



WELCOME TO BIBLE HOUSE OF GRACE

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Leviticus 27

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Leviticus 27.

FOCUS: VOWS, VALUATION OF PEOPLE, ANIMALS AND LAND ETC

Topics.

- The valuation of a male from twenty years old to sixty years old.
- Valuation of a female and a person from five years up to twenty years.
- Valuation of a person from a month up to five years old.
- Valuation of a person sixty years old and over and of a poor person.
- The vow of an animal offered to the LORD, is holy to the LORD.
- An Animal shall not be exchange good for bad or bad for good.
- The valuation of houses, land and fields in a man's possession.
- If a man wishes to redeem his field, he shall add a fifth to its valuation.
- The valuation of firstborn animals and the tithe of the land.
- Every tenth animal that passes under the herdsman's staff, is holy.

INTRODUCTION: the book of Leviticus is about ceremonial rules and civil laws that God gave to Moses after He had given him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

- These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. (Lev. 26:46).

Either on Mount Sinai or when he met with him in the Tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting) when they were in the wilderness near the Mountain. Moses was to give these ceremonial laws to the Levitical priesthood, they embrace rules concerning sacrifices, offerings and worship; the ordination of Aaron and his sons and their ceremonial cleanness; the Day of Atonement; feasts and holy days and the Year of Jubilee. The civil and social laws and laws of justice he was to give to the government of Israel to implement within their society.

The ceremonial and civil laws were not given to the secular world but are laws God gave to the nation of Israel. The central message is that God is holy and requires His people to be holy. The book also shows that God graciously provides atonement for sin through the shedding of blood. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the giving of the Law (about 1445 B.C.).

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

The previous chapter: reiterates the laws God made with Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. It firstly covers His promised blessings to Israel, secondly, the curses, thirdly, the history of Israel, Assyria, Judah and Babylon and finishes with the LORD saying, "If Israel confesses their iniquity, and humbles themselves, He will remember their land and not spurn or abhor them."

LEVITICUS 27:1-3

The valuation of a Male from Twenty Years Old to Sixty Years Old.

- **Leviticus 27:1-3:** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²"Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, If anyone makes a special vow to the LORD involving the valuation (estimation in KJV) of persons, ³then the valuation (estimation in KJV) of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old shall be fifty shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary.

INTRODUCTION: men and woman could consecrate and separate themselves or their children to the LORD in some inferior or servile kind of work about the sanctuary. Should the person who had made such a vow, later desire to redeem themselves or their children from their vow they could pay the redemption money as laid out in this chapter to the priest and they or their children would be released from the vow they had made. The following estimations and valuations were given to Moses on Mount Sinai or at the tabernacle in the Sinai wilderness. (Gen 27:34).

THE SHEKEL

The definition of a Shekel: during this ancient era there was no coins that were given a set value, so money was weighed instead of being counted. Even today in some oriental countries' merchants weigh the silver and gold when doing business with others so that no dishonest trader could cheat them with coins of lighter weight. The word shekel comes from the Hebrew word (*shaqal*) and means a weight used as a commercial standard. The earliest ancient shekels were a unit of weight, used for currency and trading before the introduction of coins.

Gold, silver, brass and iron shekels: there were shekels of gold (1 Chron. 21:25), shekels of silver, shekels of bronze (brass in KJV) (1 Sam. 17:5) and shekels of iron. (1 Sam. 17:7).

The weight of the shekel: it weighed between 7 grams to 17 grams, the most common weights were 11 grams, 14 grams and 17 grams. In New Testament times, a shekel was a silver coin weighing, about 11 grams. To give a visual Idea of the weight of the shekel an Australian 50 cent coin weighs 15½ grams,

The shekel of the sanctuary: was kept in the sanctuary, it was the standard weight against which the shekel the people brought to the priest would be measurement against for legitimacy and legality. To determine the weight and value of the people's shekel, the priest would place the sanctuary shekel on one side of a scale and place the shekel the people brought on the opposite side and in this manner measure the weight and value of the people's shekel against the weight and value of the sanctuary shekel.

Countries that used the shekel: it was common among the Moabites, Edomites the Phoenicians, the Persian Empire, Babylon, Rome and was the most common standard of weight and value used for currency throughout Israel and Judah. Overtime some of the silver nuggets were issued with markings engraved on them and later those in authority over the nation decided who designed the coins and what was engraved on them. It had a variety of values depending on the era, the nation and the government.

Wages and the shekel: recorded records show when shekels were used to pay wages in the ancient world they vary widely. Early records set the value of unskilled labour at approximately 10 shekels per year of work. Later, records within the Persian Empire (539–333 BC) give ranges from

a minimum of 2 shekels per month for unskilled labour, to as high as 7 to 10 shekels per month in some records. A survival wage for an urban household during the Persian period would require at least 22 shekels of income per year.

Israel's currency today: the modern currency unit used in Israel today is officially known as the Israeli New Shekel (sometimes abbreviated as NIS), which replaced the Old Israeli Shekel in 1985. It is based on a decimal system: 100 agorot to 1 shekel and includes the 1, 2, 5 and 10 shekel coins, plus the 5, 10 and 50 agorot coins (equal to one hundredth of a shekel). The coins are made of a nickel alloy and increase in size as they go up in value. (2017).

