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## Leviticus 20

(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 20.

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### FOCUS: MOLOCH, MEDIUMS, WIZARDS, INCESTUOUS LAWS

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#### Topics.

- Anyone who gives their children to Molech shall be stoned.
- Whoever turns to mediums and wizards, will be cut off.
- Whoever curses his father, or his mother shall surely be put to death.
- If a man commits adultery, both shall be put to death.
- If a man lies with his father's wife, both are to be put to death.
- If a man lies with his daughter in law, both are to be put to death.
- If a man lies with a male as with a woman both are to be put to death.
- If a man takes a woman and her mother, they shall all be burned.
- If a man lies with an animal, both shall be put to death.
- If a brother lies with his sister, they shall be cut off from their people.
- Punishment for a man uncovering a woman during her menstrual period.
- If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he and the woman will die childless.
- If a man uncovers his brother's wife, they shall be childless.
- You shall keep all my statutes and rules lest the land vomit you out.
- You shall inherit the land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

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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:** focused on treating your mother and father and the elderly with honour, being just to all people and loving your neighbor. Just weights and measures, stealing, deceiving and lying, oppressing and slandering a neighbor, causing the deaf and the blind to stumble, bearing grudges, seeking vengeance, sex and slave women and making a daughter a prostitute. Keeping the Sabbath, profaning the name of God, peace offerings, different kinds of cattle, seeds and garments, idols and gods, eating blood, interpreting omens, cutting the beard and tattoos on the body, and mediums, familiar spirits and wizards.

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## FOCUS: LAWS REGARDING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

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### LEVITICUS 20:1-5

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#### **Anyone who Gives their Children to Molech shall be Stoned.**

- **Leviticus 20:1-5:** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>"Say to the people of Israel, Any one of the people of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. <sup>3</sup>I myself will set my face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given one of his children to Molech, to make my sanctuary unclean and to profane my holy name. <sup>4</sup>And if the people of the land do at all close their eyes to that man when he gives one of his children to Molech, and do not put him to death, <sup>5</sup>then I will set my face against that man and against his clan and will cut them off from among their people, him and all who follow him in whoring after Molech.

**Molech (or Moloch) also Milcom:** are both of similar signification, one signifies a king, the other a lord, the priests of Molech are called Chemarims. It was the national idol and deity of the Ammonites, the idol itself is describe in Scripture as the abomination of the Ammonites. (1 Kings 11:5). In the later period of Jewish history, the worship of Moloch was moved to the valley of the Son of Hinnom (Jer. 7:31) (2 Kings 23:10) east of Jerusalem. (1 Kings 11:7) (2 Kings 23:13) (Hinnom being the Hebrew word for Gehenna) which was a valley of Jerusalem.

The punishment for worshipping Molech was death by stoning. (Lev. 20:2). In the New Testament Gehenna, where the statute of Molech stood became a very appropriate symbol to depict the horror and total-destruction of the human body, soul and spirit.

**The statute of Molech:** his temple was outside Jerusalem, in a place by itself. The idol was a hollow brass image that was so tall that it appeared as if it was staring down at its devotees. Its head resembled a bull or calf with two large horns. The statue rested on a base of brass, with a fire pit at its feet so that the hollow core of the idol acted as a chimney. When the fire was burning in the pit at it base the flames would reach up through the idols hollow core and lick around the edges of Molech's open mouth, with a column of smoke billowing high into the air that could be seen from some distance. The arms of Molech reached upward and out forming a steep incline that descended into his open mouth giving the appearance that he like a human with their hands stretched out was waiting to receive a gift. It is said that the temple had seven compartments (signifying seven levels of the afterlife), into which the person making the offering went according to the worth of their gifts, if the sacrifice was:

1. A fowl they went into the first compartment.
2. A sheep, into the second.
3. A lamb, into the third.
4. A ram, into the fourth.
5. A bullock, into the fifth.

