

Leviticus & Hebrews: The Necessity of the Cross

Lesson 20: Worship at the Cross

Key Verse: "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. ~Leviticus 27.30

The eaglets have hatched! As of the first day of this writing, 2 of the 3 eggs nurtured by eagle parents Jackie and Shadow had hatched, and there remained much anticipatory hope that their third egg would also produce a live baby eagle.¹ Days later, an explosion of awe, wonder, and praise erupted online when the third egg began to hatch!² The symbology of the strength, freedom, and power of this native bird explains its worth to Americans. When it became the national bird of the United States in 1782, it was placed on the Great Seal of the United States as its national symbol. Much like the awe, wonder, and praise that erupted when the eaglets hatched, the angels' **worship** couldn't be held back when the Messiah arrived on earth (Luke 2.13-14). Long having been praised as **worthy**, Christ establishes your worth before God the second you submit your life to Him as Your LORD, and as Your Savior from God's wrath for your sins (Hebrews 10.1-23). Now, He has placed your name on His hand (Isaiah 49.16)!

"Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory!" (Psalm 24.10) "May His name endure forever, His fame continues as long as the sun! May people be blessed in Him, all nations call Him blessed! Blessed by the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed by His glorious Name forever; may the whole earth be filled with His Glory! Amen and Amen!" (Psalm 72.17-19)

Leviticus 27.1-34 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 of persons, ³then the valuation 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. ⁴If the person is a female, the valuation shall be thirty shekels. ⁵If the person is from five years old up to twenty years old, the valuation shall be for a male twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels. ⁶If the person is from a month old up to five years old, the valuation shall be for a male five shekels of silver, and for a female the valuation shall be three shekels of silver. ⁷And if the person is sixty years old or over, then the valuation for a male shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels. ⁸And if someone is too poor to pay the valuation, 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.

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. ¹⁰He 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. ¹¹And 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.

¹⁴"When a man dedicates his house as a holy gift to the LORD, the priest shall value it as either good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. ¹⁵And if the donor wishes to redeem his house, he shall add a fifth to the valuation price, and it shall be his.

¹⁶"If a man dedicates to the LORD part of the land that is his possession, then the valuation shall be in proportion to its seed. A homer of barley seed shall be valued at fifty shekels of silver. ¹⁷If he dedicates his field from the year of jubilee, the valuation shall stand, ¹⁸but if he dedicates 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. ¹⁹And if he who dedicates the field wishes to redeem it, then he shall add a fifth to its valuation price, and it shall remain his. ²⁰But 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. ²²If 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 for it up to the year of jubilee, and the man shall give the valuation 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.

²⁵Every valuation shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall make a shekel.

²⁶"But 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. ²⁷And if it is an unclean animal, then he shall buy it back at the valuation, and add a fifth to it; or, if it is not redeemed, it shall be sold at the valuation.

¹ [Bear Bear bald eagles Jackie and Shadow welcome eaglets to the world.](#)

² [Fans in frenzy as Jackie and Shadow's third egg begins to hatch in Big Bear nest](#)

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. ²⁹ No one devoted, who is to be devoted for destruction from mankind, shall be ransomed; he shall surely be put to death.

³⁰ “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. ³¹ If a man wishes to redeem some of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it. ³² 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.

³³ One 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.”

³⁴ These are the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses for the people of Israel on Mount Sinai.

Diamonds: The focus of Leviticus 27 on optional vows, tithes, and labor valuations³ (*not* intrinsic, nor personal) seems like a dry and boring economic seminar! However, Leviticus ends with God's ecstatic announcement to get ready to fulfill His great and exciting promise: entry into the land *flowing with milk and honey!* It's like sitting in a title company's office lounge area in eager anticipation of legally owning your dream home. Excitement and anticipation are normal, however you must also have the presence of mind to know you have all your paperwork, and most importantly, the money to secure ownership of your dream home! Thus, Leviticus 27 is exciting because God has established the expectations of His people (Leviticus 1-16), confirmed the stability of His covenant relationship with His people (17-26), and now provides the guidelines of anticipatory praise from His people for *all He has done AND will do for them* (Leviticus 27).

1. Recall what God says has done and will do for His people from Leviticus 26.1-13:

a. What God has done for His people (26.13)

b. What God will do for His people as they obediently serve Him in the land He is providing (26.1-12)

2. Recall that the word “offering” is interchangeable with the word “worship”. The guidelines of Leviticus 27 are for the optional vow offering, and/or peace offering, briefly outlined first in Leviticus 7.11-18. How does Leviticus 27 transform into excitement now that you understand the context of Leviticus 27 as well as the nature of offerings as an act of worship to God?

