

# *The Book of Leviticus*

by  
William D. Barrick, Th.D.

Bereans Sunday School Class  
Placerita Baptist Church



## Section Outline

- I. Sacrificial System (Leviticus 1–7)**
  - II. Ministry of the Priesthood (Leviticus 8–10)**
  - III. Laws of Purification (Leviticus 11–15)**
  - IV. Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)**
  - V. Covenant Ordinances (Leviticus 17–24)**
  - VI. Conclusion of the Sinai Covenant (chapters. 25–26)**
    - A. Further Applications of the Sabbatical Principle (chapter. 25)**
    - B. Blessings and Curses of the Covenant (chapter. 26)**
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- 1. Precept (26:1-2)**
    - a. Prohibition of Idols (v. 1)**
      - Idolatry was not an option.
        - ✓ Either the LORD was the sole suzerain, or the Israelites were in breach of covenant.
        - ✓ The LORD’s authority is exclusive. He alone is God (Isaiah 43:10-11, 15; 44:6-21).
      - The LORD’s self-revelation (“for I am the LORD your God”) is the ultimate reason for the prohibition of idolatry.
        - ✓ This is the key phrase in Leviticus 18–26.
    - b. Preservation of Sabbaths and Sanctuary (v. 2)**
      - Sabbath observance signifies God’s dominion over Israel.
      - Reverence for the sanctuary is related to the terrestrial manifestation of the LORD’s presence in the midst of Israel.

- ❑ Neither Sabbath observance nor reverence for the sanctuary are acceptable without a proper heart attitude and recognition of God's lordship over every area of one's life.
  - ✓ Obedience is the key: 1 Samuel 15:22 and James 1:22.

## 2. Promise (26:3-13)

### a. The Prerequisite: Obedience (v. 3)

- ❑ Verse 3 is the "if"-clause for the "then"-clause of verses 4-12.
  - ✓ "Walk" emphasizes the totality of obedience in the various spheres of life's activities.
  - ✓ "Keep" indicates the root concept of obedience: preserving the commandment by practicing it.
  - ✓ "Do" is a generalizing term drawing the previous two verbs together in one summary statement.

### b. The Product: Blessing (vv. 4-12)

- ❑ All of the blessings are tied to the land.
- ❑ The blessings are presented in categories:
  - ✓ Productivity (vv. 4-5): God promised to send rain so the land would produce bountifully.
  - ✓ Peace (v. 6): God's gift for their obedience includes security from wild animals and marauding nations alike.
  - ✓ Power (vv. 7-8): God also provides His people with the confidence to meet their enemies in battle and to prevail, even if they are outnumbered.
  - ✓ Population (v. 9): God gives fertility and fruitfulness to His people so that they are multiplied (cp. Genesis 17:6).
  - ✓ Provision (v. 10): God provides the increase in food supplies required by an increasing population.
    - See Leviticus 25:22 regarding the Jubilee years.
    - See Exodus 16:4-36 regarding the manna in the wilderness.
  - ✓ Presence (vv. 11-12): The greatest gift of all is God's presence among His people—the basis of all blessing.
    - See 2 Corinthians 6:16.

### c. The Premise: The LORD is Savior (v. 13)

- ❑ Salvation precedes blessing.
- ❑ God delivered Israel from Egypt before giving them a land and before blessing them in that land.

## 3. Penalty (26:14-45)

Cursings are the just retribution for disloyalty and disobedience.

**a. The Cause: Disobedience (vv. 14-15)**

- ❑ Here the content is the opposite of that described in verse 3.
- ❑ Rejection of divine revelation is rejection of the Lord Himself (cf. Numbers 11:20; Hosea 4:6).
  - ✓ The tension of wills: God's will vs. man's will.
  - ✓ The tension of claims of authority: God's person and deeds vs. man's person and deeds.
  - ✓ *What or who has authority over your life?*
    - The Lord and His infallible Word?
    - The church and her "infallible popes"?
    - Yourself and your self-styled sovereignty?

