

## II. CONTINUANCE IN COMMUNION WITH GOD 17:1-26:46

### A. HOLINESS ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE 17:1—20:27

#### 1. HOLINESS IN REGARD TO FOOD 17:1-16

##### a. EVERY MEAL A SACRIFICE 17:1-9

###### TEXT 17:1-9

- 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them: This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded, saying,
- 3 What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it without the camp,
- 4 and hath not brought it unto the door of the tent of meeting, to offer it as an oblation unto Jehovah before the tabernacle of Jehovah: blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people:
- 5 to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they sacrifice in the open field, even that they may bring them unto Jehovah, unto the door of the tent of meeting, unto the priest, and sacrifice them for sacrifices of peace-offerings unto Jehovah.
- 6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting, and burn the fat for a sweet savor unto Jehovah.
- 7 And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the he-goats, after which they play the harlot. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.
- 8 And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice,
- 9 and bringeth it not unto the door of the tent of meeting, to

sacrifice it unto Jehovah; that man shall be cut off from his people.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 17:1-9

373. Moses is instructed to include many more in his instructions from God than usual. Why?
374. What a very severe penalty for only killing an animal in the wrong place! Is this all that is involved?
375. God solved the problem of idolatry and harlotry in one action. Explain that action.
376. Why specify "a peace offering"? Why not "a burnt offering" or "a sin offering"? Surely "a trespass offering" would have been appropriate.
377. Are we to understand from verse 7 that every meal of beef, lamb or goat was first slain at the temple throughout the history of Israel? Discuss.
378. Was it reasonable to ask strangers and sojourners to also observe this law?
379. This chapter begins the second section of the book. It is not the same as the first. What is the difference?

### PARAPHRASE 17:1-9

The Lord gave to Moses these additional instructions for Aaron and the priests and for all the people of Israel: Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox, lamb, or goat anywhere except at the Tabernacle is guilty of murder and shall be excommunicated from his nation. The purpose of this law is to stop the people of Israel from sacrificing in the open fields, and to cause them to bring their sacrifices to the priest at the entrance of the Tabernacle, and to burn the fat as a savor the Lord will appreciate and enjoy. For in this way the priest will be able to sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the Lord at the entrance of the Tabernacle, and to burn the fat as a savor the Lord will

appreciate and enjoy—instead of the people's sacrificing to evil spirits out in the fields. This shall be a permanent law for you, from generation to generation. I repeat: Anyone, whether an Israelite or a foreigner living among you who offers a burnt offering or a sacrifice anywhere other than at the entrance of the Tabernacle, where it will be sacrificed to the Lord, shall be excommunicated.

## COMMENT 17:1-9

vs. 1-5 We begin in these verses the second major section of the Book of Leviticus. All the previous chapters discussed the public or national sacrifices made by the priests on behalf of the people—or attendant matters. In chapters 17 to 26 we will consider the daily life of these children of Jacob. Perhaps it is because of the personal content of what follows that as God spoke to Moses He included not only Aaron but "all the children of Israel." The problem of these verses does not appear until verse 5. Sad and strange as it may seem the worship of idols and immorality was so widespread that God had to claim possession of the meat used for daily food. The reason being that if He didn't claim it, it would be offered to the demon gods in the open fields. The three potential sacrificial animals, *i.e.*: ox, lamb or goat, must not be killed in the open field or even in the outer court of the tabernacle, but only at the door of the tent of meeting on the north side of the altar of burnt offering. Even if such animals were going to be used for the common meal they must first be offered as a sacrifice to God. Under penalty of death this commandment must be kept. When God can control our diet under penalty of death He is going to have a large claim on our lives.

vs. 6-9 The use of the little phrase "no more offer their sacrifices to goat-like gods or demons" in verse 7 indicates the already serious nature of their sin. How difficult it is for us to understand the faithlessness of these people. These animal deities were obvious carry-overs from Egypt. Had they not yet

learned the emptiness and meaninglessness of these gods? When sex orgies are associated with the worship of such deities such strong desires would not be easy to ignore. Even if many did not associate the miraculous with their worship they would be drawn to the shrine to meet the prostitute or to become one. We do wonder about the "demons" or supposed demons involved. What or who were they? Ginsburg supplies quite a study on this subject. He says:

The word (*seirim*) here translated "devils," literally denotes *hairy* or *shaggy goats*, and then *goat-like deities*, or *demons*. The Egyptians, and other nations of antiquity, worshipped goats as gods. Not only was there a celebrated temple in Thmuis, the capital of the Mendesian Nomos in Lower Egypt, dedicated to the goat-image Pan, whom they called Mendes, and worshipped as the oracle, and as the fertilizing principle in nature, but they erected statues of him everywhere. Hence the Pan, Silenus, satyrs, fauns, and the woodland gods among the Greeks and Romans; and hence, too, the goat-like form of the devil, with a tail, horns, and cloven feet, which obtain in medieval Christianity, and which may still be seen in some European cities. The terror which the devil, appearing in this Pan-like form, created among those who were thought to have seen him, has given rise to our expression *panic*. This is the form of idolatrous worship which the Jews brought with them from Egypt, and to which reference is continually made. (See Josh. 24:14; Ezek. 20:7, 23:3, etc.; and especially II Chron. 11:15.) The expression "and they shall *no more* offer" shows that the Israelites were hitherto in the habit of first dedicating their ordinary food to these deities; whilst the words "gone a whoring" indicate the orgies connected with this form of idol worship. It has been urged that the demand to offer up, in so confined a space as the entrance of the sanctuary, the domestic animals intended for the daily consumption of more than 600,000 people, imposed a task upon the people which it was impossible for them to carry out. Hence it has been urged that the injunction here (verses 2-7) must refer to sacrifices. But this difficulty arises from importing our modern notions into the ancient mode of living. The ancient

Israelites, like the modern Orientals, especially the nomadic tribes, ate very little flesh meat apart from the seasons of sacrifice, which were the occasions of feasting. Besides, those who urge this difficulty ignore the fact that the injunction before us is restricted to the three kinds of animals; that none of the wild clean quadrupeds, as stags, roes, etc., nor any of the feathered tribes, as pigeons, turtle-doves, etc., which formed an essential part of the daily diet, is here included; and that even the three kinds of sacrificial quadrupeds only come within this restriction when they are qualified by age, which was within two years, and by physical condition, which demanded that it should have no external defect."

### FACT QUESTIONS 17:1-9

383. What is the one distinctive difference in the two major divisions of Leviticus?
384. Why was it necessary to make every meal an act of worship?
385. Why hadn't Israel yet learned that an idol is nothing?
386. There was a strong attraction to idol worship. What was it?
387. Pan was worshipped as a god. Discuss how and why.
388. How answer the objection that 600,000 people could not bring their sacrifices to the door of the tent of meeting?

### PROHIBITION OF BLOOD IN THE PEOPLE'S DIET

17:10-14

#### TEXT 17:10-14

- 10 And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eateth any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.
- 11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life.

- 12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.
- 13 And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who taketh in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten; he shall pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.
- 14 For as to the life of all flesh, the blood thereof is *all one* with the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 17:10-14

380. Compare Ezekiel 33:25 and show how it relates to this section.
381. Just what is involved in the atonement for our souls found in the blood? Cf. Rom. 3:24-26.
382. Does this regulation still stand for today? *i.e.* eating blood?
383. What else would a hunter do but pour out the blood of a deer or antelope? Why cover it with dust?
384. God really must have meant this regulation, *i.e.* judging from the times it is repeated. Is this a fair conclusion?

## PARAPHRASE 17:10-14

And I will turn My face against anyone, whether an Israelite or a foreigner living among you, who eats blood in any form. I will excommunicate him from his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given you the blood to sprinkle upon the altar as an atonement for your souls; it is the blood that makes atonement, because it is the life. That is the reasoning behind My decree to the people of Israel, that neither they, nor any foreigner living among them, may eat blood. Anyone, whether an Israelite or a foreigner living among you, who goes

hunting and kills an animal or bird of a kind permitted for food, must pour out the blood and cover it with dust, for the blood is the life. That is why I told the people of Israel never to eat it, for the life of every bird and animal is its blood. Therefore, anyone who eats blood must be excommunicated.

## COMMENT 17:10-14

*vs. 10-14* This is the third time we have read of the prohibition of the eating of blood. In the other two references it is associated with the fat which belongs to God (*Cf.* 3:17; 7:26). Since Israel was held responsible for those under their roofs (at least temporarily) even strangers, visitors or sojourners are involved in this regulation. It is a serious matter to have the face of God set against us. What is the cause? Why such a stringent punishment? It is because what is represented and contained in the blood—both of man and of animals. The “life” or “soul” is in the blood—both of man and of beast. God is making a substitute—the life or soul of the animal for the life or soul of the man. To disregard or treat lightly this important entity is to call common what God has called sacred. Perhaps a study of the triune nature of man will help in our understanding of the biblical fact that the blood is the carrier of the self-conscious portion of man’s nature:

## (1) BODY:

Made of dust, corruptible and subject to decay. Man’s body is “mortal” or “deathable.” It is to return to the dust. It is the outer man. The tabernacle in which we live for this brief sojourn called life. This is the outward house of the spirit and the soul.

## (2) SOUL:

Man’s self-consciousness. It is formed in or by the unity of the spirit and the body. This is man’s individuality, *i.e.*, what makes him different from every other person. Our parents provide our body. God provides the spirit. When the two (body and spirit) unite, the result is *you*. “A

living life" unique and wonderously made. You are one of a kind.

(3) SPIRIT:

Our parents produced our bodies but "God is the Father of the spirits of all flesh." As our bodies partake of the physical likeness and image of our parents, so our spirits partake of the likeness or image of God. "We are His offspring" (Acts 17:28). All the capacities of man are capacities of His spirit since God is alive in the same sense we are, and has given us of Himself.

The crucial decision is "whom will ye serve," your spirit or your soul? *i.e.* will you decide to worship God or mammon? You are God related thru your spirit and this-world related thru your soul. Will you be soulish or spiritual?

