

Leviticus 26:1 ¶ Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up *any* image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I *am* the LORD your God.

As I read through this chapter, it began to read as a declaration of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. It opens basically repeating the first two commandments.

Exodus 20:2–5 “I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God....”

God was determined that His people worship Him in a way that identified Him as totally unique. He is not an impotent “god” like those represented by the idols of the heathen. He is Almighty God as declared by the miracles He wrought in delivering the people of Israel from servitude in Egypt. He is the LORD, YHWH, the self-existent eternal God.

Leviticus 26:2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the LORD.

This verse restates the fourth commandment with a further admonition.

Exodus 20:8–11 “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

Not only were the people to observe the Sabbath, they were to show reverence for God’s sanctuary. At the time this record was being recorded, that sanctuary was the tabernacle. Beginning in the days of Solomon it was to be the temple. Since the resurrection of Jesus, it would seem logical to apply this truth to the church; and I believe that is a valid application. More importantly, however, I believe is the application to be made to the body of each true believer.

1 Corinthians 3:16–17 “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”

Leviticus 26:3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

Leviticus 26:4 Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

Leviticus 26:5 And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

Leviticus 26:6 And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make *you* afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

Leviticus 26:7 And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.

Leviticus 26:8 And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

In this section of verses the LORD is basically saying that obedience to Him would result in blessing and prosperity for the people of Israel. I think it is truly amazing that the people would ultimately choose to reject God as their LORD and forfeit such blessing. He had certainly proven Himself willing and able.

Just think, just because they did not want to yield to God as LORD, they forfeited:

- The guarantee of a bountiful harvest every year.
- The guarantee of living in safety within their land.
- The guarantee of freedom from fear.
- The guarantee of being able to soundly defeat any enemy that chose to threaten them.
- The guarantee that it would only require a small band of fighters to defend the nation.

Frankly, I think we too miss out on blessings that could be ours when choose to disobey Him as well. I think many of us have areas in which we struggle in yielding to the Savior as LORD and try to justify choices that in our heart we know are not pleasing to Him.

Leviticus 26:9 For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

Leviticus 26:10 And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.

Leviticus 26:11 And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.

Leviticus 26:12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

Leviticus 26:13 *I am* the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

This section goes on to elaborate on the blessings with which God wanted to bless His people. He promised to:

- Make them fruitful and bless them with children.

- Uphold His covenant with them or be faithful to keep His promises to them.
- Ensure that there would always be seed to perpetuate the harvest.
- Establish His dwelling place on earth among them.
- Never reject them as His people.
- Make His presence known among them as their God.
- Affirm Himself as the LORD their God who delivered them from bondage in Egypt.
- Establish them as a people of honor among the nations.

Leviticus 26:14 ¶ But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;

Leviticus 26:15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, *but* that ye break my covenant:

Leviticus 26:16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

Leviticus 26:17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

In this section of verses the LORD begins to declare the consequences for refusing to submit to Him in obedience and disregard the covenant.

- They will suffer disease and fever.
- They will suffer depression.
- They will suffer hunger when their enemies steal their crops.
- They will experience the consequences of God's anger against them.
- They will suffer death at the hands of their enemies.
- They will suffer under servitude of foreign rulers.
- They will live in a constant state of fear.

Leviticus 26:18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

Leviticus 26:19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:

Leviticus 26:20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

Leviticus 26:21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.

Leviticus 26:22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your *high* ways shall be desolate.

This section seems to declare that if they did not respond in repentance to the above consequences of disobedience and breaking covenant, the consequences would become even more harsh. In fact, their punishment would be increased seven-fold.

- God would humble them and refuse to hear their prayers.
- They would not be able to produce a harvest.
- They would suffer the attack of wild beasts that would kill their children, destroy their cattle and greatly reduce the population.
- Their roads would be empty of travelers.

Leviticus 26:23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me;

Leviticus 26:24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

Leviticus 26:25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of *my* covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

Leviticus 26:26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver *you* your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

This section seems to be building on the last section and promises yet further seven-fold judgment if they still refused to repent. They would continue to experience God's anger and suffer pestilence or plague and servitude under heathen rulers. Lack of food would become so prominent that ten women would share an oven to bake bread, and the bread would not be sufficient to satisfy their hunger.

