

# Numbers 15 Commentary

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**THE BOOK OF NUMBERS**  
**"Wilderness Wandering"**

| WALKING<br>Numbers 1-12   |                                    |                                  | WANDERING<br>Numbers 13-25                            |   |  | WAITING<br>Numbers 26-36                               |  |   |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| Counting & Camping<br>Nu 1-4  | Cleansing & Congregation<br>Nu 5-8 | Carping & Complaining<br>Nu 9-12 | 12 Spies & Death in Desert<br>Nu 13-16                | <a href="#">Aaron</a> & Levites in Wilderness<br>Nu 17-18 | Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam<br>Nu 21-25 | Second Census 7 Laws of Israel<br>Nu 26-30             | Last Days of Moses as Leader<br>Nu 31-33 | Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements<br>Nu 34-36 |
| Law & Order   |                                    |                                  | Rebellion & Disorder                                  |   |  | New Laws for the New Order                             |  |   |
| Old Generation  |                                    |                                  | Tragic Transition                                     |   |  | New Generation   |  |   |
| Preparation for the Journey:<br>Moving Out                          |                                    |                                  | Participation in the Journey:<br>Moving On            |   |  | Prize at end of the Journey:<br>Moving In              |  |   |
| At Sinai<br><a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>                                |                                    |                                  | To <a href="#">Moab</a><br><a href="#">Mt Hor</a>     |   |  | <a href="#">At Moab</a><br><a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>     |  |   |
| En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a><br>(Mt Sinai)                    |                                    |                                  | En Route to Nowhere<br>( <a href="#">Wilderness</a> ) |   |  | En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a><br>(Plains of Moab) |  |   |
| A Few Weeks to 2 Months   |                                    |                                  | 38 years,<br>3 months, 10 days                        |   |  | A Few Months   |  |   |
| Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One"<br>(Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15) |                                    |                                  |   |   |  |  |  |   |
| Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>                                       |                                    |                                  |   |   |  |  |  |   |

### Numbers 15:1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NET Note** - This chapter collects a number of religious rules.

- Nu 15:1-16 - deal with rulings for sacrifices.
- Nu 15:17–36 sins of omission.
- Nu 15:37–41 rules concerning tassels are covered.

**NIVSB** - This chapter is divided into three units, each introduced by the phrase, "The Lord said to Moses" (Nu 15:1, 17, 37).

**ESVSB** has an interesting observation - The Law-giving at Kadesh. At each place where Israel encamped for a long time, laws were given: at Sinai (Exodus 20—Numbers 9), Kadesh (Numbers 15), and the plains of Moab (Numbers 28–36). The Kadesh laws are the briefest and are mainly clarifications of the Sinai laws.

**George Bush** - In the preceding chapter we learn that in consequence of the grievous provocation given to the Most High, he had determined to destroy them, and in token thereof had sentenced the offenders to perish in the wilderness, making, at the same time, a merciful reservation in behalf of their children. Accordingly, with a more special reference to that part of the congregation who were to inherit the land, he here repeats and explains some of the laws concerning offerings, which were to be observed after they had actually become settled in Canaan. This implied that notwithstanding past misdemeanors and proneness to rebel, the Lord was still disposed to be reconciled to them, and therefore gives them a virtual assurance that those who did not fall in the wilderness should be eventually planted in Canaan, and that he would there smell the sweet savor of their sacrifices, and make good to them all his promises.

**Richards** writes "The travel narrative is interrupted here by rules governing a variety of offerings. Why? These chapters on ritual serve as a commentary on the preceding chapters. God's people had refused to believe and had disobeyed. These laws reminded them of God's original call to holiness. Note too that the regulations were for "after you enter the land I am giving you." So these laws were also a promise that God would bring Israel home despite one generation's unbelief." (365 Day Devotional Commentary)

Later Moses recorded...

Deuteronomy 1:46 "So you remained in Kadesh many days, the days that you spent there."

Based on this passage in Deuteronomy, it is very probable, that the transactions recorded in this and the four following chapters took place during the time the Israelites abode in Kadesh

**Believer's Study Bible** - Moses has described very little of the 38 years of judgment in the wilderness (Nu 15:1-20:29). This chapter presents additional rules for the sacrificial worship of Yahweh that was to characterize Israel's life in the land (cf. Nu 15:17, 18). It is amazing after such rebellion in Nu 13; 14 that God's grace allowed Israel's relationship with Him to continue as if nothing had happened. Though the generation was cursed, the promises to the nation were still intact.

**FLB** - It is unknown why these laws were placed here, instead of incorporated into other legal collections in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers or Deuteronomy. Many of the laws are intended for a settled agricultural population living in the land of Canaan (Num 15:2), whereas Numbers is generally about the people living in the wilderness prior to entering Canaan.

**Guzik** makes an excellent point in light of the preceding chapter - Israel was at one of its lowest points in history. It had just rebelliously rejected God's offer to bring the nation into the Promised Land. God had consigned them to wander in the wilderness for 38 years, until the unbelieving generation had perished in the wilderness and a new generation of faith would take the Promised Land. Yet, immediately after this stinging rebellion and the chastisement from the LORD, Israel received precious tokens of God's mercy, care, and help to Israel.

**Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying** - When this occurred is not absolutely clear but presumably it was after their failure and judgment in Numbers 14. Where this was spoken is not stated, but we presume it is still at Kadesh-Barnea because of Moses' words in Dt 1:46 "So you remained in Kadesh many days, the days that you spent there."

**Numbers 15:2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land where you are to live, which I am giving you,**

- Nu 15:18 Lev 14:34 23:10 25:2 De 7:1,2 12:1,9
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **YAHWEH ASSURES ISRAEL WILL ENTER THE LAND**

The rules in Nu 15:1-16 discuss voluntary offerings that were described in Leviticus 1-3

**Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land where you are to live** ( Heb "the land of your habitations"), **which I am giving you** - Notice the word **when** (not if) indicating God would fulfill His promise to bring Israel into the Promised Land (God always fulfills His promises beloved! cf 2 Pe 1:3-4+ and 2 Cor 1:20KJV)

**THOUGHT** - God has not, and will not give up on Israel. Many a believer under the rod of God's correction has felt abandoned by God, as if He had given up on them, but God is always near to the believer under correction. (Guzik)

**MacDonald** - We don't know how much time elapsed between chapters 14 and 15, but the contrast is striking. "... they certainly shall not see the land" (Nu 14:23). "When you have come into the land" (Nu 15:2). God's purposes, though sometimes hindered by sin, are never thwarted. He promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, and if one generation of his descendants was too faithless to receive it, He would give it to the next. (BBC)

**THOUGHT** - There is a principle here which is very important. God has redeemed EVERY believer to have a specific divine purpose (see Eph 2:10+) and play a role in His grand plan of redemption. Here is the point -- if we neglect or refuse His purpose and plan for our life, His overall plan and purpose of redemption **will be fulfilled** by someone who is willing to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects. Beloved, we are only making one pass through this temporal life before we step into eternity. Would you not rather enter eternity confident that you had been faithful to fulfill God's plan for your life? That's clearly a rhetorical question. The answer is clear from Mt 25:21, 29, 34 (cf "abundantly supplied" in 2 Peter 1:10-11+)

In this passage we see Man's responsibility balanced with God's provision - **You enter** (man's responsibility = the responsibility of the second generation) and **I am giving** = God's gracious, sovereign provision. It was a gift and the life they lived there was also in a sense a gift, and as they laid hold of the gift of the land and the life, God would be glorified and pagan nations would see God's

good hand of blessing and potentially be drawn to Him. (E.g., Queen of Sheba note her response in verse 9 - 1 Kings 10:1-8, 9)

When they did (enter the promised blessing) they were expected to take time to thank God and worship Him.

**Do you pause to thank God for sharing His blessings with you? (ED: ANY time is the RIGHT time!)**

-- Warren Wiersbe

**NET Note** - The wilderness wandering officially having begun, these rules were then given for the people to be used when they finally entered the land. That they would be provided here would be of some encouragement to the nation after their great failure. God still spoke of a land that was to be their land, even though they had sinned greatly.

**NET NOTE on I am giving** - The Hebrew participle here has the futur instant use of the participle, expressing that something is going to take place. It is not imminent, but it is certain that God would give the land to Israel.

God is showing His faithfulness to the everlasting covenant He had cut with Abraham and renewed with Isaac and Jacob to give Israel the land of Canaan

On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite." (Ge 15:18-21, cf Ge 12:7; Ge 13:15, 18; Ge 24:7; 26:4; Nu 34:2; Dt 34:4)

**Numbers 15:3 then make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfill a special vow, or as a freewill offering or in your appointed times, to make a soothing aroma to the LORD, from the herd or from the flock.**

- **will make:** Ex 29:18,25,41 Lev 1:2,3,9,13,17 10:13
- **a burnt:** Lev 1:1-17+
- **a sacrifice:** Lev 7:16 22:18-23 De 12:11
- **a freewill:** Lev 22:21,23 De 12:6,17 16:10
- **your appointed times** Nu 28:16-19,27 29:1,2,8,13-40 Lev 23:8,12,36 De 16:1-17
- **a soothing aroma:** Ge 8:21 Ex 29:18 Mt 3:17 Eph 5:2 Php 4:18
- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Eph 5:1-2+, Therefore **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of God, as beloved children; and **walk** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God **as a fragrant aroma**.

### A PLEASING AROMA TO THE LORD

**Soothing** is a key word in Numbers 15 - Num 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14 and then in the next section in Nu 15:24. In short, the first section Numbers 15:1-21 is about pleasing the LORD.

**Wiersbe** explains that "The five basic Mosaic offerings were the burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, sin offering, and trespass offering (Lev. 1–7). The first three were "sweet savor" sacrifices, designed to please the Lord, but the sin offering and the trespass offering were not "sweet savor" because they dealt with guilt and sin, and there's nothing pleasing to God about sin. The burnt offering typified the worshiper's complete devotion to God, for the animal was totally consumed on the altar. The meal (grain) offering spoke of the worshiper's dedication of his labor to the Lord, and the peace (trespass) offering represented joyful fellowship and thanksgiving to God for His blessings. Of course, the offerings point to Jesus Christ (Heb 10:1–18). He gave Himself completely on the cross (burnt offering) and paid for the sins of the world (sin offering, trespass offering). He is our peace and made peace on the cross (peace offering), and He is the satisfying bread of life (meal offering)." (Be Counted)

**then make an offering by fire to the LORD** - The word "offering" is not expressed in the original, but is understood in context.

**ESVSB** has a helpful note on the significance of the sacrifices and offerings described in Numbers 15 - The imagery of sacrifice is drawn from that of a meal: the worshiper must act as the generous host and give to God all that he would give an important guest (Ge 18:1–8). It was not that God needed food, but these gifts showed the worshiper's devotion (Ps 50:12–15+). The giving of these laws at this point is very telling. (1) The entry into Canaan has just been delayed 40 years, and an attempt to enter has failed (Nu 14:20–45+), so the question could be asked: would Israel ever enter the Promised Land? These laws emphatically answer **YES**. It is not a question of if they will enter the land, but rather **WHEN** they will come in. In this way the laws reaffirm the land promise. (2) Further, the continuing instructions show that God has indeed retained Israel as his people (Nu 14:36–38 = "*The covenant made at Sinai—that the Lord would be their God and that Israel would be His people—was maintained. Yet the people still suffered for their sin: they did not enter Canaan, but died in the wilderness.*"). (3) But more than that, the laws are an assurance that their harvests in the land would be abundant, as they stipulate that large quantities must be offered with each animal. **The sacrifice of a lamb must be accompanied by about half a gallon (1.9 liters) of flour, a quart (0.95 liters) of oil, and a quart (0.95 liters) of wine** (Nu 15:4–5). **At least double quantities are needed for a bull** (Nu 15:8–10). (ED: Note that the #'s **1,2,3** are added by me).

**A burnt offering** - In this offering the animal was wholly consumed (see notes below). Applying this to our Christian life Paul's passage from Romans 12:1-2 provides a clear parallel "Therefore (BASED ON ROMANS 1-11) I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And **do not be conformed** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to this world, but **be transformed** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." How can we know the will of God? By making a daily "burnt offering" to Jehovah. Is that your practice (under grace) beloved?

**Burnt offering** (05930) ('**olah** from 'alah = to ascend and thus the picture of **going up** in smoke) refers to a whole burnt offering (one which **goes up** in smoke), which was voluntary, was understood as a sacrificial gift to God, resulting in a pleasing aroma acceptable to Jehovah (Lev 1:9). The presenter laid hands on the sacrifice which many feel signifies they saw the animal sacrifice as their substitute. The blood was sprinkled on the altar (Lev 1:6) When this offering was properly carried out (including a right heart attitude not just a "going through the motions," [which was not pleasing to God - Jer 6:20, Jer 7:21, 23, 24, see David - Ps 51:16-17+] not just an external "work," but an internal submission and obedience to Jehovah), they made atonement and were acceptable before Jehovah. The total burning indicated (or should have indicated) total consecration of the presenter's heart and soul and life to Jehovah.

As noted a key feature of '**olah** appears to be that among the Israelite sacrifices only '**olah** is **wholly burned**, rather than partially burned and eaten by the worshipers and/or the priest. Thus, the whole animal is brought up to the altar and the whole is offered as a gift (minha) in homage to Yahweh. Whole offering would be a better rendering in English to convey the theology. It is indeed burned, but the burning is essentially secondary to the giving of the whole creature to Yahweh.

**Burnt Offering** - '**olah** , "what ascends" in smoke to God, being wholly consumed to ashes. Part of every offering was burnt in the sacred fire (see Bush's distinction below), the symbol of God's presence; but this was wholly burnt, as a "whole burnt offering." (Fausset's Bible Dictionary)

**George Bush** on **burnt offering** in Leviticus 1:3 - The prescribed sacrificial offerings are distinguished in Hebrew by two several terms, **isheh**, and **olah**, of which the first being a derivative from **ish**, fire, denotes an offering by fire, and is applied both to offerings burnt wholly, and to those burnt in part. This word is generally rendered by 'offering by fire.' The word **olah**, on the other hand, literally signifying 'ascension' from **alah**, to ascend, because these offerings went up in flame and smoke into the air, is applied to sacrifices wholly burnt, which the Greeks denominated **holokautomata**, or **holokauston** from which the word 'holocaust' has been transferred into our language. If rendered in English phrase, it should properly be '**whole burnt-offering**,' whereas by its being generally rendered by our translators '**burnt-offering**,' the genuine distinction between the original words is bidden from the ordinary reader, as there is no difference between the expression '**burnt-offering**,' and '**offering by fire**.' But let the phrase 'whole burnt-offering' be employed, and the distinction is obvious. **Every holocaust or 'olah,' was an 'isheh,' or offering by fire, but every 'isheh,' or fire offering, was not a holocaust.** It may here be remarked, that the 'whole burnt-offering' was the first or principal sacrifice with which God was daily served by his people, Nu. 28:3, no part of it being eaten, but the whole consumed upon the altar. It pointed to the offering of the body of Christ, as is evident from Heb. 10:10. In Deut. 33:10, it is rendered 'whole burnt sacrifice.'

**Or a sacrifice** - **Bush** explains "Understand a sacrifice of peace-offering, as the Chald. explains it. See the law concerning these, Lev. 3. The original zebach, sacrifice, when occurring in absolute form is often put for peace-offerings, as Ex. 18:12, on which see

Note. Consult also Lev. 17:5, 8, 23:37, Deut. 12:27. Such is the import here, for the meat and drink-offerings about to be specified were not added to the sin or trespass-offerings, except in the case of the cleansing of the leper."

**Special vow...freewill offering...appointed times** (aka "annual festivals") - These are fellowship offerings. **Special** vow offerings celebrate the successful completion of a vow or fulfill a promise made if God answers one's prayer (Gen. 28:20; Num. 6:14, 21; 2 Sam. 15:7-8; Prov. 7:14; Jon. 2:9). **Freewill** offerings express gratitude to God (Deut. 16:10; Ps. 54:6). Festival offerings are required at various feasts (Exod. 23:15; Lev. 23:8, 19, 37).

**To fulfill a special vow** - NLT = "a sacrifice to fulfill a vow." Hebrew = "In separating a vow." This **special vow** is mentioned again in Nu 15:8 below. We have encountered the idea a special vow in the making the Nazarite vow in Nu 6:2+ "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When a man or woman **makes a special** ([pala](#)) **vow**, the vow of a Nazirite, to dedicate himself to the LORD.'"

The word "**special**" is the Hebrew word [pala](#) which means to be extraordinary or amazing, be surpassing or to cause a wonderful thing to happen. To do something wonderful, extraordinary or difficult. And so a relatively uncommon use of [pala](#) expresses the performance of a **special vow** beyond the ordinary commitment (Lev. 27:2+ = "difficult vow"; Nu. 6:2; Nu 15:3, 8).

**Bush** - "The true idea is that of paying, performing, fulfilling a vow, but as the particular animal of the herd or flock which was vowed for a sacrifice was to be singled out and set apart from common use, therefore the term to *separate* ("SPECIAL"), which originally applied to the object became gradually applied to the **vow** itself." So here the idea is of vowing something in a signal way, in a mode striking and extraordinary (aka the sense of the Hebrew word [pala](#)). By Philo this kind of vow is termed ευχη μεγάλη, the great vow, as being an act of special and distinguished devotion.

**Or as a freewill offering** - "That is, an offering not required by any law, but which a person might be prompted spontaneously to present as the expression of a grateful heart." (Bush)

**THOUGHT**- This type of offering makes me think of what believers should do according to Hebrews 13:15-16+ "Through Him then, let us continually offer ([ACTIVE VOICE](#) = VOLITIONAL CHOICE - WE FREELY MAKE THIS OFFERING!) up a **sacrifice of praise to God**, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And **do not neglect doing good and sharing**, for with such **sacrifices** God is pleased." You may want to sing this great old chorus "[We Sing the Sacrifice of Praise](#)" -- If you begin your day with a "freewill offering" of praise to Jehovah, I submit the rest of your day will be filled with His joy and peace, independent of the circumstances you encounter! Try it today beloved!

**Or in your appointed times** - NLT = "a special sacrifice at any of the annual festivals." (**see comments** on Lev 23:4 including calendar and tables on Jewish feasts) "Of these see a full account Lev. 23, with the accompanying Notes." (Bush) The idea is applied to the solemn feasts of the Israelites, which were **appointed** by God, and fixed to certain seasons of the year.

**Spurgeon** comments on their **appointed times** - The Jews had much **rest** provided for them. If they had had faith enough to obey God's commands, they might have been the most favored of people, but they were not a spiritual people, and the Lord often had to lament their disobedience as in the words recorded by Isaiah, "If only you had paid attention to my commands. Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea" (Is 48:18).

Although not a feast that was appointed, in a sense one of the "**appointed times**" was the weekly observance of the Sabbath day which sadly the Jews for the most part turned into a legalistic observance - Lev 23:3 'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, a holy convocation. You shall not do any work; it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.' **It is a sabbath to the LORD** - Yes the Sabbath is to be for the glory of the LORD but is also His gift for our good!

**THOUGHT** - Dearly beloved, are you remembering His Sabbath? Are you keeping His Sabbath holy? Are you experiencing His day of rest for your soul? You are under grace, not law, and the Sabbath is given as a gift and not for guilt.