"The strangers are also prohibited eating blood because they have submitted to the law of the land, and because their eating it would not only infringe the law which they have voluntarily adopted, but would lessen the horror with which such indulgence was regarded by the Jews." (*Cf.* Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25)

### FACT QUESTIONS 17:10-14

389. Blood is usually associated with what other portion of the animal? Why?
390. Was it reasonable to ask strangers to submit to the laws of Israel? Discuss.
391. Define the triune nature of man and show how "the soul" or "the blood" is involved.



PROHIBITION OF EATING ANIMALS  
NOT KILLED BY MAN 17:15-16

## TEXT 17:15-16

- 15 And every soul that eateth that which dieth of itself, or that which is torn of beasts, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean.
- 16 But if he wash them not, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 17:15-16

385. It is just as important to wash and bathe as it is to not eat. Why?
386. What is meant by "bearing his own iniquity"?

## PARAPHRASE 17:15-16

And anyone—native born or foreigner—who eats the dead body of an animal that dies of itself, or is torn by wild animals, must wash his clothes and bathe himself and be defiled until evening; after that he shall be declared cleansed. But if he does not wash his clothes and bathe, he shall suffer the consequence.

## COMMENT 17:15-16

*vs. 15, 16* Every possible circumstance in which man would be tempted to eat blood is covered. Supposing we find an animal in the forest who has just been killed by another animal? or has strangled itself? Since the blood has coagulated in its veins and arteries it is unclean and must not be eaten. Such a carcass could be and should be given to the dogs (*Cf. Exodus 22:31*).

God is very serious about this regulation as can be observed in the following examples: I Sam. 14:32-35; Ezekiel 4:14.

We would imagine that the "stranger" here mentioned could have been in reference to "the mixed multitude" that came out of Egypt and joined the Jewish community.

The comment of Ginsburg is instructive inasmuch as much of his comments are based upon an extensive use of the documents used in the Temple service at the time of our Lord. He says: "If he (*i.e.* the stranger) ate any of it unwittingly, he had not only to wash his garments, but immerse his whole body in water, and be excluded from the sanctuary till sundown . . . If he neglects those acts of purification, and enters the sanctuary in a defiled state, or partakes of the sacrificial meal, he is to incur the penalty of excision for the former act, and to be beaten with stripes for the latter, according to the interpretation of this law given in the time of Christ."

#### FACT QUESTIONS 17:15-16

392. Eating of blood was a very serious offense. Cite examples to prove this point.
393. Who was "the stranger" in the camp of Israel?
394. Was immersion practiced in the time of Leviticus? Discuss.

#### HOLINESS IN THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP 18:1-30

#### IMPRESSIVE INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT 18:1-5

#### TEXT 18:1-5

- 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am Jehovah your God.
- 3 After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither

I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their statutes.

4 Mine ordinances shall ye do, and my statutes shall ye keep, to walk therein: I am Jehovah your God.

5 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and mine ordinances; which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am Jehovah.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 18:1-5

387. Why remind the children of Israel of the existence of God? Or is this the meaning of verse 2? Discuss.
388. The total life style of Egypt and Canaan were to be rejected. Is this the thought of verse 3?
389. If these people learned carefully all the laws and statutes we have discussed thus far in Leviticus (to say nothing of previous books) their whole life would be under the direction of God. Is this what is meant in verse 4? What reason is given for such obedience?
390. Explain the phrase "... if a man do, he shall live in (or by) them" Cf. Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12.

### PARAPHRASE 18:1-5

The Lord then told Moses to tell the people of Israel, I am Jehovah your God, so don't act like heathen—like the people of Egypt where you lived so long, or the people of Canaan where I am going to take you. You must obey only My laws, and you must carry them out in detail, for I am the Lord your God. If you obey them you shall live. I am the Lord.

### COMMENT 18:1-5

vs. 1-5 Moses doesn't need Aaron or his sons to help him in the instructions of this chapter. The lawgiver is to speak directly

to the children of Israel or their representatives for what he has to say relates to their moral conduct and personal happiness. It is of real interest to note that the emphatic phrase "*I am the Lord your God*" is used three times in this one chapter (vs. 1, 4, 30) and only one other time in the whole book (11:44). This speaks to a very deep need. We can have no communion with God in whose image we are created if we indulge or serve the lusts of the flesh. We cannot and will not know Him personally until we are willing to submit to His way of life. The Egyptians walked in the way of sexual promiscuity—the "freedom-bondage" which has always been the fruit of such a choice. What a galling yoke of bondage this "freedom" has always provided! Strange to say man has but one choice: *which master will you have?* God also offers a "bondage-freedom" relationship but His yoke is easy and His burden is light, *i.e.* as compared with that of the Egyptians or Canaanites. The "spirit-slave" is always happier than the "body-slave" because we are created in the image of a Spirit not an animal. Our essential nature is spirit, not flesh. Walk in my statutes and you will have life, not death—peace, not frustration" is the message of verse 5.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 18:1-5

395. Why not include Aaron or his sons in the address by God?
396. What is the deep significance of the phrase "I am the Lord your God"?
397. Man has but one choice. Discuss what it is and the consequences of it.

#### PROHIBITED MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS 18:6-18

##### TEXT 18:6-18

- 6 None of you shall approach to any that are near of kin to him, to uncover *their* nakedness: I am Jehovah.

- 7 The nakedness of thy father, even the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
- 8 The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover; it is thy father's nakedness.
- 9 The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or the daughter of thy mother, whether born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover.
- 10 The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness.
- 11 The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
- 12 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman.
- 13 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman.
- 14 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt.
- 15 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter-in-law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness.
- 16 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.
- 17 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter; thou shalt not take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; they are near kinswomen: it is wickedness.
- 18 And thou shalt not take a wife to her sister, to be a rival to *her*, to uncover her nakedness, besides the other in her lifetime.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 18:6-18

391. What is the meaning of the phrase, "to uncover their nakedness"?

392. Why not have sexual relations with near of kin?
393. The nakedness of the mother is also the nakedness of the father. How so?
394. Who is involved in "the nakedness of thy father's wife"?
395. There can be no marriage of sister and brother even if they are only half-sisters or brothers, even if they were born far from you and you never saw them until you were both grown. Is this the thought of verse 9? Discuss the reason behind this.
396. A man may sin against his own body if he has intercourse with whom? Is marriage or simply sex relations being discussed here?
397. Wasn't half-sister relationship covered in verse 9?
398. Why mention her again in verse 11?
399. No one should marry his aunt, on either his father's or his mother's side. Why?
400. What about Cain and Abel who married their sisters? Compare 20:17 as to the penalty for sexual intercourse with a half-sister. What is the penalty?
401. How many relationships are covered in these verses (there are eleven. Can you find them all?)
402. There is no prohibition for "a daughter, a full sister, or a mother-in-law." Cf. Deut. 27:23, Ex. 21:15.
403. What was the penalty for the violation of these laws? Notice a difference between numbers 1, 2, 3, 8, 10 and 6, 7, 9. Cf. 20:11, 12, 14, 17; Deut. 23:1; 22:20, 22, 23)

## PARAPHRASE 18:6-18

None of you shall marry a near relative, for I am the Lord. A girl may not marry her father; nor a son his mother, nor any other of his father's wives, nor his sister or half-sister, whether the daughter of his father or his mother, whether born in the same house or elsewhere. You shall not marry your grand-

daughter—the daughter of either your son or your daughter—for she is a close relative. You may not marry a half-sister—your father's wife's daughter; nor your aunt—your father's sister—because she is so closely related to your father; nor your aunt—your mother's sister—because she is a close relative of your mother; nor your aunt—the wife of your father's brother. You may not marry your daughter-in-law—your son's wife; nor your brother's wife, for she is your brother's. You may not marry both a woman and her daughter or granddaughter, for they are near relatives, and to do so is horrible wickedness. You shall not marry two sisters, for they will be rivals. However, if your wife dies, then it is all right to marry her sister.

## COMMENT 18:6-18

*vs. 16-18* These laws can hardly be considered national when the Egyptians and Canaanites have been condemned for their violation. Evidently God gave them in the beginning and therefore they have Patriarchal and not only Mosaic significance. These verses discuss but one law of the ten commandments, *i. e.* the seventh. It would seem God is to “stop all channels in which lust might flow.” Verse 6 gives the general prohibition and verses 7 through 18 describe the specific applications. There are eleven in number. We shall consider each in order. Before we do we must point out the principles behind such laws. There are at least three obvious reasons we should not marry our near of kin: (1) How could society and the home exist if man was at the same time brother and husband, or a son and a husband; he could never fulfill the duties of such relationships at the same time; (2) By intermarrying with other families than our own the bonds of society are established between neighbors. In an intermarried family feuds and divisions of all kinds would be unavoidable; (3) The strength of the blood line is weakened by family intermarriage and deformity and weaknesses are found in the children and grandchildren.

(1) *With mother. v. 7* The meaning of the phrase “uncover

nakedness" is found only by referring to its context. There are a total of 21 references to this act in the Old Testament. (Ex. 20:26; Isa. 42:3; Ezekiel 17:36, 37; 22:10; 23:10, 18, 29; Lev. 20:11, 17, 20, 21 and the nine references in 18:6-19.) In all the references in Ezekiel illicit sex relations are described, but in all other references the God-ordained physical relationship in marriage is involved. We believe the phrase was used both ways. In the verses under consideration we are discussing the wrong use of the sex act. Some commentators refer "the nakedness of the father" to relations of the daughter with the father and "the nakedness of the mother" to relations of the son with the mother. The paraphrase of this text so renders it; however it is probably more accurate to consider this from the son's viewpoint and see the nakedness of the mother to include that of the father, since the two are one.

Paul is repulsed at the thought of such a relationship—"it is not even named among the pagans"—and yet it was practiced in the Corinthian church. Cf. I Cor. 5:1, 2.

The tragic consequences of such action can be seen in Lot and his daughters. The Moabites and the Ammonites were the unhappy children of such a union. Reuben was marked and punished because he had sexual relations with the handmaid of his father. Cf. Gen. 35:22.

(2) *With a step-mother. v. 8* Are we to conclude she is widowed and this is a marriage and not adultery? We believe so. Marriage and family relationship must not be violated even if there is no blood relationship. (Cf. 20:11; Deut. 27:20) Perhaps the father had died in the example cited in Corinth, but no such information was given and in the absence of it, we would conclude that he was still alive.

