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A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



BLESSINGS & CURSINGS: THE OUTWORKING OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT IN LEVITICUS 26



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*Ye shall make you no idols,
neither shall ye rear you up
a graven image, or a pillar,
neither shall ye place any
figured stone in your land,
to bow down unto it: for I
am Jehovah your God. Ye
shall keep my sabbaths,
and reverence my
sanctuary: I am Jehovah.
Leviticus 26:1-2*

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

In Leviticus 26, Moses gave a preview of Jewish history. When he wrote the Book of Leviticus, this was all prophecy, but by now, most of this chapter has already been fulfilled in history. In fact, the first thirty-nine verses of this chapter have already been fulfilled in history.

In this chapter, he also pointed out the principle of the Mosaic Covenant: blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience, showing its conditional nature. This, too, was a prophetic preview of Israel's history. This chapter closely parallels what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 28-30.

I. THREE BASIC LAWS: LEVITICUS 26:1-2

Moses introduces this chapter by reiterating three basic laws from previous segments of the Mosaic Law in verses 1-2: *Ye shall make you no idols, neither shall ye rear you up a graven image, or a pillar, neither shall ye place any figured stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am Jehovah your God. Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am Jehovah.*

A. The Law Prohibiting Idolatry

The first basic law is against idolatry in verse 1: *Ye shall make you no idols*; idolatry was forbidden in any form. The Jewish people were not allowed to make any idols or graven images for the purpose of worshipping the God of Israel, or any other god for that matter. They must not even place *any figured stone* in their Land for the purpose of worship. The reason God states for this first law is: *I am Jehovah your God*. The very name *Jehovah* emphasizes that God is a covenant-keeper. The phrase *I am Jehovah your God* emphasizes a covenantal relationship, specifically God's covenantal relationship with Israel.

B. The Law of the Sabbath

The second basic law is the Law of the Sabbath in verse 2a: *Ye shall keep my sabbaths*. The word *sabbaths* is plural because there are three kinds of *sabbaths* to be observed: the weekly Sabbath, the Sabbatical Year, and the Year of Jubilee.

C. The Law of the Sanctuary

The third basic law is the Law of the Sanctuary in verse 2b: *reverence my sanctuary*, meaning everything related or relevant to the Jewish Tabernacle. This is the proper place for public worship in contrast to verse 1, which is an improper type of worship. The only proper kind of worship and the only proper place of worship is in the Tabernacle, which God instructed the Jewish people build. The last phrase of verse 2 again gives the same basis *I am Jehovah*, emphasizing Israel's covenantal relationship with God.

II. BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE AND CURSINGS FOR DISOBEDIENCE: LEVITICUS 26:3-39

After giving these three basic laws and the covenantal foundation upon which they are based, what follows in the rest of the chapter shows the results of both obedience and disobedience to God's commandments as embodied in the Law of Moses. The rest of the chapter clearly emphasizes the conditional nature of the Mosaic Covenant.

Throughout this chapter, three key phrases are repeated more than once. The first key phrase is: *if ye will not hearken unto me*, meaning “if you will not listen to Me or obey Me” (vv. 14, 18, 21, 27).

The second key phrase is: *seven times for your sins* or *seven times more for your sins* (vv. 18, 21, 24, 28). The number seven is the number of perfection and completion. Thus, by saying *seven times for your sins*, He emphasizes complete or full punishment, a repeated series of punishments until it comes to completion or totality. It emphasizes the strengthening of the chastisement even to the height of its full measure.

And the third key phrase is: *if ye walk contrary unto me, I will walk contrary unto you* (vv. 21, 23, 24, 27, 40, 41).

A. Blessings for Obedience: Leviticus 26:3-13**1. The Specific Condition: Leviticus 26:3**

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them.

Moses begins this section by giving a specific condition. The condition for receiving the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant is: *walk in* [God's] *statutes, and keep* [His] *commandments, and do them*. This emphasizes both external and internal obedience.

2. The Three Categories of Blessings: Leviticus 26:4-12

If the Jewish people will meet the condition, then they will receive the

specific blessings mentioned in verses 4-12. Each category of blessings begins with the phrase *I will give*. God mentions three categories of blessings, given specifically for obedience.

a. Material Prosperity: Leviticus 26:4-5

then I will give your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 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.

