

1. My last lesson title was about how we plan for our future. In these two chapters, God responds in effect, with "Since we are talking about the future, let me tell you what I desire of your future".
 - a) I'll shorten that title to make it easier to remember: "What God wants us to focus on".
 - b) In order to explain, let me go over these two chapters and explain why they are here.
2. Know that Chapters 28 and 29 go well together. If I were in charge of the chapter breaks (and I'm not), I would have made this one single chapter. They are in effect one continuous story of what God requires of the Israelites once they actual enter the land of Israel.
 - a) Think of these chapters this way: The Israelites are now camped just outside of the land of Israel. They realize they must fight the inhabitants there in order to conquer that land. I'm guessing the average Israelite soldier is thinking, "How long will it take to win? How long before I just get to settle down there and live with my family? Will I even survive through that war myself? Yes I believe God will lead me to victory, but what is the cost?"
 - i) In that sense, these two chapters are designed to calm the hearts of the Israelites by saying in effect, "Not only will you win this war, but here is how I (God) want you to worship Me once gets into the land of Israel." I believe these two chapters are here to calm the Israelites fear that not only they will win this war, but that they will be able to focus on God throughout their years living in that land.
 - b) With that said, these two chapters are in effect describe each of the daily, weekly, monthly and special holiday sacrifices that the Israelites must make in order to worship God.
 - i) To put it simply, the Israelites are required to sacrifices thousands of animals, over a ton of wheat, and many gallons of wine to God yearly on a sacrificial altar.
 - ii) What that also means is that God will provide for them all of the animals, wheat and grapes in order to make those sacrifices in the first place.
 - iii) God is saying, this land of Israel will be such a good land for one's animals and for growing things, if the Israelites agree to follow My (God's) instructions, there will always be plenty of food for them in order to obey these laws.
3. Now for the important question: why should we care about any of this? One of the biggest fears most of us have in life is the question of how do we financially survive through our lives? God answers that question by saying in effect, "If you are willing to trust Me by giving up some of our stuff, then I (God) promise to alleviate that financial fear and provide enough for your future".
 - a) Are you saying we have to sacrifice lots of animals to God like these Israelites do in these chapters? Of course not. In fact, devoutly religious Jews today don't even sacrifice these animals since the official Jewish temple does not exist. That leads me back to the question of why should I care about any of this stuff? What is the significance?
 - b) The first thing to keep in mind is that God takes sin seriously. A reason why all of these sacrifices are made is to remember how seriously He does take sin. The idea is that there is a price to be paid for sin. Those animals being burnt up on that altar were in effect the price paid for their sins. Since Jesus literally became sin for us, we should never, ever take our own sins lightly as He died for every one of our sins, past, present and future.
 - i) The way I like to describe the life of the Christian when it comes to sin is, if we do believe that Jesus is God, why would we want to disappoint Him by sinning? We don't avoid sin out of fear of going to hell. We avoid sin as that is the best way to live our lives and we don't want to disappoint the one who did die for our sins.
 - ii) Let's assume we all know that fact about Jesus. If that is true, why should I care about all of these details about how many animals and non-animals are sacrificed throughout the Israelite calendar year? It is to think about all of these animals that were killed and realize that is how seriously God wants us to take sin.

4. Let me explain this concept another way: Many of us like to complain about how much money the government takes out of our income. Now imagine if ten percent of our hard earned income had to be given every year to make all of these animal and other sacrifices? Wouldn't we also be complaining about this cost to us every year? How long would it be before we would be saying, "Why should I give up my hard earned animals and crops just to know they are going to go up in flames? Isn't that a waste of what I work hard for every year? What do I get in life in exchange for giving up those animals or those crops that I work so hard to grow every year?"
 - a) The answer is not just about supporting our local pastors and priests. They are called to use their lives to make a difference for God by serving Him. The idea for us is also about developing a sense not only that God is there, but also providing for us. By us offering a percentage of what we earn, we are telling God in effect, "We trust You to provide for our future by trusting You with what we have". That is one reason why we should be willing to give a percentage of what we earn to our local church or other Christian charities. We shouldn't give out of guilt, but only out of a sense of trust that He will provide for us in the future based on our trust in Him.
5. Now let me talk a little more about the specifics of these two chapters. The key word is "giving".
 - a) It starts with the daily sacrifices that are required. Then comes the weekly sacrifices that God requires. Then comes the monthly ones. Then comes additional sacrifices that are to be made on special holidays throughout the years. Then it repeats for the following year.
 - b) I can almost guarantee that a short time after reading this chapter, one is going to forget most or all of the details about the daily, weekly, monthly, and holiday requirements. Let's be honest: since we don't have to make these sacrifice these animals ourselves, it is highly unlikely that we will remember the specific requirements a short time from now.
 - c) That is why when you study the chapter, I am suggesting that we don't focus too much on the specific number of sacrifices, but just understand why they are being made. They are to show how much we should be trusting God to provide for our lives by our willingness to sacrifice part of what we've got not to earn His love, but to show our trust in Him.
