

Leviticus 27:1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Leviticus 27:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons *shall be* for the LORD by thy estimation.

Leviticus 27:3 And thy estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

Leviticus 27:4 And if it *be* a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels.

Leviticus 27:5 And if *it be* from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels.

Leviticus 27:6 And if *it be* from a month old even unto five years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male five shekels of silver, and for the female thy estimation *shall be* three shekels of silver.

Leviticus 27:7 And if *it be* from sixty years old and above; if *it be* a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels.

Leviticus 27:8 But if he *be* poorer than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him; according to his ability that vowed shall the priest value him.

Well, I think this is probably going to be hardest chapter in this book for me to understand. I understand that the subject is making voluntary vows to God.

This first section of verses seems to be addressing making a vow to the Lord involving dedication of person to His service. It would seem that the sincerity of the vow was to be affirmed by giving an offering of a set amount that reflected the estimated worth of that person's services according to age and gender.

- Males from 20-60 were valued at 50 shekels of silver (according to the sanctuary shekel).
- Females of the same age were valued at 30 shekels.
- A young person between the ages of 5-20 were valued at 20 shekels for a male and 10 shekels for a female.
- Children from a month old to 5 years old were valued at 5 shekels of silver for the male and 3 shekels of silver for the female.
- A senior adult above the age of 60 was valued at 15 shekels and 10 shekels for male and female respectively.
- Any person that was deemed to poor to pay the established amount was to present himself before the priest to be valued according to his ability to pay. In other words, no one was to have their vow rejected due to their inability to make the required offering.

I guess this would be the basis for Hannah's vow to give her son into God's service at the temple if He would but give her a son.

1 Samuel 1:11 "And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

Maybe that is the point to the vows being addressed in this chapter. Maybe they fall into the “if You do this for me, I will do this for You” category.

Several commentaries indicate that these amounts all reference amounts reflecting the amount to be paid to accomplish redemption of the person, but I think it is significant that no such redemption is mentioned as it is in the following sections regarding animals, houses or land.

Leviticus 27:9 And if *it be* a beast, whereof men bring an offering unto the LORD, all that *any man* giveth of such unto the LORD shall be holy.

Leviticus 27:10 He shall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good: and if he shall at all change beast for beast, then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy.

Leviticus 27:11 And if *it be* any unclean beast, of which they do not offer a sacrifice unto the LORD, then he shall present the beast before the priest:

Leviticus 27:12 And the priest shall value it, whether it be good or bad: as thou valuest it, *who art* the priest, so shall it be.

Leviticus 27:13 But if he will at all redeem it, then he shall add a fifth *part* thereof unto thy estimation.

It would seem that one could also vow to donate the services of an animal to the Lord’s service as well. The context implies to me that the animal is dedicated to God before its birth or while still very young and its physical health fully determined. The animal dedicated is the one to be given and no substitution was to made for the better or the worse. Even an unclean animal that was not acceptable as a sacrifice could be given by vow into the service of God and used by the priests. The priest was to value each animal individually. If the original owner wanted to redeem the animal, 20% was to be added to the determined amount.

Leviticus 27:14 ¶ And when a man shall sanctify his house *to be* holy unto the LORD, then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand.

Leviticus 27:15 And if he that sanctified it will redeem his house, then he shall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be his.

The same principle applied to the vow of one’s house for God’s service. The priest was to establish an amount to affirm the vow; and if the owner wanted to redeem the house, 20% was to be added to that amount.

Leviticus 27:16 And if a man shall sanctify unto the LORD *some part* of a field of his possession, then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof: an homer of barley seed *shall be valued* at fifty shekels of silver.

Leviticus 27:17 If he sanctify his field from the year of jubile, according to thy estimation it shall stand.

Leviticus 27:18 But if he sanctify his field after the jubile, then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the year of the jubile, and it shall be abated from thy estimation.

Leviticus 27:19 And if he that sanctified the field will in any wise redeem it, then he shall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be assured to him.

Leviticus 27:20 And if he will not redeem the field, or if he have sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed any more.

Leviticus 27:21 But the field, when it goeth out in the jubile, shall be holy unto the LORD, as a field devoted; the possession thereof shall be the priest's.

Leviticus 27:22 And if *a man* sanctify unto the LORD a field which he hath bought, which *is* not of the fields of his possession;

Leviticus 27:23 Then the priest shall reckon unto him the worth of thy estimation, *even* unto the year of the jubile: and he shall give thine estimation in that day, *as* a holy thing unto the LORD.

