

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 12.8%

Weekly Readings will cover: Leviticus 20 through Leviticus 27

Sunday: Leviticus 20

Monday: Leviticus 21 & 22

Tuesday: Leviticus 23

Wednesday: Leviticus 24

Thursday: Leviticus 25

Friday: Leviticus 26

Saturday: Leviticus 27

Current # of email addresses in the group: 580

After taking four weeks off from this program, I hope each of you had a great study week and found your routine again. This week we will finish the book of Leviticus, which will be the fourth book we've gone through in-depth (Genesis, Job, Exodus & Leviticus)!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 24

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 141 - SUNDAY: April 30th

Leviticus 20

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll begin with the chapter over view from the UCG reading plan:
"God's purpose was to bring Israel into the Land of Promise—and He would do just that. But the land was filled with people who practiced abominable wickedness. Because Israel was a carnal people, not having the Holy Spirit, and because they had been raised in an oppressive pagan culture, they would be tempted to syncretize and "borrow" pagan elements in their worship of God. This, of course, was completely unacceptable to God.

One of the practices of the people of Canaan was child sacrifice. Children, most often the firstborn, were burned alive to the false god Molech in the belief that their innocence and sinlessness would appease him and make the prayers the children supposedly brought before him more acceptable (hence the mention of mediums and familiar spirits, which were other forms of communication with a god). While it may seem incredible to us that anyone could be seduced into such horrific practice, Israel would not have found it unthinkable—it was simply one of many religious practices of the day. God, however, found it utterly loathsome! So, He unambiguously condemns child sacrifice in the first seven verses of the chapter. The penalty for such conduct was death, and the executioners were to be the people, not the state. This crime was so appalling that God wanted the entire community involved in its eradication. And notice, God directly connects holiness and sanctification not with such abhorrent practices, but with conscientious obedience to His laws.

This chapter also contains a repetition of the laws of sexual morality, albeit in a condensed form. The laws regarding sexual relations are repeated, but the emphasis is on the punishment and the enormity of the crime. Once again, notice the connection between sin and the defilement of the land.

Notice also that the dietary laws of clean and unclean meats are mentioned and specifically connected to holiness—that is, separation from the people of the surrounding lands. The dietary laws, too, were given primarily for holiness purposes rather than physical health. Indeed, the dietary laws do have many health benefits, and no doubt God so intended them; but their primary purpose is stated as being for holiness. By creating such dietary laws, God added a dimension to daily living that constantly reminded the Israelites that they were to continue to be separate from the people of the world, and the laws created a significant frustration to fellowship with non-Israelites. Does God want

such a distinct separation between Christians and the world? Yes! Notice what the apostle Paul wrote: "And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' Therefore, 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'" (2 Corinthians 6:16-18)." [END]

Verse 4 – Notice that if God’s people turn a blind eye away from one of His people who is sinning, God holds them responsible for ignoring the sinful actions. We see Paul have to deal with a similar situation in 1 Corinthians 5 where the whole congregation knew of a brother walking in sin and was doing nothing about it. Paul put the man temporarily out of the church to keep sin from spreading through the congregation and to hopefully lead him to repentance (which he did).

Verse 6 – This scripture discusses those who turn to “mediums and familiar spirits” (NKJV). “Mediums” in Hebrew means “one who evokes the dead” (BDB) and “familiar spirits” means “a knowing one, one who has a familiar spirit” (BDB). God equates one of His people who turns to demons and these evil practices as someone who is like a prostitute, a harlot, who commits adultery. God’s people were supposed to be in a marriage-like relationship with God, just as we are today when we commit to Him at baptism, and when we turn to other gods (demons), God sees it like a spouse who commits adultery. This is a comparison that we see throughout the whole Bible.

Verse 7 – God wants us to separate ourselves from all these evil practices (and all evil practices in general) so that we will be Separate/Holy.

Verse 9 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “The term “curses” signifies, not only to curse, but to speak of a person contemptuously and disrespectfully, to make light of; so that all speeches which have a tendency to lessen our parents in the eyes of others, or to render their judgment, piety, etc., suspected and contemptible, may be here included; though the act of cursing, or of treating the parent with injurious and opprobrious language, is that which is particularly intended.”

Verse 26 – Through all these commands and throughout this whole book, God continues to teach and emphasize the need for us to walk in a “clean” manner and be Holy. God wanted Israel, and wants us, to live differently than those around us in this world. We have been called to be different.

Day 142 - MONDAY: May 1st

Leviticus 21 & 22

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is the UCG reading plan summary for both chapter 21 & 22:

“Because God is holy, His priests, who serve Him and represent Him to His people, must also be holy. This chapter details several regulations concerning only the priesthood.

God is eternal and wholly separate from sin. Human death is the product of sin. So, God's priests must be separate from defilement through death. To accomplish this, the priests were forbidden to become defiled with the death of any person who was not a direct and close family member. Proper mourning was appropriate, and hence mourning for a father or mother, brother or sister, son or daughter was permitted. But otherwise, the priest had to be kept far from the defilement of the dead. For the high priest, even defilement for parents was not permitted, nor outward signs of mourning allowed.

Again, tonsures, certain beard trimming and body piercing for the priests are prohibited. Such practices were pagan in origin and God wanted His priesthood to be distinctively non-pagan.

