

Leviticus 24-27

Leviticus 24

This chapter focuses upon the responsibility of the priests around the Tabernacle. They were to care for the lamp-stand and the bread. The subject is interrupted by the actions of two young men. We are not told what led to the fight, but we do know that as emotions heated up one of the men took it to the next level and blasphemed God. At this point fight stopped and the elders broke away to seek the mind of God regarding how to punish this particular trespass.

The LampStand and the Bread

Part of the responsibilities of the priests were to care for the lamp and the bread on a daily basis. As time went on and the nation and ministry grew the priest established a rotation for serving within the holy place. This is seen in Luke when Zachariah enters the temple.

Luke 1:8-9

So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

The maintenance of the lesser articles in the tabernacle illustrates the believer's need for faithfulness to God in the daily routine of life and not just during spiritual mountaintop experiences.

Luke 16:10

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

Leviticus 24:2

“Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually.

The lamp stand was designed by God, constructed by the artisans and placed behind the first veil in the Holy place. This lamp was fueled with special oil and was designed to provide continual light for the tabernacle and its inner services.

The oil for the lamp was filled daily to ensure continual light illuminating the holy place.

This oil is symbolic of the work of the Holy Spirit. In a vision Zechariah saw the lamp-stand being filled without the work of the priests. When he asked about it he was told that the work of the ministry would be accomplished not by might or power but by the Spirit of the Lord.

This lampstand is also a picture of the presence of the Lord in His church. Jesus warned the church of Ephesus

Revelation 1:20

The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

Revelation 2:5

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place—unless you repent.

The Showbread

Leviticus 24:5

“And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake.

The Showbread was changed weekly and sat in the holy place within the first veil of the temple.

This bread illustrates Christ who is the bread of life.

John 6:35

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

Just as the bread was attended to daily it is a good idea for the believer to daily dive into the Word of God where he can encounter the Lord

This bread was also referred to as “The Bread of Presence” and pictured the fellowship God wants to have with His people

Exodus 25:30

And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me regularly.

In Leviticus 24:10 the instructions for the priests are interrupted by the actions of two young Israeli men who got in a fight.

This is the second of two narrative passages in Leviticus. The first is found in chapters 8-10

Things turned from bad to worse when one of them became enraged and began to blaspheme the name of God. This was a capital offense.

Some applications include

The danger of being unequally yoked

The young man was the child of a Hebrew woman and an Egyptian man. There is nothing unbiblical or sinful about interracial marriage (Moses married an Ethiopian woman) the problem is when a believer gets involved with an unbeliever. In that situation it won't be long before they are faced with compromise. This sets up a scenario where children have a more difficult time walking with the Lord because of the double standard that is often at play within the home. This is attested to by countless examples. As a result we need to be careful where we choose to hang out and with whom we choose to establish relationships. It is utterly untrue that we cannot control who we fall in love with. If we set a standard that starts with looking for a person who loves God and desires to serve Him we will illuminate many unnecessary difficulties

The danger of anger

Paul exhorts us in Ephesians 4:26

NIV

In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,

NLT

And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry,

ESV

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

Clearly there is a difference between being angry, which is an emotion and sinning which is an action.

As believers we must always have our emotions under the government of the Word. One of the most common problems today are believers who are being governed by their emotions. The Bible refers to this as walking after the flesh and fulfilling its desires.

How to determine the mind of the Lord

Leviticus 24:12

Then they put him in custody, that the mind of the Lord might be shown to them.

This is one of four such cases where Moses had to await further divine revelation before a situation could be properly handled (cf. Num. 9:6–14; 15:32–36; 27:1–11).

Under the old covenant blaspheme was a crime punishable by death. Because of the seriousness of his actions this man was placed in custody while the leaders took the necessary time to seek the mind of the Lord. Two important principles stand out:

First, before making a big decision Moses and his leadership team took the necessary time to seek the Lord. They realized that God was interested in their lives and had a plan for their current situation. Years later Paul wrote that God has for-ordained good works for us to walk in. That means that He has a wonderful plan for our lives and if we seek Him He will provide direction that will allow us to make good decisions and remain upon the narrow path that leads to abundant life.

