

## BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

### LEVITICUS 27

#### VOWS (PROMISES) TO THE LORD

Leviticus ends, rather fittingly, with a chapter on *vows* (promises) to the LORD. After all the chapters about personal holiness and proper living; after the motivation and reason for following the LORD (His mercy and love toward people) has been shown, opportunity is given for the Israelites to say, “Yes! I will devote myself to the God! I will give Him of my best! I will never leave Him or forsake Him!”

When a vow to the LORD was made, the thing promised to Him became His property. For it to return to the original owner, the item had to be *redeemed* (bought back).

#### Leviticus 27:1-8

#### A Special Vow People as Holy to the LORD

If a person desired, he could make a special promise to be faithful to the LORD and help the LORD in all His work. He would dedicate himself as holy to the LORD.

Since, however, only the Levites were allowed to help God at the tabernacle and temple, a promise offering was given instead. A male between the ages of 20 and 60 gave 50 shekels of silver instead of giving themselves personally. A female of the same age was to give 30 shekels. Males between the ages of 5 and 20 gave 20 shekels. Women of same age gave 10. Male Children between one month and five years were valued at five shekels; females at three.

If one wanted to be dedicated themselves to the LORD by this special outward sign but was unable to pay the standard dedication price, the priest could set the value according to what could be paid.

#### Leviticus 27:9-13

#### Animals as Holy to the LORD

Animals could be vowed to the LORD as well. A particular animal would be set aside as a special offering to be given to God. If the person who vowed the original animal wanted to make a substitute later on, that was permitted only *both* animals remained the LORD's property if not redeemed. If an animal vowed to the LORD was an unclean animal and not acceptable to Him, it could still be taken by the priest and sold for a profit. If the owner wanted the animal back, he would have to redeem it, adding a fifth of its value.

## **Leviticus 27:14-25**

## **Vowing Houses to the LORD Vowing Land to the LORD**

A house could also be promised to the LORD. The priest would determine the value of the dedicated house and if the man who gave it wanted to redeem it (keep it), he would have to pay the price adding an extra fifth of its value.

If the house were simply vowed and not redeemed, it became the property of the priests and could be sold at their discretion.

If land were vowed to the LORD, its redemption value was set based on the number of years until the next Year of Jubilee. If the owner wanted to redeem the land, he would pay the price plus a fifth of its value. If he did not redeem the land and the priests sold it to someone else, the land would be returned to the priests at the next Year of Jubilee and it would become their permanent possession.

## **Leviticus 27:26-29**

## **Firstborn Animals**

Firstborn animals could not be vowed to the LORD since He owned them already (Ex 34:19). They could be redeemed, however, for their set value plus a fifth.

## **Leviticus 27:28-29**

## **Devoted to the LORD**

Something being *devoted* to the LORD was far more serious than something *dedicated*. The *devoted* thing could not be sold or redeemed. It belonged entirely and permanently to the LORD.

## **Leviticus 27:30-34**

## **Tithing**

A tenth of everything from the land, whether grain or soil or fruit from the trees automatically belonged to the LORD and was holy to Him. If a man wanted to redeem his tithe, he had to pay the value of it plus 20%.

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Vows and tithes to the LORD were fitting and proper. The vows gave the people an opportunity to show their love and devotion to Him. The tithes reminded them that all they owned ultimately belonged to the LORD and they were merely stewards taking care of what He had provided.

Today we do not necessarily make vows of animals, houses, and land the way the Israelites did, but we do promise to love, serve, and honor the LORD each day of our lives. May God give us the strength to keep this vow; and may we be covered by the precious blood of Jesus when we fail.