

BIBLE SCAN

LEVITICUS 23-27

On my calendar there're some important dates. **April 16** is **Tax Freedom Day**, when the average American finally makes enough money to pay their annual tax bill... **July 18** is **my wife's birthday**. She'll be 39 this year... **August 23** is **our 45th anniversary**. *Not sure how that math works, but...* **August 17** is **opening day for Calvary Bible Institute South**, the new Bible College we're starting this fall... And **February 8** is **Super Bowl Sunday**. *Expect the Falcons to be watching from home.*

My point is we all have vital dates on our calendar *and so does God...* In Leviticus 23 God publishes His calendar, and He establishes special or **"holy"** days.

When God created the universe He established a continuum of space, mass, and time - *and He remains Lord of all three!* He has jurisdiction over all *space*. He is sovereign over all *matter*. He's the author of all *time*.

So when He brought His people out of Egypt God reminded them of His supremacy over this space, mass, time continuum. He **"set apart"** or **"made holy"** a *sacred space* (the Tabernacle), *sacred materials* (the Offerings), and *sacred times* (these Feast Days).

And this reiterated to the Hebrews that they were responsible to God for how they occupied space, and utilized matter, and consumed time... Every tick of the clock belongs to God. We live on borrowed time. Every second of life is a gift from Him - and God calls us to give back to Him a portion of the time He's given to us.

There were a few non-biblical feasts... the Feast of **New Moon** was monthly... **Purim** and **Hanukkah** were annual feasts, not specifically sanctioned in Scripture.

But God ordained certain days as special days, days set aside for worship and rest... *Feast Days*. The **Sabbath** was a once a week celebration... Then there were seven yearly feasts: *four in the spring, three in the fall*. The spring feasts were **Unleavened Bread, Passover, the Feast of First Fruits, and the Feast of Weeks...** Fall feasts were **the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles...**

Then there was the **Sabbath year** - which occurred one year in seven. And a very special significance was attached to every fiftieth year... the **year of Jubilee**.

In Chapter 23 God prefaces all these feast days, **"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD,**

which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are **My feasts.**" The Hebrew term translated "**feast**" means "**appointment.**" God made appointments with Israel. He blocked out time for them, and expected them to block out the same time for Him.

We too should take out our calendar, and set aside time to spend with God: a *weekly Sabbath, meaningful holidays and timely get-aways, even spiritual retreats.*

God said to Moses, "**these are My feasts.**" When God makes an appointment with you, don't snub God!

There's a saying I heard years ago that has saved me from burn out. Jot this down, "**The bow that is always bent ceases to shoot straight.**" If you never relax the string and keep constant tension on the bow - it'll eventually warp and lose its effectiveness.

And the same is true of the human psyche. Our bodies, our minds, our spirits need frequent intervals of rest and rejuvenation to operate at optimum levels.

Today, a third of all Americans experience "*extreme stress*" - 27% are so stressed-out they can't function most days. Researchers say three out of every four visits to the doctor are for stress-related ailments. You and I weren't built to push through life 24/7, non-stop.

Thus, God's calendar built frequent periods of rest and rejuvenation into the lives of His people.

Of course, we as Christians no longer celebrate OT feast days per se, but that doesn't mean we can't learn from the principles they teach! We need to set aside weekly, monthly, and yearly intervals to *rest physically and refocus spiritually.* **We need rhythms of rest to truly rejuvenate ourselves.** And Leviticus 23 is God's sacred calendar, God's appointments with His people, Israel.

And the first appointment God mentions is a weekly Sabbath. The fourth of the Ten Commandments, verse 3 reads, "**Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.**" Interestingly, during the French Revolution to de-Christianize society France tried a 10 day week. For similar reasons the 1930s Soviet Union shortened their week to five days. Yet in both cases the experiment was quickly dismissed.

