

Why does Numbers give these regulations about the feasts here?

As we’ve seen, the particular laws and rules that God gives throughout Numbers connects with Israel’s failures in the wilderness.

Israel’s sins in Numbers 25 were idolatry and sexual immorality – the Baal of Peor.

And so God commands Moses –

here is the way that you *should* worship;

here is the way that you *should* sanctify time day by day,

week by week, month by month, and year by year,

so that you do not again fall into idolatry.

Against the backdrop of Israel’s sexual immorality and idolatry,

these offerings call Israel to structure time according to the worship of God.

So, how should we think about all these offerings?

Paul says in Colossians 2:16-17,

“Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink,

or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.”

You can see the categories of the book of Numbers in Paul’s discussion.

Festivals are the annual feasts –

new moons are the monthly offerings –

and Sabbaths are the weekly offerings.

Paul says that all these things are “shadows.”

The substance of these things – namely, the body that casts the shadow –
is Christ.

There’s a lot of fuss these days about Lent –

should Reformed Christians observe Lent?

or should Reformed Christians abhor Lent?

Some people argue that the church calendar replaces the OT calendar –

while others argue that the church should only observe the weekly Lord’s Day.

Paul is not arguing for either position in Colossians 2.

His point is, “Let no one judge you” regarding these things.

Christ is casting *his* shadow back into the Old Testament.

The reason why we don’t follow the OT calendar

is not because we’ve replaced it with a NT calendar –

(either Medieval or Reformed) –

but because we have replaced it with *Christ*.

Christ is our daily offering, our weekly offering, and our monthly offering.
Christ is our festival offering.

However you structure your time (and Paul doesn't actually provide *the* solution in Colossians!)
it needs to be oriented around *Christ*.

As many of you no doubt have figured out,
I like the continental Reformed practice of celebrating Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost
while maintaining the high priority of the weekly Lord's Day.
The NT *does not* clearly command one single way of sanctifying time –
and the NT *does* clearly permit at least some diversity of practice –
so long as we are focused on *Christ*.

So how do these shadows reflect the substance of *Christ*?

I've called verses 1-15, "the Regular Sanctification of Time" –
but it might be better to say, "the sanctification of regular time" –
since there is something of a contrast with the feasts.

The regular pattern of daily offerings, weekly offerings, and monthly offerings
provide a way for Israel to consecrate "ordinary time" to God.
Ordinary time is then punctuated by the annual feasts.

1. The Regular Sanctification of Time (28:1-15)

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Command the people of Israel and say to them, 'My offering, my food for my food offerings, my pleasing aroma, you shall be careful to offer to me at its appointed time.'

It is not a stretch at all to say that the daily, weekly, and monthly offerings
were designed around the rhythms of the heavens.

God says that these offerings were to be given

"at their appointed time" – a phrase that comes from Genesis 1:14,
which speaks the reason why God made the sun, moon, and stars.

Even so,

the daily offering is made with the rising and setting of the sun;
the Sabbath offering with God's seventh day rest;
the monthly offerings with the phases of the moon.

In all of the offerings you see the whole of Israel's creational labors offered to God:
lambs, bulls, rams, male goats – not wild animals –
they must offer their livestock to God – the results of their labors;
flour, oil, and wine – not just grain, olives, and grapes –

they must bring the fruit of their fields, their orchards, their vineyards,
not raw – but processed.

The work of their hands must be joined to the products of creation.
And what is more, the things that are presented to God as offerings
must be the *finest* products of their labor.

That finest bull in your field –
that is the one which shall be burnt on the altar!

What a waste!
Think of the steaks! The roasts!

No.
It was not a waste.
And the faithful Israelite who took his finest bull to the altar did not lament!
Far from it!
He rejoiced that he could give this finest work of his hands to his God!

We are so egalitarian that we want *everyone* to participate.
But only one Israelite got to bring the morning sacrifice each day
(we're not told *how* the lamb was selected –
but as Numbers 7 told us,
for the dedication of the Tabernacle,
each tribal leader brought the offerings for one day).
Likewise, not everyone is able to bring the bread and wine for communion –
but the elders take it in turn month by month.

