



# THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

## Chapters 19 – 20

### *"Various Laws for Preservation & Protection of a Nation"*

#### CHAPTER 19 – "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy"

(v1-2) God calls the children of Israel to be "HOLY," what does it mean to be holy and what about today?

- The word HOLY speaks of moral and ethical wholeness or perfection; freedom from moral evil. Holiness is one of the essential elements of God's nature required of His people. Holiness may also be rendered "sanctification" or "godliness." The word holy denotes that which is "sanctified" or "set apart" for divine service. God instructed Moses to "consecrate Aaron and his sons" (Exodus 29:9) to the priesthood. The children of Israel were admonished to "remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). The "Holy of Holies" (or "Holiest of All") was the most sacred place in the desert tabernacle and in the Temple at Jerusalem (Exodus 26:33; Hebrews 9:1-9).

Elisha was called a "holy man of God" (2 Kings 4:9). Herod feared John the Baptist, "knowing that he was a just and holy man" (Mark 6:20). God's high expectations of His people flow out of His own holy nature: "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6); "sanctify yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 20:7).

Jesus was the very personification of holiness; He reinforced God's demands for holiness by insisting that His disciples must have a higher quality of righteousness than that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). The theme of sanctification or growing into God's likeness and being consecrated for His use, is prominent throughout the Bible.

Like Jesus, the apostles taught that sanctification, or true holiness, expressed itself in patient and loving service while awaiting the Lord's return. Peter urged the suffering Christians of the Roman Empire to follow God's example of holiness in their trials: "As He who has called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:15). Paul's prayer for the saints at Thessalonica is timeless in its application to the church and individual believers: "And may the Lord make you increase in love and abound in love...so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (1 Thessalonians 3:12-13). (from Nelson's Bible Dictionary)

(v3) "Honor your father and mother" – In the New Testament we read from Ephesians 6:1-3 - *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."*

**- What about the Sabbaths for the Christian?**

**Paul answers this question in Colossians 2:11-23 - In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations — 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.**

**(v4) We are not to worship idols, statues, or foreign gods.**

**In 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 - Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. 18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.**

**- What else is idolatry?**

**Colossians 3:5 - "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."**

Jesus said in Luke 12:13-21 - *Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." 14 But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" 15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

Someone who tries to play the balancing act of serving both God and earthly idols is doomed to fail. We receive a very clear warning about this in Matthew 6:24: *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

Jesus said, *"For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matt 16:26; Mark 8:36; Luke 9:25).*

Matthew 6:20-21 - *"But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Paul exhorts believers in Colossians 3:1-2 - *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth."*

(v5-8) Rules for the "peace offering" – This sacrificial offering was also called a heave offering and a wave offering. This was a bloody offering presented to God. Part of the offering was eaten by the priest (representing God's acceptance) and part was eaten by the worshiper and his guests (non-officiating priests or Levites and the poor).

(v9-10) Make provisions for the less fortunate – Leave food for the poor.

(v11-12) Maintain proper ethics, integrity, and honor before God and for His holy name.

(v13) Establish proper wages - Colossians 3:22-4:1 – *Bondservants (employees), obey in all things your masters (employers) according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.*

(v14) Take care of those who have a disability.

(v15-16) Equal justice for all!

- Don't be a Talebearer - A person who spreads idle rumors or gossip that is likely to cause trouble or harm.

(v17-18) Jesus taught on several of these topics in Matthew 5:43-45 - "*You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*"

(v19) Listen to Whitelaw commentary.

(v20-22) This seems to be dealing with an immoral relationship during where she has been spoken for, but no payment has been made. This event could possibly be between two slaves. It is a sin punishable with scourging, but not death and a *trespass offering* was to be given.

There is a tendency to look at slavery as something of the past. But it is estimated that there are today over 27 million people in the world who are subject to slavery: forced labor, sex trade, inheritable property, etc.

As those who have been redeemed from the slavery of sin, followers of Jesus Christ should be the foremost champions of ending human slavery in the world today. The question arises, though, why does the Bible not speak out strongly against slavery? Why does the Bible, in fact, seem to support the practice of human slavery? Slave ownership was a common practice long before the time the Mosaic Law was given. So, the law neither instituted slavery nor ended it; rather, the law regulated it. It gave instructions on how slaves should be treated but did not outlaw slavery altogether.

In Bible times, slavery was more of a social status. People sold themselves as slaves when they could not pay their debts or provide for their family. In New Testament times, sometimes doctors, lawyers, and even politicians were slaves of someone else. Some people actually chose to be slaves so as to have all their needs provided for by their master.

Hebrews with Hebrew slaves. The law allowed for Hebrew men and women to sell themselves into slavery to another Hebrew. They could only serve for six years, however. In the seventh year, they were to be set free (Exodus 21:2). This arrangement amounted to what we might call indentured servanthood. And the slaves were to be treated well: "Do not make them work as slaves. They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you" (Leviticus 25:39-40). The law also specified that, "when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the LORD your God has blessed you" (Deuteronomy 15:13-14). The freed slave had the option of staying with his master and becoming a "servant for life" (Exodus 21:5-6). (from *Hard Sayings of the Bible*)

(v23-25) Rules for newly planted fruit trees.

