

## Numbers 15

Verses 1 – 10

**Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land where you are going to live, which I am giving you, <sup>3</sup> and you make an offering by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfill a special vow, or as a voluntary offering or at your appointed times, to make a soothing aroma to the Lord from the herd or from the flock, <sup>4</sup> then the one who presents his offering shall present to the Lord a grain offering of a tenth of *an ephah* of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil, <sup>5</sup> and you shall prepare wine for the drink offering, a fourth of a hin, with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice, for each lamb. <sup>6</sup> Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths of *an ephah* of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil; <sup>7</sup> and for the drink offering you shall offer a third of a hin of wine as a soothing aroma to the Lord. <sup>8</sup> And when you prepare a bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a special vow, or for peace offerings to the Lord, <sup>9</sup> then you shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of *an ephah* of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; <sup>10</sup> and you shall offer as the drink offering half a hin of wine as an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the Lord.**

**When you enter the land where you are going to live, which I am giving you, <sup>3</sup> and you make an offering by fire to the Lord**

In the last chapter the children of Israel had refused to enter Canaan and were told they would spend the next 38 years in the wilderness.

Right away God looks to the younger generation, those who were 20 years old and younger, which will enter Canaan.

He gives them the rules for making an offering by fire to the Lord from the herd or from the flock when they get to Canaan.

The offerings included the following kinds:

1. A burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfill a special vow
2. A voluntary offering
3. An offering at their appointed times

The following were the flour, oil and drink offerings for a lamb, a ram and a bull.  
No fixed amounts were prescribed at the time the law was given in Exodus.

**The one who presents a lamb offering shall present to the Lord a grain offering**

**A 10th of an ephah of fine flour**

**Mixed with a 4th of a hin of oil**

**And wine for the drink offering, a 4th of a hin**

**For a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering**

**2-10ths of an ephah of fine flour**

**Mixed with a 3rd of a hin of oil**

**And for the drink offering you shall offer a 3rd of a hin of wine**

**For a bull you shall offer a grain offering of**

**3 10ths of an ephah of fine flour**

**Mixed with 1/2 a hin of oil**

**And a drink offering 1/2 a hin of wine**

The meal, oil and the drink-offerings increased according to the size and value of the animals offered.

The grain offering increased from one tenth, to two tenths, to three tenths of an ephah

The oil and drink offering increased from one fourth, to one third, to one half of a hin

Does it seem odd that God would give them this law 38 years before it would take effect? This younger generation will prove themselves to be faithful.

See Joshua 24:31

Verses 11 -16

**<sup>11</sup> ‘This is how it shall be done for each ox, or for each ram, or for each of the male lambs, or of the goats. <sup>12</sup> According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do for each one according to their number. <sup>13</sup> Everyone who is a native shall do these things in this way, in presenting an offering by fire as a soothing aroma to the Lord. <sup>14</sup> Now if a stranger resides among you, or one who *may be* among you throughout your generations, and he *wants to* make an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the Lord, just as you do so shall he do. <sup>15</sup> As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who resides *among you*, a permanent statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. <sup>16</sup> There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the stranger who resides with you.’”**

**Now if a stranger resides among you, or one who *may be* among you throughout your generations, and he *wants to* make an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the Lord, just as you do so shall he do.**

What is meant by the term stranger?

This was a foreigner who was in Israel for a short or long period of time.

The position of the Israelites as a distinct nation under divine protection attracted the neighboring peoples. Therefore the law provided for their incorporation into Israel.

The stranger could offer a sacrifice but it had to be done according to the law

There were other laws that governed the relationship between the Jews and foreigners.

The following is a brief summary:

1. Strangers were not full citizens

A stranger was not allowed to take part in the feast of Passover unless they became a convert to the Jewish faith.

See Ex 12:43 - 49

**<sup>48</sup> But if a stranger resides with you and celebrates the Passover to the Lord, all of his males are to be circumcised, and then he shall come near to celebrate it; and he shall be like a native of the land.**

2. However, strangers had rights under the law

The stranger was not be exploited or oppressed

See Exodus 23:9

<sup>9</sup> **You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you *also* were strangers in the land of Egypt.**

The patriarchs lived as strangers in Canaan

Jacob and his descendants were foreigners in Egypt

Moses lived as a stranger in Midian

3. Foreigners had obligations to follow some of the law

A. The stranger was not allowed to work on the Day of Atonement

See Lev 16:29

<sup>29</sup> **you shall humble yourselves and not do any work, whether the native, or the stranger who resides among you;**

B. Together with the Israelites strangers were required to come every seven years to listen to the reading of the Law.

See Deut. 31:9 -13

<sup>12</sup> **Assemble the people, the men, the women, the children, and the stranger who is in your town**

4. The Jews were required to love the stranger (foreigner)

God told his people to love the stranger in the same way as they love themselves

See Lev 19:33 - 34

<sup>34</sup> **The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself**

God reminded the Jews numerous times that their suffering in Egypt as slaves should make them more compassionate toward others

Verses 17 – 21

**<sup>17</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>18</sup> “Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land where I am bringing you, <sup>19</sup> then it shall be, that when you eat from the food of the land, you shall lift up an offering to the Lord.**

**<sup>20</sup> Of the first of your dough you shall lift up a loaf as an offering; as an offering of the threshing floor, so you shall lift it up. <sup>21</sup> From the first of your dough you shall give to the Lord an offering throughout your generations.**

**Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land where I am bringing you**

Again, this was spoken to the next (younger) generation.

All the adults and elders of this (the rebellious) generation will die in the wilderness

**From the first of your dough you shall give to the Lord an offering throughout your generations.**

This would begin when Israel had conquered Canaan and raised their first crop.

This was to be a permanent statute for all of Israel

Verses 22 – 26

**<sup>22</sup> ‘But when you unintentionally do wrong and fail to comply with all these commandments which the Lord has spoken to Moses, <sup>23</sup> *that is*, all that the Lord has commanded you through Moses from the day that the Lord gave commandments and onward, throughout your generations, <sup>24</sup> then it shall be, if it is done unintentionally, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one bull as a burnt offering, as a soothing aroma to the Lord, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one male goat as a sin offering. <sup>25</sup> Then the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and they will be forgiven; for it was an unintentional wrong, and they have brought their offering, an offering by fire to the Lord, and their sin offering before the Lord, for their unintentional wrong.**

**<sup>26</sup> So all the congregation of the sons of Israel will be forgiven, as well as the stranger who resides among them, for *guilt was attributed* to all the people through an unintentional wrong.**

**When you unintentionally do wrong all the congregation shall offer one bull as a burnt offering, as a soothing aroma to the Lord, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one male goat as a sin offering**

The instructions here deal with unintentional sins by the whole congregation.

Unintentional sin included breaking any of the Lord's commandments out of ignorance of the law.

See Leviticus 5:17

**<sup>17</sup> “Now if a person sins and does any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, though he was unaware, he is still guilty and shall bear his punishment.**

However there were other sins that were unintentional even when the law was known because they took place accidentally or in a moment of thoughtlessness.

See chart 1510

Types of sin		
<b>Unintentional</b>	Unaware they are breaking the law	Forgiveness through sacrifice
Lev. 5:2-3	Unwittingly touching something unclean	
Lev. 5:4	If someone thoughtlessly takes an oath	
<b>Intentional</b>	Aware they are doing wrong But do it anyway	Forgiveness through sacrifice
Lev. 5:1	Don't speak up when called to testify	
Lev 6:1-3	Deceiving, cheating or lying to a neighbor	
<b>Defiant</b>	Rejecting the covenant Numbers 15:30-31	No forgiveness
Numbers 15:32-36	Gathering wood on the Sabbath	
Numbers 25:1-9	Worshipping a foreign god	

In any or all of these situations the sin required forgiveness thru sacrifice.

**So all the congregation of the sons of Israel will be forgiven, as well as the stranger who resides among them, for *guilt was attributed* to all the people through an unintentional wrong.**

Here the foreigners are seen as part of the community so they are guilty of the sin and need forgiveness also.

Verses 27 – 31

**<sup>27</sup> Also, if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one-year-old female goat as a sin offering. <sup>28</sup> And the priest shall make atonement before the Lord for the person who goes astray by an unintentional sin, making atonement for him so that he may be forgiven. <sup>29</sup> You shall have one law for the native among the sons of Israel and for the stranger who resides among them, for one who does *anything wrong* unintentionally. <sup>30</sup> But the person who does *wrong* defiantly, whether he is a native or a stranger, that one is blaspheming the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. <sup>31</sup> Since he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt *will be* on him.**

**If one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one-year-old female goat as a sin offering**

This was covered in Lev. 4:27-28

**But the person who does *wrong* defiantly, whether he is a native or a stranger, that one is blaspheming the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from among his people**

See Exodus 14:8

The word boldly in this verse means "with a high hand"

When God brought Israel out of Egypt with a "high hand," this act was a challenge to the authority of the Egyptian king.

Israel was seen as defying the King of Egypt in a defiant way.

When someone challenges God's law with a high hand it constitutes a challenge of Divine authority, and is called blasphemy

Verses 32 - 36

**<sup>32</sup> Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. <sup>33</sup> And those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation; <sup>34</sup> and they placed him in custody, because it had not been decided what should be done to him. <sup>35</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “The man must be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.” <sup>36</sup> So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.**

**And those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to the entire congregation; <sup>34</sup> and they placed him in custody, because it had not been decided what should be done to him**

The death penalty had already been assigned for breaking the Sabbath in Exodus 31:15

But the manner of death had not been specified. They find out here that it would be by stoning.

Verses 37 - 41

**<sup>37</sup> The Lord also spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>38</sup> “Speak to the sons of Israel and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a violet thread. <sup>39</sup> It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, so that you will do them and not follow your own heart and your own eyes, which led you to prostitute yourselves, <sup>40</sup> so that you will remember and do all My commandments and be holy to your God. <sup>41</sup> I am the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the Lord your God.”**

**Speak to the sons of Israel and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a violet thread**

Jesus observed this command.

See Matt 9:20 (in some versions the tassels are only mentioned in a footnote)



Jewish men often wear a prayer shawl that has these tassels

See Pic 1515



Some Jewish men of more recent times wear them on the belt.

See Pic 1520



**It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord**

The Jews recognize 613 separate commandments.

Keeping them is another issue.

**So that you will remember and do all my commandments and be holy to your God**

Sometimes a visual reminder can be helpful but for others it can become an accessory that has little to no meaning.

Much like a cross necklace or earrings can be meaningful or just a nice accessory.

The key here was to “remember” and “do” His commandments.