

Leviticus 17-20• You shall be holy

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Leviticus chapter 17. As we get into these chapters, you're going to find a phrase that is repeated in each section. And that is the words, "*And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying.*" And that tells us that these are messages directly from the Lord God to Moses, and to be given to the people.

And what you're going to find in these chapters is probably some fairly revolutionary information for the people of Israel who had come out of living in Egypt for 400 years. Good grief, we haven't even been a nation that long. The United States hasn't been a nation as long as Israel lived in Egypt under, well, I don't think they were under bondage the whole time by any means. But they were living there and they were involved in the nation of Egypt in terms of its paganistic ways.

Egypt was a pagan nation. They had a multiplicity of gods that they worshipped. And when you live among pagan idolatry, and pagan philosophy, and pagan practice, it rubs off. That's all there is to it. It rubs off. You will be influenced by it. And the nation of Israel was greatly influenced by it.

And so God is speaking really specifically in these chapters about a whole paradigm shift of morality for the people of Israel. Things that they would have thought were just fine, they're going to learn. are fundamentally and morally wrong. And things that they saw practiced all the time under Egyptian rules, and philosophies, and so forth, they're going to discover are, in fact immoral.

And so this is, you can imagine these people hearing these things for the first time. And I wonder if while they were hearing Moses giving these, I wonder if people kind of would look at each other and go, well, I guess we're going to have to change. A lot of changes coming down the pike here.

But you don't change people overnight. When you... Just because you walk up to somebody and go, oh, by the way, that thing you're doing, that's wrong. Don't do that anymore. That's very, very, difficult to change someone's habitual behavior or what someone has been raised in perhaps all their lives. And suddenly you make them aware of the fact that this is wrong. This is immoral. You shouldn't be doing that. Wow. Really? I've been doing that for 70 plus years or whatever the case might be.

And one of the things that we're going to see here in these chapters, and I don't mean to delay going into it here, because we've got a lot to get through, but He's going to be talking about things that some of which are based in universal morality. And what I mean by that is that they're morally true, regardless of who you are, what time you live in, what people you are, or what covenant you're under. Right?

There are certain things that God says to Israel that is related specifically to the Mosaic Covenant, which was between God and Israel, not between God and the church. Right? There are certain rights, there are certain things that Israel was told to keep, that we were not.

In fact, Jesus is the fulfillment of those things, but there are other things that He's going to bring out in this chapter that relates to things that are unique to the Jews, and to the covenant that God made with them through Moses. And it is very important to know the difference.

I get questions all the time. People will, because they have not recognized that difference between what God was saying to Israel under their covenant, and what God was saying to Israel as a moral statement of right and wrong, people will say, well, what about this? I read this in the Bible.

And we're going to deal with one of them tonight. It has to do with tattoos. You ready? Yeah. No, we're not going to be throwing any condemnation on anybody but what we are going to do is we're going to look at a passage where God makes reference to tattoos. But we're going to look at it and we're going to see why He said it. And what He said, and what was actually being forbidden. And I'll just give you a little spoiler. He was not talking about the kind of tattoos people get today. Okay. Anyway, there's just a lot of things you just got to, you got to discern correctly. Okay.

Now, as we get into chapter 17, because God had already established the sacrificial system with Aaron and his sons in previous chapters, we went through all of that. He's going to speak now to the people of Israel about bypassing that system. In other words, just because, here's the deal.

God had established this whole sacrificial thing, told Aaron and his sons how to deal with it. But what if somebody said, well, I don't really want to go through those guys? I want to do my own sacrifices. I don't, I just can't be bothered by all the, rigmarole and ritual. And if I want to sacrifice to God, I'll sacrifice to God myself. I'll just do it myself. Take a, slaughter an animal and I'll do what I

want, so what then? Well, He hasn't dealt with that up to this point, so this is the point where He does.

