

Leviticus Chapter 26 Continued

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

"Your God ... my people": The promise of an intimate covenant relationship with the God of the universe is given (compare 2 Cor. 6:16).

We have been studying in the last lesson of the blessings they would receive if they walked in God's statutes and kept His commandments. The presence of God has always been apparent where people love and follow God. One of the greatest promises (in my opinion), is the fact that He will be their God. If we keep His commandments, He will be our God. The following two Scriptures tell the wonderful relationship that a true believer has with God.

Romans 8:15 "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Galatians 4:6 "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Not only, will God walk with us and be our God, but we are actually accepted into His family as His adopted children. Notice (in verse 12 above), that He is not only our God, but we are His people. I have said it before, but I think it is hard to separate Physical Israel which (verse 12), is speaking to, and spiritual Israel which is all believers in Christ.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

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."

Who, having done that, was able to fulfil the above promises. And which may be considered as an earnest and pledge of them, as well as be a motive to the Israelites. And an obligation upon them to obey the commandments of God, and walk in his statutes.

"That ye should not be their bondmen": This was the end of their being brought out of Egypt, that they might be no longer in a state of bondage to the Egyptians. Nor to any other, but to serve the Lord their God, by whom they were delivered. As those who are redeemed by Christ from worse than Egyptian bondage. From sin, Satan, and the law, are redeemed. That they might not be the servants of any, but be a peculiar people, zealous of good works to serve the Lord Christ.

"And I have broken the bands of your yoke": Which fastened it on their shoulders, that is, set them at full liberty, from the yoke of all their enemies. Particularly the Egyptians, who made

their lives bitter in hard bondage, making the yoke of it heavy upon them. As Christ has broken the yoke of spiritual enemies from off the shoulders and necks of his people (Isa. 10:27).

"And made you go upright": Who before stooped under the yoke, as well as were of dejected countenances. But now were made to walk in an erect stature, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra. Or in liberty, as Onkelos (see Gal. 5:1); and with heads lifted up and countenances cheerful.

We went into this (in chapter 12 of Leviticus), how the man child was born on the way to the Promised Land. The man child represents the physical house of Israel and also, the law that was given unto them. This journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, birthed the nation of Israel as the people of God. They had nothing to do with the freedom from being bondmen in Egypt. God was their deliverer.

In (verses 13-39), the exile of the people is predicted. In 722 B.C., the 10 northern tribes went into captivity to be followed by Judah in 586 B.C. (compare 2 Chron. 36:20-21).

Verses 14-39: These punishments will repay disobedience. This section of curses follows the pattern of the ancient Near Eastern treaties, in that it was much larger in number than the enumerated blessings. The "terror" would consist of "consumption", a general term that might include dysentery, cholera, typhoid fever, typhus fever, malaria, tuberculosis and various types of cancer. "The burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart" (causes life to wane), may be a reference to gonorrhoeal blindness. "Then I will punish your seven times more for your sins" indicates that these judgments are looked upon as God's discipline (Deut. 8:5; Psalms 38:1; 94:12; Prov. 3:11-12; Jer. 30:11; 31:18; Zeph. 3:2, 7; Heb. 12:5-11).

Amos laments that, despite judgments of famine and drought, disease and defeat, "Yet have ye not returned unto me" (Amos 4:6, 8-11). The reference to "seven times" (verses 18, 21, 24, 28), seems to be a round number for repeated punishments (compare Psalms 79:12; Prov. 24:16; Isa. 4:1).

The book of Revelation portrays a series of sevenfold judgments overtaking the world in the last days (Rev. chapters 5-16). "And I will break the pride of your power", indicates that quite often prosperity leads to pride and self-confidence (Deut. 8:11-19; 32:15).

Judgment cuts a man down to size and reminds him that his well-being really depends on God. The "heaven as iron", indicates no rain and "earth as brass" (bronze), indicates no crops (compare Haggi 1:9-11). All of these curses were sent by God as "a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant". Which is best interpreted, "And I will bring the sword upon you to avenge the breaking of the covenant" (Judges 2:11-15; 2 Kings 17:7-23; Isa. 10:5-19; Luke 19:42-44).