Your work of taking God's creation and turning it into cultural goods
is sanctified by the presentation of the *best* of that work to God.

a. Christ, Our Morning and Evening Offering (28:3-8)

³ And you shall say to them, *This is the food offering that you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs a year old without blemish, day by day, as a regular offering.* ⁴ *The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight;* ⁵ *also a tenth of an ephah^[a] of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with a quarter of a hin^[b] of beaten oil.* ⁶ *It is a regular burnt offering, which was ordained at Mount Sinai for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.* ⁷ *Its drink offering shall be a quarter of a hin for each lamb. In the Holy Place you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the LORD.* ⁸ *The other lamb you shall offer at twilight. Like the grain offering of the morning, and like its drink offering, you shall offer it as a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.*

The basic point in all the offerings is stated in verse 2 –
“My offering, my food for my food offerings, my pleasing aroma,

you shall be careful to offer to me at its appointed time.”
When it says “my food” it uses the word “lechem” – which can be translated “bread” –
but often just means “basic food.”
(Think of the Lord’s Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread” –
no one thinks that this means that we are just asking God for *bread* –
we are asking God to provide our *food!*)

In the same way, God says that the offerings that Israel provides in the land are “my food.”
God is pleased with the finest work of our hands.

I recently read an article by a woman who converted to Roman Catholicism
because in all life in Reformed churches,
she kept hearing that God is not pleased with our works.
I hope that none of you think that God is not pleased with your works!
You cannot be *justified* by your works –
our good works cannot “make up” for our sins –
we are justified *only* by the grace of God in Jesus Christ, received by faith.
But God is *always* pleased by good works!
The good things that you do are *pleasing* to God!

The morning and evening offering of the lamb was a pleasing aroma –
because of Israel’s faith and love
demonstrated in the care that the shepherd took
in order to produce such a fine lamb,
the faithfulness of the priest who offered it,
and the properly-ordered community that the offering represents.

But the point of these offerings *is* that God eats and drinks – and *smells* –
the offerings of his people.

The pattern of the offerings –
the burnt offering is consumed by God;
the grain offering and the sin offering is consumed by God and the priest;
the peace offering is consumed by God, the priest, and the people –
clearly demonstrates the pattern of *shalom*.
God saves and delivers his people –
through the priest he cleanses and renews his people –
and in the sacrificial meal, God dwells with his people,
even eating a meal with them.

And all of this became clear when the Word became flesh and dwelt among us –
becoming the burnt offering that was consumed by God,
and the peace offering that is consumed by us.

He is the priest – he is the offering.
And in him, we become partakers of the divine nature,
so that we might dwell together with him forever.

And so every morning and every evening we should start our day and end our day in Christ.
He is our morning and evening offering.
This is why the church has often maintained morning and evening prayers –
and when it became impossible to meet together as a congregation,
the church encouraged families to gather for morning and evening prayer.

b. Christ, Our Sabbath Offering (28:9-10)

⁹ “*On the Sabbath day, two male lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, and its drink offering:* ¹⁰ *this is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.*”

While the daily offering and the monthly offering are patterned after the visible heavens,
the weekly offering on the Sabbath day has no such visible connection.

If you think about it, there is *no earthly reason* why we should have a seven-day week.
There is no pattern of heaven above or earth beneath that fits into seven days.
Days make perfect sense – the sun comes up/the sun goes down!
Months follow the cycles of the moon
(at least they used to until people wanted “solar months” –
an oxymoron if ever there was one!).
Years connect to the seasons – and the earth’s relationship to the sun.

But the seven day week?

That was God’s gift to man – based not on the patterns of the creation,
but upon the pattern of *the Creator!*
For in six days God made the heavens, the earth, and the seas – and all that fills them –
and he rested on the seventh day.

God’s seven-day pattern of creation is the model and example for us.
Genesis 1 never tells us how long the days were –
so we needn’t worry about that.
Rather, Genesis 1 (and Exodus 31, which discusses the Sabbath day)
emphasizes the fact that God’s pattern of six days of labor and 1 of rest
forms the pattern and example for all humanity.