VOW OFFERINGS

The reasons for vows: people often made a vow promising God a gift of some kind if they were:

- Suffering extreme illness praying He would heal them.
- In apprehended and impending danger praying He would deliver them from the evil or the threat.
- Kings or commanders of armies praying for victory.
- Under the influence of God's presence and Spirit.
- To express their gratitude and thankfulness for blessings they received or for something they desired.
- Full of zeal and passion from which they would dedicate themselves to God or a man under zeal may make a vow offering himself, his wife, his child, or his bondservant to consecrate and separate themselves and their children to the sacred service of some inferior or servile kind of work attending to the maintenance or mundane duties of the sanctuary

3

If any vow was made involving money, the Law ordered that whatever currency they used had to be weighed against the shekel that was kept in the Sanctuary, so that its value would be measured against the sanctuary shekel. Neither the man making the vow, or the priest could estimate his value according to their own estimation, because it was to be made according to the age of the person and all ages had a set value placed upon them according to the law.

VALUATION OF A TWENTY TO SIXTY-YEAR OLD

From twenty years old even unto sixty years old: (v3) the valuation/estimation begins with males in the prime of their life. Between twenty and sixty, is the best time for maturity, strength and being capable of the greatest service therefore those in this age category were prized at the highest value. Whether the person themselves was making this vow or another person was making the vow to offer and dedicate their son, or servant, or any other member of the community, if the one making the vow later desired to redeem the person from the vow they had made they were to pay fifty silver shekels to the priest.

VALUATION OF A FEMALE

LEVITICUS 27:4

The Valuation of a Female Person.

- **Leviticus 27:4:** If the person is a female, the valuation (estimation in KJV) shall be thirty shekels.

If a woman made a vow herself or dedicated another woman between the age of twenty to sixty such as her daughter or servant to the sanctuary, and she later desired to redeem the person from the vow she had made she was to pay thirty shekels to the priest. This is twenty shekels less than males of the same age, following are two possible reasons why the woman was permitted to pay less than the man of the same age.

1. During this ancient era woman were considered the weaker vessel, both in strength, worth and importance of labour (such as sowing, cleaning, cooking and washing etc.), and was therefore also considered to be inferior to the man and of less value.
2. The value a woman was required to pay was twenty shekels less than a man of the same age. During this early ancient era most of a woman's work was unpaid work and therefore she did not have the same earning capacity as a man, and for this reason she was not expected to pay the same as a man.

The following verses indicates that servants were also valued at thirty shekels:

- If the ox gores a slave, male or female, the owner shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned. (Exod. 21:32).

And Jesus was betrayed for 30 shekels:

- Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel. (Matt. 27:9).

VALUATION OF FIVE TO TWENTY YEARS

LEVITICUS 27:5

The Valuation of a Person from Five Years up to Twenty Years.

- **Leviticus 27:5:** If the person is from five years old up to twenty years old, the valuation (estimation in KJV) shall be for a male twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels.

Not that the five years old is to make a vow, but their parents or another adult that offers to pay the estimation value of the child. The fact that a child of five years is mentioned here shows that the vows are not limited to those that a person makes for themselves, but also vows they make concerning others, since a five-year old child could never be expected to pay such a considerable sum of money. This means that circumstances here is of a father or mother making a vow to offer their son or daughter to the LORD or offer any other person and taking upon themselves to pay the value of the child to the priest if they at a later date desire to redeem the person (the following verse (v6) makes this idea even clearer). Those of five to twenty years old are valued at a less than the previous persons, because they are not yet fully mature or capable of as much work or service. Zeal for the LORD motivated some parents to dedicate themselves or their children to the serve the LORD, in His House, such children would be trained in the duties of the temple and used as assistants to the priests. Hannah during her barren years prayed to the LORD and vowed a vow saying:

- LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head." (1 Sam. 1:9-11).

In due time Hannah conceived a son, who she named Samuel, and said:

- I have asked for him from the LORD." ²⁸Therefore I have lent him to the LORD, as long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD. (1 Sam. 1:27-28). For the full story see (1 Samuel Chapter One).

VALUATION OF A MONTH TO FIVE YEARS

LEVITICUS 27:6

The Valuation of a Person from a Month up to Five Years Old.

- **Leviticus 27:6:** If the person is from a month old up to five years old, the valuation (estimation in KJV) shall be for a male five shekels of silver, and for a female the valuation shall be three shekels of silver.

If a parent, or any other person, devoted theirs or another child (male or female) to the sanctuary, they could be redeemed according to the valuation the law places upon their age group. The different age groups and their valuation were as follows.

- A male from 20 to 60 years was 50 shekels and a female 30 shekels. (Leviticus 27:3-4).
- A male from 5 to 20 years, was 20 shekels and a female 10 shekels. (Leviticus. 27:5).
- A male 1 month to 5 years was 5 shekels and a female 3 shekels. (Leviticus 27:6).
- A male sixty or over was 15 shekels and a female 10 shekels. (Leviticus 27:7).
- If someone was too poor the priest was to value them according to what the person making the vow could afford. (Lev. 27:8).

Naturally a child from a month old up to five years old are far too young to be of much use for work and service and therefore their redemption price was very low, five shekels for a male and three for a female. The person who devoted them to the LORD and says, "the estimation of my son or my daughter be upon me," was committed to pay the redemption price of the child's value to redeem them. Children less than a month old could be vowed, but no estimation price was to be set upon them.

VALUATION OF SIXTY YEARS PLUS

LEVITICUS 27:7

The Valuation of a Person Sixty Years old and Over.

- **Leviticus 27:7:** And if the person is sixty years old or over, then the valuation (estimation in KJV) for a male shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels.

Men and women sixty years old and above were considered almost past labour, and therefore the redemption price for males was fifteen shekels and females ten shekels. It is interesting to notice that males sixty plus were valued five shekels less than the males five to twenty years old, whereas a woman sixty plus was valued the same as females five to twenty years old. This maybe because the man's strength for work was reduced, whereas the older woman's nurturing nature and services as carer and nurse was highly valued.

VALUATION OF THE POOR

LEVITICUS 27:8

The Valuation of a Poor Person.