With the opening phrase of the first category of blessings *I will give*, God promises to give them *rains in their* [proper] *season*. The promise itself is that of material prosperity, but a key source of that material prosperity is the rains. This was important for Israel, because, unlike the United States that receives rain in all four seasons of the year, rainfall in Israel follows a fixed rainy-season pattern. Rains begin in the middle of October; rains fall in November, December, January, and February; rains begin to subside in March and die out by mid April; and from mid-April until mid-October, no rain falls in the country. It should also be noted that the dry season from mid-April to mid-October is not truly dry, but in fact, it is the “dew” season. That is when the heavy dew comes upon the country, and the summer vine-crops such as grapes are grown by means of the heavy dew.

During that rainy-season from mid-October to mid-April, the season is divided into three periods. First, there are the early rains of October and November, which are a light, drizzly kind of rain that begins to soften the ground after the dry summer. Then comes the second period of rains, called the “main body of rains,” which falls in the months of December, January, and February. This is the major source of Israel's water supply for the year. Finally, there are the latter rains of March and April, which go back to a lighter, drizzly type of rain. If all three periods of rains come at the proper time and proper season, this will result in much greater productivity in the Land, and the result will be material prosperity. That is exactly what God promised in this first blessing.

God points out that the crops will be so abundant that threshing will continue until the time of the vintage; the vintage, in turn, will be so abundant that it will last until the time for sowing. Indeed, He states: *ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely*, hereby promising them that they will never know hunger and they will have security in the Land. In fact, famine was often a reason why Jewish people left the Land; this was the case in the Book of Ruth, which records how Naomi, her husband, and their two sons left the Land because of famine.

b. Peace: Leviticus 26:6-10

And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will cause evil beasts to cease out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

The second category of blessings God promises them *is peace in the land*. Notice again the opening phrase in verse 6, *I will give*. God promised them total security; they will *lie down*, and no one will make them *afraid*.

God promises them victory over their enemies in verses 7-8: *And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.*

In verse 7, they will chase their *enemies* with a *sword*. Verse 8 uses a common Hebrew idiom, “five Jewish people will be able to chase a hundred, and a hundred will be able to chase ten thousand,” meaning the defeat of a superior force by an inferior one.

This will all be the result of God's grace to Israel in verses 9-10:

And I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and will establish my covenant with you. And ye shall eat old store long kept, and ye shall bring forth the old because of the new.

God *will have respect* for Israel, and make them *fruitful* and *multiply* them in verse 9. He states that He *will establish* [His] *covenant with* [them]. This is dealing with the Mosaic Covenant, because obedience will result in receiving the blessings of the Mosaic Covenant. He then reiterates that they will receive an abundance of food in verse 10. In fact, they will have so much food that it will take a great deal of time just to eat it all. They will *eat old store* and, in spite of the increase of the population promised in verse 9, there will be a great amount of food production to feed all of them.

c. God's Presence in the Land: Leviticus 26:11-12

And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

The third blessing is God's presence in the Land. The place of His presence is in verse 11: *I will set my tabernacle among you*. The Shechinah Glory will take up its residence with the Jewish people in the Holy of Holies of that Tabernacle.

The result of God's presence is in verse 12: *I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.*

3. The Covenantal Base: Leviticus 26-13

I am Jehovah your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bars of your yoke, and made you go upright.

God concludes this section with the basis: *I am Jehovah your God*; this is the God with whom Israel has a covenant. He tells them that He is the One *who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt* at the Exodus for the purpose of no longer being slaves, but free. This is the God of redemption. Therefore, in appreciation for what God did for them, they should obey the terms of the Mosaic Covenant. In turn, if they obey the terms of the Mosaic Covenant, they will receive the blessings of that covenant.

B. Curses for Disobedience: Leviticus 26:14-39

Most of Israel's history will be spent living in disobedience rather than in obedience, therefore, most of this chapter deals with the curses for disobedience.

1. The Condition: Leviticus 26:14-15

But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall reject my statutes, and if your soul abhor mine ordinances, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant.

In contrast to obedience, God now deals with disobedience beginning in verse 14: *if you will not hearken unto me*. This means if they will not hear with the ear and obey. The next phrase *and will not do all these commandments* describes Israel's passive failure to observe specific commandments.

