

ONE LAW FOR ALL!

(Scripture: Num. 15:15, 16)

Numbers 15:15, 16. 15As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who resides among you, a permanent statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the stranger who resides with you.”

Introduction: In Numbers 14, we came across 10 spies who discouraged Israel from entering the Promised Land, and the whole nation wept, and wanted to return to Egypt. The Lord was very angry, and He swore in His anger that the adults will not enter for another 40 years. They all had to return to the wilderness. It seems like Chapter 15 should have come right before the spy story. 15:2 says this ²“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land [a]where you are going to live, which I am giving you, ³and you make an offering by fire to the LORD..... I do not think God would speak like that to a bunch of rebellious people after they rebelled. God was extremely angry with them, and ready to destroy them. In addition, if you read chapter 16, you will come across another story of rebellion. Therefore, this chapter 15 is sandwiched between two stories of rebellion. So try to take this chapter as a standalone chapter.

In any case, chapter 15 has lot of nuggets. Let us see what we can learn from it. I will be touching upon some of those passages that are very relevant to us.

I. One law for all kinds of people!

Numbers 15:15, 16.[1] 15As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you, and for the stranger, who resides among you, a permanent statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the stranger who resides with you.”

II. Same law should be applied to all.

The Ten Commandments should be applied to all equally.

One law for the slaves and the masters

Masters cannot kill the slaves and say, “o well, he was just my property and I have right to kill him!”

One law for the police and the thief. The police officer tells the thief, thou shall not steal, and then he himself goes and steals.

There must be one law for the employee as well as his boss. The boss reprimands the employee for coming late, but he has the freedom to come and go anytime, and no one to question him?

One law for the politicians and the public. The politicians can get away with anything but the common people cannot.

There should be one rule for the president and the citizens. If the citizens are indicted for a crime, the president should be also indicted and removed from the job. The country will not fall apart because he is gone. The Vice President can step into his shoes overnight! (Lyndon Johnson after JFK was shot dead, Gerard Ford during Nixon time)

Likewise, one rule for the ambassadors and common people. If the common people drink and drive, and they are locked up. Therefore, the ambassadors should be locked up too!

There must be one rule for the rich and the poor. If the poor has to pay income tax, the rich should also.

One rule for the aliens and residents. There was no such thing called illegal alien. When a stranger came, the natives were obliged to show hospitality. However, the alien must follow the rules of that land. Same thing applies to us also. If we go to a new country, we must follow the law of that land.

How about One immigration law for Europe, and Canada, as well as Mexico, Asia, and Africa? Why there is so much disparity?

Should there not be one rule for the idol worshippers and others? No idols. Period. Constitution is ambiguous about enforcing Ten Commandments.

We must have one law for the pastor and the congregation in the church. In addition, that law is the law of love. If that is missing from any one of us, others must call it out and correct us.

III. In verses 22 thru 26, Lord had made provision for those who had committed unintentional sins. They were supposed to offer an animal sacrifice; God would accept it and forgive them. But what about intentional sin?

IV. Remedy for intentional sins?

Numbers 15:30, 31. 30But the person who does wrong [r]defiantly, whether he is a native or a stranger, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. 31since he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his [s]guilt will be on him.”

The language is very strong here, and without any ambiguity. A person, (it does not matter if that person is native or a stranger), if he does wrong defiantly and disobeys the Lord's commandments, then he is only blaspheming the Lord; and such a defiant person must be put to death! Since he has despised the Word of the Lord, broken the word of the Lord, broken the covenant, he must completely be cut off (in other words, he must be put to death). God cannot tolerate defiant disobedience! An example is given right after this commandment.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF PUNISHMENT FOR INTENTIONAL SIN.

Numbers 15:32-36. 32Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. 33And those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation; 34and they placed him in custody, because it had not been decided what should be done to him. 35Then the LORD said to Moses, “The man must be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.” 36So

all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him [t]o death with stones, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Lord had already warned Israelites that they should not gather Manna on Sabbath day. Yet, some of them went out to gather them, but they did not find any, and they were rebuked. Therefore, this person trying to cook on Sabbath day was a real act of defiance. He went out boldly to pick up some dry sticks for cooking, and they arrested him. Now they did not know what punishment to give, because it appeared to be a small crime. However, the Lord told them to put him to death by stoning. Why? The breaking of Sabbath may be a petty crime, but defying the lord, and going against His commandment is a huge crime!

We may think that this is a very harsh punishment, but Bible says, children that curse the parents to be put to death. Here this person may not be cursing but he was blaspheming God by breaking His law deliberately?

Did this man do it intentionally or unintentionally?

Did Disciples break the law of Sabbath? Not according to Torah, but they did according to their Rabbis tradition.

Did Jesus break the law of Sabbath? Not really! Nowhere does it say that one cannot heal on Sabbath day. Mercy and compassion triumphs over the law anytime.

Sabbath is made for man, but man is not made for Sabbath.

Adulteress woman forgiven! Perhaps, she slipped and caught up in sin at the spur of the moment, not a planned scheme of defiance?

Mercy always trumps over justice.

VI. REMEMBER THE LAWS OF GOD - The Tassel.

Numbers 15:37-41. 37The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, 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 [u]violet thread. 39It shall be a tassel for you [v]to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so that you will do them and not [w]follow your own heart and your own eyes, [x]which led you to prostitute yourselves, 40so that you will remember and do all My commandments and be holy to your God. 41I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God.”

The outer garment of the Jews was a four cornered cloth, ([Exodus 22:26-27](#)). It appears to have been commonly used with a hole in the center, through which the head was put, so that one-half covered the front and the other the back of the body. These tassels or fringes were enlarged by the Pharisees to exhibit their piety and the mastering of the Law (Matt. 23:5). Great sanctity was attached to these fringes or tassels, and for this cause the woman with the issue of blood desired to touch the tassel of our Saviour's garment ([Matthew 9:20](#)).

It continues among the Jews to this day. In the synagogue, all males over thirteen years of age wear a special garment called a **tallith**, which 'consists of an oblong cloth with a tassel at each corner.

Purpose? To look at and remember all the commandments of God. The Jews are required to remember 613 laws by heart and walk in them. However, it is no good just remembering it. They must follow those laws also! Do not just try to remember. Live by it also.

God says here that we must not follow our heart, and our eyes. In our situation, let us not follow the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life, which is the lust, and desires of our heart. We must deny our selfish desires and passions, crucify it and follow the path of self-denial. We must deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow Him. This is what is called emptying ourselves! We have to take concrete action to deny our selfish ambitions and desires, crucify it, take up the cross and follow HIM DAILY!

For Christians, the cross pendant can be a tassel. We look at it and remember just one law - how Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, so we ought to love everyone and live for others. Let us empty ourselves, fill our heart with the Spirit, and follow Him. Let us not engage in adultery or prostitution. Israel did just that, and faced grave consequences.

Conclusion:

1. Let us have just one law for all
2. Let us not defiantly disobey the Word of God. He will not tolerate it.
3. Let us not only remember His Word, but live by it also.
4. Let the cross be before us like a tassel, and remind us of the sweet love of Jesus for us.

Daniel Israel
pastor@acts242church.org
July 25, 2021