 - d) Let me put this another way: I'm not asking you to give to one's favorite Christian cause or one's own church because one has to. I'm also saying that giving a part of what one earns is a way of building up one's trust in God to provide for one's future. I'm also not saying that one has to give an exact percentage of one's income. Giving is about a trust that He will provide for one's future. I'm also not saying that the more we give, the more we will earn. God does not require we take a vow of poverty by giving away all we earn.
 - i) The way I try to look at my stuff is as follows: All I have belongs to God. I let Him lead me as to how much to give away and how much to keep. If we pray our way through our life I find that He makes it obvious to me how much to give each payday to Him. I've yet to go to a church that pesters me to give more every week and I would leave any church that does. We should not give out of guilt. We give out of trust that He will provide for our future. We give in order to alleviate our fears that we won't have enough for our future. Again it comes down to trust.
 - e) That speech does lead me back to these two chapters. My point is that as one reads about all of these sacrifices, don't get too focused on the specifics of the sacrifices. I will try to explain the significance behind those details as we go through the chapter. The key is to not think in terms of this specific day requires "x" number of animals, think of it in terms of "Do I trust God to provide for my future or not?"
6. With that speech completed, know that we are going to be reading lots of numbers and text that appears to be repetitive in this chapter. It is real easy to get bogged down in trying to keep track of the specific numbers of animals being sacrificed for each occasion. Let me calm one's fears and know that those numbers are there for a reason, but it is the patterns that are important.
 - a) In other words, God is going to teach us things by the patterns laid out in these chapters. Speaking of teaching, it is definitely time to start the specific text itself.

7. Chapter 28, Verse 1: The LORD said to Moses, ² "Give this command to the Israelites and say to them: 'See that you present to me at the appointed time the food for my offerings made by fire, as an aroma pleasing to me.'
- a) Let's start with who's talking to who: God is giving a direct command to Moses. If you recall from the last chapter, God just finished telling Moses that he was going to die soon by going up on a mountain, see of all Israel from the view up there and then he will die.
 - i) If I just got that news about my upcoming death, I would probably have a tough time focusing on more information. After Moses was told that bit of news in the last chapter, his next concern was about who would be the next leader of Israel.
 - ii) God is in effect responding further to the question of what do the Israelites do next, by giving this two-chapter speech about what happens to the Israelites when they get into the land of Israel. Notice there is no mention about how to fight the local inhabitants or when this process of conquering begins. Instead, the next order of business is to explain how God is to be worshipped when they get there.
 - b) In effect, God is saying, let me worry about how the land gets conquered and how life will go once one gets there. You just focus on worshipping Me and I promise to take care of the rest. That is similar to my concept of letting go of our worries about financial fears or fill in whatever fears one has. In other words, our main issue as Christian believers is to focus on worshipping Him. If we do that, He promises us to guide us through life in a way that is not only pleasing to Him, but in a way that will (big emphasis on will) give our lives purpose as we make a difference for Him.
 - c) Therefore, these verses for us are not about literally offering animals and other things on a sacrificial altar. In that sense, Jesus already paid the complete price for our sins. What is important is that we take sin seriously, and we take our commitment to Him seriously. If one keeps that in mind, these chapters will make a lot more sense as we go through them.
 - d) With that said, it is time to focus on the sacrificial altar.
8. Verse 3: Say to them: 'This is the offering made by fire that you are to present to the LORD: two lambs a year old without defect, as a regular burnt offering each day. ⁴ Prepare one lamb in the morning and the other at twilight, ⁵ together with a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil from pressed olives. ⁶ This is the regular burnt offering instituted at Mount Sinai as a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. ⁷ The accompanying drink offering is to be a quarter of a hin of fermented drink with each lamb. Pour out the drink offering to the LORD at the sanctuary. ⁸ Prepare the second lamb at twilight, along with the same kind of grain offering and drink offering that you prepare in the morning. This is an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.
- a) Just so you know, these two chapters follows a time line pattern:
 - i) First it talks about the sacrifices that are to be made daily.
 - ii) Then it talks about the sacrifices that are to be made weekly.
 - iii) Then it talks about the sacrifices to be made monthly.
 - iv) Finally it talks about sacrifices to be made on special holidays of the year.
 - v) Know that each of these requirements are cumulative. To state it another way, the sacrifices to be made weekly are over and above the daily ones. The monthly ones are over and above the weekly ones. The same for the special holiday ones.
 - b) That leads me back to this first set of verses. The point here is simply that "here is what I God require of the Israelites every day that they are in Israel." They don't begin after they have won the war. They are not every day that they feel like it. They are daily, whether one feels like serving God or not. One of my favorite scriptures about serving God comes from 2nd Timothy 4:2, that says in effect, "Preach the word whether you feel like it or not".
 - i) My point is not that we all have to be preachers. The point is we all should serve God by trusting Him no matter what the circumstances. If one gets that point, understanding the specifics of these verses will make a lot more sense.

- c) Speaking of the specifics of these verses, it is time to talk about them a little more.
 - i) The first requirement is "two lambs" are to be burnt up. One in the morning and one in the evening. I could give a lecture here on how Jesus was our sacrificial lamb, but I suspect most of us are aware of that principal by now.
 - a) For the sake of the newcomers, just know that Jesus sacrifice on the cross is compared to the idea of a sacrificial lamb in the New Testament. (See Acts 8:32 and Revelation 5:6 as examples.)
