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LEVITICUS 20:1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

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Of giving seed to Molech, and the punishment of this crime, Lev 20:1-5. Of consulting wizards, etc., Lev 20:6-8. Of disrespect to parents, Lev 20:9. Of adultery, Lev 20:10. Of incestuous mixtures, Lev 20:11, Lev 20:12. Bestiality, Lev 20:13-16. Different cases of incest and uncleanness, Lev 20:17-21. Exhortations and promises, Lev 20:22-24. The difference between clean and unclean animals to be carefully observed, Lev 20:25. The Israelites are separated from other nations, that they may be holy, Lev 20:26. A repetition of the law against wizards and them that have familiar spirits, Lev 20:27.

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LEVITICUS 20:2 "Moreover, you shall tell the children of Israel, 'Anyone of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who live as foreigners in Israel, who gives any of his seed to Molech; he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones.'

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#### Verse 2

That giveth any of his seed unto Molech - To what has been said in the note on Lev 18:21 (note), we may add, that the rabbins describe this idol, who was probably a representative or emblematical personification of the solar influence, as made of brass, in the form of a man, with the head of an ox; that a fire was kindled in the inside, and the child to be sacrificed to him was put in his arms, and roasted to death. Others say that the idol, which was hollow, was divided into seven compartments within; in one of which they put flour, in the second turtle-doves, in the third a ewe, in the fourth a ram, in the fifth a calf, in the sixth an ox, and in the seventh a child, which, by heating the statue on the outside, were all burnt alive together. I question the whole truth of these statements, whether from Jewish or Christian rabbins. There is no evidence of all this in the sacred writings. And there is but presumptive proof, and that not very strong, that human sacrifices were at all offered to Molech by the Jews. The passing through the fire, so frequently spoken of, might mean no more than a simple rite of consecration to the service of this idol. Probably a kind of ordeal was meant, the persons passing suddenly through the flame of a large fire, by which, though they might be burnt or scorched, yet they were neither killed nor consumed. Or they might have passed between two large fires, as a sort of purification. See the notes on Lev 20:14; See the notes on Lev 18:21. Caesar, in his history of the Gallic war, lib. vi., c. 16, mentions a custom of the Druids similar to this. They made an image of wickerwork, enclosed those in it whom they had adjudged to death, and, setting the whole on fire, all were consumed together.

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LEVITICUS 20:3 I also will set my face against that person, and will cut him off from among his people because he has given of his seed to Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.

LEVITICUS 20:4 If the people of the land all hide their eyes from that person, when he gives of his seed to Molech, and don't put him to death;

LEVITICUS 20:5 then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all who play the prostitute after him, to play the prostitute with Molech, from among their people.

LEVITICUS 20:6 “The person that turns to those who are mediums, and to the wizards, to play the prostitute after them, I will even set my face against that person, and will cut him off from among his people.

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Verse 6

Familiar spirits - See the notes on Lev 19:31; and Exo 22:18 (note).

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LEVITICUS 20:7 “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am the LORD your God.

LEVITICUS 20:8 You shall keep my statutes, and do them. I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

LEVITICUS 20:9 “For everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death: he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.

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Verse 9

Curseth his father or his mother - See the notes on Gen 48:12, and Exo 20:12 (note). He who conscientiously keeps the fifth commandment can be in no danger of this judgment. The term ללל' yekallel signifies, not only to curse, but to speak of a person contemptuously and disrespectfully, to make light of; so that all speeches which have a tendency to lessen our parents in the eyes of others, or to render their judgment, piety, etc., suspected and contemptible, may be here included; though the act of cursing, or of treating the parent with injurious and opprobrious language, is that which is particularly intended.

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LEVITICUS 20:10 “The man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, even he who commits adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

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Verse 10

Committeth adultery - To what has been said in the note on See Exo 20:14 (note), we may add, that the word adultery comes from the Latin adulterium, which is compounded of ad, to or with, and alter, another, or, according to Minshieu, of ad alterius forum, he that approaches to another man's bed.

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LEVITICUS 20:11 “The man who lies with his father’s wife has uncovered his father’s nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

LEVITICUS 20:12 “If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have committed a perversion; their blood shall be upon them.

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Verse 12

They have wrought confusion - See Leviticus 18, and especially the note on Lev 18:6 (note).

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LEVITICUS 20:13 "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 shall be upon them.

LEVITICUS 20:14 "If a man takes a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burned with fire, both he and they; that there may be no wickedness among you.

