

CHAPTER 29

This chapter appoints the offerings that were to be made by fire unto the Lord in the three great solemnities of the seventh month.

- I.** In the feast of trumpets on the first day of that month (v. 1-6).
- II.** In the day of atonement on the tenth day (v. 7-11).
- III.** In the feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day and the seven days following (v. 12-38). And then the conclusion of these ordinances (v. 39, 40).

~~ONE~~ NUMBERS 29:1-11

SOLEMNITIES OF THE SEVENTH MONTH

There were more sacred solemnities in the seventh month than in any other month of the year, not only because it had been the first month till the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt (which, falling in the month Abib, occasioned that to be thenceforth made the *beginning of the months* in all ecclesiastical computations), but because still it continued the first month in the civil reckonings of the jubilees and years of release, and also because it was the time of vacation between harvest and seedtime, when they had most leisure to attend the sanctuary, which intimates that, though God will dispense with sacrifices in consideration of works of necessity and mercy, yet the more leisure we have from the pressing occasions of this life the more time we should spend in the immediate service of God.

1. We have here the appointment of the sacrifices that were to be offered on the first day of the month, the day of *blowing the trumpets*, which was a preparative for the two great solemnities of holy mourning on the day of atonement and of holy joy in the feast of tabernacles. The intention of divine institutions is well answered when one religious service helps to fit us for another and all for heaven. The *blowing of the trumpets* was appointed, ~~ONE~~ Leviticus 23:24. Here the people are directed what sacrifices to offer on that day, of which there was not then any mention made. Note, Those who would know the mind of God in the scripture must compare

one part of the scripture with another, and put those parts together that have reference to the same thing, for the latter discoveries of divine light explain what was dark and supply what was defective in the former, *that the man of God may be perfect*. The sacrifices then to be offered are particularly ordered here (v. 2-6), and care taken that these should not supersede the daily oblation and that of the new moon. It is hereby intimated that we must not seek occasions to abate our zeal in God's service, nor be glad of an excuse to omit a good duty, but rather rejoice in an opportunity of accumulating and doing more than ordinary in religion. If we perform family-worship, we must not think that this will excuse us from our secret devotions; nor that on the days we go to church we need not worship God alone and with our families; but we should *always abound in the work of the Lord*.

2. On the *day of atonement*. Besides all the services of that day, which we had the institution of, Leviticus 16, and which, one would think, required trouble and charge enough, here are burnt-offerings ordered to be offered, v. 8-10. For in our faith and repentance, those two great gospel graces which were signified by that day's performances, we must have an eye to the glory and honour of God, which was purely intended in the burnt-offerings; there was likewise to be a *kid of the goats for a sin-offering, besides the great sin-offering of atonement* (v. 11), which intimates that there are so many defects and faults, even in the exercises and expressions of our repentance, that we have need of an interest in a sacrifice to expiate the guilt even of that part of our holy things. Though we must not repent that we have repented, yet we must repent that we have not repented better. It likewise intimated the imperfection of the legal sacrifices, and their insufficiency to take away sin, that on the very day the *sin-offering of atonement* was offered, yet there must be another sin-offering. But *what the law could not do, in that it was weak*, that Christ has done.

NUMBERS 29:12-40

SOLEMNITIES OF THE SEVENTH MONTH

Soon after the day of atonement, that day in which men were to afflict their souls, followed the feast of tabernacles, in which they were to rejoice before the Lord; for those that *sow in tears* shall soon *reap in joy*. To the

former laws about this feast, which we had, ^{<23:34>}Leviticus 23:34, etc., here are added directions about the *offerings by fire*, which they were to offer unto the Lord during the *seven days of that feast*, ^{<23:36>}Leviticus 23:36. Observe here,

- 1.** Their days of rejoicing were to be days of sacrifices. A disposition to be cheerful does us no harm, nor is any bad symptom, when it is so far from unfitting us for the duties of God's immediate service that it encourages and enlarges our hearts in them.
- 2.** All the days of their dwelling in booths they must offer sacrifices. While we are here in a tabernacle-state, it is our interest as well as duty constantly to keep up communion with God; nor will the unsettledness of our outward condition excuse us in our neglect of the duties of God's worship.
- 3.** The sacrifices for each of the seven days, though differing in nothing but the number of the bullocks, are severally and particularly appointed, which yet is no vain repetition; for God would thus teach them to be very exact in those observances, and to keep an eye of faith fixed upon the institution in every day's work. It likewise intimates that the repetition of the same services, if performed with an upright heart, and with a continued fire of pious and devout affection, is no weariness to God, and therefore we ought not to snuff at it, or to say, *Behold, what a weariness it is to us!*
- 4.** The number of bullocks (which were the most costly part of the sacrifice) decreased every day. On the first day of the feast they were to offer thirteen, on the second day but twelve, on the third day eleven, etc. So that on the seventh they offered seven; and the last day, though it was the great day of the feast, and celebrated with a holy convocation, yet they were to offer but one bullock; and, whereas on all the other days they offered two rams and fourteen lambs, on this they offered but one ram and seven lambs. Such was the will of the Law-maker, and that is reason enough for the law. Some suggest that God herein considered the infirmity of the flesh, which is apt to grudge the charge and expense of religion; it is therefore ordered to grow less and less, that they might not complain as if God had *made them to serve with an offering*, ^{<43:23>}Isaiah 43:23. Or it is hereby intimated to them that the legal dispensation should wax old, and vanish away at last; and the multitude of their sacrifices should end in one great sacrifice, infinitely more worthy than all of them. It was on the last day of the feast, after all these sacrifices had been ordered, that our Lord

Jesus stood and cried to those who still thirsted after righteousness (being sensible of the insufficiency of these sacrifices to justify them) *to come unto him and drink*, ~~405~~ John 7:37.

5. The meat-offerings and drink-offerings attended all the sacrifices, *according to their number, after the manner*. Be there ever so much flesh, it is no feast without bread and drink, therefore these must never be omitted at God's altar, which was his table. We must not think that doing much in religion will be accepted if we do not do it well, and after the manner that God has appointed.

6. Every day there must be a sin-offering presented, as we observed in the other feasts. Our burnt-offerings of praise cannot be accepted of God unless we have an interest in the great sacrifice of propitiation which Christ offered when for us he made himself a sin-offering.

7. Even when all these sacrifices were offered, yet the continual burnt-offering must not be omitted either morning or evening, but each day this must be offered first in the morning and last in the evening. No extraordinary services should jostle out our stated devotions.

8. Though all these sacrifices were required to be presented by the body of the congregation, at the common charge, yet, besides these, particular persons were to glorify God with their vows and their free-will offerings, v. 39. When God commanded that this *they must do*, he left room for the generosity of their devotion, a great deal more they *might do*, not inventing other worships, but abounding in these, as ~~418~~ 2 Chronicles 30:23, 24. Large directions had been given in Leviticus concerning the offerings of all sorts that should be brought by particular persons according to the providences of God concerning them and the graces of God in them. Though every Israelite had an interest in these common sacrifices, yet he must not think that these will serve instead of his vows and his free-will offerings. Thus our ministers' praying with us and for us will not excuse us from praying for ourselves.