Something built-in to our brains calls for *downtime* every seventh day. Researchers say that people who observe a Sabbath each week live ten years longer than those who don't, *and they certainly live happier.* This is why Jesus said in Mark 2:27, "**The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.**"

Notice the flow of verse 3: “*six days shall work be done... on the Sabbath do no work...*” The Sabbath is a contrast. The word “Sabbat” means “*intermission.*” That’s what the Sabbath is, a break in the weekly routine - a rest-stop in the rat race - a time-out in a big game. One author puts it, “*On the Sabbath everyday gives way to holiday, and the Jewish world rests.*”

Six days is given to work, but a seventh is set aside to remind us *why we work*. It’s a day to refocus our priorities - to remind ourselves of the reason we do what we do the rest of the week. *It’s a day to regroup, restore, reorientate, rejuvenate.* The Sabbath is for two activities: to *pray* and to *play*. It’s a day to enjoy God’s blessings, and as you do... *make sure you say thanks!*

Today we use the term “*holiday.*” It’s the combination of two English words, “*holy*” and “*day.*” And “*holidays*” were originally “*holy days*” - days set aside for God and worship, and the celebration of His wonderful works.

The problem with our Sabbaths today is how we spend them. We go to Disney World, or Six Flags, or the Braves Game, and by the time we get home we’re more exhausted than before we went. A trip to Disney World is not exactly what I’d call “*a holy convocation.*”

Sometimes we take our Sabbaths, and do work of another sort - *labor in the yard, or toil on the car, or remodel the bathroom.* We find new ways to stress out. Verse 3 tells us the Sabbath is set aside for a “*solemn,*” or *serious rest.* It’s not a day for inactivity - just to do something that rejuvenates, not drains. Verse 3 calls the day “*a convocation*” or “*a commanded assembly.*” Community worship is also a Sabbath component.

Say you call the church and make an appointment with a pastor to share your problems, but as you spill the beans he’s reading a magazine, **you’d be ticked off!** *At least he could give you his undivided attention.* This is how God feels when He makes an appointment with you, only for you to ignore Him. We need to prioritize those times that strengthen our grip on God.

Verse 4-22 go on to describe the spring feasts. Verse 5, “*On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover.*” or “*Pesach.*” Note, the Hebrew day began at “*twilight*” or sundown. God wants our days to begin with rest, *not* end with rest. His plan is for us to gain our strength from Him; then begin our work.

Recall Exodus 12, on the eve of their exodus from Egypt, the festivities revolved around a meal. They ate bitter herbs which reminded them of their years of bondage. Roasted lamb recalled the sacrificial blood that was spread on the doorposts and threshold of the house. That caused God’s judgment to pass over His people.

Unleavened bread spoke of the Hebrews' faith in God's promise. Their exodus from Egypt the next day wouldn't provide enough time for the bread to rise.

Passover was celebrated on Nisan 14th. And since this was a new start for the nation, Nisan became the first month of the Jewish year. Today, the month of Nisan corresponds with our *late March - early April*.

Of course, 1500 years later Jesus was crucified on Passover, Nisan 14th. 1 Corinthians 5:7 tells us, "**For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.**" Jesus is now our Passover lamb. When His blood is spread on the doorposts and threshold of our heart God's judgment *passes over* us. We're delivered from sin. It becomes a new day, a new beginning for us.

Remember on the night of the Passover, just before He was crucified, Jesus gave new meaning to the age-old celebration. He took the unleavened bread and wine, and called it "**My body, My blood.**" Jesus took a 1500 year old tradition and gave it a revolutionary new meaning. You and I can are born anew in Christ Jesus.

Verse 6 mentions the next spring feast, the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**. For the seven days following the Passover the Hebrews ate only unleavened bread. Leaven is a type of sin. It corrupts by puffing up. And sin likewise inflates our pride... So following their deliverance from Egypt they were to spend seven days ridding their houses of this notorious reminder of sin.

It's interesting, when Jesus delivers us He takes us *just as we are, and right where we're at*. Leaven or sin doesn't stop Jesus from forgiving you, and setting you free, and making you His child - but once you're His, He changes your nature and you'll want to get rid of the leaven in your life. As the old saying goes, "**A believer is never sinless, but he will sin less and less.**"

The third spring feast was the **Feast of First Fruits**. On the day after the Sabbath, following the Passover, the priest took the initial harvest of barley and offered it to God. He was saying thanks to God for His provision. Which is what we do when we tithe our income. We give back to God **the first** of what He's given to us.

The priest made this offering in an interesting way. Earlier, it's a "**heave offering**" and "**wave offering.**" He heaves the bundle up and down; then side to side - a vertical then horizontal motion... in essence, He's drawing a cross. These offerings were depicting Jesus.

But there's more! Jesus' resurrection occurred on the day following the Sabbath, after the Passover, or on **the Feast of First Fruits**. 1 Corinthians 15:23 refers to Jesus

as the “**firstfruits**” of the resurrection. He was the initial bundle of God’s resurrection harvest. He was first to overcome death, and inherit an incorruptible body.

