

Bible Devotions: Lock Stock & Barrel
Devotional Reading for Outdoorsmen
(Old Testament)

Leviticus 26:6, 14, 22

Obey God or Else

I (God) will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts, and the sword will not go through your land... But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments... I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate.

Obey God or else. That was the message to the children of Israel in this chapter of Leviticus. The first 13 verses are very positive. Don't make idols. Keep the Lord's Sabbaths. Reverence His sanctuary. Obey His commandments. Obedience brought God's blessing and favor upon the faithful man and his family and community.

Disobeying God, despising His statutes, abhorring His judgments, and breaking His commandments would result in Divine retribution. The punishment is described as categorical and exponential (Leviticus 26:14-39). It includes things like terror, disease, loss of crops, drought, attacks by wild animals, attacks by the enemy, pestilence, starvation, cannibalism, utter desolation, and fear.

There appears to be a pattern here. It starts with terror and ends with fear. The punitive measures in between these extremes multiply by sevens. It is certain that God has control over this, executing judgment until His people shape up or ship out, the latter of which eventually happened.

Let's look at just one of these levels of punishment: attacks by wild animals. As I write this, there have been several fatal alligator attacks in Florida the last few weeks. It has brought a fresh awareness of the terror that lurks in every pool of murky water. It has also caused a huge bump in the business of professional gator trapping.

Our human nature is inclined to fear attacks by wild animals. I remember when the movie *Jaws* came out in 1975. The film spun fear into many beach-goers. It was quite the phenomenon. I grew up near Lake Erie, having learned to swim in that big hole of water. Although I was quite safe from shark attacks, even I became a little more interested in the things that brushed my feet and legs as I swam in the very familiar waters.

God's threat of judgment in Leviticus can be compared with the sounding of the seven trumpets in the Revelation given to John. Both expound on similar categories of God's retribution. Both emphasize the increase in severity from one punishment to the other. I don't think this is coincidental. Disobeying God is sin and He has a systematic and severe punishment for it.

We've reviewed the sequence in the Levitical warning. Here's how it goes in the Revelation. It will begin with a sense of impending terror before the trumpets sound (Revelation 8:5). Then punishment is measured out as each trumpet blows: hail and fire and blood fall upon the earth, vegetation is destroyed, waters are dried up or poisoned, the heavens are altered, WILD ANIMALS ATTACK mankind (they will be the worst form of creatures ever known), an army of two hundred million attack mankind, the kingdoms of the world fall, then another sense of fear and awe (see Revelation 8 – 11).

Revelation 9:20-21 describes the plight of human hearts at the end of time. Clearly, men will be in a disobedient condition: *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

In history and in prophecy, God gave ample warning of the consequences of disobedience. He will deal with it – a fact that cannot be ignored. Everything He created will be instruments of His judgment or subject to His judgment. No thing and no one shall escape.

Never let it be said that the Levitical precepts of God are not applicable today, especially since we know the certainty of the end-time judgment to come. We must obey God or else. That is the message for people today, as it was to the children of Israel.

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Bible Devotions: Hook Line & Sinker (study guide)

Leviticus 26:6, 14, 22
Obey God or Else

HOOK

1. What book or movie impacted you the most in your fear or interest in wild animals?

2. What two wild animals do you most fear or least like to deal with? Explain why.

3. How would you handle: a bear on your trail, an alligator in your pond, locusts in your garden?

LINE

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What most challenges you in your obedience to God? How can you strengthen your resolve?

Name a nation or government in world history that has fallen. How do you think the fall can be explained? Then tell what that nation could have done to be spared destruction.

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: obedience Divine retribution wild animals

