

Leviticus 26

Verse 1-2

‘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.

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

These 3 commands are really one. So why did God have to list each one separately?

Because many of the people in Israel were spiritually immature

They needed to be reminded of the same things over and over again.

See Hebrews 5:11 – 6:2

You shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary; I am the Lord.

This is pretty basic stuff, is it not?

1. Don't make an image of 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.

So why did God have to repeat these same commands so many times? The writer of Hebrews says the people he was talking to “had become poor listeners”.

Spiritual immaturity explains the convoluted history of the Jews and all of mankind.

Verses 3-13

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.

If you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments, then I shall

These blessings were conditional.....If, then

If they kept the law they would be blessed.

I shall give you rains in their season.....they will have great crops

I shall grant peace in the land.....their enemies will flee

I will make you fruitful and multiply you.....many sons and daughters

I will make my dwelling among you.....God will dwell with them

This is the law of reaping and sowing that is very prominent in the Bible

These are the blessings (advantages) one gets from keeping Gods laws

The next section will outline the curses (disadvantages) if they do not keep His Law

Verses 14-22

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. 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.

But if you do not obey me, then (the then is implied) **I in turn will do this to you**

These curses were also conditional.

The same **if - then** clause is used here as it was above for the blessings

I will set my face against you.....God will not be with them

You will be struck down before your enemies.....their enemies will defeat them

Your land will not yield its produce.....diminished Crops

The beasts of the field will bereave you of your children..... They will lose their sons and daughters

The blessings of verses 1 thru 13 have been turned into the curses of verses 14 thru 22

Man has been given a choice, be blessed or be cursed.

That being said, why do so many people choose to ignore or curse God?

Verses 23-26

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.**

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

God disciplines and rebukes his people to bring them back to Him

I will also bring upon you a sword

War is an extreme form of discipline, more like a final judgment

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.

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.

Verses 27-33

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.

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

In verse 24 it said I will act with hostility against you but here it says wrathful hostility.

The longer man lives in rebellion against God the more God increases the punishment to bring them back.

You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat

Cannibalism was experienced in Israel no less than three times:

1. In the siege of Samaria 722 BC

See 2 Kings 6:24 - 30

2. In the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar 586 BC

See Lamentations 4:10

3. In the siege of Jerusalem 70 A.D.

I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars

These were the shrines of false god's like Baal, which Israel often combined with the worship of The Lord God.

I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate

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

You, however, I will scatter among the nations

This happened during the events listed above.

Verses 34-39

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.

Then the land will enjoy its Sabbaths all the days of the desolation

This was covered in Leviticus 25:1-7

As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies.

Foreign nations often took many captives back to their land, but those who escaped death would find life to be very difficult in the land of their enemies.

But you will perish among the nations, and your enemies' land will consume you.

Many of the Jews who were scattered among the nations lost their identity. The ten northern tribes never returned; and a large majority of them were absorbed into the culture of these pagan nations.

There were some individuals from the Northern tribes that found their way back.

Anna was a descendant of Asher, one of the Northern tribes

See Luke 2:36

Verses 40-45

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.'"

If they confess their iniquity or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham

The promise of His remembering the covenant was contingent on

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.

I was acting with hostility against them, to bring them to 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.

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.

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

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.

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