 - b) So if Jesus only had to die once for our sins, why offer a lamb twice a day on the barbeque pit? ☺ It is not about killing him over and over again, it is about taking time out of our day to focus on Him. It is the idea of praying to God first thing in the morning and again in the evening in order to give Him thanks for providing for us.
 - c) OK, we better speed this up, or we'll never make it through the lesson.
 - ii) Mixed with the lamb was a grain offering and a liquid offering made from olive oil. Know that this was a large quantity being offered. One thing Christians have to learn and accept in life is that God never asks us to do anything that He doesn't also provide the materials for us to do what He asks.
 - a) Does that mean life will be easy? Does that mean God just drops in our laps what we need to serve Him and others? Of course not. At the same time, I have yet to see God fail to provide what we need to serve Him.
 - b) As a personal example, God has never failed to provide for me with the financial resources I need to complete my ministry work. I trust in Him to provide that for me so I can do what I believe He wants me to do. The day I do lose that, I may take it as a sign from God it is time for me to stop.
 - c) OK, back to the Israelites. Remember that they have been living in a wilderness for the last 40 years. Now they learn the land they are about to go live in will be a good land for raising animals, as well as planting food. That should be the good news, not that they have to sacrifice a portion of what they grow in order to serve God. The idea is that the land will be so abundant with these things, there will be enough to make these sacrifices as well as enough to keep the Israelites healthy enough to keep doing this.
 - iii) What about times when our lives get really difficult. Do we still have to do all of this? If a priest was too sick to get out of bed, I doubt God still expected him to go burn up a few lambs and other priests covered for him. The point is we never stop our practice of trusting in Him, whether life is easy or difficult at that moment. That concept of daily trust is what this paragraph is describing for us.
- d) To finish the text, over and above an animal and food offering twice a day, there was a strong drink offering. Think of this as preparing a quantity of wine not for drinking, but for pouring it out over this sacrifice. The idea is that the land of Israel will have the ability to produce the grapes needed to make this large amount of wine in the first place. Don't forget that this is a twice-daily requirement, so it is a large quantity that is needed here.
 - i) The issue here has nothing to do with whether or not one should drink alcohol. That is a whole discussion unto itself, and not the topic of this text.
 - ii) To understand, consider that there are two references in the New Testament where Paul describes his own life as a "drink offering". That is from Philippians 2:17 and 2nd Timothy 4:6. In both cases Paul is describing his life as a drink offering. The point is that God desires we use the most valuable thing He gives each of us, our time to be used in order to make a difference for Him. Does that mean we can't work for a living or enjoy our time? Of course not. It just means that we should realize the most valuable thing we own is our time, and God desires that we use it to make a difference for Him. That is the "our drink offering" to Him.

9. Verse 9: "On the Sabbath day, 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.¹⁰ This is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.
- a) We now move from the daily offering to the weekly offering in these particular verses. Think of these verses this way: If God wants us to daily use our time and our resources to make a difference for Him, what is so special about the Sabbath, that is, the seventh day of the week? The word Sabbath literally means to rest. That does mean we just sleep in on Sunday or whatever day we go to church. The idea of rest is in terms of "rest in Him".
 - b) Let me explain this concept another way: A great pleasure we have as Christians is to be able to pause from our daily routine just to spend time with God and with other believers. It is designed to be a time to refresh us so we can handle the rest of the week. When we miss going to church for some specific reason, we miss the opportunity to rest in Him.
 - i) What about those people who have to work on Sundays? What about when we travel somewhere? With respect to our "Seventh Day Adventist" brethren, I don't think the day of the week is as important as the concept that we do take one day of rest out of seven. If one has a job that requires one to work on Sunday, then one should take another day to rest in God and be with Him and other believers.
 - ii) A young pastor once asked Billy Graham, "What do you this is the most important thing for me to remember as a pastor?" Mr. Graham's answer was, "Don't forget the gathering of the brethren". The idea is about not isolating oneself and ignoring spending time with other believers. That is what the Sabbath rest is all about.
 - c) With that speech out of my system, now I can talk about the text itself. My first point here is that two more lambs are offered over and above the daily ones. That just means God required twice as much as the other days of the week. Think of this effort as being twice as much as God required the other days of the week. Compare this to the fact that most of us only go to church once per week. Some of us go twice, for a mid-week bible study, but twice the time commitment is usually for our weekly service usually on a Sunday.
 - i) I remember my daughters grumbling last Sunday morning how they didn't want to go church that day. Did I force them? Yes in the sense, they got the idea that as long as they are part of our family, this is what we do. When they grow up they can make their own choices. In the meantime, my wife and I are in charge. I am convinced that over time, it will make a difference and hopefully those values will be past on to their own children.
 - ii) That is relevant to the text in that God asks us for "twice the commitment" when we do rest in Him. If one gets that, one gets these verses.
 - d) Speaking of twice as much, notice that the grain offering and I'm speculating that the drink amount is also twice as much than the daily offerings. Again the idea is simply about taking one day a week to focus on Him twice as much as the rest of our lives.
 - e) With that said, it is time to move on to the monthly offerings.