(3) *With sister or half-sister. v. 9* Such description would infer the possibility of a former marriage by either the father or the mother. The father or mother could have children in another town or country. When such children come to visit, the present children must not imagine they are eligible for marriage. They are not. We have a sad example of this relationship in the son and daughter of David. When Amnon was about to commit



adultery with his half-sister, Tamar, she cried out, "I pray you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you." Cf. II Sam. 13:10-19. Evidently this law was not as effective as the example of Jacob reflected in the life of David and his children.

(4) *With a granddaughter, the daughter of either son or daughter.* v. 10 Whereas marriage to a daughter is not plainly stated in any of these relationships we could say it is included in this law, *i.e.* if a man was not to marry his own granddaughter, how much more should he be shut out from his own daughter? It could be that the word "granddaughter" should be "daughter," *i.e.* the text could read, "the nakedness of thy daughter and of thy son's daughter." (*Ginsburg*)

(5) *With the daughter of a step-mother.* v. 11 This refers to a half-sister by a second marriage, and the prohibition refers to the son by the first marriage, whereas verse 9 treats of the son by a second marriage. The notion that the man's own mother is also included, and that the prohibition includes marriage with a full sister, is at variance, with the usage of the expression, "thy father's wife." (*Keil*)

(6) *With an aunt, the sister of either father or mother.* vs. 12, 13 Cf. 20:19; 21:2; Num. 27:11. Moses might have thought more than twice when he heard this prohibition, since he himself was the offspring of such an alliance. The father of Moses was Amram, who married his own aunt, Jochebed, the sister of Amram's father. Cf. Exodus 6:20. Home can be a happy place. God tells us how. The fact that His grace and mercy covers our mistakes does not argue against His beautiful ideal pattern.

(7) *The wife of an uncle on the father's side.* v. 14 A nephew was to have no marriage involvements with his aunt during the lifetime of his uncle, and he could not marry his aunt even when his uncle was dead. Lev. 20:20 indicates the death penalty for the violation of this law.

We do have examples of the marriage of the niece to her uncle: Nahor married Milcah, the daughter of his brother Haran (Gen. 11:29); Othniel, the son of Kenaz, married his grand-niece, Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, his father's brother. (Joshua 15:17; Judges 1:13)

(8) *The daughter-in-law.* v. 15 "The legislators in the time of Christ defined this prohibition as applicable not only to cases where marriage between them had actually been consummated, but to cases where the maiden had only been espoused, or when the daughter-in-law had been divorced by the son, or had become a widow. For an offense of this kind, both parties were punished by death. (Cf. 20:12) Other nations regarded such alliances with the same abhorrence." (*Ginsburg*)

(9) *The sister-in-law, or brother's wife.* v. 16 Deut. 25:5 gives the exception to this regulation. Matt. 22:23-26 cites an example of the exception. If a brother dies and his wife has had no male children, the living brother is obligated to marry the widow. If the brother dies and leaves a male child, it would be wrong for the brother to marry the widow. It is of passing interest to note object of interest in the minds of the Sadducees. Our Saviour spoke to them as He does to us—in the world to come there will be no sex (nor food, nor money).

(10) *The woman and her daughter, or a woman and her granddaughter.* v. 17 "Marriage with a woman and her daughter, whether both together or in succession, is described in Deut. 27:20 as an accursed lying with the mother-in-law; whereas here it is the relation to the step-daughter which is primarily referred to, as we may see from the parallel prohibition, which is added, against taking the daughter of her son or daughter, *i.e.* the granddaughter-in-law. Both of these were crimes against blood relationship which were to be punished with death in the case of both parties (chapter 20:14), because they were 'wickedness,' literally 'invention,' design, here applied to the crime of licentiousness and whoredom (Cf. 19:29; Judges 20:6; Job 31:11)." (*Keil*)

(11) *Two sisters at the same time.* v. 18 We have read a good deal of discussion as to the possible permission of polygamy from this verse. We are unconvinced that any such possibility could exist. We are not discussing polygamy as cited in Exodus 21:7-11 or Deuteronomy 21:15-17; 17:17 (please read our BIBLE STUDY TEXTBOOKS on these passages). We are satisfied with the American Standard translation of this verse, "and thou shalt not take

a wife to her sister, to be a rival to her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her lifetime." As if this were not clear enough the Amplified translation says, "You must not marry a woman in addition to her sister to be a rival to her, having sexual relations with the second sister when the first one is alive," or in the New English Bible—"You shall not take a woman who is your wife's sister to make her a rival-wife, and to have intercourse with her during her sister's lifetime." This seems to be a law against the very circumstance in which Jacob found himself with Leah and Rachel.

### FACT QUESTIONS 18:6-18

398. Why should we consider the laws given here to be larger than the nation of Israel?
399. Give the three reasons God gave these limitations on the marriage of near kin.
400. What is meant by the phrase "uncover nakedness"?
401. Sex relations with one's mother has tragic consequences. What biblical examples teach this?
402. There is a New Testament example of illicit relations with a stepmother. Where? Discuss.
403. Amnon and Tamar illustrate one of these prohibitions. Discuss.
404. Why no law against marriage to a daughter?
405. Show how the case in verse 9 is different in the violation of verse 11.
406. Moses was involved personally in the violation of verses 12, 13. Discuss.
407. What was the penalty for marriage to one's aunt?
408. What about marriage to an uncle by a niece?
409. The law was very strict on marriage between father-in-law and daughter-in-law. Discuss.
410. There is an exception in the marriage of a brother's wife. Discuss.
411. What does God call "an accursed lying with the mother-in-

law"? Discuss the reason.

412. Just what is involved in the marriage of two sisters? *i.e.* why the prohibition?

### PROHIBITION OF SEXUAL CRIMES 18:19-23

#### TEXT 18:19-23

- 19 And thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is impure by her uncleanness.
- 20 And thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbor's wife, to defile thyself with her.
- 21 And thou shalt not give any of thy seed to make them pass through *the fire* to Molech; neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah.
- 22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.
- 23 And thou shalt not lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith; neither shall any woman stand before a beast, to lie down thereto: it is confusion.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 18:19-23

404. Is verse 19 a discussion of prohibited marriage relationship?
405. What is meant by "lying carnally"? as in verse 20?
406. Who was Molech? Just what was involved here?
407. Does verse 22 condemn homosexuality? Discuss.
408. Why would anyone stoop so low as to desire sex relations with beasts?

#### PARAPHRASE 18:19-23

There must be no sexual relationship with a woman who is menstruating; nor with anyone else's wife, to defile yourself with

her. You shall not give any of your children to Molech, burning them upon his altar; never profane the name of your God, for I am Jehovah. Homosexuality is absolutely forbidden, for it is an enormous sin. A man shall have no sexual intercourse with any female animal, thus defiling himself; and a woman must never give herself to a male animal, to mate with it; this is a terrible perversion.

## COMMENT 18:19-23

vs. 19-23 It will be helpful to consider this outline of these verses: (1) adultery—19,20; (2) infant sacrifice—21; (3) sodomy—22; (4) bestiality—23. We shall discuss these verses under these headings.

(1) *Adultery. vs. 19,20* Verse 19 speaks against intercourse with "a woman" during her period of menstruation and also in the time immediately after childbirth. In 15:19-24 we discussed this act by a man who did not know of the condition of the woman; for such an act he was unclean seven days. In both cases fornication or adultery is involved. When the act is presumptuous, both he and the woman are to be put to death. Cf. 20:18; Ezekiel 18:16; 22:10.

Verse 20 is a straight-forward description and condemnation of adultery. Both persons involved were to be put to death. Cf. Deut. 22:22; Ezek. 16:38,40; John 8:5—Cf. 20:10 of Lev.) The use of the expression, "lie carnally" well describes the motive—"the lust of the flesh" for such God has the death penalty. So called "modern man" might legalize it between consenting adults—God condemns them both under the penalty of death.

(2) *Infant sacrifice. v. 21* This is related to the worship of the god of Molech. Those involved in the uncleanness described earlier would be easy prey to the god Molech. C. D. Ginsburg has supplied us with a very graphic description of this form of idolatry:

Pass through the fire to Molech.—Literally, *to let it pass to*

*Molech*, that is, to put the child into the hands of the figure of Molech, when it fell into the fire which was kindled in the hollow statue of this idol. Molech, also called Milcom, which denotes king, is described as the hideous idol, or "the abomination of the Ammonites" (I Kings 11:5,11). The following graphic description has been handed down traditionally of this idol and its worship:—"Our sages of blessed memory say that whilst all other idols had temples in Jerusalem, Molech had his temple outside Jerusalem, in a place by itself. It was a brass and hollow image, bull-headed, with arms stretched out like a human being who opens his hands to receive something from his neighbour. Its temple had seven compartments, into which the offerers went according to their respective gifts. If one offered a fowl, he went into the first compartment; if a sheep, into the second; if a lamb, into the third; if a ram, into the fourth; if a bullock, into the fifth; if an ox, into the sixth; and if he offered his son, he was conducted into the seventh compartment. He first kissed the image, as it is written, 'let the sacrificers of men kiss the calf' (Hosea 13:2), whereupon a fire was kindled in Molech till its arms became red hot; the child was then put into its hands, and drums were beaten to produce tremendous noises so as to prevent the shrieks of the child reaching the father's ears, lest he should be moved with pity towards his offspring." It was to this idol that Solomon erected a temple on the southern side of Mount Olivet (II Kings 23:13). This idolatrous worship was punished with death by stoning. (See chap. 20:2)

(3) *Sodomy*. v. 22 We know of this sin under the name "homosexuality." Is the Bible very clear on God's estimate of this act? Indeed it is! This was the sin of Sodom (Gen. 19:5) for which God burned them up. The death penalty was given for it in Lev. 20:13. Israel was involved in this sin and suffered for it. (Judges 19:22; I Kings 14:24) The apostle Paul described it as being a sin upon which the wrath of God was revealed from heaven. (Rom. 1:27) He condemned it in no uncertain terms. (I Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19; I Tim. 1:10) Men have been—and are now delivered from such a bondage. We have nothing but concern and compassion for such persons on a human level—but

there *must* be motivation from God, not man to deliver such persons.