Furthermore He states in verse 15: *if you shall reject my statutes*, referring to the more active form of disobedience where there is deliberate and planned disobedience. The next phrase *and if your soul abhor mine ordinances* describes actions of disobedience out of hatred; when they actively disobey God in this way, they show their hatred of God. The result will be twofold: first, they will fail to observe and obey; and secondly, they will break God's covenant by violating the Mosaic Covenant and the Law of Moses.

As the rabbis looked at the entire context here, focusing on the figure seven that appears frequently, they said that they detected seven specific sins. First, they interpreted “if you do not hearken unto Me” as failure to study the Mosaic Law. Secondly, “if you will not keep *all these commandments*” was interpreted literally. Thirdly, “if you reject My statutes” was taken to mean making others do the same. Fourthly, *if your soul abhor mine ordinances* was seen as disliking the sages or rabbis. The fifth sin, “if you will not keep” was interpreted as not letting others keep these commandments. Sixth, “if you will not do all My commandments” was taken to mean denying the commandments. And seventh, *but break my covenant* was viewed by the rabbis as denying God Himself. This is a rabbinic view of why the figure seven appears in the passage.

2. The Five Waves of Judgment: Leviticus 26:16-33

God now deals with the specific curses themselves. In dealing with the curses, He is going to point out that there will be more than just one judgment. In fact, He mentions five waves of judgment.

a. Illness and Enemies: Leviticus 26:16-17

I also will do this unto you: I will appoint terror over you, even consumption and fever, that shall consume the eyes, and make the soul to pine away; and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be smitten before your enemies: they that hate you shall rule over you; and ye shall flee when none pursues you.

The first wave of judgment is the stress from illness and enemies. In

verse 16a, the first curse is that of illness; they will suffer from all types of illness as a divine judgment. God says: *I also will do this unto you*; in other words, God takes the initiative with this statement, and introduces the cursing aspect: *I will appoint terror over you*, which will cause stress in the following ways. First, there will be *consumption*. The Hebrew word for *consumption* refers to any disease that causes a “wasting away.” This would include diseases such as dysentery, cholera, typhoid fever, typhus, malaria, tuberculosis, and cancer. He then states: *and fever*. The Hebrew word here refers to any disease that inflames and wastes the body, causing life to slowly wane. The result is that the eyes will be consumed; this involves gonorrhea blindness, which wastes the eyes. The *consumption and fever* will also make their *soul to pine away*, causing the life to drain or deteriorate.

The second curse is that they will suffer from their enemies in verse 16b. When enemies attack them, it will mean a loss of crops. In verse 17, it will mean subjugation to a stronger power.

Here again the rabbis found seven specific punishments: first, depression or consumption; secondly, excitement, meaning fever; thirdly, a destroyed outlook in hopelessness, meaning the soul grieves until it finally dies; fourthly, they will plant crops in vain, for their enemies will eat these crops; fifth, God's anger, meaning they will be defeated; sixth, enemies will literally dominate them; and seventh, they will flee when no one is actually chasing them.

b. Drought and Famine: Leviticus 26:18-20

And if ye will not yet for these things hearken unto me, then I will chastise you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power: and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass; and your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its increase neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.

If there is no repentance however, then there will come a second wave of judgment: *drought and famine*. Why will the second wave of judgment come? Because of failure and sin in verse 18: *if ye will not yet for these things hearken unto me*. In other words, because they failed to learn from the discipline and judgments of the first wave of judgment, now will come the second wave of judgment: *then I will chastise you seven times more for your sins*; a divine judgment will now intensify in the second wave of judgment.

In the second wave of judgment, God mentions two specific things in verse 19. First, the coming of a drought. He begins with a declaration: *I will break the pride of your power*. The productivity promised in the blessings section is what made them proud. Such productivity made the nation strong and powerful. But now that is going to be removed by means of withholding the rains in their seasons. So He promises: *I will make your heaven as iron*, so that no rain falls, and therefore, *your earth as brass*, which cannot be sown with seed.

The second curse is going to be famine in verse 20: *your strength shall be spent in vain*. This has to do with the labor in the field, because, if there is no rain, there is no produce. The land will not yield its increase, and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit.

