

「心の救い」への道 — レビ記 26 章

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Abstract Nobuyoshi KIUCHI, “The Road to the Salvation of Heart: Leviticus 26”. Studies of this chapter thus far have mainly focused on the covenantal aspects of the blessing and curse. Though this is not on the wrong track, it alone is superficial. This article aims to demonstrate that the long section of the curse does more than just presenting the calamities in the event of the failure to observe the Lord’s commandments; it addresses itself to the psychological aspects of both the Lord and, particularly, the people.

A closer look at the related expressions for ‘observance of the Lord’s commandments’ and *nepēš*, *lēbāb* ‘*ārēl* shows: (1) Non-observance of any of the commandments constitutes disobedience. (2) *Nepēš* in this chapter should be rendered ‘soul’ rather than being taken as a reflexive pronoun or an emphatic substitute for pronouns (‘yourselves’ or ‘myself’). (3) By violating one commandment, a person necessarily commits a sin against the Lord, even without knowing it.

On the assumption that *ḥaṭṭā’ī* means the state of hiding oneself, almost always unaware, it is reasonable to suppose that the people do not realize that the calamities befall them because they are hiding themselves from the Lord. Thus, it is hidden from their consciousness that their souls detest the Lord’s commandments as well as that their hearts are uncircumcised. The hypothetical confession of sin in v. 40 means that they have become aware of their own former condition of heart; the confession is existential.

A series of the Lord’s punishments has a double or triple purpose: Primarily the Lord punishes the sin of the people, but he also smashes the hardness of their hearts by inflicting on them outward calamities, and thereby he expects the people to become aware of their own inner conditions. The mention of the people’s loathing the Lord’s commandments at the beginning of the curse section (v.15) indicates that the hearts of the people were

uncircumcised from the beginning, so that they necessarily harden their hearts. The confession of 'sin' (v.39) does not take place automatically but from their own will.

The later history of Israel shows that the people failed to observe the laws. Prophets from the Babylonian exile, Jeremiah and Ezekiel in particular, stress that the new covenant that the Lord will make in the future consists of transforming the human heart (e.g. Jer 31:30; Ezek 36:26), thus enabling the people to walk in the Lord's way. While the NT assumes all the above truths concerning human heart, one cannot attain such a heart if one does not resolve to be totally sincere and to uncover oneself, nay, even his very soul that abhors the Lord's commandments.