Leviticus chapter 17, read along with me, or follow along, I should say, as I read. It says, *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (there's that repetitive statement we'll see again and again) ² “Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the people of Israel and say to them, This is the thing that the LORD has commanded. ³ If any one of the house of Israel kills an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or kills it outside the camp, (and this is obviously for sacrificial purposes) ⁴ and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it as a gift to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD, bloodguilt shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people.” (ESV)*

This was a serious issue. *“⁵ This is to the end (and here's where some of this is going to be explained) that the people of Israel may bring their sacrifices that they sacrifice in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD, to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the LORD. ⁶ And the priest shall throw the blood on the altar of the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting and burn the fat for a pleasing aroma to the LORD.”*

But here's something else that he wanted them to stop doing. Look at verse 7. *“So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they whore. (and that word, whore means to run after in a religiously unfaithful attitude. All right. He says) This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations.”*

So you can see what's behind this. The people were not just wanting to go out and do their own sacrifices but they were also, they were still entrenched in paganism. They were sacrificing to these goat idols, which He refers to here as *“goat demons.”* And He says, this has to stop. This has to stop. He's wanting to put an end to all of that.

He says in verse 8, *“And you shall say to them, Any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn (that means travel) among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice ⁹ and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it to the LORD, (again) that man shall be cut off from his people.”* Once again, this was a serious issue.

Now remember something, people. He's not just giving a rule and saying you got to follow my rules or I'm going to be really upset. Remember, all of this

foreshadows what is to come. The whole sacrificial system foreshadows the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The perfect sacrifice of God, which will ultimately be brought forth as He gives His life on the cross. Bypassing that, is really tantamount to someone today saying, well, I don't really, I'm not putting any of my hope or trust in the work of Jesus on the cross. I'm just, I'm going to do my own thing. And I believe that God's going to accept me anyway. It doesn't really matter. You do that. You decide that you're going to believe in Jesus, put your trust in Him. Fine, great. You do that, but I'm going to do my own thing.

Well, there's a problem with that. Jesus came and elucidated that for you and me in the Gospels, where He said, no man comes to the Father except by Me. (John 14:6) Right? I am the way. I'm not a way. I am the way. I'm the only way. I am the door for the sheep. If you don't go through the door for the sheep you don't get in.

He's responding to this same attitude, if you will. Where people say, well, I'm just, yeah, well, we'll sacrifice to the Lord, but I will go out in the wilderness and we'll sacrifice to our pagan gods too. No, we're not going to do that. We're not going to add, we're not going to put things together like that.

Now in the following, verses 10 and following, the Lord is going to give some directions for understanding the importance and the sanctity of blood. And if you have a doctor, nurse, or any medical person you can talk to, if you simply ask them, what's the importance of blood? Man, I tell you, just sit down and you'll get ready for a speech. Because we know so much more than we even used to.

But God is here hundreds of years, hundreds and hundreds, thousands of years earlier than medical science found out these things, is giving us the fact that the importance of blood.

Verse 10, it says, *“If any one of the house of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them eats any blood, ...”* And when it refers to eating blood for the most part it's referring to the eating of meat from animals that have not been properly bled. Now I say that, but I need to also say not to, for the purpose of being gross, but some pagan rituals involved drinking the blood of their enemies. Yeah. There was some of that going on too. Sorry. But so this is mostly referring to an animal that has not been bled properly.

He says here in the middle of verse 10, *“I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people.”* And then, now the Lord is going to go on and give the reason for this command.

Verse 11. *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, ...”* Tell that to the doctors in the 1600s, 1700s, that thought that bleeding a patient was a good idea. Yeah, that was not a good idea. That was a bad, they used to use leeches and just make incisions because they had to get the bad blood out. Well, that was so dumb and God is ruining that right here. He says, no, your life is in the blood.

And He says here, *“and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”* And that course speaks of the life of Jesus that will ultimately be given for the sins of mankind.

Verse 12 says, *“Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.”*

And then Lord's going to give some directions for properly bleeding an animal here before it's consumed. And He says, ¹³ *“Any one also of the people of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.”* Alright. And again, the reason is.

Verse 14. *“For the life of every creature is its blood: (He says it again) its blood is its life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. ¹⁵ And every person who eats what dies of itself (in other words, it wasn't killed, it just died) or what is torn by beasts, (killed by another animal) whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean. ¹⁶ But if he does not wash them or bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity.”*

And that just is a repetition of what we earlier read about how they were to deal with touching a carcass, whether human or animal.

