

CHAPTER 28

Now that the people were numbered, orders given for the dividing of the land, and a general of the forces nominated and commissioned, one would have expected that the next chapter should begin the history of the campaign, or at least should give us an account of the ordinances of war; no, it contains the ordinances of worship, and provides that now, as they were on the point of entering Canaan, they should be sure to take their religion along with them, and not forget this, in the prosecution of their wars (v. 1, 2). The laws are here repeated and summed up concerning the sacrifices that were to be offered,

I. Daily (v. 3-8).

II. Weekly (v. 9, 10).

III. Monthly (v. 11-15).

IV. Yearly.

1. At the passover (v. 16-25).

2. At pentecost (v. 26-31). And the next chapter is concerning the annual solemnities of the seventh month.

~~OLD~~ NUMBERS 28:1-8

LAWS CONCERNING SACRIFICES

Here is,

I. A general order given concerning the offerings of the Lord, which were to be brought in their season, v. 2. These laws are here given afresh, not because the observance of them was wholly disused during their thirty-eight years' wandering in the wilderness (we cannot think that they were so long without any public worship, but that at least the daily lamb was offered morning and evening, and doubled on the sabbath day; so bishop Patrick conjectures); but that many of the sacrifices were then omitted is plainly intimated, ³⁰⁷⁵Amos 5:25, quoted by Stephen, ⁴⁴⁷²Acts 7:42. *Did you offer unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?* It is implied, "No, you did not." But, whether the course

of sacrifices had been interrupted or no, God saw fit now to repeat the law of sacrifices,

1. Because this was a new generation of men, that were most of them unborn when the former laws were given; therefore, that they might be left without excuse, they have not only these laws written, to be read to them, but again repeated from God himself, and put into a less compass and a plainer method.

2. Because they were now entering upon war, and might be tempted to think that while they were engaged in that they should be excused from offering sacrifices. *Inter arma silent leges* — law is little regarded amidst the clash of arms. No, says God, *my bread for my sacrifices* even now shall you observe to offer, and that *in the due season*. They were peculiarly concerned to keep their peace with God when they were at war with their enemies. In the wilderness they were solitary, and quite separate from all other people, and therefore there they needed not so much their distinguishing badges, nor would their omission of sacrifices be so scandalous as when they came into Canaan, when they mingled with other people.

3. Because possession was now to be given them of the land of promise, that land flowing with milk and honey, where they would have plenty of all good things. “Now” (says God), “When you are feasting yourselves, forget not to offer the bread of your God.” Canaan was given to them upon this condition, that they should *observe God's statutes*, ^{Psalm 105:44,} 45.

II. The particular law of the daily sacrifice, a lamb in the morning and a lamb in the evening, which, for the constancy of it as duly as the day came, is called a *continual burnt-offering* (v. 3), which intimates that when we are bidden to *pray always, and to pray without ceasing*, it is intended that at least every morning and every evening we offer up our solemn prayers and praises to God. This is said to be *ordained in Mount Sinai* (v. 6), when the other laws were given. The institution of it we have, ^{Exodus 29:38.} Nothing is here added in the repetition of the law, but that the wine to be poured out in the drink-offering is ordered to be *strong wine* (v. 7), the riches and most generous and best-bodied wine they could get. Though it was to be poured out upon the altar, and not drunk (they therefore might be ready to think the worst would serve to be so thrown

away), yet God requires the strongest, to teach us to serve God with the best we have. The wine must be strong (says Ainsworth) because it was a figure of the blood of Christ, the memorial of which is still left to the church in wine, and of the blood of the martyrs, which was poured out as a drink-offering upon the *sacrifice and service of our faith*, ^{<317>}Philippians 2:17.