Here the Lord lists the punishments for disobedience: terror, disease, famine, and subjection to their enemies. "I will scatter you among the heathen"; foreshadows the exile at the hands of the

Assyrians and then the Babylonians, a circumstance that would bring sabbath to the land (26:34-35).

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

To his commandments, as the rule of their duty. And to his promises, as an encouragement to it, or to his prophets and ministers. Explaining and enforcing his law, and exhorting to a cheerful obedience to it. So the Targum of Jonathan, "if ye will not hearken to the doctrine of them that teach my laws;" which was the sin of the Jews in later times, for which captivity and other calamities befell them (Jer. 7:25).

"And will not do all these commandments": Which he had delivered to them by Moses. Whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial, recorded in this book and in the preceding. Even all of them were to be respected, attended to, and performed. For the law curses everyone that does not do all things it requires (Gal. 3:10).

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:"

"Break my covenant": By disobeying the commandments and the various laws of the Mosaic Covenant, Israel broke this conditional covenant. Unlike the ultimate provisions of the unconditional covenant made with Abraham, all blessings in the covenant of Mosaic law were conditioned upon obedience (compare Lev. 26:25).

They had a choice, just as we have a choice. They did not have to follow God. If they did not however, they would not know the blessings of God either. I want to stress here, that they have the choice. God would not force Himself upon them. God will offer salvation to us, but He will not go against our will and save us. We must want to be saved for God to save us. In the next few verses, we will see some of the consequences of not following God.

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."

"Consumption": Perhaps tuberculosis or leprosy is in view (the subject of much legislation in Lev. Chapters 13 and 14), but no certain identification is possible.

"Your enemies shall eat it": They will be conquered by their enemies at a time when those enemies will enjoy Israel's harvest.

There is no peace in the world. This terror is because they have no help in time of trouble. It was a foolish thing then, to turn away and not obey God. In fact, it is even more terror today to not follow in God's ways. The threat of nuclear war has the world literally scared to death, just to name one terror. We read just how frightening it will be on the earth before the LORD comes back.

Luke 21:26 "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

Consumption is a lung disease that has to do with breathing. The word that was translated consumption here, does not have a translation other than consumption. Ague means inflammation. This must be a terrible inflammation, if it causes blindness. This sorrow of heart is because there is no hope for them. This life is very short and full of trouble and sorrow, if there is no hope of the resurrection. As if the troubles in the body and mind are not enough, the ground will not produce for the person who rejects God. Even the little crop that does come will be eaten by others.

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."

Exert his power, and stir up his wrath and indignation against them, as enemies of his, to cut them off (see Psalm 34:16). Which is the reverse of having respect to them (Lev. 26:9).

"And ye shall be slain before your enemies": As they were sometimes by the Philistines and others.

"And they that hate you shall reign over you": As did the Chaldeans and Babylonians (see Psalm 106:41).

"And ye shall flee when none pursueth you": Of such fearful spirits should they be. And filled with such dread and terror of their enemies, so contrary from what is promised them on their obedience (Lev. 26:8).

We see in this person who has chosen the world over God, a person most miserable. Fear would cause a person to flee when no one followed. To be out of fellowship with God brings many problems. We see worldly people away from God, being overrun and destroyed by these very Israelites this message is given to, when they take the Promised Land away from heathen people.

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."

If such corrections by diseases of body, and by giving them up into the hands of their enemies, should be ineffectual to reform them. And bring them to obedience to the statutes and commandments of God, but should continue in their disobedience to him, and rebellion against him.

"Then I will punish you seven times more for your sins": That is, abundantly more, with sorer punishments, and these more frequently repeated.

To whom much is given, much is required. These Israelites were given the law, and the opportunity to be God's people. Any sin that they would commit would be in full knowledge.

The punishment being so great, is because they deliberately turned their back on God and sinned even with full knowledge that they were sinning.

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:"

Which the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret of the sanctuary, which they were proud of, trusted in, and boasted of. But was broke or destroyed, first by Nebuchadnezzar, then by the Romans. But it may rather signify their country, the glory of all lands for its fruitfulness, which for their sins should become barren, as follows. Or the multitude of their forces, and the strength of their mighty men of war, in which they put their confidence. It may take in everything, civil and ecclesiastical, they prided themselves with, and had their dependence on. Thinking themselves safe on account of them, but should be broken to shivers, and be of no service to them.