Second, it is important to notice where they went to hear from the Lord. They did not look to past experience, or to the culture around them. They did not gather the people together for a popular vote or allow their emotions to guide them by "following their heart." Instead they got alone with the Lord and looked into His written word. Their situation was a difficult one and the answer they received for the Word was hard but they followed in nonetheless.

When we are seeking to make decisions it would be a good idea to follow the pattern set here. We need to realize that God has a plan for us but we also need to realize that the details for that plan are found in

Scripture. The life that is guided by the light of the Word of God is the life that will be led into the way everlasting.

Leviticus 25

The Sabbatical Year

Leviticus 25:2-4

“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall keep a sabbath to the Lord.

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.

“as people were to work six days and then rest on the Sabbath, so the land on which they lived was to be worked for six years (v. 3) and then allowed to rest on the seventh or sabbatical year” (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Israel not only kept a weekly sabbath but was also required to keep a year long sabbath every 7th year. This sabbath was designed to give the land rest as well as make the nation dependent upon the Lord. God established a system where His people would always need to look to Him for provision. They were taken from a land that survived from the Nile, to a land with very little water apart from annual rainfall. In addition they were required to rest one day a week even during seed time and harvest and here they are instructed to allow the land to sit dormant for a year every seven years.

Leviticus 25:6-7

And the sabbath produce of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, for your livestock and the beasts that are in your land—all its produce shall be for food.

The principle of the sabbath year is that God can be trusted and will always provide us with more than enough

God went on to promise that if they kept the sabbatical year He would provide enough to meet their needs not only for the missing year but for an additional year.

Leviticus 25:20-22

“And if you say, “What shall we eat in the seventh year, since we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?”

Then I will command My blessing on you in the sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years.

And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat of the old harvest.

If they trusted Him and obeyed His word they would receive even more than they gave up.

They skipped one year of work and received provision enough for three years.

This seems to be a common Principle with the Lord. If we trust Him with our finances, He promises to meet our needs. He will do the same with our time, talents, and energies.

The Bible is filled examples where something small is given to God and that small offering is multiplied enough to meet whatever need the child of God is facing

- Obviously we see it with the bread and fish. Small ministry resources given to the Lord are able to accomplish great things
- We also see it with giving, the only place in scripture we are told to test God is with finances
- We see it with abilities. An untrained shepherd gives his slingshot to the Lord and the giant is conquered
- We see it with time. We find that Joshua gave what they had to accomplish the task the Lord called them to and the Lord held back the sun to extend their time and complete the task
- We see it with people. Gideon's small troops were able to do what the entire nation had been unable to do.

The Year of Jubilee

There is no narrative where jubilee is being practiced. We are left to wonder how often if all it was a part of Israeli social life

Leviticus 25:8

“And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years.

Every 49 Israel was to celebrate a special sabbatical year. They called it jubilee

The English word jubilee means - a season of celebration

The Hebrew word means - a shout of joy.

The people needed to realize that the land of Israel was God’s property and His people were its tenants

We cannot expect the world to understand this but at least we as believers should be in agreement that the Land has and always will belong to God and He reserves the right to do with it as He pleases. Much end times prophecy is predicated upon Israel being back in the Land. Daniel speaks of the temple being reconstructed and the antichrist desecrating it. This can only happen if Israel is occupying Jerusalem and the Temple mount.

Leviticus 25:9

Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land.

The trumpet blast on the day of atonement of the 50th year designated it as the Jubilee.

Because it was a a sabbath year, no sowing, or reaping or gathering would be done.

Leviticus 25:10

And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.

This year was to be consecrated to the Lord and was a time of release for the people.

Jubilee deals largely with land, property, and property rights. According to Leviticus, slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven, and the mercies of God would be particularly manifested

The year of jubilee impacted the value of a property or of a person being sold into slavery. The closer to the year the less valuable the property became.

