

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# THE LAW OF CUMULATIVE SIN

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Throughout the Bible we see evidence of a fundamental law that governs God's creation regarding the cumulative effect of human sin, especially upon the Holy Land, but on the entire earth as well, and, indeed all of creation (Romans 8:22). It is a corollary to the law of Sabbath which requires every seventh day (and year) to be a "Sabbath" or rest period: not primarily for the people, but *for the land*.

As one of the original laws of creation (Genesis 2:1-3), the law of Sabbath pre-dates but is an essential tenet of the Mosaic Code in Leviticus 23:3 and 25:1-12 which chapters establish God's worship-based time and order-keeping system of feasts and *shemitahs* (time cycles of sevens) for what would eventually become known as Judeo-Christian civilization.

The law of Cumulative Sin is most clearly recognized in its regulation of punishment for violating the law of Sabbath, as detailed in Leviticus 26, the entirety of which is devoted to this topic.

Leviticus 26:2-13 first restates the law of Sabbath and the promise of blessing for keeping it: "*You must keep My Sabbaths and have reverence for My sanctuary. I am the LORD. If you follow My statutes and carefully keep My*

*commandments, I will give you rains in their season, and the land will yield its produce, and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. Your threshing will continue until the grape harvest, and the grape harvest will continue until sowing time; you will have your fill of food to eat and will dwell securely in your land...*

Leviticus 26:14-39 then details a series of escalating punishments that grow more severe at each level of ongoing lack of repentance, ending with the final consequence: expulsion from the land (desolation):

*“If, however, you fail to obey Me and to carry out all these commandments, and if you reject My statutes, despise My ordinances, and neglect to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, then this is what I will do to you... But if in spite of all this you do not obey Me, but continue to walk in hostility toward Me, then I will walk in fury against you, and I, even I, will punish you sevenfold for your sins. You will eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and heap your lifeless bodies on the lifeless remains of your idols; and My soul will despise you....I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out a sword after you as your land becomes desolate and your cities are laid waste....Those of you who survive in the lands of your enemies will waste away in their iniquity and will decay in the sins of their fathers.”*

Importantly, Leviticus 26:34 clarifies the primary purpose of the desolation: *“Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths all the days it lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies. At that time the land will rest and enjoy its Sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not receive during the Sabbaths when you lived in it.”*

And finally, Leviticus 26:40-46 states that if the people finally repent after being removed from the land, they will be spared from total destruction by God, but will still be required pay for their sins through captivity until

the land has been cleansed of the consequences of their sins. *“But if they will confess their iniquity and that of their fathers in the unfaithfulness that they practiced against Me...then I will remember My covenant with Jacob and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. For the land will be abandoned by them, and it will enjoy its Sabbaths by lying desolate without them. And they will pay the penalty for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and abhorred My statutes. Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject or despise them so as to destroy them.”*<sup>1</sup>

Leviticus 26 was prophetic of the desolation of first Israel and then Judah, with, for example, the very specific and horrific consequence of cannibalism recorded in Samaria, the capital city of Israel in 2 Kings 6:28-29 and in Jerusalem, capital of Judah, in Lamentations 4:10. And it was prophetic regarding the remedy of the desolation of both Israel and Judah for the sake of the land as best recognized regarding Judah in 2 Chronicles 36:21 *“So the land enjoyed its Sabbath rest all the days of the desolation, until seventy years were completed, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD through Jeremiah.”*

The law of Cumulative Sin can be seen throughout the Bible as a law binding upon all people, not just the Hebrews. For example, when God promised the Holy Land to Abraham’s descendants (through Jacob’s line), He told Abraham *“In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete”* (Genesis:15:16). The accumulation of the Amorites’ sin would not rise to the level of justifying God’s wrath until that future time.

The growth of sin in a tribe or nation follows the same sequence as in an individual, as described in James 1:13-15: *“When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt*

anyone. But each one is tempted when by his own evil desires he is lured away and enticed. Then **after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.**” It is the fruit of choices made by people and nations which ripens over the course of a season, until the time of harvest.

In the case of the Amorites (Canaanites), that harvest of death/desolation of the land is described in Leviticus 18:24-28 “*Do not defile yourselves by any of these practices, for by all these things the nations I am driving out before you have defiled themselves. Even the land has become defiled, so I am punishing it for its sin [primarily incest, child-killing, homosexuality and bestiality], and the land will vomit out its inhabitants. But you are to keep My statutes and ordinances, and you must not commit any of these abominations —neither your native-born nor the foreigner who lives among you. For the men who were in the land before you committed all these abominations, and the land has become defiled. So if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it spewed out the nations before you.*”

Regarding the final judgment on the sin accumulated during the Age of the Gentiles which will likely soon be unleashed as an early event of the thousand-year Day of the Lord, John writes in Revelation 14:18-19 “*Still another angel, with authority over the fire, came from the altar and called out in a loud voice to the angel with the sharp sickle, ‘**Swing your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the vine of the earth, because its grapes are ripe. So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the grapes of the earth, and he threw them into the great winepress of God’s wrath.***”

Importantly, the preceding passage invokes both the “angel with authority over the fire” and the symbol of the “grapes of wrath” – a clear association with Sodom per Jude 1:7 “*just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these angels indulged in sexual perversion and*