The last of the spring feasts was the **Feast of Weeks** or “**Shavuot**” meaning “**weeks**.” This was a joyous time. Folks decorated with fresh flowers. For some reason cheesecakes are linked to Shavuot.

We’re told in verse 16, “**Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.**” The Greek word for “**fifty**” is “**Pentecost**,” which is the name this Feast went by in the NT. On our current calendar *the Feast of Weeks* or *Day of Pentecost* occurs in *late May - early June*.

This feast celebrated *the end of the spring harvest*. This time the priest brought two loaves of grain to God, and unlike at Passover, the loaves were baked *with leaven*. Jewish tradition says the giving of the Law to Moses occurred fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits. Its anniversary then, was celebrated at Pentecost.

And in the same year Jesus was crucified fulfilling the *Passover*, and was risen fulfilling *First Fruits*, He also fulfilled the symbolism in *the Feast of Weeks*. For it was at Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church, and a harvest of souls began. On that day God, the Lawgiver, began to write His law in the hearts of men. And two loaves were presented to God, both Jews and Gentiles. Leavened loaves, in fact - God accepted them even though stained with sin.

This made all four spring feasts a beautiful and prophetic picture of the first coming of Jesus Christ.

Now in verses 23-44 are three fall feasts, all in the same month, the seventh month on the Jewish calendar, *Tishri*, which is our *September - October*.

The first fall feast was the **Feast of Trumpets**, or as the Jews call it, “**Rosh Hashannah**” - “*the head of the year*.” After the exodus the Passover and Nisan were made the first month on the religious calendar. But the Jewish new year was and still is the month of Tishri.

Jewish tradition called the Feast of Trumpets “*the birthday of the world*.” It not only marked a new year, but the beginning of creation. The rabbis taught that Abraham sacrificed his son, Isaac, on Rosh Hashannah. And since God provided a ram instead, the priest blows a ram’s horn or shofar at this feast. *I brought my shofar to give you a sample.* (play)

It was this trumpet blast that called the workers out of the fields to the Tabernacle for a holy gathering. Rosh Hashannah marked the end of the fall harvest.

Next came the **Day of Atonement**. On the 10th of Tishri the Hebrews did no work, and made atonement for their sin. The sacrifices and rituals we discussed in Leviticus 16 were carried out. This was the one day of the year the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctum of the Tabernacle, where the glory of God was visible and tangible. And there he sprinkled blood on the lid of the Ark, or the mercyseat.

When he exited, the High Priest laid his hands on the head of the scapegoat, and confessed the sins of the nation. The goat was then led off into the wilderness, to never return. It was all a vivid reminder that God not only forgives sin - but what He forgives He forgets...

When the Moravian missionaries tried to witness to the eskimos in Alaska they were hindered because they couldn't come up with a word for forgiveness. They had to invent one, "*Is-shu-majie-cho-junk-anner-elk-milk*" which means "*not being able to think about it anymore.*" What a beautiful word for our forgiveness.

The Day of Atonement is known by Jews today as "**Yom Kippur**." "**Yom**" means "**day**", "**Kippur**" means "**covering or atonement**" - this was the day the sin of the nation was covered for another year. The Hebrews were to observe the day in a serious, somber fashion...

Verse 32, "**It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls** (a metaphor for fasting); **on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.**" Israel spent this day in confession and repentance.

It's sad what's happened today to the Jewish Day of Atonement. Jesus is the fulfillment of this feast. In 1 John 2:2 He's called our "**propitiation**," or "**mercyseat**." He's also our scapegoat. Confess your sin, and trust Jesus as your Savior, and God will put *your sin* onto *His Son*. He'll not only forgive it, but forget it as well.

God wanted the Jews on this day to cultivate a heart of repentance and humble themselves. The day was a reminder of their need for a sacrifice... But over the years the Jews have done the opposite. They view Yom Kippur as a substitute for sacrifice. Their fasting and afflicting is itself payment for their sin. They use this day to remind God of their good works and flaunt their self-righteousness. They've forgotten Leviticus 17, "**it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.**"

The final fall feast was the **Feast of Tabernacles**. This was a fun feast. Verse 40 commands, "**you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.**" For a whole week Hebrew families lived outdoors in tents. Even today observant Jews spend this feast in booths they set up in their backyard. This is why this feast is also called "**Sukkoth**," which means "**booths or tents.**"

And verse 43 tells us the reason for the booths, “that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt...” This was a celebration of God’s provision in the wilderness. God brought the Hebrews manna in the morning, and quail at night. For forty years the people’s sandals never wore out. *My boys needed new shoes every three months!...* God also gave Israel victory over their enemies. He brought water from the rock to quenched the people’s thirst.