Paul tells us that the OT Sabbath was a shadow of Christ.
And Hebrews 4 tells us that the point of the Sabbath was a call to enter God’s rest.
“For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way:
‘And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.’”

And again in this passage (Ps 95) he said, 'They shall not enter my rest.'
Since therefore it remains for some to enter it,
and those who formerly received the good news
failed to enter because of disobedience,
again he appoints a certain day, 'Today,'
saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,
'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.'" (Heb 4:4-7)

Hebrews says that the seventh-day Sabbath
was a regular reminder that Israel had not yet entered God's rest.
But now, by his resurrection, Jesus has entered God's rest.

As Hebrews goes on to say,
"For if Joshua (Jesus in Greek!) had given them rest,
God would not have spoken of another day later on."
Our passage in Numbers 28-29 is talking about Israel's life in the Land,
but Hebrews says that Israel's entry into the Promised Land
did *not* give God's people rest.

And so Hebrews says
"So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,
for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works
as God did from his."

Resting from your works is done in imitation of God.
God worked for six days and rested on the seventh.
Even so, we work and we rest.
But God's seventh day rest never ends.
God's seventh day rest continues!
He never resumed the work of creation!

Therefore, there must be an end to our work!
There must be an end to our pattern of working and resting.
And whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

Even if you're not convinced by the "strict Sabbatarian" argument,
I would urge you to consider the prudential reasons for taking Sunday as a day of rest!

We live in an age where everyone is busy all the time.
So perhaps for us, as much as for anyone,
it is important to slow down and rest.
I grew up in a church that said that so long as you went to church on Sunday morning,
you could do pretty much anything else on Sunday.
So it was only in college that I encountered Reformed teaching on the Sabbath.

At first I thought it was nuts!
Sunday afternoon was prime study time!
I'd never get everything done if I gave up a whole day!

But my pastor's sermons challenged me to try it.
So I did.

Today I don't keep the Sabbath out of a sense of guilt or obligation.

I keep the Sabbath out of love and delight for my God who has given me such a gift!

It's a day when I can worship God, delight in his people,
and leave aside all the cares of the week.

My cell phone and computer stay off.

Sure, I've got a backlog of projects that need to get done –
and some of them are pretty important!

But God gave me this day to set aside the cares of the week.

Christ is our Sabbath rest.

c. Christ, Our Monthly Offering (28:11-15)

¹¹ “At the beginnings of your months, you shall offer a burnt offering to the LORD: two bulls from the herd, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish; ¹² also three tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull, and two tenths of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; ¹³ and a tenth of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for every lamb; for a burnt offering with a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD. ¹⁴ Their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, a third of a hin for a ram, and a quarter of a hin for a lamb. This is the burnt offering of each month throughout the months of the year. ¹⁵ Also one male goat for a sin offering to the LORD; it shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

The monthly offering, in verses 11-15, steps up from the weekly Sabbath offerings:

The Sabbath offering consisted of 2 lambs.

The monthly offering includes 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 male lambs –
together with the proper grain and drink offerings.

AND they were to offer a sin offering of one male goat.

At the beginning of each month there is to be a significant offering to the LORD.

Why?

Why does God highlight the new moon?

The sun, moon, and stars were given for signs and seasons.

As the heavenly bodies move through the heavens
they reveal God's power and glory.

They also are signs of judgment, as Isaiah says in Isaiah 13:10, regarding the day of the LORD:

“For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light;
the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light.”

Or Habakkuk 3:11 – reflecting on Joshua’s triumph:

“The sun and moon stood still in their place at the light of your arrows as they sped....
You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed.”

Every month, the moon goes dark – as a reminder that judgment is coming.

And so every month when the new moon emerges we are reminded of God’s great mercy.

We have included an echo of this in the monthly diaconal offering,

the monthly fellowship meal,

and also by having the Lord’s Supper once a month in the evening service.