- **Leviticus 27:8:** And if someone is too poor to pay the valuation (estimation in KJV), then he shall be made to stand before the priest, and the priest shall value him; the priest shall value him according to what the vower can afford.

If the person who made the vow possesses less than the specified shekels required to redeem the person they had vowed to the LORD, they were to appear before the priest, who would then examine their circumstances, determine an amount for them to pay according to their situation. The LORD also considered the poor in other cases in a similar manner:

- If she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.' " (Lev. 12:8).

And concerning the poor the apostle Paul states:

- If the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. (2 Cor. 8:12).

VALUATION OF A CLEAN ANIMAL

LEVITICUS 27:9

The Vow of an Animal Offered to the LORD, is Holy to the LORD.

- **Leviticus 27:9:** "If the vow is an animal that may be offered as an offering to the LORD, all of it that he gives to the LORD is holy.

The words, "all that he gives to the LORD is holy," carries the idea that when a vow consists of a clean bullock, sheep, goat or lamb, the whole animal was to be holy to the LORD, meaning:

1. It was set apart for sacred uses and not to be used for common purposes.
2. It was taken to the priest to be offered on the brazen altar of burnt offerings in the outer court as a sacrifice offering to the LORD.
3. It was delivered to the sanctuary after which the priests could sell the animal to the Israelites who needed them for sacrifices with the money paid for it to be used for the maintenance and repairs of the tabernacle and later the temple.

NOT MAKE A SUBSTITUTE GOOD FOR BAD

LEVITICUS 27:10

An Animal shall Not be Exchange Good for Bad or Bad for Good.

- **Leviticus 27:10:** He shall not exchange it or make a substitute for it, good for bad, or bad for good; and if he does in fact substitute one animal for another, then both it and the substitute shall be holy.

The expression, he shall not exchange for it, good for a bad, or a bad for a good means that if an animal that was perfect had been offered in the vow it was not to be exchanged for an animal that had a blemish, likewise, if an animal that had a blemish had been offered in the vow it was not to be exchanged for animal that was perfect. A change was not be made either for the better or for the worse, for the devoted animal was to be taken as it was. If changes could be made after the vow had been made the person who made it may through regret or covetousness bring a

blemished animal (i.e., an even worse one) than the one he had vowed, believing he could deceive the priest. The identical animal vowed is to be delivered; no change whatever was to be made, even if the substitution animal was a better and healthier animal. One of the reasons it was forbidden to change a blemished animal for a better animal, was most likely because whoever made a vow before the LORD was to let their word be "yes," meaning let it be true to what they promise.

VALUATION OF AN UNCLEAN ANIMAL

LEVITICUS 27:11-13

The Valuation of an Unclean Animal, that May Not be Offered.

- **Leviticus 27:11-13:** And if it is any unclean animal that may not be offered as an offering to the LORD, then he shall stand the animal before the priest, ¹²and the priest shall value it as either good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall be. ¹³But if he wishes to redeem it, he shall add a fifth to the valuation (estimation in KJV).

Unclean animals refer to an animal such as an ass or camel, that had been vowed or that had been found to have a blemish, that made them unsuitable to be offered on the altar, such animals could be sold, and the money used for the repairs and maintenance of the temple. If the person who had vowed the unclean animal as an offering to the LORD, later desired to redeem it, they could do so by adding a fifth of the original price that the priest had valued the animal at to it.

VALUATION OF HOUSES

LEVITICUS 27:14-15

- **Leviticus 27:14-15:** "When a man dedicates his house as a holy gift to the LORD, the priest shall value (estimation in KJV), it as either good or bad; as the priest values (estimate in KJV) it, so it shall stand. ¹⁵And if the donor wishes to redeem his house, he shall add a fifth to the valuation (estimation in KJV), price, and it shall be his.

When a man vows to devote his house to the service of God, it was to be set apart for sacred service, and devoted to holy uses, meaning, it could be used as accommodation for the priests or sold and the money used by the authorities for the maintenance and repair of the sanctuary, or for some other purpose connected with the duties of the Temple. The one making the vow must be the sole owner of the house and have the exclusive right of disposing of it. Any house or property obtained by fraud could not be vowed to the sanctuary, since the property was not the rightful possession of the one making the vow.

The priest was to carefully examine it, to determine its value according to its condition, once the priest's price is fixed, the house could then be purchased by any one at the fixed price the priest had set on it. If the person who had vowed his house as a gift to the LORD, later desired to redeem it, they could do so by adding a fifth of the original price to it that the priest had originally valued the house at. If the house was in a village or the country it came under the fifty-year law of Jubilee.

- The houses of the villages that have no wall around them shall be classified with the fields of the land. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the jubilee. (Lev. 25:31).

If the house was in walled towns the right of redemption only lasted for one year.

- If a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, he may redeem it within a year of its sale. For a full year he shall have the right of redemption. (Leviticus 25:29).

LEVITICUS 27:16-18

The Valuation of Land and Fields in a Man's Possession.

- **Leviticus 27:16-18:** "If a man dedicates (sanctify in KJV) to the LORD part of the land that is his possession, then the valuation (estimation in KJV), shall be in proportion to its seed. A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver. ¹⁷If he dedicates (sanctify in KJV) his field from the year of jubilee, the valuation (estimation in KJV), shall stand, ¹⁸but if he dedicates (sanctify in KJV) his field after the jubilee, then the priest shall calculate the price according to the years that remain until the year of jubilee, and a deduction shall be made from the valuation (estimation in KJV).