The same concept is true with leased land today. The closer to the lease the lower the value of the home. We once saw a house listed 40% below market value for the neighborhood. We were ecstatic until we found it was on leased land and the lease was due in two years and was 1/3 of the value of the home.

Those sold into slavery were set free, family lands that had been sold were returned

Leviticus 25:18

“So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; and you will dwell in the land in safety.

This same promise is repeated in a variety of ways and contexts throughout the law.

Essentially God is making a covenant with Israel that if they remain committed to Him and His word He will take care of their every need including provision and protection

Redemption of Property

Leviticus 25:23

“The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.

Land that was sold could be redeemed by a relative or by the person who sold it. They would pay back what they sold it for minus the number of years it was in the possession of another.

Leviticus 25:29-30

“If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; within a full year he may redeem it. But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee.

Keep in mind that this was for farm lands. Houses within the walled cities, which would cover the type of domain we live in today, once sold became the property of another permanently. As a result, they had a year to buy back their homes. Once that year passed it was no longer theirs.

The book of Ruth records a time when a family had sold land because of poverty and the land was purchased back in their behalf by a relative.

We also see this principle in Jeremiah 32:7-12

Moses once again addresses the problem of poverty.

Then, as now there are many variables in the equation that leads to poverty. In some cases disobedience or even outright sin and rebellion are the cause. In other cases someone else's sin causes poverty, while in other cases tragedy or difficulty is the cause. In some cases a person's poverty may be a result of limited or diminished capacities. What're the cause, the law had regulations to ensure the poor were being adequately cared for.

We saw in Leviticus 19 that the corners of the fields were to be left for the poor. They could rise early and work hard to provide for themselves at the expense of the wealthy.

Two further systems are set in place here.

First they could sell family land. This would put liquid assets at their disposal enabling them to pay off debt and get established. If they were able they could buy back the land or wait until the year of jubilee when it returned to the family.

Second they could become household servants or domestic slaves. There were regulations set on the treatment and compensation for slaves.

Leviticus 25:47-48

“Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him;

A second purpose of that year is given in the supplemental passage (Deut. 15:1–11), the canceling of all debts. Also a freeing of slaves occurred at this time (Deut. 15:12–18

Redemption was based upon how close the purchase was to the year of jubilee. Obviously the farther away from a set free date the more the purchase price would be for the slave.

Leviticus 26

Leviticus 26:1-2

“You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the Lord your God. You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am the Lord.

The chapter begins with a reminder of two foundational commandments.

First, no graven images are to take the place of the Lord.

This was due to the fact that no image could rightly represent God, nor did God want man to get into the practice of making Him in their image. We must be careful today not to shape God into an image we like but rather accept Him as He reveals Himself to be within His Word.

Second, they were to keep the Sabbath. As we have seen the sabbath served to give the people rest, distinguish them from other nations and to keep them dependent upon the Lord.

The reverence of the sanctuary reminds us that the sabbath was a spiritual exercise.

Leviticus 26:3

“If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,

Leviticus 26:3-13 is filled with conditional promises. They are set before us in an "if-then" statement

If you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments.

Walking is used as an idiom for living our lives by the standards presented in the word of God. It is not that we are saved by living a certain way, but because we are saved we seek to live according to the teachings of the Bible.

Moses lists 5 promises predicated on Israel submitting to and living after the Word.

- Provision - God promised adequate rainfall and healthy crops
- Peace - God promised to keep their enemies at bay
- Victory - God promised they would defeat their enemies
- Prosperity - they would have more than they needed
- Relationship - God promised to walk with them

Again these promises were conditional. If Israel failed to submit to and walk in accordance with the teaching of the word they would miss out on the promises.

The New Testament is also filled with conditional promises

Salvation is conditional upon faith in Christ

The blessed life is conditional upon surrender to the Lord and living after the principles of the Word

Over and over Jesus declared “Blessed are those who...”

Leviticus 26:14-15

“But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant,

Leviticus 26:14-39 give us another set of conditional promises. These ones are negative and are predicated upon rejecting God's Word and His ways.

- If you do not obey...
- If you despise...
- If you do not perform...
- If you break my covenant...