6. An ox, into the sixth.

7. A son or daughter they were guided into the seventh compartment.

It is said that the devotees dedicating their children to this disgusting idol would firstly kiss the image, as it is written, "let the sacrifices of men kiss the calf" (Hosea 13:2), whereupon a fire was kindled in Molech until its arms became red hot; the child was then placed into its hands, and drums were beaten in unison, partly, to create an atmosphere of frenzied worship and partly to make enough noise to prevent the terrifying screams of the child reaching the parent's ears, lest they should be moved with pity and attempt to rescue their child.

Some say the child was firstly laid on an altar and then a priest after reciting some sacred words to the god would raise a knife-like dagger and plunge it down through the child's heart, after which the sacrificed child would be given to the flames of the fire burning in the idol Molech. Each of these descriptions may well have applied at different times depending upon which nation was worshipping the idol and at what period of history.

**The frenzied worship of Molech:** priests would bring a child to be sacrificed to Molech and chant, Molech, Molech, Molech and the frenzied crowd would also chant Molech, Molech, Molech to the throbbing beat of drums. While the priests and the crowd chanted to the pounding rhythm of drums, the chief priest faced Molech with his arms raised, pleading with the god in a frenzied cry, when he had finished his prayer, he would lower his arms and lift the child sacrifice in the air and toss the child into the monsters waiting arms. The child would roll down the hot and smoothly polished arms and into Molech's open mouth and the roaring fire and flames would devour the sacrificial child.

**God's great grief:** God's heart must have been torn in grief as He looked down on His people doing such cruel and horrific things to His innocent and helpless children, is it any wonder that He was angry with His people and allowed the Babylonians to invade their land, destroy Jerusalem and take the people of Judah and Israel into captivity for seventy years.

**Pass through the fire to Molech:** (v21) this expression signifies the victim being purified and consumed by fire. Pagan religions believed their gods had greater power than Israel's God and were of far more value therefore they offered their own sons and daughters, believing their gods deserved sacrifices of much greater value than animals. Israel's God is spoken of in Scripture as supernaturally consuming certain animal sacrifices by fire, and the priests of Israel offered their animal sacrifice to God by burning them on the brazen altar. The pagan nations deceived by Satan offered their child sacrifices to the deity they worshiped by burning them in flames of fire, believing that in this manner their god was mysteriously consuming the sacrifice.

**Israel, Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem worshipped Molech:** there are many verses that speak of Israel, Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem offering up their sons and daughters by fire, following are just a few:

- Solomon went after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites (1 Kings 11:5) and built a high place for Molech on the mountain east of Jerusalem. (1 Kings 11:7) (2 Kings 23:13).
- Ahaz king of Judah burned his sons in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom. (2 Chron. 28:3).
- The people of Judah built the high places of Topheth, in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire (Jer. 7:31).
- Israel and Judah sacrificed their sons and daughters to Molech. (Jer. 32:35).
- King Josiah of Judah destroyed Topheth, in the Valley of Hinnom, so that no one could sacrifice their son or daughter as a burnt offering to the god Molech. (2 Kings 23:10).

The law of God strongly forbids sacrificing sons and daughters (Deut. 18:10) and the LORD Himself says that it did not even enter His mind that His people would do such a horrific thing. (Jer. 7:31).

**Topheth:** is a place near Jerusalem, it is from the Hebrew word (*taphaph*) and carries the idea of smiting, and figuratively contempt. It is derived from toph, which amongst most commentators carries the following two ideas:

1. A drum: so, called because the cries of the terrified sacrificed children, as they passed through the fire in places of idolatrous horror were drowned out by the sound of many drums beating in unison as the child passed through the fire.
2. To burn: since it was a place in the valley of Hinnom where children were sacrificed in fire to the idol Molech.

Both, of these interpretations are perfectly fitting for the place called Topheth.