It’s worth noting that the monthly offerings

were not offered instead of the daily and Sabbath offerings

They were “besides” or “in addition to” the regular offerings.

2. The Feasts (28:16-29:40)

The rest of our passage deals with the feasts of Israel.

Passover was in the Spring (March or April),

and then Weeks (or Pentecost) came 50 days later (May or June).

Then Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Booths

all came in the seventh month (September or October).

These feasts are related to the agricultural cycle of the seasons

(Passover is connected to the barley harvest in the spring,

while the seventh month comes after the main harvest in the fall).

But the feasts of Israel were all designed to connect to specific events in redemptive history.

a. Christ, Our Passover (28:16-25)

¹⁶ “On the fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD’s Passover, ¹⁷ and on the fifteenth day of this month is a feast. Seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. ¹⁸ On the first day there shall be a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, ¹⁹ but offer a food offering, a burnt offering to the LORD: two bulls from the herd, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old; see that they are without blemish; ²⁰ also their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil; three tenths of an ephah shall you offer for a bull, and two tenths for a ram; ²¹ a tenth shall you offer for each of the seven lambs; ²² also one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you. ²³ You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a regular burnt offering. ²⁴ In the same way you shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. It shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. ²⁵ And on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work.

Passover was rooted in the Exodus.

The original Passover was celebrated in Egypt –

as the LORD passed over Israel, but destroyed the firstborn of Egypt.
The annual feast of Unleavened Bread was designed to remind Israel
of God's mighty hand – by which he delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt.
Notice that the daily offering during the feast of Unleavened Bread
is identical to the monthly offering:
2 bulls, 1 ram, and 7 male lambs.

And on the 1st day and on the 7th day of the feast, “you shall have a holy convocation.
You shall not do any ordinary week.”
In other words, on the 15th day of the month, and on the 21st day of the month.

So, the 14th day of the month is the Passover.
The 15th and the 21st are the holy convocations for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Numbers highlights the importance of abstaining from leaven –
seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.
Leaven is a powerful reminder of the effects of something small and unseen.

As we saw this morning, “Christ our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed,
Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven,
the leaven of malice and evil,
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Cor 5:7)
Paul's not saying, “Let's celebrate Passover once a year!” –
but neither is he saying, “Let's celebrate Passover every Sunday!” –
rather, he's saying, “let's celebrate Passover every day!”
Every day should be characterized by the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

b. Christ, the Firstfruits (28:26-31)

²⁶ “On the day of the firstfruits, when you offer a grain offering of new grain to the LORD at your Feast of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, ²⁷ but offer a burnt offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD: two bulls from the herd, one ram, seven male lambs a year old; ²⁸ also their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah for each bull, two tenths for one ram, ²⁹ a tenth for each of the seven lambs; ³⁰ with one male goat, to make atonement for you. ³¹ Besides the regular burnt offering and its grain offering, you shall offer them and their drink offering. See that they are without blemish.

In verses 26-31 we hear about Firstfruits – the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost).

You count 7 Sabbaths from the Sabbath of Unleavened Bread –
and the day *after* the seventh Sabbath – in other words, the 50th day –
so Pentecost is always on a Sunday!
And the offering for Pentecost is like the Passover – like the New Moon feast,
together with a male goat, to make atonement for you.

Passover ended with Israel still in the land.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread focused on how Israel was in bondage in Egypt,
but God delivered them by a mighty arm.

That's why Pentecost and Passover are so closely associated.

You calculate Pentecost by counting 50 days (7x7+1) after the Sabbath of Passover week.

And Pentecost is the celebration of Israel's entry into the Land.

The unique feature of Pentecost is the grain offering of new grain.

Pentecost is the ultimate 8th day feast (7x7+1).

Pentecost completes Passover.

Passover – the feast remembering our deliverance from Egypt.

Pentecost – the feast celebrating our entrance into the Land.

And even so – Easter and Pentecost continue to do this in Christ:

Easter is the remembrance of the resurrection of Christ –
our deliverance from sin and death –

Pentecost is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit –
our entrance into the new creation in Christ.

