

Leviticus Chapter 27 Continued

Verses 16-29

The dedication of land was complex, since under the Year of Jubilee legislation such property reverted to the original owner at that time.

The owner could redeem it by adding 20 percent to its value in relation to the approaching Year of Jubilee.

If he failed to redeem it, or sold it in secret after having devoted it to the LORD, it would actually become the property of the priests at the Year of Jubilee.

The firstlings of clean animals belonged to God in any event (Exodus 13:2), and therefore could not be vowed to the sanctuary (verse 26).

Blemished (“unclean”) animals could be redeemed by paying the usual 20 percent premium.

(Exodus 34:20), prescribed that the firstborn unclean animals should either be ransomed by a lamb or be killed.

The “devoted thing” was a more solemn and irreversible vow than an ordinary dedication.

Anyone or anything devoted to the LORD could not be ransomed.

This would certainly discourage irresponsible acts of piety, as these sacrifices were regarded as the exclusive property of the LORD.

This same word was the usual one to invoke the ban in wars against the native inhabitants of Canaan.

In divine judgment, all of Israel’s enemies and their property were devoted to the LORD (Num. 21:2; Deut. 7:2; 1 Sam. chapter 15).

It was also applied as a judicial sentence against idolaters (Exodus 22:20; Deut. 13:15; see Joshua chapter 7), which was the sin of Achan in taking the devoted thing.

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: a homer of barley seed [shall be valued] at fifty shekels of silver."

That which he enjoyed by inheritance from his father, to distinguish it from a field of his own purchase, as in (Lev. 27:22).

And which might be devoted, not all of it, but a part of it.

Partly that he might have something to live upon, or to improve for a livelihood for himself and family, and partly that estates might not be alienated entirely from their families and tribes in which they were.

"Then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof":

Not according to the field, the goodness or badness of that, one field being good and another bad, as Jarchi observes.

But according to the quantity of seed which it produced, or rather which it required for the sowing of it.

"A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver":

And here we must carefully distinguish between an "omer", beginning with an "o", and an "homer", beginning with an "h"; not observing this has led some learned men into mistakes in their notes on this place.

For an "omer" was the tenth part of an "ephah" (Exodus 16:36); and an "ephah" is but the tenth part of an "homer" (Ezek. 45:11).

Which makes a very great difference in this measure of barley, for a homer of it contained ten ephahs or bushels.

And even according to this account a bushel of barley is rated very high, for ten bushels at fifty shekels.

Wherefore as an ephah, the tenth part of a homer, contained three seahs or pecks, and which some call bushels.

Then a homer consisted of thirty bushels, which brings the value of it down.

But the truth of the matter is, that the value of barley for sowing is not ascertained, as our version leads us to think.

For the words should be rendered, if the "seed be a homer of barley", it, the field, shall be valued "at fifty shekels of silver":

If the field take so much seed to sow it as the quantity of an homer of barley, then it was to be rated at fifty shekels of silver.

And if it took two homers, then it was to be rated at a hundred shekels, and so on.

A homer was dry weight of about all a beast of burden could carry.

We see that this would be a large amount of seed, so the 50 shekels of silver is understandable.

The weight of the seed to plant the land could be used to determine how much the land would produce.

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

The very year, as Aben Ezra, while it is current, or when it is past, and he immediately sanctifies it for a holy use.

And one comes to redeem it, as Jarchi says, as soon as ever it is devoted, and a priest has valued it, and there is a purchaser of it.

"According to thy estimation it shall stand":

What price whatsoever the priest set upon it, that it was to go at, and he that had a mind to purchase it might have it for it.

Unless it was he that devoted it, and then he was to give a fifth part more, as afterwards expressed.

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

Some years after it, more or fewer.

Or it may be, when half way towards another jubilee, or nearer.

"Then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the year of the jubilee":

Thus, for instance, if it only required a homer of barley to sow it, and the whole value of it from jubilee to jubilee was but fifty shekels of silver.

Then supposing it to be sanctified in the middle of the fifty years, or at twenty-five years' end, it was to be reckoned at twenty-five shekels, and sold for that money.

And so in proportion, reckoning a shekel for a year.