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## LEVITICUS 20:6

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### **Whoever Turns to Mediums and Wizards, will be Cut Off.**

- **Leviticus 20:6:** "If a person turns to mediums (familiar spirits in KJV), and wizards, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.

**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 invisible 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 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." (Leviticus 20:27).

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).

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 God's 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 to 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.

**To be cut off:** the expression, "shall be cut off," in Hebrew comes from the word (*karath*) and means cut off, cut down, cast asunder, and by implication to consume and destroy. It carries two ideas, firstly to be cut off from the people and secondly, to be put to death.

1. **To be cut off:** in some contexts, carries the idea that the offender was to be immediately:

- Excommunicated from the people and treated as an outlaw, not a friend.
- Denied all the privileges of the nation Israel.
- Removed from their land, their home, their business and from their people.
- No longer considered to be a person in a covenant relationship with the LORD.

2. **To be cut off:** the following verses show that in other contexts, the expression, "to be cut off from the people," is a Jewish idiom meaning to be put to death by stoning at the hand of the people or by capital punishment at the hand of a civil magistrate.

- I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood, to destroy the earth. (Genesis 9:11).

Since all mankind was killed by the flood except for Noah and his family the expression, "to be cut off," in this context carries the idea of being killed.

- You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes (defiles in KJV) it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. (Exod. 31:14).

In this verse the expression, "put to death," refers those who profane the Sabbath day while the statement, "to be cut off," refers to those who work on the Sabbath day, however, (Num. 15:30-36) shows that those who did work on the Sabbath day were to be put to death. In Leviticus chapter eighteen the expression, "shall be cut off," is used as the punishment for various crimes that various laws laid down in Leviticus chapter twenty are to be punished with death. All these facts show that the expression, "to be cut off from the people," is a Jewish idiom meaning, to be put to death.

**In summary:** depending upon the nature of the offence or crime the expression, "to be cut off," can be taken to mean, to be cut off from the people of Israel and denied all privileges or to be literally put to death.

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## LEVITICUS 20:7-8

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### **Consecrate Yourselves and be Holy, for I am the LORD.**

- **Leviticus 20:7-8:** Consecrate (sanctify in KJV) yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. <sup>8</sup>Keep my statutes and do them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

**Consecrate and Sanctify:** comes from the same Hebrew word (*qadash*), which means to observe as clean (ceremonial or moral). It carries the idea of dedicating and separating one-self to be holy and to keep holy. The expression, "consecrate and sanctify yourselves," in its briefest form means separate yourselves and be holy. Had Israel kept God's divine ordinances it would have resulted in them separating themselves from the detestable rites and idolatrous practices forbidden (in this and the previous chapter) of the surrounding nations and the nations that

practiced such abominations separating themselves from Israel. The way in which the people of Israel were to sanctify themselves was to separate themselves from the idolatrous practices of the surrounding nations and by observing the holy commandments of the LORD. It was in this way that the LORD sanctified the nation of Israel (Lev. 20:8), to be holy, because He is Holy (Lev. 19:2). They were called to be a holy reflection of Him and the only way to be such a reflection was to separate themselves from the corrupt practices of the surrounding nations and by adhering to the LORD's commandments, it was in this way that they were to be a holy and a separate people from all others in worship, conversation, and behavior.

**I am the LORD which sanctifies you:** meaning God separates Israel from all nations, and from their corruptions, cruelty and idolatrous practises in sacrificing their children and their incestuous and unnatural crimes, so that the entire nation would be a peculiar and unique people to the LORD. The LORD separated Israel from the nations in the following ways:

- By calling them out of Egypt by a mighty hand and choosing them to be His unique people and in this manner distinguishing them from all other people on earth.
- By giving them holy laws and covering them and guiding them by His Spirit.
- By favouring them with His love, favour and grace and placing His name of His temple.

In these ways the LORD sanctified the people of Israel (i.e., separated them from the surrounding nations).

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## LEVITICUS 20:9

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### **Whoever Curses his Father or His Mother shall be Put to Death.**

- **Leviticus 20:9:** For 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.