 - i) Before I start, let me quickly explain what a Jewish month way back then. They didn't have calendars to mark days of the month. They used the moon to keep track of a monthly cycle. The moon has a 28-day cycle based on the light we can see from it. Since a lunar cycle makes a shorter month than a normal 30-31 day calendar, the Jewish calendar adds another month every few years to catch up.
 - ii) I'm telling you all of this, as the first night of a new month was easy to recognize as all one had to do was look up in the sky and see if there was no moon. Since there was no electricity back then, a "no moon" night was a little more dangerous in terms of needing protection from wild animals. Therefore, the Israelites would gather together monthly to ask God's protection for the next month.
 - iii) With that said, now I can describe the monthly offering that was required.

10. Verse 11: "On the first of every month, present to the LORD a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect.¹² With each bull there is to be a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil;¹³ and with each lamb, a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire.¹⁴ With each bull there is to be a drink offering of half a hin of wine; with the ram, a third of a hin; and with each lamb, a quarter of a hin. This is the monthly burnt offering to be made at each new moon during the year.¹⁵ Besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering, one male goat is to be presented to the LORD as a sin offering.
- a) Let me summarize all of this for us: Over and above the daily and weekly requirements, every month, two bulls, one ram and seven lambs are to be sacrificed. With each of those animals was to be sacrificed some flour and some olive oil. A drink offering was also be made along with each of those animal sacrifices. Therefore, the priests were extra busy once a month preparing all of this.
 - b) To explain, let's come back to you and me. Let's be honest, Christians don't gather once per month for any sort of gathering. Yes I get the idea that those Israelites gathered as a time of protection and so that the weekly offerings don't get routine, but the important question is why should we as Christians care about these monthly gatherings?
 - i) I suspect that what is lost among most Christians including myself is that as time passes, it is easy to get our focus off of God. It would be like realizing on the first or last day of the month, "Wow, I have made it through another month. Maybe we should pause for a moment and be grateful that God got us through that particular month and trust that He will get me through the next one."
 - ii) I'm not saying we should have a big family gathering once per month, but I am saying that spending a monthly time focusing on Him as a special occasion is a good habit (one I don't have) to do. For the Israelites the monthly gathering was a time of celebration. In 1st Samuel Chapter 20, it says in effect that King Saul had a monthly meal where his whole family would sit together. My only point here is that this concept was not just for the high priest to offer up animals. It was a time where families would gather to thank God for getting them through that month.
 - c) With that stated, let us talk about the specifics of this monthly celebration:
 - i) First, two young bulls were offered. Think of a bull (or an ox) as the largest animal that can be domesticated. It was the most expensive animal traded. This is telling God that He will provide enough bulls that two can be killed every month, plus all the additional bulls that will be mentioned in later sacrifices.
 - a) So why two bulls? Twice the effort, maybe. Maybe it also symbolizes the idea of gathering together "two or more" to be with God once per month
 - b) OK, so what? It describes the largest effort one can make by serving Him. By offering two of these animals it saying we offer the most (or best) of what we have on a monthly basis for God. Think of this as doing some sort of project that makes a difference for Him. It is hard to see progress in a day or week. However, with the passing of a month or months going by, we can see what difference can be made by such projects.
 - ii) One thing God has laid on me (I never understood why until now) is that God never wants me to check the statistics of my web site more than once per month. It is His way of showing me over the passage of time, how a ministry can make a difference for Him. At the same time, I am not to be too obsessed daily or weekly about progress, but just to trust Him about whatever progress I am making.
 - iii) Meanwhile we have more animals to describe. Next is the ram. Note that only one ram is offered. That is a key point and let me explain why.

- a) The first significant mention of a ram in the bible was in Genesis. When Abraham was about to offer up Isaac in Chapter 22, God told him to offer a ram instead. Ever since then, a ram is a symbol of a substitute offering in the bible. The single ram here is given as a reminder that God provides a substitute for our sins.
 - b) OK, then why offer it monthly? Why not daily or weekly or once a year? I suspect that it is just done often enough to remind ourselves that God does require that blood be sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. Until Jesus paid that price, all these animals were sacrificed. For the Jewish person, the ram is associated with substitution, and that point is made in these offerings.
- iv) Finally seven lambs were to be offered. The number seven is associated with completeness. Just as God rested on the 7th day, offering seven lambs on this day is God's way of saying the complete price of sin is taken care of. That monthly reminder of those sacrifices reminds us the price of sin has been completely paid.
 - a) If that is true, why is the sacrifice made monthly? It is not that God needs sacrifices over and over again. It is the reminder to us that the price for sin has been completely paid. Since we forget easily, this is done monthly.
 - b) Until Jesus blood sacrifice was made for us, this "complete" picture of what Jesus will do for us is made monthly.
- d) Now for the bad news: We are not finished describing the monthly celebration yet. I still have to describe the food and wine offerings as well as a single goat offering. Therefore I ask you to hang in there, as we are almost done describing this monthly ritual.
 - i) As for the grain offering, it is a way of God saying, I want you (us) to be part of this ritual. By offering part of what the land itself produces, we are giving of what we earn in order to draw close to God. That is the word picture here.
