sit down until they are told they can sit. An exception to this rule is made when an aged person passes by young workers engaged in their work, they do not need not stand up, because it would interrupt them in their labour.

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## LOVING STRANGERS

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### LEVITICUS 19:33-34

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- **Leviticus 19:33:** "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong (not vex him in KJV).<sup>34</sup>You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

The word stranger here comes from the Hebrew word (*ger*) a guest and means by implication a foreigner and alien to the land. It carries the idea of turning aside from the road (for a lodging (as a guest) or any other purpose. The stranger refers to a person of non-Jewish origin, that is temporally staying in the land of Israel. Even though a native of the land of Israel or a stranger was only temporally dwelling amongst the people of Israel they had to abide by the following laws:

- Not to do any work the great Day of Atonement and to fast on. (Leviticus 16:29).
- To abide by the laws and regulations concerning sacrifices. (Lev. 17:8-9) (Leviticus 22:18).
- Not to eat blood or the flesh of animals torn by wild beasts. (Leviticus 22:10).
- To keep the LORD's statutes and rules concerning sexual sins and incest. (Leviticus 18:26).
- Not to blaspheme the LORD's name. (Lev. 24:16).
- Not to take another person's life or the life of an animal. (Leviticus 24:17-18).
- To do no harm, injury or hurt to a neighbor (Lev. 24:19-22).

These were some of the conditions that a person of non-Jewish origin had to embrace if they were to sojourn in their land. The same rules that applied to Israel were to be applied to the sojourner and the native of the land. (Lev. 24:22).

**You shall not do him wrong (not vex him in KJV):** (v33) foreigners and strangers dwelling amongst the people of Israel who conform to their laws. The people of Israel were forbidden to demean and belittle them because of their past idolatrous practises, or mock and ridicule them

because of their nationality or deliberately trouble or distress them in any way. They were to treat foreigners and strangers as they would treat their own people, with kindness, respect and encouragement and as friends with the hope they might be brought to the knowledge and worship of the God of Israel and keep in mind that they themselves were strangers in Egypt, and at first were received with kindness and hospitably in that country. It is at our peril, if we do wrong to strangers, widows and the fatherless, because they are vulnerable and defenceless, and God has a particular care for such people. In contrast to treating them as strangers Israel was to do all they could to encourage them to embrace the Lord God of Israel and welcome them into God's grace when they do.

Just as Israel was strangers in the land of Egypt, until God delivered them, likewise, most Christians were at one time citizens of the world and as such strangers to Christ's Kingdom and therefore should do no wrong to those dwelling in the world, but rather do as Israel was commanded to do and encourage them to embrace the Gospel of Christ and welcome them into God's grace when they do.

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## JUST WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

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### LEVITICUS 19:35-37

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- **Leviticus 19:35-37:** "You shall do no wrong (unrighteousness in KJV) in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity. <sup>36</sup>You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. <sup>37</sup>And you shall observe all my statutes and all my rules, (judgments in KJV) and do them: I am the LORD."

The ephah is here taken as the standard of dry measure, and the hin as the standard of liquid measure. The focus here is measures of length, of weights and of quantity, it embraces the measuring of the length, the weight or quantity of:

- Lands, fields and the cattle and flocks on them.
- Cloth, grain, corn, flour etc.
- Liquids, such as milk and wine etc.
- All goods of various kinds and all things that are weighed on scales, especially gold and silver coins used as money for trading.

Those who deceive others by passing of a false measure as a legal measure are, according to this law acting as equally corrupt as judge who in a court of justice wilfully passes a wrong sentence and as a false witness who gives a false testimony. (Leviticus 19:15). Scripture frequently refers to the practise of using false weights as an abomination to the LORD, while at the same time calls right measurements as coming from God Himself.

- Shall I acquit the man with wicked scales and with a bag of deceitful weights? (Micah 6:11).
- A false balance and unequal weights are an abomination to the LORD, but a just weight is his delight. (Prov 11:1) (Prov 20:10) (Prov 20:23).
- A just balance and scales are the LORD's; all the weights in the bag are his work. (Proverbs 16:11).

Those who use false weight and measures to cheat others for their own gain are guilty of defiling the land of Israel and profaning the name of God. The principal concerning unjust weights and measures laid out in these verses applies to all business transactions, involving buying and

selling and all types of trading not only for ancient Israel, but also for all who claim to be God's people today.

**You shall observe all my statutes and all my rules (judgments in KJV):** (v37), this command not only embraces all the LORD's statutes, rules and judgments laid out in this chapter, but also embraces all the laws concerning incest mentioned in the previous chapter and all the laws laid out in the entire book of Leviticus.

These laws concerning mankind not only manifest the holiness of the LORD, but also manifest the justice of God for they all have one thing in common, in that they protect the innocent from harm and hurt and from being cheated out of what is rightfully theirs.

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**Following are the general laws laid out in this chapter that God gave to Moses to give to the People of Israel.**

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**Laws Israel was not to do:**

- Steal, deal falsely and lie to one another or profane the name of God by swearing falsely in His name.
- Oppress and rob their neighbour or rob or withhold the wages of a hired worker.
- Put a stumbling block before the deaf and the blind or do injustice in a court of law.
- Go around as a slanderer or give a false witness against their neighbour.
- Bear a grudge and hate their brother in their heart or take vengeance.
- Let their cattle breed with a different kind and sow their field with two different kinds of seeds.
- Wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material and eat and drink blood.
- Interpret omens, tell fortunes, round off the hair on their temples or mar the edges of their beard and make cuts on their body for the dead or tattoo themselves for their idols.
- Profane their daughter by making her a prostitute and turning to mediums or wizards to seek knowledge.
- Stand up in pride against an aged person or dishonour them in any way or deliberately do a stranger who dwells amongst them injury and harm.
- Deliberately do wrong in judgment and cheat in balances, measures, weight and quantity for their own gain.

**Laws Israel was to obey:**

- Judge their neighbour in righteousness and reason frankly with people, without causing strife.
- Keep the LORD'S Sabbath's and reverence His sanctuary.
- Love the native and stranger who sojourns with them as they love themselves and treat them as friends.
- Observe all the LORD'S statutes and His rules and do them.

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The following chapter shows that most of the above sins  
incurred the death penalty.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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