

LEVITICUS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Leviticus chapter 25 as we continue our study of the Word of God and we finish up this fascinating book. With that said, let's begin reading in Leviticus chapter 25, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

LEVITICUS 25**VERSES 1-2**

1. Here we see the Lord instruct Moses regarding the Sabbath of the land or, as we will see, every seventh year the land was to rest. Also, this was to take place when they entered the Promise Land, the land of Canaan. So by faith they heard these words and believed that one day they would enter in, God promised them! They just didn't realize it was still some 39 years down the road because of their unbelief when they saw the enemy and they did not trust what God had told them. Again, it took them 1 day to get out of Egypt but it took 40 years for Egypt to get out of them!

VERSES 3-7

1. Every seventh year the land was to rest. There would be no harvesting, sowing but whatever grew, you were to leave it alone. Then how would they eat, how would they survive? As we move to Leviticus 25:18-22 we will see that in the sixth year God would provide enough food for them to eat until the eighth year when they would harvest the land once again. The land got its rest and the people would see and learn to trust in the Lord in providing for them.

2. Tragically, as they entered the land and for the next 490 years they never gave the land its Sabbath rest. And in Leviticus 26 we will see that if they disobey the Lord here, they will go into captivity and that is exactly what happened. For 70 years the Southern Kingdom of Judah was in captivity in Babylon, yes, for their idolatry, but the 70 years was the payment of the 490 years they did not give the land its Sabbath rest!

VERSES 8-12

1. Here we see the Year of Jubilee established or every fifty years was like a Sabbath year. Interestingly enough, our founding fathers were aware of this and thus, they put on the U. S. Liberty Bell this verse: “Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.” (V. 10 KJV). But what is this year of Jubilee all about? Let’s read on and we will see.

VERSES 13-17

1. Remember in the book of Joshua as the children of Israel entered the Promise Land, the land of Canaan, it was divided up between the various tribes and their families and thus, this land was to be a permanent possession to them. You see, the land of Israel could never be sold; it could only be leased for a period of time.
2. So after the seventh Sabbath years or 49 years, there was the Year of Jubilee where all property, except in the walled cities, were returned to their original owners. All Hebrew slaves were set free. And the land would receive a second straight year of rest in the Year of Jubilee. This law helped from allowing a wealthy or powerful person from obtaining all the land and gaining a monopoly on it and in the end, exploiting the people!

VERSES 18-22

1. God is telling them that if they obey then He will provide for them. Yes, from a logical and human perspective it does not make sense but the Lord is not asking them to figure it out but to trust in Him! He still is asking us to trust in Him today, even when it is not logical or is humanly possible to do. It is as Jesus said in Matthew 6:33-34, “**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.**” The children of Israel did not obey God and they missed out on His blessings and received His judgment! I wonder how often we miss out on the blessings of God because we do not trust Him?

VERSE 23

1. Isn't this interesting! Today we hear all kinds of talk about who the land of Israel belongs to and they are wrong! You see, it belongs to the Lord and He has given it to the children of Israel – it is theirs! In fact, as with us, the Jews were pilgrims and strangers just passing through this world and thus, what God gave them, they cannot sell, even though they are trying! In the end, God will get it back!

2. So the land of Israel could never be sold permanently but it was in a sense leased. In the Year of Jubilee it would return or it could be bought back sooner at any time by the owner or a kinsman redeemer!

VERSES 24-28

1. Here is a picture of the kinsman redeemer or the Goel, who was a near relative and he could help buy back what was his relatives. Our kinsman redeemer or Goel is Jesus Christ! He bought us or purchased us out of the slave market you might say, for we were slaves to sin! Now, if the kinsman redeemer could not buy back the land and the owner could not buy back the land, then, in the Year of Jubilee it would return to the owner!

VERSES 29-34

1. Why was the sale of property in a walled city not released in the Year of Jubilee or after a year he could not redeem it after it was sold? Because it was a place to live but in the rural land it was more than just a place to live, it was where they earned their living as they worked their fields! There was an exception and only one to the homes that could be redeemed back within a walled city and that was if a Levite sold it. They could redeem it back at any time; it didn't matter if it was in the country or a walled city!

VERSES 35-38

1. Here God is telling His people that they were not to make money off the less fortunate or those who fall into difficult times. He tells them to help them and don't rip them off. Isn't that just the just the opposite of what we see today! People are having a hard time and yes, get cash now but the rate of interest in some of these places is outrageous. How sad when we don't follow God's example but let greed lead the way and it does and is hurting people! Don't take advantage of others!