Chapter 18. It says, *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, I am (YAHWEH, the Lord) the LORD your God. ³ You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. (and He goes on to say) You shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴ You shall follow my rules and keep my statutes...”*

We don't use that word statutes today much. The NIV simply says, *“do not follow their practices.”* And that's the essence of what the Lord is saying.

Now you notice what He's saying here. This is, again, this is the revelation of God to the people of Israel in the wilderness. Don't do like you saw done in Egypt. And I'm taking you to a land that is involved, that is filled with Canaanites, and I want you to rid the land of them, but meanwhile, don't do what they do. You be different. We're going to talk about that here in a bit.

He says in verse 4, look at this, *“You shall follow my rules and keep my statutes (or practices) and walk in them. I am the LORD your God. ⁵ You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.”*

And now he's going to go on and he's going to talk about some of these things, but he's going to use some interesting language. Starts in verse 6. *“None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness. I am the LORD.”*

Now, you're going to see this term, uncovered nakedness, many times through these verses. And it's a rather interesting one, but it's not spoken in the way that we would speak of it today. If I said somebody's nakedness was uncovered, you'd probably think, well, somebody took their clothes off. Well, that's not the way it's referred to. And essentially, in verse 6, it refers to having sexual relations.

But as we continue reading, it even can get confusing because, for example, look with me in verse 7. It says, *“You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness.”*

Now you read that at point, blank value and it's like, the ESV did a really good job of giving you this verse word for word. They really did. But that doesn't mean it's easily understandable. In fact, if you read this in the NIV, let me put this up on the screen for you. It goes like this.

Leviticus 18:7 (NIV84)

“Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her.”

“Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her.”

And it's talking about, a stepmother, essentially. And because, some men had several wives and so that sort of deal happened. Well, you can see here that up

on the screen, the passage I quoted to you from the NIV, is pretty easy to understand. But what they had to do to make it easy to understand is they had to essentially sacrifice a strict word for word approach to the verse. And I've told you guys this before, I hear people saying all the time, I want a Bible that is the most word for word I can possibly get. I want the strictest word for word translation that's out there. And it's like okay great knock yourself out.

It doesn't mean it's going to be easy to understand and it doesn't mean that you're going to be able to grasp what that means all the time because word for word is not the way we talk. We're talking about ancient language here and the way they said things. And they used euphemisms, and idioms, and things that we just, we don't use. They're not part of our language. They're not part of our vocabulary.

Anyway, what He's talking about is don't have sexual relations with your step mom. Don't do that. But it says it by saying, don't uncover the. *“You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; ...”* That doesn't really make sense, but you can see what's going on here.

Alright, so now that what follows here, verses 8 and following are some, what I guess we would call them clarifying remarks concerning the various close relatives and how the Lord forbade sexual relations. Because these were things that in Egypt, anything goes. Anything goes. Sister, brother, mom, didn't matter, aunt, uncle.

He says, *“You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. ⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home.”* That'd be like a half-sister or something.

“¹⁰ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your son's daughter or of your daughter's daughter, for their nakedness is your own nakedness.” And that's just, again, that's an ancient way of saying, you're all part of the same biological family, so don't do that. You're a close relative.

“¹¹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, brought up in your father's family, since she is your sister. ¹² You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's relative. ¹³ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's relative. ¹⁴ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother, that is,

you shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt.” See how we're saying things here?

“¹⁵ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness. ¹⁶ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. ¹⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, and you shall not take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter to uncover her nakedness; they are relatives; it is depravity. ¹⁸ And you shall not take a woman as a rival wife to her sister, uncovering her nakedness while her sister is still alive.”

I think we've covered, you know, pretty much the whole family unit here. Just in case somebody's going, yeah, but what about?

Verse 19. *“You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness. (in other words, during her monthly cycle) ²⁰ And you shall not lie sexually with your neighbor's wife and so make yourself unclean with her. (that would be adultery) ²¹ You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.”* He's going to talk more about Molech a little bit later. We'll get into it.

Verse 22. *“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. (that's called homosexuality) ²³ And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, (that's called bestiality) neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.*

²⁴ *“Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, (in other words, these are all happening in Canaan) ²⁵ and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. ²⁶ But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you ²⁷ (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), ²⁸ lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. ²⁹ For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people. ³⁰ So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am (YAHWEH) the LORD your God.”*

Now, see, these are the universal, moral Principles that God has established. These have nothing to do with time, and culture, and covenant. These are just moral things. This is, He's talking about immorality and of the worst kind.

