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Vows Concerning a House or Field

27: 14-25

Vows concerning a house or field DIG: Why do you think it was necessary to set a monetary value? What do you see as the purpose of these vows concerning houses and fields?

REFLECT: What is something you have personally given to the Lord? Have you ever wanted it back? At what cost? How is this similar to things dedicated here in this chapter?

This section speaks of three types of dedications: urban dwellings, acquired agricultural land, and leased land.

When a person dedicates his house. The Hebrew verb *yakdish* means *to dedicate*. It enjoys a wide range of connotations, from the devotion of sacrificial offerings as in **22:2** to the dedication of **the first-born** in response to **God's mitzvah (Numbers 3:13; Deuteronomy 15:19)**. In **Nehemiah 12:47**, we read of **dedications** in support of **the priesthood**. In **Second Kings 12:18-19** we read of **donations** that **kings dedicated** to **the Temple**, frequently from the spoils of war.

Vowing a house to ADONAI (27:14-15): If a man should declare in a **vow** that his **house** or personal belongings were **dedicated to ADONAI**, then **the house** and the belongings became the property of **the priesthood**. **When a person dedicates his house to be holy for ADONAI, the priest is to set a fair market value on it in relation to its good and bad points; the value set by the priest will** be legally binding. They needed to set this price lest the man should later decide that he wanted to **redeem** his **house**. **If the dedicator wishes to redeem his house, he must add one-fifth to the value you have set on it; and it will revert to him** before **the Jubilee Year** requires its return.



Vowing land to ADONAI (27:16-21): Although **priests** were individually forbidden to own **land (Numbers 18:20)**, the **priesthood** as a whole could acquire **it**. But this process was far less straightforward if the man dedicated a field or other geographically tillable plot of **land**. A **dedication** of **land** transactions was complicated by **the Yovel Year (to see link click [Em](#) - The Year of Jubilee)**, because in that year all agricultural properties reverted back to the ancestral owners. Therefore, **fields** were never permanently sold. Rather, **their** value was calculated according to the number of crops which could be harvested between the date of sale and the next **Jubilee**. If a man **vowed** a field, **dedicating** it to **the LORD** the value of the field was to be deduced by a formula which considered the amount of seed required to sow the field. **If a person dedicates to ADONAI part of a field belonging to his tribe's possession, you are to value it according to its production, with five bushels of barley (an omer of barley) being valued at fifty shekels of silver [one-and-a-quarter pounds]**. A field twice the size would be **valued at one-hundred shekels of silver**.

If he dedicated his field during the Yovel Year, this valuation will be legally binding after **the priest** had set the price. **But if he dedicates his field after the Year of Jubilee, then the priest is to calculate the price according to the years remaining till the next Yovel, with a corresponding reduction in the price. If the one dedicating the field wishes to redeem it, he must add one-fifth to the valuation of the priest and the field will be set aside to revert to him. If the seller does not wish to redeem the field, or if [the treasurer for the priesthood] has already sold the field to a third party, it can no longer be redeemed** because the original owner **dedicated** the property

to the Temple. **But when the field reverted to its original** owner at **the Jubilee**, it would pass into the possession of **the priesthood**. One can imagine situations in which the owners of small plots of **land** found themselves in permanent debt to a few rich landowners. Their **lands** would go to the wealthy owner because the poor farmers couldn't pay the cost of **the land** plus **twenty-percent**. When **the Jubilee** arrived, only a small part of the debt was paid, so the **land** returned to the use of the wealthy landowner for another fifty years. The formula suggested here allowed the original family to free themselves of another's clutches by placing their **land** and themselves in the service of **the priesthood**, who did not individually own **land** and who were held to a higher moral standard, and perhaps be more merciful.⁵⁴⁷

Vowing leased land to ADONAI (27:22-24): One who leased **land** from an owner could also dedicate the leased **land** to the Temple until **the Jubilee**. Then it would revert back to the original family. **If he dedicates a field to ADONAI which he has bought, a field which is not part of his tribe's possession, then the priest is to calculate its value according to the years remaining until the Yovel Year; and the man will on that same day pay this amount; since it is holy to ADONAI. In the Year of Jubilee the field will revert to the person from whom it was bought, that is, to the person to whose tribal possession it belongs.**

Mitzvah on setting assessment values (27:25): **All your valuations are to be according to the Sanctuary shekel** [the standard weight of **two-fifths of an ounce** of silver], **twenty gerahs to the shekel**. This provided the only means of regulating weights of metal and their value throughout the twelve tribes of **Isra'el**. For the believer, the dedication of **the land** for **God's** use exemplifies the generosity and sacrifice of those whose relationship to **YHVH** is the most important thing. The gifts of **the land** for the benefit of the early Messianic community remained a means by which the physical needs of many could be met (see the commentary on **Acts As - Ruach-Filled Community Life**).⁵⁴⁸

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Thank **You** for **Your** great love and generosity to give **Your** best, **Your only son**, to **redeem** mankind (**Second Corinthians 5:21**). It is a great joy to give our time, talents and money back to **You** as a gift of our love. In **Your** great wisdom, **You** do not look at the outward size of the gift, but you look at the heart of each person. **But ADONAI said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his stature, because I have already refused him. For He does not see a man as man sees, for man looks at the outward***

appearance, but Adonai looks into the heart” (First Samuel 16:7).

Thank **You** for **Your** wisdom to look at the motive why someone is giving **You** a gift. It is sad for **You** to see a heart full of pride. **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, and drive out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness!’ (Matthew 7:21-23).”**

Others have a heart of gold for **You**, you will test their heart and greatly reward them for their deeds done from their heart of deep love for **You**. **Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear. For the Day will show it, because it is to be revealed by fire; and the fire itself will test each one’s work - what sort it is (First Corinthians 3:12-13).** Thank **You** for the joy of giving to **You**, for **You** are so wonderful! In **Yeshua’s** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen