



[Genesis 18:23-25](#)

(23) Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? (24) What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? (25) Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

New International Version

Is [God](#) fair in His dealings with man? Consider this: Has God warned man what he is going to earn in the way of a death penalty if he sinned? Consider this list. In Exodus 21, we are warned that striking or cursing parents will result in death. In Leviticus 19, He says that if you desecrate a sacrifice, you are going to die. In Leviticus 24, He said that if you murder somebody, you are going to die. In Exodus 21, He says that if you kidnap somebody, you are going to die. In Leviticus 20, He says if you sacrifice a child in the fire, you are going to die. In Leviticus 24, He says, "If you take My name in vain—if you curse Me, if you use blasphemous statements about Me—you are going to die."

In Exodus 35, He issues the death penalty for breaking the [Sabbath](#). In Leviticus 20, He issues the death penalty for consulting mediums. In Leviticus 20, He says that if you are practicing homosexuality, you are going to die. In Leviticus 20, if you practice incest, you are going to die. In Exodus 22, if you practice bestiality, you are going to die. In Deuteronomy 22, He says that if you rape somebody, you are going to die. In Deuteronomy 13, if you give a false prophecy, you are going to die.

In Exodus 22, if you practice sorcery, you are going to die. In Exodus 22, if you sacrifice to a false god, you are going to die. In Leviticus, if you commit [adultery](#), you are going to die. In Numbers 4, if you desecrate a holy thing, you are going to die. In Numbers 16, if you disagree with God's judgment, you are going to die. In Leviticus 21, if you are a priest's daughter and you play the harlot, you are going to die.

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This is only a partial list. God has clearly made known the penalty to mankind. Is God acting fairly? The penalty for some of these offenses really sounds harsh to modern minds. Death for a false prophecy? Death for committing adultery? Death for bestiality or homosexuality? All of these penalties are given in the Old Testament. By contrast, there is no corresponding list of penalties in the New Testament, which misleads some who are close to being biblically illiterate into thinking that they prefer the God of the New Testament to the God of the Old Testament. But the God of the New Testament is exactly the same Being as the God of the Old Testament; He says, "I change not" ([Malachi 3:6](#)). "[Jesus Christ](#), the same yesterday, today, and forever" ([Hebrews 13:8](#)).

Those of us who are living under the New Covenant need to begin to think seriously about the way we conduct our lives, and especially in reference to our own relationship with God. We cannot deny that the New Testament list of capital offenses would appear to be a dramatic reduction from the Old. What we fail to consider is that the Old Testament list above is a massive reduction from what appears at the beginning of the Book, as in Genesis 18. The list, mainly out of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, represents an astonishing measure of grace from how things began.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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