 - ii) As far the drink offering, again think of Paul describing his life as being poured out as a drink offering in the New Testament. The idea is that we commit our lives to serving Him and our lives are being poured out like this offering to Him.
 - iii) Again, this does not mean we have to focus on God 100% of the time. Our minds could not work that way if we tried. The point is God wants us to make a regular effort to seek Him in order to keep our focus upon Him. That is why there are daily, weekly, monthly and special time of the year rituals in these two chapters.
- e) A single goat is also to be sacrificed monthly. The first mention of a goat as a specific sacrifice in the bible is in Genesis 27, when Rebecca made goatskin coverings for her son Jacob (the father of all 12 tribes of Israel) in order to deceive his father Isaac. Therefore, in the bible, a goat is associated with sin and deception. It is not that goats are bad to have as pets or animals. It is that God makes the association of goats with "sin deception". By offering a single goat as part of this ritual, it is the reminder that our sins are burnt up and forgiven on this altar.
- f) With that said, we have made it through the daily weekly and monthly rituals. From here until the end of Chapter 29, the focus is now on specific annual holidays throughout the Jewish calendar. A point to remember is that Christians are not required to celebrate these specific holidays just as we are not required to make these animals sacrifices.
 - i) Just as each of these animal sacrifices point to what Jesus did on the cross for us and point to our commitment to serve Him, so these holidays also remind us of how God wants us to keep our focus upon Him.
 - ii) Before I start to describe the specifics of each of these holidays, let me encourage you that if you ever get the opportunity, check out how religious Jews do celebrate these holidays today. To state the obvious, the rituals today are different then how they are described in the bible. Still, it teaches us about how to keep close to God and it is a good thing to observe if one ever gets the opportunity.

11. Verse 16: "On the fourteenth day of the first month the LORD's Passover is to be held.
 - a) Only one verse is given to the discussion of the Passover holiday. That is because this holiday was already discussed in detail in Chapter 9 of Numbers. Since this holiday is to remember the day that Jesus died for our sins, no other sacrifice is mentioned here at this point in the story, although many animals were sacrificed annually to remember this day.
 - b) Just remember here that only one verse is given as this holiday was already described in detail earlier in this book.
12. Verse 17: On the fifteenth day of this month there is to be a festival; for seven days eat bread made without yeast.¹⁸ On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.¹⁹ Present to the LORD an offering made by fire, a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect.²⁰ With each bull prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths;²¹ and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth.²² Include one male goat as a sin offering to make atonement for you.²³ Prepare these in addition to the regular morning burnt offering.²⁴ In this way prepare the food for the offering made by fire every day for seven days as an aroma pleasing to the LORD; it is to be prepared in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.²⁵ On the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.
 - a) Just in case one thinks things get dull after Passover is over, ☺ there is another seven-day holiday that begins the day after Passover. For most of us, when we say we are going to be home for the holidays, we think of Christmas and New Years. In a similar way, Jewish people think of the first month in the spring as being "holiday season" as this is a seven-day holiday celebration that begins the day after the Passover celebration.
 - b) Let me focus on Verse 17 that says no eating of yeast mixed with bread.
 - i) Yeast, also called leaven is what makes bread rise. The symbolic idea is that if we leave sin alone it grows and gets worse. Therefore, by not eating any bread with yeast, the symbolic idea is that sin is not growing in our lives.
 - ii) With this holiday being celebrated right after Passover, the picture for Christians is that of Jesus taking away our sins as He was crucified on that day. Now, we are "sin free" as symbolized by a complete period of time (seven days) with no yeast.
 - c) Even with that stated, there are still animals to be sacrificed during this time period. The good news is the animals listed here is the exact same list and quantity of animals as the monthly sacrifice we just went through on the previous page.
 - i) To keep it simple, I believe the two bulls represent our commitment as a group to what He has done for us. The ram represents Jesus as our substitute for our sins. The seven lambs represents the fact the sacrifice is a complete amount. The goat represents the fact that our sins are covered by this sacrifice.
 - ii) In other words each of these sacrifices represent our commitment to what Jesus has done for us on the cross in their own way. The Israelites were used to doing this type of sacrifice, as it was a monthly ritual. Now this same act was completed as a holiday ritual in order for them to remember God's sacrifice on our behalf.
 - d) Also notice from the text (Verse 18 and 25) that the first and last day of this feast is a work holiday as well. Like our modern week, they are to work six days and the seventh day is a time of rest. Here God is commanding that no work be done the day after Passover.
 - i) I should also state here that this is a time of celebration. This is not a "downer" of a holiday where people sit around and complain about say, all the animals that were sacrificed. It was a time of rejoicing in that God has "Passed Over" them when the Israelites were spared the death sentence on the Egyptian first born and the nation of Israel came out of that land. In other words, while the head priests made all of these animal sacrifices, the average Israelite thought, OK, no work on these days and I get to spend time with my family and friends being grateful to God not only for rescuing my ancestors, but for guiding my life to make a difference for Him.

- e) One more bit of trivia and I'll move on. One of the classical debates in Christianity is whether or not Jesus was crucified on "Thursday or Friday" before He rose again on that Sunday morning. My point here is that the day after Passover is a nonworking day for the Jewish people as stated in this text.