VERSES 39-46

1. God is not condoning slavery; He is just trying to protect slaves from mistreatment. You see, for the most part, slaves were not treated well and God is telling His people that it didn't matter if they were Jews or foreigners; they still needed to be treated humanely. Now, for the Jew who owed a debt and couldn't pay it back, he could work as a slave to pay off the debt and if it came to be the Year of Jubilee, he was then let free! For the foreign slave, he was the families or the owners.

VERSES 47-55

1. God is very fair and He is making sure each party gets what they deserve. For instance, if someone becomes a slave for a debt that he owed and the Year of Jubilee is 30 years down the road and it will take him that long to pay off the debt. Then if a relative was going to buy him back, say after 15 years, he would have to pay the remaining 15 years he was going to work for his master before he would be set free. The same was true for property.

2. Also, listen again to Leviticus 25:55, **“For the children of Israel are servants to Me; they are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”** The children of Israel were servants of God, does that sound familiar? It should because we are bondslaves of Christ, freely giving ourselves to Him, not because of a debt we do owe and could never pay, but out of love.

3. One last point regarding this chapter and this is from Allen P. Ross in his book, *Holiness to the LORD*. He wrote:

The basic principle to stress in this chapter as the rationale behind the laws is the LORD's oft-repeated expression: "The land is mine, for you are strangers and sojourners with me.' God is sovereign over the affairs of the world; thus he has the right to release from bondage or slavery whom he wishes, to remove the land from the rich and distribute it as he wishes. This truth kept any Israelite in the physical world, and should keep any minister in the spiritual world, from personalizing the work given to him or her, from taking credit for it, or from jealousy guarding it as his or her own. It is a sacred trust to be removed some day when the LORD makes all things new. The truth in this passage ought to humble us in our work before God.

- Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the LORD*, p. 464

LEVITICUS 26**VERSES 1-13**

1. In this chapter God tells them that they will be blessed if they obey Him but if they disobey Him they will receive His curses upon them and their land. In these first 13 verses we see the blessing for obedience. Now some may not like this or disapprove of this, but this is a spiritual law. We have physical laws, of course, like gravity. Now I may not like the law of gravity, think it is foolish, but just because I feel that way, it doesn't negate the law. I can go to the top of a 10-story building, telling myself I just don't believe in the law of gravity and when I step off that building, I will understand that I will suffer the consequences of my unbelief and my foolish actions. The same is true with spiritual laws. It doesn't matter if you like them or believe in them or agree with them, they are a reality. Yes, these were specifically for the children of Israel but I do also think they can apply to us as a people and a nation.

2. What are these spiritual applications for us? If we obey the Lord our lives will be refreshed, they will be fruitful. We will have food to sustain us, both physical and spiritual. There will be peace in your life, not necessarily an absence from storms but a peace that comes from God even in the midst of a storm. There will be a cleansing of the land or in your family or in your workplace, your neighborhood and-so-on. Your enemies, even though they may be bigger, stronger, more in numbers will flee and that fleeing may be related to them coming to know the Lord as well as seeing the power of God working in your life! God will walk with you. He will lead you. And God will set you free from the bondage of sin so that we might walk in His wonderful light!

VERSES 14-39

1. God did not send these curses upon Israel the moment they stepped out of line, but He was patient, wanting them to turn back to Him. If they didn't, the curses began and they started out slowly and if they still didn't repent, the curses would increase seven times more. If that did not bring them to repentance, the curses would increase another seven times. And finally, if they still refused to repent before God then God would curse them seven times more than before, they will be driven out of the land!

2. Did this happen to the children of Israel? You bet it did. They rebelled and God cursed them as He said He would. Not only did they go into captivity, but just as God said, the food supply ran short as the enemy surrounded them and they responded by eating their children. In II Kings 6:26-29 we see this played out. We are told, **“Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, ‘Help, my lord, O king!’ And he said, ‘If the Lord does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or from the winepress?’ Then the king said to her, ‘What is troubling you?’ And she answered, ‘This woman said to me, ‘Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.’ So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, ‘Give your son, that we may eat him’; but she has hidden her son.’”** Just as God said would happen if they rebelled against Him came to pass! God says what He means and means what He says!

