

## Leviticus Chapter 27

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“... *ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*”

**Leviticus 11:45**

- Men have found themselves at times in dire straits, and in such times they are prone to vows to God, promising to do something for God if He'll save them.
- Then when the crisis has passed, God has preserved them, they will often think better of what they said and rationalize their way out of it, and forget to fulfill their pledge.
- Emotional response / spur of the moment, not prayed through.
- Sometimes men would make a vow before the Lord; “Lord if you'll do this for me, then I'll give you my firstborn... , or my daughter, or my house, or a field, or this bull...” Yet God takes us at our word.
- In this chapter we learn about keeping our vows to God.
- Understand also that these vows were completely voluntary; God did not require them, not until a man had given his word – then the vow is binding.

**Ecclesiastes 5:2** “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”

**Proverbs 20:25** “It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry.”

**Proverbs 20:25** “It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy, and afterward to reconsider his vows.” NKJV

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V: 1-2      When a person makes a vow unto the Lord and is unable to keep that vow due either to a change of heart, a physical disqualification, or because they aren't needed – they would have to be redeemed.

- The idea was that something dedicated to God could be redeemed for money, thus fulfilling the vow, and at the same time supporting the ministry of the Tabernacle and priesthood.
- These vows were strictly voluntary on the worshippers part, they were an expression of gratitude towards God for His blessings.
- The redemption value was based on what they were able to do, their capability as a worker.

**Deuteronomy 23:21-23** “<sup>21</sup>When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. <sup>22</sup>But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. <sup>23</sup>That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.”

V: 3-8 Differing values for different abilities:

Male: 20-60 (I like this!) 50 shekels of silver. (adult)  
Female: 30 shekels of silver.

Male: 5-20 20 shekels of silver.  
Female: 10 shekels of silver.

Male: 1 month to 5 yrs. 5 shekels of silver.  
Female: 3 shekels of silver.

Male: 60 + 15 shekels of silver. (elders)  
Female: 10 shekels of silver.

- We see here a distinction between capacity and title; in terms of title we're all equal.

Regarding the collection of the atonement money:

**Exodus 30:14-15** “<sup>14</sup>Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. <sup>15</sup>The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls.”

**Galatians 3:28** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

- With regard to title we are all on the same level, accepted in the beloved:

**Hebrews 10:19** “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

- Here in Leviticus 27 the issue is entirely one of ability and capacity.
- If they are unable to pay, then the priest shall value them according to their ability.
- In other words they were at the mercy of the priest, redemption would be through unmerited favor – the grace of God.
- This is how we are saved: **Ephesians 2:8-9**

**Ephesians 2:8-9** “<sup>8</sup>For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup>Not of works, (what we're able to do) let any man should boast.”

- After the shekel of the sanctuary; specially minted coins related to the Tabernacle as opposed to common currency.
- A shekel was the equivalent of a month's wages.
- A man between 20-50 would have to be redeemed with 50 shekels, roughly 4 years of wages – not a flippancy decision to make this kind of vow / commitment.
- In God's eyes everyone has value. Even children from 5 yrs to 20 yrs, 1 month old to 5 years have the capacity to contribute something of value.
- We see examples of this :
  1. 1 Samuel 1: Elkanah had two wives. Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah was barren and Peninnah had children.
  2. Hannah was grieved over her barrenness and made a vow to God that if He would give her a son, she would give him back for the Lord's service.
  3. God heard her prayer and her vow and blessed her with a son, who when he was weaned she brought to the Tabernacle and turned him over to the priests, dedicating his life to serve the Lord, his name was Samuel who later became a prophet over Israel.
- Another situation involving a vow unto the Lord is recorded in Judges

**Judges 11: 30-31** “<sup>30</sup>And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, if thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, <sup>31</sup>then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.”

- This would seem to be a great opportunity to invoke this clause in the Law.