Priestly marriages were also subject to stipulations not bound upon the average Israelite. In the case of the high priest, it very clearly states that he could marry only an Israelite virgin. Moreover, the priests of God had to be physically unblemished to perform certain rites. A blemished or deformed priest could not enter within the Holy Place, nor could he officiate at the altar. He could, however, engage in the other duties of the priesthood and partake of the offerings. The spiritual parallels with Jesus Christ, our High Priest, should be obvious.

Not only did the priests' conduct and station in life have to be holy before a holy God, but even their momentary circumstances had to be holy. To officiate at the altar, a priest had to have no ritual defilement upon him. If defiled by disease, bodily discharge, a dead body, a discharge of semen (which may have symbolized the unfruitful going forth of life), an unclean animal, an unclean person, or by any other means, the priest could not officiate until he was ritually cleansed. Ritual *uncleanness* was representative of *sin*. And the holy God cannot be defiled by sin—so everything connected with approach to Him must be without its stain.

Furthermore, if defiled, the priest could not partake of the holy offerings. The priests received portions of certain offerings, which they and their immediate families could eat. But those who partook of the offerings had to also be ritually pure. Thus, as we can see, those who serve God and benefit from His service, must all be clean. As Christians, we have cleansing through the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7), without which we cannot come to the Father, and through Christ we have access to holy things (Hebrews 13:10; compare 1 Corinthians 10:16-18; 1 Peter 2:5). Since the Church is the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16),

intended to show forth the praises of God to the world (1 Peter 2:9), it too must be cleansed, without spot, and holy.

The concluding portions of this section deal with sacrificial fitness. The animals sacrificed to God were symbolic of Christ in different ways. Christ was morally and spiritually perfect and unblemished. Thus, the animals that typified Him had to be physically perfect and unblemished. A sacrifice or offering made with a defective animal was rejected, and an insult to the perfect God. Carnal man would prefer to give God the defects and keep the good for himself. But this God will not allow. Moreover, it was required that sacrifices be from the worshiper's own goods—not from a foreigner's goods. Every sacrifice must "cost" the one sacrificing. Finally notice, once again, that the chapter closes with an emphasis on holiness." [END]

Chapter 21:

Verse 1 – The Hebrew word for “defiled” simply means “to be unclean, become unclean, become impure” (BDB).

Verse 5 – This is very similar to the command given in Leviticus 19:27-28 where these practices are connected to pagan worship for the dead, which fits the context here in discussing individuals who have died.

Verse 6 – When it says that the priests offer the “bread of their God”, this seems to be referring to God’s portion of the offerings. Notice first, the word “and” is in italics and isn’t in the Hebrew. So it really reads, “for they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the bread of their God;” The Hebrew word for “bread” is a general term that means “bread, food, grain”. The offerings were offered to God on His table, the bronze altar, as His food (as we saw in the early chapters of Leviticus).

Verse 7 – As the representative of God to God’s people, the priest was held by God to a high standard.

Chapter 22:

Verse 3 – As mentioned before, it was not wrong to be “unclean”. You could become unclean for many reasons having nothing to do with sin. What is wrong, is to interact with something Holy while in an unclean state.

Verse 11 – John Gill’s commentary states: “Now these being his own purchase, and always to abide with him, became part of his family, and so might eat of the provisions of it; and it is from hence the Jews gather, as Jarchi and Gersom, that his wife might eat of the holy things, because bought with his money; but there is a better reason to be given for that, for of whatever family she was before, whether of the priests or not, by marriage she became a part, yea, a principal of his family, being one flesh with him, bearing the same name, and entitled to all the privileges of his house.” [END]

Verse 14 – We saw this concept of restoring the amount, plus an additional 5th part when we examined the “trespass” offering.

Verse 25 – Notice here again, God calls these offerings His bread/food.

Verse 28 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “This precept was certainly intended to inculcate mercy and tenderness of heart; and so the Jews understood it. When it is necessary to take away the lives of innocent animals for the support of our own, we should do it in such a way as not to blunt our moral feelings; and deplore the necessity, while we feel an express gratitude to God for permission, to do it.” [END]

Day 143 - TUESDAY: May 2nd

Leviticus 23

Daily Deep Dive:

MEMORY CHAPTER – This is a chapter location we often commit to memory as it contains the Holy Days of God.

We'll begin our deep dive with the UCG reading plan: "This chapter provides the first full listing in Scripture of the feasts of God, which lay out His incredible plan of salvation for mankind. Stressed here is the fact that these are not just the Israelites' feasts but *God's* feasts, including the weekly Sabbath, as well as the fact that the Holy Days within them are "holy convocations"—*commanded assemblies*. We must always obey God in observing these feasts—to be in His presence and receive instruction from Him. They are His appointed times to show Him proper appreciation, respect and honor.

The *general* instructions apply fully to mankind today. The instructions about what *offerings* to make are included here because the book of Leviticus focuses on the responsibilities of the priests and Levites. Some instructions given here are especially valuable because they are more complete than elsewhere in the Bible, including those about the wave-sheaf, the counting for determining the timing of Pentecost, and staying in booths (tabernacles or tents)—emphasizing temporarily staying in dwellings other than one's home—during the Feast of Tabernacles." [END]

Verse 2 – God makes a strong point right away to emphasize these are His Feasts, calling them both "My feasts" and "feasts of the Lord" and makes it clear He has made them Holy.