Leviticus 27:24 In the year of the jubile the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought, *even* to him to whom the possession of the land *did* belong.

If a person chose to make a vow that included the giving of any part of his fields to God's service, the value was to be determined based upon the projected value of the seed it would produce. A homer (six bushels, two pecks and four quarts) of barley seed was valued at 50 shekels of silver if made in the year of jubilee; otherwise, the value was to take into consideration the time remaining until the next jubilee year. If the owner wanted to redeem his field at any time, 20% was to be added to the original valuation amount. If he chooses not to redeem the field or sells it to another man, it cannot be redeemed. At the time of the next jubilee year that land becomes a permanent possession of the priests.

If a man decides to make a vow concerning fields that he has bought from another, the priest is to value the field in light of time until the next jubilee year at which time the land will be returned to original owner.

Leviticus 27:25 And all thy estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.

All estimated amounts are to be determined according to the sanctuary shekel—20 gerahs.

"gerah" = 1/20th of a shekel. Note from Webster's 1913 Dictionary: "The silver gerah is supposed to have been worth about three cents; the gold about fifty-four cents; the weight equivalent to about thirteen grains."

Leviticus 27:26 ¶ Only the firstling of the beasts, which should be the LORD'S firstling, no man shall sanctify it; whether *it be* ox, or sheep: *it is* the LORD'S.

Leviticus 27:27 And if *it be* of an unclean beast, then he shall redeem *it* according to thine estimation, and shall add a fifth *part* of it thereto: or if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to thy estimation.

This section of verses clarifies that anything already set apart as belonging to the LORD could not be used to affirm one's vow. The firstborn of one's cattle and sheep were already designated as God's, as were the firstborn of any unclean

beast in one's possession. The unclean animal may, however, be redeemed at a value determined plus 20% or sold by the priest at the valued amount.

Leviticus 27:28 Notwithstanding no devoted thing, that a man shall devote unto the LORD of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD.

These verse seems to be contradictory to previous verses in declaring that nothing devoted to the Lord by vow can be sold or redeemed. Redemption amounts were established at the determined amount plus 20% for animals, houses and fields. I admit I am confused.

John Gill stipulates in his commentary that this was a different type of vow that "had an execration or curse added to it, by which a man imprecated a curse upon himself, if that itself, which he devoted, was put to any other use than that for which he devoted it; wherefore this sort of vow was absolute and irrevocable, and what was vowed was unalienable, and therefore not to be sold or redeemed." This verse seems to give the sad answer to the fate of Jephthah's daughter.

Judges 11:30–39 "And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, 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. So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands....And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she was his only child; beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon. And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows. And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man."

Leviticus 27:29 None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall surely be put to death.

Coffman's Commentary explains that the word "devoted" in this verse is a reference to one accursed. In other words, no one that had been condemned to die could be redeemed.

Leviticus 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.

Leviticus 27:31 And if a man will at all redeem *ought* of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth *part* thereof.

Leviticus 27:32 And concerning the tithes of the herd, or of the flock, *even* of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

Leviticus 27:33 He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.

These verses seem to allow that a tithe of seed, land or harvest may be redeemed at an amount of 20% above the estimated value. A tithe of the herd or flock, however, was not to be redeemed. That tithe was to be determined by having the herd or flock pass under the rod for counting and every tenth animal was to be taken for the Lord without regard for its condition.

Leviticus 27:34 These *are* the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai.

This concludes this record of God's commandments to Moses for the people of Israel as given in Mt. Sinai.

Obviously, I can only share what makes sense to me; and I would certainly like to have a better understanding of this whole book. The main principle I am carrying away from this book is that God wants our worship and obedience in accordance with His terms—not ours. He is honored only when we give our best from a sincere heart of obedience, gratitude and reverence. Whether my understanding of the various specifics is right or not, I know that those principles are true.

As I was looking for further help in understanding this chapter, I ran across another quote from Bob Deffinbaugh at www.bible.org that I would like to include.

“God’s people, Israel, were to imitate God, to represent Him on the earth. When God’s people failed to keep their vows they not only sinned by disobeying His regulations concerning vows, they also caused men to become doubtful of all promises....For the Israelites to take their vows lightly was to negate the impact which God’s promises of blessing or cursing was intended to have as an incentive to faithfulness and obedience to God’s word. The promises of God are the basis for our faith and obedience. God will keep His commitments, and thus we should act accordingly.”

I'll close my comments with a quote from Ecclesiastes.

Ecclesiastes 5:4–5 “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”