

Message #31**Numbers 29:1-40**

There is no question that December is a hectic month for us, but it is also a festive month. It is a joyous month. The month is filled with action. For Israel, the first month and the seventh month was a month of a lot of action. In fact, the seventh month was the most very festive time of the year. All of it was action focused on having a relationship with God.

GOD GIVES ISRAEL THE SPECIFIC REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE THREE FINAL NATIONAL WORSHIP DAYS THAT ARE TO BE CELEBRATED IN THE SEVENTH MONTH THAT INCLUDE NO WORKS AND MANY SACRIFICES IN ORDER THAT GOD MAY BLESS THEM.

When we read through these verses, it is obvious that to have a close relationship with God was not some cheap commitment. Worship was demanded and these offerings were demanded. God was to be worshipped and sacrifices were to be made if the people of God were to be a soothing aroma to God. You cannot go through the year thinking haphazardly about God and expect the blessings of God.

NATIONAL SACRIFICE #1 – The Feast of Trumpets. 29:1-6

The feast of trumpets refers to the joyous gathering of Israel to her land. This feast signaled the beginning of a new civil year for Israel (sort of like our 4th of July). What this sacrifice said was we are beginning this new year by again reminding ourselves that we need to keep our focus this year on our relationship with God.

Verse 1 gives the exact day that this was to be celebrated. It was to be celebrated in the seventh month of their ecclesiastical year. The festival began with the “blowing trumpets.” The noun “trumpet” is shofar (ram’s horn) rather than the silver trumpets (10:2). The first three feasts, Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits were to be celebrated in the first month and the last three Trumpets, Atonement and Booths were to be celebrated in the seventh month. **So there was a gap of time between the first three and the last three.**

Now the way the Jewish calendar worked was this way:

Month #1 - Nisan (Abib)=which is our months of March-April

Month #2 - Iyyar (Ziv)=which is our months of April-May

Month #3 - Sivan=our months of May-June

Month #4 - Tammuz=our months of June-July

Month #5 - Ab=our months of July-August

Month #6 - Elul=our months of August- September.

Month #7 - Tishri (Ethanim)=our months of September-October

Month #8 - Marchesvan (Bul)=our months of October-November

Month #9 - Chislew=our months of November-December

Month #10 - Tebeth=our months of December-January

Month #11 - Shebat=our months of January-February

Month #12 - Adar=our months of February-March

Now according to **verse 1**, this was to be celebrated in the seventh month which is the month Tishri, September and it was to be on the first day of the month. This was a major month for Israel.

So on the first day of September it was to be a day off work and the trumpets were to be blown. The trumpets were to be blown all over the land. Now the fact that there was to be no work is significant. What this specifically illustrates is that Israel is not in a right relationship with God in the land by their works. They are there because of God's grace.

The blowing of trumpets could be for several reasons:

- 1) It could call the congregation together (Num. 10:2);
- 2) It could sound an alarm (Num. 10:5-6);
- 3) It could announce that the military was about to go to battle (Num. 10:9).

Now the Jews are scattered today all over the world, but one day the trumpets will sound signaling that the Messiah has come and that God is blessing Israel in the land and that is what this celebration was all about (Is. 27:12-13; Matt. 24:29, 31).

We who live in the Church Age are waiting for a trumpet blast that will call us up into the sky to meet the Lord. That event will happen at the Rapture of the church (I Thess. 4:13-18).

According to **verse 2**, there was to be a burnt offering to the Lord comprised of one bull, one ram, and seven male lambs without defect.

According to **verse 3**, there was to be a grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, $3/10^{\text{th}}$'s of an ephah for a bull (1.8 gallons); $2/10^{\text{th}}$ s for a ram (1.2 gallons); $1/10^{\text{th}}$ for each of the seven lambs ($1/2$ gallon) (v. 4).

According to **verse 5**, there was to be one male goat for a sin offering to make atonement.

According to **verse 6**, there was to be a burnt offering of the new moon, a grain offering and drink offerings according to the ordinance of God.

This was a "soothing aroma" offering to the LORD. This is what God's people need to always consider. If we want God's blessings in the New Year, we need to have lives that are a soothing aroma to the Lord and not a sinful stench. In other words, when God looks at His people and sees they are worshipping Him in accordance with His Word, He is, as one writer said, "heartened and satisfied" (R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, p. 478).

Now what we also learn here is that even though this is a special event, the regular offerings must not be neglected. This was to happen on the first day of the seventh month.

Now this Feast of Trumpets Festival is a prophetic picture and type of a future regathering of Israel. There is a gap of time between the first fruits of the nation and the Trumpet blowing of the nation.