 - i) If there were two holidays between the day Jesus was crucified and the day He rose again, (the normal weekly Sabbath and the first day of this holiday), that would lend support to the idea of Jesus having three full days and three full nights in between the time He was crucified and the time He rose again.
 - ii) Scholars are divided on this bit of bible trivia. All I am saying is that there is a, not "the" argument that there were three full days in that time span between the time Jesus was crucified as compared to the time He rose again.
 - f) OK, so the Jews celebrated this seven-day holiday after Passover. We as Christians don't celebrate this holiday. Why should I care about this stuff? I thought you'd never ask. ☺
 - i) Does that mean Christians should take off work the day after Passover and take work off again six days later? No, but like I stated earlier in the lesson, if one ever gets the opportunity to join a religious Jewish family in celebrating this holiday, it is joyful thing to experience if one gets the opportunity.
 - ii) The answer is we should use the Easter Season not just as an opportunity to have say, a large meal with family and friends. It should be a time to remember that we have been made sin free and remember that fact. This comes back to the fact that God wants us to live as sin free as possible. We should confess sins when we do become aware of whatever ones we have committed. With that said, that time of year should be a time of rejoicing in that our sins are forgiven.
 - iii) The way I view Easter is that on one hand, every Sunday at church should include time to remember what Jesus has done for us. Still that particular time of the year should also be special where we invite people who don't normally go to church to come celebrate with us and realize what God has done for us. My point is simply that this holiday season should be a time of celebration, not sorrow.
 - g) Meanwhile, we have a few more holidays to go through before we finish the lesson.
13. Verse 26: "On the day of firstfruits, when you present to the LORD an offering of new grain during the Feast of Weeks, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.²⁷ Present a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old as an aroma pleasing to the LORD.²⁸ With each bull there is to be a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths;²⁹ and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth.³⁰ Include one male goat to make atonement for you.³¹ Prepare these together with their drink offerings, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its grain offering. Be sure the animals are without defect.
- a) For those of you getting bored going through all of these Jewish holidays, let me make it really simple: There are a bunch of them together in a spring month, there a also bunch of them that are celebrated in a fall month and one holiday in between those two periods of time. These five verses focus on that one particular holiday in between the other groups.
 - b) This holiday comes seven weeks after the spring holidays. The actual calculation of when this holiday occurs is a little more complex. To keep it simple, it is 50 days after the first regular Sabbath after Passover. Explaining how I know that involves the study of a bunch of different bible verses from the Old Testament. Now that you know that, I can move on and describe the significance of this holiday. Christians know this holiday as Pentecost. That is a Greek term that means "50" as again it is about 50 days after Passover.
 - i) The Christian significance is that the church was born on that day. This is the day in the book of Acts where "tongues" fell on a group of believers and all of a sudden people were prophesying in languages they could not normally speak. This is described in the Book of Acts, Chapter 2. (Verse 1 there says it was Pentecost.)

- c) To state the obvious, the Jewish people of that day had no idea the church would be born on that particular day. The reason this was a holiday, was that this was the time of the year when wheat was first harvested. By taking some of that wheat and dedicating it to God, it is another reminder that we are trusting God to provide for our future. We are dedicating part of what we just earned to show our trust in Him to continue to provide.
 - i) Once again, they offered the same animals and other sacrifices that they did for the monthly offering as well as the spring holidays. It is a joyful time to say by these sacrifices that one does trust in God to provide for our future.
 - ii) This is not part of the text here, but know that Pentecost was the only holiday that the Jewish people did eat leaven bread (bread with yeast). It was eaten that way to remind them that their numbers were growing despite the fact that sin exists.
 - iii) Considering the fact that the Christian church was born on that day ties to the idea that believers in Jesus are continuing to grow through the millenniums despite the sins that we commit and despite the persecution of believers throughout that large period of time.
 - iv) So, should Christians celebrate Pentecost? Unfortunately that holiday has gotten lost in modern times, although it has been a holiday in the past. It should be used to celebrate the growth of the church, despite our sins and despite persecution.
 - a) Therefore, my answer is "yes we should, but no we don't". Is it a sin for us to not celebrate it? No. My point is that we should consider the fact that God used this holiday to begin the church and let it grow.
 - v) Meanwhile back in Numbers, the Jewish people were required to celebrate this day by their trust in God to provide for their future by offering the first of what was harvested. We as Christians when we get paid, should offer the first part of whatever we get as take home pay to say, "We are trusting God to provide for our future and trust in Him that the church will continue to grow and thrive despite whatever the world may throw at us."
 - d) On that somewhat happy note, it is time to move on to the fall holidays. The good news is that if you have stuck with me this far, the rest is going to go pretty quickly.
14. Chapter 29, Verse 1: " `On the first day of the seventh month hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. It is a day for you to sound the trumpets.² As an aroma pleasing to the LORD, prepare a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect.³ With the bull prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths;⁴ and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth.⁵ Include one male goat as a sin offering to make atonement for you.⁶ These are in addition to the monthly and daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and drink offerings as specified. They are offerings made to the LORD by fire--a pleasing aroma.
- a) It might be best to describe the three fall holidays quickly first:
 - i) On the first day of the month is "New Year's". It is a holiday.
