

Leviticus Chapter 20 Continued

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."

Marry both the one and the other, or commit uncleanness with them, they consenting to it.

"It is wickedness":

Abominable wickedness, shocking and detestable.

There are other things, which also are wicked and not to be done, but this is extremely wicked, wickedness to a high degree.

"They shall be burnt with fire, both he and they":

The man, the mother and her daughter both being married together to him, or both consenting to his lying with them.

Otherwise, if one of them was first his wife, it was not reasonable that she should be put to death.

And therefore some interpret "they", one of them, as Jarchi observes, one or other of them.

And so Aben Ezra explains it, this or that.

If the mother was his wife, the daughter was to be burnt.

And so on the contrary, if the daughter was his wife, the mother was to be burnt.

According to the Targum of Jonathan, they were to be burnt by pouring lead into their mouths.

And so the manner of burning is described in the Misnah.

They that are to be burnt are fixed in dung up to their knees, then they put a hard napkin within a soft one, and roll it about the neck.

One draws it one way, and another draws it another way, until he opens his mouth.

Then they take hot melted lead, and pour it into his mouth, which goes down into his bowels and burns them.

"That there be no wickedness among you":

Of such kind, continued, countenanced, and pass unpunished.

This punishment was to be inflicted, to deter persons from it.

The law against it is in (Lev. 18:17).

In all of these verses (in chapter 20), we have already dealt with the fact that these are very serious sins.

This is a list of the punishments that should be carried out for each sin.

I don't believe that the method of killing these people, that verse 14 deals with, is to burn them at the stake.

They were probably stoned to death and then their dead bodies were burned.

Not only does God deal with the sin and its punishment, but He also tells us why the punishment is so harsh.

It is very important to God, as we mentioned in the last lesson, to have a holy people.

This is a sin of the flesh.

Worldly people sometimes are involved in this type sin.

God wants His people to be overcomers of the world.

Someone who pretended to be a follower of God, and was involved in this type sin, would have to be destroyed to keep this sin from spreading through the congregation.

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

A sin quite unnatural, exceeding shocking and detestable and forbidden (Lev. 18:23).

"He shall surely be put to death":

By stoning, as the Targum of Jonathan adds.

And this is the death such are condemned to in the Misnah.

"And ye shall slay the beast":

With clubs, as says the Targum of Jonathan.

The reasons given in the Misnah, why the beast was to be slain, are, because ruin came to the man by means of it, and that it might not be said, as it passed along the streets, that is the beast for which such a one was stoned.

Aben Ezra says it was to be slain, that it might not cause others to sin.

This is called bestiality.

Many satanic cults practice this very thing today.

This is a very serious sin.

God made man above the animals, to rule over them.

Man was made in the image of God.

What a terrible blow to God, for a person to lower themselves to this type sin.

Animals do not have a soul.

For a man to do such an awful sin, would be to say that he regarded his soul as nothing.

Even I can agree with the punishment of death.

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."

In order that the beast may lie with her, and solicit it to commit such an action with her (see Lev. 18:23).

"Thou shalt kill the woman and the beast":

The woman by stoning, and the beast with clubs, as the Targum of Jonathan.

And this for the same reasons as before, as well as to prevent monstrous births.

"They shall surely be put to death":

Both the one and the other, and not spared.

"Their blood shall be upon them":

They are guilty of a capital crime, a crime which deserves death.

This must be understood of the man that lies with a beast, and of the woman.

For as for the beast itself, as it is not capable of sinning, so not of guilt, in a proper sense.

This is the very same sin as the one (in verse 15 above).

The only difference is the fact that this is a woman committing this sin.

What a horrible sin.

You can easily see why God would never allow this type of union.

The only answer is death for both, and the second death awaits the woman involved here.

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."

“Incest was condemned, and offenders were to be,

“cut off in the sight of their people”:

The fact that David did not properly punish his son Amnon for raping David’s daughter Tamar caused severe consequences later (2 Sam. chapters 13-15).

This is speaking of indecent exposure.

It does not appear that they have actually been involved in the sex act, but it is certainly against all Christian principles.

Ham got into a great deal of trouble by looking at the naked body of his father.

Genesis 9:22-9:25 "And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without." "And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid [it] upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces [were] backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness." "And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him." "And he said, Cursed [be] Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren."

