

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Leviticus 27: 26-34**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue to read Leviticus 27: 26-34.

The entire book of Leviticus consists of God's words to Moses. On the surface, it is filled with commandments, statutes, and ordinances that God gave to the Israelites. On a deeper level, however, it reveals God's grace in paving a way for the Israelites to come before Him. All these laws point to Jesus Christ, who came to fulfill the law. Under the demands of the law, what man could not achieve, Christ's grace made up for. For Christ is the burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering. Christ is not only the sacrifice that pleases God but also the High Priest who offers the sacrifice on our behalf.

He bears us on His shoulders, enters the sanctuary, passes through the veil, and comes before the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies so that we may meet with God, commune with Him, and receive mercy and grace to help in time of need. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, we are cleansed, sanctified, and set apart for God. He also leads us to experience rest, including the weekly Sabbath, the seven annual feasts, the Sabbath year every seven years, and ultimately the Jubilee at His second coming, when all creation will be restored.

Therefore, every chapter and every verse of Leviticus, between the lines, reveals God's grace toward man. Having seen, experienced, and enjoyed such abundant grace, our only response should be to offer ourselves and all that we have to God in gratitude, becoming holy unto Him.

In this chapter, we have read the ordinances of making vows, which allow people, animals, houses, and land to be set apart and dedicated to God. Today, we come to the final section of this chapter, which speaks of three categories that cannot be vowed and given to God: the firstborn animals (verses 26–27), things or persons

devoted to destruction or permanently dedicated to God (verses 28–29), and the tithe (verses 30–33).

The reason these three categories cannot be vowed to God is that they already belong to Him. How can man take what already belongs to God and vow it back to Him? Verses 1–25 of this chapter speak of people offering vows to God out of gratitude, willingly dedicating things to Him, which pleases Him. This is man's voluntary and proactive offering to God. Verses 26–33, however, address those things that cannot be offered as vows but are still due to God. These things inherently belong to Him, and failing to offer them would be to rob God. With this understanding, let us now read the final portion of this chapter.

**Verse 26: "Only the firstborn of the animals, which should be the Lord's firstborn, no man shall dedicate; whether it is an ox or sheep, it is the Lord's."**

The firstborn of the animals was to be given to the Lord, a command established by God when He led the Israelites out of Egypt. In Exodus 13:1-2, it is written: "Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.'"

This command was instituted because on the night when the destroyer struck Egypt, killing all the firstborn in the land, the Israelites were spared. The blood of the lamb placed on their doorposts caused the angel to pass over their houses, and the firstborn of Israel were substituted by the lamb. Therefore, all firstborn in Israel were to belong to the Lord as holy. Among clean animals, like oxen and sheep, they belonged to the Lord by default and could not be offered again as a vow.

The handling of these firstborn oxen and sheep is detailed in Deuteronomy 15:19-22: "All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall sanctify to the Lord your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. You and your household shall eat it before the Lord your God year by year in the place which the Lord chooses. But if there is any defect in it, if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it

to the Lord your God. You may eat it within your gates; the unclean and the clean person alike may eat it, as if it were a gazelle or a deer."

Firstborn oxen and sheep without blemish were to be offered like a peace offering, with their fat burned on the altar as a sweet-smelling fire offering. The breast and right thigh were given to the priests, and the remaining meat was shared by the one making the offering with family and friends. If the firstborn animal had a defect, it could not be offered on the altar and was instead eaten at home by the family.

**Verse 27: "And if it is an unclean animal, then he shall redeem it according to your valuation and shall add one-fifth to it; or if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation."**

For unclean animals, such as camels and donkeys, their firstborn could not be offered on the altar or eaten by the people. They were to be redeemed according to Moses' valuation, with an additional 20% added to the redemption price. The silver was then given to the treasury of the tabernacle. If the owner chose not to redeem it, the animal was to be sold at the appraised value to someone else.

The firstborn of animals is addressed in these two verses, while the next two (verses 28–29) focus on things devoted to the Lord or set for destruction.

**Verse 28: "Nevertheless no devoted offering that a man may devote to the Lord of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the Lord."**

"Devoted offerings" are items set apart for the Lord, whether a person, animal, or inherited land. This does not include purchased land, as it would revert to its original owner in the Year of Jubilee and therefore could not be permanently dedicated. Devoted offerings were holy to the Lord, so they could neither be sold nor redeemed.

**Verse 29: "No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death."**

A "person under the ban" refers to someone guilty of a capital offense. Such a person could not be redeemed. For example, Numbers 35:31 states that murderers cannot be ransomed, and Exodus 22:18-20 includes other capital crimes, such as practicing sorcery, bestiality, or worshipping other gods. Those guilty of such sins were to be put to death and could not be redeemed.

**Verses 30-31: "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 to the Lord. If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it."**

The land and its produce belonged to the Lord by creation, but in His grace, He allowed mankind to enjoy its blessings. However, a tenth of everything from the fields, orchards, vineyards, or olive groves was to be set apart for the Lord as holy. The remaining nine-tenths were generously left for human enjoyment. Since the tithe inherently belongs to God, it could not be vowed as an offering. If someone wished to redeem their tithe, they were required to add 20% to its value, with the silver going to the treasury of the tabernacle.

**Verse 32: "And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord."**

A tenth of the herd or flock also belonged to the Lord as holy. The Israelites had a custom of counting livestock as they passed under a rod. The rod was marked with red paint, and every tenth animal was marked as belonging to the Lord. This marked animal was considered holy and set apart for Him.

**Verse 33: "He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed."**

A person cannot select based on preference; they must mark according to the counting order. Whether good or bad, it cannot be chosen, and God accepts it. Any animal marked with the red sign belongs to God and cannot be exchanged. If someone feels that offering a particular animal with a defect is inappropriate, they may additionally offer another one. However, the originally marked one cannot be redeemed; both animals belong to God as holy. This is the first recorded regulation in the Bible instructing Israel to tithe.

The Old Testament teaching on tithing can be traced back to Genesis 14:20, after Abraham rescued Lot and returned victorious. Melchizedek, king of Salem, met him with bread and wine to provide for him, and Abram gave him a tithe of all. This is the first mention of tithing. Later, in Genesis 28:22, when Jacob fled from his brother Esau and traveled to Paddan Aram, he rested in the wilderness of Bethel. Exhausted, he used a stone for a pillow and dreamed of a ladder set on the earth that reached to heaven, where the Lord appeared and blessed him. Upon waking, Jacob prayed in response, concluding by promising, "Of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Tithing to God became a custom among the patriarchs. By today's passage in Leviticus 27:30–33, God officially instituted it as a regulation for Israel through Moses. Numbers 18:21 reveals further instructions on how the Israelites were to use the tithe: "Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting." Because the Levites had no inheritance among the Israelites, the tithe was provided to support them as they served in the tabernacle.

Even after the Israelites returned from captivity, Nehemiah 13:10–11 records Nehemiah rebuking the leaders for neglecting the Levites' tithes and urging the people to bring the grain, new wine, and oil tithe to the storerooms for their sustenance. During this period, the prophet Malachi challenged the returned Jews

regarding tithing. In Malachi 3:10, he declared, "'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,' says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.'"

In the New Testament, every saint has been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, making both the individual and all they own belong to the Lord. The principle of stewardship shifted, with believers managing all they have under God's sovereignty. Tithing became an act of devotion rather than a fixed requirement. 2 Corinthians 9:6–8 outlines this New Testament principle: "But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work."

**Verse 34: "These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai."**

This is the final sentence in the entire book of Leviticus, summarizing the commandments, statutes, and laws God gave Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites to follow.

We thank the Lord! In the second half of 2024, He has led us through the book of Leviticus. It is a challenging book to read, but by God's strengthening and support, we not only completed it, but I believe the saints have gained something from it. On one hand, I thank the saints for their companionship, as it is only through the strength of the body that we can persist, comprehend the wisdom of God's Word, and enjoy His abundant provision. On the other hand, we together praise and glorify God, as He has spoken timely words to us through this book.

Let us pray together: Lord, we offer our gratitude and worship to You! 2024 has been a year of abundance as You led us through the Gospel of Mark, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, James, and Leviticus. Your words to us are spirit and life. Thank You for helping us gain inspiration and life supply through Your Word, enabling us to grow in life. We thank You for Your abundant grace and provision, as well as for Your peace and protection during the turbulent year of 2024. For the coming year, we once again look up to You, expecting You to speak to us more abundantly and to deepen our knowledge of You. May we willingly dedicate our lives, serving together with the saints in the church, building up the Body of Christ. Please continue to guide us the path ahead. We pray, petition, and give thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.