Inter-covenantal Truth and Relevance: Leviticus 26 and the Biblical Covenants

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Leviticus 26 consists of parenetic revelation given at Sinai on the threshold of Israel's wilderness wanderings. The pericope's relevance is best understood in the light of the apparent tension that the promulgation of the Mosaic Covenant had created with the Abrahamic Covenant. After three disturbing apostasies at Sinai, Leviticus 26 explains the relationship between the two covenants and reemphasizes the exclusive lordship of Yahweh. Although Leviticus 26 antedates Paul's teaching in Galatians 3:17 by fifteen centuries, the same truth is proclaimed: "the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise."[1]

The respective emphases of both covenants were advanced by the blessings and curses of Leviticus 26. While the blessings were relevant to the Abrahamic Covenant's promises regarding land and blessing, the cursings represented a five-stage process of Mosaic Covenant vengeance.[2] The purpose of the cursings was to produce confession of guilt, humility, and restitution — elements that may be seen as anticipating either the Deuteronomic (or Palestinian) Covenant or the New Covenant.[3] Restitution involved the sabbatical principle, a significant element of the Mosaic Covenant. The sabbatical principle is central to Leviticus 26. Yahweh is Lord of both space (the land) and time (the sabbaths). The Land-Giver and Exodus-Causer will always be loyal to His covenants and to His covenanted people. In addition to its direct links to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, Leviticus 26 also has bearing upon the existence of a covenant that Israel entered in Moab. Later prophetic revelation was anchored in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27—28.

This paper will discuss the inter-covenantal aspects of Leviticus 26 as it relates to the following subject areas: (1) covenant, (2) law, (3) Yahweh, (4) promise, (5) repentance, and, (6) revelation. The parenesis in Leviticus 26 has something to contribute to each of these areas of OT theology.

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[1] NASB. All translations in this study are the author's own unless otherwise indicated, as here.

[2] The five stages are: (1) debilitation and defeat (Lev 26:16-17), (2) drought (vv. 18-20), (3) devastation by wild beasts (vv. 21-22), (4) deprivation by siege (vv. 23-26), and (5) deportation (vv. 27-38).

[3] There are a number of similarities between the Deuteronomic Covenant and the New Covenant. See Dennis T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading*, Overtures to Biblical Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 126-58 (esp. 153-56).

Covenant

"Covenant" (ברית) is employed eight times in Leviticus 26 (vv. 9, 15, 25, 42 *ter*, 44, 45). It always denotes a binding relationship of Yahweh to His people Israel. This relationship provided Israel with a life which had a goal and with a history that had meaning. In all its occurrences in this pericope, "covenant" promotes the concept of the sovereignty of Yahweh, the covenant-giver. In six of the eight uses of the term, the first person singular suffix ("my") is attached (vv. 9, 15, 42 *ter*, 44). Yahweh Himself is always the antecedent. The unilateral nature of the covenants is implied by this form of reference. Yahweh Himself established the covenants, and He alone. Yahweh's personal intervention in the history of Israel is a central theme of the covenants. His lordship is personal and absolute. The covenant lays hold of the people of Israel and demands unconditional surrender to the will of God. Loyalty to the covenant must be more than outward acquiescence, it must be an inward reality. The "uncircumcised heart" (v. 41) is the antithesis of this loyalty:

> The covenant Lord demands heart-consecration which reflects the fulfillment of the consecration sworn in the circumcision oath. Circumcision is an oath-rite. To be uncircumcised would be to place oneself outside the juridical authority of Yahweh and a refusal to consign oneself to the ordeal of the Lord's judgment for the final verdict on one's life—eternal weal or woe..[4]

The Abrahamic Covenant

Yahweh's covenant with Abraham appears to underlie the references to "covenant" in verses 9, 42, and 44. The theme of a fruitful population is an echo of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 17:6, 7, 19, and 21 (cf., also, Exod 6:4 and Deut 8:18). Verse 9 may be employed as an example of the distinctions made within the passage concerning the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. The Abrahamic Covenant is characterized by the following elements: (1) The theme of promise, (2) emphasis on divine fulfillment, and (3) references to land, prosperity, and blessing and/or cursing. On the other hand, the Mosaic Covenant is characterized by: (1) the theme of law, (2) emphasis on human responsibility, and (3) references to sabbath, sanctuary, and divine sovereignty. Although verse 9 is in the midst of Mosaic Covenant material, it displays Abrahamic vocabulary, phraseology, and theme. Its message is pertinent to that brief span of time immediately following the revelation of the Mosaic Covenant at Mt. Sinai. In effect, the message was: the revelation concerning law is equal in authority to the older revelation concerning promise. In order to receive the promised blessings contained in the Abrahamic Covenant, Israel would have to obey the stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant. In other words, the Mosaic Covenant would be the program by which Israelites would manifest their faith by faith's works (cf. Jas 2:14-26).

Each of the three references to "my covenant" in verse 42 is associated with one of the patriarchs:

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[4] Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1968), 47-48.

42a- וזכרתי את־בריתי יעקוב
and I shall remember my covenant with Jacob

42b- ואף את־בריתי יצחק
even my covenant with Isaac

42c- ואף את־בריתי אברהם אזכר
yea, I shall remember my covenant with Abraham

42d- והארץ אזכר
and I shall remember the land

The triple employment of זכר sets the tone of this section.[5] The first person references indicate that Yahweh Himself will respond to Israel's repentance when it occurs. When Israel repents and turns back to Yahweh, it is the Abrahamic Covenant that will be reconfirmed or renewed. Thus, the blessings and cursings of Leviticus 26 are set against the backdrop of the Abrahamic Covenant. The same covenant may also be in view at verse 44 in Yahweh's promise not to be the one to initiate any breach of the covenant.

The blessings recited in Leviticus 26:4-12 are at least in part a fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham. Those blessings fall into six categories:

(1) productivity (vv. 4-5; cf. Gen 24:35, 27:28; 30:43)
(2) peace (v. 6; cf. Gen 22:17)
(3) power (vv. 7-8; cf. Gen 22:17)
(4) population (v. 9; cf. Gen 12:2; 15:5; 17:6)
(5) provision (v. 10; cf. productivity, above), and
(6) presence (vv. 11-12; cf. Gen 17:7, 8).

All these blessings were associated with the land that Israel would receive from Yahweh. They are consistent with various statements and restatements of the Abrahamic Covenant.