You can easily see the seriousness of this type of sin.

God's people must have high morals.

He will not permit low morality among His people.

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."

Her monthly courses, which make her weak and languid, which is forbidden (Lev. 18:19).

This is not to be understood of a man's lying with his wife ignorantly, when in such a condition, for this being the case, he was only unclean seven days (Lev. 15:24).

Whereas this made him and her liable to cutting off, as in an after clause.

But of his lying with her, knowing this to be the case with her, and of which she could not be ignorant, and therefore both liable to the same punishment.

Or else of any other man lying with her, or of any man lying with any woman, married or unmarried, being in such circumstances.

"And shall uncover her nakedness":

That is, have carnal knowledge of her.

"He hath discovered her fountain":

From whence her issue of blood flows.

And she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood; freely and willingly, as Aben Ezra observes.

For if she had been forced, he alone would have been cut off.

But both these phrases put together show agreement in this matter, that they both had knowledge of her case, and both consented to commit the sin.

"And both of them shall be cut off from among their people":

By death, either by the hand of the civil magistrate, the case being known and proved, or else by the hand of God being known by mortality or the pestilence, as the Targum of Jonathan.

Or they should die childless (see notes on Lev. 20:17).

We covered this in a previous lesson on the woman with the issue of blood.

A woman's normal monthly cycle at the most will usually be for 7 days.

This was the time regarded as her time of uncleanness.

The only difference we see here, is the punishment for this sin.

The punishment would be that they would be cut off from 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."

An aunt either by mother or father's side, against which the law is (Lev. 18:13).

"For he uncovereth his near kin":

As an aunt is to a man, and so an uncle to a woman, and both equally criminal.

For it is a rule that holds good in all those cases, though not expressed, that what is binding upon one sex is upon the other, being in the same degree of relation, whether of consanguinity or affinity.

"They shall bear their iniquity":

"Both" of them, as the Vulgate Latin version, the man and his aunt, and so a woman and her uncle.

"The guilt of their sin shall be upon them, and the punishment of it be inflicted on them":

Either they should be cut off from their people, as before, or be childless, as in the following instances.

This too was dealt with as a serious sin in a previous lesson.

We see from this that guilt and a conscience bothering them would be the major punishment.

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."

His uncle being dead, and he marry her, which is forbidden (Lev. 18:14).

"He hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness":

His wife's, which was his, and therefore the kindred too near for a man to marry in, and such a copulation must be incestuous.

"They shall bear their sin":

Both" of them, as the Vulgate Latin, as before (Lev. 20:19). The punishment of it, as follows.

"They shall die childless":

Which Jarchi and other Jewish writers interpret, if they had any children at this time, that is, by a former marriage, they should die and be buried before them.

Which was reckoned a great punishment (see Jer. 22:30).

For a Hebrew, to be childless was thought of punishment from God in all instances.

It was, in fact, considered a disgrace.

Children were considered a blessing from God.

To be childless then, would be a painful punishment.

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."

To his wife, whether in his life, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, or whether after his death, unless when there is no issue, then he was obliged to it by another law (Deut. 25:5).

Which is now ceased, and the law in (Lev. 18:16); here referred to, stands clear of all exceptions.

"It is an unclean thing":

Or a "separation" from which a man should remove and keep at a distance, as from menstruous women, of whom this word is used.

And so denotes that it is by all means to be avoided, as an abominable and detestable thing.

And it is observed that of all copulations it is only used of this.

And the Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra and others, observe that this case is somewhat like that of a menstruous woman, who in the time of her separation is unlawful, but when out of it lawful.

And so, in this case, a brother's wife might not be taken, he being alive.

But after his death she might, if she had no son, according to the law before referred to, but that is now abolished.

"He hath uncovered his brother's nakedness":

His wife's, which was his brother's; which through nearness of kin, he ought not to have done.

And the same holds good of a wife's sister, the relation being the same.

"They shall be childless":

They shall have none by such a marriage or copulation, and die without any.

And as this supposes the brother's wife to have children by her first husband, or otherwise while the Jewish law lasted, it would not have been unlawful to marry her husband's brother.

The meaning may be, that these should die before them, or rather, as some think, those that might be born of such a marriage should not be reckoned legitimate, and so not inherit.

In the case of the brother's death, we will find that the brother is to take his wife and raise a son in his brother's name.