Jesus warned the Jews of His day of the coming destruction of Jerusalem for rejecting Him and in 70 AD Titus and the Romans came in and destroyed the city, burned down the temple just as Jesus said. In the Works of Josephus, The Wars Of The Jews, 6.3.4, we are told of what took place and it is the judgments that God spoke of here in Leviticus chapter 26 for their disobedience. We are told:

There was a certain woman that dwelt beyond Jordan, her name was Mary; her father was Eleazar, of the village Bethzob, which signifies the house of Hyssop. She was eminent for her family and her wealth, and had fled away to Jerusalem with the rest of the multitude, and was with them besieged therein at this time. The other effects of this woman had been already seized upon, such I mean as she had brought with her out of Perea, and removed to the city. What she had treasured up besides, as also what food she had contrived to save, had been also carried off by the rapacious guards, who came every day running into her house for that purpose. This put the poor woman into a very great passion, and by the frequent reproaches and imprecations she cast at these rapacious villains, she had provoked them to anger against her; but none of them, either out of the indignation she had raised against herself, or out of commiseration of her case, would take away her life; and if she found any food, she perceived her labors were for others, and not for herself; and it was now become impossible for her any way to find any more food, while the famine pierced through her very bowels and marrow, when also her passion was fired to a degree beyond the famine itself; nor did she consult with any thing but with her passion and the necessity she was in. She then attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said, "O thou miserable infant! for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? As to the war with the Romans, if they preserve our lives, we must be slaves. This famine also will destroy us, even before that slavery comes upon us. Yet are these seditious rogues more terrible than both the other. Come on; be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a by-word to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews."

As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and eat the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed. Upon this the seditious came in presently, and smelling the horrid scent of this food, they threatened her that they would cut her throat immediately if she did not show them what food she had gotten ready. She replied that she had saved a very fine portion of it for them, and withal uncovered what was left of her son. Hereupon they were seized with a horror and amazement of mind, and stood astonished at the sight, when she said to them, "This is mine own son, and what hath been done was mine own doing! Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself! Do not you pretend to be either more tender than a woman, or more compassionate than a mother; but if you be so scrupulous, and do abominate this my sacrifice, as I have eaten the one half, let the rest be reserved for me also." After which those men went out trembling, being never so much afrighted at any thing as they were at this, and with some difficulty they left the rest of that meat to the mother. Upon which the whole city was full of this horrid action immediately; and while every body laid this miserable case before their own eyes, they trembled, as if this unheard of action had been done by themselves. So those that were thus distressed by the famine were very desirous to die, and those already dead were esteemed happy, because they had not lived long enough either to hear or to see such miseries.

3. I thought God was a God of love, how could He do this? Because He does love them so much and He does love us so much that He won't leave us to continue in this dangerous path. You see, they did that to themselves by their actions. But listen to what our God does next and I think you will see His love come shining through!

VERSES 40-46

1. It looked so dark, so hopeless. Their sin had brought the chastening of God upon their lives and their land. It does not look good and yet, these verses open up with the word, "**But.**" In other words, there is a ray of hope from God. He hasn't forgotten them. He was not going to wipe them out. He will remember His covenant He made with them. All they must do is repent of their sin and they will return to the Land that God promised them. Yes, Israel had broken the covenant they made with God but God would not and will not break the covenant He made with them!

2. Listen how this works in our lives. In Ephesians 2:1-3 we see the problem, "**And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**" Is there any hope? I doesn't sound like it and yet, with our God there is great hope!

Notice the words that Paul uses beginning in verse 4, “**But God.**” You see, that changes everything as He tells us, “**But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**” Ephesians 2:4-10.

Thus, we may and will blow it. We may break the covenant we made with God and He will chasten us because He loves us. But He will not break the covenant of everlasting life in Christ that He has made with us! I think that gives me great hope!

3. As we conclude this chapter, listen to these words from Allen P. Ross, once again from his book *Holiness to the LORD*. He wrote:

The teaching about punishment for sin is never a pleasant subject. But these announcements were made in an effort to turn people away from sin and to bring about true repentance. This idea can be expressed this way:

In order to prevent sin and bring about salvation, God warns people that he will bring judgment upon them for unbelief and disobedience, both in this life and in the life to come.

In this chapter God seems to be concerned with temporal punishment on the land and the people, leading to their exile and the land's rest. The judgments clearly result from pervasive and continued evil, and that is what happened in the nation's history – they were sent into exile. For those who died with unrepentant hearts, the exile from God continued and they never found peace (Isa. 57:21); any who died as believers were spared evil and rested in peace (57:1-2).

The sovereign LORD God can still deal with nations or individuals who abhor his laws – and do so in ways that are intended to bring them to repentance. The New Testament affirms this for Israel, for the church, and for the world.

- Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the LORD*, pp. 481-482

LEVITICUS 27

VERSES 1-2

1. In this chapter were things that are consecrated to God. These were voluntary but God is instructing them on how this was to be done.

VERSES 3-8

1. Here we see a value assigned to those who were vowed to the Lord. Obviously if you were between the age of 20 and 60 years old, you were more valuable than a child. Why was that? Because, in general you were more useful, more beneficial to society! But what if you couldn't afford it? God does not leave anyone out. The priests would evaluate your resources and come up with a fair price for you to pay.

2. How does that apply to us today? Folks, we are to give our lives as a living sacrifice to the Lord and none of us are too small, too insignificant, not useful or don't have talents to be used by God. God has given to us life and He wants us to live it for His glory as we serve Him and minister to others!

VERSES 9-13

1. The idea here is that if you vowed to give a clean animal to the Lord as a sacrifice and then you wanted to redeem it from this vow of consecration, you could exchange it with another animal that was clean. Why would you do that? Possibly because the animal was more valuable to you!

2. If you gave to the Lord and unclean animal and then desire to keep it, you would pay the value of the animal; let's say a donkey plus 20% and that kept the vow still in place. If you wanted to give it to the priest, he would set a value on it and the priest could use the animal or sell it.

VERSES 14-25

1. Now the Lord speaks of houses and land that is dedicated to the Lord. If a person did this with their home, then the priest could set a value on it plus 20% and that would go into the treasury of the tabernacle, just like with the animals. This way he can still use the house and keep the vow.

2. In regards to the field that is dedicated to the Lord, if you wanted to keep the vow and yet use the land, the value would be based upon the potential produce of the land as well as the number of years until the Year of Jubilee.

VERSES 26-27

1. Back in Exodus 13:1-2 we are told, **“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.’”** With the firstborn, they were the Lord’s and you couldn’t buy them back if it was a clean animal. It was to be sacrifice to the Lord. You see, it was His! But, if it was an unclean animal it could be sold or bought back from the Lord and the money once again would be given to the treasury of the tabernacle! Obviously a firstborn child could also be redeemed!

VERSES 28-29

1. It would seem that devoting something to the Lord was more binding than a vow and it seems that whatever it was, man or object or beast it would be given totally to the Lord, it couldn’t be used for anything else. It could not be bought back.

VERSES 30-33

1. If you tithed an animal or seed to the Lord you could buy it back for the price of the animal or seed plus 20%. Thus, you could keep the seed and pay the Lord what was due Him.

VERSE 34

1. Please notice that these words given to Moses on Mount Sinai by God and then Moses gave them to the children of Israel were not suggestions, good ideas, if you felt like it, they were the commandments of the LORD! And for us, there are great spiritual truths for us to apply to our lives to help us to grow in the Lord. It is as Clarke wrote,

“READER, thou hast now gone through the whole of this most interesting book; a book whose subject is too little regarded by Christians in general. Here thou mayest discover the rigid requisitions of Divine justice, the sinfulness of sin, the exceeding breadth of the commandment, and the end of all human perfection . . . By this law then is the *knowledge*, but not the *cure* of sin . . . We see then that Christ was the END of the law for *righteousness* (for *justification*) to every one that believeth.”

2. As I begin to rap up this study this evening and we close the book of Leviticus, I hope you have seen the holiness of the Lord and what God requires of us. Yes, we can't accomplish by our own efforts anything that God wants us to do. We first must come to Christ and as we receive Him and His gift of life, then we are to walk in holiness, not because of the Law, but out of love for Him!

3. Let me close this evening with these words of Matthew Henry as he wrote:

We are not under the *dark shadows* of the law, but enjoy the clear light of the gospel, . . . that we are not under the *heavy yoke* of the law, and the carnal ordinances of it . . . , but under the sweet and easy institutions of the gospel, which pronounces those the *true worshippers that worship the Father in spirit and truth*, by Christ only, and in his name, who is our priest, temple, altar, sacrifice, purification, and all. Let us not therefore think that because we are not tied to the ceremonial cleansings, feasts, and oblations, a little care, time, and expense, will serve to honour God with. No, but rather have our hearts more enlarged with free-willing offerings to his praise, more inflamed with holy love and joy, and more engaged in seriousness of thought and sincerity of intention. *Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith*, worshipping God with so much the more cheerfulness and humble confidence, still saying, Blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

- Matthew Henry