Verses 28-29 must be understood in the context of God's definition of the word translated to English as “devoted”. This translates to being defined as “putting something or someone under ban.”⁴ In the affirmative verse of 28, this means that one who has been “devoted” to the LORD, referenced first in verses 1-8, has an irrevocable devotion and dedication to the LORD's service (1 Samuel 1.11; Judges 11.30-31). This was not to be done rashly and carried great consequences before the LORD (revealed in the contrasting results of Hannah's vow of her firstborn son Samuel in 1 & 2 Samuel versus Jephthah's rash vow in Judges 11). Yet it also opposed the ability of anyone to hold back what was devoted to destruction. This included the plunder of conquest

³Similarly, our economy uses data to understand our labor value with corresponding pay. Our labor value grows over the lifespan of our career, and thus we are paid more as we accumulate years of experience in our career or industry.

⁴Mathews, p. 254

(Numbers 21.2; Joshua 6.17) as well as murderers who desired to pay their way out of receiving God's justice in that time period (V 29).

God's institution of a sliding-scale cost reveals His desire that worship of Him, even as it is optional, remains accessible to all His people (V 8). "The Israelites gave according to their ability to serve, both in terms of their physical capability and their financial ability. It was not a matter of whether one person was more devoted because he could give more; the valuations were set according to a person's capacity."

3. Jesus confronts this sin-driven misunderstanding and misapplication of appropriate sacrificial gifts to Him in Mark 12.41-44 and Luke 20.45-21.4. Read about Jesus' compassionate understanding of His servant's heart through her action. What is the lesson, application, and/or confirmation for you?

The to-do list in Hebrews 13 has a similar ending to Leviticus 27. Every expectation is a response to the work of God through His Son, Jesus. Likewise, there is an undercurrent of anticipatory praise in the work the Holy Spirit will do through His people, His Church, as they obediently serve Him. The laws in Leviticus 27 address two broad categories of what can be offered in this specific offering: people (V 1-13) and personal property (V 9-27). Surprisingly, Hebrews 13 includes vows that include these same topics: people's vow in marriage (Hebrews 13.4) and generosity in sharing possessions (Hebrews 13.16). Just as the to-do list in Hebrews 13 identifies the safeguards and personal benefits of fulfilling these exhortations, the laws established in Leviticus 27 safeguard against the people's sinful inclinations and ensure the personal benefit of redemption in the year of Jubilee.

The safeguards against people's sinful schemes are discovered in the declaration of what can be redeemed, and what is not able to be redeemed because it is "devoted" and/or designated as "holy to the LORD". For instance, the firstborn male child and the firstborn of livestock automatically "belong(s) to the LORD" (V 26). As such, the animals marked as "clean" and thus worthy of sacrifice to the LORD cannot be purchased for personal use or ever substituted (V 33). To do so is theft of the LORD.

The firstborn animals marked as "unclean", and thus unable to be used in tabernacle sacrifice or service, can be redeemed through a value-added tithe, or sold for market value (V 27). Through the redemption price, which adds "a fifth" to its market value, the money is paid directly to the temple. Implied is that if the unclean firstborn instead "goes to market", the proceeds from the sale would be given to the temple. Here is where we discover a key truth about redemption that unlocks a treasure chest of God's love for His people in His law: redemption is costly to the one redeeming but also *adds value* to what is being redeemed!

4. There are patterns in the law of redemption of things dedicated to God. What patterns do you see in the law of redemption from verses 13, 15, 19, 27, and 31:

Leviticus ends with a strong theology of God's character and nature, revealing God's value of you. The elementary truth that redemption costs but also adds a significant value to what is redeemed reveals God's value-added view of you through Christ. God paid the cost to redeem you from sin's enslavement and eternal death, or removal from His Presence today and forevermore. Only the owner of what is being redeemed has the legal right to redeem it. Only God has the legal right to redeem you. Through the sacrifice of His Son, God not only paid the cost to redeem you, He added value to you!

5. By scanning Hebrews, where do you discover God's choice to fulfill His legal right to redeem His people and His creation?

Doctrine: Worship⁶~ (Leviticus 27) “...offering of homage, honor, and praise to God. Worship is the theme of salvation history, the supreme purpose for which believers were redeemed (John 4.23), and the occupation to which all will be eternally enthralled (Revelation 19.1-6; 22.3-4).”

“To worship the Lord is to ascribe to Him the honor, glory, adoration, praise, reverence, and devotion that is due Him, both for His greatness and for His goodness (Isaiah 42.8; 48.11; Matthew 4.10; Revelation 14.7). The...worship of angels, saints, or other supposed deities constitutes idolatry, and is strictly prohibited in Scripture (Exodus 20.3-5; Colossians 2.18; Revelation 19.10, 22.9; Westminster Confession, Chapter 21, paragraph 1).”

“True worship must begin in the heart and the mind of the worshiper...God accepts only that which flows from sincere devotion to Him...For believers, the supreme act of worship is to offer all of themselves as a living sacrifice to the Lord (Matthew 22.37). Genuine worship engages the mind; it does not bypass it (1 Corinthians 14.15). Worship encompasses much more than the singing portion of a church service; it is a way of thinking and living for God’s honor and glory (Romans 12.1-2).”

“There are five basic biblical commands concerning worship:

1. We are to worship God in ways that edify our local church. (1 Corinthians 14.26; Ephesians 5.18-20);
2. We are to worship God in a proper and orderly manner. (1 Corinthians 14.40);
3. We are to worship God in Spirit and truth. (Psalm 2, 72, 110; John 4.23-24; Revelation 5.9-10);
4. We are to worship God in reverence. (Psalm 22; Hebrews 12.28-29);
5. We are to worship God in awe. (Psalm 24; Hebrews 12.28-29)”

To worship God is to ascribe to Him the worth of which He is worthy (1 Chronicles 16.29). In fact, the word “worship” comes from the Old English word “worthship” which means to proclaim or give worth to something you consider precious and supremely valuable (Psalm 95, 100).

10. You already studied this doctrine in Lesson 1 (“Worship at the Cross”, see [pdf here](#)). Revisit your answers to the doctrine questions (Questions 7 & 8) from Lesson 1. How do your answers from that lesson ignite a response to offer a sacrifice of worship in line with the spirit of Leviticus 27?

Final Question of the study: Cue “Pomp and Circumstance”! You did it! You made it through the simultaneous study of Leviticus and Hebrews, making everyone a newly minted theologian! However, this means that you will be challenged to continually and consistently apply this knowledge. Perhaps some have already been challenged by their deeper understanding of God and Jesus, while others can see the challenge on the horizon. Regardless, just as Jesus’ ministry resulted in challenges and suffering for His obedience to His Father, it is unavoidable that we all will feel the pain of being misunderstood, rejected, misconstrued, and falsely labeled as our knowledge of God and Jesus deepens, taking firm root in our minds and hearts.

11. How do the simultaneous truths that “you are strangers and sojourners with [God]” (Leviticus 25.23), and that you “have a sure and steadfast anchor of [your] soul” in Jesus (Hebrews 6.19) strengthen you, build stamina, and fortify you as live as God’s singularly devoted servant (Leviticus 25.55)?

⁶ MacArthur & Mayhue, “Biblical Doctrine” pp. 790-792, 939

Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:

Lecture Outline:

Aim: Proper worship flows from wholehearted devotion to God.

- I. Vowed People (Leviticus 27.1-8) **T1:** Wholehearted devotion to God requires full surrender to Him.
 - a. How have you seen your love and devotion for God grow through the study of Leviticus?
 - b. In what tangible ways does your worship express your love to Him?
 - c. What changes do you need to make to ensure you are fully surrendered to Him?
- II. Vowed Property (Leviticus 27.9-25) **T2:** Wholehearted devotion to God proclaims His gospel of unparalleled generosity.
 - a. How generous are you with the gifts of grace you have received from God?
 - b. What might you be holding back from Him?
 - c. In what specific ways could you proclaim the gospel by generously sharing with those who need Jesus?
- III. Vow Parameters (Leviticus 27.26-34) **T3:** Wholehearted devotion to God honors all His holy commands.
 - a. How well is your obedience to God's commands expressing your devotion to Him?
 - b. What would full obedience to Him cost you?
 - c. Which of God's attributes will you meditate upon to keep you mindful that He is worthy of your wholehearted devotion?

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Morales, L. Michael, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015) pp. 15-107, 185-220

Sklar, Jay, *Leviticus*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014) pp. 326-335