

**Leviticus 20:1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,**

This chapter appears to specify the penalties for refusing to follow the commands of God given previously, primarily in chapter 18.

**Leviticus 20:2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever *he be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth *any* of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.**

**Leviticus 20:3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.**

**Leviticus 20:4 And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not:**

**Leviticus 20:5 Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.**

In chapter 18 the command was given prohibiting the sacrifice of one's children to Molech, one of the gods of Canaan, the ruler of the netherworld according to Eerdman's Dictionary. David Guzik describes the worship of this false god as follows: "Molech was worshipped by heating a metal statue representing the god until it was red hot, then by placing a living infant on the outstretched hands of the statue, while beating drums drowned out the screams of the child until it burned to death."

It is obvious that such a sacrifice by one of God's chosen people would profane His name. The penalty for such action—death by stoning. It was an act of murder. I am reminded of God's words to Noah—long before He ever set apart the nation of Israel as His chosen people.

*Genesis 9:6 "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."*

These verses also declare guilty any person that knows about such sacrifice and keeps silent to protect the one making the sacrifice. God declares that He will destroy the guilty person(s).

**Leviticus 20:6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.**

Those who chose to rebel against God and turn to those with familiar spirits and/or wizards would suffer God's hand of judgment. The Hebrew for "cut him off" states "to destroy or consume...perish." God looked at such action as spiritual adultery. It was an offense directed specifically against God, and He would personally carry out judgment.

**Leviticus 20:7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God.**

**Leviticus 20:8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I *am* the LORD which sanctify you.**

At this point the LORD interjects a reminder that His people are to sanctify themselves, to avoid participating in anything that identified with idol worship. The LORD, YHWH, is the only true God of Israel as well as of all peoples on earth. God's people were to be holy, to act according to the morals established by God's commands. They were to be careful to preserve God's commands and act accordingly. Only God can sanctify the sinner and make him clean again.

**Leviticus 20:9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.**

I think we have to remember that God established the only acceptable structure for authority; that structure positions parents in authority over their children. Even when grown, children were to honor their parents. I think we have to stipulate that this commandment is directed at adult sons or daughters and not children. The parallel section in Deuteronomy makes this clear.

*Deuteronomy 21:18–21 “If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.”*

To curse someone in the ancient world was again connected with consorting with evil spirits or magic.

**Leviticus 20:10 ¶ And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.**

If a man was caught committing adultery with another man's wife, both the man and the woman were to be put to death.

**Leviticus 20:11 And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.**

**Leviticus 20:12 And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood *shall be* upon them.**

Any son that commits adultery with his father's wife is to be put to death along with the woman.

Any man that commits adultery with his daughter-in-law is to be put to death along with the woman.

**Leviticus 20:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.**

Any men found in sexual contact with one another were to be put to death.

**Leviticus 20:14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you.**

Any man who has intercourse with both his wife and her mother is to be burned to death along with the women. Adam Clarke posits that this is possibly a reference to being branded with a mark of some sort.

**Leviticus 20:15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast.**

**Leviticus 20:16 And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.**

Any person committing bestiality was to be put to death and the animal killed.

**Leviticus 20:17 And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; it is a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity.**

**Leviticus 20:18 And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness; he hath discovered her fountain, and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people.**

**Leviticus 20:19 And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, nor of thy father's sister: for he uncovereth his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity.**

**Leviticus 20:20 And if a man shall lie with his uncle's wife, he hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness: they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless.**

**Leviticus 20:21 And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.**

Any man engaging in a sexual relationship with his sister, or with a woman during her menstrual cycle was to be cut off from the people along with the women involved. If caught with his aunt by blood relationship "they would bear their iniquity." If caught with his aunt by marriage or his sister-in-law, they would die childless.

**Leviticus 20:22** ¶ Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out.

**Leviticus 20:23** And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.

The LORD again inserts a strong command that His people are to obey all the laws and judgments He establishes to govern their lives. If they don't, He would just as surely dispossess them of the land as he was the Canaanites on their behalf.

Verse 23 clarifies that God's commands were to set His people apart as unique from the heathen nations around them. They were not to be involved with any practice associated with idolatry—anything that God abhors because it is so evil and/or pays homage to evil spirits. God boldly declares in scripture that He is the only One worthy of our worship and obedience.

*Exodus 34:14 "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God...."*

*Isaiah 43:11 & 13 "I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour....Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?"*

*Isaiah 44:6 "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."*

*Isaiah 46:9–10 "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...."*

**Leviticus 20:24** But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from *other* people.

**Leviticus 20:25** Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.

**Leviticus 20:26** And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD *am* holy, and have severed you from *other* people, that ye should be mine.

As the Creator, everything belongs to Him and He has the right to give it to whom He so chooses. He chose Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to set apart a people to Himself. He chose to give the land of Canaan to that people—the people of Israel. People and nations today can argue all they want as to who owns the land.

God has declared that the Jewish people own the land—in fact, far more than is now in their jurisdiction.

As His people, God expected the people of Israel to pay attention to what is clean and unclean and live in obedience to Him and separate from the nations around them. They were to be a testimony to the blessings that one can enjoy in submission and obedience to Almighty God.

**Leviticus 20:27 A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.**

One more judgment to close the chapter—Any man or woman with a familiar spirit or was a wizard was to be stoned to death. They were obviously in communion with evil spirits.

Regarding the death penalty in general, I think it is important to note that there had to be corroborating testimony from two or three witnesses to issue such a judgment.

*Deuteronomy 17:6–7 “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.”*

While looking for some helpful input to better understand some of these judgments, I ran across a quote from Bob Deffinbaugh that I would like to include in closing this chapter.

“Think of the “crimes” for which our society is willing to put a person to death. While capital punishment for crimes such as murder and kidnapping is widely opposed by many, we will put the elderly to death for the crime of becoming a burden on us, for being a nuisance. The child that is born with a serious defect may be starved to death or have surgery which is necessary to preserve its life withheld so that the parents won’t be burdened with an “inferior” child. And, to cap it all off, we pronounce an infant in the womb worthy of death (and thus let the abortionist kill it) because it interferes with the freedom and pleasure of the parents. Our society has surely turned God’s values upside-down. The innocent are put to death because they violate our autonomy, our freedom, our pleasure. Our values become evident by those whom we sentence to death.”