~~<317>~~ NUMBERS 28:9-15

LAWS CONCERNING SACRIFICES

The new moons and the sabbaths are often spoken of together, as great solemnities in the Jewish church, very comfortable to the saints then, and typical of gospel grace. Now we have here the sacrifices appointed,

1. For the sabbaths. Every sabbath day the offering must be doubled; besides the two lambs offered for the daily burnt-offering, there must be two more offered, one (it is probable) added to the morning sacrifice, and the other to the evening, v. 9, 10. This teaches us to double our devotions on sabbath days, for so the duty of the day requires. The sabbath rest is to be observed, in order to a more close application to the sabbath work, which ought to fill up sabbath time. In Ezekiel's temple-service, which points at gospel times, the sabbath offerings were to be six lambs and a ram, with their meat-offerings, and drink-offerings (^{<318>}Ezekiel 46:4, 5), to intimate not only the continuance, but the advancement, of sabbath sanctification in the days of the Messiah. This is *the burnt-offering of the sabbath in his sabbath*, so it is in the original, v. 10. We must do every sabbath day's work in its day, studying to redeem every minute of sabbath time as those that believe it precious; and not thinking to put off one sabbath's work to another, for sufficient to every sabbath is the service thereof.

2. For the new moons. Some suggest that, as the sabbath was kept with an eye to the creation of the world, so the new moons were sanctified with an eye to the divine providence, which *appoints the moon for seasons*, guiding the revolutions of time by its changes, and governing sublunary bodies (as many think) by its influences. Though we observe not any feast of new moons, yet we must not forget to give God the glory of all the precious things put forth by the moon which he has *established for ever*, a

faithful witness in heaven, ^{<4887>}Psalm 89:37. The offerings in the new moons were very considerable, two bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs, with the meat-offerings and drink-offerings that were to attend them (v. 11, etc.), besides a sin-offering, v. 15. For, when we give glory to God by confessing his mercies, we must give glory to him likewise by confessing our own sins; and, when we rejoice in the gifts of common providence, we must make the sacrifice of Christ, that great gift of special grace, the fountain and spring-head of our joy. Some have questioned whether the new moons were to be reckoned among their feasts; but why should they not, when, besides the special sacrifices which were then to be offered, they rested from servile works (^{<3085>}Amos 8:5), *blew the trumpets* (^{<0400>}Numbers 10:10), and went to the prophets *to hear the word?* ^{<1023>}2 Kings 4:23. And the worship performed in the new moons is made typical of gospel solemnities, ^{<2463>}Isaiah 66:23.

^{<0236>}NUMBERS 28:16-31

LAWS CONCERNING SACRIFICES

Here is,

1. The appointment of the pass-over sacrifices; not that which was the chief, the paschal lamb (sufficient instructions had formerly been given concerning that), but those which were to be offered upon the seven days of unleavened bread, which followed it, v. 17-25. The first and last of those seven days were to be sanctified as sabbaths, by a holy rest and a holy convocation, and on each of the seven days they were to be liberal in their sacrifices, in token of their great and constant thankfulness for their deliverance out of Egypt: *Two bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs.* A gospel conversation, in gratitude for *Christ our passover* who was sacrificed, is called the *keeping of this feast* (^{<4618>}1 Corinthians 5:8); for it is not enough that we purge out the *leavened bread* of malice and wickedness, but we must *offer the bread of our God, even the sacrifice of praise, continually,* and continue herein unto the end.

2. The sacrifices are likewise appointed which were to be offered at the feast of pentecost, here called the *day of the first-fruits*, v. 26. In the feast of unleavened bread they offered a *sheaf of their first-fruits* of barley (which with them was first ripe) to the priest (^{<0230>}Leviticus 23:10), as an

introduction to the harvest; but now, about seven weeks after, they were to bring a *new meat-offering to the Lord*, at the end of harvest, in thankfulness to God, who had not only given, *but preserved to their use, the kindly fruits of the earth, so as that in due time they did enjoy them*. It was at this feast that *the Spirit was poured out* (~~ACT~~ Acts 2:1, etc.), and thousands were converted by the preaching of the apostles, and were presented to Christ, to be *a kind of first-fruits of his creatures*. The sacrifice that was to be offered with the loaves of the first-fruits was appointed, ~~GEN~~ Leviticus 23:18. But over and above, besides that and besides the daily offerings, they were to offer *two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs, with a kid for a sin-offering*, v. 27-30. When God sows plentifully upon us he expects to reap accordingly from us. Bishop Patrick observes that no *peace-offerings* are appointed in this chapter, which were chiefly for the benefit of the offerers, and therefore in them they were left more to themselves; but *burnt-offerings* were purely for the honour of God, were confessions of his dominion, and typified evangelical piety and devotion, by which the soul is wholly offered up to God in the flames of holy love; and *sin-offerings* were typical of Christ's sacrifice of himself, *by which we and our services are perfected and sanctified*.