

**October 18, 2020**  
**Blessings for Obedience**  
**Leviticus 24-27**  
**FOCUS: Leviticus 26**

**BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN**

Oct 11	Matthew 22-23	Oct 15	Mark 1-3
Oct 12	Matthew 24-25	Oct 16	Mark 4-5
Oct 13	Matthew 26	Oct 17	Mark 6-7
Oct 14	Matthew 27-28	Oct 18	Mark 8-9

**Overview of Leviticus 24-27**

**Leviticus 24** Light and Bread for the Holy Place  
 “An Eye for an Eye” passage

**Key verses:** *19 If a man injures his neighbor, just as he has done, so it shall be done to him: 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; just as he has injured a man, so it shall be inflicted on him.*

**Leviticus 25** Sabbatic Year and Year of Jubilee  
 Property Laws and Redemption

**Leviticus 26** Blessings of Obedience  
 Penalties of Disobedience

**Leviticus 27** Consecrating possessions to the Lord

**Lesson Idea:** Blessings come to those who obey God; but wrath comes to the unfaithful.

**Background:** As the book of Leviticus is coming to a close, this chapter serves as a call to righteousness and obedience. God promises to bless His people if they will keep His covenant commands. But He also warns them of the punishment that will come if they reject Him. He does this in His mercy and grace to encourage His people to do what is right and let them know that He rewards those who come to Him.

**Leviticus 26:1-13 Blessings of Obedience****Questions to Ponder:**

- Why were they not to make idols?
- What does it mean to reverence God’s sanctuary?
- What is the nature of an “if... then...” statement?
- What does God promise if His people are obedient?
- What are the greatest promises in v. 9-12?
- Why does God remind them that He “made them walk erect?”

*1 ‘You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; **for I am the Lord your God.** 2 You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; **I am the Lord.** 3 **If** you walk in My*

*statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, 4 **then** I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 5 **Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time.** You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. 6 I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. 7 But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; **8 five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword. 9 So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm My covenant with you. 10 You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. 11 Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. 12 I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people. 13 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and **made you walk erect.*****

**DISCUSSION:**

In v 1-2 God commands His people not to make idols or set up images, but to keep His Sabbaths and show reverence for His sanctuary. The only reason He gives: **“for I am the Lord your God.”** God uses His covenant name: Yahweh (“**I AM**”). His name reiterates that He truly exists, as opposed to *idols, images, and pillars to false gods* which do not exist. Why would people choose idols which cannot speak or hear or move, when they can know the One True God who is Almighty, All-powerful, All-knowing, and Sovereign over all things? Though most people today do not worship images and idols, they often mistakenly render their loyalty to things and activities instead of serving the Lord. There is no profit in serving empty religion.

In v 3-4 God issues an “if... then...” statement. The first covenant was based on the obedience of God’s people (“*walking in His statutes and keeping His commandments*”). Unfortunately, no person could ever keep the covenant completely. That is why God sent Jesus to do what we could not do. Jesus lived a perfect life and kept all of the Law perfectly, so that we could receive the blessings of righteousness in His obedience as we walk with Him.

R.K. Harrison in the *Tyndale Commentary on Leviticus* notes that the blessings of God “fall into three divisions (verses 4, 6, 11), each of which is prefaced by the phrase ‘I will give’.

Obedience to the covenant stipulations will be recompensed by

**material prosperity** (3–5), **victory over the nation’s enemies** (6–9), **the assurance of God’s presence in the land** (11–12), and the **dignity of personal freedom** (13). The mention of God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt is a guarantee that the Great King who has initiated the covenant with the people is able to perform all that he has promised. He will be no absentee deity, but will be with the Israelites, directing their lives and providing for all their needs. These blessings are unique in character, assuring the Israelites of personal security, continued national prosperity, and above all the presence of a loving, all-powerful deity. The assurance of God’s presence has been a [Vol 3: Lev, p. 235] source of strength and blessing for countless generations of believers (cf. Isa. 11:1–16; Ezek. 36:28; 37:24–27, etc.). Before his ascension, Christ gave the assurance of his continual presence with his disciples as a means of strengthening and encouraging them in their ministry (Matt. 28:20). Because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever (Heb. 13:8), this promise is still valid for every believer.” (Harrison, *Leviticus*)

God promised that He would reward the faithfulness of His people by making their land fruitful and peaceful. He promised to rescue them from the danger of wild animals and powerful enemies. In fact, God promised to make their enemies fearful of them. But the greatest promises God made involved His personal relationship with His people. In v 9 He promised to “*confirm His covenant with them.*” In v 11 He promised to “*make His dwelling among them*” and not reject them. In v 12 He promised to “*walk among them*” and call them His people. No matter how great or small the material blessings we receive from following the Lord, the greatest blessings are His **promises** (covenant), His **presence** (dwelling with us), and His **protection** (walking among us).