That is possibly, what this means here.

If the brother is living, however, then the man and his brother's wife would be childless as punishment for the sin.

Verses 22-26

Verses (22-24 are similar to 18:24-30).

The command to distinguish between the clean and the unclean indicates that God had separated Israel from the people; a holy God must have a holy people.

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, spew you not out."

“Spew you not out”:

God told Israel repeatedly that remaining in the land required obedience to the Mosaic Covenant (compare 18:25, 28).

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."

Nation seems to be put for nations, for there were seven nations cast out for them.

Though the Canaanites may be intended, being a general name for the whole.

Some think the Amorites are meant, who were a principal nation, and notorious for their wickedness.

Hence we often meet with this phrase in Jewish writings, "the way of the Amorites", as being exceeding bad, and so to be avoided, and by no means to be walked in (Gen. 15:16).

"For they committed all these things":

Were guilty of all the idolatries, incest, and uncleanness before mentioned, and forbid under severe penalties.

"And therefore I abhorred them":

The sins committed by them, being so abominable and detestable: their persons, though the creatures of God, were had in abhorrence by him.

And this he showed by casting them out of the land.

And hereby it is suggested, that, should they, the Israelites, be guilty of the like, they also would be rejected and abhorred by him.

The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are, "my Word abhorred them," Christ, the eternal Word (Psalm 45:7).

God is reminding these Hebrews (children of Israel), that He is bringing them into a land that is already inhabited.

The only reason God is allowing these Hebrews to overcome and utterly destroy the people before them, is because the people before them are worldly people who are so disgusting to God (abhorred).

The people in the land had been given a time to repent, and they did not repent.

Now they will be destroyed and the land given to these Hebrews (Israelites).

The Israelites must obey God and live godly lives, or they themselves will be destroyed, and God will give their inheritance unto another who will obey.

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."

Promised it unto them, as he had to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and also to them.

Or he had said the above things unto them, that they, observing them, might possess the land of Canaan, and continue therein.

Which is the sense of the Targum of Jonathan: The Jews say, that the right of inheritance belonged to them, from Shem the son of Noah, whose portion it was, and which they gather from Melchizedek being king of Salem, whom they take to be Shem.

And they say, the Canaanites only dwelt in it to make it better, till they should come and inherit it.

"And I will give it unto you to possess it":

In whose gift it was, and who had a right to dispose of it.

And could give them a good title to it, and secure them in the possession of it.

"A land that floweth with milk and honey":

Abounding with all good things, with all the comforts of life, with everything both for necessity and delight (see Exodus 3:8).

"I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people":

Had chosen them above all people, to be a special and peculiar people to him.

Had distinguished them by his favors, and had given them particular laws and ordinances, to observe and walk according to them, different from all other nations, which it became them carefully to regard.

God has always wanted a people who would be totally devoted to Him.

The land promised to these Israelites would be a land that was abundant in the necessities.

The promise was a land of milk and honey.

God even promises the Christians wonderful things, if we seek Him first.

Matthew 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Those who follow God are to be a separated people.

We are not to be like the rest of the world.

Galatians 5:16 "[This] I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

God's people are in the world, but are not of the world.

We will see, in the next few verses, how we must conduct ourselves toward the world.

1 John 2:15-16 "Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

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."

The ten clean ones, as Aben Ezra observes.

And all the rest that are unclean, according to the law before given (Lev. 11:3).

By using the one for food, and not the other.

And so the Targum of Jonathan, ye shall separate between the beast which is fit for food, and that which is not fit for food.

"And between unclean fowls and clean":

And which the same Targum interprets, what is unfit to eat and what is fit, even all that are particularly mentioned as unclean, and not fit for food (in Lev. 11:13).

And all the rest not excepted to as clean and fit for food, which was one way and means God made use of, to separate them from other nations, and so preserve them from their idolatrous and evil works.

"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.”:

That is, by eating them, contrary to the command of God, which would make them abominable in his sight (see Lev. 11:43).

Every sin or transgression of this law being so to him.

"Which I have separated from you as unclean":

Which by law he had commanded them to abstain from the use of, as unclean, and not fit to be eaten.

This physical house of Israel is to be a separated people.

They are to observe the laws of God, every one.

We will find a very similar request of the spiritual house of Israel (Christians), in the following verse.