Leviticus 26:27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

Leviticus 26:28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

Leviticus 26:29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

Leviticus 26:30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

Leviticus 26:31 And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.

Leviticus 26:32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it.

Leviticus 26:33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

In this section the LORD is declaring yet further seven-fold judgment for refusing to repent and turn back to Him in obedience. At this point they will experience the consequences of His fury. They would get so hungry that they

would turn to cannibalism and choose to eat their children just to survive. He would personally ensure that the high places where they worshipped their false gods were destroyed and the images honoring them destroyed. He would then destroy those who worshipped the idols as well. The cities of their nation would be destroyed and their idolatrous temples destroyed too. He would not acknowledge their offerings and would inflict them so harshly that even the heathen nations would be stunned at so great a fall from blessing. He would then cause them to be scattered among the heathen nations where they would live as a despised people. The land of Israel would become desolate and the cities fall into decay.

History records that the Northern Kingdom of Israel was the first to experience dispersion among the heathen followed by the Southern Kingdom of Israel being taken captive to Babylon. The next dispersion scattered the people even more widely throughout the heathen nations and has lasted almost 2,000 years.

Beyond my scope of comprehension, scripture also records that the people resorted to cannibalism of their children as recorded in 2Kings 6.

Leviticus 26:34 Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye *be* in your enemies' land; *even* then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths.

Leviticus 26:35 As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

It's at this point that one can make a direct connection to the Babylonian captivity. According to the writer of Chronicles, Jeremiah specifically declared that the 70 years of captivity was directly connected to this section of scripture.

2 Chronicles 36:20–21 “And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.”

Leviticus 26:36 And upon them that are left *alive* of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

Leviticus 26:37 And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth: and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

Leviticus 26:38 And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

Leviticus 26:39 And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

The experiences of the Jewish people while living among the heathen would be characterized by fear and anxiety. They would end up turning on each other, and many would die at the hands of their enemies. The consequences of their sin would be great indeed.

History records the affirmation of God's word. The Jews have ever been a despised people among the nations. The pogroms in Russia and the holocaust of the Germans resulted in the deaths of millions of Jews. Even as they have experienced times of prosperity, Jews have turned on one another—even to this day. I am always surprised at learning of those among the rich and powerful who are Jews yet seem to despise their own heritage—e.g., Karl Marx, George Soros, Noam Chomsky, Norman Finklestein, etc.

Leviticus 26:40 ¶ If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me;

Leviticus 26:41 And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

Leviticus 26:42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

This is a very important section of scripture. It is one of many throughout scripture that declare that God's covenant with Abraham is everlasting. Though the people of Israel may reject God as Lord, He will never reject them as His people. Although He has set them aside as He waits for them to turn back to Him in faith and repentance, the important truth is that He is waiting for them to repent. When they finally choose to humble themselves in repentance before Him, God will once again establish them before Him in a place of honor before the nations according to His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Both the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak of this time—a time when God will establish an even better covenant to replace the first.

Jeremiah 31:31–34 “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Ezekiel 36:24–28 “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will

take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

Leviticus 26:43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes.

Leviticus 26:44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I *am* the LORD their God.

Leviticus 26:45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.

These verses declare that the dispersion of the people will once again have a direct connection to the sabbaths of the land. They emphasize yet again that God will not utterly destroy them as a people or break His covenant with Abraham.

Isn't it interesting to note that before Israel became a nation again in 1948 the land of Israel was basically a wasteland. Only since the Jewish people have begun returning to the land has it begun once again to yield a bountiful harvest. I believe that scripture foretells that Israel will yet suffer much as a nation. The last seven years on earth before Jesus returns as King of kings is identified by Jeremiah as the time of Jacob's trouble. The blessed promise is that it will be a time that will serve as a refining fire to bring forth a believing remnant through whom God will fulfill His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Jeremiah 30:3–11 "For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it....Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it....Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished."

I think we can all agree that this is yet future.

Leviticus 26:46 These *are* the statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.