"Rest and relaxation are not optional to healthy living. Rest was never meant to be a luxury but a necessity for growth, maturity, and health. You do not rest because your work is done; you rest because God commanded it and created you to have a need for it. The **Sabbath was made for you** because God knows that your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being demands periodic breaks. The Sabbath is not just a psychological convenience; it is a spiritual and biological necessity. "Remember the Sabbath" is more than just a lifestyle suggestion; it is a commandment (**ED**: see [our need to depend on the](#)



[Holy Spirit to obey](#)). To forget it is dangerous—personally, morally, and spiritually. Your body will last longer and function better if you take time to rest (ED: SPECIFICALLY TO REST IN THE LORD! Psalm 37:7+). **And in the long run you'll accomplish far more by resting.** Bottom Line The old adage is true: **If you don't "come apart," you will come apart."** (Stand Firm Day by Day)

**ILLUSTRATION** - Our great-grandparents called it the Holy Sabbath; our grandparents called it the Sabbath; our parents called it Sunday; we call it the weekend. We have forgotten to observe the Sabbath, and we are paying the price. Sleep scientists are warning that people are not getting enough rest, and our health and safety are suffering as a result. William Dement, founder and director of the Stanford University Sleep Research Center, estimates that people sleep about one-and-a-half hours less per night than the average from a century ago. The consequences? One report found that driver fatigue was involved in over half of all American vehicle accidents. Larger accidents, such as the Exxon Valdez disaster, have also been linked to sleep deprivation. In laboratory experiments, prolonged stress without rest apparently caused the immune systems of the rats to fail. Also, recent theories propose that the REM stage of sleep is necessary to learning and memory, meaning that less sleep affects our cognitive functions as well as our physical well-being. The need for rest should come as no surprise to Christians, for we know that our Creator made us that way! That's why in the Law God made every seventh day a Sabbath, and every seventh year a Sabbath year.

**Mark 2:27+ Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath -**

This statement is found only in Mark's version. What is Jesus saying? He is saying that God made the Sabbath to give men a time to rest. By the addition of all their minute rules and regulations ([see here](#)), the Jewish "sages" had in effect made the Sabbath the "master" over men. The Jews instead of enjoying the Sabbath as a day of rest, now had to work even harder than ever to make sure they did not break any of the many Sabbath regulations. They had to be cautious about what they did, where they went, how far they went, and on and on. It must have been a heavy mental burden on all who tried to comply with the non-Biblical regulations. In short Jesus is saying the Sabbath was made to be a **blessing** for man, but the plethora of non-Biblical rules had turned the day into an **onerous burden**. It is interesting that in our modern culture many often dread Monday, but given the burden of the Sabbath, one cannot help but believe most of Jews would say "T.G.I.M" (Thank God it's Monday!)

**Lenski** has an excellent comment - The principle back of all that God ordered in his law regarding the Sabbath was that it might be a blessing for man. This day afforded man physical rest and, still more important, time to attend to his spiritual needs. But the Jews had inverted this. They treated man as if he had been created for the purpose of keeping the Sabbath laws. The Sabbath had to be kept, no matter how man fared, whereas God intended that man should be blessed—by the Sabbath, of course, but, if necessary, even at the expense of the Sabbath. (ISMG)

**Kistemaker** adds that "The sabbath was instituted to be a blessing for man: to keep him healthy, to make him happy, and to render him holy. Man was not created to be the sabbath's slave." (BNTC)

The Jews themselves recognized the burden of the Sabbath writing "the rules about the Sabbath...are as mountains hanging by a hair, for [teaching of] Scripture [thereon] is scanty and the rules many" (m. Hag. 1:8)."

**FLB** - Sacrifice was an act of worship, not merely a ritual done for atonement. Offerings might be brought for a variety of reasons including to give thanks to Yahweh, to fulfill a vow, to commemorate a religious festival, or as a freewill offering (see Lev 7:12–18; 22:18–33). The sacrifices brought for these varied occasions were generally either burnt offerings (olah) or peace offerings (zevach shelamim; see Num 15:8; compare Lev 3:1–17).

**to make a soothing aroma to the LORD, from the herd or from the flock - Soothing**([nihoah](#)) is translated in Lxx with [osme](#) meaning fragrance, odor, smell (see use in Eph 5:2+, Php 4:18+, 2 Cor 2:14 = believers). The concept is that the smoke from

the sacrifice ascends "heavenward" to Yahweh and it satisfies and please Him.

**Soothing** (sweet) (05207)(**nihoah** from **nuach** = to rest) means a quieting, soothing, tranquilizing. In 20 of the 43 uses of nichoach, this noun (usually with the sense of an adjective) is used with the phrase "burnt offering." Almost all uses describe the odor of a sacrifice as pleasing or acceptable to God. Sadly, we see this word used to describe Israel's offering to idols (Ezek 6:13<sup>+</sup>, Ezek 15:19, Ezek 20:28), which is in stark contrast with Jehovah's assessment of His rebellious people in Ezek 20:14 where they are described as a soothing aroma! The first use of **nihoah** describes the sacrifice of **Noah** (Ge 8:21)

**Soothing aroma** - This phrase is found 42x - Gen. 8:21; Exod. 29:18; Exod. 29:25; Exod. 29:41; Lev. 1:9; Lev. 1:13; Lev. 1:17; Lev. 2:2; Lev. 2:9; Lev. 2:12; Lev. 3:5; Lev. 3:16; Lev. 4:31; Lev. 6:15; Lev. 6:21; Lev. 8:21; Lev. 8:28; Lev. 17:6; Lev. 23:13; Lev. 23:18; Num. 15:3; Num. 15:7; Num. 15:10; Num. 15:13; Num. 15:14; Num. 15:24; Num. 18:17; Num. 28:2; Num. 28:6; Num. 28:8; Num. 28:13; Num. 28:24; Num. 28:27; Num. 29:2; Num. 29:6; Num. 29:8; Num. 29:13; Num. 29:36; Ezek. 6:13; Ezek. 16:19; Ezek. 20:28; Ezek. 20:41

**Numbers 15:4 'The one who presents his offering shall present to the LORD a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil,**

- **Grain** (KJV): Ex 29:40 Lev 2:1 6:14 7:9,10 Lev 23:10-14 Isa 66:20 Mal 1:11 Ro 15:16 Heb 13:16
- **the fourth:** Nu 28:5-8 Ex 29:40 Lev 2:15 14:10 23:13 Jud 9:9 Eze 46:14
- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Wiersbe** emphasizes that "The sacrifices discussed in these verses were spontaneous expressions of love and gratitude to God." (Ibid)

**The one who presents his offering shall present to the LORD** - The three words at the beginning of this verse are all etymologically related: "the one who offers his offering shall offer." (NET)

**Bush on the one** - That is, of any of the above-mentioned species. The meat-offerings (i.e. meal-offerings) were of two kinds, some being offered alone, respecting which the law is given Lev. 2:1, 2, etc., and others being added as a constant accompaniment to the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, in respect to which the present directions are given. The intent of this law is, to prescribe what proportion the meat-offering and the drink-offering should bear to the several sacrifices to which they were annexed. The general rule that regulated the whole subject was this: That all sacrifices of beasts burnt upon the altar, whether by way of vow, or voluntary gift, being of the nature of a spiritual feast, were each of them to have a meat-offering as an appendage, consisting of flour, oil, and wine, in the following proportions, viz. to every lamb or kid a tenth-deal or omer of flour (about five pints), a quart of oil, and a quart of wine; to every ram, double the quantity of flour, the third of a gallon of wine, and as much of oil; to a bullock the largest sacrifice, three omers of flour, half a gallon of oil, and as much of wine; and so on, the same quantities being prescribed for each, whatever the number of the beasts offered at the altar. But the particulars will be more minutely considered as we proceed.

**a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil** - An ephah was about half a bushel. **Fine flour** would be the best available. Note that grain, flour, oil would not be products they would grow in the wilderness, but would grow once they entered the Promised Land.

**ESVSB** explains why we have all these details about **grain** (flour here), **oil** and **wine** (see passages below) - Leviticus 1-7 explains how each type of sacrifice is to be conducted, but does not explain that burnt offerings (Leviticus 1) and peace offerings (Leviticus 3) must be accompanied by **appropriate quantities of meal, oil, and wine**. This may be because such materials were not available in the wilderness (**ED**: Leviticus was given before they set out from Sinai)

**Bush on hin of oil** - A hin was a liquid measure of the sanctuary containing one gallon and two pints; a fourth part of this of course was one quart and half a pint.

**NET NOTE** - Obviously, as the wording of the text affirms, this kind of offering would be made **after they were in the land** and able to produce the **grain and oil** for the sacrifices. **The instructions anticipated their ability to do this, and this would give hope to them.** The amounts are difficult to determine, but it may be that they were to bring 4.5 liters of flour and 1.8 liters each of oil and wine.

**Believers Study Bible** - Once Israel began farming the land, grain and drink offerings were always to accompany burnt and peace



offerings. A portion of the grain offering was burnt, and the rest was given to the priest. The drink offering may have been poured out at the foot of the altar.

#### Related Resource:

- [What are the modern equivalents of biblical weights and measures? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Numbers 15:5 and you shall prepare wine for the drink offering, one-fourth of a hin, with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice, for each lamb.**

- Nu 28:7,14 Jud 9:13 Ps 116:13 Song 1:4 Zec 9:17 Mt 26:28,29 Php 2:17 2Ti 4:6
- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**and you shall prepare wine for the drink offering, one-fourth of a hin, with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice, for each lamb** - "Heb. lannesek, for an effusion, for a poured-out offering or libation, because it was poured out on the altar, but not on the fire. The priest had none of it." (Bush)

**FLB** - This meal offering and its wine libation are relevant for a future time when the people live in the land (Num 15:2), as they are products of a settled agricultural society. The practices are attested to early in Israel's occupation of the land (1 Sam 1:24; 10:3).

**Numbers 15:6 '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;**

NET Numbers 15:6 Or for a ram, you must prepare as a grain offering two-tenths of an ephah of finely ground flour mixed with one-third of a hin of olive oil,

NLT Numbers 15:6 "If the sacrifice is a ram, give a grain offering of four quarts of choice flour mixed with a third of a gallon of olive oil,

ESV Numbers 15:6 Or for a ram, you shall offer for a grain offering two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil.

NIV Numbers 15:6 " 'With a ram prepare a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil,

KJV Numbers 15:6 Or for

- Nu 15:4 28:12-14
- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**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-**

NLT helps get a sense of the meaning of the Hebrew measures = "If the sacrifice is a ram, give a grain offering of **four quarts of choice flour** mixed with **a third of a gallon of olive oil**. As discussed earlier (see point #3 at [v3](#)), these are relatively large quantities (of fine flour, oil) and would by implication indicate that they would have abundance of these products when they entered the promised land.

**Numbers 15:7 and for the drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a soothing aroma to the LORD.**

NET Numbers 15:7 and for a drink offering you must offer one-third of a hin of wine as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

NLT Numbers 15:7 and give a third of a gallon of wine as a liquid offering. This will be a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

ESV Numbers 15:7 And for the drink offering you shall offer a third of a hin of wine, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

NIV Numbers 15:7 and a third of a hin of wine as a drink offering. Offer it as an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

KJV Numbers 15:7 And for a drink offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And for the drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine-** NLT = "and give a third of a gallon of wine as a liquid offering. This will be a pleasing aroma to the LORD." A third of a gallon is a lot of **wine** - again indicating they would have an abundant harvest of grapes in the Promised Land.

**FLB on drink offering** - Drink offerings are not covered in the detailed account of the various offerings in Lev 1–7, but they are often mentioned elsewhere in association with various offerings (e.g., Nu 6:15; 28:7; Ex 29:40–41; Lev 23:18).

Compare Leviticus 1:9b (see notes) "And the priest shall offer up in smoke all of it on the altar for a burnt offering, an offering by fire of a **soothing aroma** to the LORD. "

**As a soothing aroma to the LORD - NLT** = "This sacrifice will be very pleasing to the LORD." As discussed above (see point #3 at [v3](#) and [v7](#) above) the pleasant aspect of the aroma from the burning of these sacrifices and offerings was but a faint shadow of the fulfillment when the Lamb of God Himself was offered as a sin sacrifice to the Father which Paul says was "**an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.**" (Eph 5:2+)

**Numbers 15:8 'When you prepare a bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a special vow, or for peace offerings to the LORD,**

- **peace:** Lev 3:1 Lev 7:11-18
- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Leviticus 3:1+ 'Now if his offering is a sacrifice of **peace offerings**, if he is going to offer out of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without defect before the LORD.

## OFFERINGS FOR SPECIAL VOWS

**When you prepare a bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a special vow, or for peace offerings to the LORD-** NLT - "When you present a young bull as a burnt offering or as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow or as a peace offering to the LORD."

**BSB** - According to Lev. 7:11-36, there were three types of peace offerings: (1) the thanksgiving offering, (2) the vow or votive offering, and (3) the freewill offering (cf. Lev. 3:1)....Peace offerings could be of the herd (cattle, Lev 3:1-5), or of the flock (sheep, Lev 3:6-11, or goats, Lev 3:12-17). These peace offerings were categorized according to three types: (1) thank offering (Lev 7:12-15; 22:29, 30), (2) votive offering (Lev 7:16-18; 22:18-25), and (3) freewill offering (Lev 7:16-18; 22:18-25). The distinctive feature of the peace offering is that it culminated in a sacrificial meal (Lev 7:15, 16; 22:29, 30); consequently, it was restricted to bulls, sheep, or goats, as turtledoves or pigeons would have been insufficient. The peace offering dramatized peace and reconciliation between the offeror and God (cf. Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20). See chart, "The Levitical Offerings,"

**Peace offerings** ([08002](#))([selem/shelem](#)) is a noun which means fellowship offerings, thanksgiving offerings and all uses (except [Amos 5:22](#)) are in the plural form (**selamim**). The root Hebrew word conveys the idea of completion and fulfillment, of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship. The peace offerings were voluntary offerings (like burnt and grain offerings) given to God with thanks and praise.

**Selem** is translated in the Lxx in most of its uses with the adjective [soterios/soterion](#) which describes the act of delivering or saving from great danger or peril and of healing, making whole, protecting and preserving. The

significance of this particular Greek word in the context of the OT peace offerings is uncertain and it certainly does not imply that the human participants are "saved" in the classic NT sense as when by grace they believe in Jesus. Liddell-Scott give one instance in which **soterios** is used by Xenophon in the context of a thank offering for deliverance.

**Carr** - Current understanding of the meaning of **šelem** follows three main lines of thought. First, **šelem** symbolizes the gift of [shalom](#), i.e. the blessing of wholeness, prosperity, and the status of being at peace with God. This involves more than forgiveness of sin, in that fullness of life, prosperity, and peace with men is the expected result of [shalom](#) status. A second alternative is identified by de Vaux as "communion sacrifice," i.e. one in which there is a sharing of the sacrificial animal and the resultant fellowship around a meal. The **šēlāmîm**, then, were social occasions "before" (Hebrew = panim = face) the Lord never "with" the Lord (Dt 12:7, 18; 14:23, 26; 15:20). There is no sense of attaining mystical union with God through these sacrifices. Rather there is a sense of joyful sharing because of God's presence. Note too, that a quarter of the animal is shared with the priest (Lev 7:32). Thirdly, the fact that the **šelem** usually comes last in the lists of the offerings (though not in the description of Lev 1-5), has prompted some scholars to argue that this is a "concluding sacrifice." This derives šelem from the rare Piel meaning "to complete." If this sense is correct, the NT references to Christ our Peace (e.g. Eph 2:14) become more meaningful, as he is the final sacrifice for us (cf. Heb 9:27; Heb 10:12)." (TWOT)

**Numbers 15:9 then you shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-half a hin of oil;**

- with a: Nu 28:12,14
- Grain Nu 29:6 Lev 6:14 Lev 7:37 14:10 1Ch 21:23 Ne 10:33 Eze 42:13 Eze 46:5,7,11,15 Joe 1:9 2:14
- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### ADDITION OF OIL TO THE GRAIN OFFERING

**Then you shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-half a hin of oil-**  
NLT = " you must also give a grain offering of six quarts of choice flour mixed with two quarts of olive oil." These offerings of grain and oil were not discussed in the original peace offering in Leviticus.

**Guzik** - "The offering of the ram and bull each needed progressively greater amounts of grain and wine to accompany them, because they were progressively bigger sacrifices."

**Numbers 15:10 and you shall offer as the drink offering one-half a hin of wine as an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD.**

- Nu 15:5 6:15
- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DRINK OFFERING

**and you shall offer as the drink offering one-half a hin of wine as an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD-**  
NLT = "and give two quarts of wine as a liquid offering. This will be a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD."

**Soothing** is a key word in Numbers 15 - Num 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 24.

**Numbers 15:11 'Thus it shall be done for each ox, or for each ram, or for each of the male lambs, or of the goats.**

- Nu 15:28
- See [Table of Levitical Offerings](#) below
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Thus it shall be done for each ox, or for each ram, or for each of the male lambs, or of the goats-** "Each sacrifice of a bull, ram, lamb, or young goat should be prepared in this way." (Nu 15:11NLT)

**Numbers 15:12 'According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do for everyone according to their number.**

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do for everyone according to their number-** NLT (original version) = "Each of you must do this with each offering you present."

**Bush on according to the number.** - That is, that proportionate to the number of bullocks, rams, sheep, or goats, should be the quantity of the meat-offering and drink-offering; for bread and wine ought to bear a due proportion to the meat set on the table.

**Numbers 15:13 'All who are native shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD.**

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **RULES APPLY TO ALL NATIVE ISRAELITES**

**All who are native shall do these things in this manner-** Native means "native Israelites," those who were born Israelites. The wording echoes the conclusion to the laws about observing the Passover in Ex 12:44–49+.

**Bush on All who are native** - Heb. "Every native-born (Israelite)." This is clearly prospective, as the native-born of the country refers to those who should be born in Canaan and not in the wilderness.

**In presenting an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD-** NLT = "If you native Israelites want to present an offering by fire that is pleasing to the LORD, you must follow all these instructions."

**Soothing** is a key word in Numbers 15 - Num 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 24.

**Numbers 15:14 'If an alien sojourns with you, or one who may be among you throughout your generations, and he wishes to make an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD, just as you do so he shall do.**

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **RULES FOR STRANGERS OR FOREIGNERS**

**If an alien sojourns with you, or one who may be among you throughout your generations, and he wishes to make an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD, just as you do so he shall do.** - NLT = "And if any foreigners living among you want to present an offering by fire, pleasing to the LORD, they must follow the same procedures." Strangers or foreigners could sacrifice only if and when they complied with all the points of the law, which made them Jewish proselytes (Nu 9:14).

**Bush on alien** - Greek "If there be a **proselyte** (see word study of [proselutos](#)) among you in your land;" that is, the Gentile converted in whole or in part to the religion of Israel. **or one who may be among you** That is, a foreigner that shall be permanently settled among you in contradistinction to the temporary sojourner, who may still be a proselyte. **throughout your generations** That is, throughout your generations; in all succeeding ages. So also in v. 15.

**Just as you do** - "In Exodus 12, a sojourner could join Israel in observing Passover if he and his household were circumcised,

symbolizing their entrance into the Israelite community. The parallel language between Exod 12:49 and Num 15:16 is likely intended to evoke a connection between these passages with the implication that circumcision is also necessary for anyone who would offer sacrifice (see Gen 17:9–14)." (FLB)

**Wiersbe** points out that "nothing is said here about their (ALIENS) having to be circumcised (Ex. 12:48). Even the Jewish boys weren't given the mark of the covenant during Israel's years of wandering because the nation had rebelled against God and broken His covenant. The males in the new generation were marked with the covenant sign when they entered the Promised Land (Josh. 5:1–8). (Ibid)

**BSB** - Strangers or foreigners were excluded from the rite of the Passover unless they conformed to the laws of the Hebrews, including circumcision (Nu 15:14-16; Ex. 12:48, 49; Josh. 5:2-10).

#### Related Resource:

- [Why do Christians believe in proselytization? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Numbers 15:15** 'As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD.

- **One:** Nu 15:29 9:14 Ex 12:49 Lev 24:22 Ga 3:28 Eph 2:11-22 Col 3:11
- **perpetual statute** e: Nu 10:8 18:8 Ex 12:14,24,43 1Sa 30:25
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SAME STATUTES FOR NATIVES AND ALIENS

**As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you-** "if a sojourner sojourns." NLT = "Native Israelites and foreigners are the same before the LORD and are subject to the same laws. This is a permanent law for you."