In the first century, during this Feast, the wilderness miracle of water from the rock was commemorated in the Temple. Priests would pour out water on the altar commemorating God drawing water from the rock.

And it was there, in the Temple, at this feast, Jesus made an astounding statement. As the priest was dowsing the altar, Jesus stood, and according to John 7:37, shouted, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” For Jesus is the rock in the wilderness of this world who satisfies and slakes our spiritual thirst.

Here now is where the plot thickens - if the spring feasts were all fulfilled by Jesus’ first coming, is it possible the fall feasts will be fulfill at His second?

During the summer months there were no feasts. And prophetically, that’s where we are now. God is working with the Church, not Israel - for the Hebrews it’s the drought of summer. But the Scripture is clear, at the close of the age, God will return to Israel and fulfill His purposes. *And how will His end times work begin?*

With a trumpet blast! (Sound) 1 Thessalonians 4:16, “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” The last days begins with the rapture of the Church, which is what the Feast of Trumpets foreshadows. The shofar calls the workers out of the fields. The harvest is over. *It sounds like the rapture!*

This year Rosh Hashanah falls on September 22. No man knows the day or the hour of Jesus’ return, but I always approach that day with extra anticipation.

On the Day of Atonement the High Priest came out of the Holy of Holies and appeared to the people to let them know His sacrifice was accepted. This is what happens when Jesus returns to Earth at the end of the Great Tribulation. The High Priest leaves the heavenly Holy of Holies and shows Himself to Israel. It could be that Jesus’ second coming occurs on Yom Kippur.

That would mean the Feast of Tabernacles would then be prophetic of the Kingdom Age, when again God supernaturally provides for His people, just as He did in the

wilderness. The Millennium will be a period of great rejoicing. In fact, **Zechariah 14:16** teaches us during Christ's thousand year reign all the nations will come up to Jerusalem once a year to worship the King *and keep what feast?*... the Feast of Tabernacles.

Granted, it's speculation - but if the four spring feasts were prophetic of Jesus' first coming - it's possible the three fall feasts are prophetic of His second coming.

Two more feasts appear in Leviticus 25. Just as there's a Sabbath day, there's also **a Sabbath year**. Every seventh Israel was to let the land rest. Verse 4, "**neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard.**"

Modern agriculture has now scientifically verified the wisdom of this law. When a field is dormant it restores and revives its mineral content. Fail to let the land rest, and you rape it of its nutrients. Today's farmers practice crop rotation to allow the land to rejuvenate itself.

Verses 18-22 answer the question that I'm sure entered the mind of every Jew. *If we let the land rest in the seventh year, how are we going to eat?* But God promised to make the sixth year so prosperous that afterwards you'll have enough to eat for three years!

If the Jews obey God's Law they'll live high on the hog! *Well, not on the hog...* but "**in high cotton!**"

Yet here's the hurdle you have to overcome if you're going to truly observe a Sabbath day - or for the Hebrews, a Sabbath year - **do you trust God to do more with six, than you can do with seven?** And this is the hurdle when it comes to tithing our money, **do we trust God to do more with 90%, than you can do with 100%?** In essence, how strong is your faith?

Another feast is discussed in Leviticus 25, **the year of Jubilee**. This was a Sabbath year after seven, seven year periods. Every fiftieth year was the Jubilee!

And the concept of a Jubilee year is unparalleled in history. It was uniquely Hebrew. *And it was ingenious.* Verse 10 describes the chief feature of the Jubilee, "**each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family.**" In other words, all debts were forgiven, and all properties were returned in the fiftieth year. **It was a societal and financial reset.**

When the Hebrews entered the promised land God portioned out the land to each of the twelve tribes. The land belonged to God, but He loaned a parcel to each family in Israel. From time to time land was sold or bought. When land was put up for collateral on a loan, and a man defaulted, the land was lost. But the loss was never permanent -

for in the year of Jubilee all parcels were returned to their original owner. That's why whenever a land transaction came down, its value was determined by the number of years to the Jubilee.

