



## [Ezekiel 20:12-13](#)

(12) And also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that *they* might know that I *am* the LORD Who sanctifies them. (13) But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes, and they despised My ordinances, which *if* a man does, he shall even live in them. And they greatly polluted My Sabbaths. And I said, 'I will pour out My fury on them in the wilderness to destroy them.'

*A Faithful Version*

Verses 23-24 go on to indicate the consequence of Israel's refusal to become sanctified by obeying God's laws: [God](#) says He "lifted [His] hand in an oath, . . . that I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries, because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths. . . ." If Israel insisted on acting like the nations of [the world](#), God says He would physically place them among those nations; Israel would become separated from God and the land He promised them. They would become "sifted" (see [Amos 9:9](#)) among the Gentile nations.

[Leviticus 18:24-30](#) outlines the inevitable separation that a nation (or an individual) will undergo as a result of commandment-breaking: "The land vomits out its inhabitants" (verse 25). This is the national consequence of breaking the commandments. God states the result to individuals in verse 29: "Whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people." Vomiting and cutting-off are both metaphors for separation.

Nationally and individually, commandment-breaking always yields the same ultimate punishment: *separation* from God. That separation may come slowly, as [Ecclesiastes 8:11](#) points out, but always surely.

The history of the children of Israel proves the point. God wanted Israel to be a special, sanctified nation; a holy one. He promised to bestow incredible blessings on it *if* it acted

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to separate itself from the social and religious practices of other nations. *Israel failed as a nation because it failed to be holy!*

— Charles Whitaker

**To learn more, see:**

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