 - ii) On the 10th day of the same month is a serious holiday where Jewish people are to confess their sins and seek His forgiveness.
 - iii) On the 15th day of the same month is an 8-day long holiday where Jewish people are to remember how their ancestors had to live in the wilderness for 40 years.
 - iv) There, you now have Chapter 29 in three simple thoughts. The rest are details.
 - b) To explain further, I need to quickly discuss a Jewish year. I've already beaten to death the idea that one uses the cycles of the moon to mark the passage of time. What is a little confusing is to understand when the year starts. God told Moses that the first month of spring is the beginning of the calendar. (See Exodus 12:2). However, the first day of the fall is considered a New Year's day. The way it works is that the spring month is used to calculate the holidays, but the New Year's holiday itself is celebrated the first new (no) moon of the fall. Now that you know that, we can describe the fall holidays.

- c) What may help here is to remember that a Jewish day starts at sundown. The idea is that it gets dark before it gets light. The same with a Jewish year. The seasons get cold before it gets warm again. That is why it is a fall day to celebrate a New Year. The idea is that God gets us through the rough patches of our lives in order to have the eternal joy with Him forever in heaven. These passages of time are kept that way for us to contemplate.
 - i) All of that leads me back to the text. The Israelites were to blow horns to mark the first day of the year. Just like the idea that God got us through another month, it is the idea that God has helped us get through another year. Therefore, this holiday is a time of celebration just as our New Year's is considered a time of celebration.
 - ii) I'm not going to go through all of the animal sacrifices again, as the list is the same as the spring holidays and the monthly holidays. The idea is simply that animals were sacrificed as a way of saying, "Thanks to our God who has helped us to get through another year." Just as He has provided for us in our past, so we will trust Him to provide for our future.
 - d) This leads me to the next Jewish holiday, "The Day of Atonement". This is considered the only "serious" holiday in that it was not a time of celebration, but a time to confess one's sins to God. The short version is, since it is a new year, let us begin clean by confessing whatever sins we have committed in the past.
15. Verse 7: "On the tenth day of this seventh month hold a sacred assembly. You must deny yourselves and do no work. ⁸ Present as an aroma pleasing to the LORD a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. ⁹ With the bull prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths; ¹⁰ and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth. ¹¹ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the sin offering for atonement and the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.
- a) Notice in Verse 7 the phrase "Deny yourself". Many Jewish people fast this day and focus on sins that they believe they have committed or sins they believe their nation has done.
 - b) My first question to ponder here, is why do this in the fall? If Jesus died for our sins in the springtime (The Feast of "Passover"), why have a fall holiday to confess sin? Again, it is a Jewish tradition to start the new year, "clean" by confessing sin as if to rid ourselves of it.
 - c) There are many bible scholars who hold the view that just as the spring holidays tie to Jesus first coming, and the Pentecost holiday ties to the birth of the Christian church, so the fall holidays somehow tie to Jesus Second Coming. Here is the basic theory:
 - i) The New Year's (first day of the fall) some ties to Jesus return. Does that mean He comes back on that date? Don't know. It just ties to His return.
 - ii) The time of confession ties to the idea that the Jewish nation "blew it" in that they failed to recognize Jesus as their promised Messiah. To steal a classic joke, when Jesus comes back the Jewish nation will ask, "Is this Your first or second visit?" This theory states that this will be a time of national confession of sin that they blew it as far as recognizing Jesus as the Promised Messiah.
 - iii) The third and final holiday is a time of celebration to realize that despite the fact the Jewish nation blew it, God still loves them as a nation and forgives them.
 - iv) Will it exactly happen that way? Don't know. It is just a theory about the future.
 - d) Meanwhile, we are back to describing this "serious" holiday, that was used as a time to confess one's sins. If I haven't said it by now, know that this is not the only place in the Old Testament that describes this holiday or any of these holidays. The purpose of these chapters is to focus on what animals are to be sacrificed on these holidays (as well as the grain and drink offerings).
 - i) If one wants to just remember just one thing from these chapters is the idea that "wherever God leads, God provides". If God wanted the Israelites to sacrifice all of these things, He will provide for them more than enough to perform the rituals.

- e) Speaking of animals, the only thing that is different about this holiday is that one bull is offered instead of two. The rest of the sacrifices are essentially the same as the monthly offerings and the holidays already described. So why one bull? The idea is that this is a day to remember that God did it all, so the focus is on what He did to forgive us. All God asks of us is our confession of our sins and our trust in Him to provide for us the power to turn from those sins in the future.
 - i) Grant it, there are still seven lambs sacrificed here, but that represents the fact that this payment was complete for sin.
 - ii) Also know that modern Judaism no longer does animal sacrifices but it is used as a time to confess one's sins to God.
 - f) Time for the last holiday of their calendar year:
16. Verse 12: "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. Celebrate a festival to the LORD for seven days. ¹³ Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, a burnt offering of thirteen young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. ¹⁴ With each of the thirteen bulls prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with each of the two rams, two-tenths; ¹⁵ and with each of the fourteen lambs, one-tenth. ¹⁶ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.
- a) Remember that a month is a lunar cycle. If the first day is "no moon", then the 15th day of the month is a full moon. That is how the Israelites knew when to celebrate this day.
