

The Two Pathways

Leviticus 26

Leviticus series #20

October 23, 2022

PreSermon Comments

- Last two in Leviticus, then Jude, New Testament to begin 2023
- Christmas Carols for Advent, online only on Christmas morning

Charles Spurgeon My text has two parts. The first is very agreeable to my mind, and gives me pleasure; the second is terrible in the extreme. But, since they are both the truth, they must be preached.

Introduction | The End of Leviticus

- **Leviticus 26** ⁴⁶ These are the statutes, ordinances, and laws the LORD established between himself and the Israelites through Moses on Mount Sinai.
- **Roy Gane** Leviticus 26 provides a dramatic climax to the book of Leviticus, after which the concluding rules of chapter 27 are anticlimactic.

The Big Picture

**After having been redeemed, saved, called, and chosen: marriage ceremony, how do we live together?*

Step 1: Meet regularly with God | sacrifices/forgiveness, priesthood, ritual purity

Step 2: Be shaped by God's holiness | holiness code

Step 3: Enjoy God's presence forever | sabbaths, festivals

Conclusion: Keep or break the covenant | very common feature of ancient covenants

The Summary Statement

Leviticus 26 ¹ Do not make worthless idols for yourselves, set up a carved image or sacred pillar for yourselves, or place a sculpted stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the LORD your God. ²

Keep my Sabbaths and revere my sanctuary; I am the LORD.

- Two broad headings: no idolatry, meet with God regularly

Covenant Blessings

Leviticus 26 ³ If you follow my statutes and faithfully observe my commands, ⁴ I will give you rain at the right time, and the land will yield its produce, and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. ⁵

Your threshing will continue until grape harvest, and the grape harvest will continue until sowing time; you will have plenty of food to eat and live securely in your land. ⁶ I will give peace to the land,

and you will lie down with nothing to frighten you. I will remove dangerous animals from the land, and no sword will pass through your land. ⁷You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword. ⁸Five of you will pursue a hundred, and a hundred of you will pursue ten thousand; your enemies will fall before you by the sword. ⁹I will turn to you, make you fruitful and multiply you, and confirm my covenant with you. ¹⁰You will eat the old grain of the previous year and will clear out the old to make room for the new. ¹¹I will place my residence among you, and I will not reject you. ¹²I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. ¹³I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would no longer be their slaves. I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to live in freedom.

Covenant Judgments (not on screen)

Leviticus 26:14-39 (26 verses!!) | Feel the weight...fear, poverty, disease, devastation, **death**.

Michael Morales The [two] paths amount to the ones taken by the alternative goats on the Day of Atonement: either more deeply into the divine Presence, into life itself, or else further away from God into darkness, chaos and death. In other words, Israel's ultimate blessing or curse is described in terms of progressive nearness to or progressive estrangement from the divine Presence. This progressive nearness or estrangement is dependent upon whether or not Israel pursues the relationship with YHWH established by the covenant.

Biblical promises very often operate at multiple levels

- Example: Isaiah 7's *Immanuel* promise. Both right then, but also future Messiah
- Yes "here and now," but the Lev 26 language is ***so elevated*** as to point to something bigger
- What's the closest or most distant one can be to God? Heaven or hell.

Jay Sklar The blessings are arranged into four groupings, beginning with abundant crops, then moving from one blessing to the next, until they climax with the promise of the Lord himself dwelling in the Israelites' midst. This is nothing less than a return to Eden. The curses are arranged into five groupings, beginning with fear, disease and defeat by enemies, then moving from one curse to the next, until they climax with starving Israelites eating their own children and being slaughtered by their enemies, dispossessed from their land and loathed by the Lord. This is nothing less than a living hell. The contrast between the sections could not be clearer and serves to emphasize a theme found throughout Scripture: the posture we take before the Lord determines whether we experience blessing or cursing. And although this chapter is focused on that experience in the here and now, it is equally true for our experience in the world to come.

(big idea) The two pathways of Leviticus 26 point us toward eternity. (*Pause to reflect*)

(big idea) The trajectories of heaven and hell are at work today

- Believer: present sin, lifetime of transformation, intermediate state, eternal resurrection
- Unbeliever: present fear, lifetime of hardship, intermediate pain, eternal death
- Pathway begins today.
 - Hell is at work throughout the earth today, it's obvious.
 - But God's kingdom has come and is coming here on earth.

(big idea) Discipline serves to prevent judgment

- Formative discipline: building in good habits.
 - There is a type of pain: getting up early, exercising, eating healthy
 - Disciples of Jesus are those who are formed to be like him
- Corrective discipline: pain due to not doing the right thing.
 - All through Lev. 26, "and if you still won't listen to me..."
- **Author of Hebrews tells us to "endure hardship as discipline"
 - Maybe correction, maybe training, but shaping/forming
- Judgment: final pain, condemnation of a lifetime of persistent, hardhearted, rejection of the discipline of the Lord.
- Jesus told us to think about Hell as a way to motivate us toward godliness
 - Matt 5: better to cut off hand/eye than for your whole body to go to hell

(big idea) God's mercy will triumph for God's people

God's Mercy

Leviticus 26 ⁴⁰ But when they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their ancestors—their unfaithfulness that they practiced against me, and how they acted with hostility toward me, ⁴¹ and I acted with hostility toward them and brought them into the land of their enemies—and when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, ⁴² then I will remember my covenant with Jacob. I will also remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. ⁴³ For the land abandoned by them will make up for its Sabbaths by lying desolate without the people, while they make amends for their iniquity, because they rejected my ordinances and abhorred my statutes. ⁴⁴ Yet in spite of this, while they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject or abhor them so as to destroy them and break my covenant with them, since I am the Lord their God. ⁴⁵ For their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God; I am the Lord.

- God's covenant faithfulness is accessed by our ongoing repentance
- Why were there sacrifices for sin? Because God knows our weakness!

- *I will not reject or abhor them so as to destroy them and break my covenant with them, since I am the Lord their God.*
- Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice | **GOSPEL**

New Covenant in Jesus

1 Corinthians 11 ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

God’s Presence

Leviticus 26 ¹¹ I will place my residence among you, and I will not reject you. ¹² I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

Ultimate Presence

Revelation 21 ³ Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

If you have not trusted in Jesus: repent and receive his mercy

If you are trying to be good / moral: repent and live by God’s mercy

If you are by God’s grace a believer: continue repenting, keep your eyes on eternity

- Think of hardships as loving, forming, shaping discipline