*went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.” And per Deuteronomy 32:32-33 “from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are poisonous; their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the venom of serpents, the deadly poison of cobras.”*

## THE TWO CATEGORIES OF SIN THAT ACCUMULATE

*“Oh, Lord GOD, when You pour out Your wrath on Jerusalem, will You destroy the entire remnant of Israel?” He replied, “The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great. The land is **full of bloodshed**, and the city is **full of perversity**. For they say, ‘The LORD has forsaken the land; the LORD does not see.’ But as for Me, I will not look on them with pity, nor will I spare them. I will bring their deeds down upon their own heads” Ezekiel 9:9.*

In Yeshua’s Sermon on the Mount, He highlighted two sins for special notice -- murder and adultery -- emphasizing the deeper spiritual principle behind the letter of the law:

*“You have heard that it was said to the ancients, ‘Do not murder’ and ‘Anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.... You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* It happens that these two sins represent the two categories of law-breaking that are most closely associated in Scripture to the law of Cumulative Sin: murder being associated with blood-guilt, and adultery being representative of all forms sexual perversion and the spiritual equivalent of idolatry.

### 1. **Blood-Guilt:**

The spilling of innocent blood is the first category of sin that accumulates

in the land until it is full, triggering wrath.

One example is especially pertinent here, that of God's curse on Edom in Ezekiel 35:5-15 *"Because you harbored an ancient hatred and delivered the Israelites over to the sword in the time of their disaster at the final stage of their punishment, therefore as surely as I live, declares the Lord GOD, I will give you over to bloodshed and it will pursue you. Since you did not hate bloodshed, it will pursue you....As you rejoiced when the inheritance of the house of Israel became desolate, so will I do to you. You will become a desolation, O Mount Seir, and so will all of Edom. Then they will know that I am the LORD."*

It must be remembered here that the Edomites are the descendants of Esau, Jacob's brother, giving special meaning to this prophecy in light of Yeshua's extended comments on murder *"But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment....But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be subject to the fire of hell"* (Matthew 5:22).

Bloodguilt was such an important issue to the Hebrews under the Torah that any unsolved murder that occurred near the border of two towns required an investigation to determine which town bore the bloodguilt, and thus the responsibility to atone for it (Deuteronomy 21:1). Known murderers were required under the law to be hunted down by the avengers of blood, per Numbers 35:19 *"The avenger of blood is to put the murderer to death; when he finds him, he is to kill him."*

The principle of blood guilt was so well understood by Christendom prior to the present generation that it featured prominently in one of the most famous of all political speeches in American history: Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address delivered shortly before his assassination. It is engraved on the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., containing, in pertinent part, these words:

“If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which in the providence of God must needs come but which having continued through His appointed time He now wills to remove....Fondly do we hope ~ fervently do we pray ~ that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword as was said three thousand years ago so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' ”

If that was true of innocent blood spilled from slaves, what are the implications from the slaughter of millions of unborn children? And how much of that blood does it take for the cup of wrath to be filled to overflowing?

## **2. Sexual Perversion**

The second category of cumulative sin is sexual perversion, and we have already noted above both the biblical emphasis on homosexuality as the form of deviance most severely condemned by God, and the fact that its normalization in society is the most clearly identified harbinger of God's wrath in Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation – each time being the last “straw that breaks the camel's back” as it were. Thus, we will devote the next segment to address that phenomenon in modern society, as a gauge of how close to judgment we may be.

### **The Point of No Return**

While the law of Cumulative Sin covered sins beyond Sabbath-breaking,

especially regarding the Gentiles, there were only two remedies seen for it in the Old Testament, the primary one being Sabbath-keeping by the Hebrews (obedience). Sabbath-keeping was, essentially, the pressure-release valve that prevented the accumulation of sin from reaching the point of triggering wrath. The other remedy was total sincere repentance (sacrifice) per 2 Chronicles 7:14 *“If my people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”* However, those remedies were only available prior to the “point of no return.”

Once sin had accumulated to the point of triggering God’s wrath, there was no remedy that would prevent the punishment from being paid by the guilty under Leviticus 26:40-45. Yet, per that same passage (consistent with our analysis in Chapter Three), the punishment could be limited by repentance (even during the Ten Days of Awe/Wrath), preserving one’s eternal relationship with God.

Thus, the willingness of people to repent is of paramount importance. And that willingness is heavily dependent upon their perception of reality, most especially the reality of God’s existence and expectations. The goal of Satan and his followers, therefore, is to so thoroughly defile human society and culture with the lie and practice of self-indulgent “consequence-free” sin that people will scorn and reject repentance as a concept.

What then is the measure of imminency of God’s wrath? It is the degree to which sorrow for sinfulness (the attitude that leads to repentance) is replaced by the *celebration* of sin (the very opposite of repentance). This is what Paul described in his summary of the cause and constitution of apostasy in Romans 1: *“And even as they did not like to retain God in their*



*knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: **Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.***

That highlighted final sentence of the chapter-long treatise defines the context or season in which wrath becomes imminent – when the attitude of the society as a whole becomes one of celebration of what God has condemned.

<sup>1</sup> Note that this is the same legal principle that we see at work in the “second chance” available to the “left behind” as addressed in Chapter 3.