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[5] In addition to the repetitions in verse 42, the following elements should be noted: (1) The elevated style of 42abc is nearly a tristich containing synonymous parallelism. This does not mean that the three men are synonymous. The proper names are but modifiers of ברית. The last phrase of 42 and the subsequent context confirm that only one covenant is being described. (2) זכר forms an inclusion opening and closing the section in order to maintain the emphasis on remembrance. The absence of זכר in 42b helps the inclusio develop. (3) ואף in 42bc continues the concept initiated in 42a. Its absence in 42d confirms the individual nature of that stich. (4) The patriarchal names are the reverse of the triad's usual order (a *hapax phainomenon* in the OT). The backward look to the original Abrahamic promise served to confront Israel with their covenant relationship to Yahweh. (5) The apodosis (the protasis is in vv. 40-41) is concluded by 42d. The substitution of הארץ for ברית focuses attention on the central promise of the covenant: the land. The patriarchs are not the center of attention, the land grant is. (6) Verse 42d repeats the *yqtl* form of זכר (cf. 42c) in order to maintain the continuity between 42abc and 42d. Therefore, 42d is best understood as a concise summary of 42abc. (Note, also, that הארץ אזכר in 42d is immediately followed by הארץ תעזב in 43a. This case of contrastive anadiplosis is significant in that the Israelites' forsaking of the land must precede the divine remembering of the land.)

The covenant curses of Leviticus 26:14-38 are at least in part a removal of the Abrahamic blessings. Disobedience on the part of Israel would result in the following changes:

(1) Rather than possessing the land (Gen 12:1; 15:7, 18-21; 17:8), Israel would be dispossessed from the land (Lev 26:33-38).
(2) National greatness (Gen 12:2) would be turned into humiliation, inferiority, and insignificance (Lev 26:29, 32, 36-37; Deut 28:43-44).
(3) Blessing (Gen 12:2; 22:17) would turn to cursing (Lev 26:14-38; Deut 28:15-68).
(4) Instead of being a blessing (Gen 12:2-3; 22:18), Israel would become a curse (Lev 26:32, 36-37a; Deut 28:25, 37).
(5) Multiplication (Gen 12:2; 15:5; 17:4-6; 22:17) would be replaced by diminution (Lev 26:22, 29, 38; Deut 28:18, 20-22, 53-57, 62).
(6) Success over Israel's enemies (Gen 22:17) would turn to defeat at the hand of their enemies (Lev 26:16-17, 32, 36-38; Deut 28:25, 31, 48, 52, 68).

The basis for Yahweh's historical extraction of Israel from Egypt was the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Gen 15:13, 14). While the nation resided at Mt. Sinai, they would remember that covenant as part of their theological heritage. They experienced the beginning of the historical fulfillment of its promises.

The Abrahamic Covenant demonstrated that Israel's national identity was not of their own making. That covenant provided them with the hope of landedness at a time when they were landless. Leviticus 26:1-13 revealed to Israel that the recent covenant given at Mt. Sinai (the Mosaic Covenant) did not nullify the Abrahamic Covenant. The central concept of the Abrahamic Covenant was the land of promise (v. 42). The Mosaic Covenant would not conflict with the landedness promised long before.

Even the phraseology of covenant disloyalty ("uncircumcised heart," v. 41) was a reflection of the impact of the Abrahamic Covenant on the theology and life of Israel. Circumcision was the outward manifestation of inward commitment to the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 17:9-14). Personal commitment and accountability were implicit even in the unilateral pact that Yahweh made with Abraham while the latter was in a deep sleep (15:12-21). Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not opposing concepts in the biblical covenants. Indeed, it was because Yahweh was the sovereign Lord that the human vassal must obey Him. Human accountability would be nonexistent (at least, nonbinding) if it were not for the divine character. Yahweh's Lordship as revealed in His covenant with Abraham is not altered by subsequent covenants. Since the sovereignty of God is not altered, neither are the promises of His covenant altered or nullified (cf. Gal 3:17).

Sinaitic Covenant

In Leviticus 26 attention is directed to the Mosaic Covenant by the prominence of the immediate historical context at Sinai and the legal nature of some of the terms used in the chapter ("statutes, commandments," v. 3; "commandments, statutes, ordinances," vv. 14-15; "statutes, ordinances, laws," v. 46). The precepts of verses 1-2 have the Mosaic Covenant in view:

- prohibition of idols
- observance of sabbaths, and

- reverence for the sanctuary

Any remaining doubt is removed by the clear statements of verses 15, 45, and 46. This legal emphasis sets the stage for covenant vengeance in verse 25. It also promotes the sense of Yahweh's Lordship which was already present in the Abrahamic Covenant. The covenant at Sinai was based upon the historical deliverance of Israel from Egypt. That deliverance was in accord with the prior covenant (vv. 13, 45). It was intended to identify more narrowly the people of Yahweh. The Abrahamic Covenant's identification of the land of promise was supplemented by the refined definition of the people of promise. Just as the outward seal/sign of the Abrahamic Covenant was circumcision, so the seal/sign of the Sinaitic Covenant was the observance of the sabbaths (cf. Lev 25; 26:2, 34-35, 43). The seal/sign of each covenant affected the realm of the other covenant: the covenant of the land (Abrahamic) was related directly to the people by circumcision, and the covenant of the people (Mosaic) was related directly to the land by the sabbaths.[6] Thus the two aspects of these covenants (the land and the people) were bound together. The land was for the people, and the people for the land.

The legislation connected with the Mosaic Covenant encouraged a serious mindset regarding submission to the divine overlord. It also produced humility with reference to the unworthiness of Israel to be the special people of God, the chosen people (cf. Deut 7:6-11). Right behavior by the people of Yahweh was the means of witnessing to the nations. By such behavior Israel participated in the testimony that Yahweh Himself initiated by means of their miraculous deliverance out of Egypt (cf. Lev 26:45). The legislation marked Israel as the people belonging to Yahweh, the Exodus-Causer.

Disobedience to the absolute sovereign of Israel's history would also result in the removal of covenant blessings associated with the Mosaic Covenant. The following aspects of the Mosaic Covenant would be rendered inoperable by the exile:

(1) Though previously a people above all the nations (Exod 19:5; Deut 26:18-19), Israel would be abhorred by Yahweh and treated as the tail of all the nations (Lev 26:30; Deut 28:43-44).
(2) The kingdom of priests (Exod 19:6) would become ceremonially unclean and their sacrifices unacceptable (Lev 26:31).
(3) The holy nation of Israel (Exod 19:6) would be burdened with guilt (Lev 26:39) and characterized by a heathenlike uncircumcised heart (v. 41).
(4) Israel's history of national deliverance (Exod 19:4) would turn into a history of national exile (Lev 26:33, 38).