**Bush** - The wording of the original is peculiar, and may be rendered, "O congregation, one ordinance, or statute, shall be for you, etc." Or, as the main word stands as a nominative absolute, it may be rendered, "As to the congregation, one ordinance shall be for you," etc. For a fuller account of the laws pertaining to proselytes among the chosen people, see the various treatises of Jewish antiquities. The drift of this law would naturally tend to the encouragement of proselytes of other nations to come in and embrace the religion of the true God. It was hereby ordained that all such persons should have the same religious privileges, so far as the ceremonies, sacrifices, and services were concerned, as were accorded to the native-born Israelites; and this privilege they were to enjoy from age to age as long as that dispensation lasted.

**FLB** does note "Other laws make distinctions between native Israelites and foreigners living among them. For example, the law about observing Sukkoth only mentions native Israelites having to live in booths during the festival (Lev 23:42).

**Alien** (sojourner) (01616)(ger from gur = to live among people not one's blood relatives) is a masculine noun meaning sojourner, alien, stranger. It describes someone who did not enjoy rights usually possessed by residents. It describes a person who does not belong to the nation of Israel by ancestry.

**a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD.**

**Numbers 15:16** 'There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.'

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you** - NLT - "The same instructions and regulations will apply both to you and to the foreigners living among you."

**Numbers 15:17** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying

**Numbers 15:18 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land where I bring you,**

- Nu 15:2 De 26:1-15
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## INSTRUCTIONS UPON ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

**Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land where I bring you-** NLT = ""Give the people of Israel the following instructions: When you arrive in the land where I am taking you,"

**Bush** - When ye come into the land, etc. Heb. "In your coming, or entering in." A new ordinance is here imposed by divine authority, viz. that the people, when they had entered the land, should offer to the Lord a cake made of the first of their dough—a law of which no mention is made by Moses in any other place than this. It is in fact a direction respecting a new perquisite to the priests. It had before been commanded (Lev. 23:17) that at every Pentecost two loaves should be brought to them by each householder, from the first-fruits of the wheat harvest. That provision is now so extended as to give them a similar claim to a loaf made from the first gatherings of all kinds of grain, its size, as far as we know, being left to the giver's discretion. This law, like the last, and like the similar one of older date, was first to go into effect after the establishment in Canaan. It is evidently a law of the same nature with that respecting the first harvest-fruits, namely, that as every corn-grower in the land of Canaan was required to present some part of his first ripe corn every year to God for the use of the priests, so it is now ordained, as a kind of supplement to the same law, that out of the first bread that any man made of his new corn, a part of the dough should be taken and presented to the priest in waiting, ready baked, and before he had baked any for his own use. This the priest was to present as an offering to the Lord by waving it up towards heaven, after the manner of a heave or wave-offering, and then was to have it as a portion for himself.

**Numbers 15:19 then it shall be, that when you eat of the food of the land, you shall lift up an offering to the LORD.**

- Jos 5:11,12
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HEAVE OFFERING TO THE LORD

**then it shall be, that when you eat of the food of the land-** NLT = "you will eat from the crops that grow there.."

**Bush** - "That is, of the bread-corn, the produce of the land, as in Is. 28:28, "Bread is bruised," i. e. bread-corn, as rendered in the common version. So also Ps. 104:14, "That he may bring forth food out of the earth." Heb. "Bread.""

**you shall lift up an offering to the LORD -** NLT = "But you must set some aside as a gift to the LORD."

**Bush** "Heb. "Ye shall heave an heave (offering) unto the Lord." Greek and Chaldee. "Shall separate;" it being separated by the owner, and offered to the Lord, and thus made to form one of the "heave-offerings" which the Lord gave to his priests. It was therefore holy. The Jewish writers allude thus to this enactment: "Whosoever separated a cake he first blessed God who sanctified them by his commandments, and commanded them to separate a cake."—Maimonides. "An heathen that separated a cake, though in the land of Israel, it was no cake."—Idem."

**NET NOTE on lift up an offering** - This is the תְּרוּמָה (térumah), the "raised offering" or "heave offering" (cf. KJV, ASV). It may simply be called a "contribution" (so NAB). The verb of the sentence is from the same root: "you shall lift up/raise up." It was to be an offering separated from the rest and raised up to the LORD in the sight of all. It was designed to remind the Israelites that the produce and the land belonged to God.

**Heave Offering** - The "heave offering" (terumah, Heb.), perhaps "lifted up" or just presented to the Lord, could consist of the thigh of the right hind leg, unleavened cakes (Lev 7:13, 14; Num. 15:19-21), the tithe (Num. 18:24), sanctuary building materials (Ex. 25:2,



3), land (translated "district" in Ezek. 45:1; 48:8), etc. Whereas the "wave offering" was always performed in the sanctuary, the "heave offering" could be presented to the Lord anywhere.

**Ryrie** - The offering (lit., heave offering) symbolically set aside the animal (see Lev. 7:32) or grain (as here) as a contribution to the Lord of the first of the harvest after entering Canaan. Apparently it was for the priest to eat.

**Bush on to the LORD** - Chaldee version. "Before the Lord." That is, in his presence, under his auspices, they were first heaved or lifted up to the Lord, the creator of heaven and earth, in token of his supremacy, and in acknowledgment of his goodness, and then made over to the priests without being laid upon the altar, like the other sacrifices. Indeed, it was not necessary that this offering should be made, in after times, at the Temple at Jerusalem, but wherever the offerer resided; and as the priestly class was dispersed all over the land, there was no difficulty in finding those to whom it was to be dispensed. Comp. Ezek. 44:30, "Ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough." Comp. also Neh. 10:37. This explains v. 21, below.

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**Question:** [What is a heave offering?](#)

**Answer:** A heave offering was a way of presenting one's offering to God, and it appears in the Old Testament along with [burnt offerings](#), [grain offerings](#), freewill offerings, and the offering of the firstborn of the flocks. The **heave offering** is part of the Mosaic Law and was one of the common sacrifices or offerings given to God by the Israelites.

Only a few translations, such as the KJV and the NAS, call it the "heave offering"; most translations consider it simply an offering presented before the Lord. The "heave" of the "heave offering" is a simple upward movement. It could refer to the generic movement of lifting or "heaving" the sacrifice toward the altar, or it could refer to lifting up or separating a portion of the sacrifice from the rest. This "heaved" portion was set apart for use by the priests (Leviticus 7:34).

The **heave offering** was not really a separate offering but the portion of another offering that was reserved for the use of the priests. "You shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering which was waved and which was offered from the ram of ordination, from the one which was for Aaron and from the one which was for his sons. It shall be for Aaron and his sons as their portion forever from the sons of Israel, for it is a heave offering; and it shall be a heave offering from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, even their heave offering to the LORD" (Exodus 29:27–28).

The heave offering was often used in conjunction with a wave offering, and both were then given to the priests. The heave and the wave refer to the movement of the sacrificed item over the altar. With a wave offering, the priest moved the offering from side to side over the altar, and, with a heave offering, the sacrificed item is presented with an up-and-down motion. The Hebrew word *terumah*, which is the word for "heave offering," comes from the verb stem *rum*, which means "exalted" or "lifted up." In most biblical instances, the heave offering was the part of a sacrifice set aside or "lifted up" for a higher purpose.

The heave offering was often given in conjunction with tithes (Leviticus 7:14, 34) as a provision for the [Levites](#), the priestly tribe who did not have land of their own and therefore could not grow their own food. They depended on the Lord's provision through tithes and heave offerings (Numbers 18:24, 29). The heave offering is also similar to the tithe in that it was to be given of a person's [firstfruits](#), that is, out of the first portion of the produce harvested each year (Numbers 15:21) The Levites themselves also offered a heave offering to the Lord out of the tithes of the Israelites. A tenth of all they were given by the other tribes was offered up to God (Numbers 18:26). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Numbers 15:20 'Of the first of your dough you shall lift up a cake as an offering; as the offering of the threshing floor, so you shall lift it up.**

- **first of your dough** Nu 18:12 Ex 23:19 De 26:2-10 Ne 10:37 Pr 3:9,10 Eze 44:30 Mt 6:33 Ro 11:16 1Co 15:20 Jas 1:18 Rev 14:4
- **offering**: Lev 2:14 Lev 23:20,16,17
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## OFFERINGS OF THE FIRST DOUGH

**Of the first of your dough you shall lift up a cake as an offering; - NLT-** "Present a cake from the first of the flour you grind and set it aside as a gift, as you do with the first grain from the threshing floor."

**Bush** - "This is on the general principle involved in the precept, Prov. 3:9, "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits

of all thine increase;" the effect of which would be to sanctify all the rest; "For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump (dough) is also holy," Ro 11:6. See this subject still further considered in the Notes on Lev. 23:16, 17. As a reward for thus consecrating the first of every thing to the Lord it is said, Prov. 3:10, "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." The custom of the Israelites was to bestow of their corn, first-fruits, tithes, and other gifts to the priests, Levites, and poor, upon their first reaping and threshing the harvest. See Ex. 13:19, Lev. 13:22, Num. 18:12, 26. Afterwards when they made their bread they separated this cake; and as the Levites separated a heave-offering out of their tithe, Num. 18:26, so the poor that gleaned the fields separated of their dough for a like purpose."

**As the offering of the threshing floor, so you shall lift it up-** The priests received the first of the produce. Bush adds "That is, of the corn in the threshing-floor. So Deut. 16:13, "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine." Heb. "After thou hast gathered in thy floor and thy vineyard". As it was their duty religiously to separate the first-fruits of their corn on the threshing-floor, so also of the dough in their houses."

**First** (first-fruits) (07225)(**reshith**) means first, in place, time, order or rank; beginning, chief, firstfruit, principal thing; first phase, step, or element in course of events. It can mean the choice, highest quality, the best

Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce

--Proverbs 3:9 the OT version of Mt 6:33+.

**Numbers 15:21 'From the first of your dough you shall give to the LORD an offering throughout your generations.**

- Nu 18:26 Ex 29:28
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE DOUGH OFFERING

**'From the first of your dough you shall give to the LORD an offering throughout your generations.-** This was not described in the offerings in Leviticus. NLT = "Throughout the generations to come, you are to present this offering to the LORD each year from the first of your ground flour."

**ESVSB** - The book of Leviticus (Lev 19:24–25; 23:10–11) insists that the firstfruits of the crops must be given to God. This principle is now extended to baking. The **first dough** is given to the priests. Observant Jews today still remember this rule when they bake, by throwing a small lump of dough into the fire.

**Bush** - As **this was a new law not given before**, so it is repeated several times to give it more emphasis and importance in the eyes of the people; and that its sanctity was highly appreciated is evident from the fact that it was observed by the Israelites after their return from Babylon, **Nehemiah 10:37**, "*We will also bring the first of our dough, our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the new wine and the oil to the priests at the chambers of the house of our God, and the tithe of our ground to the Levites, for the Levites are they who receive the tithes in all the rural towns.*" This seems to have been done in every private family; and the Jews consider a woman as infamous who neglects to do it. At this day the Jews are so observant of this rite, that when they have dough enough to make a cake, they do it as soon as they have water enough to do it. According to the construction and practice of the modern Jews, this cake was given to the priests, though some (TODAY) throw it into the fire. It is understood by them to mean that the **first portion of every lump of dough** exceeding the bulk of forty eggs was to be given to the priests or Levites in order to sanctify the rest."—Priestley. That somewhat of a mystical import was couched in the ordinance is obvious from Paul's allusion, Ro 11:16, where he applies the first-fruits and the lump of dough to Israel (*If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.* ), and it is confirmed by the language of the prophet, Jer. 2:2-3, "Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend." The phrase, "All that devour (Heb. eat) him," seems to refer to the rule that no one was to eat of the first-fruit of the harvest but the priest. This mystical sense is also recognized by the Jewish commentators: "*The commandment of the cake signified in mystery the congregation of Israel, called the first-fruits of the world; which when it is put into the oven that burneth with the fire of the holy blessed God, it is necessary to separate therefrom a cake, that it be not partaker of severe judgment; and therefore is a blessing reserved in the world.*"—Rabbi Menahem. But we are taught to go beyond the Jewish nation to find the reality of the emblematic cake: "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be **a kind of first fruits** among His creatures." Jas. 1:18+.

**Related Resources:**

- American Tract Society [Firstfruits](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Firstfruits](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Firstfruits](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Firstfruits](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Firstfruits](#)

**Numbers 15:22 'But when you unwittingly fail and do not observe all these commandments, which the LORD has spoken to Moses,**

BGT Numbers 15:22 τὰν δὲ διαμρῆτε καὶ μὴ ποιήτε πᾶσαι τὰς ἐντολὰς τὰς ἃς ἐλάλησεν ὁ κύριος πρὸς Μωυσήν

NET Numbers 15:22 "If you sin unintentionally and do not observe all these commandments that the LORD has spoken to Moses—

NLT Numbers 15:22 "But suppose you unintentionally fail to carry out all these commands that the LORD has given you through Moses.

ESV Numbers 15:22 "But if you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments that the LORD has spoken to Moses,

NIV Numbers 15:22 "Now if you unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands the LORD gave Moses--

KJV Numbers 15:22 And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses,

YLT Numbers 15:22 'And when ye err, and do not all these commands which Jehovah hath spoken unto Moses,

LXE Numbers 15:22 But whensoever ye shall transgress, and not perform all these commands, which the Lord spoke to Moses;

ASV Numbers 15:22 And when ye shall err, and not observe all these commandments, which Jehovah hath spoken unto Moses,

CSB Numbers 15:22 "When you sin unintentionally and do not obey all these commands that the LORD spoke to Moses--

NKJ Numbers 15:22 `If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which the LORD has spoken to Moses--

NRS Numbers 15:22 But if you unintentionally fail to observe all these commandments that the LORD has spoken to Moses--

- Lev 4:2,13,14,22,27 5:13,15-17 Ps 19:12 Lu 12:48

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 4:1+ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, **If a person sins unintentionally** in any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them, 3if the anointed priest sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed.

### SINS OF IGNORANCE OF OMISSION NOT COMMISSION

**Note that Numbers 15:22–26 describe the rules for a sin of omission by the congregation** (see also Lev. 4:13–21+).

Numbers 15:22-31 deal with offerings required for purification of sins and parallel the descriptions in Leviticus 4-5. These regulations supplement what was already stated in the book of Leviticus for the purification and reparation offerings. See those instructions in Lev 4–7+ for details. (cf. Lev. 4:13–21).

**Wiersbe** points out that "The sacrifices described in Leviticus 1–7 took care of **sins of commission**, but the instructions here have

to do with unintentional **sins of omission**, things that the people should have done but didn't do... Even though the people who sinned didn't realize their failure, what they didn't do was still a sin and had to be dealt with. "I didn't know" will not avail at the throne of God." This makes me think that we should frequently pray David's prayer for our sins are so deceitful we don't always know when we commit them! What is the prayer? Psalm 139:23-24

**Search** me, O God, and **know** my heart; **Try** me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And **lead** me in the everlasting way. ([Spurgeon's comments](#))

**'But** - Term of contrast. Change of direction now to offerings for sin. Nu 15:22-26 deal with offerings for the entire congregation who inadvertently sins and Nu 15:27-29 with the offerings for the individual person who sinned unintentionally.

**When you unwittingly fail** - Imperfect tense (over and over). Note "**when**" note "if" -- we will fail! And we will continue to do so until we are glorified and sinless like the Son (1 Jn 3:2+). Sins that are not premeditated, sins done when the person did not know the action was sinful. Unwitting means not knowing; unaware, not intended; unintentional; not conscious; inadvertent; accidental; unaware; not done with purpose or intent; unplanned; unknowing.

**Unwittingly** (wander, go astray, err, commit error, intoxicated)([07686](#))([shagah](#)) literally means to go astray (Pr 5:23, Ezek 34:6), then to make an error (1 Sa 26:21). To err, to deceive, to make a mistake. To sin inadvertently, perpetrated in ignorance, not willfully (Lev 4:13, Ezek 45:20). In some context it can mean to stagger or reel, to not be able to go forward (wine - Pr 20:1, visions Isa 28:7, love Pr 5:19, strange woman -Pr 5:20). Does not sin in effect make us all "stagger" spiritually and not be able to advance on the highway of holiness? Of course it does. Shagah is used frequently to describe a wandering or aimless flock, both figuratively and literally (Ezek. 34:6). The Lxx translates shagah in Nu 15:22 with the rare verb **diamartano** (used only in Nu 15:22) which means to miss entirely, to go quite astray, to fail utterly, to be completely unsuccessful or seriously in error, miss the mark badly, be quite wrong,

**THOUGHT - Unwitting** sins makes me think of David's prayer in Psalm 19 in which he says "Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults." (Ps 19:12). In Jesus' Name and because of His fully atoning blood. Amen.

**George Bush on unwittingly fail** - "That is, **done unadvisedly through ignorance, error, or oversight**, to which is opposed the "**doing presumptuously**," or "**sinning with a high hand**," mentioned Nu 15:30. A law had been previously given respecting sins of ignorance, Lev. 4:1ff+, and it is an obvious question, in what respects that law differed from the present. We may observe in reply, (1.) that the law in Leviticus seems rather to contemplate sins of commission, and this sins of omission. (2.) The present law appears to have reference to such sins of ignorance as might be committed by the whole congregation, while the other is applicable to the sins of individuals. This view seems to be confirmed by the fact, that in the verse before us. the collective "you" is employed, while in the subsequent verse, Nu 15:27, where the case of an individual is recognized, the term used is "**one person**," as it is also in Lev. 4:2. The ceremonial observances enjoined upon the nation were so numerous, complicated, and various, that it might easily be supposed some of them would by degrees be forgotten and disused; consequently if, in process of time, upon consulting the law, there should appear to have been a general neglect of any of the divine appointments, a sacrifice must be offered for the whole congregation. We may suggest, moreover, that the law contemplated perhaps the extension of the meaning of "**sins of ignorance**" on the part of the congregation, making them cover the case of the commission of any offence within its borders, when the criminal had escaped detection. When such an offence occurred, one which might be considered to involve the responsibility of the nation at large, its sense of the fault was to be manifested in a manner somewhat different from what had been before prescribed, and one more costly and imposing. Instead of a bullock only for a sin-offering, which had been previously ordained, a sin-offering of a kid is now to be substituted, accompanied with the holocaust (burnt offering) of a bullock, with the addition of its appropriate meal and drink offerings, as these had been lately prescribed. This was a striking feature of the present enactment, that it tended to make the whole community feel itself charged with the responsibility of the conduct of each of its members. It became liable to a certain form of penalty for the transgression, by certain individuals, of the divinely appointed statutes and ordinances with which they were bound sedulously to comply." (Bush)

**and do not observe all these commandments which the LORD has spoken to Moses**- God now gives guidelines when the people sin, either unintentionally (Nu 15:22-29) or defiantly (Nu 15:30-31)

**Bush on do not observe...** - Heb. "Have not done all these commandments." As intimated above, the words of this law differ from those in Lev. 4:2, 23, they having reference to things which should not be done, and these to things which should be done; or in other words, the one pointing to sins of commission, and the other to sins of omission. The implication is very clear, that when commanded duties are neglected through ignorance or inadvertence, the delinquent is not entirely guiltless on that account. His culpability is not so great as that of the knowing or wilful transgressor, but he still needs the application of the virtue of the great sacrifice represented by the bullock and the kid.

**Guzik** - Many today think and live as if an action is **unintentional**, it cannot be sin. But many of the worst sins are committed with the best of intentions. Intentions matter nothing when the result is sin. Especially in the 20th century, all sorts of horrific atrocities and terror have been committed by those dedicated to honorable causes; Communism sought to establish a just, fair economy where each worked according to his ability and received according to his need—and became the instrument of the genocide of tens of millions of people.. Today, in the church, many a gossip, many a talebearer, many a divisive person will claim the best of intentions. Even if we agree they have the right intentions, they still may be in grievous sin. The same applies for a myriad of other sins we are often ready to ignore or think lightly of, all on the basis of “after all, they had good intentions.”

**Numbers 15:23 even all that the LORD has commanded you through Moses, from the day when the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations,**

NET Numbers 15:23 all that the LORD has commanded you by the authority of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded Moses and continuing through your future generations—

NLT Numbers 15:23 And suppose your descendants in the future fail to do everything the LORD has commanded through Moses.

ESV Numbers 15:23 all that the LORD has commanded you by Moses, from the day that the LORD gave commandment, and onward throughout your generations,

NIV Numbers 15:23 any of the LORD's commands to you through him, from the day the LORD gave them and continuing through the generations to come--

KJV Numbers 15:23 Even all that the LORD hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations;

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**even all that the LORD has commanded you through Moses from the day when the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations** - This would refer to the giving of the Law at Mt Sinai (Ex 19:16–20:21).. NLT = "And suppose your descendants in the future fail to do everything the LORD has commanded through Moses.:

**Numbers 15:24 then it shall be, if it is done unintentionally, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one bull for 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 for a sin offering.**

NET Numbers 15:24 then if anything is done unintentionally without the knowledge of the community, the whole community must prepare one young bull for a burnt offering— for a pleasing aroma to the LORD— along with its grain offering and its customary drink offering, and one male goat for a purification offering.

NLT Numbers 15:24 If the mistake was made unintentionally, and the community was unaware of it, the whole community must present a young bull for a burnt offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It must be offered along with its prescribed grain offering and liquid offering and with one male goat for a sin offering.

ESV Numbers 15:24 then if it was done unintentionally without the knowledge of the congregation, all the congregation shall offer one bull from the herd for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the rule, and one male goat for a sin offering.

NIV Numbers 15:24 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.

KJV Numbers 15:24 Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering.

- **if it is done unintentionally:** Lev 4:13

- **one bull** Lev 4:14-21
- **with its grain offering and its drink offering:** Nu 15:8-10
- one kid: Nu 28:15 Lev 4:23 2Ch 29:21-24 Ezr 6:17 8:35
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Leviticus 4:13+ Now if the whole congregation of Israel commits error and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly, and they commit any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and they become guilty;

**Bush** comments on **If the whole congregation sin.** This probably refers to some oversight in acts of religious worship, or to some transgression of the letter of the law committed, not presumptuously, but heedlessly, as in the case mentioned 1 Sa 14:32; where, after smiting the Philistines, the Israelites 'flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood.' This was a congregational sin. The sacrifices and rites in this case were the same as in the preceding; only here the elders laid their hands on the head of the victim, in the name of all the congregation....By '**the matter escapes the notice of the assembly**' is meant that they were not for the present sensible of their error or transgression. The reference is to a case where they had ignorantly or inadvertently committed some act which they presumed at the time to be lawful, but which subsequent reflection or instruction convinced them was sinful. In this case, as soon as they came to a sense of their wrong-doing, the elders, or heads of the tribes, as the representatives of the whole body, were to bring a young bullock to the tabernacle and present it to the high-priest, who was to offer it by way of atonement for them, in the same manner and with the same circumstances, that he did the other for himself.

Hebrews 9:7+ but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people **committed in ignorance.** (= [agnoema](#) - to sin without knowing that one has sinned. The agnoemata, for which high priest offered sacrifice on great Day of Atonement, were not specifically willful transgressions or presumptuous sins, but sins of nation as whole.)

### WHEN THE ENTIRE NATION SINS

**then it shall be, if it is done unintentionally, without the knowledge of the congregation**(Heb "[away] from the eyes of the community."), **Bush** - Heb. "By error from the eyes of the congregation." In like manner Lev. 4:13+, "If the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly," where the subjoined Note (SEE THIS NOTE ABOVE UNDER RELATED PASSAGE) fully explains the phraseology. The reference is probably to some neglect on the part of one or more individuals, of the public services or ceremonies of religion, or some deviation from the prescribed statutes, occasioned either by the remissness of rulers, the misinterpretation of the laws, or the abounding iniquity of the times.

**that all the congregation shall offer one bull for a burnt offering - Bush** - "It is worthy of remark that the Jewish writers generally understand this ordinance of strange worship which required to be expiated by the sacrifice of a bullock for a burnt-offering and a goat for a sin-offering. Outram (On Sacrifices, B. I. c. 14, §§ 1, 2) coincides in this opinion, and his remarks are well worthy of consideration:—"If my own opinion be required,—I would not be confident on so obscure a subject, but I am inclined to think that the bullock was to be offered, when the whole congregation of Israel, though in other respects retaining their own rites, and following the worship of the true God, yet led away by one common error, transgressed without knowing it, some prohibitory precept. The kid for a sin-offering, accompanied with a bullock for a burnt-offering, I apprehend to have been required when the people, neglecting their ancient rites and unmindful of the divine laws, which often happened under wicked kings, were generally seduced into strange worship. As the law seems to contemplate such a state of the nation, so perhaps it commands a holocaust to be offered in token of a return to their ancient worship and religion, and a sin-offering for the expiation of all the sins which had been committed in the substitution of idolatry for the worship of the true God. For this reason I suppose it was, and it is a circumstance which adds much probability to my opinion, that after the temple had been long shut, 2 Chr. 28:24, 29:3, the daily sacrifices discontinued, and many strange rites admitted by the people through ignorance, Hezekiah commanded bullocks to be immolated as burnt-offerings, and goats as sin-offerings for the whole nation, 2 Chr. 29:21–24. Thus also, the Jews who returned from Babylon into their own land, offered, after the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoration of their ancient worship, the same kinds of sacrifices for all Israel. It forms no objection, that whereas Moses commanded only one bullock and one goat, Hezekiah sacrificed seven, and the Jews who returned from exile, offered twelve of each kind of victims. This I suppose them to have done from a conviction that the smaller



number was absolutely necessary, but that the larger number was better; Hezekiah choosing the number seven as an emblem of perfection; and the returned exiles fixing upon twelve in reference to the number of the tribes." Comp. Ezra 8:35.

**as a soothing aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering** - The grain and drink offerings were described in Nu 15:8-10. This was the requirement when the people as a group had sinned unintentionally. Numbers 15:24-26 deal primarily with corporate sins and Numbers 15:27-29 with individual sins. And remember that these instructions deal primarily with the time when Israel enters the promised land, not the time of wilderness wandering.

**Soothing** is a key word in Numbers 15 - Nu 15:3, 7, 10, 13, 14, 24.

**NET NOTE** - The idea of לִשְׁגָגָה (lishgagah) seems to be that of "inadvertence" or "without intent." The text gives no indication of how this offense might be committed, or what it might include. It probably describes any transgressions done in ignorance of the Law that involved a violation of tabernacle procedure or priestly protocol or social misdemeanor. Even though it was done unintentionally, it was still a violation and called for ritual purification.

**according to the ordinance, and one male goat for a sin offering** - Heb. "According to the judgment." That is, according to the mode prescribed by the Lord, vs. 9, 10.

**Numbers 15:25** 'Then the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and they will be forgiven; for it was an error, and they have brought their offering, an offering by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their error.

NET Numbers 15:25 And the priest is to make atonement for the whole community of the Israelites, and they will be forgiven, because it was unintentional and they have brought their offering, an offering made by fire to the LORD, and their purification offering before the LORD, for their unintentional offense.

NLT Numbers 15:25 With it the priest will purify the whole community of Israel, making them right with the LORD, and they will be forgiven. For it was an unintentional sin, and they have corrected it with their offerings to the LORD-- the special gift and the sin offering.

ESV Numbers 15:25 And the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the people of Israel, and they shall be forgiven, because it was a mistake, and they have brought their offering, a food offering to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD for their mistake.

NIV Numbers 15:25 The priest is to make atonement for the whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven, for it was not intentional and they have brought to the LORD for their wrong an offering made by fire and a sin offering.

KJV Numbers 15:25 And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance:

- **the priest:** Lev 4:20,26 Ro 3:25 1Jn 2:2
- **forgiven:** Lu 23:34 Ac 13:39
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Acts 13:39+ and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from **which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.**

## FORGIVENESS OF THEIR SINS

**Then the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and they will be forgiven; for it was an error, and they have brought their offering, an offering by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their error** - Note forgiveness was available but genuine forgiveness was only for those who brought their sacrifices by faith. The sacrifices per se did not give them forgiveness. God "covered" their sins when He saw the faith in their heart (cf Ro 3:25+, Heb 9:15+). God has never been interested in the external but primarily on the internal, on what is transpiring in one's heart (Ps 51:16-

17±). That is the heart of forgiveness. And ultimately that forgiveness even in the Old Testament was not because of the blood of the animals but because of the blood of the Lamb of God (John 1:29+), who fulfilled all of these OT shadows that pointed to Him (cf Heb 10:1-18+).

Innocent animals had to die to provide forgiveness,  
just as Jesus had to die to make our cleansing possible.  
-- Warren Wiersbe

**Bush** - Several commentators suggest that "all the congregation" both here and in v. 26, may be rendered "every congregation," and thus the law apply to the several tribes, cities, villages, and synagogues scattered throughout the land. This may perhaps be admitted, provided only we bear in mind that the appointed sacrifice was to be offered at the temple or wherever the centre of worship might be.

**Made atonement** (03722)(**kaphar**) means to make atonement, to make reconciliation (to reconcile), to purge, to make propitiation (to propitiate), to pacify, to cancel. The Septuagint uses the verb **exilaskomai** (from **hilaskomai**) which BDAG says means "When one endeavors to attain the goodwill of another, the word can be rendered appease." **Exilaskomai** is the Greek verb used to describe the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement who was "presented alive before the LORD, to **make atonement** upon it." (Lev 16:10+). Note that the verb is from the root **hilaskomai** "means to cause to be favorably inclined toward or favorably disposed toward another (as in Lk 18:13+). **BDAG** says it means "to eliminate impediments that alienate the deity, expiate, wipe out, of Christ as high priest" (He 2:17+) **Hilaskomai** means to be merciful, make reconciliation for, be propitious, gracious, to be favorably inclined."

**NET NOTE on make atonement** - The verb is the Piel perfect with vav (ו) consecutive (וַיִּכְפֹּר, vékhipper) to continue the instruction of the passage: "the priest shall make atonement," meaning the priest is to make atonement for the sin (thus the present translation). This verb means "to expiate," "to atone for," "to pacify." It describes the ritual events by which someone who was separated from the holy LORD God could find acceptance into his presence through the sacrificial blood of the substitutionary animal. See Lev 1 and Num 17:6-13.

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**C H Spurgeon** - "And it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance."—Num. 15:25. BECAUSE of our ignorance we are not fully aware of our sins of ignorance. Yet we may be sure they are many, in the form both of commission and omission. We may be doing in all sincerity, as a service to God, that which he has never commanded, and can never accept.

The Lord knows these sins of ignorance every one. This may well alarm us, since in justice he will require these trespasses at our hand; but on the other hand, faith spies comfort in this fact, for the Lord will see to it that stains unseen by us shall yet be washed away. He sees the sin that he may cease to see it by casting it behind his back.

Our great comfort is that Jesus, the true priest, has made atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel. That atonement secures the pardon of unknown sins. His precious blood cleanses us from all sin. Whether our eyes have seen it and wept over it, or not, God has seen it, Christ has atoned for it, the Spirit bears witness to the pardon of it, and so we have a threefold peace.

O my Father, I praise thy divine knowledge, which not only perceives my iniquities, but provides an atonement which delivers me from the guilt of them, even before I know that I am guilty. (Faith's Checkbook)

**Numbers 15:26 'So all the congregation of the sons of Israel will be forgiven, with the alien who sojourns among them, for it happened to all the people through error.**

NET Numbers 15:26 And the whole community of the Israelites and the resident foreigner who lives among them will be forgiven, since all the people were involved in the unintentional offense.

NLT Numbers 15:26 The whole community of Israel will be forgiven, including the foreigners living among you, for all the people were involved in the sin.

ESV Numbers 15:26 And all the congregation of the people of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger who sojourns among them, because the whole population was involved in the mistake.

NIV Numbers 15:26 The whole Israelite community and the aliens living among them will be forgiven, because

all the people were involved in the unintentional wrong.

KJV Numbers 15:26 And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them; seeing all the people were in ignorance.

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**So all the congregation of the sons of Israel will be forgiven, with the alien who sojourns among them, for it happened to all the people through error** - Gr. "And the proselyte that is settled among you."

**Numbers 15:27 'Also if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering.**

NET Numbers 15:27 "If any person sins unintentionally, then he must bring a yearling female goat for a purification offering.

NLT Numbers 15:27 "If one individual commits an unintentional sin, the guilty person must bring a one-year-old female goat for a sin offering.

ESV Numbers 15:27 "If one person sins unintentionally, he shall offer a female goat a year old for a sin offering.

NIV Numbers 15:27 " 'But if just one person sins unintentionally, he must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering.

KJV Numbers 15:27 And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering.

- Lev 4:27,28 Ac 3:17 17:30 1Ti 1:13
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SACRIFICES WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL SINS**

**Also if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering-** The offering was smaller than when the entire nation sinned.

**Numbers 15:28 'The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven.**

NET Numbers 15:28 And the priest must make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally— when he sins unintentionally before the LORD— to make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.

NLT Numbers 15:28 The priest will sacrifice it to purify the guilty person before the LORD, and that person will be forgiven.

ESV Numbers 15:28 And the priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who makes a mistake, when he sins unintentionally, to make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.

NIV Numbers 15:28 The priest is to make atonement before the LORD for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made for him, he will be forgiven.

KJV Numbers 15:28 And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.

- Lev 4:35
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven** - NET - "And the priest must make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally—

when he sins unintentionally before the LORD— to make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven."

**Wiersbe** comments that "Sometimes we sin against the Lord by what we do, and sometimes by what we don't do (Luke 7:36–50). Sins of ignorance aren't automatically forgiven just because we unintentionally forgot God's commands; these sins must be confessed to the Lord just as we confess sins of commission (1 John 1:9+). The fact that God forgave sins of omission didn't mean He was "easy on sin," because blood still had to be shed before the sinner could be forgiven."

**Bush - If any soul sin through ignorance.** That is, any person. Chaldee "If one man." As in what precedes allusion is had to cases where the sin in question could be considered as that of the whole congregation, so in the present passage the sin of a single individual, acting on his sole responsibility is treated of, and the appointed sacrifice specified. Such a private person, when guilty of any mistake or neglect in the worship of God through inadvertence, ill example, or infirmity, was required, as soon as he became sensible of his offence, to bring a female goat to the priest, for a sin-offering, the penitent oblation of which would exempt him from any farther penalty.

**Made atonement** (03722) see note above on [kapor](#)

**Numbers 15:29 'You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them.**

NET Numbers 15:29 You must have one law for the person who sins unintentionally, both for the native-born among the Israelites and for the resident foreigner who lives among them.

NLT Numbers 15:29 These same instructions apply both to native-born Israelites and to the foreigners living among you.

ESV Numbers 15:29 You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the people of Israel and for the stranger who sojourns among them.

NIV Numbers 15:29 One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien.

KJV Numbers 15:29 Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

YLT Numbers 15:29 for the native among the sons of Israel, and for the sojourner who is sojourning in their midst -- one law is to you, for him who is doing anything through ignorance.

- **one law:** Nu 15:15 9:14 Lev 16:29 17:15 Ro 3:29,30
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SAME RULES FOR NATIVE AND ALIEN**

**You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them** - Aliens were subject to the same laws as the native Israelites. These stipulations for aliens imply that some of the pagans will be attracted to the God of the Israelites and will join in His worship. "There was to be no exception. Sin is sin, and must be accounted as such, even if the motive seemed good." (Guzik)

**Numbers 15:30 'But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.**

BGT Numbers 15:30 κα ψυχ τις ποι σει ν χειρ περηφαν ας π τ ν α τοχθ νων π τ ν προσηλ των τ ν θε ν ο τος παροξ νει ξολεθρευθ σεται ψυχ κε νη κ το λαο α τ ς

NET Numbers 15:30 "But the person who acts defiantly, whether native-born or a resident foreigner, insults the LORD. That person must be cut off from among his people.

NLT Numbers 15:30 "But those who brazenly violate the LORD's will, whether native-born Israelites or foreigners, have blasphemed the LORD, and they must be cut off from the community.

ESV Numbers 15:30 But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people.

NIV Numbers 15:30 " 'But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people.

KJV Numbers 15:30 But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

YLT Numbers 15:30 'And the person who doth aught with a high hand -- of the native or of the sojourner -- Jehovah he is reviling, and that person hath been cut off from the midst of his people;

LXE Numbers 15:30 And whatever soul either of the natives or of the strangers shall do any thing with a presumptuous hand, he will provoke God; that soul shall be cut off from his people,

ASV Numbers 15:30 But the soul that doeth aught with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, the same blasphemeth Jehovah; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

CSB Numbers 15:30 "But the person who acts defiantly, whether native or foreign resident, blasphemes the LORD. That person is to be cut off from his people.

NKJ Numbers 15:30 `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.

NRS Numbers 15:30 But whoever acts high-handedly, whether a native or an alien, affronts the LORD, and shall be cut off from among the people.

NAB Numbers 15:30 "But anyone who sins defiantly, whether he be a native or an alien, insults the LORD, and shall be cut off from among his people.

- **who does anything** Nu 9:13 14:44 Ge 17:14 Ex 21:14 Lev 20:3,6,10 De 1:43 17:12 De 29:19,20 Ps 19:13 Mt 12:32 Heb 10:26,29 2Pe 2:10
- **blaspheming the LORD:** Ps 69:9 74:18,22 79:12 89:51 Pr 14:31 Isa 37:23,24
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Psalms 19:13+ Also **keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins**; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.

**Comment:** A good prayer to pray! In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Matthew 12:32+ "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, **it shall not be forgiven him**, either in this age or in the age to come.

Hebrews 10:26; 29+ For if we **go on sinning willfully** after receiving the knowledge of the truth, **there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**, (10:29) How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

2 Peter 2:20+ For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, **the last state has become worse for them than the first**.

### SINNING WITH A "HIGH HAND"

**'But the person who does anything defiantly** - **KJV** = "presumptuously." Hebrew = "**with a high hand**." That is, bold, daring, deliberate acts of transgression against the fullest evidence, and in despite of the Divine authority. Such conduct "reproacheth the Lord," as if his commands were needless, unreasonable, and inimical to the happiness of man; his favour were not desirable, or his wrath not to be feared: in short, as if it were more advantageous to rebel against him than to serve him. Such acts admitted of no atonement: the person was condemned to bear his own iniquity, and to be cut off.

We have seen an example of a presumptuous sin, sinning with a high hand in Numbers 9:13 related to the Passover, Moses recording

‘But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person **shall then be cut off** ([karath](#); Lxx - [exolothreuo](#)) from his people, (WHY SO SEVERE?) **FOR** he did not present the offering of the LORD at its appointed time. That man will bear his sin.

**ESVSB - Cut off** probably means dying suddenly and mysteriously as a divine punishment, though some interpreters think it sometimes may refer to excommunication from Israel or judicial execution. (For other offenses that merit this penalty, cf. Lev. 17:4, 9; 20:6, 18; Nu 15:30–31; 19:13)

**Bush** - Heb. “Doeth with a high hand,” that is, in a bold, daring, defiant manner, giving way to deliberate acts of transgression against light, conviction, and inward remonstrance, and in despite of divine authority. Gr. “Shall do any thing with a presumptuous hand.” Chald. “Shall do any thing with an uncovered head,” that is, openly, fearlessly, without shame, for under emotions of shame men were prone to cover their heads, as Jer. 14:4, “The ploughmen were ashamed, they covered their heads.” The original phrase, in certain connections, is capable of a good sense, equivalent to boldness, courage, magnanimity, both in heart and deportment, as when it is said of Israel that they went out of Egypt with a high hand, Ex. 14:8, Num. 33:3; but here it implies knowingly, purposely, and presumptuously going counter to the express ordinance of heaven in contempt of the divine majesty and authority.