1 Peter 2:9 "But ye [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:"

As I have said so many times before, it would be of no use to study Leviticus, unless the Christians could find Jesus and themselves in it.

They were to obey these laws and ordinances that were written down.

We Christians are to be obedient to the high calling of Jesus Christ.

We, too, must walk holy before our Lord.

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."

Separated from all unclean persons and things, and devoted to his service, and obedient to all his commands.

And so live holy lives and conversations, according to his will, and to his honor and glory.

"For I the LORD am holy":

And therefore they, his people, should be like him, and imitate him.

And observe those things which are agreeable to his holy nature and will, and yield a cheerful obedience to his holy precepts.

"And have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine":

Which is a very forcible argument.

A strong motive, and which laid them under great obligation to obedience and holiness.

How wonderful to be called His.

The Lord JESUS CHRIST has chosen us Christians out to be His bride.

Will you be like the five wise virgins, or will you be among the five virgins who let the oil run out of their lamp?

It is enough to know that He is coming again to make us His bride.

Do not give up so near the goal.

We sing a song that says: "We'll work till Jesus comes".

Will you be found working?

Or will you be like so many who have tired of waiting, and have begun to sleep?

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."

Or the spirit of Python or divination (see Lev. 19:31).

Such as the damsel had (in Acts 16:16).

A woman is here particularly mentioned, though before included in the above law.

Because, as Aben Ezra says, such sort of practices was more frequently committed by women.

To which Maimonides adds another reason, because men have a natural clemency towards the female sex, and are not easily prevailed upon to put them to death.

Therefore, the law says, "thou shall not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus 22:18).

"Or that is a wizard":

A knowing one, who pretends to a great deal of knowledge of things.

As of lost or stolen goods, and even knowledge of things future, and imposes upon persons, and cheats them of their money they give for information. Such:

"Shall surely be put to death":

And not spared through favor and affection.

The death they are to be put to follows.

"They shall stone them with stones":

Until they are dead.

Of the manner of stoning (see notes on Acts 7:58).

"Their blood shall be upon them":

They are worthy of death, and they shall suffer it.

This phrase following upon the former, the Jews gather from hence, that, wherever it is used, it is to be understood of stoning (see notes on Lev. 20:9).

This is so serious that it is mentioned over and over.

Witches and warlocks are very prevalent in our society today.

How sad that most of us just look the other way and allow this to go on.

We mentioned earlier how Saul (the first king of Israel), was dethroned by God for consulting someone with a familiar spirit.

We cannot stress enough, do not go to palm readers, do not read your horoscope, do not practice any type of mind control.

Stay away from wizards.

Do not seek help in anything connected with these evils.

God is the answer to all your problems.

You will find help by reading His Word.

Leviticus Chapter 20 Continued Questions

1. What is the sin called, if a man takes a wife and her mother?
2. What is the punishment for each of the people involved in this sin?
3. What does the author believe is the method used to carry out this punishment?
4. Not only does God deal with the sin and with the punishment, but He tells us what?
5. God wants His people to be _____ of the world.
6. If a man lie with a beast, He shall surely be put to _____.
7. What is this type of sin called?
8. Man was made in the _____ of God.
9. If a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down there to, what shall be done to the woman and the beast?
10. What was the punishment for a man seeing the nakedness of his sister?
11. What would be the way of saying this in modern language?
12. Which one of Noah's sons got into trouble by seeing his father's nakedness?
13. What happened to this son, because of this sin against his father?
14. How many days was a woman considered unclean each month?
15. What was the punishment for uncovering the nakedness of an aunt?
16. How did Hebrews feel about being childless?
17. When was it alright to marry your brother's wife?
18. What was the punishment for taking a brother's wife, while the brother was living?
19. Why were they to keep all of God's statutes and judgements?

20. Why had God abhorred the nations that would be driven out before the Hebrews?
21. What does abhorred mean?
22. If the Israelites do not obey God, what will happen to them?
23. What was the Promised Land to be flowing with?
24. Walk in the _____ and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
25. Love not the _____.
26. What three things mentioned in 1 John 16:2, are of the world?
27. The physical house of Israel was to be what?
28. What does 1 Peter 2:9 say the Christians are?
29. What does God say we must be in verse 26?
30. Who is the bride of Christ?
31. A _____ or a _____ that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death.
32. How is the only way to get solutions to our problems?