Alright, chapter 19. *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”* And I want you to stop there for just a moment.

The reason I want you to pause there is because there's a lot of people who struggle with this statement that is made here by the Lord. And the reason they struggle with it is because they think God is asking the impossible.

When God says, I am holy, so you be holy. And the reason they have such a problem with it is because their definition of the word holy means flawless. It means perfect. Pure, utterly pure.

And so what they see in this verse is the Lord saying, I am utterly pure, so you be utterly pure. And they're like, I don't get it. There's no way I can't do this. There's no way I could possibly be that way. God is asking for too much. We know that people think that way, that's the way they define holy, the word holy. Because that's what...

They'll talk about people sometimes if they think they're self-righteous, or they're better than other people, and they'll say things like, oh, well, he thinks he's so holy. What are they saying? He thinks he's above us. He's better than us. Have you ever heard somebody say, he has such a holier than thou attitude? You know what they're saying. The guy thinks he's something, he's better than anybody else.

Well, if you look up the word, holy in a Hebrew dictionary, which I did just for reflection, you're going to get all the generally expected results. It actually can be translated many different ways.

But the essence of the word, holy as it is given both in the Hebrew and then later on in the Greek, which is what the New Testament was translated from, is that it, the essence of it is, to be set apart. Okay, that's what holy means. To be set apart. And if you had to bring it down to a single definition, a single word definition, it would be, different. Different, right?

And that's essentially what God is saying. I am different, so you be different. But, we humans, we've kind of made the word, different to mean weird or strange. You might have heard somebody say, did you meet Carl over in

accounting? Somebody goes, yeah, he's different. Right? And you know what they mean by that, right? Yeah, he's a little strange. He's a strange bird, let me tell you.

You go around telling people that, God says He's different and He wants us to be different. They're probably going to look at you sideways. Well, essentially, it's true. That's what God is saying. But I don't, rather than using the word different, you guys know I like to use the word, other. God is saying, I am other.

And when he says, I the Lord your God am holy, or I the Lord your God am other, He's essentially saying, He's not like anything or anyone else. God is not like you. Okay? He's not like you, okay. And you're not like Him.

Yes, you were created in His image. Now that's a fallen image. And God is working in our lives to bring us back into a closer image of our Lord Jesus, but He's not like you. He's not like me. He's other. And that's a very important thing.

Now, when you say God is other, and He's not like you, He's not, and you're not like Him, that makes God a little hard to relate to, but that's one of the reasons He sent His Son to become one of us so that we could relate to Him. But that's another message.

What's interesting is that what God is saying to his people here, in Israel, is what He's saying to you and me as well. What he's saying to us as Christians, living in the present day. He's saying, you shall be other, for I am other. And when He says that, he's not telling us to be, well, how do I want to say this? I got to be careful how I say it, so it's not confusing.

He's telling us to be other than the world around us. Just like He told the people of Israel, or what He's been telling them all along. Here's what Egypt was like. You guys know that. You lived there a long time. Here's what Canaan is like. You're going there. You're going to find out that it's going to be a lot like Egypt.

I want you to be other. I want you to be different. I want you to live different lives. I want you to think differently. I want you to act differently. I want you to speak differently than the people that you knew in Egypt and the people that you're going to get to know in Canaan. I want you to be other. And here's why. Because I am other. And I want you to be like Me. I want you to be different.

Now, as we go on here in verses 3 and following, the Lord is going to tell His people how to be other than their culture under their covenant. And He says,

“Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and you shall keep my Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.”

And we've talked in the past about the Sabbath regulations and why those were so strongly commanded to the people of Israel. And we talked about the fact that the Sabbath is a picture of what we do when we put our faith in Jesus Christ. Because what was the Sabbath all about? It was about resting, right? That's the very simple answer.