Verse 3 – We have seen a number of times through this reading program that the Sabbath was created and established by God as Holy during the creation details of Genesis 2. Here God clearly calls it the "Sabbath of the Lord". This word for Sabbath is the intensive form

(denotes stronger, more forceful, or more concentrated action relative to the root) of the word “rested” in Genesis 2:2-3.

The word for convocation used in these verses means to call a group of people together. Here are some of Strong’s definitions: “a public meeting, a rehearsal, assembly”. Clearly, this word means that people, who are able, are commanded by God to come together as a group of people. It has become more and more common for people who are able to gather together to opt to stay at home during these Holy convocations. The scripture is clear that if we are able, we should come together.

Verse 4 – These feasts of the Lord, these holy convocations, are to be proclaimed at their appointed times. The Hebrew for “proclaimed” is the root word that “convocation” is built from. They are related in the sense that when you “proclaim” or “call people together”, they are to “gather together”. One is the gathering response to the other. The Hebrew for “appointed times” is the same word used in Genesis 1:14 when God placed lights in the sky and one of the purposes He said He did this for was to for “seasons” (same word as “appointed times”). The definition of this word is “an appointed place, appointed time, meeting” and comes from the root “to fix upon, appointment”. God has His set appointments for us to come together as a body and we don’t want to miss out on these times.

Verse 5 – Jesus Christ is the Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7) which all Passover symbolism of the Old Testament ultimately pointed to.

Verse 6 – Jesus Christ is the true unleavened Bread of life (John 6:35, 48, 51).

Verses 7 & 8 – This verse says “you shall do no customary (servile) work”. The Cambridge Bible for Schools & Colleges states: “The

expression is used in reference to the three great festivals and that of the New Year, and implies a less strict abstinence from labour than was demanded by the corresponding rule for the sabbath ([Leviticus 23:3](#)) and the Day of Atonement ([Leviticus 23:28](#)). In the former case it was probably only work of an agricultural kind that was forbidden.

Ellicott's Commentary states: "Servile work was defined during the second Temple to consist in building, pulling down edifices, weaving, reaping, threshing, winnowing, grinding, &c, whilst needful work which was allowed was killing beasts, kneading dough, baking bread, boiling, roasting, &c."

Verse 10 – Notice that the wave sheaf wasn't commanded until after they had come into Canaan (the Promise Land). There was no sowing and reaping in the wilderness.

The word "firstfruits" (Reshiyth) in this verse is worth diving into as it is not the general term for firstfruits (Bikkur) and its meaning is significant.

First, let's define the word used here "Reshiyth" and the more general term "Bikkur".

Reshiyth means "first, beginning, chief, best" (BDB). Strong's states the definition as: "first, in place, time, order and rank. The principle thing" (Strong's).

Bikkur means firstfruits of the crops and fruit that is ripened (BDB). This is a general term for all the crops and fruits that are gathered in first (versus later in the harvest(s)).

We find both these words used together in Exodus 23:19 where it describes the "first of the firstfruits". The word here for "first" is "Reshiyth" and the word "firstfruits" is "Bikkur".

Why is this important to understand, because the Wave sheaf represented Jesus Christ. He was the First of the firstfruits. He is the firstborn (Rom 8:29, Rev 1:5).

Verse 11 - This first sheaf that was waved (presented) before God and accepted, was the piece that would represent all the future sheaves that would be cut later. In essence, when that first sheaf was selected, they were saying, in this one sheaf is a representative all of the rest of the harvest. Jesus Christ was presented (waved) and accepted on Sunday during Unleavened Bread in 31 AD. This is the day that begins the count to Pentecost.

Notice also, this sheaf was to be accepted on God's people's behalf. Jesus Christ was accepted as the First of the firstfruits on our behalf.

Verse 12 & 13 – This Wave sheaf offering was to be accompanied by both a Burnt offering and a Grain offering. We've recently explored how both of these offerings pointed to Jesus Christ and how He perfectly gave His life completely to God and served/loved His neighbor meeting perfectly the first and second great commandments (Matt 22:38 – 39).

Verse 14 – The people were not allowed to partake in any of the harvest until the first of the firstfruits was presented and accepted before God.

Verse 15 – We are currently in the midst of this 50-day count to Pentecost right now.

Verse 17 – Why were these two loaves leavened? Because unlike the Wave sheaf, the lamb, the offerings, etc... these two loaves did not represent the perfect, sinless, unleavened Jesus Christ, but God's people (the nation of Israel and the Church of God). While we strive to become like our elder brother Jesus Christ, we are not sinless, we are leavened. The symbol here of leavened loaves shows us clearly that these loaves do not represent Jesus Christ, but the rest of the firstfruits. We should also take note that here where it says "they are the firstfruits to the Lord". This word for "firstfruits", is the general term

“bikkur” that we discussed up in verse 10 (not the term used to describe Jesus Christ as the “first, chief, best”, etc... This same general term for firstfruits is also used in verse 20 in this chapter.

Verse 22 – Over and over we see throughout God’s plan, details that ensure that the poorest of God’s people are always taken care of. We may not all farm anymore, but we need to make sure we practice principles that ensure the poorest of God’s people today are cared for. God’s way required that the poor work to glean these corners of the field and not just receive a handout. It’s a beautiful principle and one our world would do well to consider.

