

Deuteronomy 27:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

Analysis

Cursed be he that lieth with his sister—the Hebrew shochev (שָׁכַב, lies with) uses covenant violation language. Leviticus 18:9 and 20:17 explicitly prohibit this incest, calling it chesed (חֶסֶד, disgrace/shame, not to be confused with the positive hesed). The arur (אָרַר, cursed) formula marks covenant-breaking that severs one from God's blessing and community.

The precision—**the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother**—covers both full and half-siblings, closing any loophole. The communal response **And all the people shall say, Amen** makes every Israelite complicit in enforcing God's sexual purity standards. To remain silent when such sin occurred was to share in the curse. This anticipates church discipline principles (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13).

Historical Context

These twelve curses (Deuteronomy 27:15-26) were proclaimed antiphonally at Mount Ebal as Israel entered Canaan (Joshua 8:30-35). Six tribes stood on Mount Gerizim for blessings, six on Mount Ebal for curses, with the Levites in the valley between declaring covenant conditions. The list emphasizes secret sins—violations done in darkness that human courts might not detect but that still brought divine judgment. Ancient Near Eastern cultures often tolerated incest among royalty (Egyptian pharaohs married siblings), but Israel's law reflected God's holiness.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the requirement that 'all the people shall say, Amen' challenge modern individualism that says 'it's none of my business' about others' sin?
2. What does God's attention to secret sexual sins reveal about His comprehensive concern for holiness in every area of life?

Interlinear Text

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|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------|
| אָר ווּר | שֵׁכֵב | עִם | אָחַת וּ | בֵּת | אָב יוֹ | א וּ |
| Cursed | be he that lieth | H5973 | with his sister | or the daughter | of his father | H176 |
| H779 | H7901 | | H269 | H1323 | H1 | |
| בֵּת | אִמּוֹ | וְאָמֵר | כָּל | הָעָם | אָמֵן: | |
| or the daughter | of his mother | shall say | H3605 | And all the people | Amen | |
| H1323 | H517 | H559 | | H5971 | H543 | |

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 18:9 (Parallel theme): The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover.

Leviticus 20:17 (Parallel theme): 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 wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity.

Ezekiel 22:11 (Parallel theme): And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter in law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter.

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