"And it shall be abated from thy estimation":

Not the Year of Jubilee, but a shekel for every year was to be deducted from the original value of fifty shekels.

According to the number of years that had passed or were to come.

It appears from this, that the price was paid each year.

The priest would have to estimate the value of the redemption.

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."

Is desirous of it, and determined upon it at any rate, repenting that he had parted with it in this manner.

"Then he shall add the fifth part of the money of thy estimation unto it":

The Jerusalem Targum is, the fifth part of the shekels of silver.

That is, if he has a mind to redeem it, and is resolved on it, as soon as he has sanctified it, then, besides the fifty shekels of silver it is rated at, and might be sold for to another.

He must pay a fifth part thereof, that is, ten shekels more, for reasons before given (Lev. 27:15).

"And it shall be assured to him":

Remain firm and stable with him, abide by him, and he in the possession of it as his property. Ever after, as if he had never sanctified it.

We find that this is figured the same way as the house was estimated.

If he bought the vow back, he must add 20% to the value to cover the trouble of the priest.

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."

He that sanctified it, does not care to give for it the settled price of the fifth part besides, but chooses it should be disposed of for the uses he devoted it to.

"Or if he have sold the field to another man":

That is, either the original owner having bought it and sold it again, or rather the priest.

The treasurer, as Jarchi, who had the disposal of it, for the uses and purposes for which it was devoted, when sold by him.

"It shall not be redeemed any more":

It was not in the power of him that sanctified it to make a purchase of it again.

The buyer of it might not sell it to him again, for otherwise, by that means, he might come at it cheaper than the law directs.

Besides, there is another reason for it, which is suggested in (Lev. 27:21).

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

Out of the hand of him that bought it.

"Shall be holy unto the LORD, as a field devoted":

Though it went out of the hand of the purchaser, it did not return to him that sanctified or devoted it.

But was separated to sacred uses for the service of the LORD.

For every devoted thing, whether of man, beast, or field, was most holy to the LORD (Lev. 27:28).

"The possession thereof shall be the priest's":

It did not return to the treasurer of the sanctuary, who had sold it to another for the repair of the temple, as Jarchi observes.

But as a devoted field it was given to the priests, as it is said, "everything devoted in Israel shall be thine" (Num. 18:14).

And even this was divided, as he says, between the priests of that ward or course that happened to be on the Day of Atonement of the jubilee year.

But in case it never was redeemed, but remained sanctified in the Year of Jubilee, the priests did not possess it without paying for it.

And so the Jewish canon says: "the jubilee comes, and the field is not redeemed, the priests enter into it, and pay the price of it."

On which one of the commentators observes, when anyone has redeemed it, the money becomes sacred for the repairs of the temple.

And when the jubilee comes, it goes out (i.e. of the hands of the purchaser), to the priests freely.

But if it is not redeemed, the priests must pay the price of fifty shekels, and take it.

And if even it was bought by a priest before out of the hands of the treasurer, it went from him to his brethren the priests, in the Year of Jubilee.

The rule is this, "if any of the priests redeem it, and, lo, it is in his possession, he may not say, seeing it goes out to the priests in the Year of Jubilee, lo, it is in my possession, lo, it is mine, but it shall go out to all his brethren the priests.

This land will not go back to the original owner at Jubilee.

It was devoted to God and not redeemed, so it belongs to the priest at jubilee.

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;"

With his own money, of some person in poverty and distress, who was obliged to sell it, and which, according to a former law, returned to the original proprietor in the Year of Jubilee.

"Which is not of the fields of his possession":

Which he has not by inheritance from his fathers.

Jarchi observes, there is a difference between a field bought, and a field possessed.

For a field bought is not divided to the priests in the Year of Jubilee, because a man cannot sanctify it but until the Year of Jubilee.

For in the Year of Jubilee it would go out of his hands, and return to the owner.

Wherefore if he comes to redeem it, he must redeem it with the price fixed for the field of possession.

The Jewish doctors are divided about a field bought of a father by a son, whether it is a field of purchase or of possession.

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

The priest was to estimate the field of purchase sanctified, and set a price upon it according to the best of his judgment.