**Anyone who curses his father or his mother:** (v9) the word curse comes from the Hebrew word (*qalal*), in this context it carries the idea of despising and consciously and deliberately bringing one's parents into contempt disrespect and scorn. This does not refer to:

- A child that is not yet of the age of accountability.
- Every stubborn expression spoken impulsively, or in a moment of anger.

But to a teenage son or daughter that is of the age to know better and to behavior that consciously and deliberately brings one's parents into disrespect and scorn. Some in the Jewish community, claim that it only applies to sons and daughters who while speaking contemptuously, disrespectfully and scornfully to their parents used the name of God to curse them.

**His blood shall be upon him:** (v9) means that:

- He is worthy to die and guilty of his own death.
- He deserves to be condemned and to be punished with death.
- He has brought it upon himself to be killed.

Whenever the expression, "his blood shall be on him," or "their blood shall be on them," it refers to being put to death by stoning.

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## LEVITICUS 20:10

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### **If a Man Commits Adultery, both shall be Put to Death.**

- **Leviticus 20:10:** "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."

This verse to the end is a repeat of what has been said in chapter eighteen, they are most likely repeated to reinforce and ingrain them in the mind of the people and magnify the extreme seriousness and revulsion of them. Adultery is a breach of the seventh commandment.

- You shall not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14).

This law embraces the wife of an Israelite, a stranger or a Gentile, both parties were to be put to death; the woman because she was another man's wife, the man, because he laid with a married woman. The following verse shows that when it is said that an adulterer and adulteress are to be put to death it means by stoning:

- You shall bring them (a betrothed virgin, and a man who lie together) 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. 22:24).

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## LEVITICUS 20:11

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### **If a Man Lies with His Father's Wife, both are to Be Put to Death.**

- **Leviticus 20:11:** If a man lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

In chapter eighteen we read:

- You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. (Levitical 18:8).

Now we read that the penalty for uncovering the nakedness of the wife of one's own father, whether she is his biological mother, or a step mother is death, both for the man and the woman and this by stoning. According to Jewish tradition this law applied even after his father's death, and whether the woman was the man's legal wife or betrothed to be his wife.

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## LEVITICUS 20:12

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### **If a Man Lies with His Daughter in Law, both shall be Put to Death.**

- **Leviticus 20:12:** If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed perversion; their blood is upon them.

In chapter eighteen we read:

- You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife; you shall not uncover her nakedness. (Lev. 18:15).

Now we read that the penalty for uncovering the nakedness of a daughter in law, your own sons' wife is death, both for the father and the daughter in law and this by stoning. According to Jewish tradition this law applied even after his father's death, and whether the woman was the sons' legal wife or betrothed to be his wife.

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## LEVITICUS 20:13

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## **If a Man Lies with a Male as with a Woman both shall Die.**

- **Leviticus 20:13:** If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

There is no doubt that when a heterosexual man lies with another heterosexual man it is a perversion since their natural inward sexual orientation is toward a female. However, when a male child is born with an imbalance of genes, DNA or hormones or whatever it is that forms our natural sexual orientation at birth it is wrong to place that child in the same category as a child that is naturally born heterosexual, this is why such boys, teenagers and men are given the title: "homosexual," simply meaning a person that is naturally attracted to another person of the same sex. Now I understand, that some Christians upon reading what I have just said, may respond by saying (or at least thinking), "this is simply worldly teaching for God does not make mistakes." But, how do we apply the principle "God does not make mistakes," to innocent children that are born with horrific deformities and terminal illnesses etc. It is true God does not make mistakes, but we are not yet living in His perfect world, but in a world infected with sin and death, which brings upon the face of the earth all sorts of flaws, distortions, deformations imperfections and deficiencies. Since this is a very large topic and has not only brought brutal and cruel violence and great grief, sorrow and hardship upon those born attracted to another person of the same sex, but also brought many to such a deep depression that they have taken their own life, I cannot fully cover the topic here. For further information see the title:

- Same Sex Relationships (ON WEBSITE MENU).