Verse 24 – There is much that could be said about the Feast of Trumpets. There were two different Trumpets blown on this Feast day. One was the Shofar and the others were Silver trumpets. Trumpets were blown for many reasons, two of the main reasons were for “war” and for “assembling God’s people”. We see these two themes in the great meaning of the Day of Trumpet. The Day of the Lord will be a day where the great vengeance of God is poured out of mankind that has rejected Him and also pictures the time when all God’s people, alive and in the grave, meet Him in the air and receive new Eternal bodies. This is the next step of God’s plan yet to be fulfilled and as the kingdoms of men decay into greater sin and depravity around us each day, may God speed this next step in His plan.

Verse 27 – We recently went through the events of the Day of Atonement in Leviticus chapter 16. We covered at that time how “afflict your soul” meant to fast from food and water. We also went through the symbolism of the two goats of that day, one representing Jesus Christ and the other Satan the Devil.

Verse 30 – Notice that this does not just say “any customary (servile) work” as there would be no need to do food preparations on this day either.

Verse 39 – This Feast of Tabernacles takes place during the fall harvest season. This is the second harvest season of the year. Notice that this scripture does not call the fruits here “first” or “firstfruits”. This is not the harvest of firstfruits, but begins the process of God working with mankind, first the group that lives during the Millennium, and second the group that is resurrected during the Great White throne judgment.

Verse 40 – The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown commentary states: “The Jews were commanded during the whole period of the festival to dwell in booths, which were erected on the flat roofs of houses, in the streets or fields; and the trees made use of are by some stated to be the citron, the palm, the myrtle, and the willow, while others maintain the people were allowed to take any trees they could obtain that were distinguished for verdure and fragrance.”

Verse 43 – In addition to reminding the nation of Israel how God had brought them out of Israel and made them dwell in booths, we as Christians understand that our physical bodies are temporary as well as we navigate this world on our way to God’s Kingdom (compare 2 Corinthians 5:1).

Lest anyone think that these Feasts were only for Israel, notice the scriptures after the Christian church had begun that showed them observed:

New Testament church begins on Pentecost – Acts 2

“Let us keep the Feast”: written to gentile congregation – 1 Cor 5:8

Paul to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost – 1 Cor 16:8

Paul wants to keep the Feast in Jerusalem – Acts 18:21

Paul hurrying to Jerusalem to keep Pentecost – Acts 20:16

Fast said to be already over (a reference to Atonement) – Acts 27:9

Day 144 - WEDNESDAY: May 3rd

Leviticus 24

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is the UCG reading plan for this chapter: “The lamps of the menorah were to be lit and kept burning every day (verse 2; Exodus 27:20; Exodus 30:7-8). This was symbolic of God's Spirit and His laws. Each day, we must have the light of God burning in us through His Spirit and living by His Word. David prayed to God, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalms 119:105). Echoing this, Solomon wrote: "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs and instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23). When people see us, they should see God shining *through* us. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Just as with the tabernacle lamps, this requires attentiveness and vigilance.

The phrase "from evening until morning indicates tending the lamps twice a day, not tending them throughout the night" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Leviticus 24:2-4). Similarly, we must seek God when we awake each day and before we go to sleep each night to make sure that our spiritual "oil" is renewed (compare Matthew 25:4; 2 Corinthians 4:16)—allowing us to shine every day.

In verses 19-20 of Leviticus 24, we come to the "eye-for-an-eye" principle, mentioned earlier in Exodus 21:23-25. We stated in our highlights on that passage that this was apparently not generally meant to be a literal requirement in meting out justice—that just recompense was the concern. The judges of Israel might have required death or beating with a certain number of stripes. And that would have been literal. But we have no evidence that the judges ever *required* a hand to

be cut off or other bodily mutilation (although it is possible that they did since there is no way at present to really know).

It may be that they would *allow* the offended party to exact that penalty from someone who had cut *his* hand off (similar to God's allowance for the nearest of kin to a murder victim to act as an avenger of blood). As mentioned in the highlights for Exodus 21, a big reason for the principle was not just so that the punishment would fit the crime but so that the punishment would not go *beyond* the crime. *The Nelson Study Bible* notes on Leviticus 24:19-20: "Its purpose was not to *require* the injured party to inflict *equal* bodily harm on the one who had injured him, but to *forbid* him from inflicting *greater* bodily harm."

Of course, while God's system may have allowed justice to be measured out in kind as described, His desire was for mercy in the face of remorse—and also for restitution and care for the victim. If someone cut another person's hand off, the person who lost his hand would be wiser to *not* cut the offender's hand off. The judges would perhaps order a beating for pain and suffering and that the offender work (maybe for the rest of his life) to provide the lost livelihood to the one who lost his hand and was no longer able to work. (If the offender's hand was cut off too, he could not work to help the victim. So it would not seem to really help matters—except in giving some sense of justice and providing a deterrent in the society.)

The same goes for blinding an offender if he has blinded someone else. This would create two needy beggars instead of just one. It seems wiser to demand that the seeing criminal be indebted and perhaps indentured to the victim." [END]

Verse 2 – John Gill's commentary states: "this was to be at the public expense, and it belonged to the community to supply the priests with oil for the light of the candlestick in the temple, [Exo 25:6](#); and this oil

was not to be any sort of oil, as train oil, or oil of nuts, almonds, &c. but oil of olives, and not any sort of that, but the purest, which was the first that was taken from them; it seems there were three sorts, the first of which was pure, and this beaten in a mortar, and not ground in a mill” [END]

Verse 5 – Likely corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel (12).

Verse 7 – Frankincense was put into gold bowls “by” each pile of bread. The frankincense was then burned upon the altar as God’s portion, and the bread was given to the priest to eat.