Here again the rabbis saw seven specific punishments. First, “I will break your aggressive pride,” which they interpreted to mean the coming destruction of the Temple. Secondly, “I will make your skies like iron,” is taken to mean rain will not fall and there will be no rain or dew. Thirdly, “Your land shall be like copper,” which they interpreted to mean that the crops will rot from moisture. Fourthly, “you will spend your strength in vain,” meaning everything will be taken away. Fifth, “the land will not yield its crops” was taken literally. Sixth, “the trees of the land will not provide” meant that there will be no apple or pomegranate trees left. And seventh, “the trees and land will not produce their fruit,” which they interpreted to mean that the fruit which begins to grow will not ripen, but will fall off the tree in an immature state.

c. Wild Animals: Leviticus 26:21-22

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. And I will send the beast of the field among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your ways shall become desolate.

If Israel fails to respond to the second wave of judgment, there comes a third wave of judgment: wild animals. God again begins with the basis in verse 21: failure and sin. The verse begins: *if you walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me*; this means that they also failed to learn from the second wave of judgment. Then comes the third judgment: *I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins*.

He specifies this third wave of judgment as being a plague of wild animals in verse 22: *I will send the beast of the field among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle*. The wild animals will not merely attack their livestock, but they will also attack their children. He then mentions two results: first, He will make them *few in number*, the result of being robbed of their children; and secondly: *your ways shall become desolate*, the result of losing their livestock. In fact, these specific prophecies were fulfilled, both before and during the Assyrian Captivity, and also before and during the Babylonian Captivity (II Kg. 17:25-28; Ezek. 5:17; 14:15, 21).

True to form, the rabbis also found seven specific punishments here. First, there were wild animals. Secondly, domestic animals will become noxious. Thirdly, insects and other small creatures will come, creating problems. Fourthly, they will kill the children. Fifth, they will destroy the livestock. Sixth, they will reduce the population. And seventh, the roads will become desolate.

d. War: Leviticus 26:23-26

The fourth wave of judgment is war. Just as each wave of judgment is

preceded by spelling out the basis or reason for the judgment, this is found again in verses 23-24: *And if by these things ye will not be reformed unto me, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you; and I will smite you, even I, seven times for your sins.*

Verse 23 states the problem once again, which is that of failure: *if by these things you will not be reformed unto me*; in other words, they also failed to learn from the third wave of judgment and failed to properly repent. Therefore, they commit the sin: *but will walk contrary unto me*. So we see the result in verse 24: *then will I also walk contrary unto you*. Thus, comes the fourth wave of judgment, and God states: *I will smite you, even I, seven times for your sins*. This emphasizes that God will bring another wave of judgment.

God describes the fourth wave of judgment in verses 25-26: *And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall execute the vengeance of the covenant; and ye shall be gathered together within your cities: and I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. When I break your staff of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.*

God states: *I will bring a sword upon you*; this is the symbol of war. The verse continues: *that shall execute the vengeance of the covenant*, referring to the Mosaic Covenant. Again, what they are experiencing in this wave, as in the preceding waves, is the cursing facets of the Mosaic Covenant. He mentions the siege of war in verse 25: *ye shall be gathered together within your cities*; they will be under siege in the city, and adds that this will be accompanied by the pestilence, the disease of war. Eventually, the besieged city will fall as it will be unable to withstand the siege.

With siege and war, always comes famine in verse 26: *When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven*. Normally, there is one oven to one woman. But as part of this judgment, food will become so scarce that even what ten women have all together will fit into one oven at the same time. Food will become so scarce that all that these ten women have to bake will not even fill one oven. The verse continues: *and they shall deliver your bread again by weight*, meaning that it will be carefully measured to make it last. Food will be very strictly rationed. The result is: *ye shall eat, and not be satisfied*. Even after eating, they will still feel hungry. Whereas in the blessing aspect, there will be so much food they would not be able to eat it all, the cursing aspect means that no matter how much they will eat, they will walk away hungry. There will never be enough food. We see elements of this fulfilled with the Babylonian Captivity (Jer. 14:18; Ezek. 5:12).