Sinai was but the commencement of the relationship between God and Israel. God and the nation must identify with each other if the wilderness years were to lead to the promised land. The apostasies of Sinai[7] only served to remind the nation why Yahweh

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[6] A distinction between a covenant of the land and a covenant of the people should not be pressed to an extreme. The Abrahamic Covenant also identified the people of promise, referring to them as the descendants of Abraham. It became clear, however, that some of the descendants of Abraham (through Ishmael) would not be the people of promise. The Mosaic Covenant clarified the situation regarding the identification of the covenant people.

[7] The golden calf incident provoked the public shattering of the covenant tablets (Exod 32:19). About 3000 died that day (v. 28). Two priests, sons of Aaron, also died at Sinai when they did not follow divine instructions concerning service at the altar (Lev 10:1-2). Later, a man was executed because of his blasphemous appropriation of the name of God (Lev 24:10-23).

gave them legislation. They needed standards. Without the order those standards would produce, there would be chaos and anarchy. The nation must be prepared for their inheritance, the land. The means of preparation would be instruction, parenesis. Instruction is the primary concept of תורה (v. 46). Leviticus 26's focus is on identification with the covenant deity/suzerain, Yahweh (cf. v. 45).

Deuteronomic Covenant[8]

The many parallels between Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27—30 present the reader with a problem of relationship. How is the Deuteronomic Covenant related to Leviticus 26? The similarities of structure (blessing and cursing), the revelation of the ultimate chastisement for breach of covenant (exile preceded by siege which deteriorates into cannibalism), and a time sphere subsequent to the impartation of the Mosaic Covenant demonstrate a relationship in content. However, similarity is not identity. No third covenant is ratified in Leviticus 26. No third covenant is described in terms of a relationship to the past covenant (Abrahamic) and the present covenant (Mosaic). The connotation of a future covenant may be present; however, that connotation would not have been identified with Deuteronomy 27—30 by those who received Leviticus 26. The former passage was revealed to the new generation of Israelites while they were camped on the plateau of Moab. The latter was revealed to their parents and grandparents while they were still at Mt. Sinai (Lev 26:46). Leviticus 26 may be considered a prophetic preview of the Deuteronomic Covenant only in the sense that the basic theological concepts of the Moab covenant are present in the pericope. However, Leviticus 26 does not specify that covenant *per se*. Leviticus 26 does not provide a formal prophetic announcement regarding any future covenant.

Revelation is progressive in nature. The seeds of one age become the flowers of yet another age. The seed of the Deuteronomic Covenant is present in Leviticus 26. The blessings and cursings of that chapter were transitional. They prepared Israel for the land while they were at Sinai prior to commencing their wilderness wanderings. Transitional revelation would be expanded and formalized in a covenant upon arrival at the threshold of the land (on the plateau of Moab). The title deed to the land (the Abrahamic Covenant), the constitution for the people of the land (the Mosaic Covenant), and the rights to the riches of the land (the Deuteronomic Covenant) would then provide the nation with all the revelation necessary to live within the land itself.

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[8] For the sake of discussion the Deuteronomic Covenant will be defined as the pact God established with Israel on the plains of Moab (Deut 27—30). That covenant was entered by Israel's oath (Deut 29), confirmed by sacrifices and public deposit at Shechem (Josh 8:30-35), and renewed by common consent at Shechem near the end of Joshua's ministry (24:1-28). Synonyms for this covenant include Deuteronomic Covenant and Covenant on the plains of Moab. Cf. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953), 58-59; Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction*, trans. Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 214-17, 226, 230; S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: The Meridian Library, 1956), 71; *TDOT*, s.v. "בְּרִית," by M. Weinfeld, 2:256, 268-69; Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 59-116; Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), 58-64, 134-42.

Land

Every gift to the nation of Israel was also a summons to an obligation before the covenant suzerain, Yahweh. The land grant to Israel involved the people's identification with Yahweh. The Land-Giver was summoning the people to service. The summons was both beneficial and binding. Benefits were conditioned upon obedience to the command of Yahweh. The enslaved nation was delivered from Egypt and became bond slaves belonging to Yahweh (v. 13). The prior bondage differed from the latter in that the latter brought blessing (vv. 2-12). No such rewards accrued as a result of Egyptian bondage.

The land grant predated the existence of Israel *per se*. Abraham received the land grant at the time of his own exodus from Mesopotamia. Israel's national identity was established under Moses at the time their exodus from Egypt. God in His sovereignty controlled the history of the land and the people. "From the roughly 160 cases in which biblical passages speak of Jahweh's giving the land to Israel, more than half contain references to 'the fathers.'"[9] It is significant, therefore that reference is made to "the ancestors" (v. 45) in a context related to the Mosaic Covenant. This establishes a continuity of covenants. Just as Abraham's descendants claimed the Abrahamic Covenant while they were at Mt. Sinai, so, in the future days, an exiled people would repent and claim the covenant made with their ancestors at Sinai. Willingness to identify themselves as Yahweh's people will qualify them for restoration to the land.

The land of promise is depicted as the setting for the fulfillment of both blessings (vv. 4-12) and curses (vv. 14-38). Reward and retribution could not be fulfilled elsewhere. The landedness of Israel was essential for fulfillment. Israel could not receive landed prosperity without the land. On the other hand, Israel could not be exiled from the land until they had first possessed it.

Interestingly, the land itself was treated as a separate participant in the covenant. It could be the recipient of the restitution of sabbaths that it had been denied (vv. 34-35, 43). It was a land belonging first to Yahweh. As its sovereign Lord, He had authority to grant it to Israel. He presented the title deed to Abraham's descendants. Any intermediate generation who were disloyal to the covenant would be subject to expulsion from the land (vv. 33-44). Yet, the land would remain, kept in store for the future generation who would obey the precepts of Yahweh. The generations may come and go, but the land would abide as the Abrahamic Covenant's material entity. By means of sabbaths Yahweh intended to preserve the fruitfulness of the land for the ultimate possessors (cf. Lev 25). Therefore, disobedience to Yahweh's sabbatical legislation was considered a sin against the land. Even more, it was a sin against future generations since such a breach of the covenant resulted from greed. Such greed would rob the land of its fruitfulness and rob future generations of its provision.

Landedness made it possible for the people to be tempted in the areas of self-sufficiency, idolatry, and sabbath breaking. Such temptations could be resisted by remembering the history of the people and the land. Remembering the covenant deeds of Yahweh would remind the people that the land they enjoyed was an unearned gift. The exiled people, remembering the Lord of the land, would confess their guilt and make restitution (vv. 40-41). Their remembering and acting upon that memory would, in turn,

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[9] J. N. M. Wijngaards, *The Dramatization of Salvific History in the Deuteronomic Schools*, OTS 16 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 73.

result in Yahweh remembering the land (v. 42). He would them preserve the covenant blessings for His people.