Verse 8 – John Gill’s commentary states: “That is, the priest or priests then ministering, who should bring new cakes and place them in the above order, having removed the old ones, which was done in this manner; four priests went in, two had in their hands the two rows (of bread), and two had in their hands two cups (of frankincense); four went before these, two to take away the two rows (of the old bread), and two to take away the two cups (of frankincense); and they that carried in stood in the north, and their faces to the south and they that brought out stood in the south, and their faces to the north; these drew away (the old bread) and they put them (the new), and the hand of the one was over against the hand of the other, as it is said, "before me continually", Exo 25:30; that is, at the same time the hands of the one were employed in taking away, the hands of the other were employed in setting on; so that there was always bread upon the table:” [END]

Verse 11 – The JFB commentary states: “It was a common practice among the Egyptians to curse their idols when disappointed in obtaining the object of their petitions. The Egyptian mind of this youth thought the greatest insult to his opponent was to blaspheme the object of his religious reverence. He spoke disrespectfully of One who

sustained the double character of the King as well as the God of the Hebrew people; as the offense was a new one, he was put in ward till the mind of the Lord was ascertained as to his disposal.” [END]

This is the first time we see this idea of “blaspheming the name of the Lord”. The word blasphemed comes from the root “to puncture”. It means “to pierce, to bore”. It’s used in the idea of wounding the one you insult.

Additionally, it says he “cursed”. This word comes from the root “to make light” and means “to bring contempt, to despise, be of little account”.

It’s clear here that this youth in his fight, chose to in some way insult the name of the Lord with the intent to diminish God in some way.

Verse 14 – The Matthew Poole’s commentary states: “they gave public testimony that they heard this person speak such words, and did in their own and in all the people’s names desire and demand justice to be executed upon him, that by this sacrifice God might be appeased, and his judgments turned away from the people, upon whom they would certainly fall if he were unpunished.”

Day 145 - THURSDAY: May 4th

Leviticus 25

Daily Deep Dive:

Let’s begin today with the UCG reading plan: “These words of verse 10 are engraved on the American Liberty Bell, a traditional symbol of U.S. freedom that sits outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. While it was first rung on July 8, 1776, to celebrate the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence, it was actually commissioned by the Pennsylvania Provincial Assembly in 1751 to proclaim the Jubilee year. (Ironically, the bell was first cast in London.) In any event, it was seen by Revolutionary America as a symbol of freedom from tyranny. And the verse quoted is quite fitting in that regard.

In actuality, the proclamation of "liberty" in the 50th year specifically referred to the fact that all debts were canceled, all Israelites who had sold themselves into slavery were freed, and all land went back to its original owners. The phrase "proclaim liberty" also occurs in Isaiah 61:1, where it is proclaimed to the "captives," along with "the opening of the prison to those who are bound." To whom is this referring? Those who are in "the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:26), i.e., the world at large. This is also seen as proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:2), another name for the Jubilee. When Christ began His earthly ministry, He explained that He was fulfilling these very verses in Isaiah (Luke 4:16-21). We should easily see how this relates to the issue of debt and servitude. The penalty earned for sin is compared to debt in the Scriptures. And in Romans 6, the apostle Paul explains that the way of sin is actually a form of bondage or slavery. It is the debt of sin that has separated mankind from his intended inheritance.

Land, in this picture, is quite important. Notice this from *The Nelson Study Bible* on "Redeeming the Land": "An ancient Israelite was in desperate straits if he had to sell his family's land. Both food and income came from the proceeds of the land. Dispossessed family members would quickly become someone else's servants. Most people would work hard to avoid such a situation. However, illness, crop failure, or other misfortunes could force a person into debt to the point that his only alternative was to sell his land. Even in this distressing situation there was hope. A dispossessed family could be saved from poverty and hardship:

"First, a redeeming relative could redeem (or buy back) the land (Lev. 25:25). From the proceeds, the man could pay off his creditors. The land stayed in the extended family; the poor family stayed on their land; and eventually the redeemer was repaid. The redeemer was the nearest male relative. If he could not fulfill this privilege and obligation,

it passed down the kinship line until someone could. This is the scenario of Ruth 4: Boaz acted as a kinsman-redeemer and bought Naomi's field.

"If a man did not have any relative who would redeem his land, he could save enough to buy it back himself. The purchase price would be prorated according to the number of years left until the next Jubilee year, the fiftieth year (Leviticus 25:26, 27). A man might have to wait until the Jubilee year to reclaim the land of his inheritance (Leviticus 25:28). Even in this most desperate situation there was the hope and promise that at the Jubilee year the family would be able to return debt-free to their land and make a fresh start.

"The law of redemption and the law of the Jubilee year are vivid symbols of what Jesus Christ did on the Cross for every person [1 Corinthians 6:20; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18—19]. What our first father and mother lost in the Garden [i.e., man's dwelling in the paradise of God and opportunity to eat from the Tree of Life], we cannot retrieve by any means [on our own]. We cannot go back to Eden [of ourselves]. Yet Jesus Christ, our elder Brother, redeemed it for us. We have been evicted from our inheritance, but in the Year of Jubilee, we will be allowed to return (cf. Isaiah 51:3; Ezekiel 36:33-35; Revelation 2:7; Revelation 22:1-2, 14). We will live with Jesus in Paradise." Moreover, we will at last inherit the whole universe with Him (Romans 8:16-19; Hebrews 2:8-9; Revelation 21:7), which was God's intent for mankind from the beginning (compare Deuteronomy 4:19). What a glorious redemption—of both us and our heritage." [END]

Verse 5 – For six years they were allowed to plow, sow, cultivate, etc...the land, but on the 7th year, the land was given a Sabbath rest for a year, which was “to the Lord”. They were not to plant, plow, or work the land in any way, nor were they to harvest the land in the traditional way of going through the whole field and picking everything for profit, selling, etc...

