**Daily and Sabbath Offerings, Feasts and Vows**

Chapters 28 & 29 of Numbers repeat God’s requirements for sacrifices, observance of the Sabbath, Passover and feasts. These had been dictated by God in Exodus and Leviticus and we studied them previously. More detail is provided in Numbers, particularly the progressive sacrifices required for the Feast of Weeks described in Chapter 29. There are several reasons for the repetition. Since the Israelites constantly backslid, they needed constant reminders from God about His laws. They had apparently failed to observe some of those during their time in the desert (see Amos 5:25 and Acts 7:420). In fact, rather than consistently observing God’s holy days and celebrations, they actually seemed to be more faithful in idol worship, a practice that would continue for generations. God also wanted to reinforce Mosaic law with a new generation of Israelites since the older generation had died off and had not set a good example for their sons. Finally, God wanted to renew their commitment to His laws since they would soon be challenged with both conflict and blessings. They would soon fight wars against the inhabitants of Canaan and they would need God’s intervention to succeed. The Old Testament has numerous examples of their failures when they did not seek God’s approval and favor before facing their enemies. They would also need to stay grounded by realizing that their victories were due to God’s strength rather than their own (see Ex. 14:14, Deut. 1:30, 1st Sam. 17:47). After spending nearly 40 years wandering in the desert, they were about to enter a land that was much more hospitable and they would leave behind many of their hardships. A life of comfort can lead to complacency and we soon forget to appreciate what we have. It is significant that the first ordained day of remembrance was Passover and God took great pains to make sure that it remained part of the Jewish heritage as a constant reminder that He had freed them from the bondage of the Egyptians.

In chapter 30, God establishes specific rules to be followed by Israelites who made vows. Much of the text about vows is dedicated to vows made by women. Vows made by young women still living with their parents were subject to approval by the father. He could nullify the vow and God would release the woman from the vow. If the father knew about the vow and said nothing then the vow would stand. Similarly, husbands could nullify vows made by their wives, however vows made by widows were binding. There were some references to vows previously and God had given detailed instructions for those making the vow of a Nazarite. Here God goes into great detail and begins by stating that when a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself, he must not break his word. This requirement is at the core of any vow that is made and the principle is repeated numerous times in the Bible. Perhaps the most often quoted is Deut. 23:21-23: *When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it, for it would be sin in you, and the Lord your God will surely require it of you. However, if you refrain from vowing, it would not be sin in you. You shall be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, just as you have voluntarily vowed to the Lord your God, what you have promised.* Note the key parts of this scripture. First, do not delay. We often procrastinate but God expects prompt attention to what we vow. He makes clear that not making a vow is not a sin while failing to keep a vow is. Vows are often made rashly, sometimes as a result of peer pressure. James devoted a chapter to taming the tongue and this scripture reinforces that. Just as one should be careful to perform what goes out from your lips, one should be equally careful to limit what goes out from your lips. Jesus said “Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No’”.