Here again the rabbis detected seven specific punishments. First, “I will bring a vengeful sword against you to avenge the covenant.” Secondly, “You will huddle in your cities, because the enemy is outside the wall.” Thirdly, “I will send the plague against you and give you over to your enemies, so that when you flee the city to escape the

enemy, you will be killed by the enemy.” Fourthly, “I will break the staff of your bread.” God will take away any food that is eaten with bread, not just the bread, but all food eaten with bread is taken away. Fifth, “Ten women will bake your bread in one oven.” The bread of ten women will fit into one oven. Sixth, “You will bring back a small amount of bread” There will be so little that they will not be able to bake the bread properly. Seventh, “They will eat, and not be satisfied” The food itself will be cursed.

e. Devastation, Deportation, and Dispersion:

Leviticus 26:27-33

Finally, the fifth wave of judgment, which is devastation, deportation, and dispersion, will come. The reason is given verses 27-28: *And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; then I will walk contrary unto you in wrath; and I also will chastise you seven times for your sins.* Each wave is preceded by the basis. God again presents the problem in verse 27: *if ye will not for all this hearken unto me.* In other words, if they will not learn from the fourth wave of judgment, and they continue the sin, the result will be the fifth wave of judgment in verse 28: *then will I walk contrary unto you in wrath.* Notice that the word *wrath* is mentioned, because God's anger is going to significantly increase. Furthermore, He states: *I also will chastise you seven times more for your sins,* chastising them in order to correct them.

God continues to describe the fifth wave of judgment, which includes five specific elements in verses 29-33: *And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your sun images, and cast your dead bodies upon the bodies of your idols; and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities a waste, and will bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies that dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you: and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.*

The first element will include cannibalism in verse 29. We see the fulfillment of this during Israel's history in II Kings 6:28-29. It was clearly a part of the Babylonian siege (Lam. 2:20; 4:10). Furthermore, Josephus points out in his book, *The Jewish War*, that this happened during the Roman siege as well.

The second element in the fifth wave of judgment will include the destruction of idolatry and idol worshippers in verse 30. Concerning idolatry, God states: *I will destroy your high places, and cut down your sun-images.* Concerning the worshippers, He will: *cast your dead bodies upon the bodies of your idols;* there will be wholesale slaughter, and my soul shall abhor you.

The third element concerns the cities and the Temple in verse 31: *I will make your cities a waste, and I will bring your sanctuaries unto desolation.* The word *sanctuaries* is plural because it will include the First Temple,

which will be destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., as well as the Second Temple, which will be destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. The result will be: *I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors*, because all Temple rituals will cease. Furthermore, Israel had become unacceptable because of her sins.

In the fourth element, God tells them that there is the devastation of the Land itself in verse 32. The judgment is: *I will bring the land into desolation*. The result will be: *your enemies that dwell therein shall be astonished at it*.

And in the fifth element, God says there will also be world wide dispersion in verse 33: *you will I scatter among the nations*; this was fulfilled as of A.D. 70. *I will draw out the sword after you* refers to the persecutions the Jewish people will suffer in the Dispersion, which has been fulfilled ever since. The state of the Land during the Dispersion is going to be one of *desolation*, and the cities will be a *waste*.

The rabbis once again noted that there were seven specific punishments recorded here. First, “You will eat the flesh of your sons and daughters.” Secondly, “I will destroy your altars and smash your sun images.” Thirdly, “I will let your corpses rot under the remains of your idols.” Fourthly, “I will thus have grown tired of you,” meaning that God will remove His divine Shechinah presence. Fifth, “I will let your cities fall into ruins,” meaning they will become ghost towns. Sixth, “I will make your sanctuaries desolate,” no one will go to the Temple. And seventh, “I will no longer accept your sacrifices,” the sacrificial system will cease to exist.

3. The Results of Judgment: Leviticus 26:34-39

After describing these five waves of judgment, He then describes the results upon the Land and upon the people.

a. Upon the Land: Leviticus 26:34-35

Then shall the land enjoy its sabbaths, as long as it lies desolate, and ye are in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, even the rest which it had not in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

The first result is on the Land: *the land shall enjoy its sabbaths*. In other words, the people never observed the Sabbatical Year. So in this judgment, when the people are removed from the Land and the Land lies desolate, it will enjoy its sabbatical rest. In fact, the reason the captivity was seventy years long is that they failed to observe seventy sabbatical years. These had to be made up with the seventy years of captivity (II Chr. 36:21).