The Hebrew here is literally, “nor gather the Nazarite grapes”. This word also means “consecrated or devoted ones”. In the same way that one would consecrate themselves to God through taking a “Nazarite vow”, which required that a man not cut his hair, these grape vines were to be “unpruned/unkept” and consecrated to God in this way. Barnes notes states: “Vine undressed - That is, "unpruned"; literally "Nazarite vine", the figure being taken from the unshorn locks of the Nazarite.”

Matthew Poole’s commentary states: “the grapes which thou hast separated or set apart to the honour of God, and to the ends and uses appointed by God; or the grapes of that year, which are in this like the Nazarites’ hair, not cut off by thee, but suffered to grow to the use of the poor.” [END]

Gill’s commentary states: “That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap,.... That which sprung up of itself from grains of corn, shed in the harvest of the preceding year, without any ploughing or sowing; he might reap it, but not as at other times, the whole of it, and gather it as his own property, but only somewhat of it in common with others for his, present use: neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed; which was on this year forbid to be dressed; the grapes of which he might gather in common with others, but not as in other years, all of them, and as peculiarly his own: the words may be rendered, "the grapes of thy separations" (p); either such as in other years he used to separate for himself, and forbid others gathering them, but now made them common; or which he did not labour in the cultivation of, but abstained from it:” [END]

Verses 6 & 7: Everyone, including animals, was to freely be able to eat from what was produced, but the owner of the land could not harvest more than their food for profit, etc... It was simply for food for everyone. What a beautiful Sabbath picture, a time ultimately pointing to the Kingdom of God when all will be satisfied and in peace together with their needs met.

Verse 17 – God’s people were not to be like the rest of mankind’s kingdoms. God’s people were to love and look out for each other, not oppress each other.

Verse 19 – We again see this beautiful picture of everyone’s needs met and living in peace and safety.

Verse 21 – God would perform a miracle in the sixth year and ensure enough food that would get them through the Sabbath year, as well as the next year which they would begin planting, sowing, and working the land again.

Verse 23 – This is a perspective we should continue to have today, that everything we have ultimately belongs to the one who created it. We are thankful for our blessings and we long for the homeland that God has promised us (compare Hebrews 11:13-14, Ephesians 2:19).

Verse 34 – John Gill’s commentary states: “The suburbs to the cities of the Levites reached two thousand cubits on every side of their cities, Num 35:5; in which they had fields to keep their cattle in, and these belonged to them in common; every Levite had not a particular field to himself as his own property, and which is the reason why it might not be sold, nor might they agree together to sell it, for then they would have nothing to keep their cattle in” [END]

Verse 37 – They were not to charge those who were already poor interest because that only harmed them further. They were not to profit off a poor brother.

Verse 55 – It’s clear here that God sees all of His people as His servants and not permanent servants of mankind. He has redeemed them, therefore they belong to God permanently. This did not apply to

foreigners because they were not God's. We as Christians, at baptism, commit our lives to God, we were redeemed by the death of Jesus Christ, and we now belong to God permanently.

Sadly what God meant as a blessing, the Jubilee year, seems to have never been followed. There is no record of Israel ever obeying God in these principles.

Day 146 - FRIDAY: May 5th

Leviticus 26

Daily Deep Dive:

We will once again begin as has become our pattern with the UCG reading plan for this chapter: "God had made promises of national greatness to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph that were unconditional - He committed Himself to bestow them on their descendants to remain true to His Word. However, God had not as yet bound Himself to any time frame in this regard except that the national greatness had to occur in this age in order for the Israelites to possess the "gate of their enemies" (see Genesis 22:17). Since Israel was not even a nation until the time of Moses in the mid-15th century B.C., this allowed a nearly 3,500-year window until this end time for the birthright blessings of national greatness to be poured out. So would God bestow the blessings at the beginning of that window--that is, to the newly formed nation of Israel here heading toward the Promised Land? It appears that He *would* have--*if* Israel had met the condition of continued obedience as outlined in this chapter, Leviticus 26, and its parallel passage, Deuteronomy 28. (Again, the blessings themselves were *unconditional*, but God was free to attach conditions as to the *time* in which He would give them.)

Right up front in Leviticus 26, God stresses prohibitions against idolatry and Sabbath breaking, the very sins for which Israel would be punished by national captivity under the Assyrians more than 700 years later

(compare Ezekiel 20:18-24). Then the Eternal lays forth the *conditions* that had to be met in order for them to begin receiving the birthright blessings right away: "If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them, *then* I will give you..." (verse 3). Perfect weather and soil conditions would yield one bumper crop after another. They would have so much that they would have to get rid of their vast surplus to make room for the next incredible harvest (verses 4-5). Their country would not be overrun by deadly snakes, swarms of locusts or disease-bearing tse-tse flies, which plague the African continent. Savage lions and tigers would not ravage small villages, terrifying and devouring their inhabitants, as happens in some areas of Africa and India today. And the Israelites would dwell in continuous peace at home, with no fear of invasion by enemy armies (verse 6). Blessed in natural resources and with power to repel all military aggression (verses 7-8), they would soon constitute the most powerful and prestigious nation in the world. This was the birthright that Israel had been promised!

