

THE EXHORTATIONS TO OBEY GOD: GOD'S PROMISES TO HIS PEOPLE LEVITICUS 26:01–13

Introduction

This chapter covers the great promises and warnings of God to the world. The promises and warnings are directed to Israel, but they are applicable to all nations and people. First, God spells out the promises, then He spells out the warnings. God warns any nation or people who reject Him: they will face the judgment and punishment of God, both in this world and in the world to come. If they live immoral and lawless lives, they will bring punishment down upon their heads now but they will also bring the eternal judgment of God upon themselves at the end of the world, at the great day of judgment. J. Vernon McGee has an excellent introduction to this chapter showing how this chapter applies to Israel as a nation and to the believers of today.

This is a marvellous chapter. It is a prophetic history that covers Israel's entire tenure of the Promised Land until the present hour and gives the conditions in the future on which they will occupy the land....this is the direct word of Jehovah to the nation Israel concerning their future. This is history pre-written and reveals the basis on which Israel entered the land of Canaan and their tenancy there.

This is an "iffy" chapter. "If" occurs nine times and it has to do with the conditions on which they occupy the land. God says "I will" twenty-four times. God will act and react according to their response to the "if." God gave them the land, but their occupancy of it is determined by their answer to the "if." Obedience is the ground of blessing in the land. This chapter is not only the calendar of their history, but it serves as the barometer of their blessings. Their presence in the land, rainfall and bountiful crops denote the favour of God. Their absence from the land, famine and drought denote the judgment of God because of their disobedience.

*You and I are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. However there are some "ifs" connected to that also. God loves you and wants to shower you with His blessings. But you can put up an umbrella of indifference, you can put up an umbrella of sin, you can put up an umbrella of stepping out of the will of God. When you do that, the sunshine of His love won't get through to you. You must put down your umbrella to experience His spiritual blessings. (J. Vernon McGee. *Thru the Bible*, Vol. 1, p. 442).*

This is: *The Exhortations to Obey God: God's Promises and Warnings to His People*, Leviticus 26:1-46.

- I. The conditions for receiving the promises of God (vv. 1-3).
 - II. The promises of God to the obedient (vv. 4-13).
 - III. The causes that stir God's discipline or punishment (vv. 14-15).
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- IV. The warning of judgment and punishment to the disobedient (vv. 16-39).
- V. The faithfulness of God to His promises: the promise of restoration (vv. 40-46).

I. *Leviticus 26:01–03 The Conditions for Receiving the Promises of God*

There are the conditions for receiving the promises of God. God spelled the conditions out for His people.

1. A person must not worship idols or false gods (v. 1). The word for *idols* (*eliyl*) means something that is good for nothing, empty, of no value, vain. An idol is nothing more than physical materials that have been formed or constructed into some image. The image is nothing more than physical materials: it has no meaning, no value whatsoever for worship. It is a worthless, useless thing for worship. False gods are nothing more than the wild and corrupt imaginations of people. Note the warning from God: there is only one true and living God, "I am the LORD Your God." The *LORD* (Jehovah, Yahweh) and the *LORD* alone is to be worshipped. Scripture declares that God is Spirit; no form or image nor anything else within creation — neither the sun, moon or stars — nothing can represent God. He is beyond anything that exists or ever could exist. There is only one Creator and Sovereign LORD of the universe, the *LORD* God Himself. It is He and He alone who is to be worshipped and served.

John 4:24 "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth."

1 Jn 5:21 Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

Deut 4:15-19 You saw no form of any kind the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below. And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars — all the heavenly array — do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping things the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven.

Deut 11:16 Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.

2. A person must keep God's Sabbaths (v. 2). The Sabbaths included not only the weekly worship of the Sabbath day, but also the Sabbatical week that was observed every seven years and the Sabbatical Jubilee that was observed every forty-nine or fifty-years (see notes, Lev 25:1-55). God expects His people to worship. He has set aside one day out of every week for worship, the Sabbath or Sunday. Physically and spiritually, man needs one day a week for rest and worship; therefore it is man's responsibility to obey God by maintaining a healthy body and spirit. But man needs more than just a Sabbath day of rest and worship: he needs other times throughout

the year when work stops and he is allowed to rest and worship. This is the reason God set aside special holidays and festivals. God demands that His people observe these special holidays or festivals throughout the year. In fact, keep the major point in mind: these are the conditions for receiving the promises of God. Man must keep God's Sabbaths in order to receive the promises of God.

1 Cor 16:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Heb 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Exo 20:8 Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Exo 34:21 Six days you shall labour, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the ploughing season and harvest you must rest.

3. A person must reverence God's sanctuary (v. 2). The sanctuary is the holy place of God. It is the place where God's presence dwells in a very special way. The sanctuary is a place that has been sanctified, set apart for God, set apart for the worship of God. Therefore God's sanctuary must be revered, kept holy. God's people are to guard and watch their behaviour within the sanctuary. Only holy behaviour and holy conversation are to take place within the sanctuary. The sanctuary is God's: it is the very place where God's holy presence dwells in a most special way.