"And I will make your heaven as iron": So that neither dew nor rain shall descend from thence to make the earth fruitful. But, on the contrary, a heat should be reflected, which would parch it, and make it barren.

"And your earth as brass": That the seed could not be cast into it, nor anything spring out of it. For the service of man and beast, so that a famine must unavoidably follow.

God had offered them blessings above all the people around them. If their pride keeps them from following Him, then He will break their pride. If the heavens would not give forth her rain, this would be what the heaven and the earth would seem like. God will get their attention somehow. All through this, notice that the withholding of rain is in God's hand, and not in Satan's. The earth and the fullness thereof is God's.

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."

In endeavoring to till the ground, to plough, or sow, or to dig about the vines or olives, and prune them.

"For your land shall not yield its increase": Produce corn, and bring forth grass, the one for the use of men, the other for the use of the cattle, and therefore both must starve.

"Neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits": Such as vines, olives, figs, pomegranates, etc. Which were very plentiful in the land of Judea, and on which they much lived, and on which their more comfortable subsistence at least depended (see Hab.3:17). All this is the reverse of (Lev. 26:4).

Your physical strength is nothing compared to God. All of the strength in the world cannot make the earth produce, if God tells it not to.

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."

To his mind and will, to his laws, commands, and ordinances. Showing no regard unto them by a walk and conversation agreeably to them, but neglecting and breaking them continually. Or by chance, as the Targum of Jonathan, not with any intention and design to obey the Lord, and to honor and glorify him. But in a careless and indifferent manner, having no regard to the law of God. Only now and then, as it happens, act according to it, but having no concern for the honor and glory of God.

"And will not hearken unto me": To his voice in his laws and his precepts, or by his prophets, exhorting them to obedience to them.

"I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins": Greater and sorer punishments still. And these more frequently repeated, and in proportion to their transgressions of his righteous laws.

Just as God sent the 10 plagues on Egypt, and He will send them upon His people who continuously sin. The world will see plagues, even worse than the 10 plagues on Egypt, at the time of the wrath of God. How wonderful to see again in these last few lessons, that those who follow God's statutes will not feel the wrath of God.

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."

"High ways shall be desolate": The activity on a nation's roadway, i.e., messengers, merchants, and people traveling, reflected the well-being of that country. This is a picture of extreme economic siege.

This appears, if you are looking with physical eyes, that this is very cruel of God to do this. Remember though, they have a choice to avoid all of this, if they keep God's statutes. While they are off fighting in wars, the beasts will multiply and become a menace to their families. The condition of the unbelieving throughout history has been one of desperation.

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

Corrected and amended by these punishments, be prevailed upon to return from their evil ways to the Lord, and walk in his commandments, and keep his judgments, and do them.

"But will walk contrary unto me (see notes on Lev. 26:21).

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

Opposing himself unto them as their enemy, fighting against them in his providence. Whetting his sword, bending his bow, and causing the arrows of his wrath and vengeance to fall upon them. Or behaving towards them in a careless and indifferent manner, not regarding what befell them. Showing no peculiar concern for them, or as exercising any particular providence over them. But as if everything came by chance to them, which was the language of their actions, if not of their lips.

"And will punish you yet seven times for your sins": Add fresh corrections, and these greater than before, and more numerous in proportion to their aggravated transgressions.

When I read of all the earthquakes, storms, A.I.D.S. and so many other terrible things happening in our society today, I believe God is trying to get us to repent and turn to Him. It is so evident that nature is out of control. God is the controller of nature, as we have been reading here. Even the ozone covering could be restored by God, if we would see our necessity to repent and turn to God. Do you suppose the terrible brutality against the Jews and the threat of total destruction of the world we live in is the punishment to seven times, because we have chosen not to follow God?

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."

"Avenge the quarrel of my covenant": God's retribution for Israel's breaking the conditional Mosaic Covenant is pledged.

War upon them by the sword of their enemies. They that use and kill with the sword, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; their neighbors that delighted in war, and bore an implacable, hatred unto them. And gladly embraced every opportunity of shedding their blood, and ravaging their country.

"That shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant": The covenant made with them at Sinai, which they transgressed, and for which vengeance would be taken on them in this way. God so ordering it in his providence, though the enemy meant it not (Isa. 10:5).