The following does not apply to a man who vows a field or land to the service of the sanctuary that he had acquired and purchased by his own work (see v22-24 below), but to a man who vows part of his land or a field that he inherited from his forefathers to the service of the sanctuary. The words, "part of his land" (v16), intimates that it was not lawful for a man to vow the whole of his estate to the sanctuary, a very valid reason supporting this idea is the fact that to do so would leave his own family improvised, and God would have no man's family made beggars to enrich His sanctuary. The valuation of land is to be in proportion to its seed/homer, meaning in proportion to the number of crops it had the potential to grow. The more produce it could produce the greater the value, because it would provide greater harvest and bigger incomes.

At first glance it appears that if forty-nine years remained to the next Jubilee it would cost fifty shekels to redeem the land, which if this is correct each year is valued at a little over one shekel, based upon this calculation, if a man was dedicating twenty acres of land and another man was dedicating two areas and both had ten years remaining to the next fifty-year Jubilee, both men would be required to pay ten shekels to redeem their land. This immediately raises the question, "how is that fair?" Since the two acres would have nowhere near the potential to produce the harvests and income that the twenty acres would. But this is only half of the formula and process of valuing the redemption price of the land, the second half involved valuing the land according to the following verse:

- If a man dedicates (sanctify in KJV) to the LORD part of the land that is his possession, then the valuation (estimation in KJV), shall be in proportion to its seed. A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver. (Lev. 27:16).

The priest was to value the area of land being vowed to the sanctuary according to how many bags of barley seed weighing a homer each (one homer is 220kg) it would take to fully sow the area being dedicated. This means, whatever size land was required to sow one homer (i.e., 220kg) of barley seed was to be valued at fifty shekels and all other land sizes whether greater or smaller were to be based upon this formula accordingly. If the field took a homer (220kg) of barley seed to fully sow the entire area, then it was to be valued at fifty silver shekels, if it took two homers (440kg), then it was to be valued at one hundred shekels and if it took less, such as half a homer (110kg) it was to be valued at 25 shekels and so on.

Following are some further examples:

- If there are 10 years remaining to the next Jubilee, and the land had been valued at two homers, which is 100 shekels, then the redemption price would be $10 \times 100 = 1000$ shekels.
- If there are 10 years remaining to the next Jubilee, and the land had been valued at 1 homer, which is 50 shekels, then the redemption price would be $10 \times 50 = 500$ shekels.

- If there are 10 years remaining to the next Jubilee, and the land had been valued at 1 homer, which is 50 shekels, then the redemption price would be $10 \times 50 = 500$ shekels.
- If there are 2 years remaining to the next Jubilee, and the land had been valued at 1 homer, which is 50 shekels, then the redemption price would be $2 \times 50 = 100$ shekels and so forth.

REDEEMING A FIELD THAT IS A MANS POSSESSION

LEVITICUS 27:19

If a Man Wishes to Redeem His Field, He shall Add a Fifth.

- **Leviticus 27:19:** And if he who dedicates (sanctify in KJV) the field wishes to redeem it, then he shall add a fifth to its valuation (estimation in KJV), price, and it shall remain his.

These verses apply to a man who vows part of his land or a field to the service of the sanctuary that that he inherited from his forefathers and not to land that a man had acquired and purchased by his own work (see v22-24 below). If a man dedicated (sanctify in KJV) land or a field that is his possession to the LORD, then the redemption valuation was to be in proportion to the potential of its seed and number of remaining years to the next fifty-year Jubilee. The starting point for calculating the redemption price was the original price the priest had set upon the land according to how many homers of seed it would take to sow the entire field, and the number of remaining years to the Jubilee. Following are some examples:

- If the field took a homer (220kg) of barley seed to fully sow the entire area, then the priest would have valued the land at fifty silver shekels, which means if ten years remained to the next Jubilee it would cost $10 \times 50 = 500$ shekels to redeem the land, plus one fifth = 100 making the total redemption price 600 shekels.
- If it took two homers (440kg), to fully sow the entire area, the priest would have valued it at one hundred shekels, which means if ten years remained to the next Jubilee it would cost $10 \times 100 = 1000$ shekels to redeem the land plus one fifth = 200 making the total redemption price 1200 shekels.
- If it took half a homer (110kg) to fully sow the entire area, the priest would have valued it at 25 shekels, which means if ten years remained to the next Jubilee it would cost $10 \times 25 = 250$ shekels to redeem the land plus one fifth = 50 making the total redemption price 300 shekels and so on.

If the person who dedicated the land or field by a vow to the sanctuary paid the relevant redemption price the land would remain theirs. For further information regarding the formula and calculations for valuing the land, see the notes following (v16-20) (above).

LEVITICUS 27:20-21

If the Field is Not Redeemed or Sold it could Not Be Redeemed.

- **Leviticus 27:20-21:** But if he does not wish to redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore. ²¹But the field, when it is released in the jubilee, shall be a holy gift to the LORD, like a field that has been devoted. The priest shall be in possession of it.

Once the land had been vowed and offered to the priest, no-one but the priest could sell the land, which means that there are two possible scenarios contained in these verses.

1. If the man had no desire to redeem the field at the price the priest had set upon it, the priest or their treasurer was free to sell it to another man and use the money for the maintenance and repairs of the temple. Once it was sold the man who vowed it to the priesthood was then excluded from all future opportunities to redeem it.
2. If the man redeemed the field himself and then sold it, this is also quite possible since the verse does not say that the man did not redeem the field, but that if he did not.

Either way if the field was not redeemed or had been sold when the fifty year of Jubilee came it was to be holy to the LORD and return to the priests and become the property of the Sanctuary forever.

NOTE: it is right and proper to use our houses, lands, money and possessions for the glory of God to give support and promote His Kingdom, but God would not approve of a zeal that would bring about the ruin of a man's family.