(4) *Beastiality. v. 23* We are shocked (or should be) at the thought of such an act. At the same time we are not unaware of such practices for every generation since Moses. *Keil* is exceedingly clear on this practice. He says: "Into no beast shalt thou give thine emission of seed, . . . and a woman shall not place herself before a beast to lie down thereto. 'To lie,' is the term used particularly to denote a crime of this description (Cf. 20:13, 15,16; Exodus 22:18). Lying with animals was connected in Egypt with the worship of the goat; at Mendes especially, where the women lay down before he-goats (*Herodotus*, 2, 46; *Strabo*, 17, p. 802) *Aelian* relates an account of the crime being also committed with a dog in Rome; and according to *Sonnini* in modern Egypt men are said to lie even with female crocodiles."

#### FACT QUESTIONS 18:19-23

413. Does verse 19 forbid sexual relations for all during the menstruation of a woman? Discuss.
414. How does God consider adultery?
415. Why would anyone degrade themselves to the extent of burning their children?
416. Discuss the Bible teaching on homosexuality and how to help such persons.
417. What possible reason could there be for beastiality? Discuss.

#### SOLEMN WARNING 18:24-30

#### TEXT 18:24-30

- 24 Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you;
- 25 and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof

upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants.

- 26 Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourneth among you
- 27 (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled);
- 28 that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you.
- 29 For whosoever shall do any of these abominations, even the souls that do them shall be cut off from among their people.
- 30 Therefore shall ye keep my charge, that ye practise not any of these abominable customs, which were practised before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am Jehovah your God.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 18:24-30

409. The defilement of Israel by the "ways," "customs," or "life style" of Egypt and Canaan was deeper than ceremonial uncleanness. Discuss.
410. The land of Canaan was sick and ready to vomit. What a graphic figure of speech! Discuss the cause and effect.
411. Evidently obedience was *the one* quality God wanted most. Is this a fair appraisal?
412. What is meant by the word "abomination"?
413. Why refer to the land as sick and not of God as such?
414. Excommunication was a real danger. Was it ever practiced? Discuss.
415. Why repeat so often the phrase, "I am the Lord your God"?

#### PARAPHRASE 18:24-30

Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for these are the things the heathen do; and because they do them I am going to cast them out from the land into which you are going. That



entire country is defiled with this kind of activity; that is why I am punishing the people living there, and will throw them out of the land. You must strictly obey all of My laws and ordinances, and you must not do any of these abominable things; these laws apply both to you who are born in the nation of Israel and to foreigners living among you. Yes, all these abominations have been done continually by the people of the land where I am taking you, and the land is defiled. Do not do these things or I will throw you out of the land, just as I will throw out the nations that live there now. Whoever does any of these terrible deeds shall be excommunicated from this nation. So be very sure to obey My laws, and do not practice any of these horrible customs. Do not defile yourselves with the evil deeds of those living in the land where you are going. For I am Jehovah your God.

#### COMMENT 18:24-30

*vs. 24-30* This chapter begins and ends with a reference to the sovereignty of God. The whole cause of sin is a failure to recognize and obey the will of God in interpersonal relationships.

The word "defile" or "defile yourselves" is a most provocative one. There is a deeper meaning than mere ceremonial uncleanness. Disobedience to our conscience produces a stain on the soul which only repentance and sacrifice can remove. When such response does not take place and the sin is repeated the defilement or stain becomes darker and deeper. The *one* large lesson we get from the rejection of the Canaanites is that *they were responsible for their actions!* One man for one woman was a law given by God in Eden. "In the beginning it was not so" are the words of our Saviour (Matt. 19:8). Whereas Jesus' words refer to the words of Moses such a law was known and either kept or rejected long before Moses recorded it.

Personal failure produces national disaster! God *does* consider man in both ways. "The land" refers in its context to geography that will one day be a national possession. Does God yet hold the country as well as the individual responsible for his life style?

We have no reason to believe otherwise.

The kind of immoral conduct here described and practiced by the Canaanites produced an indigestible ingredient in the national body. The whole body was full of nausea. The body swallowed such conduct, but it offered no life or energy to the bloodstream. It lay as lead in the stomach. It decomposed and could not be assimilated. It must be removed! The laws of self-preservation will take over. On a national scale, such conduct is self-destructive.

God is saying through Moses: the present inhabitants of Canaan offer a graphic object lesson. Either learn from their mistakes and prosper, or repeat their sins and suffer as they are.

FACT QUESTIONS 18:24-30

418. Show the similarity in the beginning and ending of this chapter.
419. Discuss the deeper meaning of the word "defile."
420. How can we be sure the Canaanites were responsible for their actions?
421. Show how personal failure produces national disaster.
422. Is this generation about to be "vomited" out of the national body of America? Discuss.
423. Perhaps God does not recognize nations as such today. Discuss.

HOLINESS IN CONDUCT TOWARD GOD AND MAN  
19:1-37

THE FIRST TABLE OF THE LAW 19:1-8

TEXT 19:1-8

- 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and

- say unto them, Ye shall be holy; for I Jehovah your God am holy.
- 3 Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father; and ye shall keep my sabbaths: I am Jehovah your God.
- 4 Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am Jehovah your God.
- 5 And when ye offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto Jehovah, ye shall offer it that ye may be accepted.
- 6 It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow: and if aught remain until the third day, it shall be burnt with fire.
- 7 And if it be eaten at all on the third day, it is an abomination; it shall not be accepted:
- 8 but every one that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the holy thing of Jehovah: and that soul shall be cut off from his people.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:1-8

416. Just what did the expression "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy" mean to the assembly of Israel when first they heard it? Were they discouraged? encouraged? afraid? resentful? or what? Discuss. (Count in this one chapter the number of times this expression appears.)
417. How does respect for parents relate to sabbath observance?
418. How are idols described? Which two commandments of the ten are here involved?
419. How do "peace offerings" relate to idol worship?
420. Why the strict regulations of verses 6 and 7?
421. Isn't verse 8 a very severe penalty for eating the peace offering on the wrong day? or is this all that is involved?

## PARAPHRASE 19:1-8

The Lord also told Moses to tell the people of Israel, You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy. You must respect your mothers and fathers, and obey My Sabbath law, for I am the Lord your God. Do not make or worship idols, for I am Jehovah your God. When you sacrifice a peace offering to the Lord, offer it correctly so that it will be accepted: eat it the same day you offer it, or the next day at the latest; any remaining until the third day must be burned. For any of it eaten on the third day is repulsive to Me, and will not be accepted. If you eat it on the third day you are guilty, for you profane the holiness of Jehovah, and you shall be excommunicated from Jehovah's people.

## COMMENT 19:1-8

vs. 1-8 We can organize these verses under the general heading: *The First Table of the Law*, and divide it as: (1) Honor to parents—v. 3; (2) Sabbath observance—v. 3; (3) Avoiding idolatry—v. 4; (4) The peace offering—vs. 5-8.

The interrelationship of these laws is not easy to observe. Honor to mother and father relates to sabbath observance possibly because it was on the sabbath parents would instruct their children. The respect given to the parents would be easily transferred to God and His day. The mention of "mother" before "father" in verse 3 is unique. It would seem God is saying that honor for mother is just as important as honor for the father.

The word for "idols" means "non-entities" or "nothings." It is what Paul means when he says in I Cor. 8:4, "We know that an idol is *nothing* in the world." The content of idol worship adds up to zero. Therefore give them no time or thought. Do not turn toward them, either mentally or physically. The second commandment in the Decalogue is covered by the prohibition against "molten gods" Cf. Exodus 20:4-6 and Exodus 34:17.

We learned in 17:3-7 that Israel was in a habit of sacrificing

their cattle and herds to the idols before they prepared them for use at their meals. The transference in thought from idol worship to peace offering is an easy one when such a practice is known. We seem to catch a hint of attitude in the little phrase "so that ye may be accepted" in verse 5. Put your heart into the effort. Do not go through the form of killing your animals before Jehovah God in the same meaningless manner you do in your field-sacrifices to your idols. God will not accept your peace offering when given in that manner.

Authorities point out that there were two classes of peace offerings: (1) Those to be eaten on the same day they were slain, Cf. 7:15 and (2) the second class peace offerings which could be eaten the day following, Cf. 8:16. In 7:17-20 we have a thorough discussion as to why the meat should not be held till the third day. Perhaps the third day was somehow associated with idol worship, otherwise it would seem the penalty attached to eating the meat on the third day to be very severe.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 19:1-8

424. How does the honor of mother and father relate to the observance of the sabbath day?
425. This text contains a strong rejection of idols. For what reason?
426. How do peace offerings and idol worship relate?

#### THE SECOND TABLE OF THE LAW 19:9-18

##### TEXT 19:9-18

- 9 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.
- 10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them

- for the poor and for the sojourner: I am Jehovah your God.
- 11 Ye shall not steal; neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another.
  - 12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, and profane the name of thy God: I am Jehovah.
  - 13 Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him: the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.
  - 14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind; but thou shalt fear thy God: I am Jehovah.
  - 15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.
  - 16 Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am Jehovah.
  - 17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt surely rebuke thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.
  - 18 Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:9-18

422. Name the ten commandments and designate which ones were on the first table and directed toward God, and which ones were on the second table and directed toward man.
423. The poor and the stranger will receive more than grain and grapes from this regulation. What was it?
424. Why did God feel it necessary to repeat these commandments in this place?
425. Verse 12 contains two misuses of the name of God. Discuss what they are.
426. Why not wait until the next day to pay a hired servant?
427. What perversity in man would tempt him to curse the deaf (who couldn't hear his cursing) or trip a blind man

(who would not know who did it)?

428. How easily we are influenced by appearance, either with the poor or the mighty. Discuss verse 15.
429. Gossip can be deadly. Discuss the danger in verse 16.
430. To hold your tongue and hate your neighbor is wrong. You should rebuke him. Discuss verse 17.
431. Isn't it surprising to read here the words "you shall love your neighbor as yourself"? Cf. Rom. 12:17,19; Matt. 5:43-46. Discuss.

### PARAPHRASE 19:9-18

When you harvest your crops, don't reap the corners of your fields, and don't pick up stray grains of wheat from the ground. It is the same with your grape crop—don't strip every last piece of fruit from the vines, and don't pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. Leave them for the poor and for those traveling through, for I am Jehovah your God. You must not steal nor lie nor defraud. You must not swear to a falsehood, thus bringing reproach upon the name of your God, for I am Jehovah. You shall not rob nor oppress anyone, and you shall pay your hired workers promptly. If something is due them, don't even keep it overnight. You must not curse the deaf nor trip up a blind man as he walks. Fear your God; I am Jehovah! Judges must always be just in their sentences, not noticing whether a person is poor or rich; they must always be perfectly fair. Don't gossip. Don't falsely accuse your neighbor of some crime, for I am Jehovah. Don't hate your brother. Rebuke anyone who sins; don't let him get away with it, or you will be equally guilty. Don't seek vengeance. Don't bear a grudge; but love your neighbor as yourself, for I am Jehovah.

### COMMENT 19:9-18

vs. 9-18 Acceptableness with God is the total point of the

three chapters of 18, 19, 20. Personal conduct as related to marriage and attitudes and actions as concerns the family are discussed. Now we hear of the treatment of the poor and strangers. Our worship of God is reflected in all our daily conduct or we cannot say he is Lord of all. The mercy shown to the poor is so like that we all receive from Him. Dignity and respect even for the poorest is provided by God. A certain amount of the harvest *belongs* to the poor; they are not begging, they are only taking that which is lawfully theirs.

The extent of the corners and the gleanings were very carefully defined at different periods in Hebrew history. The word "glean" as related to the grapes meant "infants" *i.e.* those branches or twigs of grapes upon which there were only one or two grapes. These were to be left for the needy. The scattered grapes which fell from the clusters when the large ones were cut were to be left and not gathered except by the poor.

The use of the eighth commandment against stealing used as it is in its context could refer to the seriousness of taking that which belongs to the poor—it is nothing short of theft!

The hasty, thoughtless use of the name of Almighty God is something religious people need to consider very often. How easy it is to treat the Holy as common. In the midst of all the rights and ceremonies the name of God was often used lightly.

Deceit and deception was the way of life for many in the days of the prophets—and earlier. Oppression and violence was often used in defrauding. It was in such environment these regulations were given.

The day laborer, or as he is often called, "the hireling" needs his money as soon as he earns it. His wife and family expect him to bring home sufficient money for their food. The law asks that his wages be given to him on the same day of his work. There are numerous references to this same kind treatment. *Cf.* Deut. 24:14,15; Jer. 37:13; Mal. 3:5; Jas. 5:4. The scribes of Jesus' day said, "He who treats a hireling with harshness sins as grievously as if he hath taken away life, and transgresses five precepts."

To curse or revile one who cannot defend himself was mean



and selfish. Deaf people can be exasperating, but it is not their fault. Were we unable to hear, we perhaps would react in even a less communicative manner. Kindness, tenderness is the only form of communication understood by everyone. Perhaps reviling those who are absent and thus unable to reply is another form of this wrong (Cf. Psa. 38:14,15).

Thoughtfulness and help to those physically less fortunate than ourselves is expected by God who deals kindly with such blind people as ourselves. Deuteronomy 27:18 places a curse upon those who lead the blind astray. The figurative use of this law, would also obtain, *i.e.* deceiving the naive and the ignorant. Cf. Rom. 14:13. The concluding phrase, "but you shall fear (or reverence) your God: I am the Lord" means that we might take advantage of the deaf and blind here but we have no advantage with God. He hears what we say and He sees what we do. To ignore His omnipresence and omniscience is to be deaf and blind ourselves.

Verse 15 takes us into a law court. Perhaps it is only a minor, personal case, but in whatever circumstance the judge is not to exercise his authority in an arbitrary manner. To be very plain about the subject: he is not to allow his sympathy for the poor or his admiration of the mighty to cloud his judgment. The poor must be penalized and the rich rewarded if this is what fairness and impartiality demands. Cf. Exodus 23:3; Jas. 2:2-9.

Giving evidence about our neighbor in court is one thing; it is entirely something else to recite such information to any and all who want to hear it. When such happens it is always distorted and rapidly becomes slander. How devastating is slander! Cf. Jer. 6:28; Ezek. 22:9; I Sam. 22:9,18. *Ginsburg* says: "This dangerous habit, which has ruined the character and destroyed the life of many an innocent person was denounced by the spiritual authorities in the time of Christ as the greatest sin. Three things they declared remove a man from this world, and deprive him of happiness in the world to come—idolatry, incest, and murder. But slander surpasses them all! It kills three persons with one act—the person who slanders, the person who is slandered, and the person who listens to the slander."

The phrase "neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor" (v. 16) is not clear in meaning upon the first reading. The paraphrase renders it, "Don't falsely accuse your neighbor of some crime." The Amplified Bible follows this same line of thought by saying, "nor shall you (secure yourself by false testimony or by silence and) endanger the life of your neighbor." It speaks against false testimony whether such is given by refusing to get involved and thus allowing falsehood to prevail or by giving false testimony. In either case it was serious enough to endanger the life of our neighbor. An unwillingness to help our neighbor when he is in need is in itself standing by while the blood of our neighbor is being shed.

From external acts we turn to internal motivations. Verse 17 discusses the cause of injury: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart." Even if we are the recipients of punishment in a case in which we feel we were unjustly judged, we cannot harbor hatred toward those who gave us the decision. Whereas we might not be able to overthrow the decision, we can at least get it out of our heart into words directed to our brother. We need to express ourselves. Let's not be like Absalom who "spoke unto Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon." II Sam. 13:22. Speak to your brother—say to him, "Why hast thou thus dealt with me?" Our Lord said, "If thy brother sin against thee rebuke him, and if he repent forgive him." Luke 17:3. At whatever juncture, do not hate him. We must be very careful in rebuking our brother that we do not in this very act, sin ourselves. It is not revenge that we seek, but understanding and reconciliations. Even if our brother does not repent, we have expressed all of our heart to him and it thus becomes much easier to forget and forgive freely from the heart.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We need to be reminded again and again that if we hate ourselves, if we are living in a constant state of self-loathing or self-depreciation we will indeed hate, loathe and depreciate our neighbors. We do project our own self-estimation upon neighbors—they are the unhappy recipients. The love of ourselves originates in our acceptance of God's acceptance of us. When I believe He loves

me, it becomes much easier to love myself and thus love my neighbor. Cf. Rom. 12:17, 19; Matt. 5:43-46.

### FACT QUESTIONS 19:9-18

427. What is the one concept developed in chapters 18, 19, 20?
428. How was dignity and respect shown to the poor?
429. What grapes were left for the poor?
430. How is the eighth commandment related to treatment of the poor?
431. Profaning of the name of God is often done among religious people. Why? How?
432. The day laborer must be paid on the same day he does the work. Why?
433. How serious was it to treat a laborer harshly?
434. Why would some be tempted to curse a deaf person? Is there a double application of this law?
435. Why does God expect us to deal kindly with those who are physically handicapped?
436. Explain in your own words verse 15.
437. How do verses 15 and 16 relate?
438. What is slander? How does it start?
439. Show how slander kills three people.
440. What is involved in "standing against the blood" of our neighbor?
441. What is the real cause of injury to our neighbor?
442. Show how II Sam. 13:22 and Luke 17:3 relate to verse 17.
443. What is meant by loving ourselves?

*In review:* we discussed THE SECOND TABLE OF THE LAW in verses 9-18 under the following headings: (1) Consideration for the poor—vs. 9, 10; (2) Prohibition against robbery and deceit—v. 11; (3) Prohibition against false swearing—v. 12; (4) Prohibition against oppression—v. 13; (5) Care for the helpless—v. 14; (6) Righteous judgments—v. 15; (7) Warning against "tale bearing"—v. 16; (8) Summary of the Second Table—vs. 17, 18.

## VARIOUS ORDINANCES 19:19-29

## TEXT 19:19-29

- 19 Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seed: neither shall there come upon thee a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together.
- 20 And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that is a bondmaid, betrothed to a husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; they shall be punished; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free.
- 21 And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto Jehovah, unto the door of the tent of meeting, even a ram for a trespass-offering.
- 22 And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering before Jehovah for his sin which he hath sinned: and the sin which he hath sinned shall be forgiven him.
- 23 And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as their uncircumcision: three years shall they be as uncircumcised unto you; it shall not be eaten.
- 24 But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy, for giving praise unto Jehovah.
- 25 And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof: I am Jehovah your God.
- 26 Ye shall not eat anything with blood: neither shall ye use enchantments, nor practise augury.
- 27 Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.
- 28 Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am Jehovah.
- 29 Profane not thy daughter, to make her a harlot; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:19-29

432. Is there some difference between "statutes" and commandments?
433. Is there some practical or moral reason for not mixing seed, cattle or cloth?
434. To commit adultery with a female slave was a sad offense. What was to be done?
435. What happened to the slave? to the child, *i.e.* if one were born?
436. God had some very practical laws concerning horticulture. What were they?
437. Does verse 26 speak against present-day horoscopes? Discuss.
438. Verse 27 seems to have little present-day meaning. Discuss.
439. Is it a sin to be tattooed?

## PARAPHRASE 19:19-29

Obey My laws: do not mate your cattle with a different kind; don't sow your field with two kinds of seed; don't wear clothes made of half wool and half linen. If a man seduces a slave girl who is engaged to be married, they shall be tried in a court but not put to death, because she is not free. The man involved shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord at the entrance of the Tabernacle; the offering shall be a ram. The priest shall make atonement with the ram for the sin the man has committed, and it shall be forgiven him. When you enter the land and have planted all kinds of fruit trees, do not eat the first three crops, for they are considered ceremonially defiled. And the fourth year the entire crop shall be devoted to the Lord, and shall be given to the Lord in praise to Him. Finally, in the fifth year, the crop is yours. I am Jehovah your God! You must not eat meat with undrained blood; nor use fortune telling or witchcraft. You must not trim off your hair on your temples or clip the edges of your beard, as the heathen do. You shall not cut yourselves nor put tattoo marks

upon yourselves in connection with funeral rites; I am the Lord. Do not violate your daughter's sanctity by making her a prostitute, lest the land become full of enormous wickedness.