Another practice in ancient Israel was slavery. When we think of slavery, we think of the cruel and inhumane chattel slavery of the pre-Civil War South, but that was not the slavery of ancient Israel. Hebrew slavery was a substitute for bankruptcy. It helped the debtor work off his obligation to his creditor. If you owed a great sum, you could become an indentured servant and work off what you owed... Yet in the year of Jubilee all debts were canceled, **and all slaves became free men.**

Think of the practical impact of this law. Most Israelis experienced one Jubilee in their lifetime. They got a once-in-a-lifetime reprieve. All debt was canceled. Everyone got a fresh start financially. If a family land had been lost through a relative's slothfulness the family could retrieve it, and begin again. The Jubilee didn't hinder an industrious person, but it did even out some inequities, and address some cruelties, and restore to everyone a real opportunity to get ahead.

As clever a welfare system as the Jubilee was its real significance was **prophetic**. Think about it, the original owner of this world is God. But God gave dominion of it to man. We in turn lost it to Satan. Three times in the Gospel of John, Satan is called "**the ruler of this world.**" But one day God will call for a Jubilee, and all the land will revert back to its original owner.

Today, Satan may control this earth, but it doesn't belong to Him. When Jesus returns, Satan will be evicted, and the world will return to its rightful landlord.

When Jesus comes all our debts will be canceled, slaves will be freed, and all property will return to its rightful and ultimate owner. *Come quickly, Lord Jesus!*

Let me bring up another point regarding God's calendar. It's full of sevens, the seventh day, seventh year, the year after the seventh period of seven years. There are even periods of seven times seventy years. Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy is an example. The Babylonian captivity also lasted seventy years because the Hebrews had neglected to observe the Sabbath year, seventy straight times, or for 490 years.

Now, what I'm about to suggest is conjecture, but what if we took this one more step - *seven times a thousand years - or seven millenniums?* Based on the assumption that Adam and Eve were created 6000 years ago we're now coming to the end of the sixth millennium. From Adam to Abraham was 2000 years, give or take. From Abraham to Jesus was 2000 years. And from Jesus to today, is of course, 2000 years. Three periods of 2000 years is a total of 6000 years.

Now the Bible mentions one final 1000 year period. Revelation 20 teaches Jesus will return to reign a 1000 years. If God fulfills His plans in seven millenniums, then Jesus' Millennial Kingdom will be the seventh! And since we're coming to the close of the sixth millennium; then it's possible Jesus is returning very, very soon.

And this is not just modern day Millennial fever. This was believed by many early Christians. The Church father, Irenaeus, in 150 AD, wrote, "For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were complete; it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand years." Of course, our current year count is arbitrary. On the Jewish calendar - supposedly starting at creation - this is year 5,785. But whether the seventh millennium is 215 years away, or 2 days away, we're getting closer!

Of course, quite a few other issues are covered in today's chapters. Let me talk briefly about what's left...

Leviticus 24:1-9 are instructions for the priestly oil, and shewbread on display in the Tabernacle. The oil fueled the menorah and reminded Israel that God is the light of the world. The bread fed the priests, and reminded Israel that God alone satisfies our hunger.

The precise care taken with both the oil and bread should encourage us to take care in our worship. Our worship should be *deliberate, not sloppy or haphazard*.

In 24:10 Moses runs into a situation not covered by the letter of the Law. Two men get into a fight, a regular fisticuffs. In the process one of the men blasphemes God's holy name, *what's the appropriate penalty?* Verse 12 says, "they put him in custody, that the mind of the LORD might be shown to them." Blasphemy was an issue not covered in the *Word of God*, so Moses seeks the *mind of God*. And it's wise to do just that...

Notice here, three things... *First, Moses **desires** to know. He doesn't act rashly, or impatiently, or act of his own initiative... Second, Moses **delays** until he knows. He gives it time. He doesn't rush it. He puts the boy in custody until God reveals His will... And third, Moses **depends** until He knows. He'll know when God shows. This is not something that's up to Moses to figure out, or discover. Moses believes God will show him. Hey, when you **desire, delay, depend...** God will show you.*

People said George Washington Carver got his knowledge of the peanut from the Bible. But here's how Carver explained it, "The Bible teaches nothing about the peanut. But it told me about God, and God told me about the peanut." As believers we have *the mind of Christ*. It's a matter of tuning into His wisdom.