"And when ye are gathered together within your cities": From the fields and villages, fleeing from the enemy invading and destroying, to their fortified towns and cities for safety.

"I will send the pestilence among you": Which shall destroy those that escaped the sword, and thought themselves safe in a strong city. And even the very soldiers in the garrisons, who were set for the defense of the city.

"And ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy": So many being taken off by the pestilence, there would not be a sufficient number to defend the place. And therefore obliged to give it up, by which means those that escaped the pestilence would fall into the hands 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."

Brought a famine, at least a scarcity of provisions upon them. Deprived them of bread, the staff of life, by which it is supported. Or however made it very scarce among them, so that they had hardly a sufficiency to sustain nature, and perhaps the blessing of nourishment withheld from that (see Isa. 3:1).

"Ten women shall bake your bread in one oven": For want of wood, according to Jarchi. Or rather through scarcity of bread corn, they should have so little to bake every week, that one oven would be sufficient for ten families. Which in a time of plenty each made use of one for themselves. And so Aben Ezra says, it was a custom in Israel for every family to bake in an oven by themselves, which they ate the whole week. Ten is a certain number for an uncertain, and denotes many, as in (Zech. 8:23). Making and baking bread was the work of women in the eastern countries, as we find it was particularly among the Persians, and continues to this day among the Moors and Arabs.

"And they shall deliver you your bread again by weight": There being not enough for everyone to eat what they pleased, but were obliged to a rationed allowance. Therefore, everyone in the family should have their share delivered to him by weight (see Ezek. 4:16).

"And ye shall eat, and not be satisfied": Not having enough to eat to satisfaction. Or what they did eat, God would withhold a blessing from it for their nourishment, the reverse of (Lev. 26:5).

This is a prophecy of the time when there will hardly be any grain to bake into bread.

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

To his commands, and to his prophets sent unto them time after time. And all his corrections and chastisements being ineffectual to reform them, and make them obedient to him.

"But walk contrary unto me" (see notes on Lev. 26:21).

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."

As in (Lev. 26:24). With this addition, in fury; being greatly provoked, and highly incensed. That no regard was had to him, neither to his commands, nor to his corrections. And therefore, would be determined to stir up his wrath, and pour out the fury of his indignation on them, which must be terrible.

"And I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins": Add new and many more chastisements, and that in hot displeasure, for their sins. And the repetition or doubling of the phrase, "I, even I, will do it", denotes the certainty of it. And that he will do it himself, and his

hand should be visible in it. And they should feel the weight of it, and be obliged to own that these were punishments inflicted by him for their sins.

You can see from this, that all these things happened unto them to make them turn back to God. If they will not repent and turn to His ways, He has no choice but to bring 7 times the problems upon them as before. The following Scripture says it all.

Nahum 1:6 "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him."

There is only one answer to this dilemma. REPENT.

2 Chronicles 7:14 "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Leviticus Chapter 26 Continued Questions

1. What does the author believe to be one of the greatest promises?
2. What does Romans 8:15 tell us of the relationship of Father God and the Christians?
3. What special name can only God's children call Him?
4. Whose seed are we, if we believe in Christ?
5. In verse 13, God reminds them that He brought them out of where?
6. The man child in of Leviticus chapter 12 is symbolic of whom?
7. Who was the deliverer for these people?
8. What is the complete turnaround in verse 14?
9. Whose choice was it for them to follow God, or not to follow God?
10. What terrible things would be brought on them, if they did not follow in God's ways in verse 16?
11. What does Luke 21:26 tell us of the condition of the world in the end?
12. What is consumption?
13. What is ague?
14. Who shall reign over them, if they decide not to obey God?

15. What would cause one to flee, when no one is following?
16. Verse 18 says, they will be punished how many times for their sin, if they choose not to repent and follow God?
17. God will make the heaven as what to them?
18. What will the earth be as to them?
19. Will all of this affect their crops?
20. How many plagues did God bring upon Egypt?
21. Why should we not look at these plagues God sent as cruelty?
22. The author believes what terrible things happening today is God trying to get His people to repent?
23. Who is bringing all of these terrors?
24. What is verse 26 a prophecy of?
25. What had all of these terrible things happened for?