Disobedience, however, would bring a different result--for a time, at least. The Israelites would be victims of sickness and disease, drought, crop failures, famine and pestilence. They would be invaded, defeated, plundered and, as they had been in Egypt, enslaved. Sadly, these exact kinds of curses came on them time after time during the period of the judges. Yet they failed to learn their lesson. The period of the divided monarchy saw Israel wallowing ever more in the worship of Baal and other false gods. And finally, the rest of the curses of Leviticus 26 befell them, including national captivity and a 2,520-year delay in receiving the birthright blessings (see ["Birthright Blessings Delayed for 2,520 Years"](#)).

At last, God did bestow the birthright of national greatness on the modern descendants of Israel as He had promised--and the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, other British--

descended areas and, to a lesser extent, the other northwest European nations have been tremendously blessed as a result (for details, download the free booklet [The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy](#)). But the timing is still in His hands. He is not required to continue the blessings indefinitely in this age. Indeed, many prophecies make it clear that the curses of Leviticus 26 are again going to befall the modern-day descendants of Israel--in a worse way than ever before. "Indeed all the nations will wonder, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What caused this great display of anger?' They will conclude, 'It is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their ancestors'" (Deuteronomy 29:24-25, New Revised Standard Version).

Some conclude that because God divorced ancient Israel and because the Sinai marriage covenant ended with the death of Christ, God no longer deals with His physical people based on the principles of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Yet, while the Husband/wife relationship based on the Sinai covenant *has* ended between God and physical Israel, the *God/people* relationship, based on much *earlier* promises to Abraham as well as other covenants God made with Israel *besides* the Old Covenant marriage, has certainly *not* ended.

Indeed, when Leviticus 26 was given, the Old Covenant marriage was already in existence-making the blessings and curses distinct from it. This becomes even clearer when we consider that immediately following virtually the same terms in Deuteronomy 28, we are told, "These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, *besides* the covenant which He made with them in Horeb" (29:1). The principles delineated in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28, then, are still in force.

We should also consider that many of God's laws are *self-enforcing*, meaning that breaking them brings about punishing consequences: "Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will reprove you" (Jeremiah 2:19). For example, earlier in Leviticus we read of God's instructions about which animal flesh is suitable for human consumption. Eating those animals God designates as "unclean" and unfit for eating can bring about any number of diseases and other health problems on those who disregard His instructions (you can read what several medical doctors and nutritionists say in our free booklet [What Does the Bible Teach About Clean and Unclean Meats?](#)).

Similarly, flaunting God's laws regarding marriage and sexual relationships can lead to crippling and deadly epidemics such as AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases along with other consequences like fatherless homes and resulting increases in poverty, crime, child abuse and substance abuse. Furthermore, we can't ignore the fact that a drop in moral standards weakens the very fabric of any society and, if not reversed, makes a people or nation a tempting target for military attack and conquest-as has happened repeatedly throughout history. Whenever we're tempted to think God's laws don't apply to us or are no longer in force, we should consider their benefit and the possible unforeseen consequences of violating them. This is certainly part of the warning inherent in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28." [END]

Verse 15 – The Hebrew word for “despise” means “to reject, refuse, despise”.

Verse 18 – Notice this principle. God punishes for the purpose of correction, so we will change our evil behaviors and return to obeying. If we refuse further, God increases the punishments to a more severe

level. It would be much better if we are quick to recognize God's correction and turn back to Him quickly.

Verses 23-24: Again, the level increases due to stubborn pride.

Verse 29 – What a disturbing picture and thought. Yet, we find this fulfilled in both 2 Kings 6:29 and Lamentations 4:10. Jew history contains other records of such terrible events.

Verse 31 – God will reject their offerings.

Verses 34 – 35: God predicts that his people would not follow the land Sabbaths, and God further predicts that He will bring about years of Sabbaths (of rest) for the land and that the land will finally enjoy all of those years of land Sabbaths that Israel should have kept.

Verses 40 – 42: God is always quick to mercy. Notice that if the people would finally repent, God would turn back to them. That is a principle we should remember. If we go off track, we must humble ourselves and return to God and our loving, merciful God will quickly turn back to us. What a patient, loving, caring, faithful, merciful God we serve!

Day 147 - SATURDAY: May 6th

Leviticus 27

Daily Deep Dive:

We now come to the last chapter of Leviticus. This will be our 4th completed book! (Genesis, Job, Exodus and Leviticus).

Here is the UCG reading plan for this final chapter: “Based on the redemption amounts, some might think God is sexist and ageist. But God does not play favorites. The amounts here have only to do with a practical valuation of how useful the various classes of people would be in carrying out the heavy work of the tabernacle.

Certain dedicated property could be redeemed through paying the valuation plus an additional one fifth. This could even be done with tithes of produce (verses 30-31), but not with the tithe of livestock (verses 32-33). "Every tenth animal was part of the tithe that belonged to God. The owner was not allowed to adjust this procedure so that the animal for the tithe was small, weak, or sickly, nor could he substitute a poor animal for a better one" (Nelson Study Bible, note on verses 32-33).