Acts 7:33 Then the Lord said to him, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

1 Cor 3:16-17 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

Exo 3:5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Jos 5:15 The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

Psa 33:8 Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him.

Psa 89:7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

Hab 2:20 But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.

4. A person must keep God's laws and obey His commandments (v. 3). The one thing God wants above anything else is obedience. This is the declaration of God throughout all of scripture. The person who truly loves God will obey God.

Mat 7:21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

Mat 7:24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

John 14:21 “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

John 14:23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Deut 26:16 The LORD your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul.

1 Sam 15:22 But Samuel replied: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.”

II. **Leviticus 26:04–13** *The Promises of God to the Obedient*

There are the promises of God to the obedient. As these promises are studied, a person must remember that they are conditional. The promises of God are given to the obedient and only to the obedient. If a person obeys God, then he receives some great and precious promises from God.

1. There was the blessing of food and plenty, of even having an abundance (vv. 4-5). If a person obeyed God, God promised a full season of rain, crops and fruit — a full season of harvest. There would be an abundance of food; moreover, God would provide safety from any enemy who might steal or ravage the crops. Note: when armies march across land, they are often forced to live off the land. Moreover, what they do not need, they often destroy to keep the food out of the hands of their enemies. God was promising His people safety from thieves and from armies of war. He would provide and take care of them, making sure that they had plenty of food, even an abundance of food.

Mat 6:33 “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Phil 4:19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Exo 23:25 Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you.

2. There was the blessing of peace and security (v. 6) This is an interesting promise because it mentions lawless attacks at night and attacks from savage animals. Thieves and rapists are usually the lawless who attack at night. The dangerous or savage

animals would include snakes and scorpions, and lions and bears who roamed the land of Canaan during the days of Moses. Security was also promised against hostile people and war. The person who obeys God will have a blessing of peace and security even during the night while he is sleeping.

Luke 12:7 *“Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”*

Heb 13:6 *So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*

1 Pet 3:13 *Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?*

1 Pet 5:7 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.*

2 Chr 16:9 *For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.*

Psa 91:4 *He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*

Psa 91:5 *You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day.*

Psa 112:7 *They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.*

Psa 121:4 *Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

Prov 3:24 *When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.*

3. There was the blessing of victory (vv. 7-8). If an enemy — a nation, mob or individual — attacked any or all of God's people, God promised that they would be defeated. The believer would strike with the sword and the enemy would fall before the believer. Note a striking fact: the obedient believer will be filled with courage. It takes just a few obedient believers to defeat a mob or army of unbelievers. Note the example given: five obedient believers will have so much courage that they will chase a hundred, and a hundred obedient believers so much courage that they will chase ten thousand. What a wonderful promise! Victory over all enemies is guaranteed to the obedient believer.

Thought 1. God promises victory to the believer, even victory over the terrible enemy of death and hell.

Rom 8:35, 37 *Who shall separate us from the love [compassion] of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

2 Cor 2:14 *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

1 John 5:4 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.*

Rev 21:7 *Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.*

4. There was the blessing of children, of being fruitful. This was a promise to fulfil the covenant with Abraham (v. 9). (See notes, Gen 12:1-3). If God's people obeyed Him, He promised that the population would dramatically increase.
5. There was the blessing of having more than enough, of having enough to give and help others (v. 10). The believer who obeys God will never face a food shortage. He will always have enough to eat and to give to help others. Note the picture God uses to describe the abundance of harvest: the believer will still be eating last year's harvest when he has to make room for the new harvest.
6. There was the blessing of God's presence (vv. 11-12). God promised to dwell among His people and not despise them if they obeyed Him. He would walk among them and be their God and make them His people. This is a great promise: that God would live among and fellowship with His people if they would just obey Him. What an amazing thought! That the God of the universe — the great Creator and Sustainer of all — would allow a personal relationship with Himself. He would actually live and fellowship with an obedient believer. He would take the believer and make him a member of God's family — an astounding truth!

Mat 18:20 *“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*

Mat 28:20 *“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

1 Cor 1:9 *God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

1 John 1:3 *We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

Rev 3:20 *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*

Exo 33:14 *The LORD replied, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

Psa 34:18 *The LORD is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psa 145:18 *The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.*

Isa 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

7. There was the guarantee that God could fulfil His promises and His blessings (v. 13). Note the forceful declaration: "I am the LORD your God." It is He who has delivered His people from the slavery of Egypt. Remember, Egypt is a symbol of the world. God is the One who enables His people to walk with their heads held high. God is declaring that He has the power to fulfil His promises and His blessings. He has proven His power by delivering His people from the enslavement of Egypt. Because of His power, His people can walk with their heads held high. His promises will be fulfilled.

2 Tim 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day. ■