The Sabbath was about resting. He told them one day out of seven, rest. Rest on the last day of the week, the seventh day. Right? That's what He told Israel to do. And that was a picture, a foreshadowing of the command that we've been given to rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

When you put your faith, and this is what the writer of Hebrews goes into great detail to talk about in the Book of Hebrews. He talks about the fact that there is still yet another Sabbath rest for the people of God. And when we enter by faith into a confidence in what Jesus did for us on the cross, we enter into that rest.

And you could, instead of saying to somebody, are you saved? Are you a Christian? Here's what you could say. Are you resting in the finished work of Jesus on the cross? That's a way of asking somebody if they're a born again believer. Are you resting in the finished work of Jesus? That is our Sabbath today, right?

We don't keep the Sabbath like the Jews kept the Sabbath. They kept one day as a physical day of rest. We keep every day as a spiritual attitude of rest saying, I am resting. I'm not working for my salvation. I'm resting in what Jesus did on the cross, right? If somebody's trying to be a good person to get to heaven, they're not resting. They're working.

And that's why God said in the Old Testament that the Jews, don't work on the Sabbath. You work on the Sabbath, there's a serious consequence. Because He was training his people to understand what it meant to rest and so forth. So this was a very important thing for them to do. It was one of the ways they would be different from the other peoples.

He says in verse 4, *“Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: (that was very common back in that time. He says) I am (YAHWEH) the LORD your God.”*

Verse 5. *“When you offer a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, you shall offer it so that you may be accepted. ⁶ It shall be eaten the same day you offer it or on the day after, and anything left over until the third day shall be burned up with fire. (and then He says) ⁷ If it is eaten at all on the third day, it is tainted; it will not be accepted, ⁸ and everyone who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned what is holy (again, different, set apart) to the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from his people.”*

Now, in verses 9 through the end of the chapter, the Lord's going to deal with really commands about caring for your neighbor, taking care of each other. A lot of this stuff has been, don't do this because it's an abomination in the eyes of God. But what if something is wrong toward my brother? Or what if my brother needs my help or whatever like that? We're going to deal with some of those things.

Verse 9. *“When you reap the harvest of your land, (in other words, when you bring the harvest in) you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest.”* In other words, don't go back over the field a second time.

“¹⁰ And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. (the ones that were so ripe they just hit the ground. He says) You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: (why?) I am the LORD your God.”

It's Me, it's who's telling you. This was God's way of encouraging those who have to help those who didn't have.

Verse 11, *“You shall not steal; you shall not deal falsely; you shall not lie to one another. ¹² You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.*

¹³ “You shall not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages of a hired worker shall not remain with you all night until the morning.”

And what that's all about is that people back in those days were paid at the end of each day. Can you imagine getting your, getting money at the end of every day's work? And that's when you would go and you would buy food for your family. And so He says, don't hang on to a worker's wages. They worked for you that day. Make sure you pay them at the end of the day. Give them their fair due.

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

Notice He says, *“you shall fear your God.”* He's basically telling His people to remember that God holds people accountable for their actions, for their words. And so when He says fear Me, that's what that means. Know this, I'll hold you accountable so don't do those things. I see those things, don't do that.

Verse 15, *“You shall do no injustice in court. (don't lie on the stand, don't falsify information, don't take advantage of people) You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, (in other words, don't give deference to those who are popular just because they're popular) but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶ You shall not go around as a slanderer (I think the King James calls it a tale bearer) among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.”*

Wow. Don't slander your neighbor. Wouldn't it be something if politicians took that one seriously? We'd have a whole new race on our hands, wouldn't we?

Verse 17, *“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.”* In other words, he did something wrong to you, but instead of going to reason with him, you just went back and tried to get even, and you entered into sin, even though he was originally at fault.

Verse 18, *“You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: (wow, Jesus talked about that, didn't He? He says,) I am the LORD.”*

Remember when Jesus was asked, what are the most important commandments? Love the Lord your God, and then love your neighbor as yourself. And somebody spoke up and said, yeah, but who is my neighbor? And that's the way people treat the Word of God. They're always looking for a loophole. That just, that's human nature, I guess. Okay.

Verse 19. *“You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind. You shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor shall you wear a garment of cloth made of two kinds of material.”*

Oh man, I bet some of you guys are sinning right here in this room. You got some mixed stuff going on there in your clothes and stuff. All right, we got to talk about this for a minute.

