

## NUMBERS 28

## THE LORD'S FEASTS AND SACRIFICES

Now that the Israelites had been numbered, and orders had been given for the dividing of the Promised Land, and a successor to Moses had been nominated and commissioned; one would have expected that the next chapter would begin the history of the campaign, or at least give us an account of the ordinances of war. But no; rather, it contains the ordinances of worship! The people were on the point of entering Canaan, but they must be sure to take their religion along with them. They must not think that their wars with the Canaanites would exempt them from their worship of the Lord. They must keep their peace with God, even when they were at war with their enemies. Hence in this chapter, the Lord's laws were repeated and summed up concerning the sacrifices that were to be offered to Him. This was a new generation of people, and this repetition of the ordinances of God's worship would leave them without excuse; they could not claim ignorance on the basis that they had not yet been born when the Lord had given these ordinances the first time.

The daily sacrifice was called a continual burnt-offering because a lamb was to be continually offered, day after day, both morning and evening. This teaches us to pray always. At least every morning and evening, we should offer up solemn prayers and praises to God. The burnt-offering of each lamb was to be accompanied by a grain-offering of flour mixed with of oil. There was also to be a drink-offering of wine. This drink-offering was a picture or foreshadow of the blood of Jesus – the memorial of which is still left to the Church in the elements of the Lord's Supper.

Every Sabbath day, in addition to the two lambs offered for the daily burnt-offering, there was to be two additional lambs offered, accompanied by an additional grain-offering and drink-offering. The doubling of the daily burnt-offering on the Sabbath teaches us to double our devotions on the Lord's Day of rest and worship. The original institution of the Sabbath was in honor of the works of Creation; but when we celebrate the Lord's Day, do we not commemorate both the old Creation in nature, and also the new Creation in grace?

The offerings on the first days of the new months (or the "new moons," as the Jews called them) showed thankfulness to God for the renewing of earthly blessings. When we rejoice in the gifts of Providence, we must make the sacrifice of Christ – that great gift of special grace – the fountain and springhead of our joy. And the worship performed on the "new moons" was a picture of wor-

**Outline of the chapter:**

- ❖ *The daily burnt-offering – verses 1-8*
- ❖ *The special burnt-offering for the Sabbath – verses 9, 10*
- ❖ *The offerings for the first day of a new month – verses 11-15*
- ❖ *The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread – verses 16-25*
- ❖ *The Feast of Firstfruits – verses 26-31*

ship under the Gospel (Isa. 66:23). Just as the moon borrows light from the sun, and is renewed by its influences; so also, the Church borrows her light from Jesus Christ, Who is the Sun of righteousness – renewing the state of the Church by the good news of His Gospel. The “new moons” were to be observed by the offering of two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs for burnt-offerings; as well as a goat for a sin-offering. Each of the animals for the burnt-offering was to be accompanied by its respective grain-offerings and drink-offerings.

Particular directions had already been given in Exodus 12 concerning the celebrating of the Passover, and the great mercy intended by it – the remembrance of which was to be kept up by God’s people in their perpetual generations, until the coming of Christ the Messiah – the true Passover Lamb. But the sacred historian was here directed, in this chapter, to focus particular attention upon the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which commenced the day after Passover and lasted for seven days. The first and last of those seven days were celebrated as “special Sabbaths.” But on each of the seven days of this feast, the people were to offer two bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs for burnt-offerings – all accompanied by their respective grain-offerings – and one goat for a sin-offering.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a day of great solemnity among the people; and the Feast of Firstfruits, which followed seven weeks afterwards, was no less so. Not only was it a time of festivity among the people, it was also intended to be a season of testifying thankfulness to the Lord for the gathering in of the blessings of the earth. During this feast, the people were to bring a new grain-offering in thankfulness to God Who had not only given them the fruits of the earth, but Who had also preserved them so that they could enjoy them in due season. However, in addition to this grain-offering, the people were also to offer burnt-offerings (accompanied by their respective grain-offerings) and a sin-offering. This Feast of Firstfruits (sometimes referred to as Pentecost) was the memorable feast which the Holy Spirit was pleased to distinguish for the time of His first descent upon the Apostles, in Acts 2 – by which, indeed, there were great offerings of the firstfruits of the conversion of souls to the Redeemer!

As we reverently and attentively study these feasts and sacrifices, let us not forget the infinite value that our Lord has placed upon the blood of the one great Sacrifice which these things represented. What a profusion of blood was continually shed in the Tabernacle! What an awful conviction of sin it should give us! And what a precious testimony does it hold forth of the infinite importance of the one Sacrifice which has forever done away with our sin, and made us perfect. Lord, write upon my souls – in characters that may never be effaced – that without the shedding of our Savior’s blood, there is no remission of sins! (Heb. 9:22)

*Lord Jesus! May Your Holy Spirit cause us to see Your perfect Sacrifice pictured in all these ceremonies and ordinances.*