**NET NOTE** on **defiantly** - The sin is described literally as acting “**with a high hand**”—בְּיָד רַמָּה (béyad ramah). The expression means that someone would do something with deliberate defiance, with an arrogance in spite of what the LORD said. It is as if the sinner was about to attack God, or at least lifting his hand against God. The implication of the expression is that it was done in full knowledge of the Law (especially since this contrasts throughout with the sins of ignorance). Blatant defiance of the word of the LORD is dealt with differently. For similar expressions, see Exod 14:8 and Num 33:3.

**Wiersbe** - To sin “presumptuously” means to disobey God’s law deliberately and arrogantly, knowing full well the danger involved. The Hebrew literally means “to sin with a high hand” as though the person were shaking his or her fist in the face of God, daring God to do something. Presumptuous sins are committed by people who have “no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom. 3:18). (Be Counted)

**Whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD**- NLT = “But those who brazenly violate the Lord’s will, whether native Israelites or foreigners, blaspheme the LORD, and they must be cut off from the community.”

**Bush on that one is blaspheming the LORD** - The same reproacheth the Lord. Or, Heb. “Blasphemeth.” Gr. and Chald. “Provoketh to anger.” The original denotes primarily verbal reproaching, or reviling, as in 2 Kings 19:6, 22; but is applied here to a reproaching or blaspheming by deeds, as in Ezek. 20:27, “In this your fathers have blasphemed me in that they have committed a trespass against me.” It is a truth of solemn import, that every presumptuous sinner is a virtual blasphemer of Jehovah, even though he may never orally profane his name.

**MacArthur** - These sins, committed knowingly and deliberately were described as blasphemous because they were an arrogant act of insubordination against the Lord. Anyone guilty of presumptuous sin was to be excommunicated from Israel and put to death. (MSB)

**ESVSB** has an interesting comment that “Cutting off prefigures apostasy from Christ (Heb. 10:26–31+)....A “high hand” suggests lifting up a hand in defiance against God, and such a sin cannot be atoned for (see Heb. 10:26–30). Those who sin consciously and deliberately shall be cut off (i.e., die suddenly and mysteriously as punishment from God; see Gen. 17:14; Ex. 12:15; 31:14; Num. 9:13 and note on 9:6–14).”

**and that person shall be cut off from among his people**-‘Cutting off, he shall be cut off’; this is a typical Hebrew construction denoting certainty. NLT = “and they must be cut off from the community.” **Cut off** is [karath](#) which could describe capital punishment or banishment. In the example in context clearly it means death.

**Bush** adds “ Gr. “Shall be utterly destroyed (See word study of [exolothreuo](#)).” Chald. “That soul shall perish.” On the peculiar import of this phrase see the Note on Ge 17:14, where it is fully explained. The Jewish writers extend the force of the threatening into the next world. “Although we find apostates to live more than fifty years, and that they are not cut off from the life of this world, yet know that their deserts hang upon them in this world, and vengeance shall be taken upon them abundantly in the world to come.”—Rab. Menahem. It is probable that, when there were witnesses to the fact, the offender was punished by the magistrates either by death or beating. See Note on Deut. 25:2.

**BSB** - Verses 30, 31 give instructions for dealing with presumptuous or defiant (lit. “high-handed”) sin, and the following verses recount an exemplary incident. The expression “with a high hand” is translated “with boldness” in Ex. 14:18 and Num. 33:3 (cf. 1 Kin. 11:26; Job 38:15). Breaking the Sabbath law was not a minor infraction, but amounted to blasphemy, the rejection of the Lord and His covenant, since it was the covenant sign (cf. Ex. 20:11, note). This, rather than its being committed knowingly, was what classified it as a sin for which there was no sacrifice (Lev. 6:1-7). Leviticus 24:10-23 gives another example of such a sin (cf. Num.



25:1-9). This passage (Num. 15:30-36) is the basis for Heb. 10:26-28 (cf. also Matt. 12:31).

**Numbers 15:31 'Because 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.'"**

BGT Numbers 15:31 τιτμα κυρ ου φα λισεν κα τς ντολς ατο διεσκ δασεν κτρ ψει κτριβ σεται ψυχ κε νη μαρτα ατς ν ατ

NET Numbers 15:31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, that person must be completely cut off. His iniquity will be on him."

NLT Numbers 15:31 Since they have treated the LORD's word with contempt and deliberately disobeyed his command, they must be completely cut off and suffer the punishment for their guilt."

ESV Numbers 15:31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be on him."

NIV Numbers 15:31 Because he has despised the LORD's word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; his guilt remains on him.' "

KJV Numbers 15:31 Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.

YLT Numbers 15:31 because the word of Jehovah he despised, and His command hath broken -- that person is certainly cut off; his iniquity is on him.'

LXE Numbers 15:31 for he has set at nought the word of the Lord and broken his commands: that soul shall be utterly destroyed, his sin is upon him.

ASV Numbers 15:31 Because he hath despised the word of Jehovah, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.

CSB Numbers 15:31 He will certainly be cut off, because he has despised the LORD's word and broken His command; his guilt remains on him."

NKJ Numbers 15:31 `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.'"

NRS Numbers 15:31 Because of having despised the word of the LORD and broken his commandment, such a person shall be utterly cut off and bear the guilt.

NAB Numbers 15:31 Since he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, he must be cut off. He has only himself to blame."

- **despised:** Lev 26:15,43 2Sa 12:9 Ps 119:126 Pr 13:13 Isa 30:12 1Th 4:8 Heb 10:28,29
- **his guilt:** Lev 5:1 Ps 38:4 Isa 53:6 Eze 18:20 1Pe 2:24 2Pe 2:21
- **[Numbers 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DESPISING THE WORD OF THE LORD!**

**Because** - Term of explanation. Explains why this sin is considered more serious. This was a willful, volitional violation of God's Word.

**he has despised the word of the LORD** - **NLT** = "Since they have treated the Lord's word with contempt." **Despise** (bazah - see below) means to treat as worthless, treat it with contempt, [look down the nose at](#) (so to speak) and is translated in the [Lxx](#) with **phaulizo** (from [phaulos](#) = worthless, bad, of no account) meaning to hold cheap, to depreciate, disparage, to despise, to consider worthless (used in Ge 25:34, Nu 15:31 2Sa 12:9 Isa 37:22 Mal 1:6)

**Bush** - Heb. [bazah](#), hath contemned, set at naught as vile, dishonored. Comp. with this Prov. 13:13, "He that despiseth the word shall be destroyed; but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded."

**And has broken His commandment** - **NLT** = "and deliberately disobeyed his commands, they must be completely cut off and

suffer the consequences of their guilt." Broke is *parar* meaning to violate (as in Ezra 9:14) and is translated in the Lxx with the rare verb (only here) *diaskedazo* which means to scatter abroad, to reject

**Bush on broken His commandment** - Heb. *hēphar*, hath annulled, frustrated, made void or of none effect, in opposition to establishing or confirming. It is a term usually applied to breaking the covenant with God, as Gen. 17:14, Lev. 26:44; and often in the prophets. Sometimes spoken of the law and the commandments, as Ps. 119:126, Ezra 9:14, Heb. 10:28.

**That person shall be completely cut off** - NLT = "they must be completely cut off." In a sense the nation of Israel had been guilty of "high handed sins" against Yahweh in Numbers 14 and they were in fact "cut off" from the Promised Land and destined to die in the wilderness.

**His guilt will be on him** - NLT = "and suffer the consequences of their guilt." **Bush** comments " Heb. "Its iniquity shall be upon it." That is, the iniquity of that soul; which however stands for the person, and is correctly enough rendered. By "iniquity" may be understood the punishment of iniquity, as in Gen. 19:15, Lev. 22:9. It is observable, however, that several of the Jewish commentators give a more interior sense. Thus Sol. Jarchi says, "its iniquity shall be in it," means, "when his iniquity is in him, and he repenteth not." Rab. Menahem also gives the following as an exposition of the ancients: "That soul shall be cut off, and the iniquity thereof with it," as if he should say, The iniquity shall cleave unto it after it is cut off, to be punished for ever, according to that (Is. 66:24), Their worm shall not die, which Jonathan (the Chaldee Paraphrast) expounds, Their soul shall not die. And our doctors have said, It shall be cut off in this world, it shall be cut off in the world to come." Jonathan's words are, "That man shall be destroyed in the world that is to come, and shall give account of his sin at the great day of judgment." Pool explains it, that his punishment shall be confined to himself, and not fall upon the congregation, as it would do if they were to neglect to cut him off. After every attempt at a true solution of the meaning of the phrase, some doubt will still remain."

**Henry Morris** - Nowhere did the Mosaic laws provide any offerings whereby the willful sinner--one who had deliberately and intentionally rebelled against God's Word--could receive forgiveness. The example in Numbers 15:32-36 graphically illustrates this truth. David's experience, however, (Psalm 51; 2 Samuel 12:9-13), illustrates the fact that a genuine believer could be spared and restored through sincere repentance and confession. Nevertheless, even in such a case severe temporal chastisement was incurred (2 Samuel 12:14-18).

**Merrill** has an interesting note - The New Testament warns against "a sin that leads to death" (1 John 5:16-) and of the impossibility of forgiveness for blasphemy against the Spirit (Mark 3:29+) and apostasy (Heb 6:4-6+; Heb 10:26-31+, referring to Deut 17:2-6). But it is also interesting to note that Jesus treated some very serious sins as things done in ignorance and called for their forgiveness (Luke 23:34+), as did Peter (Acts 3:17+). Then there is the forgivable ignorance of those who haven't heard the gospel (Rom 10:14), to say nothing of Paul's ignorant blasphemy (1 Tim 1:13). However, ignorance is reprehensible when people "deliberately forget" what God has done, required, or promised (2 Pet 3:5+).

**Despised** (0959) (**bazah** is from a root meaning to accord little worth to something) means to disdain or to hold in contempt. **Bazah** is used in a number of places to mean "despise" in the sense of treating someone or something as totally insignificant or worthless. **Bazah** means to raise the head loftily and disdainfully, to look down one's nose at something (so to speak)! The idea is that one undervalues something or someone which implies contempt for that thing or person (in this case God's Name in Mal 1:6 and here His table/altar, the place He is to be worshipped, revered, and adored! Woe!) **Bazah** means to treat things of value with contempt, as if they were worthless, the classic example being the very first use in Scripture in which Esau "despised his birthright" and sold it for lentil stew! (Ge 25:34, cp Heb 12:15-16+) **Waltke** writes that "the use of **baza** shows that disobedience to the Lord is based on "contempt, despising" of him. Thus David's adultery with Bathsheba is equated with contempt for the Lord (2 Sa12:10) and his word (v. 19)." The opposite of **baza** is **kabad** "to honor" (1Sa 2:30), **yare'** "to fear" (Pr 14:2), and **shamar** "to keep" commandments (Pr 19:16).

**THOUGHT** - Lest we be too hard on these ancient Israelites, let us "moderns" consider what we do EVERY TIME we willfully sin against God! Are you as convicted as I am! In fact Larry Richards writes that "Disobedience and other sins are portrayed in the OT as nothing less than evidences that we despise God. When we disobey, we show that we place little value on the Lord."

**Numbers 15:32** Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the sabbath day.

- **they found a man:** Ex 16:23,27,28 Ex 20:8-10 Ex 35:2,3
- **[Numbers 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

Exodus 20:8-10+ Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.

Exodus 35:2-3+ "For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy day, a sabbath of complete rest to the LORD; **whoever does any work on it shall be put to death** 3 "You shall not kindle a fire in any of your dwellings on the sabbath day."

## DEFIANT SIN ILLUSTRATED

**Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day-** Work was forbidden on the Sabbath (Ex 20:10; Ex 31:14–15; Lev 23:3) Recall that all work on the Sabbath is prohibited (Ex. 20:10), including lighting a fire (Ex. 35:3). This man was in effect despised the Words which God had clearly stated.

**Bush** - Several of the foregoing ordinances it was not expected would be observed during their journeyings to the promised land, but the sabbath was to be honored wherever they were; therefore it is expressly mentioned that this incident occurred "in the wilderness." It is doubtless cited as an instance of presumptuous sin; for as the law of the sabbath was plain and positive, this transgression must of course have been known and wilful. The offence, according to the purport of the original, was gathering and binding or bundling up wood.

**Wiersbe** - Apparently he was gathering sticks to start a fire, and it was unlawful to kindle a fire on the Sabbath (Ex 35:1–3). It's a dangerous thing for Christians to say, "I'll go ahead and sin, because afterward, I can ask God to forgive me." They see God's promise in 1 John 1:9 as a "religious rabbit's foot" to get them out of trouble after they've deliberately disobeyed God. Professed Christians who repeatedly and deliberately sin probably aren't Christians at all (Rom. 6; 1 John 3:7–10; 5:1–5, 18); and true believers who adopt that careless attitude will be chastened by the Father until they submit to His will (Heb. 12:3–15). When the German poet Heine said on his deathbed, "Of course God will forgive me; that's His job," he understood neither the awfulness of sin or the high cost of God's grace. (Ibid)

**NET Note** - Gathering of wood, although seemingly harmless, is done with intent to kindle fire, and so reveals a culpable intent.

**Ryrie** - These verses furnish an example (breaking the Sabbath) of a sin committed with a high hand and the punishment that resulted (cf. Ex. 35:2).

**Numbers 15:33** Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation;

- Joh 8:3-20
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PUBLICLY SINNING WITH A HIGH HAND

**Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation** - "Not perhaps literally into the presence of the whole congregation, consisting of hundreds of thousands, but before the heads and representatives of the whole body, to which the name of the congregation was often given." (Bush)

**Numbers 15:34** and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him.

- Lev 24:12
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SABBATH BREAKER INCARCERATED!

**And they put him in custody** - " Heb. bammishmor, in keeping; as they had previously dealt with the blasphemer, Lev. 24:12." (Bush)

**FLB** - The penalty for violating the Sabbath was death according to Exod 31:14–15. Their uncertainty over how to handle the violation could indicate that this portion of the law had not been fully articulated at this time. There may have been some confusion about whether the man's actions consisted of prohibited work, or Moses may have been waiting for confirmation from Yahweh that the violation had been deliberate and demanded the death penalty.

**because it had not been declared what should be done to him** - "Gr. "They had not judged, or determined." They knew, indeed, that the sabbath-breaker was to die (Ex. 31:4, 35:2), but by what death he should die, or whether this gathering of sticks made him obnoxious to that sentence, they were not certain. It was clear that he had done it presumptuously, but whether the act came fairly within the compass of the law, and in what precise manner it was to be dealt with, they were not fully resolved in their own minds. As this was the first offence of the kind, and as neither Moses nor the people were disposed to act precipitately in the matter, they saw fit to await a specific direction from the Lord himself." (Bush)

**Numbers 15:35 Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp."**

- **The man:** Ex 31:14,15
- **stone him:** Lev 24:14,23 1Ki 21:13 Ac 7:58 Heb 13:11,12
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Acts 7:58+ When they had driven him (STEPHEN) **out of the city**, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Hebrews 13:11-12+ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp.:12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered **outside the gate**.

### VERDICT FOR SABBATH BREAKER: DEATH BY STONING

**Then the LORD said to Moses** - "Probably in answer to the special inquiry which Moses went into the tabernacle to make, as he did in another case of difficulty mentioned before, Nu 9:8." (Bush)

**"The man shall surely be put to death all the congregation shall stone him with stones-** . Stones were used to keep the people from being defiled by the dead body.

**Bush** - Stoning was the most dreadful of all the punishments inflicted upon malefactors under the Jewish dispensation; the event recorded furnishes, therefore, a striking and solemn testimony to the sacredness and divine obligation of the sabbath law, and one which should not be lost upon us at the present day. The offence was apparently light and trivial, and for which we should be apt to suppose such a punishment entirely disproportioned; but the dignity and majesty of the divine Being against whom it is committed is to be considered, and such an example teaches how enormous those acts become, which, though not sinful in their own nature, are yet forbidden by the supreme authority of the universe. Actions ventured upon in defiance or contempt of an express divine command, draw after them a fearful load of responsibility. See Note on Lev. 20:2 for a particular account of the manner in which this punishment was inflicted.

**outside the camp** - Executions were always held **outside the camp** (Lev 24:14, 23) or the city (1 Ki 21:10, 13)—probably to prevent the number of people who might come into contact with a corpse and be rendered unclean.

**Bush - Without the camp.** Hence arose the custom of taking those who were to be stoned to a distance from cities and from the judgment-hall, as is remarked by Sol. Jarchi. Thus they dealt with Stephen, casting him "out of the city," and stoning him, Acts 7:58; likewise with Naboth, 1 Kings 21:13, and with the blasphemer, Lev. 24:14. This aggravated the punishment, from involving a degree of reproach, as is evident from the language of the apostle, Heb. 13:11–13, "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." The

severity of the punishment in cases of the violation of the sabbath no doubt points typically to the sad lot of those who do not keep the true spiritual sabbath, "entering into the rest of God by faith, and ceasing from their own works, as God did from his," Heb. 4:1–11.

**Wiersbe** - In His law, God made no provision for presumptuous sin, for such sinners were despising God's Word and defying His authority. God in His mercy could forgive such sins, as He did with David (2 Sam. 12), but He did not put Himself under obligation. The man who deliberately violated the Sabbath discovered that God is not mocked.

**NET NOTE** - all the community is to stone him with stones. The punishment is consistent with other decrees from God (see Exod 31:14, 15; 35:2). Moses had either forgotten such, or they had simply neglected to (or were hesitant to) enact them.

**Numbers 15:36** So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

- Jos 7:25
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SABBATH BREAKER STONED TO DEATH**

**So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

In a stoning, the victim was stripped naked and his hands bound; then he was paraded out of town, where he was placed on a scaffold about nine feet high. The first witness pushed him off the scaffold; the second dropped a large stone on his head or chest. Then bystanders pelted the dying man with stones. No mourning was permitted for the dead man.

**Numbers 15:37** The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying,

- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying** - Nu 15:37-41 relate to the laws of the tassels worn as a physical reminder of Yahweh's commandments

**Numbers 15:38** "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 cord of blue.

NET Numbers 15:38 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them to make tassels for themselves on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and put a blue thread on the tassel of the corners.

NLT Numbers 15:38 "Give the following instructions to the people of Israel: Throughout the generations to come you must make tassels for the hems of your clothing and attach them with a blue cord.

ESV Numbers 15:38 "Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner.

NIV Numbers 15:38 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel.

KJV Numbers 15:38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

YLT Numbers 15:38 'Speak unto the sons of Israel, and thou hast said unto them, and they have made for themselves fringes on the skirts of their garments, to their generations, and they have put on the fringe of the skirt a ribbon of blue,

LXE Numbers 15:38 Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt tell them; and let them make for themselves fringes upon the borders of their garments throughout their generations: and ye shall put upon the fringes of the borders a lace of blue.

ASV Numbers 15:38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of each border a cord of blue:

CSB Numbers 15:38 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them that throughout their generations they are to make tassels for the corners of their garments, and put a blue cord on the tassel at each corner.

- fringes in the borders: The word {tzitzith} properly denotes an ornament resembling a flower. From ver. 39, we learn that these were emblematical of the commands of God. That there is any analogy between a fringe and a precept, it would be bold to assert; but when a thing is appointed to represent another, no matter how different, that first object becomes the legitimate representative or sign of the other. De 22:12 Mt 9:20 23:5 Lu 8:44
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 22:12 "You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself.

**NET NOTE on tassels** - Heb "twisted threads" (גְּדִילִים, gédilim) appears to be synonymous with צִיצִית ([tsitsith](#)) which, in Num 15:38, occurs in a passage instructing Israel to remember the covenant. Perhaps that is the purpose of the tassels here as well. Cf. KJV, ASV "fringes"; NAB "twisted cords."



Blue Tassel on Each Corner

### TASSELS ON ONE'S GARMENT

**Matthew Henry** - Provision had been just now made by the law for the pardon of sins of ignorance and infirmity; now here is an [expedient](#) provided for the preventing of such sins. They are ordered to make fringes upon the borders of their garments, which were to be memorandums to them of their duty, that they might not sin through forgetfulness.