## COMMENT 19:19-29

vs. 19-29 (1) Prohibition against "hybrids"—v. 19; (2) Sin of a betrothed bondmaid—vs. 20-22; (3) The first-fruit of the trees in Canaan—vs. 23-25; (4) Abstention from heathen rites—vs. 26-29.

We appreciate Bruce Oberst's comment on the companion reference of Deuteronomy 22:9-11: "Note the basic concept of *separation* which runs throughout these verses. The fact that two kinds of seed might grow quite well together, or that one could plow together quite well with an ox and an ass, or that linen (originating from flax) and wool might make a durable, warm, and nice-looking garment when combined, was *nothing to the point!* God had said they were not to be mixed! His word was to be respected and honored.

"As a separated people, they were to live separated lives (*Cf.* I Kings 8:53, etc.). Such laws as this would also distinguish and identify them as God's own people, different from all others.

Separation is as much a New Testament doctrine as Old—not the separation here spoken of, but the separation from the world and its ways that has *always* characterized God's true children. It is still very necessary that the child of God *distinguish* and *differentiate* in this world—an ability he develops more and more as he matures and grows into the likeness of his Master. Mature Christians should see the difference between light and darkness, sham and sincerity, truth and falsehood.

"The 'unequal yoke' of the ox and ass (v. 10) perhaps were in the very mind's eye of the apostle when he exhorted the Corinthian Christians, 'Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity . . .' etc. (see II Cor. 6:14—7:1)."

What a pathetic use of position to use it in seducing a slave—

most especially one who is betrothed! "This bond woman might be of either one of the intermediate kind, that is, one whose redemption money had been partially paid, or belong to that class who had no prospects of a free discharge." It could be such a female slave was espoused to a Hebrew slave—both of whom were owned by the master who was guilty of this seduction. When this happens, the woman is also held responsible; she was therefore given 40 stripes.

Punishment by death was the penalty ordinarily inflicted. Cf. 20:10; Deut. 22:23. However because she was "degraded to the condition of private property" to only be used to satisfy the lusts of her master, a lesser punishment was permitted. She was exempted from offering the sacrifice. The man must bring a ram for a trespass offering. A slave had no property, therefore no sacrifice was required. The sacrifice being made according to the prescribed ritual (Cf. 4:20, 26), he was forgiven of his sin.

There are four references in Leviticus where regulations are given in anticipation of entering Canaan: (1) 14:34—the promise of leprosy in their houses; (2) 19:23—the planting of fruit trees in the land; (3) 23:10—the law of the first fruits of the land; (4) 25:2—keeping a sabbath day in the land. In the mind of God, Canaan was already a possession. In the mind of God we are already in our eternal promised land enjoying all the bounties of that place.

The trees of Canaan were: (1) all manner of citrus trees: oranges, lemons, etc.; (2) olive trees; (3) fig trees. In the first three years the trees were to be regarded as "uncircumcised" i.e. unclean for use as food. Some see a metaphorical use of this word in the cutting or plucking off the buds or early fruit during the first three years. On the fourth year the whole harvest was to be given to the Lord and eaten in joyful worship before Him. The fifth year could be the first year of use for Israel. Such treatment of the trees would yield the highest possible harvest by the fifth year.

Verses 26-29 discuss abstinence from certain heathen rites. Evidently the eating of blood in this instance was associated in some manner with idolatry. There are various possible

explanations, but since all of them are conjectural, we will forego reference to them.

The practice of magic or enchantments as used here refers to certain kinds of incantations, according to some "to prophecy obtained from observing snakes." The practice of "augury" is called the observing of days or of "times" by other translations. Some authorities refer this to "taking notice of the seasons and days, and saying this is a good day to begin a journey, tomorrow will be a lucky day to make a purchase."

The reference to haircuts and the care of beards sounds strangely familiar in our day. Of course present day hair trimming and beard care does not have such a direct relation to the deity involved—human pride seems to be the god in view today. In the day of Moses the hair was shaved off around the temples and behind the ears, so as to leave the head bald except for a dish-like tuft upon the crown of the head. This, according to those who did it, imparted to the head the form and shape of a hemisphere. This was done by the Arabs, and other worshippers of the god Orotal. The Arabs are ironically called "those with the corner of their hair polled"—as is rightly rendered in the margin. Cf. Jer. 9:26; 25:23; 49:32.

The beard was regarded by the Hebrews and other eastern nations as the greatest ornament of a man, and was as dear to them as life itself. It was the object of salutation, Cf. II Sam. 20:9, and the mutilation of it was looked upon as the greatest disgrace and most degrading punishment. Cf. II Sam. 10:4; Isa. 7:20; Ezra 5:1-5. It was only in seasons of sorrow that the Hebrews neglected their beards; and sometimes, to show how deeply they were afflicted, they covered them up, or even cut them off, or tore them out. Cf. II Sam. 19:24; Isa. 15:2, Jer. 51:5. Because it was so precious a treasure it was customary among some of the ancients to present to their gods the firstlings of their beards. The prohibition in this verse refers to this practice." (*Ginsburg*)

The worshippers of Baal in the contest of Elijah on Mount Carmel "cut themselves with knives and lances until the blood gushed out upon them." Cf. I Kings 18:28. This was a custom of



many idol worshippers when mourning for the dead as well as when calling upon their god for fire from heaven. The Israelite was to respect his body as the creation of God not to disfigure it. Cf. 21:6; Deut. 14:1.

The practice of tattooing is as old as the history of nations. Incisions or punctures were made in the skin in the form of words or pictures and some type of ink was impressed upon the incisions. Slaves bore the tattooed name of their masters, soldiers of their captain, and worshippers of their gods. Were the phylacteries which the Hebrews were to bind on the head and hands "as a memorial" a reaction or accommodation to tattooing? Cf. Exodus 13:9, 16; Deut. 6:8; 9:18.

Daughters were given to Astarte to serve in her temple as prostitutes. Astarte was the goddess of fertility and prostitution was a part of her worship. The Jews became so degraded that fathers thought it was an honor to thus give their daughters. Here is a plain word from God against such a practice.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 19:19-29

444. Why not inter-breed cattle as in verse 19? Aren't present day cattle evidence that such is a good practice? Discuss.
445. Why not stone the adulterers described in verse 20?
446. God anticipates the activities in Canaan in four references. What regulations are given?
447. In the first three years the trees were "uncircumcised." In what regard?
448. Wasn't it selfish of God to refuse the fruit for four years?
449. Eating of blood here is different than earlier references, *i. e.* the purpose was different. What was it?
450. How were magic or incantations used?
451. The care of hair and beards became very important in the days of Moses. How so? Discuss.
452. Cutting and tattooing was used for what purpose?
453. Why would any father consider giving his daughter to prostitution?

CONCLUDING INJUNCTIONS 19:30-37

TEXT 19:30-37

- 30 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am Jehovah.
- 31 Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them: I am Jehovah your God.
- 32 Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and thou shalt fear thy God: I am Jehovah.
- 33 And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong.
- 34 The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt: I am Jehovah your God.
- 35 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in measures of length, of weight, or of quantity.
- 36 Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.
- 37 And ye shall observe all my statutes, and all mine ordinances, and do them: I am Jehovah.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 19:30-37

440. Just how does reverence for the sabbath and the sanctuary relate to the context?
441. What is "a familiar spirit"?
442. What was the work of a wizard?
443. In what way were people defiled by spirits and wizards?
444. What is meant by "hoary head"? What request is here made?
445. The Israelites would know just how strangers felt and just how to treat them. Why?

446. How does fair measurement relate to the nature or name of God?
447. What advantage was there in observing all the statutes and ordinances of God?

### PARAPHRASE 19:30-37

Keep My Sabbath laws and reverence My Tabernacle, for I am the Lord. Do not defile yourselves by consulting mediums and wizards, for I am Jehovah your God. You shall give due honor and respect to the elderly, in the fear of God. I am Jehovah. Do not take advantage of foreigners in your land; do not wrong them. They must be treated like any other citizen; love them as yourself, for remember that you too were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God. You must be impartial in judgment. Use accurate measurements—lengths, weights, and volumes—and give full measure, for I am Jehovah your God who brought you from the land of Egypt. You must heed all of My commandments and ordinances, carefully obeying them, for I am Jehovah.

### COMMENT 19:30-37

*vs. 30-37* We have six concluding commands and a summary in these verses. They are: (1) honor the sabbath and the sanctuary—v. 30; (2) avoid familiar spirits and wizards—v. 31; (3) honor the aged—v. 32; (4) deal kindly with strangers—vs. 33, 34; (5) keep my standards of righteousness—vs. 35, 36 (6) summary—the reason for obedience—v. 37.