I would encourage those who are open to questioning the harsh condemning traditional teaching and have a mind that is at least somewhat open to consider a more compassionate view to visit the title, Same Sex Relationships, and take a journey that leads to compassion and understanding.

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## **LEVITICUS 20:14**

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### **If a Man Takes a Woman and Her Mother, they shall be Burned.**

- **Leviticus 20:14:** If a man takes a woman (a wife in KJV) and her mother also, it is depravity; he and they shall be burned with fire, that there may be no depravity among you.

In chapter eighteen we read:

- You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter. (Lev. 18:17).

Now we read that the penalty for a man lying with his wife and her mother, is that all three are to be burnt by fire. This punishment applies to any man who has a sexual relationship with a mother and her daughter and they consent to it. It matters not whether he is married to one of the women or to both women or if neither of the women are his wife such a relationship is a perversion and all three are to be burned.

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## **LEVITICUS 20:15-16**

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### **If a Man Lies with an Animal, both shall be Put to Death.**

- **Leviticus 20:15-16:** If a man lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. <sup>16</sup>If a woman approaches any animal and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

In chapter eighteen we read:

- You shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion. (Lev. 18:23).

Now we read that the penalty for a man or a woman lying with an animal, is death. This is such a loathsome crime it is difficult for most to think such a thing would exist, but sex with animals continues to this very day and despite much of the world being revolted by bestiality many countries still lack any laws against it.

**Death penalty stoning and fire:** it should be noted here, that, whenever mention is made of an offender being, "put to death," without the method of death being mentioned, stoning is meant. The only instance of another form of capital punishment occurs in the following two verses:

- If a man takes a woman and her mother also, it is depravity; he and they shall be burned with fire, that there may be no depravity among you. (Lev 20:14)
- He who is taken with the devoted things shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done an outrageous thing in Israel. (Joshua 7:15).

Both, of these clearly mention they are to be burnt with fire. being

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## LEVITICUS 20:17

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### **If a Brother Lies with a Sister, they shall be Cut off from the People.**

- **Leviticus 20:17:** "If a man takes his sister, a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace, and they shall be cut off in the sight of the children of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness, and he shall bear his iniquity.

In chapter eighteen we read:

- You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home. (Lev. 18:9).

Now we read that the penalty for a man to uncover the nakedness of his sister, is that both the brother and the sister were to be cut off from their people in the sight of the people of Israel.

**Uncover her nakedness:** the expression "he has uncovered her nakedness," and "he sees her nakedness," and "she sees his nakedness," is not to be understood of the two simply exposing their nakedness to each other but embraces the idea of mutually agreeing to lie together for unlawful sex including incest and adultery.

Here the expression, "cut off," could refer to:

- Some special form of public excommunication and expulsion of the brother and the sister, from the people and the camp.
- To burning or stoning the brother and the sister, especially since all other punishments for incestuous sin is death.

Both, of these punishments are designed to put all forms of incestuous filthiness out of the camp and discourage others from practising any form of incestuous sin. For further information concerning the expression, "be cut off," see the title: "Cut him off from among his people," following (v6) (above).

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## LEVITICUS 20:18

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### **Punishment for Uncovering a Woman during her Menstrual Period.**

- **Leviticus 20:18:** If a man lies with a woman during her menstrual period and uncovers her nakedness, he has made naked her fountain, and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from among their people.
- If any man lies with her and her menstrual impurity comes upon him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. (Lev. 15:24).
- You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness. (Lev. 18:19).

