

December 9, 2018 - Lev. 26:3 – 26:13 - Blessings for Obedience
Torah Reading: Leviticus 26:3 – 26:13 - Blessings for Obedience
Psalm 89:16-19
Haftarah: Isaiah 1:19-20, 24-28, 31 + 2:1,5

For the purposes of clarity, we're separating the blessings and the curses, although they overlap in the readings - so this week we'll study just the blessings. We'll celebrate Hanukkah next week, marking the conception of Jesus. After that we'll study the curses - for which His incarnation and redemption are the remedy.

Blessings for Obedience - Leviticus 26:4-13

Fruitfulness

Leviticus 26:3-4 - "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit."

Rashi - "follow my statutes" - "observe My commandments" is also stated. Why the different phrases? It means that you must toil in the study of Torah [for the word for "follow" here, תִּלְכוּ, literally means "walk," which is a strenuous activity (Gur Aryeh)]. — [Torath Kohanim 26:2] You shall toil in the study of Torah in order to observe and fulfill [the commandments (Torath Kohanim 26:2). This is similar to, "[Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances...] and learn them, and keep in mind to do them" (Deut. 5:1) [i.e., learn the Torah in order to keep them in your heart and perform them]. — [Sifthei Chachamim]

Jesus fulfilled the Law and was the only One to truly "walk in His precepts."

Leviticus 26:5 - "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."

Rashi - you will eat your food to satiety: One will eat only a little [food], but it will become blessed in one's innards. — [Torath Kohanim 26:6]

- **Galatians 5:22-23** - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Peace

Leviticus 26:6 - "And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land."

Rashi - You might say, "Here is food, and here is drink, but if there is no peace, there is nothing!" Scripture, therefore, states, after all this [blessing], "I will grant peace in the

Land.” From here, [we learn] that peace is equal to everything else. And so, [this is illustrated in our morning prayers,] when we say: “[Blessed are You, O Lord...] Who... makes peace and creates everything” [a paraphrase of the verse] (Isaiah 45:7). - [see Ber. 11b; Torath Kohanim 26:7] [Armies will not come] even to pass through your land from one country to another. — [Torath Kohanim 26:9]

- **Philippians 4:7** - "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Victory

Leviticus 26:7-8 - "And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword."

Rashi - [Since five will pursue a hundred, this means that each Jew will pursue twenty enemies;] therefore, should Scripture not have written here: “and a hundred of you will pursue two thousand”? But, [the Torah teaches us that] there is no comparison between a few who fulfill the Torah and many who fulfill the Torah [and thus, here, the larger the group of pursuers, the higher proportionately is the number pursued]. — [Torath Kohanim 26:10]

"your enemies shall fall before you by the sword" - Repeated to teach us (Torath Kohanim 26:10) that the enemy will fall before you, not in the usual manner [i.e., that many of them will fall by the hand of only a few. — [Rash MiShantz ad loc.]

- **1 Corinthians 15:55-57** - "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Spiritual Blessings

Leviticus 26:9 - "For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you."

This recalls the promise to Abraham of multiplication of their seed as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea (**Genesis 15:5**). But Paul notes that the promise was made to the "seed, as of one," which seed is Christ (**Galatians 3:16**). And the promise to "multiply" probably looks ultimately toward the Gospel era for fulfillment.

Rashi has an interesting take on the phrase "have respect unto you" -

"I will turn towards you": "I will turn away (אֶפְנֶה) from all My affairs to pay your reward." To what may this be compared? To a king who hired some workers [only one of whom worked for him for a long time, while all the others did not. When they presented themselves to receive payment, the king quickly paid the others a small amount, while to the one who had worked long, he said, "They worked merely a little for me, but with you, I must now turn my attention to calculate the substantial amount that I owe you."

Likewise, God will quickly pay the nations the small amount He owes them for their little good deeds, and then He will turn His attention, as it were, to the Jewish people, to calculate their great reward,] as is taught in Torath Kohanim 26:11.]

Jesus turns this story around and declares that those who came late to the vineyard to work (Gentile believers) receive the same as those first hired (Jewish believers of the Old Covenant). (**Matthew 20:1-16**)

Matthew 20:16 - "So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."

A New Covenant

God already had a covenant with Israel at Sinai. So what is this promise to "establish a covenant?"

Rashi - a new covenant, not like the first covenant, which you broke, but a new covenant, which will not be broken, as it is said, "I will form a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah-not like the covenant [that I formed with their forefathers... that they broke]" (Jer. 31:30-31). - [Torath Kohanim 26:12]

Leviticus 26:10 - "And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new."

This probably recalls the promise of the sabbatical year, when God would provide enough the sixth year to eat during the seventh year of rest.

Rashi - the produce will remain well preserved, growing mellow with age, so that very old produce from three years ago will be better to eat than that of last year. — [B.B. 91b]

Even so, there will be so much grain, "you will have to remove what is in the storehouses and take it elsewhere [in your house], in order to put the new produce into them." - [Sifthei Chachamim]

God Will Dwell Among Us

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."

Paul quotes this:

2 Corinthians 6:16 - "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Fulfilled in Christ:

- **John 1:14** - "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his

glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

The Jewish translation is "My Spirit will not reject you." The Targum of Onkelos has: "my Word shall not abhor you"

The Targum of Jonathan: "I will make the glory of my Shechinah dwell among you, and my Word shall be unto you for God the Redeemer, and ye shall be to my name for a people of Holy Ones."

- **1 Corinthians 3:16** - "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

- **Acts 2:4** - "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Repentance

See **Job 42:6** - "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

To be accepted by God we must abhor ourselves - i.e. see ourselves as God sees us - "wounds and bruises and putrifying sores" (**Isaiah 1:6**) because of our sin, repent and receive the righteousness of Christ as our new garment. Then God sees His Son, and is pleased.

- **Lamentations 5:21** - "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old."

- **Matthew 3:8** - "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance..."

Freedom

Leviticus 26:13 - "I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright."

A gesture back to **Leviticus 25** and a reminder that the people of Israel should not become slaves. But also the reason to obey God's commandments - because we now belong to Him as his servants.

"go upright" - No longer stooped under the yoke of bondage and dejected, but able to walk upright in liberty with cheerful countenance and head lifted up.

- **Isaiah 10:27** - "And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing."

- **Galatians 5:1** - "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,

and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

A Preview of The Curses for Disobedience: There are nine verses listing the blessings, and 25 describing the curses!