*v. 30* The greatest safeguard for an Israelite against idolatry and all attendant sins was a sincere consistent observance of the sabbath days and a regular attendance at the tabernacle along with his various personal sacrifices, not to mention his interest in the national feasts and sacrifices. Considering the number and frequency of these personal and national sacrifices

the conscientious Israelite would have but little time for idolatry.

v. 31 We are indebted to Adam Clarke for a study on the meaning and application of the terms "familiar spirits," "wizards," and "witches." He says in commenting on Exodus 22:18:

Verse 18. *Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.* If there had been no *witches*, such a law as this had never been made. The existence of the *law*, given under the direction of the Spirit of God, proves the existence of the *thing*. It has been doubted whether *mecashshephah*, which we translate *witch*, really means a person who practised divination or sorcery by spiritual or infernal agency. Whether the persons thus denominated only *pretended* to have an art which had no existence, or whether they *really* possessed the power commonly attributed to them, are questions which it would be improper to discuss at length in a work of this kind; but that *witches*, *wizards*, those *who dealt with familiar spirits*, etc., are represented in the sacred writings as actually possessing a power to evoke the dead, to perform supernatural operations, and to discover hidden or secret things by spells, charms, incantations, etc., is evident to every unprejudiced reader of the Bible. Of Manasseh it is said: *He caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times (veonen, he used divination by clouds) and used enchantments, and used witchcraft (vechishsheph) and dealt with a familiar spirit*, performed a variety of operations by means of what was afterwards called the *spirit of Python*, and with *wizards*, (*yiddeoni*, the *wise* or *knowing ones*;) and he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord; II Chron. 33:6. It is very likely that the Hebrew *cashaph*, and the Arabic *cashafa*, had originally the same meaning, to *uncover*, to *remove a veil*, to *manifest*, *reveal*, *make bare* or *naked*; and *mecashafat* is used to signify *commerce with God*, or the *invisible world*. From the severity of this law against witches, etc., we may see in what light these were viewed by Divine justice. They were seducers of the people from their allegiance to God, on whose judgment alone they should depend; and by impiously prying into futurity, assumed an attribute of God, *the foretelling of future events*, which implied in itself the grossest blasphemy,

and tended to corrupt the minds of the people, by leading them away from God and the revelation he had made of himself. Many of the Israelites had, no doubt, learned these curious arts from their long residence with the Egyptians; and so much were the Israelites attached to them, that we find such arts in repute among them, and various practices of this kind prevailed through the whole of the Jewish history, notwithstanding the offence was capital, and in all cases punished with *death*.

v. 32 The due honor and respect we should give to the elderly are beautifully expressed in these words: "When you meet them in public places, or they come to where you are, show them reverence. Both the infirmity and the wisdom of the aged have a claim on us; and besides, *age*, apart from its qualities, has in it solemnity. By the sight of it, the Lord would solemnize us in the midst of our pursuits. 'Lo! the shadow of eternity! for one cometh who is almost already in eternity. His head and beard white as snow, indicate his speedy appearance before the Ancient of Days,' the hair of whose head is as pure wool."

Every object, too, that is feeble seems to be recommended to our care by God; for these are types of the condition wherein He finds us when His grace comes to save. It is, therefore, exhibiting His grace in a shadow, when the helpless are relieved, "the fatherless find mercy" (Hosea 14:3), "the orphans relieved, and the widow," (Psa. 146:9) and "the stranger preserved." (*Bonar*)

vs. 33, 34 "Deal kindly with strangers" should strike a responsive chord in the heart of the Israelite since for so long he was a stranger in a strange land. To become a Jew meant much more than just being circumcised. All of the laws and ceremonies must also be understood and observed. When a stranger acts in an awkward or unusual manner, do not laugh at him or criticize him. Put yourself in his sandals—you were once the stranger in Egypt. Treat him as you wish you were treated.

vs. 35, 36 It is a strange but true fact that men somehow become blind to the application of morality in certain areas. Put some people behind the steering wheel of an automobile and

their code of ethics has somehow disappeared. The same is true of weights and measures. If a larger share than we deserve is available we are sorely tempted to take it! This was true in the day of Moses. "The Bible frequently brands these dealings as wicked, and an abomination to the Lord, while it designates the right measures as coming from God Himself." Cf. Deut. 25:13, 15; Ezek. 45:10, 12; Hosea 12:8; Amos 8:5, Micah 6:10.

v. 37 The reason for obedience is cited in this verse. "You must heed all of my commandments and ordinances, carefully obeying them, *for I am Jehovah*," or as the New English Bible translates it: "You shall observe all my rules and laws and carry them out. *I am the Lord*." The Jerusalem Bible translates it: "Keep all my laws and customs, put them into practice. *I am Yahweh*." Without an acceptance of the majesty and power, to say nothing of the presence and wisdom of God we will have no desire to obey God. With a full awareness His commandments are not grievous.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 19:30-37

454. List the six commands in these verses.
455. What was the greatest safeguard against idolatry?
456. Define: "familiar spirits," "wizards," "witches."
457. Aged people have a double claim on us. What is it?
458. How can we "exhibit His grace in a shadow"?
459. The loving care of strangers should have been easy for the Israelites. Why?
460. When are men blind to the applications of morality? Discuss.
461. What is the strongest motive for obedience to the laws of God?

## PUNISHMENT FOR UNHOLINESS 20:1-27

## MOLECH WORSHIP 20:1-5

## TEXT 20:1-5

- 1 And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying,
- 2 Moreover, 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 of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones.
- 3 I also 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.
- 4 And if the people of the land do at all hide their eyes from that man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and put him not to death;
- 5 then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that play the harlot after him to play the harlot with Molech, from among their people.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:1-5

448. How could "the strangers" be held responsible in the same way as the children of Israel?
449. Who are "the people of the land" in verse 2?
450. Just what is involved in being "cut off" from among the people?
451. In what way does the worship of Molech defile the sanctuary and profane the holy name of God?
452. Why would the people of the land be tempted to hide their eyes and not put such a one to death?
453. Why include the family of the violator in his punishment?
454. Was sex a part of the worship of Molech? Discuss.

## PARAPHRASE 20:1-5

The Lord gave Moses these further instructions for the people of Israel: Anyone—whether an Israelite or a foreigner living among you—who sacrifices his child as a burnt offering to Molech shall without fail be stoned by his peers. And I Myself will turn against that man and cut him off from all his people, because he has given his child to Molech, thus making My Tabernacle unfit for Me to live in, and insulting My holy name. And if the people of the land pretend they do not know what the man has done, and refuse to put him to death, then I Myself will set My face against that man and his family and cut him off, along with all others who turn to other gods than Me.

## COMMENT 20:1-5

*vs. 1-5* God is indeed interested in the reformation of those who sin. However in the cases before us all attempts at reformation have failed and the instruction of others by the death penalty is the only alternative. We must add that the reputation of God is at stake; the honor of His name must be upheld. He can have no competitors!

We have considered in detail the worship of Molech in 18:21. The entire community of Israel as well as those who sojourned among them are here called to share in the punishment of this idolator. Ginsburg gives a most instructive description of the action of stoning:

Stoning was the first and the severest mode of capital punishment among the Hebrews, the three others being burning, beheading, and strangling. The Jewish canonists have tabulated the following eighteen cases in which death by stoning was inflicted: (1) of a man who has commerce with his own mother (chap. 20:11); (2) or with his father's wife (chap. 20:12); (3) or with his daughter-in-law (chap. 20:12); (4) or with a betrothed maiden (Deut. 22:23,24); (5) or with a male (chap. 20:13); (6) or with a beast (chap. 20:15); (7) of a woman who was guilty of lying with a beast (chap. 20:16); (8) the blasphemer (chap.



24:10-16); (9) the worshipper of idols (Deut. 17:2-5); (10) the one who gives his seed to Molech (chap. 20:2); (11) the necromancer; (12) the wizard (chap. 20:27); (13) the false prophet (Deut. 13:6); (14) the enticer to idolatry (Deut. 13:11); (15) the witch (chap. 20:17); (16) the profaner of the Sabbath (Num. 15:32-36); (17) he that curses his parent (chap. 20:9); and (18) the rebellious son (Deut. 21:18-21). As the Mosaic legislation only directs that the lapidation is to take place without the precincts of the city (chap. 24:14; Num. 15:36), and that the witnesses upon whose evidence the criminal has been sentenced to death are to throw the first stone (Deut. 17:7), the administrators of the law during the second Temple decreed the following mode of carrying out the sentence. On his way from the court of justice to the place of execution a herald preceded the criminal, exclaiming, "So-and-so is being led out to be stoned for this and this crime, and so-and-so are the witnesses; if any one has to say anything that might save him, let him come forward and say it." Within ten yards of the place of execution he was publicly admonished to confess his sins, within four yards he was stripped naked except a slight covering about his loins. After his hands had been bound, he was led upon a scaffolding about twice the height of a man. Here wine mingled with myrrh was mercifully given to him to dull the pain of execution, and from here one of the witnesses pushed him down with great violence so that he fell upon his back. If the fall did not kill him, the other witnesses dashed a great stone on his breast, and if this did not kill him, all the people that stood by covered him with stones. The corpse was then nailed to the cross, and afterwards burnt. Hereupon the relatives visited both the judges and the witnesses to show that they bore no hatred towards them, and that the sentence was just. Not unfrequently, however, the excited multitude resorted to lapidation when they wished to inflict summary justice. This description will explain why the Jews said to Christ that the woman had to be stoned, and why He replied to her accusers that he who is without sin should cast the first stone (John 8:5,7); why the Jews wanted to stone Christ when they thought He was blaspheming (John 10:31), and why they offered

Him wine mingled with myrrh before his crucifixion (Matt. 27:34,38; Mark 15:23).

How is it that God speaks of cutting off the idolator when sentence has already been passed upon him and he is to be (or has been) stoned? We believe verse 3 is discussing an undetected offender, whereas the evidence was not sufficient to convict him. God knows he is guilty and will not allow him to appear in the tabernacle and defile His sanctuary or treat lightly the holy name of God.

It is tragically true that some who are blood guilty of lasciviousness or licentiousness often appear before God in His assembly. The very people who offered their children to Molech afterward came to the sanctuary to worship God. Cf. Jer. 7:9,10; Ezek. 23:37-39. Then and now God will not ignore this affront to Him.

Since it would be impossible to participate in this type of idolatry without involving the whole family, the whole family will share the punishment.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 20:1-5

462. In what way was the death penalty reformatory?
463. In what sense is God's reputation in the balance?
464. List nine of the eighteen offenses that carried the death penalty.
465. Describe in your own words the death march and the act of stoning.
466. Explain verse 3.
467. We have some today who are like these idolators. In what way?

CONSORTING WITH WIZARDS AND  
NECROMANCERS 20:6-8

## TEXT 20:6-8

- 6 And the soul that turneth unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards, to play the harlot after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.
- 7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am Jehovah your God.
- 8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am Jehovah who sanctifieth you.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:6-8

455. What is it in man that turns him to "familiar spirits" and wizards?
456. Are we to understand sex or immoral conduct was a part of the practice of these persons?
457. Just what is involved in the act of sanctifying ourselves?
458. We should be holy for God is holy. What is the motivation?
459. God has a part in sanctifying us. What is it?