V: 9-10 If someone brought an animal as a sacrifice unto the Lord, once given it became holy, he couldn't exchange it for a lesser animal – no exchanges – but the animal that he brought in an attempt to exchange them would also become the Lord's and be holy to the Lord

This was a sin described by the prophet Malachi:

**Malachi 1:13-14** “<sup>13</sup>Ye said also, behold, what a weariness is it! And ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: Should I accept this of your hand? Saith the Lord. <sup>14</sup>But cursed be the deceiver, which

hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and My name is dreadful among the heathen.”

- God is always deserving of our very best.

V: 11-13 If when making a vow, a man vowed an unclean animal. He was to bring it to the priest who would place a value on it – and presumably sell it and give the money to the Lord. If the owner wanted to redeem it, then he himself would pay the valued price + 20% to keep it.

V: 14-15 A man desires to consecrate his house to the Lord – the priest assigns it a value – later the man wants to redeem his house – now he pays the assigned price + 20%.

- He gave it to the Lord and to the Lord it belongs, in a way he has to buy it back.

V: 16-19 If a man sanctifies a field – same thing.

V: 20-21 If the owner doesn't redeem a field devoted to the Lord, or if he sells it to someone else – having been dedicated. When the jubilee comes around the property doesn't revert back to the original owner, but to the Lord and the priests get to use it.

V: 22-24 If a man devotes a field which he purchased. The priests shall reckon or estimate it's value, taking into consideration the year of jubilee. In the jubilee it goes back to the original owner, but the man who dedicated it to the Lord gives the value to the Lord.

V: 25 All the estimations and payments are to be in Temple / Tabernacle shekels.

- Temple shekels were about ½ oz. (12 grams) of silver.

V: 26 Anything that already belonged to the Lord can't be re-sanctified or the subject of a vow. The firstborn of man and animals was already dedicated to the Lord, doesn't belong to the father or owner to control as in using for a vow or further consecration.

V: 27 Unclean animals were to be valued and sold, the money going to the Lord. If they would be redeemed then there would be a 20% added charge.

V: 28 Once a person, animal, and possession was devoted to God, it could no longer be sold because it belonged to the Lord – it is holy unto the Lord.

V: 29 It helps to see this verse in different translations:

NKJV - "No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death."

NIV - No person devoted to destruction may be ransomed; he must be put to death.

V: 30-31 All the tithes belong to the Lord. If a man withheld part of his tithe, later when he was able to pay it he was to add 20% to it.

V: 32-33 As they would count their livestock, their sheep etc. they would have them pass under the rod, holding out his shepherds staff.

- As the sheep would pass under he would count, and every 10<sup>th</sup> lamb would belong to the Lord. It didn't matter if the 10<sup>th</sup> was good or bad that was the one that belonged to the Lord, no switching or substitutions.

V: 34 These are the commandments which the Lord commanded.

- The book of Leviticus ends with a teaching on tithing, giving of tithes – for some a painful subject.
- One of the reasons why this subject is addressed in the Bible and specifically here in Leviticus is because it's a matter of the heart.

Jesus said:

**Matthew 6:21** "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

- Just like with these vows or voluntary offerings, tithing isn't presented as a payment as such, but as something that already belongs to the Lord and to withhold it is tantamount to stealing, robbing God of what is His.

**Psalm 116:12-14** "12 What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? 13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. 14 I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people."

- This brings to mind how we were redeemed, and what we were redeemed with:

**1 Peter 1:18-19** "18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

- This chapter seems a little out of place, somewhat anti-climactic – this discussion of vows.

- The obvious message of this chapter is that we keep our vows, keep our promises to God.

Jesus repeats this admonition:

**Matthew 5:33, 37** “<sup>33</sup>Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:” – “<sup>37</sup>But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

- This reminds us of the covenant relationship that the Jews had with God, that if they would keep His Law, the sacrifices and all – they would be His people.
- The bottom line is that they weren't able to do so. The next thought then is how then could they be redeemed?

**Matthew 16:26** “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

- When we have a right understanding of the law and it's purpose we then get a more clear picture of God's grace.

**Galatians 3:24** “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”