At Mt. Sinai, the land represented hope. In the wilderness, the land represented hope. In the land, when the hope was fulfilled, the land presented the people with a challenge. They were challenged to exercise faith in the God of the covenant. Such faith had not been exhibited by those who apostasized at Sinai and who died in the wilderness.

Heilsgeschichte

Heilsgeschichte ("salvation history") was the foundation of the Mosaic Covenant (vv. 13, 45). Yahweh is the God of history. He is the sovereign Lord of time and of place. Divine election and deliverance are the main factors in Israel's history. Nothing that Israel possessed was a result of her own work. Yahweh as Creator and Giver had graciously and mercifully associated Himself with this nation. As the Lord of history, He controls all history. He can move entire nations in order to chastise disobedient Israel and return her to the land in the time of her repentance. The God of history can prepare the nations for receiving the exiled people (cf. Joseph, Gen 50:20). The nations would swallow up the scattered Israelites (Lev 26:33) and would make them vanish (v. 38). Yet, Yahweh would preserve a remnant so that a new history could begin. Israel must trust the God of history who controls all time, places, and nations.

Breach and Preservation of Covenant

Israel might breach (פרר, vv. 15, 44) the covenant, but Yahweh could not (v. 44). The "uncircumcised heart" (v. 41) of disobedient Israel reflected her disloyalty to the divine covenants. Yahweh could never be disloyal. He is always faithful because He is "Yahweh their God" (v. 44).

Breach of covenant occurred when Israel disobeyed the stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant (v. 15). Idolatry and sabbath breaking, especially, constituted breach of covenant (vv. 1-2). Such an action was willful. It would result in the nullification of blessings associated with the Abrahamic Covenant and identification associated with the Mosaic Covenant. Any infraction of Mosaic legislation was deemed rebellion against the sovereign will of the suzerain-legislator, Yahweh.

Yahweh, however, "remembers" (זכר) His covenants. He preserves the covenants. The covenants contained both blessing and cursing. Blessing and cursing were initiated by promise, and implemented by legislation. Promise emphasized divine sovereignty; legislation highlighted human responsibility. When Israel was unfaithful, Yahweh yet remained faithful. The suzerain's faithful preservation of the covenant is in sharp contrast to the vassal's failure to submit. Covenant history confirms both divine dependability and human culpability.

The Abrahamic Covenant was identified as a covenant with roots in the history of Israel. It involved Jacob, and before him, Isaac. Before Isaac, it was granted to Abraham. Verse 42 presented this confirmation of prior history.[10] As the Abrahamic Covenant was preserved (and would continue to be preserved), so also the Mosaic Covenant would be preserved for future generations (v. 45). Yahweh's deeds in history illustrate His

[10] See above, 4.

faithfulness to preserve the covenant in spite of the failure of one generation to be faithful to it.

Law

Religious enthusiasm is insufficient for proper participation in the covenant relationship with God. Enthusiasm without identification leads to confusion. Identification produces unity within and recognition from without. At Mt. Sinai, the apostasies of the golden calf, the strange fire, and blasphemy demonstrated what an unguided and unstructured religious fervor can produce. Seeing that the emphasis of divine law is upon Yahweh Himself, any breach of the law is defiance directed against the Law-Giver. The stipulations of law exhibit the nature and personality of the law-giver. The morality of the law is a reflection of Yahweh's morality. Israel's faith is grounded in the precepts of divine law. Divine law identified Yahweh as the Creator of the heavens and earth, the Promise-Giver, the Land-Giver, and the Exodus-Causer. Every statute was a testimony to the election of the people and a witness to their identification with their sovereign Lord.

A variety of terms are employed for law in Leviticus 26: חק/חקה ("statute"), מצוה ("commandment"), משׁפט ("ordinance"), and תורה ("law/instruction"). These terms represent the entire law promulgated at Mt. Sinai. The law was to be "kept/preserved" (שׁמר), "obeyed" (שׁמע), "walked in (ordering the life)" (הלך), and "practiced" (עשׂה) (cf. vv. 3, 14-15). Therefore, the law did not serve as mere ornamentation. It was Israel's constitution. The nation of Israel derived their identity from their observance of Yahweh's commandments.

The legislation promulgated at Sinai did not contradict the promise given to Abraham. The legal covenant (Mosaic) supplemented the promissory covenant (Abrahamic). The latter did not nullify the former. Mosaic legislation was a means of implementing Yahweh's suzerainty. It reaffirmed His lordship over His people prior to their entry into the land promised to Abraham's descendants.

Relation to Covenant

As already observed,[11] law supplemented covenant. Stipulations were a part of the treaty form employed by several cultures in the ancient Near East. Thereby the suzerain could identify himself as the overlord, the one with authority to establish the calendar, ordain boundaries, grant life, or deal out death. Without legislation, authority would not be clarified. Every covenant must have an authority in which it resides, an authority capable of meting out the punishment required for breach of covenant. A covenant is as lasting as its ratifier. A covenant is as wise and moral as its ratifier. The ratifier of the covenants with Abraham and Moses was Yahweh Himself. The covenants are His covenants (cf. "my covenant," vv. 9, 15, 42, 44), and the laws are His laws (cf. first person singular suffixes on terms for law in vv. 3 and 15).

[11] See above, 7-9, 14-15.

Prohibition of Idolatry

Leviticus 26:1 clearly prohibited all forms of idolatry. The prohibition emphatically identified the true nature of faith in Yahweh. Such faith recognizes the exclusivity of Yahweh's deity and lordship. No idolater can truly worship Yahweh. Yahweh's preeminence as the Creator of heavens and earth makes Him the only true God. Yahweh created and controls all the natural forces of the world. He is the Rain-Giver and the Rain-Withholder (vv. 4, 19). He is the Controller of wild beasts (vv. 6, 22). He is the Controller of the nations (vv. 7-8, 16-17, 33, 38). He knows the heart and its motives (vv. 36, 41). He is the Destroyer of idols and idol worship (v. 30). Idolatry and its attendant rituals in the ancient Near East involved the concept that the divinities were unable to be self-sufficient. In fact, idolaters were cast in the role of manipulators. They sought to manipulate the divinities behind the idols. Not so with Yahweh—Yahweh is controlled by no man. Yahweh controls history, nature, life, death, and man.