## PARAPHRASE 20:6-8

I will set my face against anyone who consults mediums and wizards instead of Me and I will cut that person off from his people. So sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. You must obey all of My commandments, for I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

## COMMENT 20:6-8

vs. 6-8 Man is an incurably curious creature and will inquire concerning the future or the unknown in one way or another.

Those with supposed contact with the spirit world offer one avenue of inquiry. When a son of Israel sought out a soothsayer he was in effect denying his confidence in God's ability and interest in him. Such action was a direct reflection on the character of God and therefore became a most serious sin. Ventriloquism and sleight of hand, coupled with singing and incantations all served to impress the devotee with the thought he was talking with the spirits of the dead. Necromancy was the act of speaking to the dead. The actual practice was aligned with Satan and demons all liberally supported by the tricks of the trade of magic. Sexual immorality was a large part of the attraction of such worship. "I will set my face against anyone who consults mediums and wizards instead of Me and I will cut that person off from his people"—thus says God.

The injunction of verses 7 and 8 can be understood only in light of the fact that men are "sanctified" or "set apart" when they heed and obey the commandments of God. Obedience to God's law is the sanctifying act.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 20:6-8

468. What is it in man that leads him to a wizard? What is wrong with it?
469. Besides talking with spirits there were other attractions. What were they?
470. How are we sanctified?

#### CURSING PARENTS-20:9

#### SEXUAL CRIMES-20:10-21

#### TEXT 20:9-21

- 9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.
- 10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's

- wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
- 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.
  - 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.
  - 13 And if a man lie with mankind, as with womankind, both of them have committed abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.
  - 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.
  - 15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast.
  - 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.
  - 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 shameful thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of the children of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity.
  - 18 And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness; he hath made naked her fountain, and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people.
  - 19 And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, nor of thy father's sister; for he hath made naked his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity.
  - 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.
  - 21 And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it is impurity: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:9-21

460. Why so severe a punishment for the cursing of parents?  
461. Burning with fire is singled out for three people. Who are they?  
462. Do you believe Israel was deterred from sexual sins because of the severe penalty? Discuss.

PARAPHRASE 20:9-21

Anyone who curses his father or mother shall surely be put to death—for he has cursed his own flesh and blood. If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, both the man and woman shall be put to death. If a man sleeps with his father's wife, he has defiled what is his father's; both the man and the woman must die, for it is their own fault. And if a man has sexual intercourse with his daughter-in-law, both shall be executed: they have brought it upon themselves by defiling each other. The penalty for homosexual acts is death to both parties. They have brought it upon themselves. If a man has sexual intercourse with a woman and with her mother, it is a great evil. All three shall be burned alive to wipe out wickedness from among you. If a man has sexual intercourse with an animal, he shall be executed and the animal killed. If a woman has sexual intercourse with an animal, kill the woman and the animal, for they deserve their punishment. If a man has sexual intercourse with his sister, whether the daughter of his father or of his mother, it is a shameful thing, and they shall publicly be cut off from the people of Israel. He shall bear his guilt. If a man has sexual intercourse with a woman during her period of menstruation, both shall be excommunicated, for he has uncovered her uncleanness. Sexual intercourse is outlawed between a man and his maiden aunt—whether the sister of his mother or of his father—for they are near of kin; they shall bear their guilt. If a man has intercourse with his uncle's widow, he has taken what belongs to his uncle; their punishment is that they shall

bear their sin and die childless. If a man marries his brother's widow, this is impurity; for he has taken what belongs to his brother, and they shall be childless.

## COMMENT 20:9-21

v. 9 It has been thought that the cursing of father or mother was with the name of God and for this reason we have such a severe penalty for this act. Such a sin strikes at the foundation of society. Where there is no respect of parents there can be no respect for God. Such a one shall be stoned to death. Cf. Exodus 21:17; Prov. 20:20; Matt. 15:14; Mark 7:10. The reference to "his blood shall be upon him" suggests that the son knew the penalty before he sinned. Cf. Joshua 2:19. This phrase occurs six times in this chapter (vs. 9, 11, 12, 13, 16, 27).

vs. 10-21 Traditionally the words "shall surely be put to death" when not modified by a reference to stoning or burning meant that such a one should be strangled. Such a phrase occurs six times for the following crimes: (1) Adultery with another man's wife; (2) striking father or mother; (3) kidnapping another Israelite; (4) an elder who rebelled against the decision of the senate (Deut. 17:12); (5) the false prophet; (6) prophecy in the name of another god. (*Ginsburg*) Most of these crimes have been discussed in chapter 19. The third form of capital punishment, *i.e.* "burning with fire" is mentioned in verse 14. We are indebted again to C. D. Ginsburg for a most graphic description of this:

This, as we have seen, is the third of the four modes of capital punishment. (See verse 2.) In the following ten cases those guilty of the sins specified suffered this punishment: (1) the unchaste high priest's daughter (chap. 21:9); (2) he who had commerce with his daughter; (3) or with his daughter's daughter; (4) or with his son's daughter; (5) or with his wife's daughter; (6) or with her daughter's daughter; (7) or with her son's daughter; (8) or with his mother-in-law; (9) or with the mother of his mother-in-law; and (10), or with the mother of his father-in-law.

## PUNISHMENT FOR UNHOLINESS 20:22-26

It will thus be seen that with the exception of the high priest's daughter this death was only inflicted for incest. As the Bible nowhere states the precise mode in which this kind of death is to be carried out, the authorities during the second Temple maintained that it must be executed in such a manner as to leave the body externally unchanged by the flames, because when God himself inflicted this punishment, the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu were in a perfect state of preservation. (See chap. 10:2.) To effect this the criminal was put into dung up to his knees, a soft cloth containing a hard one was then tied around his throat, while the two witnesses who had secured his sentence drew tighter by the two cords till the criminal opened his mouth, when molten lead was poured down his throat, thus burning him to death. Hence the ancient Chaldee Version renders it here, "they shall be burnt with fire, with melted lead in their mouth."

Please refer to 19:9-30 for a careful description of the sins for which the penalty is here given.

## FACT QUESTIONS 20:9-21

471. Children could curse parents and not be put to death if they cursed in a particular way. How?
472. This is a very serious sin. Explain.
473. What is meant or suggested by the words "his blood shall be upon him"?
474. How was it decided that the death penalty should be by strangling?
475. Why use such a strange manner of burning with fire?

## EXHORTATION TO FAITHFULNESS 20:22-26

### TEXT 20:22-26

22 Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all mine ordinances, and do them; that the land, whither I bring you to dwell



therein, vomit you not out.

- 23 And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.
- 24 But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey: I am Jehovah your God, who hath separated you from the peoples.
- 25 Ye shall therefore make a distinction between the clean beast and the unclean, and between the unclean fowl and the clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by bird, or by anything wherewith the ground teemeth, which I have separated from you as unclean.
- 26 And ye shall be holy unto me: for I, Jehovah, am holy, and have set you apart from the peoples, that ye should be mine.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:22-26

463. This seems to be a very appropriate time to call for faithfulness to God and His laws. Why?
464. These laws were a preparation for living. Where? When?
465. If God described the land as "flowing with milk and honey" it would indeed be so. Was this adequate reason for obedience to His laws? Discuss.
466. How could Israel "make themselves detestable" or "make your souls abominable" by bird or by "anything wherewith the ground teemeth"?
467. God really wants a "set apart" people. Is this true today? Discuss.

#### PARAPHRASE 20:22-26

You must obey all of My laws and ordinances so that I will not throw you out of your new land. You must not follow the customs of the nations I cast out before you, for they do all these things I have warned you against; that is the reason I abhor them. I have promised you their land; I will give it to you to

possess it. It is a land "flowing with milk and honey." I am the Lord your God who has made a distinction between you and the peoples of other nations. You shall therefore make a distinction between the birds and animals I have given you permission to eat and those you may not eat. You shall not contaminate yourselves and make yourselves hateful to Me by eating any animal or bird which I have forbidden, though the land teem with them. You shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy, and I have set you apart from all other peoples, to be Mine.

vs. 22-26 There is a temporal advantage in keeping the statutes and ordinances of God. The land of Canaan will be yours if you do and it will vomit you out if you do not. Cf. 18:28. This is an oft repeated word in Leviticus and the rest of the Pentateuch because Israel was so dull of hearing, or perhaps the allurements of sin were so near. Again and again the several distinctive differences are emphasized: (1) you have one God; they have many; your God is alive and responsive, theirs are dead and dumb; (2) you have one wife with whom you have sexual relations—in this relationship is the highest happiness—they live to satisfy their own lusts—but such lust creates its own appetite and is never full. Self-destruction and misery are in their way; (3) you have a different diet; it will keep you strong and healthy; you will live a long and happy life. They eat to their own self-destruction. I created you and the food you eat, won't you please follow my menu?

In these ways—and others—you are separated from other nations, *i.e.* "sanctified" or "holy," not that you are by nature any better than other people, but you could be an example of what I want for all mankind. You belong to Me. I love you deeply and dearly; if I didn't I wouldn't take such an interest in all of your life.

#### FACT QUESTIONS 20:22-26

476. What was the temporal advantage in obeying Jehovah?  
 477. Name and discuss the three distinctive differences of Israel to other nations.  
 478. In what ways was Israel "sanctified" or "holy"?

## WARNING AGAINST UNFAITHFULNESS 20:27

## TEXT 20:27

27 A man also or a 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.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS 20:27

468. Isn't this verse out of place? Should it follow verse 6?  
 469. Show a possible connection to verse 26.

## PARAPHRASE 20:27

A medium or a wizard—whether man or woman—shall surely be stoned to death. They have caused their own doom.

## COMMENT 20:27

It is suggested that the first word of verse 27 could be "but" a man, etc. In this way we could see the connection of the verses. Because Israel is God's holy nation such a sin could not be permitted. The wizard usurps the position of God. To Him alone is the future known. In 19:31 the consulting of such persons is forbidden. In 20:6 God sets His face against them; in this verse the physical punishment is made known. Women are included in this verse because they were so frequently involved. Cf. Exodus 22:28; I Sam. 28:7; Acts 16:16.

## FACT QUESTIONS 20:27

479. How relate this verse to the previous section?  
 480. Why was this such a serious sin?  
 481. Why mention women?