**Currid** - The legislative section of chapter 15 has a fitting conclusion. It deals with the command of God for Israelites to wear tassels with a blue cords (cf. Deut. 22:12). These are reminders that Israel is to keep God's law. (Ibid)

**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 cord of blue** - Why on **each corner**? Presence on 4 corners would make it very easy to see the blue tassel. Why **blue**? "Perhaps a blue thread was commanded because the ark of the covenant was covered with a blue cloth, blue curtains adorned the tabernacle, and blue was in the high priest's garments. The color blue was full of holy reminders." (Guzik)

**Larry Richards** - "A blue cord on each tassel" Num. 15:38. Blue represents royalty and deity. It was the dominant color in the high priest's garments and the color of the cloth that wrapped the ark of the covenant. The blue thread in the tassels to be attached to the clothing of ordinary Hebrews reminded them that each believer was holy, a community called to be a royal priesthood.

**Matthew Henry** - The Jews being a peculiar people, they were thus distinguished from their neighbours in their dress, as well as in their diet, and taught by such little instances of singularity not to be conformed to the way of the heathen in greater things. Thus likewise they proclaimed themselves Jews wherever they were, as those that were not ashamed of God and his law. Our Saviour, being made under the law, wore these fringes; hence we read of the hem or border, of his garment, Mt. 9:20. These borders the Pharisees enlarged, that they might be thought more holy and devout than other people. The phylacteries were different things;



these were their own invention, the fringes were a divine institution. The Jews at this day wear them, saying, when they put them on, Blessed be he who has sanctified us unto himself, and commanded us to wear fringes.

If some outward sign helps us to remember, then let us use it;  
only let us ever fear lest we become so accustomed to it, that we forget its true significance.  
-- G Campbell Morgan

**Bush - Bid them that they make fringes in the borders of their garments.** Heb. tzitzith, from tzitz, a flower, probably from the fact that the fringe was an ornamental appendage somewhat resembling a flower. The English term occurs Deut. 22:12, "Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters (Heb. wings) of thy vesture," but in this case the original is gedilim, of a somewhat different, but related purport, as it denotes the tufts or tassels which were inserted in the fringe. From the threads or thrums of a fringe hanging down from the edge of the garment somewhat like locks of hair, the original word tzitzith is so rendered Ezek. 8:3, "And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head." It is rendered in the Gr. by κράσπεδα kraspeda, which occurs Mat. 23:5, where our version has "borders"—"they make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments," i. e. the fringes. "There have been various conjectures as to the object of this law. The most probable is that the 'fringe' was intended as a sort of badge or livery, by which, as well as by circumcision and by the fashion of their beards, and by their peculiar diet, the Hebrews were to be distinguished from other people. Be this as it may, much superstition came in the end to be connected with the use of these fringes. The Pharisees are severely censured by our Saviour for the ostentatious hypocrisy with which they made broad the 'borders' of their garments. Our Lord himself wore the fringe, which is commonly called in the New Testament the 'hem or border,' and it was this part of his dress which the sick desired to touch, under the impression that the contact would make them whole. It was probably the peculiar sanctity of this part of the dress, which directed attention to it in preference, for we may be certain that Christ himself did not point it out. We think that we may thus obtain a new light on the subject which has escaped observation. In Luke 8:43, a woman having an issue of blood comes behind him, touches the 'border' of his garment, and is healed. She afterwards falls down at his feet and acknowledges what she has done. Hence the 'fringe,' so to call it, was not, as the modern Jews think, before exclusively, but behind also, if not wholly behind; and hence also the same fringe could scarcely have been at the bottom of the robe, as the other account supposes. We may therefore ask whether it was not in fact such an embroidered edge, of various breadth, as we now see wrought with colored worsted or silk around the opening for the neck and down the breast of the abba, or woollen mantle, now in use among the Arabs (see the note on Ex. 22:27) and which is a very ancient article of dress, and probably in use among the Jews. This border might, on the one hand, be touched by a person behind the wearer, while on the other, the part in front would be under his own eye, as the law seems to require. We would by no means make a stand upon this conjecture; but being founded on a real Oriental usage, it is at least entitled to as much attention as the others, which are not so."—Pict. Bible.

**Bush - on the corners of their garments throughout their generations** In the borders of their garments. Heb. "On the wings." The skirt, edge, or border of a garment is usually called a wing, as Ruth 3:9, 1 Sam. 15:17, Deut. 22:30, Zech. 8:13. So the four corners of the earth are called its four wings, Is. 11:12, Ezek. 7:2, Job 37:3. The fringes were the threads left unwoven at the end of the web, on the edge of which, or just above the fringe, was put a band or lace of blue, or rather of purple color, binding the fringe, which was of the same color with the garment, and that was usually white. This band or ribbon served not only to distinguish them from other people, but when they looked down upon it they were reminded of the duty they owed to God, as a holy and consecrated nation. Such among them as laid claim to greater sanctity than others, enlarged their fringes and extended them to so great a length that they sometimes swept the ground, which made them the more noticeable, of which they were ambitious. The modern Jews wear a long tassel at each corner, consisting of eight white woollen threads, knotted with five knots like small buttons, and open and untwisted at the ends.

**and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue-** The blue color, the color of the firmament of heaven, with which the purple was closely allied, seems to have been deemed of peculiar sanctity, and as it was the color of the priest's robe, so it would naturally tend to put the Israelites in mind that they were a kingdom of priests, and thus bound to act in accordance with their holy designation. (Bush)

The effect of the blue tassel would be like "tying a string around the finger," serving as constantly visible reminders to obey God's commands.

**Henry Morris** - The Hebrew word for "fringes" evidently means "tassels." It is used elsewhere only in Ezekiel 8:3, there translated "lock" (that is, of hair). It seems primarily to have been a mem

**Guzik** - We might imagine an Israelite being tempted into some kind of sin, and then catching sight of his own distinctive garments—reminding him of who he is, and reminding him that others can see who he is: A child of God, and not a child of the sin he is contemplating.

The tassels were small things, yet they carried a big message:

Israel belonged to God and must respect and obey His commandments

-- Warren Wiersbe

**NET NOTE** - This is a reference to the צִיצִית (tsitsit), the fringes on the borders of the robes. They were meant to hang from the corners of the upper garment (Deut 22:12), which was worn on top of the clothing. The tassel was probably made by twisting the overhanging threads of the garment into a knot that would hang down. This was a reminder of the covenant. The tassels were retained down through history, and today more elaborate prayer shawls with tassels are worn during prayer. The blue may represent the heavenly origin of the Law, or perhaps, since it is a royal color, the majesty of the LORD.

**BSB** - The people were to add tassels to their garments as a reminder to obey the commandments of God and to live holy lives before Him, and as a reminder of God's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. According to Jewish tradition, there were eight threads and five knots in each tassel, suggesting the number thirteen. The numerical value of the Hebrew word for tassels, sisis, is 600. In this way they were reminded of the 613 laws of the Hebrew legal code. This passage is the origin of the Jewish tallit (Heb.) or prayer shawl (cf. Deut. 22:12).

**Tassel** (06734) (**tsitsith**) a feminine noun signifying a tassel, an ornamental tuft of threads. Hartley - It is debated whether *ṣīṣīt* indicates the fringe around the edges of a garment or a tassel at each corner; Snaith suggests the threads were twisted in groups to form "a fringe of tassels." A cord of blue was to be placed on each tassel. Traditionally they were woven out of eight threads tied into five knots. These tassels served to remind the people to keep Yahweh's commandments and not to follow their own desires (Numbers 15:38ff.; cf. Deut. 22:12; Matthew 9:20; Matthew 14:36; Matthew 23:5). For a faith based on a saving history and a law, memory is crucial to preserving its integrity. It also means "a lock"; in a vision the Spirit transported Ezekiel by a lock of hair to Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8:3). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Used only 3x - Num. 15:38; Num. 15:39; Ezek. 8:3

**Corner** (03671) (**kanaph**) means a sing, or the corner of a garment. Appendage of a bird with which it flies, denoting speed as well as protection. **Gilbrant** - The psalmist desired to be hidden in God, "under the shadow of [his] wings" (Pss. 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4). Ruth also was blessed by her benefactor, Boaz, that she be given full reward for her faithfulness by Yahweh God of Israel, "under whose wings thou art come to trust" (Ruth 2:12). Wings also describe armies, such as the Assyrian conquerors, whose armies filled the land of Israel (Isa. 8:8) by "stretching out [their] wings." *Kānāph* also means "edge," "extremity" such as the edge of a garment (e.g., 1 Sam. 15:27; Zech. 8:23; Ezek. 5:3; Hag. 2:12). This usage for the noun is attested in cognates in Ugaritic, Yaudic and Egyptian Aramaic (with no nuance of "wing"). The extension of this concept to include "lap" is found in Jewish Aramaic, while the nuance of "side" is attested in Arabic and "edge" in Old South Arabian. An ancient Near Eastern custom of wrapping oneself in a mantle created the expression, "edge of a bed covering." One of the laws of the Torah forbids a man to violate his father's bed, i.e., "uncover his father's bed covering," which means to have sexual relations with his father's wife or expose the nakedness of his father. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

Kanaph - 85v - bird\*(1), corner(1), corners(4), covering(1), each other(1), edge(5), edges(1), ends(3), fold(2), garment(1), kind(3), skirt(3), skirts(1), sorts(1), wing(14), winged(5), wings(58), wings were each other(1), wingspan(1). Gen. 1:21; Gen. 7:14; Exod. 19:4; Exod. 25:20; Exod. 37:9; Lev. 1:17; Num. 15:38; Deut. 4:17; Deut. 22:12; Deut. 27:20; Deut. 32:11; Ruth 2:12; Ruth 3:9; 1 Sam. 15:27; 1 Sam. 24:4; 1 Sam. 24:5; 1 Sam. 24:11; 2 Sam. 22:11; 1 Ki. 6:24; 1 Ki. 6:27; 1 Ki. 8:6; 1 Ki. 8:7; 2 Chr. 3:11; 2 Chr. 3:12; 2 Chr. 3:13; 2 Chr. 5:7; 2 Chr. 5:8; Job 37:3; Job 38:13; Job 39:13; Job 39:26; Ps. 17:8; Ps. 18:10; Ps. 36:7; Ps. 57:1; Ps. 61:4; Ps. 63:7; Ps. 68:13; Ps. 78:27; Ps. 91:4; Ps. 104:3; Ps. 139:9; Ps. 148:10; Prov. 1:17; Prov. 23:5; Eccl. 10:20; Isa. 6:2; Isa. 8:8; Isa. 10:14; Isa. 11:12; Isa. 18:1; Isa. 24:16; Jer. 2:34; Jer. 48:40; Jer. 49:22; Ezek. 1:6; Ezek. 1:8; Ezek. 1:9; Ezek. 1:11; Ezek. 1:23; Ezek. 1:24; Ezek. 1:25; Ezek. 3:13; Ezek. 5:3; Ezek. 7:2; Ezek. 10:5; Ezek. 10:8; Ezek. 10:12; Ezek. 10:16; Ezek. 10:19; Ezek. 10:21; Ezek. 11:22; Ezek. 16:8; Ezek. 17:3; Ezek. 17:7; Ezek. 17:23; Ezek. 39:4; Ezek. 39:17; Dan. 9:27; Hos. 4:19; Hag. 2:12; Zech. 5:9; Zech. 8:23; Mal. 4:2

**Cord** (06616) (**pathil** from **pathal** = to twist) means a cord or thread. In five passages, *pāthîl* depicts a "blue cord" (Exo. 28:28, 37; 39:21, 31; Num. 15:38). In Judg. 16:9, the noun is translated "thread of" tow, and in Ezek. 40:3, a "cord of" flax, both of which depict fine fibre such as is burned in the flame. In Gen. 38:18, 25, *pāthîl* refers to a cord, and in Exo. 39:3, it appears as threads of gold "to work it in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet." In Num. 19:15, *pāthîl* is used as an adjective to describe a container without a lid "bound" to it.

**Pathil** - 11v - cord(6), cords(1), line(1), string(1), threads(1), tied down(1). Gen. 38:18; Gen. 38:25; Exod. 28:28; Exod. 28:37; Exod. 39:3; Exod. 39:21; Exod. 39:31; Num. 15:38; Num. 19:15; Jdg. 16:9; Ezek. 40:

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**The Color Of Blue** - The children of Israel were to make tassels on the corners of their garments with "a blue thread in the tassels" (Numbers 15:38). The tassels reminded them to "**do all My commandments, and be holy for your God**" (v.40). The blue thread—the color of the heavens above—spoke of His immeasurable power and saving grace.

**We still need reminders today.** In the fuss and frenzy of our busy lives, we easily forget God and His passion for us. We forget that

He lives within and around us and loves us with eternal affection. It helps to have something to signify His presence. Blue can be one of those signs.

"The first step is to remember," says Aslan in C. S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*. Aslan, a figure of Christ, tells Jill to "remember the signs" he has given her.

If you learn God's signs—like the significance of the color **blue**—it will be easier to remember God's love. **Blue** can remind you of the invisible realm above and all around, unseen and yet as real as anything you can see. A mountain lake, a glacial crevasse, an alpine forget-me-not, a cerulean sky—all remind us of heaven and God's unfathomable love. - David Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When you see blue, think of God's love, and especially His love for you.

This is my Father's world!  
He shines in all that's fair;  
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass—  
He speaks to me everywhere.  
—Babcock

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**G Campbell Morgan** - Blue Tassel - This was a sign for the coming days of wilderness wanderings. The first part of the chapter is occupied with the repetition of certain laws already given, and their enforcement as binding. This repetition and enforcement are explained by the opening words: "**When ye be come into the land.**" In the Divine discipline of the people for their failure in faith, they were about to turn their faces from the land which they might at once have possessed; and in this reiteration of certain laws for their dwelling within that land, there was at once a prophecy of the ultimate fulfilment of Divine intention, and a means of preserving in their minds the principles of the law by which they were to be governed. It would also serve to remind them that even in the wilderness they were to live as those belonging to the land, even though for the time being they were excluded from it. The purpose of this cord of blue was distinctly declared. It was a symbol of the deepest truth concerning their national life. The colour blue was always the symbol of heavenly beauty and thus they were constantly reminded that they were under the direct government of God. It was to help them to re-member the one great fact which they had forgotten, when they had permitted the difficulties of the way to fill them with fear. In the fuller light and glory of our fellow-ship with the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Spirit, such material signs should not be necessary, but it would be a daring thing to say that they are wholly wrong. If some outward sign helps us to remember, then let us use it; only let us ever fear lest we become so accustomed to it, that we forget its true significance.

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**Holy Blue** - In the forests of northern Europe and Asia lives little animal called the ermine, known for his snow-white fur in winter. He instinctively protects his white coat against anything that would soil it. Fur hunters take advantage of this unusual trait of the ermine. They don't set a snare to catch him, but instead they find his home, which is usually a cleft in a rock or a hollow in an old tree. They smear the entrance and interior with grime. Then the hunters set their dogs loose to find and chase the ermine. The frightened animal flees toward home but doesn't enter because of the filth. Rather than soil his white coat, he is trapped by the dogs and captured while preserving his purity. For the ermine, purity is more precious than life. **The Lord wants His people to keep themselves separated from the filth of this world at all cost.** In (Nu 15:38,40) the Lord told the Jews to put a blue thread on the borders of their clothes. When they saw the blue, they were to remember God's holy purpose for their lives and to keep a distance from sin. Do we remind ourselves often of our high and holy purpose for living? The best way to live in the world is to live above it.- Henry G Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

"Oh worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness,  
Bow down before Him, His glory proclaim,  
With gold of obedience & incense of lowliness,  
Kneel & adore Him, the LORD is His name.  
---J. S. B. Monsell

Daily blessings are daily reminders of God.

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - Numbers 15:38 A cord of blue. (R.V.)**

Throughout their generations the Israelites were bidden to wear it. It is the symbol of depth, of love, of Heaven. The azure sky, the glacier-rift, the deep lake, the far horizon, the eye of the hopeful, buoyant, tender nature — all tell the same story of deep and constant love, which mirrors below God's heaven of love above. Therefore to wear this cord of blue was to be kept in mind of the eternal and unseen. No outward symbol is needed by us. The very best, after awhile, becomes time and commonplace. We get so accustomed to it that it ceases to stir our thoughts. But if we will entrust ourselves to the Holy Spirit, He will teach us all things, and

keep us always in mind. He is the blessed Remembrancer, whose mission is to bring Christ to our thought and keep Him there, the prominent object of our soul's vision.

The object of this cord of blue was to restrain the people from going about "after their own heart and their own eyes." We need to be kept from the same, that we may walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. In our resolutions, our energies, our acts of consecration, our Christian activities, we are all too apt to go at the dictates of our heart and eyes. May God forgive us! It has been the source of our perpetual failure and defeat. There is a more excellent way. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to keep the blue cord of the Christ — memory ever before our gaze, that we may become utterly absorbed in his beauty and glory, in doing his will, and in executing his commands. Let us seek to be bound to our Master, who is Love, by that same cord, that we may never for a moment forget the demands of the unseen and eternal.

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Just as the tassels in ancient Jewish worship served as visual aids, so the cross is a powerful reminder of the work of Christ for Christians today.

However, what was an obvious symbol of Christianity a century or two ago is no longer so obvious. The cross has become little more than a popular shape for a pendant worn by Christians and non-Christians alike. It is gilded with gold or studded with diamonds to make it beautiful. But actually, there isn't anything beautiful about the cross; it was used as an instrument of torture, suffering and death.

But it is wondrous. To the Christian who knows what Jesus accomplished on it, the cross is a symbol that conveys wonder — wonder that God should love us. Wonder that Jesus would die for us. Wonder that the cross spanned a gulf that separated us from our Creator.

Like the tassels the Lord commanded the people of Israel to attach to their clothing, the cross serves as a reminder each time we see one. When we see a cross, we recall that Jesus tells us to take up our cross daily in order to keep our eyes focused on him. What does that mean for us today? Only as we make the Lord the object of our personal worship can we fully celebrate the benefits he made available to us on that "cross of wonder."

We see many crosses around us — in window panes, in the lower case t, through building profiles, perched atop church steeples. Let these remind us of the cross of Christ, the focus of God's love and forgiveness so wondrously displayed through his Son.

#### PRAYER

Remind me, Father, of ...

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**H A Ironside** - Blue is the heavenly color. The thread of blue on the border of the Israelite's garments was to remind the wearer that he belonged to the God of Heaven and was responsible to act accordingly. So believers today are to walk as heavenly men and women in the midst of all the sin and corruption of this world. Our citizenship is in Heaven (Php 3:20-21+). We represent another country. Here we are but strangers and pilgrims. The heavenly character should ever be manifested in all our words and ways.

Lord, since we sing as pilgrims,  
Oh, give us pilgrims' ways,  
Low thoughts of self, befitting  
Proclaimers of Thy praise.  
Oh, make us each more holy,  
In spirit, pure and meek,  
More like to heavenly citizens,  
As more of heaven we speak.

—M. Bowley

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**Numbers 15:39** "It shall be tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot,

BGT Numbers 15:39 κα̣ σται μ̣ν ν̣ το ς κρασπ̣ δοις κα̣ ψεσθε ατ̣ κα̣ μνησθ̣ σεσθε πασ ν̣ τ ν̣ ντολ ν̣  
κυρ ου κα̣ ποι̣ σετε ατ̣ ς κα̣ ο̣ διαστραφ̣ σεσθε π̣ σω τ ν̣ διανοι ν̣ μ̣ν κα̣ π̣ σω τ ν̣ φθαλμ̣ ν̣ μ̣ν ν̣ ο ς με ς  
κπορν̣ε̣ ετε π̣ σω ατ̣ ν̣

NET Numbers 15:39 You must have this tassel so that you may look at it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and obey them and so that you do not follow after your own heart and your own eyes that lead you to unfaithfulness.

NLT Numbers 15:39 When you see the tassels, you will remember and obey all the commands of the LORD instead of following your own desires and defiling yourselves, as you are prone to do.

ESV Numbers 15:39 And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after.

NIV Numbers 15:39 You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes.

KJV Numbers 15:39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:

YLT Numbers 15:39 and it hath been to you for a fringe, and ye have seen it, and have remembered all the commands of Jehovah, and have done them, and ye search not after your heart, and after your eyes, after which ye are going a-whoring;

LXE Numbers 15:39 And it shall be on your fringes, and ye shall look on them, and ye shall remember all the commands of the Lord, and do them: and ye shall not turn back after your imaginations, and after the sight of your eyes in the things after which ye go a whoring;

ASV Numbers 15:39 and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Jehovah, and do them; and that ye follow not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to play the harlot;

CSB Numbers 15:39 These will serve as tassels for you to look at, so that you may remember all the LORD's commands and obey them and not become unfaithful by following your own heart and your own eyes.

- remember: Ex 13:9 De 6:6-9 11:18-21,28-32 Pr 3:1
- ye seek not: De 29:19 Job 31:7 Pr 28:26 Ec 11:9 Jer 9:14 Eze 6:9
- go a whoring: Ex 34:15,16 Ps 73:27 106:39 Ho 2:2 Jas 4:4
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



A TASSEL (tzitzit)

## REMEMBERING AND DOING

The end of remembering is doing!  
- Bush

There is an old saying that "the clothes make the man," and here in Numbers 15 we see the "thread" makes the man, so to speak.

**It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD-** The tassels were visual reminders of God's laws, which would presumably serve as an impediment to committing sin! The holy blue should serve to draw their mind to their Holy God.

The three verbs are very important - **look at, remember, do**. First they needed to see the reminder. Then they needed to **remember**

the reminder. And then they need to do what the reminder symbolized and that was to be holy.

**THOUGHT** - The blue tassel reminder calls to mind Peter's charge to believers to holiness declaring "Therefore, prepare (gird) your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts (cf don't play the harlot!) which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, **b e** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **holy** yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." (1 Peter 1:13-16+)

**Matthew Henry** - The intention of it was to remind them that they were a peculiar people. They were not appointed for the trimming and adorning of their clothes, but to stir up their "sincere mind by way of reminder." (2 Pt. 3:1+), that they might look upon the fringe and remember the commandments. **Many look upon their ornaments to feed their pride**, but they must look upon these ornaments **to awaken their consciences to a sense of their duty, that their religion might constantly beset them, and that they might carry it about with them, as they did their clothes, wherever they went.** If they were tempted to sin, the fringe would be a monitor to them not to break God's commandments: If a duty was forgotten to be done in its season, the fringe would remind them of it.

**Eugene Merrill** - Prevention is better than cure, and the first generation couldn't seem to remember much longer than three days (11:1-3; Allen 1990:828), so the Lord gave Israel an item of decoration on their clothing that would remind them of their sacred office and duty. Every time they glanced down and saw a tassel swinging from their clothes, they should have been reminded of the law and been urged to explore its implications. Swinging in silent exhortation, "Be holy to your God" (15:40), the tassels reminded the people that they were a national priesthood (Exod 19:6). (CBC)

**Bush** - This appendage to their dress was appointed as a badge a memento, by which they were constantly reminded of their peculiar relation to God, and of their obligations to walk holily and religiously before him.

**NIVSB** - As one would walk along, the tassels would swirl about at the edge of one's garment (cf. v. 39), serving as excellent memory prods to obey God's commands (cf. Dt 6:4-9).

**Wiersbe** - The tassels were small things, yet they carried a big message: Israel belonged to God and must respect and obey His commandments. It is not wrong to have reminders that point us to God, provided they don't replace God or His Word. We are to "seek those things which are above" (Col. 3:1). (WWBC)

**So as to do them** - First the positive. So not just **remember** them but **do** them. James 1:22+ has a similar thought '**prove** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.."

**And not follow after your own heart and your own eyes** - **Your own heart** and **eyes** would in essence describe our fallen flesh which wants to **follow after** that which pleases the flesh, not that which pleases Yahweh. We fail to guard our eyes and evil comes into our heart and corrupts it and then comes out lusts and evil acts.

**THOUGHT** - Looking at the tassel should serve to impede following after their **own eyes**. Today we do not have a blue tassel to look at but a Beautiful Savior to look at, so may we continually fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2+) and not on the **passing pleasures of sin** (Heb 11:25+).

**John Currid** has an interesting note on **follow** - There is a subtle reference in verse 39 to the account of the spies in Numbers 13-14. The text says that the Israelites should not '**follow**' **after their own hearts and eyes**. This verb is the main one used in the episode of the spies, and it means 'to scout', 'spy out', or 'explore' (Nu 13:2, 16, 17). The scouts' 'spying out' (Nu 14:34) led to their 'playing the harlot' (Nu 14:33). The tassels and cords are to remind Israel not to act like the scouts—that is, according to their own inclinations. Israel would then have to bear the same consequences. (EPSC-Nu)

**Follow** (08446)(**tur**) means to to seek out, spy out, explore, to go into a land and search it out (Nu 10:33; 13:2, 16, 17, 21, 25, 32; 14:6, 7, 34, 36, 38). Baker adds that tur "depicts persons following their own hearts or desires, seeking them out to pursue them rather than the Lord's will (Num. 15:39). It refers to merchants, those who seek out wares (1 Ki. 10:15; 2 Chr. 9:14). It is used of the instincts and inclinations of an animal to search out its habitat (Job 39:8). It refers to a person serving as a guide who explores the way for others (Prov. 12:26). It is used figuratively of exploring and investigating wisdom and its ways (Eccl. 1:13; 2:3; 7:25). It refers to the Lord's previous exploration (nasb selection) of the land of Canaan before giving it to His people (Ezek. 20:6). (CWD-OT)

Tur - 24x in 23v - explore(1), explored(1), explores(1), follow(1), guide(1), investigate(1), seek(2),



selected(1), spied(5), spy(6), spying(2), traders\*(2). Num. 10:33; Num. 13:2; Num. 13:16; Num. 13:17; Num. 13:21; Num. 13:25; Num. 13:32; Num. 14:6; Num. 14:7; Num. 14:34; Num. 14:36; Num. 14:38; Num. 15:39; Deut. 1:33; Jdg. 1:23; 1 Ki. 10:15; 2 Chr. 9:14; Job 39:8; Prov. 12:26; Eccl. 1:13; Eccl. 2:3; Eccl. 7:25; Ezek. 20:6

**Bush - That ye seek not after your own heart, etc.** Heb. tâthoru, from the root toor, which we have explained in the Note on Nu 14:36, where it is employed in reference to the searching or exploring the land of Canaan by the spies, and implies, as we have shown, a turning or circling about in opposition to pursuing a direct and straight-forward course. Greek "Ye shall not turn back after your imaginations, and after (the sight of) your eyes in the things after which ye go a whoring." Chaldee "Ye shall not err, or wander, after the cogitation of your heart." The Chaldee term here used does not signify, says Fagius, mere cogitation, but that kind of thought which proceeds from an impious curiosity, when we do not simply believe in and cleave to the word of God, but indulge in a spirit of vain speculation and disputation, against the nature of true faith. The "seeking after their own heart and their own eyes" implies therefore a giving way to their own imaginations and inventions in the matter of worship and general obedience, and lapsing into idolatry, which is spiritual fornication and adultery.

**After which you played the harlot** - It literally says, "**which you go whoring after them.**" Here **played the harlot** indicates this is something Israel did. In fact in the **Lxx** the verb used to translate **played the harlot** ([zanah](#) - below) is [ekporneuo](#) which literally means to indulge in flagrant immorality, be given to fornication, misbehave sexually as in Jude 1:7+. **BDAG** says [ekporneuo](#) means to "indulge in illicit sexual relations/debauchery."

**Play the harlot** ([02181](#))([zanah](#)) is a verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute and refers to marital infidelity or unfaithfulness. It was word used elsewhere in the OT to describe prostitution (Lev 21:7, Pr 7:10). Many of the uses of [zanah](#) are figurative describing Israel's (Jehovah's "wife") commission of "spiritual prostitution" by having "intercourse" so to speak with other gods (cp 1 Co 6:16). Indeed, idolatry is looked upon as prostitution (Isa 50:1, 2, 3; 54:6, 7, 8; Jer 2:1, 2, 3; 3:1ff; Hos 2:1ff; Jas 4:4+; [Rev 2:4+](#)). In addition [zanah](#) describes Israel's improper relationships with other nations (Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 23:30; Nah. 3:4). "The thought seems to be of having relations with these nations for the sake of political and monetary benefit, although in the case of Nineveh the added element of alluring, deceitful tactics leading on to oppressive dominance is implied." (TWOT) "A third figurative meaning is found in [Isa 1:21](#), where the Israelites' departure from God's approved moral standards is called harlotry." (TWOT)

**NET NOTE** - The verb for "whoring" may be interpreted to mean "act unfaithfully." So, the idea is these influences lead to unfaithful activity: "after which you act unfaithfully."

The blue tassel recalls the story of the woman who touched Jesus' garment in Mark 5:30- and was healed. Did she touch a blue tassel? We cannot be absolutely sure but certainly that is possible.

**Zodhiates** has an interesting thought regarding the NT parallel to a blue tassel - The Israelites were commanded to put a "ribbon" of blue or sky-color on the fringes (Num. 15:38), representative of the blue appearance at the extremity of the sky. Wearing such "ribbons" of blue on the borders of their garments was meant to remind them of all the commandments of the Lord. **For Christians, the figure in the NT** is the putting on of Christ, the divine light (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27). Having this in mind, they should walk as children of light, putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24). This figure was to have reminded believers that they should walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 26), being adorned with the accompanying graces (Gal. 5:22, 23 [cf. Num. 15:39, 40]). (Word Study NT Dictionary)

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#### THOUGHT - On How to Maintain a Walk of Holiness...

- **SEE > REMEMBER > DO** – Timeless principle to guard and guide a walk of holiness.
- **See** Jesus' Sacrifice (Begin day in Word) > **Remember** the Cost of redemption (cf 1 Cor 6:19-20+) > **Do** in power of His Spirit
- **Note: Expulsive power of a new affection** (SEE>REMEMBER>DO) effectively annuls the power of the flesh (see Gal 5:16-17+). But it needs to be a continual practice!

**Numbers 15:40 so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God.**

BGT Numbers 15:40 πως ν μνησθ τε κα ποι σητε π σας τ ς ντολ ς μου κα σεσθε γιοι τ θε μ ν

NET Numbers 15:40 Thus you will remember and obey all my commandments and be holy to your God.

NLT Numbers 15:40 The tassels will help you remember that you must obey all my commands and be holy to your God.

ESV Numbers 15:40 So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God.

NIV Numbers 15:40 Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God.

KJV Numbers 15:40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

YLT Numbers 15:40 so that ye remember and have done all My commands, and ye have been holy to your God;

LXE Numbers 15:40 that ye may remember and perform all my commands, and ye shall be holy unto your God.

ASV Numbers 15:40 that ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

CSB Numbers 15:40 This way you will remember and obey all My commands and be holy to your God.

NKJ Numbers 15:40 "and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God.

NRS Numbers 15:40 So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and you shall be holy to your God.

NAB Numbers 15:40 Thus you will remember to keep all my commandments and be holy to your God.

NJB Numbers 15:40 'This will remind you of all my orders; put them into practice, and you will be consecrated to your God.

- **be holy:** Lev 11:44,45 19:2 Ro 12:1 Eph 1:4 Col 1:2 1Th 4:7 1Pe 1:15,16
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 23:5 "But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments.

**Comment** - As a sign of supposed advanced holiness, the Jews of Jesus' day would lengthen their tassels, which was sheer hypocrisy for inside they were full of dead men's bones (defiled)! They wanted others to see their piety and supposed obedience to the Law.

## PURPOSE OF THE BLUE REMINDERS

**So that** - Term of purpose. The purpose of the blue tassels is explained.

**you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God**- Notice that two verbs from verse 39 are repeated "remember" and "do". Can you see how one could misinterpret this passage? One might read the doing of the all the commandments as resulting in one being holy. This may be related to modern orthodox Jews on whose prayer shawls there is a Hebrew inscription around the neck of the Tallit (Prayer Shawl) that reads...

**"Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who makes us holy with commandments, and has commanded us to wrap ourselves in the tzitzit."**

"The end of remembering is doing; and we have reason to be thankful for any appointed means or appliances which shall assist us in impressing our minds more deeply with our religious obligations, and keep us in the way of the actual performance of every duty. The Israelites were not to regard the wearing of these fringes as having in it any real intrinsic sanctity, but only as an instrumental and sensible help to the dullness and sluggishness of their minds in relation to the deportment which they were required, as a holy people, to observe." (Bush)

Heavenly Father, help us now  
At Thy feet to humbly bow;  
Take away all thought of sin,  
Make us clean and pure within.  
--Bartels

Especially in the context of the next passage, one is reminded of the great charge in Leviticus...

Leviticus 11:44+ 'For **I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves** therefore, and **be holy**, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.

**Wiersbe** - When they dressed each morning, the Jews would see the tassels and be reminded that they were God's people, obligated to obey His will. Perhaps the blue threads would remind them that their God was in heaven, seeing everything they did. As they walked about during the day, they would notice the tassels and remember God's commandments, and likewise when they prepared for sleep at night. No matter how many idols they might see during the day, the tassels reminded them that it was Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had delivered them from Egypt; and they were to worship and serve Him alone.

**LASB** - The tassels were to remind people not to seek after their own lustful desires, but to seek the Lord. Idol worship is self-centered, focusing on what a person can get from serving an idol. Good luck, prosperity, long life, and success in battle were expected from the gods. So were power and prestige. The worship of God is the opposite. Believers are to be selfless rather than self-centered. Instead of expecting God to serve us, we are to serve him, expecting nothing in return. We serve God for who he is, not for what we get from him.

**Numbers 15:41 "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."**

NET Numbers 15:41 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."

NLT Numbers 15:41 I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt that I might be your God. I am the LORD your God!"

ESV Numbers 15:41 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."

NIV Numbers 15:41 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God.' "

KJV Numbers 15:41 I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.

YLT Numbers 15:41 I am Jehovah your God, who hath brought you out from the land of Egypt to become your God; I, Jehovah, am your God.'

LXE Numbers 15:41 I am the Lord your God that brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God.

ASV Numbers 15:41 I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am Jehovah your God.

CSB Numbers 15:41 I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am Yahweh your God."

NKJ Numbers 15:41 "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."

NRS Numbers 15:41 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.

- Lev 22:33 25:38 Ps 105:45 Jer 31:31-33 32:37-41 Eze 36:25-27 Heb 11:16 1Pe 2:9,10
- [Numbers 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Leviticus 20:7+ 'You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.

**I AM YAHWEH  
YOUR GOD**

**I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God-** Note that God says he is (1) their God, (2) their Deliverer and (3) their Possession! These truths in context would/should serve to motivate them to **"do all My commandments and be holy to your God."**

This repeated description **I am the LORD your God** is frequently associated with a call to live a separated or holy life.

**I am the LORD your God** - 40x in 39v in the OT - Ex 6:7; Ex 16:12; Ex 20:2; Lev. 11:44; Lev. 18:2; Lev. 18:4; Lev. 18:30; Lev. 19:3; Lev. 19:4; Lev. 19:10; Lev. 19:25; Lev. 19:31; Lev. 19:34; Lev. 19:36; Lev. 20:7; Lev. 20:24; Lev. 23:22; Lev. 23:43; Lev. 24:22; Lev. 25:17; Lev. 25:38; Lev. 25:55; Lev. 26:1; Lev. 26:13; Num. 10:10; Num. 15:41; Deut. 5:6; Deut. 29:6; Jdg. 6:10; Isa. 41:13; Isa. 43:3; Isa. 48:17; Isa. 51:15; Ezek. 20:5; Ezek. 20:7; Ezek. 20:19; Ezek. 20:20; Joel 2:27; Joel 3:17

**THOUGHT** - As blood bought, heaven bound believers we need to continually remember (our **"blue cord"**) that He is the LORD our God, that He lives within our bodies and that He is returning soon to take us home. Paul writes "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor 6:19-20+).

This is similar to the declaration made to Moses in his first encounter with the Lord in the desert (Ex 3:13–22+). Now Yahweh makes this affirmation to the entire nation. This would be a fitting end to this chapter filled with assorted instructions on offerings and sacrifices, for all these demands were firmly grounded in the fact that He had **brought** them out **from the land of Egypt to be their God**. He was their Redeemer and worthy to be worshipped by offerings and sacrifices.

**Warren Wiersbe** nails it - Thirty-eight years later, Moses will rehearse the law to the new generation in what we call the Book of Deuteronomy; he'll emphasize the fact that obedience brings life and blessing to the nation but disobedience brings death and cursing. Joshua will repeat this message after the nation enters Canaan and begins its conquest (Joshua 8:30–35). These same principles apply to God's people today.

**I am the LORD your God** - This is an amazing affirmation, filled with amazing grace and infinite mercy, for Israel had grumbled (again) to the point that He had even considered exterminating the entire nation. But here He reminds them, that in spite of their horrible sin of grumbling, He was still their God.

**THOUGHT** - Did we more firmly believe, and more frequently and seriously consider, that God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, we should see ourselves bound in duty, interest, and gratitude, to keep all his commandments. (Matthew Henry)

**John Currid** - There is an old adage that says, **'Apparel oft proclaims the man.'** There is no denying the fact that what one wears often gives the impression of what is important to a person. This is especially seen in this day when sports enthusiasts wear the jerseys or colours of the teams they support. Students often display what university they belong to by their T-shirts or hats. Urban gangs proclaim their loyalty to the group by the clothing that they wear. The Hebrews are to announce proudly by their clothing that they are people of the Word of God! And since they wear these garments all the time when they are out in public—in worship, in travel, and in every other endeavour of life—they are continually and repeatedly proclaiming the very basis of their life and existence for all the world to see. **The Westminster Confession of Faith tells us that the Word of God is 'to be the rule of faith and life' for the Christian. Now we do not announce that by wearing tassels and blue cords on our garments. But do you publicize it by the way you live? Do you proclaim it by the way you treat others? Do you announce it with a life of holiness? How do you show the world that the Bible is the basis of all that you do and all that you are?** (EPSC-Nu)

| THE LEVITICAL OFFERINGS<br>SUMMARIZED |                   |                   |                   |                 |                      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
|                                       | BURNT<br>OFFERING | GRAIN<br>OFFERING | PEACE<br>OFFERING | SIN<br>OFFERING | TRESPASS<br>OFFERING |

|                    |  |  |   |   |  |
|--------------------|--|--|---|---|--|
| Description        | 1) Sweet aroma<br>2) Voluntary<br>Heb = 'olah                              | 1) Sweet aroma<br>2) Voluntary<br>Heb = minchah  | 1) Sweet aroma<br>2) Voluntary<br>Heb = selemim   | 1) Non-sweet aroma<br>2) <b>Compulsory</b><br>Heb = chattath<br><i>Aka-Purification Offering</i><br><br>Atoning sacrifice of animals with no physical defects. The required offering varied with the situation and station of the person receiving its benefits | 1) Non-sweet aroma<br>2) <b>Compulsory</b><br>Heb = asam<br><i>Aka - Reparation or Guilt Offering</i><br><br>Atoning sacrifice of a ram or lamb with no physical defects |
|                    | Lv 1:3-17- <a href="#">note</a><br>Lv 6:8-13- <b>note</b><br>Cp Nu 15:1-16 | Lv 2:1-16- <b>note</b><br>Lv 6:14-18- <b>note</b><br>Lv 7:12-13- <b>note</b><br>Cp Nu 15:17-21 | Lv 3:1-17- <a href="#">note</a><br>Lv 7:11-21- <b>note</b> ,<br>Lv 7:28-34- <b>note</b><br>Cp Deut 12:20-28 | Lv 4:1-5:13- <b>note</b><br>Lv 6:24-30- <b>note</b><br>Cp Nu 15:22-31   | Lv 5:14-6:7- <b>note</b><br>Lv 7:1-7- <b>note</b>  |
|                    | IN COMMUNION<br>WITH GOD   |  |   | FOR COMMUNION<br>WITH GOD   |  |
| Purpose Summarized |  |  |   |   |  |

|                                    |  |  |  |   |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Purpose<br/>Detailed</b></p> | <p>1) To propitiate for sin in general - Lv 1:4-<a href="#">note</a></p> <p>2) To signify complete dedication &amp; consecration to God hence called the whole burnt offering.</p> <p>Acceptance before God for worship &amp; service</p> <p>Maintenance of fellowship with God</p> <p>Recognition of the sovereignty of God</p> | <p>This offering accompanied all burnt offerings.</p> <p>Signified homage &amp; thanksgiving to God.</p> <p>Recognition of God's bountiful provision</p> <p>Expression of dedication, praise &amp; thanksgiving to God</p> <p>Acknowledging God as the source of provision and prosperity.</p> | <p>Celebration of peace &amp; of God's covenant faithfulness...</p> <p>Generally expressed peace &amp; fellowship between the offerer &amp; God &amp; thus culminated in a community meal.</p> <p>1) Thank offering: express thanks for unexpected blessing or deliverance</p> <p>2) Votive Offering: to express gratitude for a blessing or deliverance granted when a vow had accompanied the petition.</p> <p>3) Freewill Offering: to express gratitude to God without regard to any specific blessing or deliverance.</p> | <p>To atone for sins committed unknowingly, especially where no restitution was possible. Note Nu 15:30, 31: The sin offering was of no avail in cases of defiant rebellion against God.</p> <p>Confession to God for impurities and offenses</p> <p>Recognition of the effects of one's sins on others in the covenant community</p> <p>Restoration of fellowship with God</p> | <p>To atone for sins committed in ignorance, esp where restitution was possible</p> <p>Confession to men for impurities and deceptions</p> <p>Willingness of the repentant believer to make proper restitution</p> |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|



|                    |   |   |   |  |   |
|--------------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Consists of</p> | <p>According to wealth:</p> <p>1) Bull without blemish-Lv 1:3–9-<b>note</b></p> <p>2) Male sheep or goat without blemish-Lv 1:10–13-<b>note</b>); 3 Turtledoves or young pigeons-Lv 1:14–17-<b>note</b></p> <p>3) Turtledoves or young pigeons-Lv 1:14–17-<b>note</b></p> | <p>Three Types:</p> <p>1) Fine flour mixed with oil and frankincense-Lv 2:1–3-<b>note</b></p> <p>2) Cakes made of fine flour mixed with oil and and baked an oven Lv 2:4-<b>note</b>, in a pan Lv 2:5-<b>note</b> or in a covered pan Lv 2:7-<b>note</b></p> <p>3) Green heads of roasted grain mixed with oil and frankincense-Lv 2:14, 15-<b>note</b></p> | <p>According to wealth:</p> <p>1) From the herd, a male or female without blemish-Lv 3:1–5-<b>note</b></p> <p>2) From the flock, a male or female without blemish-Lv 3:6–11-<b>note</b></p> <p>3) From the goats-Lv 3:12–17-<b>note</b></p> <p><b>Note:</b> Minor imperfections were permitted when the peace offering was a freewill offering of a bull or a lamb-Lv 22:23</p> | <p>1) For the high priest, a bull without blemish-Lv 4:3–12-<b>note</b></p> <p>2) For the congregation, a bull without blemish-Lv 4:13–21-<b>note</b></p> <p>3) For a ruler, a male goat without blemish-Lv 4:22–26-<b>note</b></p> <p>4) For a commoner, a female goat or lamb without blemish-Lv 4:27–35-<b>note</b></p> <p>5) In cases of poverty, two turtledoves or two young pigeons (one for a sin offering, the other for a burnt offering) could be substituted-Lv 5:7–10-<b>note</b></p> <p>6) In cases of extreme poverty, fine flour could be substituted-Lv 5:11–13-<b>note</b>; cp Heb. 9:22-<b>note</b></p> | <p>1) If the offense was against the Lord (tithes, offerings, etc), a ram w/o blemish was offered; restitution was reckoned according to the priest's estimate of the value of the trespass + 20% (Lv 5:15-16-<b>note</b>)</p> <p>2) If the offense were against man, a ram w/o blemish was offered, restitution reckoned according to the priest's estimate + 20% (Lv 6:4-6-<b>note</b>)</p> |
|--------------------|---|---|---|--|---|

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| <b>God's Portion</b>     | Entirety burned on the altar of burnt offering-Lv 1:9- <a href="#">note</a> except the skin-Lv 7:8- <b>note</b> | Memorial portion burned on the altar of burnt offering-Lv 2:2, 9, 16- <b>note</b>                                   | Fatty portions burned on the altar of burnt offering-Lv 3:3-5- <a href="#">note</a>                                   | 1) Fatty portions to be burned on the altar of burnt offering Lv 4:8-10- <b>note</b> , Lv 4:19. 26- <b>note</b> , Lev 4:31, 35- <b>note</b><br><br>2) When the sin offering was for the high priest or congregation, the remainder of the bull was to be burned outside the camp-Lv 4:11, 12- <b>note</b> , Lev 4:20, 21- <b>note</b> | Fat burned on altar of burnt offering-Lv 7:3-5- <b>note</b> |
| <b>Priests Portion</b>   | Skin only-Lv 7:8- <b>note</b>   | Remainder eaten in court of tabernacle-Lv 2:3, 10- <b>note</b> , Lev 6:16-18- <b>note</b> , Lv 7:14-15- <b>note</b> | Breast (wave offering) & right thigh (heave offering)-Lv 7:30-34- <b>note</b>   |   | Remainder eaten in holy place-Lv 7:6-7- <b>note</b>         |
| <b>Offerer's Portion</b> | None  | None  | Remainder to be eaten in the court by the offerer & family<br>1) Thank offering = eaten same day-Lv 7:15- <b>note</b> | None  | None  |
| <b>The Christian</b>     | Consecration  | Service   | Fellowship  | Redemption for the sinner that he is  | Redemption for the sinner he commits                        |
| <b>Christ</b>            | He presented Himself to the Father to do His will   | He served His Father and men as Son of Man  | He is the common bond of fellowship between God & man   | He atoned for the guilt of sin  | He atoned for the damage of sin.                            |

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| <b>Prophetic Significance</b> | Signifies complete dedication of life to God  | Signifies perfect humanity of Christ:   | Shadow of the peace believer has through Christ-Ro  | Prefigures fact that Christ's death...  | Shadow of Christ as our Trespass offering - Col   |
|                               | 1) On part of Christ-Mt 26:39-44, Mk 14:36, Lk 22:42, Php 2:5-11- <b>note</b><br><br>2) On part of believer-Ro 12:1-2- <b>note</b> , Heb 13:15- <b>note</b> | 1) Absence of leaven ~ sinlessness of Christ-He 4:15- <b>note</b> , 1Jn 3:5<br><br>2) The presence of oil is emblematic of the Holy Spirit-Lk 4:18; 1Jn 2:20- <b>note</b> , 1Jn 2:27- <b>note</b> | 5:1-2- <b>note</b> , 1Cor 10:16-18, 11:17-34, Col 1:20- <b>note</b><br><br><b>NB:</b> Only offering in which offerer shared<br><br>Thank Offering:<br><br>1Th 5:18- <b>note</b><br><br>Heb 13:15- <b>note</b> | 1) Was made sin for us - 2Cor 5:20-21- <b>note</b><br><br>2) He suffered outside the gate - Heb 13:11-13- <b>note</b><br><br>Cp Lv 4:3- <b>note</b> , 1Ti 5:20<br><br>Cp Lv 4:27- <b>note</b> , 1Cor 8:9-13<br><br>Cp Lv 5:5- <b>note</b> , 1Jn 1:9- <b>note</b><br><br>See Heb 9:22- <b>note</b> | 2:13- <b>note</b><br><br>Cp Lv 5:15- <b>note</b> , Lv 22:14-16<br><br>Cp Lv 6:2-5- <b>note</b> , Eph 4:25-32, Jas 5:16<br><br>See Isa 53:10 |

Adapted from Believer's Bible Commentary & Irving Jensen

# THE HEM OF HIS GARMENT

## Numbers 15:38–41

### Alan Carr

#### Introduction:

By way of introduction, please turn to Matthew 9:20–22 and Matthew 14:36. In both of these passages we are told of people being healed by touching the “hem” of our Lord’s garment. When we think of the kind of clothing worn by men in those days, we know that men wore long, flowing robes. We think of the “hem” as being the very bottom portion of the robe; the part nearest the ground. We get the picture of the woman with the issue of blood stooping down to the ground, and touching the very bottom of His robe. I would like to challenge that image just a little today.

The word “hem” means “fringe, tassel, or the border of a garment”. Now, you will notice back in Numbers 15:38, they are told to “make fringes in the borders of their garments.” The word “fringe” means the same things as the word “hem” in Matthew. It is the word “Tzitzit” and it speaks of a “tassel”.

In ancient times, a man’s clothing was essentially a long, rectangular cloth that draped down over the body. It had four corners at the bottom. The Israelites were to attach tassels to the four corners of their garments and hem the garment in blue.

Over time, clothing styles changed, and robes became more rounded at the bottom. They no longer had four corners, so the Israelites developed something called the “Tallit”. I have one with me today, so you can see what I am talking about. This is a Jewish prayer shawl.

You will notice that this cloth has four corners and a long tassel hanging down from each. This “tallit” is similar to that which Jewish people have used for thousands of years. From reading the Gospels, it seems clear that Jesus wore a “tallit”, as did all orthodox Jews in His day. So, when the woman touched the “hem” of His garment, what she touched was one of the four “tassels”.

A person uses the prayer shawl by reading an inscription that is embroidered into the garment. He is to kiss the first word of the inscription, kiss the last word of the inscription and then he places the shawl over his head for a moment of reflection. Then, the cloth is placed on the shoulders. During times of deep prayer, the head is wrapped in the “tallit” to shut off the worshiper from the word. Many commentators believe this is what Jesus

had in mind in Matt, 6:6 when He told His followers to enter into their closets to pray.

The “tallit” can be found throughout the Old Testament.

- When David cut off the bottom of Saul’s garment, he cut off the “tzitzit” or tassel, 1 Sam. 24:1–22. Saul’s garment was seen as a symbol of his authority to reign as king. “Skirt” is the same word as the word “borders”.
- When Samuel rebuked Saul for failing to kill all the Amalekites, their king and their cattle, Samuel turned to go and Saul reached out to stop him. In doing so, he ripped the tassel from Samuel’s garment. Samuel used this as a picture of what God was going to do with the kingdom of Israel. It was to be ripped out of Saul’s grip, 1 Sa 15:1–31. Again, “skirt” is the same word that is translated “borders” in our text.
- When Elijah was taken up in to Heaven, Elisha was given Elijah’s mantel. This was probably his “tallit”.
- Malachi said that “the Sun of righteousness” would “arise with healing in his wings”, Mal. 4:2. The word “wings” is the same as the word “borders” in Nu. 15:38.

The significance of the prayer shawl was not in the cloth, but in the tassels themselves. If you will bear with me for a few moments, I would like to share some fascinating truths about the “tallit” and the “tzitzits”, or tassels.

- They are formed from four strands of thread, which are doubled making eight strands. One of the strings, usually a blue string, is much longer than the others. (Note: Since the shellfish from which the dye used to prepare the blue cord is extinct, most Jews use all white strings. Some use black, however, as a symbol of mourning over the destruction of the Temple.)
- These strands are tied in a series of five knots, with a certain number of windings from the longer string, between each knot.
- The five knots represent the Torah, or the five books of the Law. The Torah is identical to the first five books of our English Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- Between the five knots there are four windings. In the first, the string is wound around seven times. In the second, it is wound around eight times. In the third, it is wound around eleven times. In the fourth, it is wound around thirteen times. These windings are very significant to the Jews.

Each letter of the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical value. The first three windings (7+8+11) equal twenty-six and this number is equal to the Hebrew value for the Name of God. This Name is YHWH and is called the “Tetragrammon”. It is the word we know as “Yahweh” or “Jehovah”. Thirteen can refer to the attributes of God that the Jews believed He possessed.

Another interpretation is that if you add the five knots with eight strands you get the number thirteen. The numerical value of the word for tassel (Tzitzit) is 600. Add these numbers together and you get 613. This is the number of laws that are found in the Torah, or the first five books of the Bible. There are 365 “thou shalt nots” and 248 “thou shalts”. As our text says, “that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD”.

- The tassels on the border of a man’s garments were there to be a constant reminder of his relationship to God and to God’s Law. Since they were to be on the four corners of the garments, no matter which way he turned, he would be reminded of the Law and of his responsibility to the Law.

These verses reveal some important facts about the “tallit”. They can help us to understand what was so special about the “hem of His garment”. I want to show you why God told the Israelites to wear the “tallit”. I would like for us to see that we need some reminders from time to time too! Let’s take some time today to look at The Hem Of His Garment. Here is what the “hem” or “tassels” of His garment was for.

The “prayer shawl” with its “tassels” was a reminder of:

## **I. Numbers 15:40–41 THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD**

A The Jews are to wear the tassels on their garments as a constant reminder of their relationship to the Lord. The word “**your**” in these verses signifies a personal relationship. God purchased them unto Himself; we will say more about that in a few moments. They were always to remember who they were, Who’s they where and what was expected of them.

Their garments were a constant reminder that they were a “kingdom of priests, and a holy nation”, Ex. 19:6. They were to remember that they were like no other group of people in the world. They were in a faith relationship with the Jehovah God, and they were to constantly remind themselves of this truth. The blue in the garment was the color of heaven. It was there to remind them of their high, heavenly calling among all the

nations of the world.

The Jews came to believe that they were saved by keeping the Law. In fact, the Hebrew inscription around the neck of the Tallit (Prayer Shawl) reads,

**“Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who makes us holy with commandments, and has commanded us to wrap ourselves in the tzitzit.”**

B. We need this reminder too! Salvation is not about what you do, it is about Who you know. We are not made holy by the commandments, but by the blood of Jesus, Eph. 1:7. Salvation is about being in a personal, faith relationship with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ill. John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Acts 16:31; 1 John 5:12.) Salvation is not keeping rules; salvation rests on grace and faith alone, Eph. 2:8–9.

## **II. Numbers 15:39–40 THEIR REQUIREMENTS BEFORE GOD**

A. The tassels on the four corners of their garments reminded the ancient Jews that they were required to obey the Lord of God. No matter which way they turned, they would see the tassels and be instantly reminded of their obligation to keep the Lord’s commandments.

When we think of the commandments, we always think there are only ten. The Jewish rabbis identified 613 commandments in the Torah. There were 365 “Thou shalt nots” and 248 “Thou shalt”. The tassels on the borders of their garments were a constant reminder of their responsibility to keep the Law.

B. We need to be reminded too! While we are not saved by keeping the commandments, we prove our love for God by keeping the commandments, John 14:15, 21. We do not need a prayer shawl or tassels on our clothes to remind us that we are to do right and live right. When a person receives Jesus, they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. When He enters a life, He changes that life, 2 Cor. 5:17, and He leads that person into an ever deepening relationship with Jesus Christ, John 16:13–15.

The redeemed child of God will not be perfect, but he will be different and he will have a desire to live right and to get closer to the Lord Who saved him. The lack of such a change and desire indicates a lack of salvation, 1 John 2:3–4; 1 John 5:2–3. (Ill. Psalm 19:7–11)

## **III. Numbers 15:39b THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES BEFORE GOD**

A. The Jews were also reminded that they had an obligation to separate themselves from evil and to walk in the ways of the Lord. The idea of keeping the commandments speaks to external obedience. The idea expressed in this verse is of internal obedience. The Jews were to conform to the will of God and the ways of God both internally and externally. They were to obey on the outside and on the inside. They were to do their will of God from the heart.

It was possible for a person to keep the letter of the Law and violate the spirit of the Law. They might do everything the Law said, but hate every minute of it. They might manifest complete external obedience to the Law of God, and all the while break the law with the attitudes and affections of the heart. This problem was addressed by Jesus in the Sermon On The Mount, Matt. 5:27–48. (Ill. Adultery, oaths, vengeance, and forgiveness)

B. We need this reminder too! Many people seem to think that since they have prayed a prayer and joined a church, they are free to do as they please and live as they want. Not so! The Lord expects His people to live separated, holy lives; both internally and externally!

We seem to think that there is some disconnect between what we think and what we do. We seem to think that we are all right as long as we do not actually commit a physical act of sin. We seem to think that if we think and don’t do it, then everything is fine. That is not what Jesus thinks!

We seem to think that some sins are not as devastating as other sins. We think we can hold a grudge; talk about people; complain; be slack in our giving and our church attendance; but as long as we don’t cuss, steal, commit murder or adultery, then we are doing great. That is not what Jesus thinks!

C. Jesus thinks that what we do on the outside always begins on the inside, Mark 7:1–23. Every sin you commit on the outside, begins in the inside. So, how many sins do you commit in your heart? Jesus is looking for total obedience; not just outward obedience.

He knows that if the heart is right the outside will be right too. He also knows that the outside can look fine, while the inside can be filthy. This is called “hypocrisy”. This word refers to “an actor, an imposter; a pretender.”

God desires that the people who call themselves by His name be the real deal, both internally and externally!

#### **IV. Numbers 15:41 THEIR REDEMPTION BY GOD**

A. The tassels on their garments were there to remind them that they were a special people. They had been purchased to the Lord by the blood of thousands of lambs, Ex. 12. They had been redeemed from their bondage and released from their slavery and they were never to forget what the Lord has done for them in Egypt. The tassels reminded them that God has been faithful to them. He had led them, fed them and blessed them above all nations. They were to remember that He had brought them out in order to bring them in, Deut. 6:23. The tassels reminded them that they were part of God's eternal plan. The tassels on their garments were a reminder that they were the people of the Lord, and they were to never forget that fact!

B. We need this reminder today! We must never forget the terrible price that was paid to redeem us. We must never forget that God robed Himself in humanity, dwelled among men and died on a cross to secure our redemption, Isa. 53:4–6. We must never forget that He rose from the dead on the third day, ascended back to Heaven and sits there as our Intercessor today. We must never forget that He is coming back to get us some day to take us home to be with Him in Heaven, John 14:1–3. May we never forget who we are; what we are; why He saved us and where He is taking us!

#### **Conclusion**

When the woman with the issue of blood came up behind Jesus and touched the tassels of His garment, she was touching more than a prayer shawl! She was embracing the promise of Malachi 4:2. She was looking for healing in His “wings” or “border”. She looked upon Jesus and she believed that He was Who He claimed to be. She saw Him as the Messiah and like Ruth, she was asking the heavenly Boaz to spread His “skirt” over her, Ruth 3:9. The word “skirt” is the same word that is translated “border” in Num. 15:38. She was doing what the Psalmist did in Psalm 91:1–7. She was asking to come under the shelter of the “wings” of God, v. 4. The word “wings” is the same word translated “border” in Num. 15:38.

Do you get the picture? When she touched the tassel, or the hem of His garment, it was the same as touching Him! She looked to Him by faith and when her faith touched His grace she was healed! She was claiming her right as a daughter of Abraham. She was looking to her Messiah and trusting Him to deliver her from her situation. She was claiming the promises of the Word of God and resting in the grace of God. She came to the right Person in the right manner and she got what she needed!

Do you need to touch Him today? Has He spoken to your heart through this message? Here is the invitation:

- If you are lost and would like to come under the shelter of His wings, so you can enjoy His salvation, you come. Touch the hem of His garment today!
- If you are not walking in humble obedience, whether it is externally or internally, you come. Touch the hem of His garment today!
- If there are problems and burdens in your life and you know you need help, you come. Touch the hem of His garment today!

We do not need a tallit to get what we need from God. All we need is what the woman who touched Him had: faith. Come to Him, come today and get the help you need!