These prohibitions about not mixing things are so incredibly understood, and they're often quoted by people who want to mock the Bible, or mock you for believing in the Bible, and they'll even point to people and say, are you doing that? Are you wearing clothing of mixed fabrics? Because...

Well, first of all, they don't understand that you're not under the law of Moses. That's the first thing. But the second thing they don't understand is that all of this is about paganism at its root. All of it. And what God was saying by all of these things is, don't live like the pagans, because the paganism, you got to know this. Paganism at its root is very superstitious. Okay. You know people who are superstitious? Well, paganism is the ultimate superstitious sort of belief.

And the pagans believed that by mixing things, they gave them a, it would provide a, like a magical outcome. Mixing animals, mixing fabric, mixing this or that, or the other thing. And somehow it would work in their favor to bring about a better outcome of whatever they wanted in life or something like that.

What the Lord was doing here, He's forbidding the participation of his people in the influence and practice of paganism, and paganistic thinking. And He's basically saying this, don't be superstitious, you bonehead. Don't do that. Don't think that by doing this or doing that, that it's going to have some positive outcome for you. Because that's not how things work. And those are things that people just believe because they want to believe them, but there's no basis in fact. Okay. That's what's going on here.

Now if somebody ever comes mocking to you and brings up these verses, you can explain, not that they're going to listen, but at least you can explain what's going on here.

Verse 20, *“If a man lies sexually with a woman who is a slave, assigned to another man and not yet ransomed or given her freedom, a distinction shall be made. They shall not be put to death, (that’s the distinction, why?) because she was not free;”*

And the assumption there is that she didn't have a choice. Because many times, if you were the property of someone else, you could be told to do something and you had no choice in the matter. So the Lord is giving a situation here.

But it goes on to say, *“²¹ but he shall bring his compensation to the LORD, to the entrance of the tent of meeting, a ram for a guilt offering. ²² And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before*

the LORD for his sin that he has committed, and he shall be forgiven for the sin that he has committed.”

Now, again, all of this assumes that the man was contrite and repent of the sin. It doesn't mean that if I sleep with some guy's slave girl and then I go, yeah, by the way, here's a ram. Go take care of the ram for me would you, just so I can be forgiven. And I'm going to go do it again. And I, because I got lots of rams to spare in my flock so I'm not worried about this. I can just keep sinning because I got plenty of rams. It's not what's going on here.

It may sound like that at the outset, but there is an assumption that goes along with it that the person is broken and contrite in heart. And that's what we need to understand. You don't just get forgiven because you went, forgive me, Lord.

Remember when you're training your children? We used to do that with our kids. One of them would hit the other one or say something. And so we'd get them together and say, did you do that? Yeah, I did. Okay. Apologize to your sister. I'm sorry. Remember when they would do that? And it's like, oh, that's wonderful. Very, the contrition is just oozing out of your pores. Yeah. You didn't mean it at all. And then the other one goes, I forgive you. Right. Yeah. What happened there? We just went through the rigmarole of doing this forgiveness and apology. And it didn't mean a thing.

And if somebody was to sin like this and to go get a ram and give it to the priest and say, here, do this for me. There's not going to be forgiveness if he's not repentant. God knows the heart and He always sees the heart of an individual, okay?

Verse 23 says, *“When you come into the land and plant any kind of tree for food, then you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. (in other words, don't eat it) Three years it shall be forbidden to you; it must not be eaten.”* Okay?

For the first three years of any tree that's planted they were to allow it to grow without harvesting any of the fruit. Just let it grow. Let it grow and mature.

“²⁴ And in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, (there's the word holy. Again, that means, set apart, and) an offering of praise to the LORD.” In other words, first fruits. On the fourth year are given to the Lord. then in the fifth year, knock yourself out.

And then *“²⁵ ...in the fifth year... (knock yourself out, you can do what you want with the fruit), ...to increase its yield for you: I am the LORD your God.”*

Verse 26, *“You shall not eat any flesh with the blood in it. (we've already talked about this. This is repeated because again, He's talking about the things pagans do. He says) You shall not interpret omens or tell fortunes. 27 You shall not round off the hair on your temples or mar the edges of your beard.”* These were pagan practices.