VALUATION OF A FIELD NOT PART OF THE MANS POSSESSION

LEVITICUS 27:22-24

- **Leviticus 27:22-24:** If he dedicates to the LORD a field that he has bought, which is not a part of his possession, ²³then the priest shall calculate the amount of the valuation (estimation in KJV), for it up to the year of jubilee, and the man shall give the valuation (estimation in KJV), on that day as a holy gift to the LORD. ²⁴In the year of jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, to whom the land belongs as a possession.

If an Israelite man with his own money had purchased a field from and Israelite whose inheritance it was dedicates it to the LORD, the priest was to estimate the valuation for it up to the year of jubilee and the man was to give to the priest, not the land, but the valuation price the priest had set upon it as a gift to the LORD. The priest would then use the money for the repairs and maintenance of the temple. When the year of Jubilee came the field would return to the original man from who it had been purchased and whose inheritance it was.

10

VALUATION ACCORDING TO THE SHEKEL

LEVITICUS 27:25

The Shekel of the Sanctuary shall Be Twenty Gerahs.

- **Leviticus 27:25:** Every valuation (estimation in KJV), shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall make a shekel.

As the proceeds of these vows were devoted to the maintenance and repair of the sanctuary, all the valuations were to be made and paid according to the standard weight of the sanctuary shekel, which was twenty gerahs. (Exod. 30:13). The gerah was the smallest weight or coin among the Jews, it weighed around 0.57grams, which means one shekel was around 11.4 grams (i.e., 20 gerahs).

The definition of a Shekel: during this ancient era there was no coins that were given a set value, so money was weighed instead of being counted. Even today in some oriental countries' merchants weigh the silver and gold which when doing business with others so that no dishonest trader could cheat them with coins of lighter weight. The word shekel comes from the Hebrew word (*shaqal*) and means a weight used as a commercial standard. The earliest ancient shekels were a unit of weight, used for currency and trading before the introduction of coins.

Gold, silver, brass and iron shekels: there were shekels of gold (1 Chron. 21:25), shekels of silver, shekels of bronze (brass in KJV) (1 Sam. 17:5) and shekels of iron. (1 Sam. 17:7).

The weight of the shekel: it weighed between 7 grams to 17 grams, the most common weights were 11 grams, 14 grams and 17 grams. In New Testament times, a shekel was a silver coin weighing, about 11 grams. To give a visual Idea of the weight of the shekel an Australian 50 cent coin weighs 15½ grams,

The shekel of the sanctuary: was kept in the sanctuary, it was the standard weight against which the shekel the people brought to the priest would be measurement against for legitimacy and legality. To determine the weight and value of the people's shekel, the priest would place the sanctuary shekel on one side of a scale and place the shekel the people brought on the opposite side and in this manner measure the weight and value of the people's shekel against the weight and value of the sanctuary shekel.

Countries that used the shekel: it was common among the Moabites, Edomites the Phoenicians, the Persian Empire, Babylon, Rome and was the most common standard of weight and value used for currency throughout Israel and Judah. Overtime some of the silver nuggets were issued with markings engraved on them and later those in authority over the nation decided who designed the coins and what was engraved on them. It had a variety of values depending on the era, the nation and the government.

Wages and the shekel: recorded records show when shekels were used to pay wages in the ancient world they vary widely. Early records set the value of unskilled labour at approximately 10 shekels per year of work. Later, records within the Persian Empire (539–333 BC) give ranges from a minimum of 2 shekels per month for unskilled labour, to as high as 7 to 10 shekels per month in some records. A survival wage for an urban household during the Persian period would require at least 22 shekels of income per year.

Israel's currency today: the modern currency unit used in Israel today is officially known as the Israeli New Shekel (sometimes abbreviated as NIS), which replace the Old Israeli Shekel in 1985. It is based on a decimal system: 100 agorot to 1 shekel and includes the 1, 2, 5 and 10 shekel coins, plus the 5, 10 and 50 agorot coins (equal to one hundredth of a shekel). The coins are made of a nickel alloy and increase in size as they go up in value. (2017).

VALUATION OF FIRSTBORN ANIMALS

LEVITICUS 27:26-27

The Valuation of Firstborn Animals.

- **Leviticus 27:26-27:** "But a firstborn of animals, which as a firstborn belongs to the LORD, no man may dedicate (sanctify in KJV); whether ox or sheep, it is the LORD's. ²⁷And if it is an unclean animal, then he shall buy it back (redeem it in KJV) at the valuation (estimation in KJV), and add a fifth to it; or, if it is not redeemed, it shall be sold at the valuation (estimation in KJV).

These verses state that no one could dedicate a firstborn animal

- Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. (Exod. 13:13).

In Exodus chapter thirteen the LORD said to Moses:

- The LORD said to Moses, ²"Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine." (Exod. 13:1-2).

Then the LORD says when He brings them into the land of Canaan they are to:

- Set apart to the LORD all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the LORD's. ¹³Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. (Exod. 13:11-13).
- All that open the womb are mine, all your male livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep. ²⁰The firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem. And none shall appear before me empty-handed. (Exod. 34:19-20).

The LORD then explains to Moses the reason for this command, saying, when their sons ask them, "What does this mean?" They were to explain to them that when the LORD desired to deliver them from the bondage and slavery of Egypt, the Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let them go, so the LORD killed all the firstborn of man and of animals in the land of Egypt. Therefore, we sacrifice all male animals that first open the womb in remembrance that the LORD by His strong hand delivered us from Egypt (Exod. 13:14-15), and offer all firstborn of man to the LORD, signifying the death of the firstborn of Egypt, but since it would be an abomination before the LORD to put them to death they were to be redeemed. Since the donkey (being a most stubborn animal) signifies the stubborn Pharaoh of Egypt the donkey was not to be sacrificed to the LORD, however, being a valuable work animal it could be redeemed by offering a lamb in its place, signifying Israel's victory over Egypt, however, if no one redeemed it, they were to break its neck, signifying the LORD breaking the yoke of Egypt. In Exodus chapter thirteen and thirty-four Israel is still in the wilderness, and there is no mention of the firstborn animal (clean or unclean) being redeemed and a fifth part being added to the set price, which would indicate that the primary focus of these two chapters is on the law of the firstborn in general, while the primary focus here in chapter twenty-seven when they are in the land of Canaan seems to be upon what happens after the firstborn animal is offered.

No man shall dedicate the firstborn of animals: (v26) by a vow, because a firstborn animal is not his own, but belongs to the LORD already, and therefore to vow a firstborn animal to God is to dedicate something to Him that is already His, which is at the same time extremely insulting to God to attempt to give something to God that by law cannot be withheld from Him.

Whether ox or sheep: (v26) these two most common of animals are put forward for all other firstborn animals suitable for sacrifice.

These verses (Lev. 27:26-27) contain the following three laws:

1. Whether an ox or sheep the firstborn of animals belongs to the LORD, meaning the priests kept them, no one could dedicate them for they were the property of the priests.
2. If the firstborn was an unclean animal it also belonged to the LORD, but rather than the priests keeping it, the owner was to buy it back at the valuation the priest set upon it and add a fifth to it. The money would then be used for the maintenance and repair of the temple.
3. If the owner of the firstborn unclean animal did not pay the redemption price that the priest set upon it, plus the one fifth, the the treasurer of the sanctuary sold it to anyone who liked to buy it at its valuation, and the proceeds were devoted to the maintenance and repairs of the sanctuary.

Nothing Devoted to the LORD, shall Be Sold or Redeemed.

- **Leviticus 27:28-29:** ²⁸"But no devoted thing that a man devotes to the LORD, of anything that he has, whether man or beast, or of his inherited field, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted thing is most holy to the LORD. ²⁹No one devoted, who is to be devoted for destruction from mankind, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death.

The words, "no devoted thing that a man devotes to the LORD," does not mean that the person is devoting a thing to destruction, but rather refers to those persons and things that are devoted to destruction by God's sentence. The word devoted in this verse comes from the Hebrew word (*cherem*), it means a thing or object doomed for extermination and utter destruction and carries the idea of a cursed thing dedicated to being utterly-destroyed. The words, "of anything that he has," embraces all that he had absolute authority over and could therefore legally devote to the service or benefit of the LORD, such as his servant, male or female, his own family members or a portion of his land or a field and his animals that were his own property and possession. The idea is that if any of these were devoted for destruction or sentenced to be put to death, they could not be vowed to the LORD, but must be put to death. Unlike the firstborn offering and tithe offerings that could be redeemed, anything devoted to destruction could not be vowed, sold or substituted for something else.

No one devoted for destruction shall be ransomed but put to death: carries the idea that if a man's family member, servant or slave or his field, land or something of his possessions were devoted to destruction they could not be vowed, or sold for money or substituted for something else, but must be utterly-destroyed or put to death. All things doomed to destruction were to be cut off from the people and put to death or destroyed, and whatever was doomed to destruction had no right of redemption or being sold for money or substituted for something else.

Following is a brief list of various people, cities and abominable things spoken of in Scripture that were doomed for destruction:

- Whoever sacrifices to other gods. (Exod. 22:20).
- The cities of Canaan. (Num. 21:2-3).
- Abominable things. (Deut. 7:26).
- The Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. (Deuteronomy 20:17).
- The city of Jericho. (Joshua 6:17-18).
- The Amalekites. (1 Sam. 15:3). (1 Sam. 15:20).
- The people of Edom. (Isaiah 34:5).
- The people of Israel for their multitude of sins against the LORD (Isaiah 43:28).

Is most holy to the LORD: (v28) carries the following two ideas:

1. Whatever was vowed was to only be handled by the priests and not by any other person outside of the priesthood.
2. What was vowed was to be used for the benefit of the sanctuary and priesthood and not any other purpose.
3. What was sentence to destruction was to be put to death and in this sense was holy to the LORD, meaning it was His property and His only, no one else could possess it or own it, for it was to be given to the LORD (i.e., put to death)

Surely be put to death: (v29) in the context of these verses does not mean as a sacrifice to God, but to be removed out of His sight, which is the meaning these verses carry.

Justly and rightly doomed to death: the application of the word devoted (*Hebrew cheřem*) to man is made in reference, to a person who is justly and rightly doomed to death and, in this sense given up to the LORD. A man who, in a right spirit, that carries out a sentence of just death on an offender (i.e., criminal), or who, slays an enemy in a just battle, must regard himself as God's servant rendering up a life to the claim of justice.

- Israel devoted the cities of the Canaanites to destruction in accordance with the word of God. (Num. 21:2-3).
- The LORD told the cities of Israel if one of their cities turned to other gods, the remaining cities of Israel were to devote that city to destruction (i.e., burn it) and put its inhabitants and all its cattle to death. (Deut. 13:12-18).
- Samuel hacked Agag (King of the Amalekites) to pieces before the LORD in Gilgal (1 Sam 15:33), according to the word of the LORD (1 Sam. 15:2-3).

In all such instances, a moral obligation rests upon those whose office it is to take the life: they must look upon their death blow as being under the justice of the LORD, as do soldiers who go to war to defend their or another country.

- For the LORD your God is he who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you the victory.' (Deut. 20:4).

For these reasons, those who are devoted to destruction cannot be redeemed or sold for money or substituted for something else, if it is a man, a nation or animal they must be put to death, and if a field, city or possessions it must be utterly-destroyed.