The wisdom of this law is very striking. Every gardener will teach us not to let fruit trees bear in their earliest years, but to pluck off the blossoms; and for this reason, that they will thus thrive the better, and bear more abundantly afterwards. The very expression, *“to regard them as uncircumcised,”* suggests the propriety of pinching them off; I do not say cutting them off, because it is generally the hand, and not a knife, that is employed in this operation.

(v26-28) These were heathen practices for the worship of their gods.

(v29) Do not prostitute your daughter, which produces harlotry in the land and wickedness.

(v30) Israel shall keep its Sabbaths.

(v31) *“Give no regard to mediums or familiar spirits, do not seek after them”* - Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27, 31; and Deuteronomy 18:9-14 refer to *“mediums and familiar spirits”* and forbids being involved with them, as they are an abomination to the Lord. A medium is one who acts as a liaison to supposedly contact or communicate with the dead on behalf of the living. In reality mediums are contacting demons who convince the mediums that they are “familiar” and can be trusted and believed. The practices associated with mediums and familiar spirits were banned in Israel, and the punishment for practicing such things was death.

Familiar spirits and spirit guides are under the control of their master, Satan. They influence people to spread lies and deceit in order to thwart the kingdom of God. To knowingly open oneself to the work of demons is an evil thing: *“Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD”* (Deuteronomy 18:10-12a).

One of the most intriguing historical events regarding a medium is with King Saul in 1 Samuel Ch. 28; this medium conjured Samuel, and Saul communicated with the dead prophet. The prophet’s message to Saul was one of doom (verses 17–19), and he died the next day. (rf. 1 Chronicles 10:13-14)

(v32) Honor the elderly.

(v33-34) Be kind and compassionate to strangers in the land.

(v35-37) Have integrity in one’s business practices.

### > CHAPTER 20 – “God’s Protection & Provision”

(v1-5) Let’s understand Molech - *Molech* was the national deity of the Ammonites (Leviticus 18:21; Jeremiah 32:35), whose worship was accompanied by the burning of children offered as a sacrifice by their own parents. The god *Molech* also appears in the Old Testament as *Milcom* (2 Kings 23:13; Zephaniah 1:5; Malcham, KJV) and in the New Testament as *Moloch* (Acts 7:43).

In addition to sexual rituals, Moloch worship included child sacrifice, or “passing children through the fire.” It is believed that idols of Moloch were giant metal statues of a man with a bull’s head. Each image had a hole in the abdomen and possibly outstretched forearms that made a kind of ramp to the hole. A fire was lit in or around the statue. Babies were placed in the statue’s arms or in the hole. When a couple sacrificed their firstborn, they believed that Moloch would ensure financial prosperity for the family and future children.



Moloch/Molech worship wasn't limited to Canaan. In North Africa, Moloch was renamed “Kronos.” Kronos migrated to Carthage in Greece, and his mythology grew to include his becoming a Titan and the father of Zeus. Moloch is affiliated with and sometimes equated to Ba'al, although the word *ba'al* was also used to designate any god or ruler.

In Genesis 12 Abraham followed God's call to move to Canaan. Although human sacrifice was not common in Abraham's native Ur, it was well-established in his new land. God later asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Genesis 22:2). But then God distinguished Himself from gods like Moloch. Unlike the native Canaanite gods, Abraham's God abhorred human sacrifice. God commanded Isaac to be spared, and He provided a ram to take Isaac's place (Genesis 22:13). God used this event as an illustration of how He would later provide His own Son to take our place.

Over five hundred years after Abraham, Joshua led the Israelites out of the desert to inherit the Promised Land. God knew that the Israelites were immature in their faith and easily distracted from worshiping the one true God (Exodus 32). Before the Israelites had even entered Canaan, God warned them not to participate in Moloch worship (Leviticus 18:21) and repeatedly told them to destroy those cultures that worshiped Moloch. The Israelites didn't heed God's warnings. Instead, they incorporated Moloch worship into their own traditions. Even Solomon, the wisest king, was swayed by this cult and built places of worship for Moloch and other gods (1 Kings 11:1-8). Moloch worship occurred in the "high places" (1 Kings 12:31) as well as a narrow ravine outside Jerusalem called the Valley of Hinnom (2 Kings 23:10).

(v6-7) This is the judgment against those seeking mediums and spiritists.

(v8-27) These sins are similar to Leviticus Chapter 18 as the judgments are included.

> In conclusion, as we look to the end times, even in "The Great Tribulation" we see the wickedness of humanity in Revelation 9:18-21 - By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed — by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm. 20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

And in Revelation 21:6-9 - And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."