b. Upon the People: Leviticus 26:36-39

And as for them that are left of you, I will send a faintness into their heart in the lands of their enemies: and the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as one flees from the sword; and they shall fall when none pursues. And they shall stumble one upon another, as it were before the sword, when none pursues:

and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

The result on the people will be in four specific aspects. First, there will be a spirit of fear in verses 36-37a; *they shall stumble* upon each other in their fearful stampede to escape. The second aspect is the spirit of weakness in verse 37b: *ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies*; even when there is no war they will still lose. The third aspect is death in the Dispersion in verse 38: *ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up*. And the fourth aspect is pining away in the Dispersion in verse 39: *they that are left of you shall pine away in your enemies' lands, for their own sins*. They will also pine away for the sins of their fathers. This has to do with inner anguish which tears the heart and destroys life.

Verse 39 ends with a picture of the Jewish people living in world-wide dispersion and suffering persecution. According to the New Testament, the world-wide dispersion came as a direct result of the rejection of the Messiahship of Yeshua (Jesus).

4. Summary of Verses 1-39

Most of what Moses wrote as prophecy has now been fulfilled in history. He prophesied that when the Jewish people eventually entered the Land, while there would be short periods of obedience bringing divine blessings, for the most part, they would fall into periods of disobedience that would bring down different forms of divine discipline. First, there would be subjugation, which was fulfilled essentially in the days of the Judges. Secondly, there would be captivity, which was fulfilled by the Assyrian and the Babylonian Captivities. But then, thirdly, there would come a world-wide dispersion which, according to the New Testament, was a direct result of the rejection of the Messiahship of Yeshua. By the end of verse 39, the world-wide dispersion is a fact; the first thirty-nine verses of this chapter have already been fulfilled. However, Moses did not stop writing there.

III. ISRAEL'S FUTURE FINAL RESTORATION: LEVITICUS 26:40-45

It should be pointed out that, just as the first thirty-nine verses have been fulfilled literally, so should the remaining verses of this chapter be fulfilled in the same way: literally. It is the height of inconsistency, as so many theologians throughout Church history have done, to take the first thirty-nine verses concerning the cursings of the Jews as being literal, and then try to allegorize and spiritualize the remaining part of the chapter as simply speaking of the Church. God has not changed his audience anywhere in this chapter. The same people He scatters are the same people He is going to regather. If one accepts the first

thirty-nine verses literally, as virtually everyone does, it is inconsistent to claim that the remainder of the chapter is simply spiritual and will never really be fulfilled with literal, ethnic Israel. That is simply an inconsistent exegesis; that is reading one's own theology into the text rather than deriving one's theology from the text. Hence this study will interpret verses 40-45 the same way as verses 1-39: literally, unless there is something in the text that states otherwise.

A. The National Confession: Leviticus 26:40-41a

And they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, in their trespass which they trespassed against me, and also that, because they walked contrary unto me, I also walked contrary unto them, and brought them into the land of their enemies.

1. The Confession of Iniquity

Verses 40-41a prophesy that some day there will be a national confession of Israel: *And they shall confess their iniquity*. Notice that the word *iniquity* here is singular. It is a sin, one specific sin, that some day will be confessed by a future generation of Israel.

In verse 40, God states that they will also confess *the iniquity of their fathers*. Once again the word *iniquity* is singular; it is an iniquity committed by a historical generation, one that was committed by the fathers. The point of the verse is that there was a specific sin that was committed by their fathers of a previous generation that resulted in this world-wide dispersion. However, the final world-wide restoration will be brought about when a future generation of Israel confesses this iniquity of their fathers.

This one specific sin is the rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus on the basis of demon possession. This is called the “unpardonable sin.” It is important that the exact nature of the unpardonable sin is understood in its own context. In the context of Matthew 12, the unpardonable sin is the national rejection by Israel of the Messiahship of Yeshua while He was present, on the basis that He was demon-possessed. That is the specific *iniquity* committed by the fathers. The phrase “by the fathers” means the generation of Israel that was living at the time when Jesus was present, the generation to whom Yeshua came, offering Himself as the Messiah and to establish the Kingdom. It was that generation of Jesus' day, which rejected Him.