Some today have taken the verses regarding the redeeming of tithes to mean that it is permissible to borrow from their monetary tithes and pay them back by adding a fifth. Yet this is not at all what is meant here. The regulation is about *exchanging*, not *borrowing*. Tithes were owed directly to God as the firstfruits of increase. It was not permissible to borrow from them. God said in Exodus 22:29 that the people were not to delay in turning over their firstfruits to Him. Consider that if someone owed some carrots as a tithe, he could redeem them by adding one fifth to their evaluation and paying that in cash. But he could not simply eat the carrots and later grow new carrots to replace them, giving the new ones plus one fifth. That was not allowed. And it would still be wrong today. (To learn more about the subject of tithing, download the free booklet, [What Does the Bible Teach About Tithing?](#))"
[END]

Verse 2 – Ellicott's commentary states: "no vow mentally made or conceived was deemed binding. It had to be distinctly pronounced in words. The form of the vow is nowhere given in the Bible. Like many other points of detail, the wording of it was left to the administrators of the law. They divided vows into two classes: (1) Positive vows, by which a man bound himself to consecrate for religious purposes his own person, those members of his family over whom he had control, or any portion of his property, and for this kind of vow the formula was "Behold I consecrate this to the Lord"; and (2) Negative vows, by which

he promised to abstain from enjoying a certain thing, for which the formula was, “Such and such a thing be unlawful to me for so many days, weeks, or for ever.” [END]

Benson’s commentary states: “Although vows of this kind were not usual, yet there want not instances of persons who devoted either themselves or their children, and that either more strictly, as the Nazarites and the Levites, (1 Samuel 1:11,) and for these no redemption was admitted, but they were in person to perform the service to which they were devoted; or more largely, as some who were not Levites might yet, through zeal for God, or to obtain a blessing which they wanted, devote themselves or their children to the service of God and of the sanctuary, though not in such a way as the Levites, which was forbidden, yet in some kind of subserviency to them. And because there might be too great a number of persons thus dedicated, which might be burdensome to the sanctuary, an exchange is allowed, and the priests are directed to receive a tax for their redemption. A book of rates is, accordingly, provided here, by which the priests were to be guided in their valuation.” [END]

Verse 8 – I have been blown away by God’s mercy toward the poor throughout this book. This should make us all very aware of what an amazing, loving, understanding God we serve. He is not harsh, he’s compassionate!

Verse 11 – Benson’s commentary: “Either for the kind or for the quality of it; if it were such a one as might not be offered. In the case of any unclean beast; that is, which was not allowed to be offered in sacrifice, such as a horse, camel, &c., it was to be valued by the priest, and then the owner had liberty to leave the beast at the priest’s disposal, or to redeem it by paying the price set upon it, with a fifth part more. This served as a proper check to men’s levity and fickleness in making vows and religious resolutions. It put them in mind not to be rash in opening

their mouths to God, and made them feel the inconvenience of repenting of their vows.” [END]

Verse 16 – Benson’s commentary states: “This intimates that it was not lawful for a man to vow his whole field or estate, because God would have no man’s family made beggars to enrich his sanctuary.” It continues: “That is, it shall be valued according to the quantity of seed required to sow it. *A homer of barley-seed shall be valued at fifty shekels* — That is, so much land as a homer of barley would sow was to be rated at fifty shekels” [END]

Verse 22 – Keil & Delitzsch Bible Commentary on the OT states: “If on the other hand any one dedicated to the Lord a "field of his purchase," i.e., a field that had been bought and did not belong to his patrimony, he was to give the amount of the valuation as estimated by the priest up to the year of jubilee "on that day," i.e., immediately, and all at once. This regulation warrants the conclusion, that on the dedication of hereditary fields, the amount was not paid all at once, but year by year. In the year of jubilee the field that had been vowed, if a field acquired by purchase, did not revert to the buyer, but to the hereditary owner from whom it had been bought, according to the law in Leviticus 25:23-28.” [END]

Verse 26 – No man can dedicate what already belongs to God.

Verse 28 – John Gill’s commentary states: “his is a different vow from the former, expressed by "sanctifying"; for though "sanctifying" and "devoting" were both vows, yet the latter had an execration or curse added to it, by which a man imprecated a curse upon himself, if that itself, which he devoted, was put to any other use than that for which he devoted it; wherefore this sort of vow was absolute and irrevocable, and what was vowed was unalienable, and therefore not to be sold or

redeemed as afterwards expressed, whereas things sanctified might:”
[END]

Verse 29 – Ellicott’s commentary states: “that is, every one banned from amongst men, or every human being banned, is not to be redeemed. Like the cattle and the patrimonial estates, when once devoted to God by a vow of banning, the man thus banned by a vow comes irretrievably under the class of “most holy unto the Lord,” or one irrevocably withdrawn from the power of man.”

JFB commentary states: “shall surely be put to death—This announcement imported not that the person was to be sacrificed or doomed to a violent death; but only that he should remain till death unalterably in the devoted condition. The preceding regulations were evidently designed to prevent rashness in vowing”

Verse 32 – JFB commentary states: “This alludes to the mode of taking the tithe of cattle, which were made to pass singly through a narrow gateway, where a person with a rod, dipped in ochre, stood, and counting them, marked the back of every tenth beast, whether male or female, sound or unsound.”

This is a very fair system of God. Had God required that the first animal be given, and someone only had 5 animals, they would actually be giving 20% of their animals. By taking the 10th, God ensured no more than a 10th (10%) would be given.