As an extra incentive for obedience, God reminded His people that He rescued them from their slavery. If God had not set them free, they would still be bent over under a heavy yoke of slavery. The only reason they could “*walk erect*” is because God had blessed them with freedom. He reminds them to use their freedom to honor and worship the One who had granted it to them. As believers, we are reminded that we are not set free by obedience to the Law but by faith in Christ Jesus. Galatians 5:1 says: “*It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.*” But at the same time, Paul reminds us not to abuse the freedom we have in Christ.

In Galatians 5:13 he says: “*For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*”

### Leviticus 26:14-20 Penalties of Disobedience

#### Questions to Ponder:

- **What is the alternative to obeying God?**
- **What does God send upon the disobedient?**
- **What does v 17 say will happen to God’s people if they disobey?**

14 ***But if*** you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, 15 ***if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, 16 I, in turn, will do this to you:*** I will appoint over you a sudden ***terror***, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will ***sow your seed uselessly***, for your enemies will eat it up. 17 ***I will set My face against you*** so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and ***you will flee when no one is pursuing you.***

#### DISCUSSION:

Verse 15 describes the root causes of disobedience:

- *A rejection of God’s statutes*
- *A hatred of God’s ordinances*
- *A failure to carry out all His commandments*
- *A breaking of God’s covenant*

We often don’t think of our disobedience in these terms. When God says “*your soul abhors my ordinances*” He is using the strongest of terms to describe the real root of our disobedience. The *God’s Word Translation* renders the first part of v 15 this way: *if you reject my laws and look at my rules with disgust...* Several translations use the word “hate” to describe the feelings of the disobedient to God’s requirements. When we reject God’s desires and designs for us, God says it is because we hate His Word.

There are grave consequences for rejecting God’s guidance. According to v 16, God promised to send terror and sickness to His people if they broke covenant with Him. He would make the land unfruitful and make their labors useless.

One of the worst consequences for disobedience is found in v 17—God warned that He would actually “***set His face against them.***” Not only would He not protect them from their enemies, He promised to fight against them and help their enemies conquer them. In many of the writings of the prophets, we find that God did this as He used the Assyrians or Babylonians or Persians to

punish His disobedient people (see Isaiah 14:2; Jeremiah 19:7; Ezekiel 15:7)

God sends punishment upon His people to turn them back to His righteousness. In Hebrews 12, the author quotes Job 5:17 and Proverbs 3:11-12 to remind us to appreciate the discipline of God, because it is meant for our good. Verse 11 sums it up well:

*11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. (see Hebrews 12:5-11)*

### Leviticus 26:21-39 Seven Times According to Your Sins Questions to Ponder:

- What does v 18 promise if God's people won't repent?
- According to v 19-20 what happens to man's pride and strength when under the punishment of God?
- What continues to happen when God's people refuse to repent? (see v 18, 21, 24, 28)
- According to v 27-30, what horrible conditions develop when people reject God?

*18 **If** also after these things you do not obey Me, **then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.** 19 **I will also break down your pride of power;** I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. **20 Your strength will be spent uselessly,** for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit.*

*21 **If** then, **you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins.** 22 I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted.*

*23 **And if** by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, 24 **then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins.** 25 I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. 26 When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied.*

*27 **Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, 28 then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins.** 29 Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. 30 I then*

*will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, **for My soul shall abhor you.** 31 I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. 32 I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. 33 You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.*

*34 **Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths.** 35 All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it. 36 As for those of you who may be left, **I will also bring weakness into their hearts** in the lands of their enemies. **And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall.** 37 **They will therefore stumble over each other as if running from the sword, although no one is pursuing; and you will have no strength to stand up before your enemies.** 38 But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies' land will consume you. 39 So those of you who may be left will rot away because of their iniquity in the lands of your enemies; and also because of the iniquities of their forefathers they will rot away with them.*

### DISCUSSION:

After explaining the consequences for disobedience, God warns that if they refuse to repent, He would multiply their punishment. He would break down the pride they had in their own power and make their strength ineffective (v 19-20). If God so orders it, all nature could turn against man and destroy his crops.

In v 18, 21, 24, and 28 God says that He would increase His wrath sevenfold each time. That's 7 x 7 x 7 x 7, which means God's wrath had increased by 2,401 times (see Romans 1:18-32 for the progressive nature of God's wrath in the NT). Notice that v 21 adds the phrase: "**according to your sins**" (or as the NIV puts it: "*as your sins deserve*"), which indicates that God's wrath was justified. We might think that the worst part of that wrath is described in v 29, when His people would resort to cannibalism (which unfortunately happened during the days of the siege of Samaria in 2 Kings 6:24-33. The Jewish historian Josephus also tells of cannibalism happening during the siege of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 AD).

As atrocious as these horrors were, the worst caution is found in v 30. God tells His people that if they still would not repent, "**...My soul will abhor you.**" What began with the people's souls abhorring God's commands (v 15) would one day lead to *God's soul*

abhorring them (v 30). What is man to do if God turns against Him? There is nothing a person could do but plead for mercy. This is also why we fall beneath the Lordship of Jesus Christ. For though we deserve wrath for our sin, God grants us grace through Jesus. In our sinful state, we are enemies towards God; but Romans 5:10-11 declares:

*10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. (see all of Romans 5)*

### **Leviticus 26:40-46 Remembering the Covenant**

#### **Questions to Ponder:**

- How will God's people need to seek restoration?
- What does it mean for God to "remember" His covenant with Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham?
- What does God promise in v 44-45 and why?

**40 *'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me— 41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember My covenant*** with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land. 43 For the land will be abandoned by them, and will make up for its sabbaths while it is made desolate without them. ***They, meanwhile, will be making amends for their iniquity, because they rejected My ordinances and their soul abhorred My statutes. 44 Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. 45 But I will remember for them the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God. I am the Lord.'***"

46 These are the statutes and ordinances and laws which the Lord established between Himself and the sons of Israel through Moses at Mount Sinai.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Even in the midst of their multiplied and horrifying wrath, God offered another "if... then..." alternative in v 40-42. God promised that if His people would confess their iniquity, hostility, and unfaithfulness against Him, then He would "remember His covenant." The biblical

word "confess" means to agree with God's assessment of something, whether it be our sin or our need for a Savior. We must come to God on His terms, not our own. God called His people to agree that their unfaithfulness was the reason for His wrath and to call out to God for forgiveness.

When God said He would "remember" the covenant, it does not imply that He had forgotten His promises.

*Ellicott's Commentary* explains:

"The expression 'remember' frequently denotes 'to be mindful,' 'to perform,' especially when used with regard to God... When thus brought to repentance, the Lord will perform towards them the covenant which He made with their ancestors... with Jacob at Bethel [Genesis 35:9-15], ...with Isaac at Mount Moriah [Genesis 22], ...and with Abraham between the divided pieces of the sacrifices [Genesis 15:18-21]. (*Ellicott, Lev 26:42*)

God promised to bring good on the land during the time of Israel's punishment. Verse 43 reiterates what v 34-35 had said—that while God was punishing His people for their sins, the land would receive its Sabbath rest which had been neglected by the unfaithfulness of Israel. God cares for His entire creation and desires us to be good stewards of it. When we abuse the land out of a disrespect for God's order, He will hold us accountable but finds a way to renew it in the midst of our punishment. Romans 8:20-22 tells us that all of creation waits longingly for the day of final redemption:

*20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.*

Leviticus 26 ends with a note of hope. In v 44-45 God promised not to abandon His people completely. He would still be their God when they were taken into captivity by their enemies. Even though their unfaithfulness deserved the punishment, God would remember the promises He made in the covenant with their ancestors. He foreshadowed their future rescue by reminding them that He was the God who brought them up "***out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations.***" His purpose in their freedom was that He might be their God, because He is the Lord. Leviticus 26 declared clearly that they would be blessed by walking under His Lordship, but punished severely for their unfaithfulness. Can we learn a lesson from this chapter today?

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