Oh, look at this, verse 28, *“You shall not make any cuts on your body for the dead or tattoo yourselves: I am the LORD.”* Have you ever heard somebody quote that out of context? I have. What does the Bible say about tattoos? You shall not tattoo yourselves. I am the Lord.

Well, these were pagan ritual practices. That's what they were doing, and it was part of their religious ritual. I mean, God says to us today don't be part of any worldly religious ritual that isn't part of worshipping Me. That's the same thing, right?

Now, we may not do those sorts of things in tattoos today, but they did then. The pagans did, they did all these things. They mixed their fabrics, they mixed animals, they cut the sides of their hair they. They mar the edges of their beard, and they tattooed themselves, and they cut themselves. We know that they cut themselves. They believed that by causing themselves to bleed, they were getting the attention of their deities.

You'll remember that when Elijah was up against the prophets of Baal, during the time of Jezebel and Ahab. He challenged them, remember? To build an altar, sacrifice an animal, put it on there. And he said, whoever God, rains fire down from heaven to consume the altar, he's God. And so he says, you go first. That's a great plan.

Anyway, they did it. They sacrificed the animal, put it on the altar. And they started hooping and hollering and nothing happened. And Elijah started, teasing them, mocking them. Maybe your God is in the bathroom. And all this and that. And it's literally what it says. Maybe he's relieving himself. And he's teasing, he's mocking them all. And so it says they started cutting themselves and the blood started flowing. And nothing happened. This was a pagan practice. But it went along with tattoos and all the other stuff.

So the idea here. Here's the point guys, there are people, it's interesting, here we are, October 30th, when we're doing this. Tomorrow's Halloween, and then comes Christmas later on. And there are people, and some of them might even be in this room, who believe that any participation in like Halloween or even Christmas, you are indulging in pagan practices. Well, I'll agree with you that

Halloween has some very paganistic background, okay? And you need to be aware of that. And this whole focus on death that goes along with Halloween, I don't like it. I'll be honest with you. I don't like driving by somebody's house and seeing skeletons out in their yard. I really don't. It's like, you know what? That's stupid. It's just dumb.

Now, when a little girl comes to my door, dressed as one of the characters in Frozen, and wants candy in her little bag, I'm not going to call her a pagan. And I'm not going to accuse her of paganistic, ritualistic practices. I'm not going to do that. Because she's not involved in paganism.

Halloween may have some paganistic roots, Christmas doesn't period. But it doesn't matter. There are people who convinced that it does and they believe that if you do anything in any holiday that might have some far off distant paganistic sort of thing, you are now involved in paganistic practices.

People, you got to be a pagan to be involved in paganistic practices. That's the thing people just don't get. If you're a Christian and you love Jesus and everything you do is because you love Jesus. It's impossible to be a pagan! You can't! You can't! Anyway, okay, I'll get off my soapbox now.

But that's just the fact of the matter, so and I'm going to get, I'll tell you right now, I'm going to get lots of nasty notes for this. I will. I will. Oh well. It's happened before, it'll happen again.

Verse 29. *“Do not profane your daughter by making her a prostitute, (this was a ritual that pagans did, it was temple prostitutes. He says, don't do that) lest the land fall into prostitution and the land become full of depravity. ³⁰ You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: (where none of that stuff goes on) I am the LORD.”*

And here.

³¹ *“Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; (a necromancer or a medium are those who claim to contact the dead for you. Let me get a hold of uncle Bill for you and we'll ask him his advice. He says) do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God.*

³² *“You shall (oh here's a good one, You shall) stand up before the gray head (isn't that good? I wouldn't have liked this until I got gray. But now I like it. This refers to giving honor to the elderly. And He goes on to say) and honor the*

face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.” In other words, give proper respect to those who've lived a few years longer than you.

Now, this is where we're going to hear more about loving your neighbor. Verse 33, *“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. ³⁴ You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*

³⁵ *“You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measures of length or weight or quantity.”* That's how they determined business transactions in those days. And that's why He goes on to say, *“³⁶ You shall have just balances, (and the word, just there means, correct. Okay. You should, you must have just balances) ... (correct) weights, (and) a... (correct) ephah, and a... (correct) hin: (these are different measurements) I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. ³⁷ And you shall observe all my statutes and all my rules, and do them: I am the LORD.”*

One more quick chapter and then we'll be done. This is an outline of the punishment for some of the offenses that are listed in the earlier chapters. We're going to leave you with a smile here on your face as we talk about punishments.

