

## **Day 162 - SUNDAY: May 21st**

### Numbers 15

Numbers 15:1-41 NKJV

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you, and you make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or in your appointed feasts, to make a sweet aroma to the LORD, from the herd or the flock, then he who presents his offering to the LORD shall bring a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil; and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each lamb. Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil; and as a drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a sweet aroma to the LORD. And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, or as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or as a peace offering to the LORD, then shall be offered with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; and you shall bring as the drink offering half a hin of wine as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 'Thus it shall be done for each young bull, for each ram, or for each lamb or young goat. According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do with everyone according to their number. All who are native-born shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. And if a stranger dwells with you, or whoever is among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by

fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD, just as you do, so shall he do. One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you.' "

Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land to which I bring you, then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land, that you shall offer up a heave offering to the LORD. You shall offer up a cake of the first of your ground meal as a heave offering; as a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up. Of the first of your ground meal you shall give to the LORD a heave offering throughout your generations. 'If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which the LORD has spoken to Moses— all that the LORD has commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations— then it will be, if it is unintentionally committed, without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it was unintentional; they shall bring their offering, an offering made by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their unintended sin. It shall be forgiven the whole congregation of the children of Israel and the stranger who dwells among them, because all the people did it unintentionally. 'And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the LORD, to make atonement for

him; and it shall be forgiven him. You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, for him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them. 'But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.' " Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him. Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." So, as the LORD commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died. Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God."

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

We'll begin with the UCG reading plan for this chapter:

“This chapter starts off on a positive, encouraging note.

God says, "When you have come into the land you are to inhabit..." (verse 2). This might seem odd on the heels of the last chapter. But remember that despite what had happened, God had stated that the younger generation *would* eventually enter Canaan. And in giving various commands regarding the making of grain and drink offerings in the land, He was also reaffirming that promise. Verse 19 refers to a "heave" offering, a term that may sound strange to our ears. The word heave means "to lift up." It is thus the same as a wave offering. Here it is explained that the Israelites were to heave the first of each grain harvest. "Right at the beginning of the harvest, the harvester had to acknowledge that his produce was a gift from God. By holding up the very first produce from a harvest or the first cake made from the first grain of the season, the worshiper thanked God as the giver of all good gifts" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 17–21).

The chapter then moves on to the subject of sin. When someone got mixed up or forgot to perform a particular duty, such a sin of ignorance could be readily remedied. But deliberate sins, or sinning "presumptuously" (literally, "with a high hand")—in essence, defiantly shaking one's fist in God's face—was another matter entirely. It merited a severe

penalty. Following in the chapter is an example of just such a situation—that of a man deliberately working on the Sabbath. The people didn't know how to deal with such a willful breaking of the commandment, so they temporarily incarcerated him until they could get instructions. The law already stated that he should die (Exodus 31:15), but not the means of death. God told Moses the man should die outside the camp of Israel at the hands of the people by stoning. This way all Israel would participate in and realize the severity of the punishment and the absoluteness of God's commandments. Today, no one is executed for Sabbath breaking. But God has already shown us His decreed penalty and exactly how He feels about the need to obey His laws. Indeed, the penalty for all sin is ultimately death (Romans 6:23).

Man is not to seek after the things of his own heart, or his own eyes, or the pride of life, because those things are of the world (Numbers 15:39; 1 John 2:16). Rather, we must forsake the spiritual harlotry of our old, sinful nature and set ourselves apart to follow only the true God (Numbers 15:40–41). We do not need to use tassels today as memory devices to remember all of God's laws, as God told the Israelites. Instead, God's Spirit writes His laws on our hearts

and minds (Hebrews 8:10), helping us to remember all of His commands (John 14:26).” [END]

Verse 3 – You’ll remember from our study of Leviticus 7:11, that these offerings being described here, related to fulfilling a vow or out of free will, were the Peace Offerings. We will also again see instructions for grain and drink offerings that were to be offered with the Burnt offerings and Peace offerings. Since we covered these in great detail in Leviticus, as well as a sermon series on the 5 main offerings, we won’t go back through any of that here.

