

# Holy to the Lord

You and the book of  
Leviticus

Chapter 27

## 2 Kinds of Offerings

Lev. 1-7



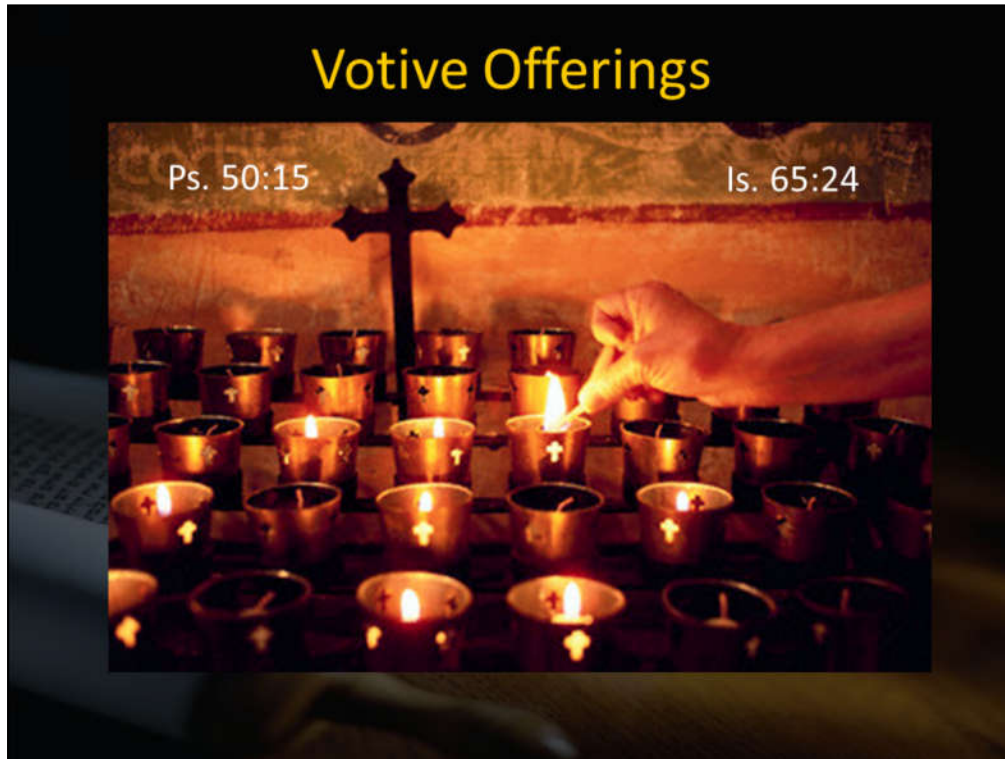
Lev. 27



The offerings explained in chapters 1-7 of Leviticus were offerings that were “made into smoke” and thus given over to God. In them an animal or some grain was burned, and through this sacrifice God interacted and connected with His people.

The offerings at the end of the book of Leviticus in chapter 27 are different. These are offerings of people and land, and are not (thankfully) made into smoke, but none the less are given to God.

## Votive Offerings



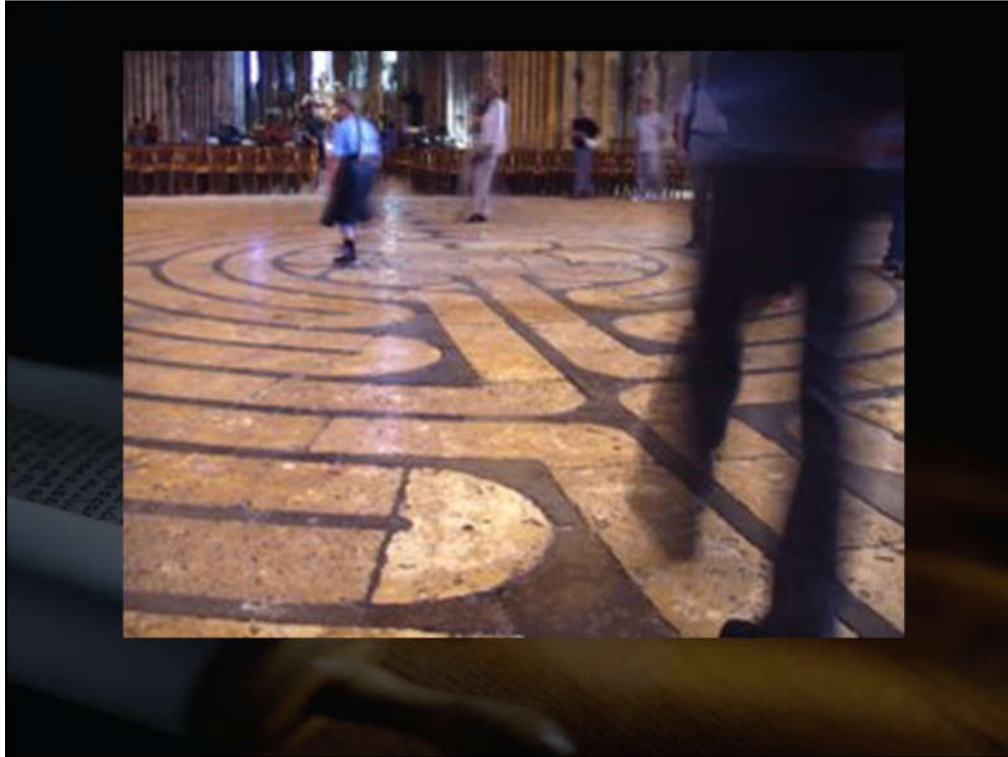
These offerings are called “votive offerings.” A votive offering is often defined as “an object left in a sacred place for ritual purposes.” Such items are a feature of modern and ancient societies and are generally made in order to gain favour with supernatural forces.

The Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches often make use of *votive candles* in their buildings. How are they used? What is their intent? (Often in a more legalistic way. They are often lit before a prayer so that the prayer is more likely to be heard.)

How would Lutheran’s view this understanding? (God is always eager to listen to us, all we need to do is call upon Him;

Psalm 50:15 “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

Isaiah 65:24 “Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear.”



What's a labyrinth? Has anyone here ever "walked a labyrinth? What's the point of a labyrinth? (It can be a meditative thing, or people can turn it into a mystical experience, almost trying to make it a means of connecting to God, much like the sacraments are intended to do.

There is an outdoor labyrinth at St. Michael's retreat centre in Lumsden, and at the centre of it is a monument of stacked rocks and on those rocks people that have walked the labyrinth have left mementos, trinkets, photos, a bracelet. In a sense these are votive offerings, "an object left in a sacred place for ritual purposes."

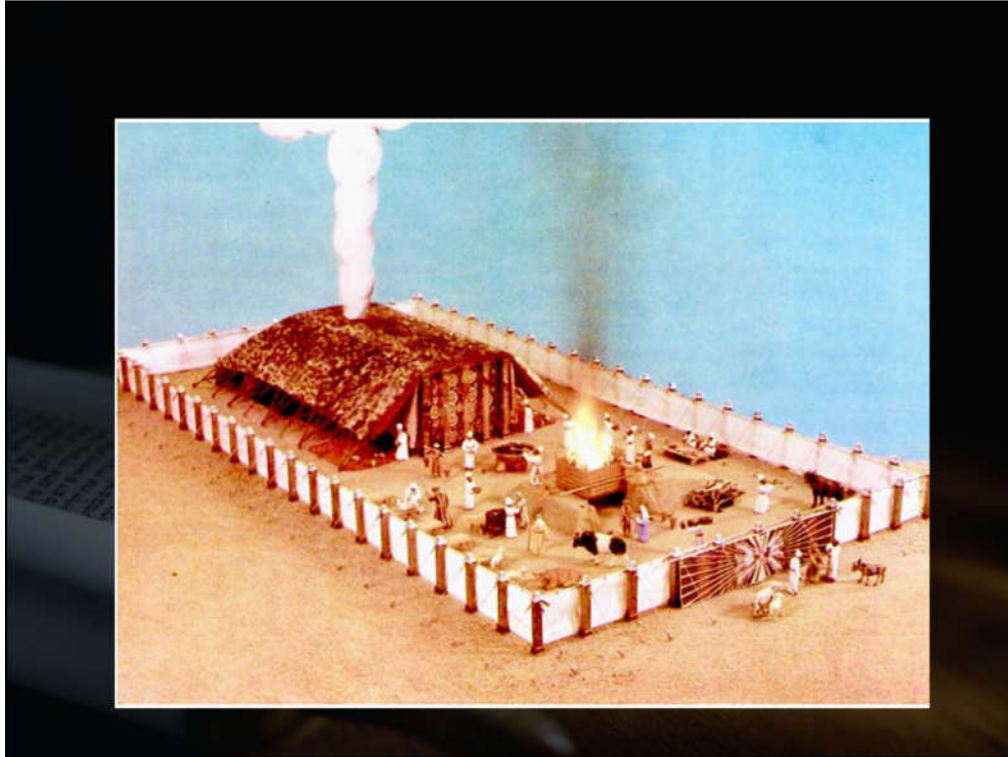
Why do you think people do this?

