

BeChuko-thai Leviticus - Vayikra (26.3-27.34)

God has brought the Hebrews out of bondage in Egypt to be a holy people to God. As God's people, there are new responsibilities, including bringing offerings to God's Sanctuary, observing God's weekly Sabbath and other festivals, eating only what is permitted, treating servers with respect, helping others in need, especially family, and following the Jubilee laws of freedom and redemption. God then said to Moses, "Speak to the Israelites for Me and say,

"If you follow My laws and faithfully observe My commandments, I will provide you rain at the proper time so the land will bear its crops and trees their fruits. You will have your fill of food and live securely. I will grant peace in the land and you shall sleep with no fear. I will cause dangerous animals to flee and you shall easily chase your enemies away.

If you follow My ways, I, your God, will look with favor upon you and make you fertile and multiply. I will establish My Covenant with you. I will keep My Sanctuary among you and My Spirit will not reject you. I will walk among you. I will be God to you and you will be a people to Me. I, God broke the bonds of your slavery in Egypt and led you out with your heads held high.

But if you will not listen to Me, if your soul rejects My laws and you do not carry out My Commandments; if you break My Covenant, then I will do the same to you. I will bring upon you illness that fills the spirit with anxiety and depression. It will destroy your outlook and make life feel meaningless.

You will then sow your seeds in vain for they will not grow. I will set My Countenance against you and you will be beaten by your enemies. Those that hate you will rule over you and you will flee even though no one pursues you.

But if you still will not listen to Me then I shall punish you further. I will break the pride of your might and your strength will be spent in vain for the land will neither give produce nor trees give fruit.

And if you walk with Me only by chance or walk against Me and My ways, then I will let wild beasts rob you of your children and your cattle and your roads will become desolate.

If you still walk with Me only by chance or walk contrary to Me then I, too, will walk with you only by chance and be contrary to you. I will strike you seven times for your sins and deliver you into the hands of your enemy. I will send pests. You will eat food but you will not feel full.

And if you are still indifferent to Me and seek not to obey, I will chastise you again seven times for your sins. I will destroy your lofty buildings and My Spirit will reject you. I will make your sanctuaries empty and I will no longer accept your offerings. I will scatter you among the nations and your land will remain desolate and your cities in ruins.

The few who survive in the land of enemies will see that their very survival is threatened. Heartsick, they will confess their sins of betraying Me and the sins of the betrayers before them. Perhaps then their hard hearts will be humbled and punishment will be paid for their sins.

It is then I shall remember My covenant with Jacob, My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham. I will remember the land. I will remember how the Israelites hated Me and how I have not hated or rejected them or broken My covenant with them. For I, God, am still their God. I brought them out of the land of bondage in Egypt before the eyes of all the nations to be a God to them. I am God."

These are the decrees and laws between God and the Israelites, that God set at Mount Sinai through the hand of Moses.

Then God said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, "There is a way of showing resolve to God and ways of showing a value, which may be with money or property, land or animal for each Israelite's obligatory tithes. These tithes will be consecrated when given to the priests in a holy manner and belong to God and are holy to God. All tithes shall be equal to one tenth, as in, one tenth of a flock.

These are the commandments which the Lord gave Moses for the Children of Israel on Mount Sinai.

Questions: 1) What does it mean to walk with God only by chance or to walk against God? 2) How do you walk with God? 3) How does God humble you?

Illustration Ideas: God granting rain and bringing good crops and trees...sleeping with no fear..someone rejecting God's Laws and feeling depressed...a humbled heart...the Israelites scattered among the nations...bringing a tithe to God