

## Leviticus 26

Verse 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.**

While Israel was in the wilderness they would have been limited to smaller hand held idols but once they took over the land of Canaan the temptation to worship larger items such as images, sacred pillars or figured stones that were already there would become a problem so this expanded definition was given here.

It should have been understood that any of these items were banned by the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment but God had to take into account the group of people He was dealing with.

See Exodus 20:4 - 6

**<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You shall not worship them nor serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, inflicting the punishment of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing favor to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.**

Verse 2

**<sup>2</sup> You shall keep my Sabbaths and revere my sanctuary; I am the Lord.**

This is pretty basic stuff.

1. Don't make an idol of any god.
2. Keep my Sabbath.
3. Have reverence for the sanctuary.

How many times have these three things been repeated in Exodus and Leviticus? That is a rhetorical question. We all know it has been countless times and this was done in a period of about 10 months.

### Verses 3 - 13

<sup>3</sup> If you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments so as to carry them out,  
<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> But you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword; <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> So I will turn toward you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm my covenant with you. <sup>10</sup> You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new. <sup>11</sup> Moreover, I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul will not reject you. <sup>12</sup> I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be my people. <sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> **If** you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments so as to carry them out,  
<sup>4</sup> **then** I shall give you....

These blessings were conditional. If they kept the law then they would be blessed.

The following is a list of the blessing they would receive if they kept the law:

1. I shall give you rains in their season.....they will have great crops.
2. I shall grant peace in the land.....their enemies will flee.
3. I will make you fruitful and multiply you.....many sons and daughters.
4. I will make my dwelling among you.....God will dwell with them.

The law of reaping and sowing is very prominent in the Bible. For the Jews their covenant with God was based on keeping the law and God would bless them with all of the blessings mention above.

The next section will outline the curses if they do not keep His Law.

## Verses 14 - 22

<sup>14</sup> ‘But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, <sup>15</sup> 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, <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> If also after these things you do not obey me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. <sup>19</sup> I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> ‘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. <sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> ‘But **if** you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, <sup>15</sup> 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, <sup>16</sup> **I, in turn, will do this to you:**

The same **if - then** clause is used here as it was above for the blessings. The word “then” is not included in verse 16 but it is definitely implied.

These curses were conditional. If they did not keep the law then they would be cursed.

The following is a list of the curses they would receive if they did not keep the law:

1. Their soul will pine away.....God will not be with them.
2. You will be struck down before your enemies.....their enemies will defeat them.
3. Your land will not yield its produce.....diminished Crops.
4. The beasts of the field will bereave you of your children..... They will lose their sons and daughters.

The Jews were given a choice, to obey the law and be blessed or if they rejected His law they would be cursed.

Verses 23 - 26

<sup>23</sup> **‘And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, <sup>24</sup> then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. <sup>25</sup> 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.**

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> **And if by these things you are not turned to me, but act with hostility against me, <sup>24</sup> then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins.**

God disciplines and rebukes His people to bring them back to Him. If they do not repent He turns up the heat that they might see the error of their ways.

<sup>25</sup> **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.**

During times of war many people headed for the protection provided by the city walls. However, a swollen population with unsanitary conditions often brought sickness and flea infected rodents that contributed to a high death rate. War is an extreme form of discipline, more like a final judgment.

<sup>26</sup> **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.**

Armies often surrounded a city and prevented any food from entering the city. Over time their supplies of food would diminish and starvation would set in. In this case, God said the rations for ten families could be prepared in a single oven. The punishment for not following God’s commands was a hard road to follow.

Isn’t it odd that pagan nations of that time thought that their gods were mad at them when some kind of disaster struck them, but the people of the one true God often failed to recognize this fact even though they had been warned.

Verses 27 - 33

<sup>27</sup> 'Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me,  
<sup>28</sup> then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. <sup>29</sup> Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas. <sup>32</sup> I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. <sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> Yet if in spite of this you do not obey me, but act with hostility against me,  
<sup>28</sup> then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins

In verse 24 it said I will act with "hostility" against you but here it says wrathful hostility. The longer the Jewish nation lived in rebellion against God the more God increased the punishment to bring them back.

<sup>29</sup> Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat.