Her sickness, refers to the woman's monthly cycle of blood, spoken of as a sickness, because it can drain a woman of energy and leave her feeling lethargic or experiencing greater levels of anxiety, or affect her general sense of physical well-being and cause emotional mood swings. This is not to be understood of a man lying with his wife when she is in such a condition, for the following verse shows that if this was the case, he was only unclean seven days:

- If any man lies with her and her menstrual impurity comes upon him, he shall be unclean seven days, and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean. (Lev. 15:24).

Whereas in this verse the man and the woman are to be cut off from the people. It appears from the language that the woman freely and willingly uncovered the fountain of her blood, before the man to lie sexually with him, for if she had been forced, he only would have been cut off from the people, which means that they both had knowledge of her case, and both consented to lying sexually together.

**Both, of them shall be cut off from among their people:** either by death or by being publicly cast out from their people. For further information concerning the expression, "be cut off," see the title: "Cut him off from among his people," following (v6) (above).

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## LEVITICUS 20:19

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### Uncovering the Nakedness of Your Mother's or father's Sister.

- **Leviticus 20:19:** You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or of your father's sister, for that is to make naked one's relative; they shall bear their iniquity.

In chapter eighteen we read:

- You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's relative.  
<sup>13</sup>You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's relative. (Lev. 18:12-13).

Now we read that the man, who uncovers the nakedness of his father or his mother's sister, shall each bear their own iniquity. When a man uncovers the nakedness of a close relative, both he and the woman are equally guilty for the laws concerning sexual relationships in all cases between close relatives is equally binding upon one sex as it is upon the other.

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## LEVITICUS 20:20

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### If a Man lies with His Uncles Wife, both will Die Childless.

- **Leviticus 20:20:** If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness; they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless.

In chapter eighteen we read:

- You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother, that is, you shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. (Lev. 18:14).

Now we read that the punishment for man, who uncovers the nakedness the wife of his father's brother is that both the man and the woman will die childless, because of their incestuous relationship.

**They shall die childless:** various commentators suppose this could refer to either of the following:

- The woman is not able to conceive or give birth or their children will die before them.
- If they had any children by a former marriage, prior to their incestuous relationship they would die and be buried before them.
- They will not be accepted as their genuine and lawful children, but as bastards, and therefore be cut off from the people and excluded from all the privileges and blessings of Israel and not entitled to any inheritance.
- No one born of a forbidden union may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD. (Deut. 23:2).

The punishment here is less than many of the previous incestuous crimes, most likely because the relationship of kinship is further removed.

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## LEVITICUS 20:21

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### **If a Man Uncovers His Brother's Wife, they shall Be Childless.**

- **Leviticus 20:21:** If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity (it is an unclean thing in the KJV). He has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.

These verses repeat what had been said before, but because of the seriousness of them they need to be laid out in detail and repeated to establish them in the mind of the people. The word unclean comes from the Hebrew word (niddah), meaning moral filthiness, idolatry and incest, it is likened to the uncleanness of a menstruous woman, and carries the idea of being rejected, put apart, separated and removed. In chapter eighteen we read:

- You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. (Leviticus 18:16).

Now we read that the punishment for man, who uncovers the nakedness his brother's wife. This was a great sin, except in the following circumstances:

- If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. (Deut. 25:5).

This law of course is now ceased, however the laws concerning incest have not.

### **The following sins resulted in the offenders being put to death:**

- If a man committed adultery, he and the adulteress were to be put to death. (Lev. 20:10).
- If a son sexually laid with his father's wife; both the son and the wife were to be put to death. (Lev. 20:11).
- If a man sexually laid with his daughter-in-law, both the man and the daughter were to be put to death. (Leviticus 20:12).

- If two heterosexual men sexually laid together both men were to be put to death. (Lev. 20:13).
- If a man sexually lies with a woman and her daughter, the man, the woman and the daughter were to be put to death. (Lev. 20:14).
- If a man lies with an animal both he and the animal were to be put to death. (Lev. 20:15-16).