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#### Verse 14

They shall be burnt with fire - As there are worse crimes mentioned here, (see Lev 20:11 and Lev 20:17), where the delinquent is ordered simply to be put to death, or to be cut off, it is very likely that the crime mentioned in this verse was not punished by burning alive, but by some kind of branding, by which they were ever after rendered infamous. I need not add that the original, **באש ישרפו** *baesh yishrephu*, may, without violence to its grammatical meaning, be understood as above, though in other places it is certainly used to signify a consuming by fire. But the case in question requires some explanation; it is this: a man marries a wife, and afterward takes his mother-in-law or wife's mother to wife also: now for this offense the text says all three shall be burnt with fire, and this is understood as signifying that they shall be burnt alive. Now the first wife, we may safely presume, was completely innocent, and was legally married: for a man may take to wife the daughter if single, or the mother if a widow, and in neither of these cases can any blame attach to the man or the party he marries; the crime therefore lies in taking both. Either, therefore, they were all branded as infamous persons, and this certainly was severe enough in the case of the first wife; or the man and the woman taken last were burnt: but the text says, both he and they; therefore, we should seek for another interpretation of they shall be burnt with fire, than that which is commonly given. Branding with a hot iron would certainly accomplish every desirable end both for punishment and prevention of the crime; and because the Mosaic laws are so generally distinguished by humanity, it seems to be necessary to limit the meaning of the words as above.

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LEVITICUS 20:15 "If a man lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; and you shall kill the animal.

LEVITICUS 20:16 "If a woman approaches any animal, and lies down with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.

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#### Verse 16

If a woman approach unto any beast - We have the authority of one of the most eminent historians in the world, Herodotus, to say that this was a crime not unknown in Egypt; yea, that a case of this nature actually took place while he was there. *Εγενετο δ' εν τω νο μω τουτω επ' εμου τουτο το τερας, Γυναικι Τραγος εμισγετο αναφανδον. Τουτο ες επιδειξιν ανθρωπων απικετο.* - Herod. in *Euterp.*, p. 108. Edit. Gale, Lond. 1679. "In this district, within my own recollection, this portentous business took place: a goat coupled so publicly with a woman that every person knew it," etc. After this, need we wonder that God should have made laws of this nature, when it appears these abominations were not only practiced among the Egyptians, but were parts of a superstitious religious system? This one observation will account for many of those strange prohibitions which we

find in the Mosaic law; others, the reasons of which are not so plain, we should see the propriety of equally, had we ampler historic records of the customs that existed in that country.

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LEVITICUS 20:17 “If a man takes his sister, his father’s daughter, or his mother’s daughter, and sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness; it is a shameful thing. They shall be cut off in the sight of the children of their people. He has uncovered his sister’s nakedness. He shall bear his iniquity.

LEVITICUS 20:18 “If a man lies with a woman having her monthly 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.

LEVITICUS 20:19 “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister, nor of your father’s sister; for he has made his close relative naked. They shall bear their iniquity.

LEVITICUS 20:20 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.

LEVITICUS 20:21 “If a man takes his brother’s wife, it is an impurity. He has uncovered his brother’s nakedness. They shall be childless.

LEVITICUS 20:22 “You shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my ordinances, and do them; that the land, where I am bringing you to dwell, may not vomit you out.

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#### Verse 22

The land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out - See this energetic prosopopoeia explained in the note on Lev 18:25 (note). From this we learn that the cup of the iniquities of the Canaanitish nations was full; and that, consistently with Divine justice, they could be no longer spared.

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LEVITICUS 20:23 You shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I am casting out before you: for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.

LEVITICUS 20:24 But I have said to you, “You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples.

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#### Verse 24

A land that floweth with milk and honey - See this explained Exo 3:8 (note).

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LEVITICUS 20:25 “You shall therefore make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean fowl and the clean: and you shall not make yourselves abominable by animal, or by bird, or by anything with which the ground teems, which I have separated from you as unclean for you.

Verse 25

Between clean beasts and unclean - See the notes on Leviticus 11 (note).

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LEVITICUS 20:26 You shall be holy to me; for I, the LORD, am holy, and have set you apart from the peoples, that you should be mine.

LEVITICUS 20:27 "A man or a woman that is a medium, or is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them."

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Verse 27

A familiar spirit - A spirit or demon, which, by magical rites, is supposed to be bound to appear at the call of his employer. See the notes on Gen 41:8; Exo 7:11 (note), Exo 7:22 (note), Exo 7:25 (note); and Lev 19:31 (note). From the accounts we have of the abominations both of Egypt and Canaan, we may blush for human nature; for wherever it is without cultivation, and without the revelation of God, it is every thing that is vile in principle and detestable in practice. Nor would any part of the habitable globe materially differ from Egypt and Canaan, had they not that rule of righteousness, the revealed Law of God, and had not life and immortality been brought to light by the Gospel among them. From these accounts, for which we could easily find parallels in ancient Greece and Italy, we may see the absolute need of a Divine revelation, without which man, even in his best estate, differs little from the brute.