Once that sin was committed, it was unpardonable for that generation, meaning nothing they did after that could change the fact of the coming judgment, which was the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in A.D. 70. But once A.D. 70 had come and gone, and once the prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction was fulfilled and the punishment for the rejection was fulfilled, any Jewish generation after A.D. 70 that would confess this one specific sin of rejecting the Messiah on the basis of demon possession is promised this final

restoration.

While the principle is true that any Jewish generation that will come to repentance will see His return, of course, prophecies such as Matthew 24-25 clearly state that it will be the generation living in the Great Tribulation. They will finally confess this one specific sin, which will, in turn, bring about the Second Coming of the Messiah.

So, they must confess two things: first, their own iniquity, and secondly, the iniquity of their fathers. Again, it was a sin committed by the fathers and continued by them that must be confessed before the restoration of these verses can actually occur. He goes on to state in verse 40a: *in their trespass which they trespassed against me*. Again, the word trespass is singular. The whole emphasis here is on one singular sin. A singular trespass must be confessed. The point is that there is one specific sin committed by their fathers, but continued by them, that must be confessed. Again, that one sin is the rejection of the Messiahship of Yeshua on the basis of being demon possessed.

2. The Confession of Divine Discipline

Once they come to the point of confessing the fact that they rejected the Messiahship of Jesus, then they will also confess the fact that they have suffered divine discipline; all the persecution they suffered was not because of their righteousness, but because of their unrighteousness: *and also that, because they walk contrary unto me, I also walk contrary unto them*. In verse 41a, the result was that God *brought them into the land of their enemies*. In other words, after realizing that Yeshua really was the Messiah, then coming to the confession of the sin of rejecting Him and affirming His Messiahship, they will also come to realize and confess that all of their sufferings in the Dispersion have indeed been a result of divine judgment.

The five waves of judgments they have suffered over and over again have been a direct result of divine discipline. There is a common teaching in Judaism that the reason for these sufferings is because of their righteousness. But that is not the biblical teaching; on the contrary, they have suffered because of their unrighteousness.

B. The National Regeneration: Leviticus 26:41b

if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.

The confession of Israel's national sin, the confession of repentance, will lead to a national conversion, a national regeneration, a national salvation. The phrase *if then their uncircumcised heart be humbled* emphasizes regeneration. Then there is an admission that all of their sufferings were due to sin, and that is all a part of their national confession: *and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity*. Not only must they confess the sin of rejection, they must also confess the fact that what they suffered was directly due to divine discipline. Their recognition of all this will show that *their uncircumcised heart [is] be humbled*.

The Bible speaks about the circumcision of the flesh and the circumcision of the heart. Circumcision of the flesh is external; circumcision of the heart is internal. In fact, in the Bible, the anti-type of the circumcision of the flesh is not baptism, as has often been taught in Church history, rather, it is the circumcision of the heart. When God states that their uncircumcised heart will be humbled, He means there will be a national salvation, a national regeneration, of the Jewish people.

C. The National Restoration: 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.

Their national restoration will result in the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. The judgments they received were the judgments and curses of the Mosaic Covenant. Once they come to national repentance, the final restoration is going to be based upon the Abrahamic Covenant.

God made five covenants with the Jewish people. Four of these covenants are eternal, unconditional covenants: the Abrahamic Covenant, the Land Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant. However, God also made another covenant, which, unlike the others, was conditional and temporary: the Mosaic Covenant.

The Mosaic Covenant is the covenant with which Leviticus 26 has mostly been dealing; the blessings and cursings have been the result of the Mosaic Covenant. Once the curses of the Mosaic Covenant have run their full course and Israel comes to national repentance and national salvation, then God says He will remember the Abrahamic Covenant. Therefore, the two covenants dealt with here are the Abrahamic Covenant and Mosaic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant is conditional and temporary; the Abrahamic Covenant is unconditional and eternal.