**The following sins resulted in the offenders being cut off from their people:**

- If a brother sexually laid with his sister both were to be cut off from their people. (Leviticus 20:17).
- If a man sexually laid with a woman during her menstrual cycle, both were to be cut off from their people. (Lev. 20:18).
- If a man sexually laid with his mother or fathers' sister both were to bear their own iniquity. (Leviticus 20:19).

**The following sins resulted in the offenders dying childless:**

- If a man sexually laid with his uncle's wife, they would die childless. (Leviticus 20:20).
- If a man who sexually laid with his brother's wife, they would die childless. (Leviticus 20:21).

Israel was chosen to be a holy nation to the LORD; to possess the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey; to be a separated people and to be the head and not the tail of all nations. If they kept the LORD'S statutes and rules and did not practise any of the laws mentioned in this chapter He would have given them the land to possess and made them the head and not the tail, but because they turned away from Him and adopted many of the pagan practises of the surrounding nations He vomited them out of the Land. History shows that the LORD did this by bringing Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon (who He called His servant), against the land of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to destroy the city, pillage the temple and take the people of Israel into captivity for seventy years so that their destruction became a horror to the surrounding nations. (Jer. 25:8-9).

**NOTE:** it should be noted here, that, whenever mention is made that the offender was "to be put to death" without specifying the way in which they were to be put to death, stoning is meant. The only other form of capital punishment was being burnt with fire, but when offenders are to be put to death by fire, it is clearly stated. The detailed specification of the incestuous crimes here itemized in this chapter shows how corrupt the idolatrous surrounding nations were, and Israel's history shows the extreme proneness the Israelites had to follow the sinful and abominable customs of their neighbors. All these scandalous incestuous sins are not only abominable shocking and detestable before the LORD, but also to the majority of mankind and for this reason when God's people practise such perversions they bring enormous dishonour upon His name, this is one of the reasons why the punishment to be inflicted upon the offenders was death, the second reason was to highlight the seriousness and awfulness of such sin and deter others from it.

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## LEVITICUS 20:22-23

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**Keep all My Statutes and Rules Lest the Land Vomit You Out.**

- **Leviticus 20:22-23:** "You shall therefore keep all my statutes and all my rules and do them, that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out.<sup>23</sup> And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I detested them.

The LORD concludes His divine laws with an appeal to the Israelites to obey and keep all His commandments, statutes, laws, ordinances and rules, of holiness mentioned in this chapter and elsewhere, especially the laws concerning incestuous marriages and unlawful sexual relationships mentioned in the previous chapter and not to be guilty of the crimes for which the previous inhabitants of the land had been cast out.

**May not vomit you out (spue you not out in KJV):** as the stomach does its food when it is loathsome and nauseous to it, and it cannot bear it or hold it down. The following verses show that the land of Canaan vomited out its inhabitants because the people of the land, who were before Israel, did all of these abominations.

- Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, <sup>25</sup>and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. <sup>26</sup>But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you <sup>27</sup>(for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), <sup>28</sup>lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. (Lev. 18:24-28).

The abominable sins those in the land practised and accepted as normal were so detestable before the LORD, that He showed his abhorrence by casting them out of the land and laying down laws and rules to keep the Israelites from being guilty of doing the same things.

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## LEVITICUS 20:24

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### **You shall Inherit the Land, a Land Flowing with Milk and Honey.**

- **Leviticus 20:24:** But I have said to you, 'You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the LORD your God, who have separated you from the peoples.

The statement, "I have said to you," refers to God's promise to Israel's fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the nation, that He would expel the Canaanites, and give them their land as an inheritance, providing they observed His laws and rules and continued in them they would inherit the Promised Land.

**I have separated you from other people:** the LORD chose them above all people, to be a special and peculiar people to Him. Their selection from all other nations was by God's special grace, favour and blessing and by miraculous works performed amongst them to be a glorious nation above all nations, preserving the knowledge and worship of the true God amid universal apostasy.

**A land that flows with milk and honey:** meaning a land abounding with all good things, that can abundantly provide its people with all the needs and comforts of life and everything necessary to give joy and happiness.