Failing to obey or perform the Word is usually preceded by despising the Word.

To despise means to look at something as though it were of little value. A person who despises the word is one who does not think that it is all that important. They give little time to reading, memorizing or being taught the Word and as a result do not live according to its principles

The greatest revivals in history have stemmed from a return to the Bible.

If we want to see our world revived we need to do all we can to ensure the Word of God is being proclaimed truthfully and faithfully

This section focuses upon at least 6 promises for those who despise the Word and do not let it be the lit that directs their lives

Keep in mind that not all these promises are transferable to the new covenant. Some of them are repeated as promises to the church and individual Christian, but not all of them. For instance the first promise is that God would protect Israel from disease. This promise was not related to diet, cleanliness or quarantine but as a result of obedience to the Word. Under the new covenant we have no such promise. We find the godliest of saints being plagued with physical infirmity. Among these are Paul and Timothy

The promises

- 16- disease
- 17- defeat
- 19- drought
- 20- famine
- 22- wild beasts

All of this was designed to get the attention of the people and bring them back to a place where God could bless their lives. It was not a one time decision for or against the Lord.

Leviticus 26:23

“And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me,

God often operates that way. When His people stubbornly refuse He responds by creating an environment that gets their attention. This was true of Israel as a whole and is the hinge upon which the story of the prodigal son turns.

- 24- over thrown by enemies

Leviticus 26:27

“And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me,

After another chance they would suffer a complete overthrow by their enemies

Leviticus 26:33

I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.

This would take place in 587 BC as Babylon overthrow Judah and Jerusalem

In an interesting turn, Moses attributes the final collapse of the nation to failing to observe the sabbath years.

We see a similar account where Samson's failure was attributed to cutting his hair. It is not that the hair gave him strength but that cutting it was the sign of the end of his Nazarite vow. In the same way the foundation of the promises is the covenant Israel had won the Lord. This was based upon trust.

The remainder of this chapter gives a promise that even after utter failure and complete collapse of the nation, if the people will once again turn to the Lord they will be forgiven and restored.

Leviticus 26:40

'But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me,

This took place in 539 BC and is the subject of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Seeing this happen in Israel's history should give us great comfort knowing that it is never too late to turn to the lord.

On a side note, Israel not only returned to the land in 539 BC because they cried out to the Lord, but they again returned in 1947 AD. This is evidence that the promises of God are stronger than the commitment of the people. We can have complete confidence that God will ultimately fulfill all His purposes

LEVITICUS 27

This chapter will close out the book and focus on vows offered to the Lord

Leviticus 27:2

"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When a man consecrates by a vow certain persons to the Lord, according to your valuation,

Vow -

Webster - a solemn promise or assertion by which a person is bound to an act, service, or condition

Synonymous include oath, pledge promise troth and votive

The Hebrew word means to promise.

Vows could include

27:1-8

Dedicating yourself to the Lord.

The most well known of these vows was the Nazarite vow which is explained in detail in numbers 5 and is seen in the lives of characters like Samson, Samuel, John the Baptist and a group of believers from the church in Jerusalem. It is even likely that Paul practiced the Nazarite vow. Luke wrote:

Acts 18:18

So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He had his hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow.

Leviticus 27 explains the valuation of a vow. If a person sought to end the vow for a particular reason they would have to pay off the vow

The reason for the variation in value was based upon the amount of work would be accomplished

Other vows referenced here include

Leviticus 27:9- 13

Animals given to the Lord

If someone wants to redeem the animal that was offered they could take it back for the cost of the animal plus 20%

Leviticus 27:14-

Homes could be dedicated to the Lord

Fields could also be dedicated to the Lord

This would be a picture of dedicating our workplace to the lord
and perhaps giving from the proceeds

A few important things to keep in mind regarding vows

First a vow was a sign of a further commitment to the lord and did not replace the need to submit to God. A person could not live however they wanted and pay off the Lord with a vow

Second, vows must be carefully considered. We find within the narrative of scripture at least one vow that was performed without truly considering the cost