

## **You Are His – That’s What Sunday Says!**

## **NUMBERS 28:9-10**

*(Reading: Mark 2:23-3:6; Numbers 28:1-10)*

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ...

If you go through the last four books of Moses you will find that the same things are described several times.

You have the Ten Commandments given twice.

You have other rules that appear again - and perhaps even again.

John Calvin structured his commentaries on the four books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, as a ‘harmony’.

That meant he grouped all the similar passages together, even though they might be in different books.

When it comes to the Sabbath day, and the worship to occur on that day, we see the same.

There are other passages which address this.

And when it came to the specific worship on this day Leviticus 23 verse 3 says much the same.

Except that it isn’t exactly the same.

For when you compare them more closely, we see that Leviticus 23 is more directly addressed to Israel as a whole while Numbers 28 and 29 speaks to the Priests.

The detail in our text is actually like an instruction book.

Now that might seem strange happening in Numbers.

It’s usually Leviticus we associate as the book with ‘Rules for the Priests.’

But here we need to consider the context.

For this part of Numbers is chronologically getting very close to the promised land.

They don’t have long to go now.

And so the Lord spells it out for them in this particular way.

For it’s the pattern here which more than matches the pagan prescription for religion.

These chapters detail things so that they should be quite taken up with the worship of the Lord.

Indeed, it would be a worship and service of Him that demanded of them everything!

They are His!

Congregation, we’ve seen that with what we heard about the daily offerings.

And now it’s shown in the Sabbath day offerings.

That’s why our first aspect says, **THERE’S SOMETHING ABOUT THE SEVENTH DAY.**

Verse 9 clearly begins with this.

“On the Sabbath day,” it states.

Ah, the Sabbath day.

The seventh day in the week.

The day proscribed to be kept as a holy day for the Lord in Exodus 20, the verses 8 till 11, and in Deuteronomy 5, the verses 12 till 15.

It's interesting, though, that the fourth commandment in each of these accounts has a different rationale.

The reason given for the Sabbath day in Exodus 20 is that it was the day God rested from His work of creation.

And the reason given for it in Deuteronomy 5 is that God has taken them out of slavery in Egypt with His mighty hand.

This day became the constant thanksgiving to the Lord for His creating **and** recreating them.

So, this special day was because they were all made by Him.

That's what David acknowledges in Psalm 139.

**And** this special day is because they have been remade by Him.

That's what Asaph in Psalm 78 details as he relates the Lord's redeeming them from Egypt and His guiding them through the wilderness.

The Sabbath testifies to them that God saved them to worship Him.

On the Sabbath day their daily worship is added to with a double offering at the tabernacle.

It was an offering that, in addition to the sunrise and sunset offerings to the Lord, would probably have taken place at midday.

That certainly claims the day for the Lord!

For, then, in the wilderness, all would have come to the outer court where the offering was made on the Altar of Burnt Offering.

They would be there looking upon that intricately made altar, as it's described in Exodus 27.

The altar made of acacia wood, with a height of one and a half metres and a width and length of two and a half metres.

The altar with horns on each corner and completely overlaid with bronze.

They would see the utensils, its grating, and the bronze ring at each of the corners.

There were also those poles of acacia wood for it, also overlaid with bronze.

And the altar was to be hollow, made out of boards, so that it could be carried with them.

Then there was the courtyard itself.

It's bordered around with curtains and posts and bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts.

And it's all top-quality linen and purple and scarlet yarn.

In that setting they were to take the time for a double offering.

That would take twice as long.

But then they weren't working that day.  
And they had received a double portion of the manna the day before.

So it was the Lord's day – the day they especially met with Him.  
The day when everything they did reminded them about Him.

The seventh day.  
It is no coincidence that all the feasts of the whole year formed a cycle arranged according to the number 'seven'.

The number which had its starting-point and centre in the Sabbath.  
So the whole Hebrew year was regulated according to the division of time established at the creation into weeks, months, years, and periods of years.

It was a pattern that went from the weekly Sabbath to the monthly Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, and the year of Jubilee.

One commentator notes that, "into this cycle of holy periods, regulated by the number seven, and ever expanding into larger and larger circles, there was embodied the whole rotation of annually recurring festivals, established to commemorate the mighty works of the Lord for the preservation and inspiration of His people."

He goes on to point out that this was done in three ways.

The first of these is that the number of yearly festivals added up to exactly seven, of which the two leading feasts lasted seven days.

In the second place he says that in all the feasts, no matter whether they were for one day or for seven days, there were only seven days that were to be observed with sabbatical rest and a holy meeting.

And thirdly he notes that the seven feasts were formed into two large festal circles, each of which consisted of an introductory feast, the main feast of seven days, and a closing feast of one day.

### ***Now, that's some detail!***

But it all comes back to seven.

The Lord clearly lays out how it must all come back to Him!

For while we now have the Spirit in our hearts, because of what Christ has done, they had to be guided from the outside.

It was in following this pattern of seven that their faith was blessed and built up.

Every time there was a revival in the Old Testament Church this is what they went back to.

Well, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE SEVENTH DAY alright!

But then, in the second place, THERE'S SOMETHING TO SET APART THIS DAY.