Chapter 29, then, deals with the feasts of the seventh month.

The movement of the feasts of the seventh month is from a call to judgment (Trumpets)
to atonement for sin (Day of Atonement)
to the eschatological celebration of God's goodness (Booths).

c. Christ, the Trumpet (29:1-6)

“On the first day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a day for you to blow the trumpets,² and you shall offer a burnt offering, for a pleasing aroma to the LORD: one bull from the herd, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish;³ also their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah^[c] for the bull, two tenths for the ram,⁴ and one tenth for each of the seven lambs;⁵ with one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you;⁶ besides the burnt offering of the new moon, and its grain offering, and the regular burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offering, according to the rule for them, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.

The first day of the 7th month is also a new moon feast –

so there would also be the monthly offering of 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 male lambs,
along with the male goat for a sin offering.

But on this day, there is also a holy convocation – a day of rest (you shall do no ordinary work),
and a special offering of 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 male lambs, and a male goat for a sin offering.

And this is a “day for you to blow the trumpets.”

The blowing of the trumpets announces the arrival of the 7th month –

the month in which God deals with the sin of Israel.
Psalm 81 speaks of this blowing of the trumpet at the new moon –
signaling the coming of the great feast.
Just as the weekly Sabbath reminded Israel of the call to enter God’s rest,
so also the 7th month reminded Israel of the need for their sin to be atoned for.

Throughout the OT, the sounding of the trumpet would assemble the people for judgment.
Why do I say “for judgment”?
Because whether the trumpet is blowing to call you to battle or to worship,
either way, judgment is coming!

And this is why I speak of Christ, Our Trumpet.
The NT clearly connects the Feasts of Passover and Pentecost with the work of Christ.
We should interpret Trumpets in the same way.
Indeed, the 7 trumpets of Revelation use the trumpets to herald the coming judgment.
Sound the trumpet in Zion!
Judgment Day is coming – so come and humble yourself before the LORD!

d. Christ, Our Atonement (29:7-11)

⁷ *“On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation and afflict yourselves.^[d] You shall do no work,⁸ but you shall offer a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma: one bull from the herd, one ram, seven male lambs a year old: see that they are without blemish.⁹ And their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah for the bull, two tenths for the one ram,¹⁰ a tenth for each of the seven lambs:¹¹ also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the sin offering of atonement, and the regular burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings.*

The Day of Atonement took place on the 10th day of the 7th month.
When Moses says to “afflict yourselves” he probably refers to fasting.

Having heard the call of the trumpets on the first day of the 7th month,
you would prepare for the day of affliction – the day of fasting –
on the tenth day of the 7th month.

The offering for the Day of Atonement is the same as the Feast of Trumpets.
1 bull, 1 ram, 7 male lambs, and a male goat as a sin offering –
“besides the sin offering of atonement.”
Leviticus 16 walks through the details of that sin offering of atonement.
And Hebrews 9-10 focuses on that –
the one day in the year when the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies,
bringing the blood of the offering before the LORD,
pointing forward to Christ, the priest who offers the final sacrifice (of himself)
in order to deal with sin once for all!

And with the once-for-all atonement for sin symbolized on the 10th day of the 7th month, Israel would then gather from all over the land to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

e. Christ, Our Eighth Day (29:12-39)

¹² *“On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days. ¹³ And you shall offer a burnt offering, a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD, thirteen bulls from the herd, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old; they shall be without blemish; ¹⁴ and their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, three tenths of an ephah for each of the thirteen bulls, two tenths for each of the two rams, ¹⁵ and a tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; ¹⁶ also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offering.*

On the first day of the feast, you shall offer 13 bulls, 2 rams, 14 male lambs, with their grain offerings, and a goat for a sin offering. Then on each successive day, the number of bulls decreases by 1, while the 2 rams, 14 lambs, grain offerings, and sin offering remain the same.