Well, in verse 13 God shows Moses, “**And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.”** Obviously, this punishment was designed to deter anyone else from blaspheming God’s name. The lesson here is that anything that *undermines our reverence for God* should be dealt with radically. For *the loss of reverence leads to a corruption of morals...*

Today, God still wants to eliminate the blasphemer, *but not by stoning, by saving!* We have a greater than Moses. The Gospel of Jesus has the power to change people’s lives and turn *blasphemers* into *worshippers*.

Chapter 24:17 goes on to describe the Law of Tit for Tat, “**fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.**” Moses is describing the role of civil government. The state should choose a punishment equal to the crime.

And this is not the human tendency. Natural reaction is one-upmanship. I’ll do to you one more than you did to me. Punch me in the eye, and I’ll give you a black-eye **AND** a bloody lip. The Law tempered our desire for revenge, and insured that our penalty fit the crime.

Leviticus 25:35 commands the Hebrews to show mercy towards the man who falls on hard times. *Don’t charge a poor man interest on a loan. Or sell him food at a marked-up price.* Help him get back on his feet.

Years ago, I worked at a warehouse in Doraville, and I’ll never forget one Friday night. We were locking up to leave when we found a drunk on the dock. Company rules required us to throw him off the property, but my boss grabbed some soft packing material, and made him a bed. He put the man under the overhang to protect him from the elements. And I’ll never forget what Ralph told me, “**Sandy, never kick a man when he’s down. You never know when it might be you.**”

Toward the end of Chapter 25 you find that slavery in Israel was very different than what **we** think of as slavery. If a person had to sell himself to pay off his debts, verse 43 commands the creditor, “**You shall not rule over him with rigor, but you shall fear your God.**”

Jewish slaves were not to be sold to others, but either *redeemed* or *set free* in the year of Jubilee.

Leviticus 26 is an amazing chapter. God tells the Hebrews what will happen if they obey the Law, and if they disobey. And these promises became prophetic.

If they obey they'll be blessed. If they disobey they'll be cursed. And now with the hindsight of history we can see how clearly this series of blessings and curses accurately predicted Israel's journey. Chart the history of the Jew, and it conforms perfectly to Leviticus 26.

From verses 4-13 we find *the blessings*. From verse 14-39 *the curses*... I once saw a documentary on the Holocaust that was chilling and sobering. The captions under the photos were quotes from Leviticus 26.

For example, verse 27, "If you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sin... Verse 39, "those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies lands..." Horror upon horror were destined on a wayward Israel.

Eventually they would be overthrown and scattered. Which is exactly what occurred in 70 AD when Rome sacked Jerusalem, and drove the Jews into foreign lands, where they stayed for 1900 years. Only in our generation, have *Jews in mass* returned to their land.

Yet in verse 40 God tells Israel that even their own failures are not insurmountable. "If they confess their iniquity... if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt - then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham... I will remember their land."

If they repent, God will remember and restore. He won't abandon Israel, nor abandon you. Nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus!

Which leads to Leviticus 27 and the practice of redemption. *Here is how a Hebrew would present an offering to God*... A parent might dedicate a child, or a family might offer to God a family member, or a cattleman might bring an ox, or a farmer might give a field to the Lord. Yet God seldom took possession of these offerings. God had no need to stockpile people, and animals, and fields. *So here's what happened*...

Say, you gave your house to the Lord; then the priest would sell it back. The money from the sale went to the service of God and you kept your house... You could do this with a child, or an animal, or a field - pretty much anything. The priest's job was to set a value or price on whatever it was that you were redeeming.

If anyone wants to give their house to the church this morning we'll take the title; then be happy to sell it back to you! Sounds like a cool way to collect an offering!

Remember in 1 Samuel 1, a lady named "Hannah" gave her young son, Samuel, to the Lord, but Hannah didn't redeem him. Instead, Samuel serves God in the Tabernacle, alongside the High Priest, Eli. Usually though, a parent would buy back, or *redeem their child*.

Leviticus ends, “These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai.” When God took Israel out of Egypt to replant them in Canaan, He first brought them to Mount Sinai. There He gave them His Law, and taught them how to worship Him and live in community.

Now they’re ready, and in the book of Numbers we chart their journey from Mount Sinai to a southern, Canaanite, border town, known as *Kadesh Barnea*.

The book of Numbers is what happens next...