Here we consider what the text describes as being done on the Sabbath and when it was done.

Because we read in verse 9 that they were to "make an offering of two lambs a year old, without defect, together with its drink offering and a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil."

Comparing this with the daily offerings described above the text in verses 3 till 8 we see that, apart from the drink offering, this was exactly double the daily offerings.

And it was to also have double the effect because of the time it would take and when it would be done.

You see, the morning and evening sacrifices would have began and ended the day with the Lord.

We have seen how much they guide God's people to be focused on Him all the time.

But with the Sabbath day offerings the whole day itself is being taken up with resting and recreating in Him.

Just as we all need a break physically from our weekly work, so the we also need to have a break spiritually.

But not a break to do what we want.

Then it wouldn't be spiritual at all!

Rather, this is a day when both the physical and spiritual come together in a special way.

This is why the strongest evidence is for the Sabbath offerings being carried out at midday.

So it would be three times this day that the people gathered together to worship the Lord their God.

Thrice they assembled.

Three times the call went out to the Church then to join in the public worship of YAHWEH.

The impact of this was brought home to me by what someone said to me some years ago.

In a meeting, he noted that nowhere does the Lord command us to worship Him twice on His day.

That's true.

But not the way he thought!

Because sometimes God calls us to worship Him more than twice, as we see here.

The whole day **is His**, isn't it?

So as often as we are called to worship that's as many times as we ought to be together in public worship.

For if the Lord is there where His people are gathered together in his Name, as Matthew 18 verse 20 says, then that's where we have to be.

This also addresses the growing practice there is amongst churches to have a service on the Saturday night.

For example, when Christmas was on a Sunday a few years ago, many churches didn't have any services at all!

Because what they are really doing is to leave the whole Sunday free for the people to do whatever **they** want to do.

And then no day is His!

For your daily worship becomes worthless if it's not looking towards your weekly worship.

What happens on Sunday should be the highlight of your week.

Because it is doing what pleases God most of all.

Oh, when you do that, you will have your blessing too.

Moses in Deuteronomy is quite clear about that.

But only because the Lord is first.

In this way, we are brought to a third aspect to this text.

For we are seeing, THERE'S SOMETHING THIS DAY DOES TO ALL DAYS.

Exodus 31, when it commands observance of the Sabbath, says in verse 17 that it was on this day that the Lord ceased from work and was refreshed.

There's no doubt that this is a day set apart.

And neither is there any doubt that this is a day that gives you a whole new start.

You will receive tremendous blessings for every day.

This is what the prophets later describe.

In Isaiah 58, the verses 13 and 14, we read, "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the LORD's holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way, and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD."

But especially we note how Isaiah ends verse 14.

Because the LORD is speaking.

He promises, "and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob."

There's also that scene we met in Psalm 134.

The service of the priests was described there in verse 1 as ministering "by night in the house of the LORD."

For as long as the faithful worship of the Lord was found in His people so long would the blessing of the Lord be there.

As indeed verse 3 confirms in that psalm.

For there we see the Lord blessing those so looking to Him.

You see, when you faithfully keep the Sabbath you find the true meaning to your life.

And how obvious isn't that in an age and a place when Christians have so much deserted this command of the Lord?

Because they're doing as they please.

It's a day that's no different to them.

They don't get a break!

Now, there is the other extreme too.

The Pharisees showed this in Jesus' time with the many extra rules they laid upon the Sabbath.

And church history gives us examples since then of Christians who have imposed man-made regulations on top of what the Lord commanded.

They don't get a break either.

Congregation, the Lord knows us better than we know ourselves.

Constantly throughout Scripture He tells us that He's thinking of us.

Don't we hear that with what Jesus says about the Sabbath in Mark 2?

In verse 27 he addresses the Pharisees by saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

Because what is this one day in seven apart from recognising what God has done in creating and re-creating His people?

Take away what we are in Him, and nothing else fits in!

No wonder Christianity seems so ineffectual in this place!

You see, Jesus went on in verse 28 of Mark 2 to say, "So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

It's Him that this day is really all about.

When we hear about these offerings being sacrificed on the day Israel remembered their being saved from Egypt, we're immediately drawn to the far greater salvation done by Christ on the cross.

That's what Old Testament Israel looked forward to every time they assembled together on the last day of the week.

Even though the sight of the saints was then dim, they knew the Messiah was coming.

While they lived in shadows, they knew the substance was coming.

They called that the 'Day of the Lord.'

That would be a day when the Law that had been on the outside would be permanently written on the inside.

In the words of Joel chapter 3, that would be the day that began a new day.

Congregation, we live on the other side of that Day.

And yet we live in that Day.

Because while Christ has come He is still to come again.

So every Christian Sabbath we look forward to that Day.

For while it's true we worship now on Sunday because of Christ's rising from the dead, it's also the first day of the week because eternity is yet to come.

Amen.

**PRAYER:**

**Let's pray...**

O Great God,

What a love You have supremely fulfilled in Your Son, our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.

How rich aren't we in Him?

Please bless the Christian Sabbath day.

May it always look back on what it fulfilled.

But especially may it direct us to look forward to all eternity with You.

In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.