NOTE: it should be mentioned here that the righteousness of this law does not embrace such things as rash and foolish vows, such as:

- King Saul's rash and impulsive oath saying, "Cursed be the man who eats food until I am avenged on my enemies." (1 Sam. 14:24).
- Jephthah's extremely foolish vow promising to offer up to the LORD as a burnt offering whatever first entered the door of his house if the LORD gave him victory over the Ammonites. The LORD did give him the victory, and his daughter, his only child was the first person to come through the door." (Judges 11:30-31).

Sacrifices offered under the Old Testament Law and that faithful patriarchs offered never involved something that was devoted to destruction or that arises from one's own rash impulsive vow, all lawful sacrifices are laid out in very detailed instruction in the laws of Leviticus and always involved the offering up of an innocent life of an animal chosen, approved off and without spot or blemish.

TITHES OF THE LAND

LEVITICUS 27:30-31

- **Leviticus 27:30-31:** "Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. ³¹If a man wishes to redeem some of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it.

The seed of the land refers to all that grows up out of the earth after the seed has been sown that is eatable, such as, the fruit of trees, all sorts of corn, wheat, barley, wine and oil etc. The word tithe comes from the Hebrew word (*ma`aser*), meaning a tenth part of the whole. The tithe of the land refers to the tithes of the soil, meaning everything that grows on it. God is the owner of the earth, but in a unique manner specifically, the owner of the land of Israel and in this sense, He is the Landlord of all

Israel's land and the tithe is the rent the Israelites, as tenants, pay to Him for the lease of the land. The last thing now mentioned cannot be dedicated to the LORD by a vow because the tithes, like the firstborn of animals already belong to God as the following verse shows.

- Every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the LORD. (Lev. 27:32).
- A firstborn of animals, which as a firstborn belongs to the LORD, no man may dedicate; whether ox or sheep, it is the LORD's. (Lev. 27:26).

No one can vow to God what is not their own, God gave the tithes to the Levites for their inheritance, in return for the service that they do, in the tent of meeting for the LORD, the priests and the people, it was to be a perpetual statute throughout their generations. (Num. 18:21-24). The people were to tithe (i.e., give ten percent) all that their seed yielded from the field to the Levites, and from this tithe the Levites were to take a tithe and give it to the priests and the LORD would bless them in all the work of their hands that they did. (Deut. 14:22-29).

All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests: the three groups of Israelites were Priests, Levi (Levites) and Israelites. All male descendant of Aaron is an Aaronite, or priest, any non-Aaronic Levite (i.e., descended from Levi but not from Aaron) assisted the Levitical priests of the family of Aaron in the care of the tabernacle (later of the temple).

Aaron's descendants the priests had two primary responsibilities:

1. Offering sacrifices; minister to God; blessing the people in the name of the LORD; solving disputes and settling assaults by their word and teaching the people from the Book of the Law.
2. Covering the holy vessels, the veil, the ark of the testimony, the table of the bread of the Presence and all its vessels, the lampstand and all its vessels, the golden altar of incense and all the vessels that are used in the service of the sanctuary, the brazen altar for burnt offerings and its utensils and making them ready to be transported.

The Kohathites, Gershonites and Merarites: were three clans of the Levites. Each clan was comprised of descendants of the man from whom the clan received its name. They each had the following specific roles within the Levite tribe: -

The Kohathites: responsibility was primarily care of the Ark of the Covenant, the Menorah (the seven branched lampstand) and the Table of Shewbread and other holy items and were assigned to carry the holy things on the shoulder with poles made for that purpose.

The Gershonites: had the responsibility of taking care of the decorations in the sanctuary, the curtains, ropes, and coverings and given two carts and four oxen to help with the transport of these and other items of the sanctuary.

The Merarites: had the responsibility of maintaining and carrying from place to place the pillars, bases, frames, pegs, and cords of the structure of the tabernacle, they were given four carts and eight oxen to help with the transport of these items

The primary duties of the Levites who were Not Priests was to:

- Assist the high priest and common priests with the holy service of the LORD and the care of the holy vessels and furnishings of the tabernacle (later the temple), in the sanctuary and the outer court.
- Thank and praise the LORD every morning and evening and keep guard over the whole tent.
- After the priests had covered all the holy items with clothes, they were to take the tabernacle down and take all its vessels and furnishings on wagons pulled by oxen to the next camp and set it up again.

- They were not to go near to the vessels and furnishings of the sanctuary or go near to the altar until they had been totally covered with clothes, if they did, they would be struck dead.
- They were supported by the tithes of the people in return for their service that they do, in the tent of meeting and from this tithe they were to give a tithe to the LORD, meaning to Aaron and the priests (and by extension all future high priests and common priests). (Lev. 27:32-33) (Numbers 18:21-28).

Faithfully performing all these responsibilities was an important part of Israel's covenantal relationship with God and remaining in His favour, blessing and will. For Further information concerning tithing see the title:

- Tithing (ON WEBSITE MENU).

THE PRIESTHOOD TODAY

The priesthood today: there is no Levitical priesthood nor Levites to assist Israel today. When Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 the Jews lost the capacity to determine their tribal lineage and Judaism as a religion of God came to an end. Now in this present age both Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ, there is no longer any distinction between the two.

- There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28).

In the New Testament, Christians comprise a spiritual Israel and are the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

- Not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." ⁸This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (Rom. 9:7-8).
- Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." (Gal. 3:7-8).

The Old Testament Law of Moses established and supported the high priest and the Levitical priesthood, whereas the New Testament speaks of a, "better high priest," referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. Changing the high priest, resulted in a change in both the law and the priesthood, for Christ was not of the tribe of Levi, and therefore could not have been a priest if the old Law of Moses was still in effect.

- For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. ¹³For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. (Heb. 7:12-13).