Cannibalism was experienced at least three times in Israel:

1. The siege of Samaria in 722 BC.

See 2 Kings 6:24-25, 28-29

<sup>24</sup> Now it came about after this, that Ben-hadad the king of Aram gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. <sup>25</sup> So there was a severe famine in Samaria; and behold, they kept besieging it until a donkey's head was sold for eighty *shekels* of silver, and a fourth of a kab of dove's dung for five *shekels* of silver.

<sup>28</sup> Then the king said to her, "What is on your mind?" And she said, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son so that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' <sup>29</sup> So we cooked my son and ate him; and I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, so that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."

2. The siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC.

See Lamentations 4:10

**<sup>9</sup> Better off are those killed by the sword  
Than those killed by hunger;  
For they waste away, stricken  
By the lack of the produce of the field.**

**<sup>10</sup> The hands of compassionate women  
Boiled their own children;  
They became food for them  
Due to the destruction of the daughter of my people.**

3. The siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

While the New Testament does not cover the particulars concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, a 1<sup>st</sup> century historian named Flavius Josephus recites an account of a Jewish woman, Maria, who allegedly ate her own baby during the siege which lasted for several months. His account does not hold the weight of scripture but it does provide some evidence that cannibalism occurred.

**<sup>30</sup> 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.**

These were the shrines of false god's like Baal, which Israel often combined with the worship of The Lord God. The idea that God would abhor them is a frightening thought.

**<sup>31</sup> I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas.**

Shiloh and the tabernacle were destroyed in 1070 BC. Jerusalem and The temple of Solomon was destroyed in 586 BC. Jerusalem and Herod's temple was destroyed in 70 AD.

**<sup>33</sup> 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.**

The people who survived the destruction of Northern and Southern kingdom were deported to Assyria in 722 BC and to Babylon in 586 BC respectively.

Verses 34 - 39

<sup>34</sup> ‘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. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies’ land will consume you. <sup>39</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> ‘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.

This was covered in the previous chapter in verses 3 & 4.

<sup>36</sup> 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.

Those Israelites who escaped death during the Assyrian & Babylonian campaigns against the Northern and Southern Kingdoms would find life to be very difficult in the land of their enemies.

However, there were some people of faith who prospered during these times including Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Zerubbabel, Ezekiel, Haggai and other Jewish leaders who served in the Babylonian court. These individuals were able to succeed in Babylon due to their faith and obedience to God's principles.

<sup>39</sup> 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.

Many of the Jews who were scattered among the nations lost their identity. The ten northern tribes never returned from Assyria and were absorbed into the culture of these pagan nations. However, there were some faithful people who had moved to Judah before the Northern Kingdom was attacked so there were remnants of the Northern tribes that were not deported by Assyria.

See 2 Chronicles 11:

**<sup>14</sup> For the Levites left their pasture lands and their property and went to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had excluded them from serving as priests to the Lord.....<sup>16</sup> Those from all the tribes of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the Lord God of Israel followed them to Jerusalem, to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers.**

Anna was a descendant of Asher, one of the Northern tribes, who was living in Jerusalem during the time of Christ.

See Luke 2:36 - 37

**<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband for seven years after her marriage,<sup>37</sup> and *then* as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She did not leave the temple grounds, serving night and day with fasts and prayers.**

Verses 40 - 45

**<sup>40</sup> ‘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—<sup>41</sup> 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,<sup>42</sup> 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.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup> 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.’”**



**<sup>41</sup> I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies**

The deportations to Assyria and Babylon were a punishment for their sin. But it was also a means to bring His people to repentance that they might live a blessed life. When life gets tough, people often find a new motivation to listen to God.

**<sup>41</sup> ..... if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, <sup>42</sup> 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.**

The promise of His remembering the covenant was contingent on the following:

1. Confession of their transgressions
2. A humble heart that makes amends for their sin (repentance)

God is very patient and often waits decades for men to repent of their rebellion.

**<sup>44</sup> 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.**

When the Jewish people were willing to repent of their rebellion against God and His laws, He was more than willing to take care of them. In time He even brought a remnant back to Jerusalem from Babylon.

Verse 46

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

This would make a good ending for the book of Leviticus, but there is one more chapter on sacred gifts.