So God states: *then will I remember my covenant with Jacob*. While Isaac had two sons, the covenant was sustained through only one son: Jacob, not Esau. Only after Jacob, was this sustained through all twelve of his sons, who are the fathers of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Then He states: *and also my covenant with Isaac*. Although Abraham had eight sons all together through three different women, the covenant was sustained only through Isaac, not Ishmael, the son of Hagar. Nor was this sustained through the six sons Abraham had by Keturah. Finally, God says: *also my covenant with Abraham will I remember*. This is the origin of the Abrahamic Covenant, Abraham himself. Thus, the Abrahamic Covenant runs from Abraham through Isaac only, through Jacob only, then through the twelve sons of Jacob, and to the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

Verse 42 ends with this little statement: *I will remember the land*. The Abrahamic Covenant had many features; in fact, there were fourteen

specific provisions or promises in that covenant. However, there was one promise that is repeated over and over again: the promise of the Land. God promised the Land to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob personally, and He also promised the Land to their descendants.

He gave the specific borders of the Land. What is interesting to note is that never, never, never, in Jewish history have the Jewish people possessed all of the Promised Land. They have certainly possessed great portions of it-sometimes more, sometimes less-but they never possessed all of the Promised Land. Even David and Solomon, at the height of their power, did not possess all of the Promised Land. So when He states: *I will remember the land*, the point is that only when there is a national salvation and the final restoration of the Jewish people to the Land, then and only then, will Israel possess all of the Promised Land.

Just as verses 1-39 have been fulfilled, some day verses 40-42 will also be fulfilled. There will be a national salvation of Israel. There will be a national restoration of Israel. They will possess and dwell in all of the Promised Land.

D. The Status of the Land: Leviticus 26:43

The land also shall be left by them, and shall enjoy its sabbaths, while it lies desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they rejected mine ordinances, and their soul abhorred my statutes.

Here God summarizes the status of the Land until the final restoration in three ways. First, He says that the land *shall be left by them*; for most of the years since A.D. 70, the majority of the Jewish people have been living outside the Land, and that remains true to this day.

Secondly, the Land *shall enjoy its sabbaths, while it lies desolate without them*. This was true during the seventy years of Babylonian Captivity. During these many years of the Dispersion following A.D. 70, basically, the Land has also enjoyed its Sabbaths.

Thirdly, during the Dispersion, they suffered the punishment of God for two reasons. First, they *rejected* [God's] *ordinances*; this has to do with their external acts of disobedience to the commandments of the Mosaic Law. Then, secondly, they suffered because *their soul abhorred* [God's] *statutes*; this deals with their inward state. Internally, they were abhorring God, hating God, and that became their excuse for why they disobeyed the commandments of the Lord.

So the promise of the future restoration is guaranteed, meanwhile, the status of the Land is one of enjoying its Sabbaths during the world wide dispersion.

E. The Status of the People: Leviticus 26:44-45

And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject

them, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God; 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 nations, that I might be their God: I am Jehovah.

These two verses describe the status of the people until the restoration. In verse 44, the promise is that there will never be a total destruction of the Jewish people. The Abrahamic Covenant promises that the Jewish people are going to survive no matter how severe the persecutions become. The cursing segments of this chapter described how severe the persecutions will become. The promise remains the same: no matter how bad it becomes for the Jewish people, they will always survive. In spite of men like Hitler and others, God will never allow a total annihilation of the Jewish people. For Him to allow that would be to break the covenant that He made with their ancestors, which guarantees the survival of the Jewish people.

God states unequivocally: *that I might be their God: I am Jehovah.* Again, this emphasizes God's covenantal relationship with Israel. Because God is in a covenantal relationship to Israel, Israel will always remain the Chosen People.

The *covenant* spoken of in verse 45 is the Mosaic Covenant, because that is the covenant He made with them when God brought them out of the land of Egypt. When God states: *I will for their sakes remember the covenant,* He points out that, even though He must bring the cursing aspects of the Mosaic Covenant, eventually it will lead to the total fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. Hence, the cursings of the Mosaic Covenant come for the purpose *that I might be their God.* And again he repeats the basis: *I am Jehovah,* the covenantal relationship between God and Israel.

His point is this: God must carry out the judgments of the Mosaic Covenant before giving the full blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant. And with that point, Moses concludes his prophetic, historic discussion. Again, just as the cursings were fulfilled literally, so will the future restoration blessings be fulfilled in the same manner: literally.

CONCLUSION

These are the statutes and ordinances and laws, which Jehovah made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by Moses.

This verse is not merely the conclusion to chapter 26, it is actually the conclusion to the Book of Leviticus. Essentially, chapter 27 is an appendix to the Book of Leviticus.☆

NOTES

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