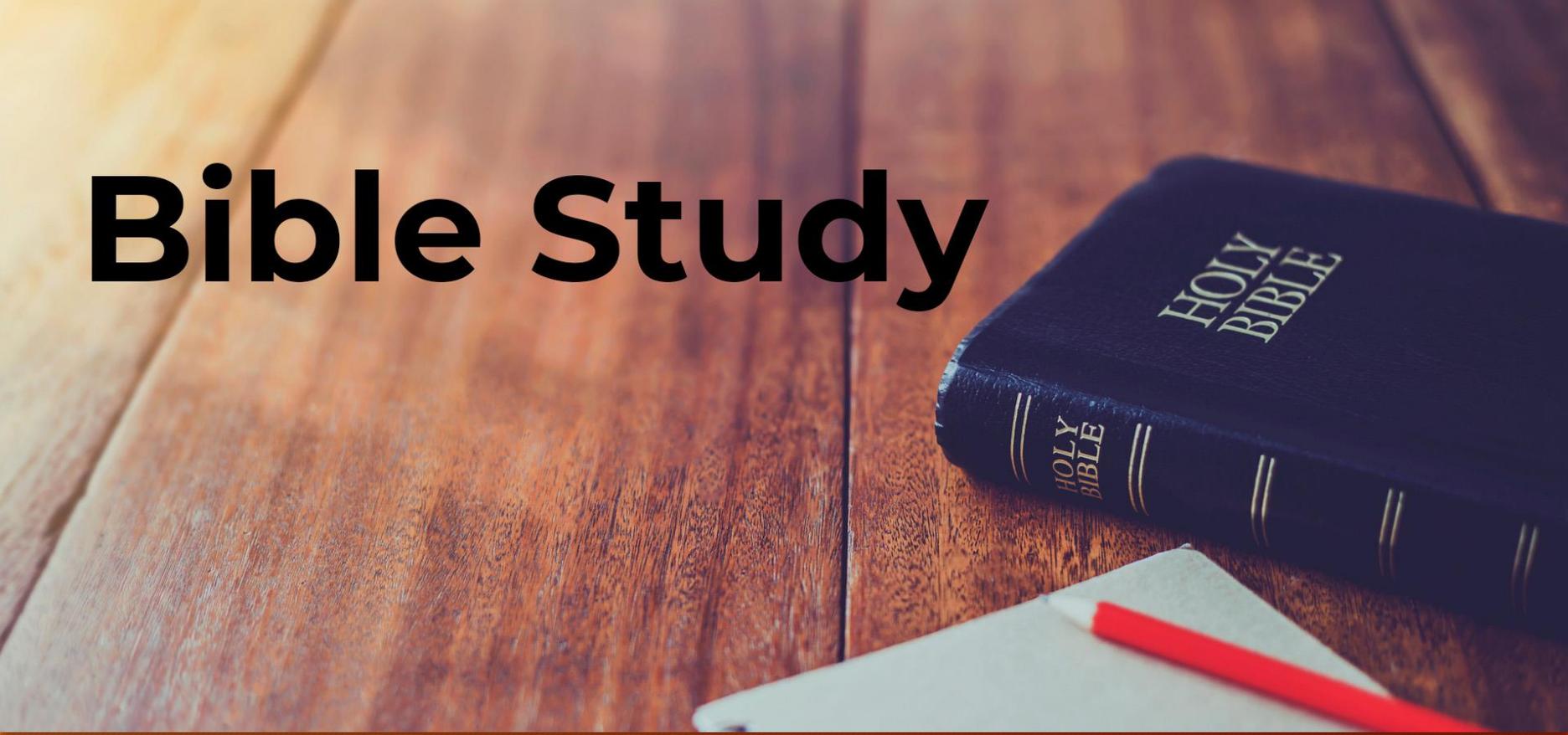


Bible Study



Leviticus 26 BLESSINGS AND CURSES

March 9, 2022

Purpose of Leviticus

- to instruct Israel concerning how to maintain holiness within the community, so that the Lord would continue to dwell among them.
- the Lord desires to dwell among his people so that he might bless them with his presence.
- if the Lord is with his people, Israel can then fulfill its vocation as his “kingdom of priests,” to mediate the Abrahamic blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5–6).

