

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

7-21-21

Leviticus 27

Consecrating persons to the Lord - Verses 1-2

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate a person to the LORD by giving the equivalent value,

27:1-2 The Israelites were required to give or dedicate certain things to the Lord and to his service: the firstfruits of their harvests, firstborn animals, their firstborn sons, a tithe of their increase. Many wished to go beyond this and dedicate themselves or another family member, additional animals, a house, or a field to God. In these cases, it was possible to donate money instead of the actual person, animal, or property. Some people made rash or unrealistic vows. To urge them to think about it first, a 20 percent penalty was put on those items purchased back by money. This chapter explains how valuations were to be made and what to do if a donor later wished to buy back what had been donated to God.

Assigning A Valuation For Persons Consecrated By A Vow - Verses 3-8

³ set the value of a male between the ages of twenty and sixty at fifty shekels of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel; ⁴ for a female, set her value at thirty shekels; ⁵ for a person between the ages of five and twenty, set the value of a male at twenty shekels and of a female at ten shekels; ⁶ for a person between one month and five years, set the value of a male at five shekels of silver and that of a female at three shekels of silver; ⁷ for a person sixty years old or more, set the value of a male at fifteen shekels and of a female at ten shekels. ⁸ If anyone making the vow is too poor to pay the specified amount, the person being dedicated is to be presented to the priest, who will set the value according to what the one making the vow can afford.

27:3 If your valuation is of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old: Persons were assigned a value according to their age and general usefulness to society; especially in an agricultural society, there was a definite sense in which a man between 20 and 50 was more "valuable" than a child one month to five years old.

27:8 If he is too poor to pay your valuation: Importantly, no one was prohibited from fulfilling a vow of consecration because they did not have enough money; if they were poor, the priests would be flexible with the valuation. Everyone can give their life to the LORD; there are none who are too small, or too insignificant, or too useless. God wants to use each and every one.

Redeeming Property Consecrated To God By A Vow - Verses 9-13

⁹ "If what they vowed is an animal that is acceptable as an offering to the LORD, such an animal given to the LORD becomes holy. ¹⁰ They must not exchange it or substitute a good

one for a bad one, or a bad one for a good one; if they should substitute one animal for another, both it and the substitute become holy. ¹¹ If what they vowed is a ceremonially unclean animal—one that is not acceptable as an offering to the LORD—the animal must be presented to the priest, ¹² who will judge its quality as good or bad. Whatever value the priest then sets, that is what it will be. ¹³ If the owner wishes to redeem the animal, a fifth must be added to its value.

27:9-10 God taught the Israelites that when they made a vow to him, they must not go back on their promise even if it turned out to cost more than expected. (This applied to animals; humans could be redeemed or purchased back.) God takes our promises seriously. If you vow to give 10 percent of your income and suddenly some unexpected bills come along, your faithful stewardship will be costly. God, however, expects you to fulfill your vow even if it is difficult to do so.

Houses and Land - Verses 14-25

¹⁴ "If anyone dedicates their house as something holy to the LORD, the priest will judge its quality as good or bad. Whatever value the priest then sets, so it will remain. ¹⁵ If the one who dedicates their house wishes to redeem it, they must add a fifth to its value, and the house will again become theirs. ¹⁶ "If anyone dedicates to the LORD part of their family land, its value is to be set according to the amount of seed required for it—fifty shekels of silver to a homer of barley seed. ¹⁷ If they dedicate a field during the Year of Jubilee, the value that has been set remains. ¹⁸ But if they dedicate a field after the Jubilee, the priest will determine the value according to the number of years that remain until the next Year of Jubilee, and its set value will be reduced. ¹⁹ If the one who dedicates the field wishes to redeem it, they must add a fifth to its value, and the field will again become theirs. ²⁰ If, however, they do not redeem the field, or if they have sold it to someone else, it can never be redeemed. ²¹ When the field is released in the Jubilee, it will become holy, like a field devoted to the LORD; it will become priestly property. ²² "If anyone dedicates to the LORD a field they have bought, which is not part of their family land, ²³ the priest will determine its value up to the Year of Jubilee, and the owner must pay its value on that day as something holy to the LORD. ²⁴ In the Year of Jubilee the field will revert to the person from whom it was bought, the one whose land it was. ²⁵ Every value is to be set according to the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel.

27:14-25 When a man dedicates his house to be holy to the LORD: With a house, as in the case with an unclean animal, if a man wanted to consecrate by a vow the house to the LORD, while still using it, the priest would set a value on the house, and one would add one-fifth to that value (20%), and give the total to the tabernacle treasury.

27:14-25 Real estate could be given as a voluntary offering in much the same way that today people give property through a will or donate the proceeds from the sale of property to the church or Christian organizations.

Redemption Of The Consecration Vow For The Firstborn - Verses 26-27

²⁶ "No one, however, may dedicate the firstborn of an animal, since the firstborn already belongs to the LORD; whether an ox or a sheep, it is the LORD's. ²⁷ If it is one of the unclean animals, it may be bought back at its set value, adding a fifth of the value to it. If it is not redeemed, it is to be sold at its set value.

27:26-27 But the firstborn of the animals, which should be the Lord's firstborn, no man shall dedicate: Since the first born already belonged to God (Exodus 13:2), you could not "buy it back" from the LORD; if it was a clean animal, it had to be sacrificed.

One Cannot Redeem Things Or Persons Devoted To The LORD - Verses 28-29

²⁸ "But nothing that a person owns and devotes to the LORD—whether a human being or an animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD. ²⁹ "No person devoted to destruction may be ransomed; they are to be put to death.

27:28-29 Things that were specially devoted or set apart for God were to be completely destroyed. This would apply to all personal property, including captured persons, plunder from idol-worshippers, or the idols themselves. These were to be destroyed and could not be redeemed.

The Payment Of Tithes & Final Commands - Verses 30-34

³⁰ "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. ³¹ Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. ³² Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the LORD. ³³ No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed." ³⁴ These are the commands the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

27:33 Many of the principles regarding sacrifices and tithes were intended to encourage inward attitudes as well as outward actions. Those who give grudgingly show that they have a stingy heart. God wants us to be cheerful givers (2 Corinthians 9:7), who give with gratitude to him.

27:34 The book of Leviticus is filled with the commands God gave his people at the foot of Mount Sinai. From these commands we can learn much about God's nature and character. At first glance, Leviticus seems irrelevant to our high-tech world. But digging a little deeper, we realize that the book still speaks to us today—God has not changed, and his principles are for all times. As people and society change, we need constantly to search for ways to apply the principles of God's law to our present circumstances. God was the same in Leviticus as he is today and will be forever (Hebrews 13:8).