Jesus death and resurrection not only abolished the Old Testament Levitical priesthood but made all New Testament faithful Christians priests.

- You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:5).
- You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9).

YEAR BY YEAR TITHE

The year by year tithe: during the year the people of Israel were to place in their storehouses a tithe of all that grew from their seed sown in the field and once a year take it to the place that God chose. to make his name dwell there (i.e., Jerusalem). When they arrived, they were

permitted to eat and drink a tithe of all that they took of their grain, wine, oil and the firstborn of their herd and flock. If the way was too far for them to travel with their tithe, then they could sell it and take the money to the same place and spend a tithe of the money they had for whatever they desired (i.e., buy oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink and whatever their appetite desired) and eat and drink it with rejoicing before the LORD. The remainder to the money was to be given to the Levites because they had no portion or inheritance with the other eleven tribes. (Deut. 14:22-27). In this way all Israel gathered together before the LORD to pay their tithe to the Levites and at the same time, fellowship, worship and rejoice together.

The three-year tithe: at the end of every three years Israel was to gather all the tithe of their produce ((i.e., oxen, sheep, wine, strong drink and whatever else their land produced) and lay it up within their towns for the Levites, the sojourners, the fatherless and widows, within those towns to freely eat of and be filled. If Israel faithfully obeyed these laws of tithing God would bless them in all the work, they set their hands to do (Deut. 14:28-29), so they would always have an abundance for themselves and to tithe to the priesthood. For Further information concerning tithing see the title:

- Tithing (ON WEBSITE MENU).

PASSING UNDER THE HERDSMAN STAFF

LEVITICUS 27:32-33

Every Tenth Animal that Pass under the Herdsman's Staff, is Holy.

- **Leviticus 27:32-33:** And every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the LORD. ³³One shall not differentiate between good or bad, neither shall he make a substitute for it; and if he does substitute for it, then both it and the substitute shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed."

17

No one was to choose which animal they could give for the tithe, for if they could it is certain some would choose the blemished and sick ones from their herds and flocks, to make such a thing impossible every tenth animal that passed under the herdsman's staff, was holy to the LORD, meaning it was selected for the tithe regardless of whether it was good or bad, healthy or sick it could not be substituted for another animal. Following is the method used for counting and selecting the animal to be tithed.

The owner would make a small gate in a pen or one of his paddocks so that only one animal could go through it at a time. He would then gather all the animals into the pen or paddock and as they come out through the gate one after another the herdsman would count them with his staff or a rod, one, two, three, etc., and the tenth that came out, whether it be male or female, perfect or blemished, he would mark with a red mark, and say, "This is the tithe."

- In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD. (Jeremiah 33:13).

It is to this custom of passing under the herdsman rod that the prophet Ezekiel alludes when he says:

- As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the Lord GOD. ³⁷I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. ³⁸I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me. I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD. (Ezek. 20:36-37).

The expression, "I will make you pass under the rod," in this context means that the LORD will once more claim the people of Israel and mark them as belonging to Him. The first time He claimed them was at Mount Sinai when they entered-into a covenant with Him.

NOTE: the rod or staff would be dipped in vermilion, a brilliant red pigment made from mercury sulphide or dipped in ochre, which is an earthy pigment containing ferric oxide, typically with clay, varying from light yellow to brown or red.

If the animal is substituted: (v33) it is possible unfaithful men would attempt to substitute a healthy animal for a sick and blemished animal, if such a deceptive and abominable thing was done and it was discovered both the original animal and the substitute would be holy to the LORD (meaning both belonged to the priests) and neither the original animal or the substituted animal could be redeemed. Since such an act is grossly sinful and there would be witnesses around seeing them blatantly abusing God's law in this abominable manner, it is more likely that some from a grateful heart would volunteer to give to the LORD a better and healthier animal and therefore substitute a healthy animal for a sick animal. If this was the case, the same law applied, both the healthy and the sick animal were holy to the LORD, and as such remained the property of the priests and neither animal could be redeemed. (Lev. 27:33).

THE LORD'S COMMANDMENTS

LEVITICUS 27:34

- **Leviticus 27:34:** These are the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses for the people of Israel on Mount Sinai.

These are the commandments of the LORD that are laid down not just in this chapter, but in the entire book of Leviticus which God gave to Moses for the children of Israel at Mount Sinai.

- These are the statutes and rules and laws that the LORD made between him and the people of Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. (Lev. 26:46).

Either during the forty days Moses was upon Mount Sinai or after the tabernacle was set up when the people of Israel were in the wilderness near Mount Sinai and the LORD spoke to Moses in the sanctuary. Today, we have great reason to thank God that we have not come to Mount Sinai and are not under the bondage of the ceremonial law to maintain our salvation, but under the freedom and clear light and grace of the Gospel.

NOTE: Israel did not need to do anything to be saved, for God chose them when they entered-into the covenant with Him at Mount Sinai, but they did need to remain obedient and faithful to His statutes, laws and commandments to maintain their salvation.

The message of our reconciliation to God by a high priest, is no longer clouded with the smoke of burning sacrifices, but cleared by the Gospel and knowledge of Christ. All today who God has delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13), have every reason to praise Him that they are no longer under the bondage of the law, but under the free grace of the Gospel, that proclaims all faithful worshippers that worship the Father through faith in God's perfect eternal heavenly High Priest the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved to everlasting life and eternal happiness. The following shows that Christ is the end of Moses Law.

- Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Rom 10:4).
- You have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest (Heb. 12:18).

The apostle Paul warn believers of putting themselves back under Moses law.

- Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? (Acts 15:10).

The Law of Moses was the guardian and protector of Israel (the Old Testament church) that acted as a schoolmaster to guide God's people until Christ came.

- So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. (Gal. 3:24).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace