

a. Rules of sacrifice for Canaan (xv.1-21)

There is little in these rules that is not already contained in the laws given at Sinai for the priests. The purpose of the section is an indirect one. It focuses attention on the certainty that God will bring His people into the Promised Land. (Cf. verses 2 and 18) Just when they have failed so miserably, and a whole generation has been doomed to die in the wilderness, specific stress is laid on God's plan for His people in Canaan, an indirect means of giving them assurance that His promises will be carried out in due time. It is to be noted that the various parts of this chapter are addressed to the nation as a whole (2,8,38) rather than to Aaron or to the Levites. Contrast xviii.1.

b. Provision regarding sins of ignorance (xv.22-31)

When a great crisis such as that at Kadesh is past, those who are truly repentant tend to give way to despair of ever satisfying God. From one extreme of carelessness they can easily pass to the other extreme of thinking that every slightest error may be fatal. To guard against such an attitude at this point God reminded the people of the special provisions regarding sins of ignorance, already explained more fully in Lv. iv and v. Every sin is wrong, even if committed in ignorance. It does injury to God's kingdom, is an affront to His holiness, and requires atonement. But it should not lead to worry or despair. It should be placed under the blood. Our present section first makes provision for remission of sins of ignorance by the entire congregation (22-26) and then provides atonement for individuals who fall into sin through ignorance (27-29). In order to guard this provision against being thought to cover wilful or presumptuous sin, the next two verses declare the utter condemnation of the man who continues in wilful sin (30-31). Presumptuously (30). Literally 'with a high hand,' i.e. wilfully, in open rebellion.

c. An instance of presumptuous sin (xv.32-36)

After the command, an instance of wilful sin is described, which occurred during the forty years in the wilderness. Despite the frequent reiteration of the sabbath