Verse 24 – This verse is translated in a variety of different ways. As I dug into the Hebrew, I don’t feel the NKJV does a very good job capturing the thought here. The NKJV says “without the knowledge of the congregation”, but the word “without” is not in the Hebrew. Here are a few other translations that may help us understand the passage:  
Literal Standard Version (LSV) – “then it has been, if from the eyes of the congregation it has been done through ignorance, that all the congregation has prepared one bullock...”

Easy to Read version (ERV) – “If you made this mistake where everyone could see it, the whole community must offer a young bull as a burnt offering...”

Contemporary English Version (CEV) – “If all of you disobey one of my laws without meaning to, you must offer a bull as a sacrifice...”

The idea here seems to indicate the entire congregation was involved in the sin or allowing the sin, not in willful sin against God, but through a lack of knowledge or awareness. The entire congregation needs atonement and forgiveness.

Verse 27 – Now we move from the congregational level sin (verses 22 through 26), to an individual who sins unintentionally.

Verse 30 – Unintentional sin is now contrasted with presumptuous sin. The word “presumptuously” in Hebrew is two words. One is a very common Hebrew word translated 1,359 times in the KJV as “hand”. The other is a Hebrew word most often translated to “lift up” or “exalt”. This is the only time in the bible these two words used together are translated “presumptuously”. To understand

what God is saying when these two words are used together, let's examine some other passages.

In 1 King 11:26 & 27, we find that Jeroboam rebelled against Solomon. In both verses, it says he "rebelled" (NKJV). The KJV says, "he lifted up his hand". The same two Hebrew words translated "presumptuously" in Numbers 15:30.

In Deuteronomy 32:27, God says He doesn't destroy rebellious Israel because he doesn't want the enemies/adversaries to misunderstand and think/say, "Our hand is high; And it is not the LORD who has done all this." Here, the "hand is high" is about claiming that on their own strength, Israel would be destroyed (instead of it being God who would have destroyed them).

In Micah 5:9, God through Micah prophesizes about the remnant of Jacob, "Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries, And all your enemies shall be cut off."

Notice here that their "hand shall be lifted up", these same two Hebrew words again, showing that they are against their adversaries.

In Exodus 14:8, and Numbers 33:3, these same two words are used about Israel coming out of Egypt with “boldness” (NKJV) (“High hand” KJV).

So what can we glean from all of this? We see these two Hebrew words indicate “rebellion”, “boldness”, and opposing strength.

We never want to sin against God in this way, to know what is right and what God commands, but to essentially say to God, “I will do it my way”, “I don’t care what you have commanded”.

Individuals who sinned in this way were to be “cut off” (which often meant death) and were to be guilty of their sin (in contrast with the atonement/forgiveness seen in the previous verses).

Verse 32 – We are immediately given the example of a man who by implication is defiantly working on the Sabbath. JFB commentary states: “This incident is evidently narrated as an instance of presumptuous sin. The mere gathering of sticks was not a sinful act and might be necessary for fuel to warm him or to make ready his food. But its being done on the Sabbath altered the entire character of the action. The law of the Sabbath being a plain and positive

commandment, this transgression of it was a known and wilful sin, and it was marked by several aggravations. For the deed was done with unblushing boldness in broad daylight, in open defiance of the divine authority” [END]

Verse 39 – The tassels were an outward symbol to help the children of Israel to remember and be mindful of God’s laws. God also tells them that their own hearts and eyes are inclined to “harlotry” (NKJV). The KJV uses “whoring”. Throughout the Bible, God uses this term to describe the nation of Israel, God’s own special people, whom He considered His bride/wife when they chased after other gods, nations or ways of life that were contrary to Him and to His law. As Christians, we are the bride of Christ and we too are capable of “cheating” on our Husband by going astray after the lusts of this world. God has given us something much better than tassels to help us remember to be obedient to Him, we have His Holy Spirit within us to bring to remembrance God’s laws and way (John 14:26).