According to Leviticus 26, idolatry is powerless/empty; idolatry is man's product (v. 1). Idolatry is blatant, filthy, and deadly (v. 30[12]). It is doomed to destruction and the idolater is destined to die. Idolatry is willful rebellion against the person of Yahweh. It is usurpation of Yahweh's rightful sovereignty. The one engaging in such activities against Yahweh is a covenant breaker, a rebel, an anarchist, and a conspirator. According to the treaties of the ancient Near East it was a capital offense to aid in the usurpation of a throne or to engage in intrigue aimed at supplanting the true heir to the throne.

It is a far more serious crime to defy the Creator of the universe and the God of all history. The ultimate reason for the prohibition of idolatry is succinctly expressed in the *Selbstvorstellungsformel* ("self-introduction formula"):[13] "for I am Yahweh your God." This formula is the key phrase in Leviticus 18—26.[14] The contrast is self-explanatory. Yahweh's inherent and exclusive authority makes idols worthless, powerless, anthropocentric, and void of any spiritually redeeming value. There is no room for divided loyalties. Yahweh insists upon exclusive lordship in the lives of His people. Awareness of Yahweh's existence, identity, and presence was central to the covenant relationship that Israel enjoyed.

The idolater chooses the way of the uncircumcised nations (cf. v. 41), therefore he will be eaten up by those nations (v. 38) among whom he will be exiled (v. 33). His guilt, his treason, will cause him great anguish (v. 39). The only way to be restored to Yahweh's favor will be by confession, humility, and restitution (vv. 40-41). Idolaters must confess their filthy idolatry. Humility must be produced by the realization that they

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[12] The following translation of Lev 26:30 brings out the "deadly" aspect of idolatry: "I will destroy your shrines and cut down your incense altars, then I will put your corpses upon the lifeless forms of your *filthy* idols because I despise [lit., my soul despises] you." The term for idols (גִּלּוּלִים) may be "a term of reproach, 'things of dung,' which is vocalized similarly to שִׁקּוּצִים ['detested things']" (Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into the Character of Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978], 104-5). Cf. Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Leviticus: A Commentary*, trans. Douglas W. Stott, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 403: "dungy things."

[13] John van Seters, "Confessional Reformulation in the Exilic Period," *Vetus Testamentum* 22 (1972): 455.

[14] Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 250.

cannot manipulate Yahweh. Restitution must consist in allowing Yahweh and His land priority in their lives.

Observance of Sabbaths

"Sabbaths" is plural throughout the pericope (vv. 2, 34-35, 43). The reference is undoubtedly intended to include both weekly sabbaths and annual sabbaths (including the year of jubilee) that are mentioned in the preceding context (chapters 23—25).

Sabbath observance is theologically rich. It specially signified God's dominion over Israel.[15] In His sovereignty Yahweh established the nation, granted them their land, and claimed His demand upon their time.[16] The sabbaths were also a means of reminding Israel of their deliverance from bondage.[17] "Any OT theology must pay attention to the way in which the faith of the OT hears the commandment of its God in its liturgical ordinances."[18] Israel's liturgical calendar was Yahweh-oriented. Yahweh is the God of time as well as the God of space. The sabbath honored the Lord of time. The sabbaths taught the Israelites to trust the Lord of all things for their provisions. Lordship was the core of the sabbatical principle. By trusting the Lord to provide for the seventh day, the seventh year, and the forty-ninth and fiftieth years, Israel gave tangible witness to His power and wisdom. He who provided in the wilderness had already proclaimed the sabbatical principle while Israel was still at Mt. Sinai. The instruction for God's people was simple: "Trust me to provide. I am Yahweh. I will not lead you where I cannot care for you." God never demands what man is unable to do. He provides the way of service. He blesses the path of obedience. Sabbath in the OT was more than an expression of the vertical relationship to the Lord of all creation. It was also an expression of concern and care for those who were fellow participants in the covenant (cf. Leviticus 25).

The sabbatical principle was the test, the seal/sign, of the obedience demanded under the Mosaic Covenant (Exod 33:17-21). The legal covenant represented the legislative authority of Yahweh. The sabbath represented Yahweh's authority over time. It was the legislation of time.

Even the land needed restitution when the time that Yahweh demanded for it was not granted by Israel (Lev 26:34-35, 43). Yahweh is Lord of the land as well as the people. The land was a promised possession in a time-space continuum. Breach of the sabbatical principle regarding the land was evidence of rebellion against the Lord of time and space. The violation of the land by denying its just recompense was a violation of Yahweh's gift of fruitfulness. It was robbery because it denied continued fruitfulness for future generations of Abraham's descendants. The liberty proclaimed in the sabbatical principle was an echo of the *Heilsgeschichte*. The God of history delivered Israel from servitude in Egypt so that the people would be free from oppression. To deny that freedom was to deny the Lord who brought them out of Egypt (v. 13; cf. 25:38, 42, 55).

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[15] Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Basic Meaning of the Biblical Sabbath," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 84 (1972): 455.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 64.
[18] Walther Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline*, trans. David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1978), 125.

Yahweh

In Leviticus 26 Yahweh is clearly depicted as God of the covenants. "Yahweh" (יהוה) is employed six times in the pericope (vv. 1, 2, 13, 44, 45, 46). Twice it us used absolutely (vv. 2, 46). Four times it is connected directly with or associated by context with "your/their God" (vv. 1, 13, 44, 45). In four of these occurrences, Yahweh is mentioned in relation to the Mosaic Covenant (vv. 1, 2, 45, 46). In two cases, Yahweh is associated with the Abrahamic Covenant (vv. 13 and 44).

Selbstvorstellungsformel

Selbstvorstellungsformel ("self-introduction formula") is one of the devices by which this particular pericope is set off from the surrounding context. It is often mixed with the *heilsgeschichtliche Formulierung* ("salvation-history formula"). In all cases (vv. 1, 2, 13, 44, 45), it is employed as a conclusion to a section of the pericope. The precepts of verses 1-2, the blessing of verses 3-12, and, also, the penalties of verses 14-45 are all marked by the *Selbstvorstellungsformel*. The only mention of Yahweh outside either one of these two formulas is in the postscript (v. 46) where Yahweh is the giver of the laws committed to Moses. The dual emphasis on Yahweh's identification in the section concerning precept (vv. 1-2) is an obvious contrast to the idolatry forbidden there. Yahweh is the covenant name of the Covenant-Giver (cf. Exod 3:13-18; also, Gen 12:1, 4; 15:1-8); Exod 20:2, 7). "I am Yahweh" is the divine seal on the covenants involved in Leviticus 26. Covenant preservation is dependent upon Yahweh's identity (vv. 44-45).

Yahweh is the author of the precepts (v. 46; cf. vv. 1-2), the author of the history (vv. 13, 45), and the author of the covenant (v. 44). His authority is absolute. His covenants are dependable. He is the author of both the blessing and the curses, the reward and the retribution.

Relation to Covenant

Yahweh's relationship to the covenants in Leviticus 26 is established by the following: (1) the *Selbstvorstellungsformel*, (2) the *heilsgeschichtliche Formulierung*, (3) the attribution of the source of the laws at Sinai (v. 46), and (4) the first person singular suffixes on "covenant."

Presence and Sanctuary

The presence of Yahweh is referred to by means of "presence" (פנים, v. 17), "walk among you" (התהלך בתוך, v. 12), "sanctuary" (מקדשׁ, v. 2), and "tabernacle" (משׁכן, v. 11). His presence works both weal (vv. 11-12) and woe (v. 17). His presence is both edifice-oriented[19] (vv. 2, 11) and people-oriented (vv. 12, 17). His presence is holy (note the employment of the root קדשׁ "holy" in מקדשׁ, "sanctuary"). The reference to holiness is particularly striking because it is in a context of precepts prohibiting of idolatry and commanding observance of sabbaths. Yahweh is holy because He is set apart from idols

[19] By "edifice-oriented" the writer does not mean that Yahweh is edifice-limited. The edifice was merely an accommodation to focus attention upon Yahweh's presence among His people. Cf. Ezek 10:3-19; 11:22-23; 43:1-5.

and His presence is distinct from idols. Also, He is holy because sabbatical time is set apart for Him.

The implication of verses 14-45 is that when disobedient Israel is confronted by the punishment-dealing presence of Yahweh, He has ceased to "walk among" them or to tabernacle among them. Indeed, He is pictured as "walking in opposition" to them (vv. 24, 28).

Even though His presence or sanctuary is not with the exiles among the nations (at least not in the same fashion as when they were obedient and in the land), yet Yahweh will preserve His covenant with them (v. 44).

Promise

Promise here is being used in a very broad sense of the term. It is being employed to cover both the promise to bless and the promise to curse. It is in the sense of fulfillment or commitment as much as in the sense of hope or expectancy.

Promise in Leviticus 26 is identified with the solemn divine self-introduction (*Selbstvorstellung*) of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (vv. 1, 2, 13, 44, 45; cf. v. 42). It is a promise preceding the history of deliverance from Egypt (the Abrahamic Covenant) and the entrance into Canaan (the Mosaic and Deuteronomic covenants). It is not a reference to something inward and spiritual, but a reference to the tangible aspects of covenant life: productivity, peace, population, presence, and land. The promise includes a pledge to bless Israel for their loyalty to the covenant and to curse Israel for their disloyalty. Yahweh, the God of their ancestors, promises His own loyalty to His covenant with His people.

Blessing and Curse

The blessings and curses of Leviticus 26 are quite similar to those of Deuteronomy 27—28 as well as to those of the Esarhaddon vassal treaties and the Sefîre stelas. The similarities involve both formal structure and traditional phraseology and vocabulary. By their very contexts in the biblical materials, the blessings and curses are distinctly covenantal.[20] The blessings are directly related to the promised blessings and/or privileges of both the Abrahamic and the Mosaic covenants. Likewise, the curses are directly related to the nullification or removal of those same blessings and/or privileges.[21]

The blessings and curses do not in themselves indicate the presence of the Deuteronomic Covenant in Leviticus 26.[22] Any preview of that covenant in the pericope must maintain a continuity with the two previous covenants. In other words, a third covenant (whether here or in Deuteronomy 27—30) does not nullify the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants.

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[20] *Contra* Ronald E. Clements, *Prophecy and Tradition*, in Growing Points in Theology (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 16-17.
[21] See above, 5-6, 8-9.
[22] See above, 9-10.

Obedience and Disobedience

"Obedience to Yahweh, the one God, who delivered Israel out of slavery and is jealous of his own uniqueness, defines the fundamental nature of the OT faith."[23] Obedience reflects respect for who and what Yahweh is personally and historically (Lev 26:1-3, 13-15, 39-45). Obedience involves the acceptance of the lordship of Yahweh in one's life in time and space (cf. vv. 2, 34-35, 43). Obedience produces participation in the covenant blessings (v. 9). The precepts reveal the will of God for Israel. The will of man must be yielded to the will of Yahweh in order to be loyal to the covenants (cf. v. 41).

Disobedience is the denial of the identity of Yahweh in history, covenant, and law. It is breach of covenant faith (v. 15). It is acting unfaithfully, disloyally, and treasonously (v. 40). It is blatant opposition to God (vv. 21, 23, 27). It is nonperformance of His commands (v. 14). It involves rejecting His statutes and despising His ordinances (v. 15). It is a matter that is concerned with the inner man (vv. 15, 41, 43; note "soul" and "heart"). Disobedience has frightful consequences. Even cannibalism is not beyond the capability of the disobedient (v. 29). It causes the unacceptability of the sacrifices which were the outward manifestation of faith (v. 31). Disobedience is worthy only of death (vv. 25, 33, 37, 38) and exile (vv. 33, 44). Death is separation from the body; exile is separation from the land.

Guilt

Guilt (עון) is a concept occurring in verses 39, 40, 41, and 43. It is mentioned only in the context of repentance, confession, humility, and restitution. The guilt resulting from disloyalty to the covenant had to be recognized before the breached covenant could be reinstated. The guilt was twofold: (1) the guilt of the ancestors of Israel ("the father," vv. 39, 40) and (2) the guilt of the current generation of Israelites (vv. 39, 40, 41, 43). Confession of both was required for restoration. The guilt of the current generation is given first consideration. Unless the current generation can recognize and deal with their own guilt, it would be pointless to recognize and attempt to deal with the guilt of their fathers.

This guilt was so burdensome that it led to severe anguish among the exiled peoples (v. 39). The guilt was real. The burden was real. It was not a temporary "guilt trip." Guilt, properly recognized, is an instrument of God to draw them back to the covenant relationship that they had enjoyed prior to their willful rebellion against Yahweh. The guilt had to be confessed (v. 40).

Retribution and Chastisement

The application of the curses/penalties of verses 14-45 are highlighted by two factors: (1) the gradation of the punishments in five stages of severity (vv. 16-17, 18-20, 21-22, 23-26, and 27-38)[24] and (2) the recurring refrain, "seven times for your sins" (vv. 18, 21, 24, 28). The stages of chastisement are emphasized also by the occurrence of the term "discipline" (יסר, vv. 18, 23, 28). The entire process, from start to finish, was

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[23] Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology*, 116.