And give it to the person that sanctified it, or whoever would redeem it.

And this estimate was made, according to the number of years there were to the Year of Jubilee.

"And he shall give thine estimation in that day":

The price set upon the field by the priest immediately, either the sanctifier, but without adding the fifth part (as in Lev. 27:19).

So Maimonides observes, or any other purchaser.

"As a holy thing unto the LORD":

To sacred uses, as the repairs of the temple, etc., to which the purchase money was appropriated.

Land that was bought from another man is only this man's land until Jubilee.

He would pay redemption money for only the time he would be using this land.

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

Not to him that sanctified it, whether he redeemed it or not.

Nor to him that bought it of the treasurer of the temple after it was sanctified.

But to the original proprietor and owner of it, of whom he bought it that sanctified it, for so it follows.

"Even to him to whom the possession of the land did belong":

Which was a possession of his he had by inheritance from his fathers, and therefore, according to the law of the Year of Jubilee, was then to return to him.

And could be retained no longer, nor even converted to holy uses.

For as it is said in the Misnah, "a field of purchase goes not out to the priests in the Year of Jubilee; for no man can sanctify a thing which is not his own."

As what he had purchased was no longer his than to the Year of Jubilee.

And therefore could not devote it to sacred uses for any longer time.

In this case, the land vowed was not part of his inheritance.

At Jubilee it would have to return unto the man he had bought it from.

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

The shekel kept in the sanctuary, which was the standard of all shekels.

Not that there was a shekel in the sanctuary different from the common one.

For every shekel ought to have been as that, of the full weight and worth of it.

And the estimation was to be according to such a shekel, and the money paid in such, even in full weight.

"Twenty gerahs shall be the shekel":

Which the Targum of Jonathan calls "meahs" or "oboli.

Scarce so much, and weighed near eleven grains, as Bishop Cumberland has calculated (see Ezek. 45:12).

Everything was redeemed with a silver shekel or shekels.

A shekel was 20 gerahs.

The gerahs weighed about 13.7 grains and was worth about 3 cents.

Remember, a penny was about what a man made for one day's work.

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."

"The firstling":

The firstborn already belonged to the LORD (Exodus 13:2), so the worshiper could not dedicate it a second time.

This is just stating that a beast which was born first already belonged to God, you could not vow something to God, that already belonged to Him.

All firstborn belonged to God.

A firstborn son was bought back from God.

The Levitical tribe took the place of the firstborn males to God.

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 is to be understood, not of the firstling of unclean creatures in common.

Which were to be redeemed with a lamb, and not with money, according to the estimation of the priest, and a fifth part added to that.

But of such as were sanctified, or vowed, for the reparation of the sanctuary, as Jarchi notes.

"Then he shall redeem it according to thine estimation":

The price the priest should set upon it, how much it was worth in his judgment.

"And shall add a fifth part of it thereto":

To the price, set upon a fifth part of that over and above the sum.

This the sanctifier, or he that made the vow, was obliged to pay, if he thought fit to redeem it.

"Or if it be not redeemed":

By him, he does not choose to give the price, and the fifth part.

"Then it shall be sold according to thy estimation":

To another man, without the fifth part, that chooses to purchase it.

And then the purchase money was laid out for sacred uses.

We found in the previous lesson, that to buy the unclean animal back, you would have to add 20% to the price of the animal.

If it was not redeemed, the money it was sold for belonged to the priest.

Verses 28-29

What was "devote unto the LORD" (set aside for exclusive use), including those things "which shall be devoted of men", was given over to Him for destruction and could not be redeemed.

That "a man shall devote unto the LORD" meant it was consecrated for holy use at sacred places.

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."

This is a different vow from the former, expressed by "sanctifying".

For though "sanctifying" and "devoting" were both vows, yet the latter 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 as afterwards expressed, whereas things sanctified might.

"Of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed":

But must be put to the use for which it was devoted.

This must be understood of such as were his own, and he had a right to dispose of.

Which were in his own power, as Aben Ezra interprets the phrase, "of all that he hath".

If of men, they must be such as were his slaves, which he had a despotic power over.

