

Leviticus 17

Verses 1- 7

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘This is what the Lord has commanded, saying, ³ “Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, ⁴ and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present *it* as an offering to the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord, bloodguiltiness is to be reckoned to that man. He has shed blood and that man shall be cut off from among his people. ⁵ The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to the Lord, at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the Lord. ⁶ The priest shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and offer up the fat in smoke as a soothing aroma to the Lord. ⁷ They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.’”

³ “Any man from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, ⁴ and has not brought it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to present *it* as an offering to the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord, bloodguiltiness is to be reckoned to that man. He has shed blood and that man shall be cut off from among his people.

The slaughter of any animal as a sacrifice anywhere except before the tent of meeting meant they would be cut off from among his people.

The meaning of being cut off from among his people meant the death penalty.

See Exodus 31:14

¹⁴ **Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.**

There were at least 22 sins that brought the death penalty.

See chart 1705

	Sins that brought the death penalty	Scripture
1	Attacking one's parents to cause them bodily harm	Exodus 21:15
2	Kidnapping	Exodus 21:16
3	Cursing one's parents	Exodus 21:17
4	Sorcery	Exodus 22:18
5	Breaking the Sabbath	Exodus 31:14.
6	Incest (specifically with a daughter in law)	Leviticus 18:9-17
7	Sacrificing your child to Moloch, a pagan god	Leviticus 20:2
8	Adultery	Leviticus 20:10-11
9	Homosexuality	Leviticus 20:13
10	Marriage to both a mother and her daughter	Leviticus 20:14
11	Bestiality	Leviticus 20:15-16
12	Being a medium or spiritist	Leviticus 20:27
13	Prostitution, if a priest's daughter	Leviticus 21:9
14	Blaspheming against God	Leviticus 24:16
15	Murder	Leviticus 24:17
16	Trespassing in God's holy things and places	Numbers 1:51; 3:10
17	Sacrificing to idol gods	Deuteronomy 17:2-7
18	Contempt for the final decisions of the high court	Deuteronomy 17:8-12
19	False Prophecy	Deuteronomy 18:20
20	Giving false testimony in a capital case	Deuteronomy 19:15-19
21	Pretending to be a virgin if you are not	Deuteronomy 22:13-21
22	Rape of a betrothed or married woman	Deuteronomy 22:23-29

⁵ **The reason is so that the sons of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they were sacrificing in the open field, that they may bring them in to the Lord, at the doorway of the tent of meeting to the priest, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the Lord.**

Prior to this command the Israelites sacrificed wherever it was convenient but now all sacrifices had to be offered at the tabernacle. This regulation had 3 positive effects.

1. This would strengthen the authority and income of the priesthood.
2. It kept the people from eating the blood or the fat.
3. It would also stop the practice of idolatry.

⁷ They shall no longer sacrifice their sacrifices to the goat demons with which they play the harlot. This shall be a permanent statute to them throughout their generations.”

Some gods were worshipped thru successive cultures but with a new name. The Greek god, Pan, was the most famous of the goat-gods, however this god had its beginnings long before the Greeks came to power.

Verses 8 - 13

⁸ “Then you shall say to them, ‘Any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice,⁹ and does not bring it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to offer it to the Lord, that man also shall be cut off from his people. ¹⁰ ‘And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats 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 on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.’ ¹² Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, ‘No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood.’ ¹³ So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.

⁸ Then you shall say to them, ‘Any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice,⁹ and does not bring it to the doorway of the tent of meeting to offer it to the Lord, that man also shall be cut off from his people

This extended the law to include foreigners who lived among the Israelites.

¹⁰ ‘And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people.

For eating blood the punishment was enforced by God. The reason God would enforce this punishment may have been because it was likely that no one else would be around when a Jew or an alien would disobey this law.

The punishment involved the following:

1. God will make this earthly life very difficult for him.
2. He will be separated from God's people.

This could have included deportation, being sold into slavery or death.

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'

God used blood to make atonement for sinners throughout history.

No person among you may eat blood, nor may any alien who sojourns among you eat blood

This prohibition preceded the Law of Moses by 1,652 years.

See Genesis 9:4

⁴ But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood.

¹³ So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.

All blood was considered sacred, and was to be covered with dirt. Even animals that were used for a common meal (not a sacrifice).

Verses 14 -16

¹⁴ "For *as for the* life of all flesh, its blood is *identified* with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.' ¹⁵ When any person eats *an animal* which dies or is torn *by beasts*, whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean. ¹⁶ But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt."

¹⁴ “For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is *identified* with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, ‘You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.’

A preacher often repeats the same thought two or three times in a sermon. Does it help? For those who are listening it helps because our minds tend to wander and if the thought is missed on the first attempt it is likely to be heard on the second or third time that it is repeated.

¹⁵ When any person eats *an animal which dies or is torn by beasts*, whether he is a native or an alien, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and remain unclean until evening; then he will become clean. ¹⁶ But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then he shall bear his guilt.”

This law appears to contradict the two laws given in Exodus 22 and Deut. 14.

1. See Exodus 22:31

³¹ “**You shall be holy people to Me, therefore you shall not eat any flesh torn to pieces in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.**

This law was given before the one in Leviticus.

2. See Deut. 14:21

“You shall not eat anything which dies of itself. You may give it to the stranger who is in your town, so that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a stranger; for you are a holy people to the Lord your God.

This law was given about 38 years after the one in Leviticus.

The reason a person was not supposed to eat an animal that had died or was torn by beasts was based on the fact that a proper bleeding of the animal was not possible. And since eating blood was a sin that incurred the death penalty, one did not want to take a chance by eating an animal that was not properly bleed.