- I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Periz-zites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. (Exod. 3:8).

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## LEVITICUS 20:25-26

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### **Be Holy to Me, for I have Separated You, that You should Be Mine.**

- **Leviticus 20:25-26:** You shall therefore separate the clean beast from the unclean, and the unclean bird from the clean. You shall not make yourselves detestable by beast or by bird or by anything with which the ground crawls, which I have set apart for you to hold

unclean. <sup>26</sup>You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.

You shall separate the clean beast from the unclean: another way the LORD separated and distinguished Israel from the surrounding nations was to give them specific foods that they could eat and that they were not to eat. The Israelites were to distinguish between the clean and unclean foods, as ordained in Leviticus chapter eleven and by strictly following these dietary laws be a separate nation from all other nations. God did everything He could to separate Israel from the surrounding nations to preserve them from their idolatrous, incestuous, abominable and evil works.

**You shall be holy to me:** (v26) Israel was called to observe all things that were agreeable to God's holy nature and wilfully submit to His will and cheerfully obey his holy laws and rules for they were called to be His people and an example to all nations. The separation of Israel from all nations does not mean the rejection of all other nations, but simply that Israel was the first nation to be called to establish God's laws and will on earth, with all other nations gradually being called to follow afterward from people to people, until, "many nations shall be joined to the Lord. If the LORD had said, "I have separated all nations from you," there would be no hope and no future for the Gentiles; but rather the LORD says, "I have separated you from all other nations." God firstly separated a people from all others, to bring forth His word and the promised Messiah and Saviour. He then goes on to continually separate people from other nations to become a part of the first nation that He called out of the sea of humanity. The LORD chose Israel to go first to the mountain of the LORD and become His children and planned that all other nations should follow them and become with them children of God.

- Many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people, and I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. (Zech. 2:11).

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## LEVITICUS 20:27

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### **A Man or Woman who is a Medium or Wizard shall Be put to Death.**

- **Leviticus 20:27:** "A man or a woman who is a medium (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."

**Mediums (familiar spirit in KJV) and wizards:** generally, speaking carries the idea of "a knowing one," and refers to the following two groups of people:

1. Those who claim to have a great amount of supernatural and secret knowledge and mystical or psychic insights of things concerning future events concerning a person's life and their destiny.
2. Those who claim to be gifted with the ability to contact departed spirits, especially a loved one of the customers paying for their services.

Many of these deceivers impose upon person who has paid for their services a false prediction or future promise and thereby cheat them out of their money that they have given them for personal supernatural information concerning themselves and their future life.

**NOTE:** there are three types of men and woman that practise these deceptive arts, firstly, those who truly believe they have physic powers to receive supernatural knowledge from a spiritual world, secondly those who truly believe they can contact departed spirits. (i.e., the art of necromancy), and thirdly, those who knowingly pretend to have these powers and skilfully deceive others for fame, renown and worldly riches.

**A man or woman:** who believes they can or pretends they can disclose future events by means of wizardry, a familiar spirit and necromancy, and thereby usurping the gifts of God, are to be stoned to death. The woman is probably mentioned here because in ancient times these sorts of practices were more frequently committed by women than men. (1 Sam. 28:7) (Acts 16:16).

**Their blood shall be upon them:** (v27) not only carries the idea that those who practise such things have in effect made a covenant with death and are worthy of death, but also means they have brought death upon themselves. The type of death they were to suffer was to be stoned until they were dead. The story of Stephen shows that stoning to death at the time of the apostles was still a common practice for the people of Israel and their religious leaders when they believed a person was a false prophet of God. When Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5), proclaimed the true Gospel the people, the elders, the scribes and the religious council (Acts 6:12-13) cried out with a loud voice and rushed together against Stephen and:

- Cast him out of the city and stoned him, and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul (later called Paul). (Acts 7:57-58).

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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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