Holiness before God

- **Leviticus displays the magnificent reality of the Lord's presence with his people in the tabernacle.**
- **Because of God's presence with them, the book declares again and again, "You shall be holy because I am holy" (Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:8).**
- **To be holy means to be sacred, set apart from what is common for service to the holy God. A person or thing is made holy, or sanctified, by the blood of sacrifice.**

Universal Themes in Leviticus

- **The centrality of God. Leviticus teaches that God is the center of all of life.**
- **God is the supreme reality around whom everything revolves and for whom all exists.**
- **Leviticus quietly yet clearly arranges all of life—space, persons, time, animals, possessions—around God.**
- **Everywhere in the world, down through human history, all of life gains its meaning only in relation to him.**

**If you walk in
my statutes
and observe my
commandments
and do them,**

then I will give you your
rains in their season,
and the land shall yield
its increase, and the
trees of the field
shall yield their fruit.

Leviticus 26:3–4



- **Leviticus ends with two chapters on human response to the divine revelation contained in this book**
—obedience (ch. 26) and devotion (ch. 27).
- **Chapter 26 is a chapter on obedience, with blessings and curses hanging in the balance.**
- **The chapter begins with the cheerier details of the blessings Israel will receive if they remain faithful to the LORD and keep his covenant.**

- **A series of “if, then” statements concerning the covenant relationship between God and His people - “do this and you’re good; if not, watch out.”**
- **These “if, then” statements are to encourage obedience and discourage disobedience to the law.**
- **The first half of Leviticus 26 is the blessing of God.**
- **A blessing is some gift, some enrichment of life, or some enablement for prosperity that comes from God – this includes both physical and spiritual blessings.**

What is a Covenant?

- *A covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship.*
 - the word *agreement* shows that there are two parties, God and man, who must enter into the provisions of the relationship.
 - the phrase “divinely imposed” shows that man can never negotiate with God or change the terms of the covenant: he can only accept the covenant obligations or reject them.

- **This definition also notes that covenants are “unchangeable.” They may be superseded or replaced by a different covenant, but they may not be changed once they are established.**
- **The word *legal* shows that the creator intends for it to be enforceable (acted upon because it is binding).**
- **A covenant is a chosen relationship or partnership in which two parties make binding promises to each other and work together to reach a common goal.**

Why talk about Covenants?

- Covenants are one of the most important themes in the Bible because they act as the skeletons upon which the entire redemptive story is built.
- They're like the backbone of the Bible.
- From Genesis on, God enters into one formal relationship after another (i.e., covenants) with various humans in order to rescue his world.

- **These divine-human relationships push that narrative forward until it reaches it's climax in Jesus.**
- **Thus, to tell the story of God redeeming his people through Jesus is to tell the story of God's covenantal relationship with his people.**

Summary of the Passage

- **Reminding Israel of their covenant obligation to keep the law, especially by abstaining from idolatry and sanctifying the sanctuary, the Lord promised that their obedience would be rewarded.**

Outline of the Passage

- **I. The Lord reminded the Israelites to keep the law, noting especially that they had to avoid idolatry and sanctify the Sabbath and the sanctuary (26:1-2).**

A. Looking at Israel's history that they couldn't and wouldn't stop worshipping false gods. They made idols every chance they got. Even at Mt. Sinai they made a golden calf. Even then when The Lord was so obviously present with them and doing miracles for their redemption.

- **Israel turned the Sabbath from a celebration of rest and peace with God into a ritualistic job. They put a huge amount of effort into keeping His rest. That was never the intention of the Sabbath.**
- **Both of those laws were about keeping the Lord first in their hearts, communing with the Almighty in love and fellowship. They missed the boat.**

- **II. The Lord promised the Israelites that if they obeyed the commandments, they would be blessed with rain in the proper seasons, good harvests, peace, and prosperity in the land (26:3-10).**
 - A. If the nation obeyed God's commands, God would send the rains in the proper season so that it would have good harvests (26:3-5).**

B. If the nation obeyed God's commands, God would give peace in the land from harmful beasts and war (26:6-8).

C. If the nation obeyed God's commands, God would increase its population in fulfillment of the covenant, with plenty to eat (26:9-10)