¹⁷ *“On the second day twelve bulls from the herd, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ¹⁸ with the grain offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, in the prescribed quantities; ¹⁹ also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings.*

²⁰ *“On the third day eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ²¹ with the grain offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, in the prescribed quantities; ²² also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering.*

²³ *“On the fourth day ten bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ²⁴ with the grain offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, in the prescribed quantities; ²⁵ also one male goat for a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offering.*

²⁶ *“On the fifth day nine bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ²⁷ with the grain offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, in the prescribed quantities; ²⁸ also one male goat for a sin offering; besides the regular burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering.*

²⁹ *“On the sixth day eight bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ³⁰ with the grain offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, in the prescribed quantities; ³¹ also one male goat for a sin offering; besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offerings.*

³² *“On the seventh day seven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old without blemish, ³³ with the grain offering and the drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, in the prescribed quantities; ³⁴ also one male goat for a sin offering; besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.*

The result is that after 7 days you have offered 70 bulls,
14 rams, and 98 male lambs, along with 7 goats for sin offerings.

70 bulls is stunning.

After all, over the course of the *whole year* (besides this feast),
there only would have been 42 bulls and 22 rams offered.

The lamb was the normal offering: there were 950 lambs offered each year
(2 for every day, an additional 2 for every Sabbath, and 7 for every feast day).

In other words, the Feast of Booths is *expensive*.

Israel is supposed to make a *big deal* about this feast!

The Feast of Booths is the eschatological feast.

It is the feast of ingathering – the feast of celebration of God’s provision.

Israel is to remember God’s provision in the wilderness

(that’s why they are to live in booths for the week) –

which is also supposed to remind Israel that although they live in the Land,
the Land is not the eschatological goal.

Israel is supposed to live in the land as pilgrims on their way to the glorious Land.

And the Babylonian Talmud suggests that the 70 bulls

were given to make atonement for the 70 nations (the table of nations in Gen 10).

But then comes the 8th day – the great day of the feast –

where you might expect the most lavish of all the offerings!

³⁵ “On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly. You shall not do any ordinary work,

³⁶ but you shall offer a burnt offering, a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old without blemish,³⁷ and the grain offering and the drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, in the prescribed quantities;³⁸ also one male goat for a sin offering; besides the regular burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering.

But instead, it drops down to one set: 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 male lambs,

besides 1 male goat for a sin offering.

It will be *one* sacrifice – the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

As David Stubbs puts it,

“The future orientation of this feast is apparent.

Booths completes the cycle begun with Passover and Pentecost

by looking forward to the consummation of all of God’s promises for Israel,

when God will judge the nations, fully atone for sin,

and begin the great feast.” (p225)

In other words, Booths is especially oriented to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

Jesus Christ is our ultimate eighth day – the day we enter his rest fully and finally.

³⁹ *“These you shall offer to the LORD at your appointed feasts, in addition to your vow offerings and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your grain offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings.”*

Conclusion: “As the LORD Had Commanded Moses” (29:40)

⁴⁰ [e] *So Moses told the people of Israel everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.*

Verse 40 is key to helping us think about the OT calendar and the church calendar.

The OT calendar was commanded by God.

The church calendar was not.

The NT does not prescribe a series of feasts.

We are not required to observe Christmas, Easter, or Pentecost.

That’s why I did not connect any of the feasts in Numbers 28-29 to these Christian feasts.

Paul’s whole point in Colossians 2 is that we should not judge one another regarding these things

Paul seems to have thought that the unity of the church in Colossae –

as in Corinth –

would not be harmed by diversity of practice in such things.

After all, our Triune God maintains unity and diversity eternally.

We should not be surprised that he expects us to reflect diversity in unity as well!

Of course, one feature of the three major feasts in Numbers

is that Israel would gather from all over the Promised Land to come to the feasts.

It wasn’t just one “congregation” gathering.

It was the whole people of God.

That’s why we have regional services on Good Friday, Christmas, Reformation Day,
and at other appropriate times!

Whenever possible, we should gather together with as many Christians as we can,
to celebrate the mighty deeds of God in Jesus Christ!

So the way that we structure our time –

daily, weekly, monthly, and annually –

should help us to reorient ourselves towards Christ.