Such as he could sell, or give to another, or leave to his children for a perpetual inheritance (Lev. 25:46).

And could dispose of as he pleased, and so devote to the service of the priests.

"Every devoted thing is most holy unto the LORD":

And therefore not to be appropriated to any use but his, nor to be meddled with, not even touched or handled by any but the priests.

As the most holy things that were eatable were only to be eaten by them.

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

"None devoted ... shall be redeemed":

A person under the ban, like Achan (in Joshua chapter 7).

We see in this that the Levitical tribe, who were dedicated to work in the temple, could not be redeemed.

They belonged to God.

Clean animals that were dedicated to God were His and could not be redeemed from God.

A message in this for believers is that we are not giving to God, until we have already given our tithes.

The amount we give over the 10% owed to God is a gift.

Verses 30-33

The tithe, comprising 10 percent of all the produce, is regarded as the offering due from the people to the true owner of the land (25:23).

If the tithe were to be redeemed, the normal 20 percent premium was to be paid to the priests.

This chapter points out that holiness is more than a matter of divine call and correct ritual.

It actually requires the total consecration of a man's life to God's service.

It involves giving oneself, one's family, and all on one's possessions to God.

Verses 30-32

"Tithe":

This general tithe was given to the Levites (compare Num. 18:21-32).

This is the only mention of tithe or 10 percent in Leviticus.

However, along with this offering, there were two other Old Testament tithes which totaled about 23 percent annually (compare the second tithe Deut. 14:22; and the third tithe every 3 years Deut. 14:28-29; 26:12).

To fail to give faithfully and generously is to rob God of what is rightfully His and limit one's blessings.

Because Israel was a theocracy, religious and civic aspects were combined, so the "tithe" (Deut. 14:22-23; Mal. 3:10; Luke 11:42), used in sacrifices, also helped support the government infrastructure.

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."

Of which there were various sorts, the first tithe, the tithe out of the tithe, the second tithe, and the poor's tithe, which are generally reduced to three, "The first tenth part of all increase I gave to the sons of Aaron, who ministered at Jerusalem.

Another tenth part I sold away, and went, and spent it every year at Jerusalem: "So Maimonides says," after they had separated the first tithe every year, they separate the second tithe, as it is said (Deut. 14:22).

And in the third year, and in the sixth, they separate the poor's tithe, instead of the second tithe:"

So that, properly speaking, there were but two tithes, though commonly reckoned three.

The tithes of all eatables were given to the Levites every year, and a tenth part of that given by the Levites to the priests.

And the second tithe was eaten by the owners.

Instead of which, according to the above writer, in the third and sixth years it was given to the poor, and called theirs.

Of this second tithe, Jarchi interprets this law, and so does Maimonides.

"Whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's":

Is to be given to him as an acknowledgment of his being the proprietor of the land.

And that all the increase of it is owing to his blessing, and therefore is given in way of gratitude to him.

The former of these takes in all sorts of corn that is man's food, as wheat and barley.

And the latter wine and oil, and all sorts of fruits that are eatable.

For it is said to be a general rule, that whatever is for food, and is preserved (having an owner, and not being common), and grows up out of the earth, is bound to tithes.

"It is holy unto the LORD":

The first tithe was eaten by the priests and Levites only.

And the other before the Lord in Jerusalem only, and that by clean persons.

We see again here, that the tithe is not a gift to God.

It is His by obligation.

You cannot give Him something that already belongs to Him.

Leviticus 27:31 "And if a man will at all redeem [ought] of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth [part] thereof." To redeem the tithe of any thing would cost the redeemer 20% extra. If you remember, this was the interest to pay when a person had neglected their tithe, also.

Of his own, and not his neighbor's, as Jarchi observes.

For if he redeemed the tithes of his neighbor, but did not add a fifth part, which he was obliged to do if he redeemed his own, as follows.

"He shall add thereto the fifth part thereof":

Besides giving the value for what part of his tithes he redeemed, he gave a fifth part of that sum over and above.

As, supposing the tithe was worth fifty shillings, then he gave that, and ten shillings more, and so in proportion.

The use of this redemption, as Jarchi suggests, was, that he might have liberty of eating it in any place.

