

Exegetical Notes, Numbers 15:1-31
“After You Enter the Land”

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NUMBERS 15:1-35

Verses 1-12

The LORD said to Moses, ² “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘After you enter the land I am giving you as a home ³ and you present to the LORD food offerings from the herd or the flock, as an aroma pleasing to the LORD—whether burnt offerings or sacrifices, for special vows or freewill offerings or festival offerings— ⁴ then the person who brings an offering shall present to the LORD a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of olive oil. ⁵ With each lamb for the burnt offering or the sacrifice, prepare a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering. ⁶ “With a ram prepare a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with a third of a hin of olive oil, ⁷ and a third of a hin of wine as a drink offering. Offer it as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ⁸ “When you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice, for a special vow or a fellowship offering to the LORD, ⁹ bring with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with half a hin of olive oil, ¹⁰ and also bring half a hin of wine as a drink offering. This will be a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ¹¹ Each bull or ram, each lamb or young goat, is to be prepared in this manner. ¹² Do this for each one, for as many as you prepare.

- The text begins with the words, "After you enter the land." Even though the people of Israel have rebelled against the Lord (see Numbers 13-14) and they have been judged by God and will suffer the consequences of their sin, the promise of God is not forgotten. The people of Israel will enter the promised the land.
- Since the final sacrifice, Jesus Christ, has been offered and no other sacrifice is now required, these instructions about how to properly offer the required sacrifices are no longer of importance to us. However, these rules clearly show that God is concerned about the

details of how we relate to him. All things must be done in the proper way as determined by the word of God.

Verses 13-16

¹³ “Everyone who is native-born must do these things in this way when they present a food offering as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ¹⁴ For the generations to come, whenever a foreigner or anyone else living among you presents a food offering as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, they must do exactly as you do. ¹⁵ The community is to have the same rules for you and for the foreigner residing among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the foreigner shall be the same before the LORD: ¹⁶ The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the foreigner residing among you.”

- When it comes to how one relates to God, there are no distinctions to be made. Everyone must relate to the Father according to the rules he has set. Today, everyone must come to God through Jesus Christ.

Verses 17-21

¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸ “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land to which I am taking you ¹⁹ and you eat the food of the land, present a portion as an offering to the LORD. ²⁰ Present a loaf from the first of your ground meal and present it as an offering from the threshing floor. ²¹ Throughout the generations to come you are to give this offering to the LORD from the first of your ground meal.

- Israel is to be continually grateful to God for the gift of the land and the bounty of it.

Verses 22-29

²² “Now if you as a community unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands the Lord gave Moses— ²³ any of the Lord’s commands to you through him, from the day the Lord gave them and continuing through the generations to come— ²⁴ and if this is done unintentionally without the community being aware of it, then the whole community is to offer a young bull for a burnt offering as an aroma pleasing to the Lord, along with its prescribed grain offering and drink offering, and a male goat for a sin offering. ²⁵ The priest is to make atonement for the whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven, for it was not intentional and they

have presented to the Lord for their wrong a food offering and a sin offering.²⁶ The whole Israelite community and the foreigners residing among them will be forgiven, because all the people were involved in the unintentional wrong.²⁷ “But if just one person sins unintentionally, that person must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering.²⁸ The priest is to make atonement before the LORD for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made, that person will be forgiven.²⁹ One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether a native-born Israelite or a foreigner residing among you.

- Some sins are committed without the sinner knowing that he has done wrong. These are sins committed unintentionally. Though they were unintentional, they are still sinful, and as soon as the wrong done is recognized a sin offering must be made to show repentance for the wrong done, even though it was not done intentionally.
- These sins involve the whole community or a single individual.
- No distinction is made between Israelite and others in this matter.

Verses 30-31

“But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or foreigner, blasphemes the LORD and must be cut off from the people of Israel.³¹ Because they have despised the LORD’s word and broken his commands, they must surely be cut off; their guilt remains on them.”

- Defiant or intentional sinning is a different matter. This kind of behavior brings with it certain consequences which cannot be avoided. It is a serious matter to deliberately ignore God's word. A person who has deliberately disregarded God's instruction is to be "cut off." They cannot be considered part of the people of God.
- As we have all sinned deliberately, we should all be "cut off" from God. Except for the sacrifice Jesus offered on the cross, this would be our fate. But through Jesus' sacrifice we can be forgiven even from deliberate sin.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *After You Enter the Land*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)