## Gain Favour with God?



Now, knowing what we know about God and how He interacts with people, do you think that He enacts these votive offerings so that we can gain His favour? Why not? (This is not how He operates. A good example of this is the exodus; first God saved His people, then He gave them guidelines [things to do] as a response to His favour.)

So then why does God close the book of Leviticus with an entire chapter on votive offerings? Maybe we need to take an in depth look at this chapter.



The purpose of the votive offerings was to support the operations of the tabernacle. To put it simply, the votive offerings kept the temple functioning. Why would that be important? (If this is the place where God is to meet His people, then you want it to be functioning properly.)

We should note that not all of the votive offerings are mentioned in this chapter. The act of simply giving money to help the tabernacle is not covered because by its very nature, it is simple to do. No explanation is needed for it.

This chapter deals with offerings that aren't money, and objects that don't have a set value to them. It helps outline how an individual can assess the value on non-monetary items that wish to be dedicated to the tabernacle, and how a person can convert them into a currency that can actually be handed over to the tabernacle. (Read chapter 27 in its entirety or listen to it from a recording.)



## Required or Voluntary?



Are the votive offerings required or voluntary? (Leviticus 27:2 "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, If anyone makes a *special* vow to the Lord involving the valuation of persons)

*Special* vow can also be translated "extraordinary vow" implying that this is not absolutely required.

If is not required, why would they do it? (They know the importance of the tabernacle and want to keep it going.)



How are the votive offerings similar to what we do on a Sunday morning?  
(Voluntary. Keep the church functioning.)



## Shekel



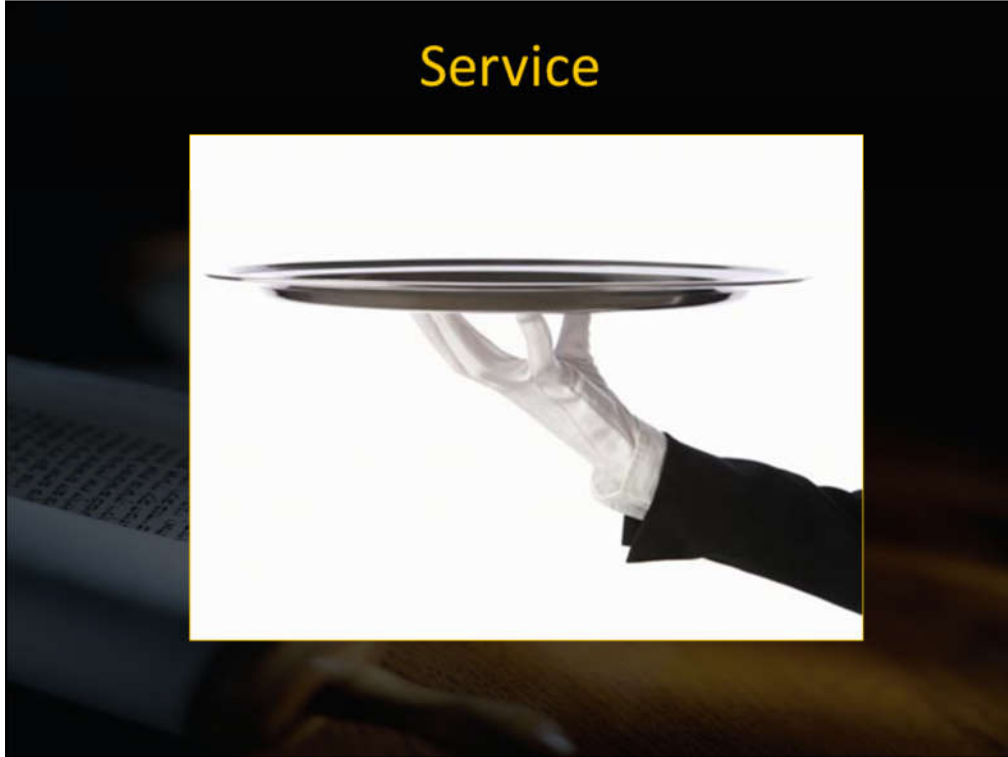
Verse 25 tell us that the shekel is twenty gerahs, (Isn't that helpful?!)

A shekel is roughly worth a months income for a person.

This has always been the official currency for Israel and was always used in the temple. During their foreign oppressions other coins were used outside the temple, as when Jesus asked whose likeness is on the denarius. (Matt 22)

In 1985 a coin called the new shekel (or shegel) replaced the old shekel at a rate of 1,000 old sheqalim = 1 new shegel. In todays current marked it one new shekel is worth about \$4 US.

## Service



Verses 1-9 of chapter 27 deals with an individual dedicating themselves to God.

In essence, what you do is you give yourself to the service of the tabernacle. What is the problem with that? (If they are not Levite they cannot work the temple)

So what they do is they "give (dedicate) themselves to the temple, but then buy themselves back with money.

This seems strange to us, but this is the way they did it. Can you think of a modern day comparison? (Sponsoring a tree or park bench. You had nothing to do with it being put there other than paying for it to be done. None-the-less there is still a bond, a connection made through your donation.)

Remember this is an optional thing. No one is required to do it.

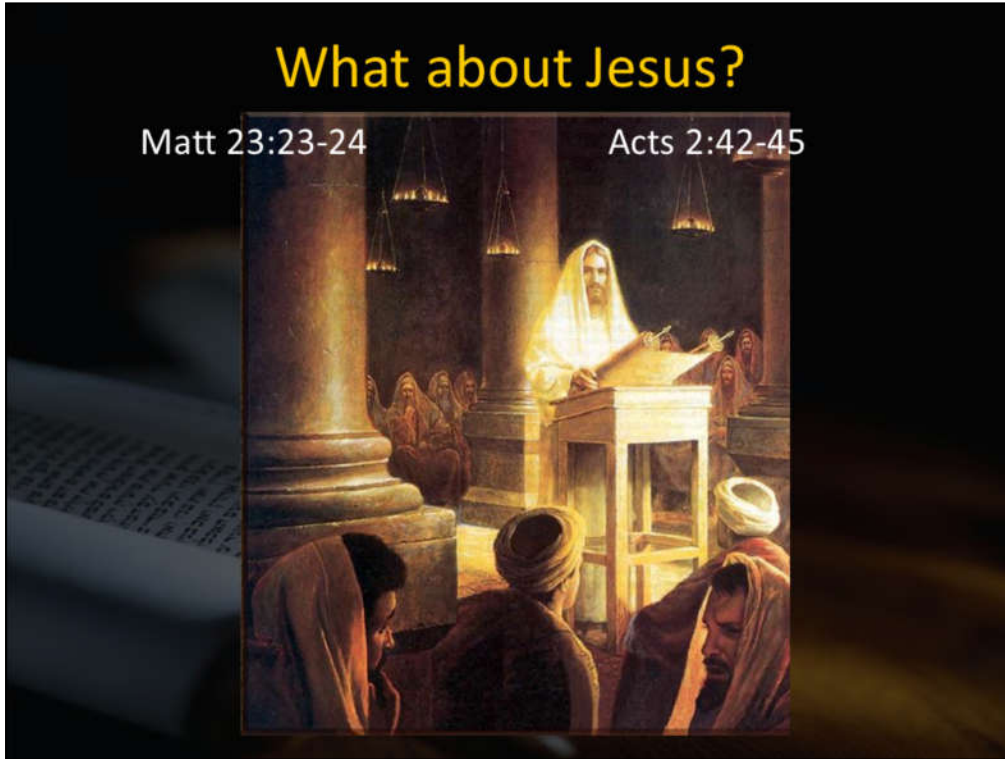
Age	Male	Female
1m-5	5	3
5-20	20	10
20-60	50	30
60+	15	10

These values have nothing to do with the worth of the individual, but had to do with how much work they were able to do. I.e. What was their “worth” to the work of the temple?

## What about Jesus?

Matt 23:23-24

Acts 2:42-45



What did Jesus say about votive offerings? (Nothing, really. He didn't command, nor condemn them. He did however rebuke the Pharisees for their zeal in tithing every little thing. Read Matthew 23:23-24 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. [24] You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!")

Jesus seems to assume that the church will carry on the beneficial practice of tithing.

What does Acts 2:42-45 say about the early church and the practice of Tithing? "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were *selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all*, as any had need." (It is one of the four main components of their worship.)

## Acts 4:32-37



The remainder of the chapter deals with dedicating animals or land to the tabernacle. We see this also happening in the New Testament church?

Why would they carry on this Old Testament tradition? (It's a good way to support the mission of the church.)

Do we still do this today? (Yes, albeit more informally. Sometimes people include the church in their will, other times land is given to the church, to build on or to sell. Many of our country churches are located where they are because the land was donated.)



How seriously does God take these votive offerings, or vows?

Read Acts 5:1-11

Is God over-reacting here?

God shows in His word just how seriously He takes vows. He even gives warnings about making vows:

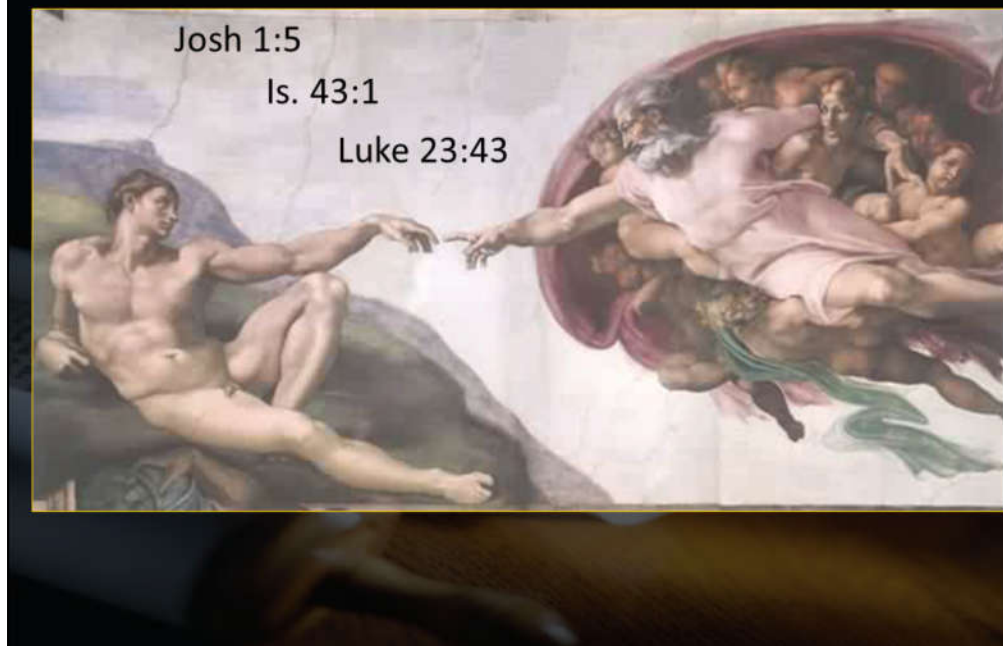
Read the following:

Proverbs 20:25 "It is a snare to say rashly, "It is holy," and to reflect only after making vows."

Deut. 23:21-23 "If you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. [22] But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. [23] You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God what you have promised with your mouth."



## What has *God Vowed*?



What has God vowed?

Joshua 1:5

No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

Isaiah 43:1 "But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

Luke 23:43

And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Is He serious when He makes these vows? He has never broken any of them.

## Redeemed



Verses 14-26 deal with the option of redeeming.

That is, a person can dedicate land or animals to the Lord, but then “redeem them” or buy them back. If he does this he give the tabernacle the value of the object plus 20%.

## Not redeemed?



1Sam 1:9-  
11

24-28

Can you think of an example in scripture where someone was dedicated to God, but not redeemed? (Samuel, by His mother Hanna)

1 Samuel 1:9-11

After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. [10] She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. [11] And she vowed a vow and said, "O 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 Samuel 1:24-28

And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young. [25] Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. [26] And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. [27] For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. [28] Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord."

And he worshiped the Lord there.

Do you think it was tough for Hanna to "give" her child to God?

Did she really have an alternative, based on her promise? (No)

## Redeemed



Titus 2:11-14

Titus 2:11-14 “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, [12] training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, [13] waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] who gave himself for us to **redeem us** from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.



Why do you think God ends the book of Leviticus with this chapter?

(Some biblical scholars think it never was part of Leviticus, that is was added later.

Having this chapter here does ensure that the book does not end on a negative note, as chapter 26 does end with serious warnings to Israel.

It can also be argued that these offerings balance out the offerings mentioned in the first chapters of Leviticus—like bookends.)

Regardless, we will not end our study here. We will have one more where we will wrap things up by comparing what went on in the temple to what you will see in heaven. If you ever wondered what it was like to be a priest in the temple of Israel, you will get your chance. We'll talk about it next week.