

CHAPTER 23

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 23

In this chapter an account is given of the several holy days, times, and seasons, appointed by God, under the general names of feasts and holy convocations; and first of the sabbath, (^{<OR20>}Leviticus 23:1-4); then of the passover and feast of unleavened bread, (^{<OR21>}Leviticus 23:5-8); to which is annexed the sheaf of the firstfruits, (^{<OR22>}Leviticus 23:9-14); after that of the feast of weeks or pentecost, (^{<OR23>}Leviticus 23:15-22); and of the feast of trumpets, (^{<OR24>}Leviticus 23:23-25); and of the day of atonement, (^{<OR25>}Leviticus 23:26-32); and of the feast of tabernacles, (^{<OR26>}Leviticus 23:33-44).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Much about the same time as before; and having delivered to him various laws concerning the holiness of the people of Israel, who were to serve him, and of the holiness of the priests, that were to minister in holy things to him, and of the purity and perfections of their sacrifices, he here appoints various times and seasons, for the more special worship and service of him:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 2. *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] Speak to them to gather together, and then say unto them what follows, they all being obliged to keep the feasts, and observe the solemnities hereafter directed to; though it may be the heads of the tribes and the elders of the people were summoned together, and the following things were delivered to them, and by them to the people:

[concerning] the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim [to be] holy convocations, [even] these [are] my feasts; appointed and ordered by God, and to be kept to the honour of his name; these are the general names for the particular holy times and seasons after appointed; they are in general called “feasts”, though one of them, the day of atonement, was, strictly speaking, a fast; yet being a cessation from all work, and opposed to working days, days of labour and business, it is comprehended in this general title: nor is it unusual with other nations to call a fast a feast; so

Aelianus ^{f798} relates of the Tarentines, that having been besieged by the Romans, and delivered from them, in memory of their sufferings appointed a feast which was called a fast: the word used has the signification of stated, fixed, appointed times and seasons, and of convening or meeting together at such times, and that for the performance of solemn worship and service, which is true of them all; for there are certain times of the week and month fixed for them, and when the people in bodies assembled together, and in a solemn manner worshipped the Lord; and these are called “convocations”, because the people were called together at those times by the priests, and that with the sound of a trumpet, (^{<0410D>}Numbers 10:2,3,8-10); and “holy”, because separated from other days, and set apart for holy services: the words may be rendered, as they are by many ^{f799}: “the solemnities of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim holy convocations, these are my solemnities”; times for holy, religious, and solemn service, of his appointment and for his glory: Aben Ezra seems to understand all this of the sabbath only, which is next mentioned, expressed in the plural number, because, as he observes, there are many sabbaths in a year; and indeed the general title of the rest of the feasts is afterwards given, (^{<02704>}Leviticus 23:4).

Ver. 3. *Six days shall work be done*, etc.] Or may be done by men, any sort of lawful work and honest labour, for the sustenance of themselves and families:

but the seventh day [is] the sabbath of rest; from all bodily labour and work of any kind; typical of rest by Christ and in him:

an holy convocation; when the people were called to holy exercises, to pray and praise, and hear the word, and offer sacrifice:

ye shall do no work [therein]; not any at all, (see ^{<02315>}Exodus 31:15) (^{<0231D>}Exodus 35:2,3);

it [is] the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings: other feasts were kept in the sanctuary, in the tabernacle or temple, or where they were; but this was not only observed there and in their synagogues, but in their private houses, or wherever they were, whether, travelling by sea or land; and so the Targum of Jonathan and Aben Ezra interpret it.

Ver. 4. *These are the feasts of the Lord, [even] holy convocations*, etc.] What follow besides the sabbath mentioned:

which ye shall proclaim in their seasons; the proper times of the year, the day or days, and month in which they are to be observed; these were to be proclaimed by the priests with the sound of trumpet, namely, what follow, for they are put together, which had been before for the most part singly delivered.

Ver. 5. *In the fourteenth [day] of the first month*, etc.] The month Nisan, the same with Abib, the month in which the children of Israel came out of Egypt, for which reason it was made the first month in the year, answering to part of our March and part of April; and for the same reason was the passover kept at this time, as follows:

at even [is] the Lord's passover; that is, that was the time for the keeping the passover, even “between the two evenings”, as it may be rendered; from the sixth hour and onward, as Jarchi, trial is, after noon or twelve o'clock the middle of the day, as Gersom, when the sun began to decline; (see Gill on “^{<0216>}Exodus 12:6”).

Ver. 6. *And on the fifteenth day of the same month [is] the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord*, etc.] Which was the day the children of Israel went out of Egypt with their dough and leaven, having not time to leaven it; in remembrance of which this feast was appointed:

seven days ye must eat unleavened bread; (see ^{<0215>}Exodus 12:15,18-20).

Ver. 7. *In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation*, etc.] That is, on the first of the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread, even the fifteenth day of the month Nisan; this was separated from the other days of the festival, and more particularly devoted to religious exercises, (see ^{<0216>}Exodus 12:16);

ye shall do no servile work therein; such as agriculture, or any manufacture or mechanical business, which they and their servants were at other times employed in; but they might bake bread, and boil or roast their meat, and walk abroad, which they might not do on their sabbaths; and therefore it is so expressed as to distinguish it from the work forbidden on that day.

Ver. 8. *But ye shall offer an offering made by, fire unto the Lord seven days*, etc.] A burnt offering was to be offered unto the Lord on everyone of the seven days, which were two young bullocks, one ram, and seven lambs; besides a meat offering, and a goat for a sin offering, (^{<0289>}Numbers 28:19-24);

in the seventh day [is] an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work [therein]; as on the first day, that was on account of the Israelites going out of Egypt; and this is said, on account of Pharaoh and his host being drowned on it; (see Gill on “⁽¹²¹⁶⁾Exodus 12:16”).

Ver. 9. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] At the same time, for what follow are the other feasts and holy convocations before spoken of:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 10. *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] What is next observed, it being incumbent on them to do what is enjoined:

when ye be come into the land which I give unto you: the land of Canaan, which God had given by promise to their fathers and to them, and which they were now going to inherit: as yet they were in a wilderness, where there were no sowing nor reaping, nor any harvest; so that the following law, though now given, could not take place till they came into the land of Canaan:

and shall reap the harvest thereof; the barley harvest, which was about this time, the month Nisan, and which had the name Abib, from the barley being then in the ear, (see ⁽¹²³¹⁾Exodus 9:31); for the wheat harvest was not till seven weeks after:

then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest; to with it as after directed: this is called an omer in the text, which was the tenth part of an ephah, (⁽¹²³⁶⁾Exodus 16:36); and so Jarchi interprets it here; according to the Jewish writers, when the sheaf was reaped, the corn was beat out and winnowed, and dried by the fire, and then ground in a mill, and an omer, or a tenth part of an ephah of the flour of it was taken, and oil and frankincense put upon it, an handful of which being put upon the altar, the rest was the priest's; and with this pretty much agrees the account Josephus gives, who says, on the second day of unleavened bread, which is the sixteenth (day of Nisan), of the fruits they have reaped they take a part; for they do not touch them before, accounting it just to honour God first, from whom they receive the plenty of these things; and bring the firstfruits of the barley after this manner, having dried the handful of ears, and bruised them, and cleansed them from the bran, they bring to the altar a tenth part to God, and casting one handful of it on the altar, they leave the rest for the use of the priests; and from thence forward it is lawful to reap publicly and privately ^{f800}: this has been in some part imitated by the

Heathens: the Egyptians, who ascribe the invention of the fruits of the earth, particularly wheat and barley, to Isis and Osiris, in memory of it, and as a testimony of their gratitude for it, at the time of harvest, bring an handful of the first ears of corn, and beating themselves near them, call upon Isis; and in some cities, at the feast of Isis, vessels of wheat and barley were carried about in great pomp, as Diodorus Siculus ^{f801} relates.

Ver. 11. *And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord*, etc.] Or the omer of barley; this was done by the priest in the tabernacle and temple, where was the presence of God, and that before the handful of it was put upon the altar; which agitation or waving was, as Gersom says, towards the east; it was moved to and fro, backwards and forwards, upwards and downwards, to make an acknowledgment to the Lord of heaven and earth, that the fruits of the earth and the plentiful harvest were of him, and to give him the praise and glory of it:

to be accepted for you; of the Lord, as a thanksgiving to him, for the harvest now ripe, and the appointed time of it, and the plenty thereof; and that the remainder might be sanctified and blessed to them, and they have leave to gather it in, which they had not till this was done:

on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it; not after the seventh day, but after the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, which was a sabbath, in which no servile work was to be done, (~~Leviticus~~ ^{Leviticus} 23:7); and so the Targum of Jonathan calls it the day after the first good day of the passover, which was the sixteenth of Nisan, as Josephus expressly says, in the place above referred to; and so it is generally understood by Jewish writers ^{f802} the account given of this affair is this; the messengers of the sanhedrim went out (from Jerusalem over the brook Kidron to the fields near it) on the evening of the feast, (i.e. at the going out of the fifteenth) and at the beginning of the sixteenth of Nisan, and bound the standing corn in bundles, that so it might be the more easily reaped; and all the neighbouring cities gathered together there, that it might be reaped in great pomp; and when it was dark, one said to them, is the sun set? they said, yes. With this sickle (shall I reap?) they said, yes. In this basket (shall I put it?) they said, yes. If on a sabbath day, he said to them, On this sabbath day (shall I do it?) they said, yes ^{f803}. These questions were put and answered three times; then they reaped it and put it into the baskets, and brought it to the court, where they parched it before the fire, to fulfil the commandment of parched corn; then they put it in mills for

grinding beans, and took out of it a tenth part (of an ephah), which was sifted with eighteen sieves; then oil and frankincense were poured upon it, being mixed; and it was waved, and brought, and a handful taken and burnt, and the rest was eaten by the priests; and when they had offered the omer, they went out and found the streets of Jerusalem full of meal and parched corn ^{f804}, there being now full liberty to reap what they would: now this sheaf of the firstfruits was typical of Christ; it being of barley, may denote the mean estate of Christ in his humiliation; and but one sheaf for all the people, may signify that Christ is the one Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer: yet as a sheaf comprehends many stalks and grains, so Christ has a complication of blessings in him; yea, he had all his people representatively in him, when he was offered for the whole body of his mystical Israel, all the children of God scattered abroad; the manner of reaping it, by persons deputed by the sanhedrim on the eve of a festival of the passover, in the sight of much people, without Jerusalem, near Kidron, exactly agrees with the apprehending of Christ in the night near Kidron, by persons sent from the Jewish sanhedrim, and his suffering publicly without the gates of Jerusalem; it being brought to the priests in the court, and threshed, winnowed, dried, and parched by the fire, and ground in mills, may denote the various dolorous sufferings of Christ, by means of the priests and elders of the people; and oil and frankincense being put on it, may denote the acceptableness of his sacrifice to God; and the waving of it, his resurrection from the dead, which was on the very day this sheaf was waved; who is the firstfruits of them that sleep in him, and which sanctifies the whole body of them, and ensures their resurrection unto eternal life; (see ^{<f85D>}1 Corinthians 15:20,23).

Ver. 12. *And ye shall offer that day, when ye wave the sheaf*, etc.] Besides the daily sacrifice of the morning and evening, and the additional offerings made on everyone of the seven days of the feast of unleavened bread:

an he lamb without blemish of the first year, for a burnt offering unto the Lord; typical of the perfect and immaculate Lamb of God, whose sufferings are fitly signified by a burnt offering; and which were endured at the time he became the firstfruits of his people, and sanctified them.

Ver. 13. *And the meat offering thereof [shall be] two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil*, etc.] The usual measure of flour to a meat offering was one tenth deal, (^{<f029D>}Exodus 29:40); but here it is doubled: some Jewish writers say ^{f805} one tenth was on account of the lamb that was offered at

this time, and the other as was suitable for a meat offering; but the true reason seems to be, because it was on account of the fruits of the earth and the plenty thereof; and therefore a double measure of fine flour mixed with oil was required as a token of gratitude; for thankfulness ought to be in proportion to mercies:

an offering made by fire unto the Lord for a sweet savour; an handful of it was burnt upon the altar, and was received with acceptance by the Lord, and the rest was eaten by the priests, (^{<BIB>}Leviticus 2:2,8 6:15,16);

and the drink offering thereof [shall be] of wine, the fourth [part] of an hin; which was the common quantity for a drink offering, (^{<BIB>}Exodus 29:40); for, as Jarchi observes, though the meat offering was doubled, the drink offering was not; the reason of which seems to be, because these offerings were on account of the harvest and not the vintage: the Targum of Jonathan calls it wine of grapes, to distinguish it from wine that might be made of other things, but not to be used in drink offerings, only the pure juice of the grape.

Ver. 14. *And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears,* etc.] That is, they were not allowed to make bread of the new corn, as Aben Ezra and Gersom explain it; for they were obliged to eat unleavened bread at this time: but it might not be made of the new corn, until the above offering was made; nay, they were not allowed to parch any of the grains of corn, and eat them; yea, even they might not pluck and eat the green ears, though of ever so small a quantity. The Jews say¹⁸⁰⁶, if it was the quantity of an olive of either of these, a man was to be beaten for it:

until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God; which includes all the offerings on this account, the offering of the firstfruits, the offering of the he lamb, and the meat offering and the drink offering; until these were offered up, the new corn might not be eaten in any form:

[it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations; until the Messiah came, who is the substance of these shadows:

in all your dwellings; not at Jerusalem only, but in the several parts of the land of Canaan; yea, as Ben Gersom says, whether in the land, or without the land; a later writer says, it is forbidden to eat of the new corn at this time, whether bread, parched corn, or green ears, until the beginning of the

night of the eighteenth of Nisan, and in the land of Israel, until the beginning of the night of the seventeenth of Nisan^{f807}.

Ver. 15. *And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath,* etc.] Not the seventh day sabbath in the passover week, nor the whole feast of unleavened bread, but the first day of it, which was an holy convocation, a sabbath in which no servile work was to be done, (~~EXE~~ Leviticus 23:7); and it was from the day after this, even the sixteenth of Nisan, that the following count was to be made; so the Targum of Jonathan, after the first feast day of the passover: and Josephus^{f808} is very clear in it, that Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, was the fiftieth day from the sixteenth of Nisan, when the above offerings were made:

from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; which plainly points out the express day from whence the count was to begin, even on the day when the sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest was offered:

seven sabbaths shall be complete; or seven weeks, that is, forty nine days; and hence, Jarchi says, we learn that the count began from the evening, or otherwise the weeks would not be complete; and Gersom thinks the day in which the sheaf was offered is included in the days counted; for the count began from the day after the first of the passover, and lo, seven days are seven weeks of days, which make forty nine days.

Ver. 16. *Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath,* etc.] Or weeks, forty nine days being counted, the following was the fiftieth day, or Pentecost:

shall ye number fifty days; from whence this feast had the name of Pentecost, (~~4ME~~ Acts 2:1); all in Israel were obliged to number those days, except women and servants^{f809}: the manner of doing it was this^{f810}; on the night of the second (day of the passover), after the evening prayer, they began to number; but if anyone forgot to number at the beginning of the night, he went and numbered all the night; for the commandment is for everyone to number by himself, and he ought to number standing, and to bless first, and number the days and weeks: How? on the first day he says, This is one day, until he comes to seven days, and then he says, This is the seventh day, which is one week; and on the eighth day he says, This is the eighth day, which is one week and one day, and so till he comes to the fourteenth; then he says, This is the fourteenth day, which make two weeks; and in this way he numbers, and goes on until the forty ninth day:

and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the Lord; that is, of new corn, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi explain it, and this was of wheat; for it was the offering for the wheat harvest, which was offered on the fiftieth day from the offering of the sheaf or omer of the barley harvest.