“The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Say to the people of Israel, Any one of the people of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech (we talked about Molech earlier) shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.”

The pagan worship surrounding the deity of Molech was a particularly heinous practice because it required sacrificing one's children in the fire. We don't really know why. I looked it up. There's a lot of opinions as to why, or I mean, what benefit they were getting out of it from Molech. But we don't really know what the people believed in that sense, but they would do it. And Solomon, the son of David, even did it. Because he was swayed by his wives who were pagans, many of them.

He says, *“³ I myself will set my face against that man and will cut him off from among his people, because he has given one of his children to Molech, to make my sanctuary unclean and to profane my holy name. ⁴ And if the people of the land do at all close their eyes to that man (in other words, they give him a pass) when he gives one of his children to Molech, and do not put him to death, ⁵ then I will set my face against that man and against his clan and will cut them off from among their people, him and all who follow him in whoring after Molech.*

⁶ “If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, (we’ve already learned that was wrong) whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. ⁷ Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, (be other) for I am the LORD your God. ⁸ Keep my statutes and do them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you. (or sets you apart) ⁹ For anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him.” Boy, what a, that's wild. Capital punishment for cursing one's parents.

Verse 10 and following outlines punishments for sexual immorality. “If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. ¹¹ If a man lies with his father's wife, (again, a step mother) he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. ¹² If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed perversion; their blood is upon them. ¹³ If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. ¹⁴ If a man takes a woman and her mother also, it is depravity; he and they shall be burned with fire, that there may be no depravity among you. ¹⁵ If a man lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. ¹⁶ If a woman approaches any animal and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

¹⁷ “If a man takes his sister, a daughter of his father or a daughter of his mother, (a half-sister) and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace, and they shall be cut off in the sight of the children of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness, and he shall bear his iniquity. ¹⁸ If a man lies with a woman during her menstrual period and uncovers her nakedness, he has made naked her fountain, and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from among their people. ¹⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or of your father's sister, for that is to make naked one's relative; they shall bear their iniquity. ²⁰ If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness; they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. ²¹ If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.”

Then verse 22 through the end says, “You shall therefore keep all my statutes and all my rules and do them, that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. ²³ And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I detested them. ²⁴ But I have said to you, ‘You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to

you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. ' I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. ²⁵ You shall therefore separate the clean beast from the unclean, and the unclean bird from the clean. You shall not make yourselves detestable by beast or by bird or by anything with which the ground crawls, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. ²⁶ You shall be holy to me, (in other words, separated unto Me, mine. He says) for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.' In other words, that you should be other.

Then we have this final repetition of a previous prohibition. ²⁷ *"A man or a woman who is a medium or a necromancer shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones; their blood shall be upon them."*

So chapter 20 is really all about the punishments that go along with the various prohibitions that we read earlier. That's where we're going to stop for tonight. We'll pick it up in chapter 21 next time. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for the understanding of right and wrong. We thank You also, Lord, for the discernment to put in place what is given to the nation of Israel uniquely under the covenant that they had with You through Moses. And what is a universal moral law that remains to this day.

And Lord, even in the things that are temporary, we see principles of understanding that help us to grasp the rest of Your Word. And we're thankful for that. Lord God, thank You that You've called us today to be other, to be set apart. For this remains to the people of God throughout all time.

Lord, help us, we pray, to truly be different, to truly be other, to be set apart, to not live like the world in which we live, but to be different. To understand the difference between what is right and what is wrong, what is holy and what is unholy, what is good and what is bad.

We ask, Lord God, that you would increase our discernment and our understanding and guide us, Lord, in all of these things, knowing, Lord, as we do, that apart from Your Holy Spirit, we cannot live this set apart life. But we believe, God, that you've given us Your Spirit for this very reason, that we might be empowered to live the life that You've called us to live. And we ask You to enable us each and every day to live for You, to serve You, to love You and to love those around us. We pray all of these things in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer, amen.