 - b) The quick version here is that for seven days the Israelites lived in booths to remember the time their ancestors lived in the wilderness. That is why this holiday is commonly called "The feast of booths" today. What is common today among religious Jews is to build these booths in their back yards or even on the roofs of apartment buildings. The idea is to live uncomfortably to realize that God guides them and us through tough times for His glory.
 - i) Also realize this is not a time of misery, but again a time of celebration.
 - c) Speaking of celebrations and good news, I'm going to skip many of the remaining verses in this chapter for a good reason: They are very repetitive. Here is the key point:
 - i) Every day of this feast they are to offer one less bull than the previous day. Verse 13 mentions 13 bulls. On the second day (Verse 17), 12 bulls were offered. On the third day, (Verse 20), 11 bulls were offered. This pattern continues until the 7th day when only 7 bulls were offered.
 - ii) There is a lot of varying opinion on why it is done this way. I suspect the reason is to show that the bulls represent our shortcomings before God and our trust in Him to forgive us and provide for us. By offering one less bull per day, it is to show that we are continuing to trust less in us and more in Him as we grow in life.
 - d) The related good news is that everything else is the exact same in Verses 14-34. I am not going to list those verses as they are exactly the same. The only difference in all of these verses is the decrease in bull sacrifices day to day. So why all of the repetition? Why not just summarize it quickly like you are doing right here?
 - i) I don't know. I suspect it to emphasize again how God will provide enough so that all of these sacrifices can be made day by day. Remember that all of this is being given to Moses before the process even starts. Not only is it teaching the Israelites to trust in God for their future, but the reminder to us that He will lead us where He wants to lead us and provide for us what we need in order for us to worship Him both individually and collectively.
 - e) Since I'm getting ready to wrap this up, let me say a quick word about "work versus trust in God to provide". To state the obvious, we still have to work to earn income. God does not literally drop things in our lap. At the same time, these chapters are a promise to us, that as long as we are willing to trust in Him, He will provide for us and make it possible for us to be guided by Him as we do live to make a difference for Him.

17. Verse 35: " `On the eighth day hold an assembly and do no regular work.³⁶ Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, a burnt offering of one bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect.³⁷ With the bull, the ram and the lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified.³⁸ Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.
- a) Remember how I said "one less bull per day for seven days"? On the first day, there were 13 bulls sacrificed. That number decreases one bull per day until the seventh day when 7 bulls were sacrificed. Now on the eight and final day of this feast, it is a holiday where nobody goes to work. Also only one bull was sacrificed. Let me explain why:
 - i) In the bible, the number seven is associated with a complete period of time, like a full week. Therefore the number eight is associated with a new beginning.
 - ii) You may find it interesting that the numerical value of every title one can think of for Jesus is divisible by the number eight. Titles (in the Greek) like "Son of God", and "Jesus" all have total numerical values that are divisible by eight. It just means that Jesus is our "new beginning" from a world corrupted by sin.
 - iii) This surprisingly leads me back to the single bull. Instead of multiple bulls that show our decreasing dependence upon our self and our increasing dependence upon God, the "new beginning" has a single bull as if we realize that everything we do is up to God Himself and not us in living a life of serving Him.
 - b) The rest of the sacrifices are the same as the other holidays and since I'm running long, I'll just say that the other sacrifices also symbolize how Jesus was our substitute for our sins as well as our new beginning. With that said, I can finish the lesson.
18. Verse 39: " `In addition to what you vow and your freewill offerings, prepare these for the LORD at your appointed feasts: your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings. ' " ⁴⁰ Moses told the Israelites all that the LORD commanded him.
- a) These final two verses are a summary of the last two chapters. They say in effect over and above what we offer to God out of our own free will, do all of these sacrifices in order to keep your (our) focus upon Him, throughout our days, weeks, months and years.
 - b) Verse 40 essentially says, Moses didn't keep this information to himself, but did make it known to all of the Israelites what God commanded them to do throughout their years.
19. Final thought, if God had all of these requirements for the Jewish people to be forgiven of their sins, why was a new method necessary (i.e., the death of Jesus) necessary for all of our sins?
- a) I could start with the simple fact that the temple no longer exists and these animals are no longer sacrificed. One could ask of the Jewish people, "Where is the blood sacrifice if one does not trust in Jesus blood as the sacrifice for our sins?" The obvious answer is that all of these sacrifices do point to what Jesus did on the cross. At the same time, they were used for the Israelites to keep their focus upon God throughout their lives.
 - b) Since these rituals had to be done over and over again, it shows the insufficiency of these sacrifices over time and the necessity of God Himself to pay the price for our sins.
 - c) On that confusing thought, this is a long lesson and time to wrap it up in prayer.
20. Let us pray: Father, we thank You that we don't have to offer daily, weekly, monthly and special holiday sacrifices for our sins as the price was paid once and for all at the cross. We realize how seriously you take sin as demonstrated by all of these offerings given through out the Jewish calendar year. Help us to use the passage of time to remember that the most valuable thing we own is our time. Help us to use that time to make a difference for You and trust that You will provide for our needs so that we can use that time to make a difference for You in this world. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.