For he understands it of the second tithe, as before observed, and which was to be eaten at Jerusalem.

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

Of oxen and sheep, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem.

For this law only concerns such, as Maimonides observes, for none but clean beasts were tithed, though the firstlings of unclean beasts were to be redeemed.

"Even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD":

Which being slain, the blood and fat were to be offered the altar, and the flesh eaten by the owners, as Jarchi observes.

Who adds, this is not reckoned with the rest of the gifts of the priesthood.

And we do not find it was given to the priests.

The "rod", under which these are said to pass, is either the shepherd's rod, as Aben Ezra, under which they passed morning and evening, when led out or brought in, as in (Jer. 33:13).

Or the rod of the tither.

The manner of tithing, as described by Maimonides, was this; "he gathers all the lambs and all the calves into a field, and makes a little door to it, so that two cannot go out at once.

And he places their dams without, and they bleat, so that the lambs hear their voice, and go out of the fold to meet them.

As it is said, "whatsoever passeth under the rod"; for it must pass of itself, and not be brought out by his hand.

And when they go out of the fold, one after another, he begins and counts them with the rod, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and the tenth that goes out, whether male or female, whether perfect or blemished, he marks with a red mark, and says, this is the tithe.

"The time of tithing the cattle was on the first of Elul or August.

For so it is said, "the first of Elul is the beginning of the year for the tithing of beasts."

When they tithed all that were born the preceding year.

But we are elsewhere told, there were three times for tithing beasts.

Fifteen days before the Passover, (which was the last of Adar or February), and fifteen days before the Pentecost, and fifteen days before the Feast of Tabernacles.

Which was the last of Elul or August.

And these tithings were made for the sake of those that went up to these feasts, that it might be certain the cattle sold and eaten were tithed.

This is just stating that not only a tenth of your money is God's, but a tenth of everything you own.

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."

In a good or bad state of health, fat or lean, perfect or blemished.

But take it as it is, be it what it will.

"Neither shall he change it":

Neither for the better nor the worse, no alteration was to be made, but the beast was to be taken as it came.

"And if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy":

Be sacred to the LORD, and for his use and service.

This was done to restrain men from making any alteration, since if they did, both the one and the other were taken from them.

Whether this change was of the herd with the flock, or of the flock with the herd.

Or of lambs with goats, or goats with lambs.

Or of males with females, or of females with males.

Or of perfect with blemished ones, or of blemished ones with perfect ones.

"It shall not be redeemed":

From whence the Jews gather, that a tithe beast was not to be bought and sold, whether blemished or unblemished.

Again here, anything given to God becomes holy.

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

Meaning either what are contained in this chapter, or rather in the whole book, which he delivered to Moses.

"For the children of Israel":

To be observed by them, priests and people.

And these were given to him.

"In Mount Sinai":

Either when upon it, or rather when near it.

In the wilderness of it, after the tabernacle was set up, and the LORD spake to him out of that (see Lev. 1:1).

The entire book of Leviticus are commandments that God gave Moses at mount Sinai to give to the Israelites.

They must keep all of these commandments to keep the covenant with God.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Bible study.

My prayer to God is that I have not altered in any way the lessons He intended us to learn from this book.

May God richly bless you and continue to encourage you to study His Word.

Leviticus Chapter 27 Continued Questions

1. How was the estimation for the redemption money from field be figured?
2. What was a homer?
3. How was the price of the field paid, probably?
4. The land, that was not redeemed, went to whom?
5. Who did the land go back to when the land vowed was bought from another?
6. What type of metal was everything redeemed with?
7. How many gerahs was a shekel?
8. What did the gerah weigh?
9. What was a day's wages for a man?
10. The firstborn animal already _____ .
11. Who took the place of the firstborn of the men?
12. Why could the devoted things not be vowed?
13. What lesson can we Christians get from this?
14. The tithe is God's by _____.
15. What % interest did they have to pay for not paying their tithe?
16. Who gave these commandments to Moses?
17. Who were these commandments for?
18. What is the entire book of Leviticus all about?
19. How could they stay in covenant relation with God?
20. Did you learn anything you did not already know in Leviticus?