**b. The Consequence: Retribution (vv. 16-38)**

- ❑ The unfolding drama of retribution consists of five stages:
  - ✓ **Debilitation and defeat** (vv. 16-17): Illness and weakness increases Israel's susceptibility to invasion.
    - The divine presence becomes hostile rather than beneficial.
    - The situation under the LORD's curse is the opposite of the blessing in verses 6-8.
  - ✓ **Drought** (vv. 18-20): Reversal of the land's productivity is the result of an attitude of arrogant self-sufficiency.
    - See Proverbs 16:18.
    - There are degrees of chastisement that might be increased if there is no change in Israel's rebellious spirit.
  - ✓ **Devastation by wild beasts** (vv. 21-22): Continued opposition to God results in the removal of the blessings of verses 6 and 9.
    - If Israel chooses to live like Egypt, God will treat them like He treated Egypt.
    - See 2 Kings 2:23-25 and Ezekiel 5:17.
    - See Amos 5:19.
  - ✓ **Deprivation by siege** (vv. 23-26): Continued failure to accept the Lord's correction results in the invasion of foreign armies.
    - There is no liberty for the disobedient; there is no rest for the wicked.
    - Their prolonged, obstinate disobedience to God results in His increased opposition to them.
  - ✓ **Deportation** (vv. 27-38): Without repentance disobedient and idolatrous Israel is ultimately expelled from the land.
    - Since the blessings are all tied to the land, removal from the land indicates a complete cessation of all blessings.
    - Exile is the ultimate in earthly punishments for Israel to experience.
    - Deportation consists of the dehumanization of Israelites (cannibalism, v. 29), the devastation and desolation of cities (vv. 30-32), and dispersion in foreign lands (v. 33).

- Desertion of the land is the means by which the LORD provides it with its rightful sabbatical rest (vv. 34-35). See 2 Chronicles 36:20-21.
- Exile for the Israelites will be a time of terror, a time of experiencing the taunts of their enemies, and a time of decreasing numbers (vv. 36-38).

**c. The Contingency: Repentance (vv. 39-45)**

- ❑ Divine retribution has the repentance of God's people as its ultimate goal (vv. 39-41).
- ❑ Reactivation of the LORD's covenant with His people must be based upon their recognition of His lordship and confession of their guilt (vv. 42-43).
- ❑ The LORD Himself is committed to the restoration of His people, since He always remains faithful to His covenant even if His people are disloyal (vv. 44-45).
  - ✓ See Romans 11:29.
  - ✓ See 2 Timothy 2:12-13.

**4. Postscript (26:46)**

This final verse establishes the historical and geographical setting for the revelation that was given.

**Summary of Applications from Leviticus 26:**

- Blessing is conditioned upon obedience to God's Word.
- Disobedience brings divine chastisement and removal of blessing.
- Persistent disobedience brings increasingly severe chastisement.
- Repentance restores the disobedient to divine blessing.

**VII. Appendix: Vows and Promises (chapt. 27)**

- ❑ Chapters 25 and 26 share the sabbatical principle, while chapters 26 and 27 share an emphasis on vows and/or promises.
  - ✓ See Deuteronomy 23:23.
  - ✓ See Ecclesiastes 5:2-5.

*What kinds of promises or vows have you made or might you make?*

**A. Promises or Vows for Personal Service to God (27:1-8)**

- ❑ God graciously provides for the redemption of vows that a person should not have made in the first place.
  - ✓ *For example:* What if Hannah (1 Samuel 1:11) had wished to change her mind?

- The redemption price is the standard market price for a slave.
- The redemption price is determined equitably on the basis of individual ability.

**B. Promises or Vows of Possessions to God (27:9-25)**

- Livestock that was promised could be redeemed under certain conditions (vv. 9-13).
- Houses and fields also could be redeemed (vv. 14-25).
  - ✓ Redemption consisted of the value plus one-fifth (cf. 5:16 and 6:5).
  - ✓ Redemption must be in accord with the law concerning restoration of property in the year of Jubilee.

**C. People or Things That Already Belong to God (27:26-33)**

- The firstborn already belonged to God (vv. 26-27).
  - ✓ See Exodus 13:2.
- Things or people under the formal ban belonged to God (vv. 28-29).
  - ✓ Compare Joshua 6:17-19 and Exodus 22:20.
- Tithes consisting of livestock belonged to God (vv. 30-33).
  - ✓ Tithes of crops or field could be redeemed.

**D. Epilogue (27:34)**

**Summary of Applications from Leviticus 27:**

- Being faithful and godly involves keeping one's word.
- Promises should not be made rashly.
- Humble yourself and negotiate directly to resolve promises you should not have made to begin with. (Proverbs 6:1-5)