[24] For an excellent discussion of the form, structure and setting of vv. 14-45, see John Hartley, *Leviticus*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 4 (Dallas: Word Books, Publisher, 1992), 457-62.

intended as a means of restoration. However, the primary purpose was not restoration, but the glorification of the covenant God, Yahweh (cf. vv. 44, 45).

Retribution may be terminal (cf. vv. 25, 30, 38), but chastisement may result in restoration through repentance (cf. vv. 39-45). Both are involved in Leviticus 26. Divine retribution will come upon those who fail to confess their sins. Chastisement will be administered to those who confess their sins.

In the refrain, "seven times"[25] implies the sabbatical principle and "for your sins" indicates breach of covenant. "Sin" is also a term applied to breach of covenant in the vassal treaties of Esarhaddon.[26] Leviticus 26 emphasizes the seal/sign of the Mosaic Covenant, the sabbaths. Since the sabbaths were related to the land (vv. 34-35, 43), the Abrahamic Covenant is at least implied. Yahweh would judge His people for their nonobservance of the sabbaths, for their worship of idols and for the resulting defilement of the people among whom He dwelt (cf. vv. 1-2, 29-31). Divine judgment is not a betrayal of the covenants (v. 44). On the contrary, judgment declares that disobedience is sin and that sin in rebellion against the Lord. Eventually, Yahweh's judgments would increase to such an intensity and nature that there would be no doubt that He had exercised His covenant rights to exact retribution from those who defy His authority.

Exile

Exile ("scattering among the nations," v. 33) was the ultimate penalty for breach of covenant. It meant removal from the land of promise. The landedness for which the nation had hoped would dissolve into the landlessness which had characterized their sojourn in Egypt. Servitude would once again engulf them. With their "uncircumcised heart" (v. 41) they would be placed among the uncircumcised—those who were outside the covenants. Exile was a living death, a living separation from the land of abundant life. Exile meant removal from the setting in which Israel could experience the blessings of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. Exile, however, need not be terminal. Exile, landlessness, could be a condition that could give rebirth to hope (vv. 39-45). Landlessness was not synonymous with divine rejection or abhorrence (v. 44). As at Sinai, and in the wilderness, landlessness presented the people with a goal for life and a meaning for history. The landless ones must cast their cares upon the one who would guide them out of bondage to freedom. Even in the land of their enemies, Yahweh was still their God (v. 44). The covenant relationship *per se* knows no geographical or political boundaries. Yahweh's loyalty is unaffected by the landedness or the landlessness of His people. He is above the circumstances of history, working for the repentance of His covenanted people so that His covenants might one day be fulfilled completely.

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[25] Seven is more than just a symbolic number: "It is an appropriate and evocative number in view of the importance of the seventh in Israelite religion" (Wenham, *Leviticus*, 331). Cf., also, Karl Elliger, *Leviticus*, HAT 1/4 (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 1966), 375: "Natürlich ist 'sieben' eine schematische Steigerungszahl" ("'Seven' is naturally a stylized number of intensity").

[26] See D. J. Wiseman, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon*, Iraq 20/1 (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1958), 42 (col. iii 160), 50 (col. iv 272), 52 (col. iv 292), 58 (col v 397).

Repentance

The Hebrew word for "repentance" (שׁוּב) does not occur in Leviticus 26. However, the concept of repentance is found in a threefold turning of the exiled people to Yahweh: (1) They would confess their guilt and the guilt of their fathers (v. 40), recognizing their personal and corporate culpability. (2) They would humble their "uncircumcised heart" (v. 41), bringing it into subjection to the precepts of Yahweh. Submission to the divine Suzerain is required of a covenanted people. They must submit to Yahweh's lordship. Their submission must not be mere external compliance externally in religious exercises; it must be internal and real. (3) They would make restitution for their guilt (v. 41), accepting the federal consequences of sin. Such restitution is not soteriological redemption. It is the evidence, not the cause, of repentance and expiation. The impact of sin would be felt until the land had enjoyed its restitution. Exile would continue after repentance until the penalty had been fulfilled. Getting right with God does not insure immediate blessing and a to solution uncomfortable circumstances. It does guarantee a restoration to the covenant relationship whereby promised blessings might be renewed once the land is regained.

Restitution

"Restitution" (רצה) not only involves the full application of the federal consequences of sin, but also the full application of that which is right in Yahweh's covenanted relationship to the land (vv. 34-35, 43). Therefore, restitution has a twofold character: positive (that which is right for the land—to enjoy its sabbaths) and negative (that which is the just consequence of sin—the period of Israel's removal from the land). Through restitution Israel learned that the inexorable will and way of Yahweh will be fulfilled within time and space.

Revelation

The very concept of law implies communication between its promulgator and its recipients. Commandments, statutes, ordinances, laws and instructions must be revealed since they cannot be intuitively perceived. In the ancient Near East the concept of covenant itself demanded a deposit or record of the pact for future generations.

The diversity of covenant concepts and forms in Leviticus 26, as compared with the ancient Near Eastern treaties, is an evidence of the independent theology of Israel.[27] Among many scholars there is "a remarkable unwillingness to appreciate the creative possibilities of Israel's own religious life and experience."[28] The richness of Leviticus 26 lies, in part, in its uniqueness at that particular stage of progressive revelation. The

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[27] Leviticus 26 contains some elements distinct from the vassal treaties of Esarhaddon and Sefîre: blessings (vv. 3-13), provision for reinstatement in case of transgression (vv. 14-45; esp. vv. 39-45), monotheism, and covenantal precedents (vv. 42, 45). In the vassal treaties there are imprecations requested by a third party in the presence of a mediating deity and the employment of ritual magic—neither of which occur in the biblical covenants. For a more detailed study of this topic, see William D. Barrick, "Leviticus 26: Its Relationship to Covenant Contexts and Concepts" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation; Winona Lake: Grace Theological Seminary, 1981), 171-84.

[28] Clements, *Prophecy and Tradition*, 21.

confluent nature of the revelation (i.e., drawing upon current vocabulary, style, forms, and cultural milieu) represents a desire on the part of Yahweh for revelation to be immediately understandable and applicable.

Leviticus 26 claims to be Mosaic in time, content, and composition. The self-witness of Scripture must suffice as the *prima facie* evidence. Unless equally ancient and authentic documentation can be produced to explicitly deny the claims and contents of this pericope, it must be allowed to stand. This must be true of both the historical claims and the theological concepts. The treaties of Esarhaddon and Sefîre cannot be offered as contradictory testimony since they were composed 700 years too late and the differences in subject matter, purpose, and structure disqualify them as legal testimony against the biblical materials of Leviticus 26.

