

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* (שֹׁכֵב, lies with) uses covenant violation language. Leviticus 18:9 and 20:17 explicitly prohibit this incest, calling it *chesed* (תֹּהֶן, disgrace/shame, not to be confused with the positive *hesed*). The *arur* (אָרוּר, 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

אָרֶר	שְׁכַב	עִם	אֶחָת	בַת	אָבִי	אִ
Cursed	be he that lieth	H5973	with his sister	or the daughter	of his father	H176
H779	H7901		H269	H1323	H1	
בַת	אֶמֶת	רַ	כָּל	בָּעֵד	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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