NATIONAL SACRIFICE #2 – The Day of Atonement. 29:7-11

According to **verse 7**, on the 10th day of the seventh month, there was to be a holy convocation of the Day of Atonement that immediately followed the Feast of Trumpets. On that day, again there was to be no work.

According to **verse 8**, there was to be a burnt offering of one bull, one ram, seven male lambs one-year-old, with no defects. This business of having animals without blemish clearly points to Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Peter picked up on this very point when he said, “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold...but with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (I Pet. 1:18-19).

According to **verses 9-10**, there was to be a grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, 3/10ths of an ephaph for the bull (1.8 gallons), 2/10ths for the ram (1.2 gallons); 1/10th for each of the seven lambs (1/2 gallon).

There was also to be one male goat for a sin offering besides this atonement sin offering and also there was to be the continual burnt offerings, grain offerings and drink offerings.

This was the only day of the year when the High Priest could go beyond the veil into the Holy of Holies. This was a critical day that pictured the day Jesus Christ would die on that cross.

All of these sacrifices say no matter how good you think you are, you are not good enough for God. To be blessed by God, you must have the sin matter resolved and it may only be resolved by substitute.

God wanted His people focused on the fact that they are not in that land because of their works or their goodness. This is all of His grace and it is all due to the atoning shedding of blood that covered their sin.

NATIONAL SACRIFICE #3 – The Feast of Tabernacles. 29:12-34

On the 15th day of the same month, 5 days after the Atonement Festival, there was the Feast of Tabernacles Festival, which was a happy, joyous harvest festival. This feast looks forward to the time when God will fulfill the kingdom promises made to Israel and the nation will rejoice.

Again no work was to be done and there was to be a holy day celebration for seven days (**v. 12**).

There was to be a burnt offering consisting of **13 bulls**, 2 rams, 14 male lambs one-year-old without defect (v. 13).

With the burnt offerings there was to be a grain offering, comprised of fine flour mixed with oil. 3/10ths for each of the 13 bulls (1.8 gallons); 2/10ths for each of the two rams (1.2 gallons) and 1/10th for each of the 14 lambs (½ gallon) (v. 15).

There was also to be an offering of one male goat for a sin offering besides the other regular offerings (v. 16).

On the second day of the Feast of Tabernacles there was to be an offering of 12 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 male lambs without defect (v. 17). Also there was to be the grain offering and drink offerings (v. 18). So on the second day, there was one less bull offered than on the first day.

There was also to be one male goat for sin with the other offerings (v. 19).

On the third day the same sacrifice formula was to be specifically followed (29:20-22). The only exception is that there was one less bull offered on this day (11 bulls).

On the fourth day the number of bulls sacrificed dropped to 10 bulls with the other sacrifices remaining the same (29:23-25).

On the fifth day the number of bulls sacrificed dropped to 9 bulls with the other sacrifices remaining the same. (29:26-28).

On the sixth day the number of bulls sacrificed dropped to 8 bulls with the other sacrifices remaining the same (29:29-31).

On the seventh day the number of bulls sacrificed dropped to 7 bulls with the other sacrifices remaining the same (29:32-34).

On the eighth day there was to be a solemn gathering again with no work. The focus was to be on the sacrifice. On this eighth day there was to be **one bull**, one ram, seven male lambs plus the other offerings (29:35-38).

Now of course a most logical question to ask here is why is there a reduction of the number of bulls offered? We think the answer is this. **The ability to live with God was shown to Israel as narrowing to one sacrifice. The ability to enjoy the blessings of God boils down to one key sacrifice and that sacrifice is that of Jesus Christ.**

These offerings were to be presented to the Lord at their appointed times besides their votive offerings, freewill offerings, burnt offerings along with the grain and drink offerings.

Some have suggested that this passage indicates that the Rapture of the church will occur in September or October. There are those who have said they figured out the time based on these O.T. Instructions. However, may I remind us that we do not know the day or the hour, and Jesus Christ nailed this law to the cross.

There are several lessons we may learn from this text:

- 1) The one sacrifice that makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God is Jesus Christ. These animal sacrifices could only cover sin but not take it away. He is the One who can take away sin.
- 2) We are to maintain a right fellowship with Jesus Christ so our lives are a soothing aroma to the Lord at all times.
- 3) Israel needed the priests in order to have a relationship with God. Jesus Christ is the High Priest who is our representative
- 4) These offerings were not cheap. They were very costly to those bringing them.
- 5) God expects His people to have daily fellowship with Him. This was a perfect system of sacrifice that covers the relationship God has with people daily, weekly, monthly and annually. Those who want God's blessings must be concerned about their relationship with God in every aspect and time of life.