Leviticus 26 and the New Testament

The employment of verses 11-12 in 2 Corinthians 6:16 is the only concrete example of the influence of Leviticus 26 on the revelation contained in the NT.[29] The passage from this pericope was employed in order that Paul might better emphasize the concept of identification with God. It is unfortunate that Wenham did not deal with this NT usage in his commentary.[30] Wenham, however, does observe that the blessings and curses of Leviticus 26 are expressed at least in principle by Christ's teachings in His pre-cross ministry. The chastisement of Israel because of covenant disloyalty was a reality among the Jews of Christ's day. Jesus also spoke of the eschatological reality of that chastisement. Wenham claims that "many of the horrifying judgments described in Rev. 6ff. find their original setting in the covenant curses of Lev. 26 and Deut. 28."[31] This is true insofar as they are directly related by the Book of Revelation to the nation of Israel. Application of the covenant blessings and curses to the Gentiles is unwarranted (with the exception of the blessing for all peoples mediated by Abraham's descendants; Gen 12:3). Technically, the covenants were made with Israel alone.[32]

The principles of God's dealings with NT believers by means of reward and/or chastisement are basically the same as the principles by which He dealt with Israel under the covenants. This must not be construed, however, as meaning that the NT saints are under the same covenant relationship as Israel. The similarity is due to the same God, not to the same covenant. The very nature of God demands the federal consequences of sin be exacted from His people in all ages (cf. Gal 6:7-10; 1 Cor 11:30). The same God provides lessons for believers in every era based upon His historical deeds (cf. Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11-13). The same God blesses in tangible ways those who are faithful (cf. 2 Cor

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[29] Paul's quotation of Lev 26:11-12 is paraphrastic. His emphasis was on the concept of identification with God (Lev 26:12b). The apostle's omission of Lev 26:11b is a clue to his intention. That phrase does not serve any purpose in Paul's discussion in the context of 2 Cor 6. Since he would omit Lev 26:11b ("and my soul will not despise you"), he paraphrased 11a ("I will set my dwelling place in your midst"—cf. 2 Cor 6:16, "I will dwell among them"). Having established the concept and the context, Paul proceeded to quote Lev 26:12. Elaborate discussions of conflation of OT texts, "pearl stringing," pre-Pauline usage, and 4Q LXX Lev[a] are made unnecessary by the simple reading of the NT text alongside the MT.

[30] Wenham, *Leviticus*, 329-30, 333-34.

[31] Ibid., 334.

[32] Cf. the postscript of Lev 26: "These are the statutes and the ordinances and the laws which Yahweh established between himself and the Israelites on Mt. Sinai through Moses" (v. 46). This same exclusivity is expressed in Exod 19:5-6 and Rom 9:4.

9:6-15). The same God is loyal even in the face of His people's disloyalty (cf. 2 Tim 2:11-13; Phil 1:6). The same God is Lord (cf. 1 Cor 12:3). The same Lord requires confession, humility, and restitution (cf. 1 John 1:9; 1 Pet 5:5-7; Phile 1-25). The same God promises that obedient service will be rewarded (cf. 1 Cor 15:58). The same God demonstrates that the believer has been delivered from bondage into a servitude that is totally unlike the bondage of fear and the curse (cf. Rom 6:12-23; Heb 2:14-15; Acts 26:18; Col 1:12-13).

The Lord who by means of Leviticus 26 revealed to Israel the continued authority and perpetuity of the Abrahamic Covenant after the ratification of the Mosaic Covenant, also confirmed that testimony in Galatians 3:17. NT believers must recognize that the authority of one covenant does not annul the authority of a previous one. Any exceptions are clearly revealed by God (e.g., Heb 7:11-14). The epistle to the Galatian churches teaches that Abrahamic faith in Yahweh was not replaced by law under Moses. Therefore, faith is still binding upon any man's relationship to the God of Abraham.

Conclusion

What then are the conclusions concerning the relationship of the Deuteronomic Covenant to Leviticus 26?

(1) Leviticus 26 does not make any specific reference to the Deuteronomic Covenant.

(2) Leviticus 26 has some similarities to Deuteronomy 27-30, the pericope involved in the Deuteronomic Covenant. However, similarity does not mean identity.

(3) Leviticus 26 explains Israel's relationship to the land prior to occupation and subsequent to the revelation of the Mosaic Covenant.

(4) Although Leviticus 26 contains revelation relating to Israel's exile and subsequent repentance under the Mosaic Covenant (v. 45), it is not a formal prophetic announcement.

(5) Leviticus 26 emphasizes the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants by direct reference. The terminology and theological concepts contain less direct references to those covenants. The relationship to these two covenants is so imbedded in the text that any connotation regarding the Deuteronomic Covenant must also involve a similar relationship between it and the previous two.

(6) The affinities between Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 27—30 are far more intimate than any similarities to extrabiblical treaties. The common entities (subject matter, language, historical context, author, and intent) of the two pericopes tie them together. These affinities are the essence of the preview of the Deuteronomic Covenant in Leviticus 26. Leviticus 26 is transitional revelation for the nation of Israel between the Mosaic Covenant granted at Mt. Sinai and the Deuteronomic (or, Palestinian) Covenant granted on the plains of Moab. Being transitional, it does not embody the Deuteronomic Covenant itself. It embodies only the concepts necessary to prepare the nation for entrance into that covenant at a later date.

The pericope, viewed in the context of the Sinai revelation and the Sinai apostasies, offers a perspective not found elsewhere in the Scriptures. That perspective regards the theological instruction of the nation of Israel on the threshold of its wilderness wanderings. Unlike Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 4, Leviticus 26 is not a mini-statement of the Mosaic Covenant. It is, instead, a compilation and synthesis of the combined truths of both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. The synthesis takes the form of a parenesis for Israel regarding what Yahweh requires of His people. It provided Israel with another taste of promise tempered by precept. It wrapped up the Sinai experience by appealing to a continuity of authority and promise. Leviticus 26 is a theological treatise with implications for living. Many fell in the wilderness because they failed to heed this timely instruction. Because Israel failed so miserably, Paul was moved to confirm the teachings for NT believers struggling with apparent conflict between the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants (Gal 3:17).

Two areas of covenant were not discussed in this study since they were not explicit in Leviticus 26: (1) the relationship of covenant to kingdom and (2) the relationship of kingdom and covenant to the calendar of Israel. These studies would complement the present discourse. The writer believes that both areas are necessary adjuncts to the theological core of Leviticus 26 if one is to understand properly the relationship of the prophets to Leviticus 26 (and, to Deuteronomy 27—30). Leviticus 26 explicitly proclaims the lordship of Yahweh in both time and space.

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