Ver. 17. *And ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals,* etc.] Out of their habitations in the land of Canaan; and not out of those without the land, as Jarchi observes; and not out of all of them, as Ben Gersom remarks; though the Vulgate Latin version has it, out of “all” of our habitations, but wrongly; and indeed out of no one particular habitation, because it was at the public expense; but they were brought from some part of the country or another, even the quantity of two tenth parts of an ephah, or two omers of wheat flour made into two loaves, which were to be, and were waved before the Lord, and hence so called; and are the same with the new meat offering, or rather bread offering, made of the new corn, in the preceding verse, so Jarchi:

they shall be of fine flour; of wheat flour, the finest of it, of which all meat or bread offerings were made; and this was particularly on account of the wheat harvest, and therefore it was proper that the finest of the wheat should be used on this occasion; (see Gill on “⁽⁻⁸¹¹⁾Leviticus 2:1”); each loaf or cake, according to Maimonides ^{f811}, was seven hands’ breadths long, four hands’ breadths broad, and four fingers high:

they shall be baked with leaven; the common meat offering was unleavened, part of which was burnt on the altar, where no leaven might be burnt, (⁽⁻⁸¹¹⁾Leviticus 2:4,5,11); and from hence it may be concluded that no part of these loaves was to be burnt, but the whole of them fell to the share of the priests:

[they are] the firstfruits unto the Lord; which he claimed as his, and gave unto his priests; and it was but right and just he should have them, as an acknowledgment of all coming from his hands, and as expressive of gratitude for them, and for the sanctification of the rest; hence this is called the feast of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, (⁽⁻⁸⁴²⁾Exodus 34:22).

Ver. 18. *And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish, of the first year,* etc.] That is, with the two wave loaves, the meat or bread offering: and besides these,

and one young bullock, and two rams; in (⁽⁻⁸⁷⁷⁾Numbers 28:27) it is two young bullocks, and one ram; and Aben Ezra suggests, that this was at the

will and option of the priest, whether one bullock and two rams, or two bullocks and one ram; but according to Maimonides ^{f812}, these sacrifices were distinct from them; they are sacrifices of the day, as being a feast day, and these belonged to the loaves; so that according to him, and so he expresses it, there were to be offered on this day, besides the daily sacrifices, three bullocks, three rams, and fourteen lambs, twenty beasts in all, for burnt offerings; and two goats for sin offerings to be eaten, and two lambs for peace offerings to be eaten; and with this account agrees Josephus ^{f813}, they sacrifice for burnt offerings, he says, three bullocks, and two rams, (or, as Dr. Bernard thinks, it should be read three rams,) and fourteen lambs, and two goats for sin offerings:

they shall be for a burnt offering unto the Lord, with their meat offering, and their drink offering; each of the said beasts were offered, unto the Lord on the altar of burnt offering, and burnt thereon; and to every beast they offered, there was a meat offering and a drink offering: the meat offering consisted of three tenth deals, or omers, of fine flour, to a bullock, two to a ram, and one to a lamb; and the drink offering was half an hin of wine to a bullock, the third part of one to a ram, and a fourth part to a lamb, as Jarchi observes, which appears from (^{<0812>}Numbers 28:12-14);

[even] an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord; an acceptable burnt offering to God.

Ver. 19. *Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering,* etc.] Which was for the sin of the whole congregation, typical of Christ, whose soul was made an offering for sin; in virtue of which all other sacrifices become acceptable to God, and believers enjoy the fruits and blessings of divine grace:

and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings; which Gersom says were the most holy things, and were only slain in the north, and only eaten by males, as the rest of the holy things, and are the only peace offerings of the congregation that were offered throughout the whole year.

Ver. 20. *And the priests shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits,* etc.] The two loaves called the two wave loaves, (^{<0217>}Leviticus 23:17); with which were waved the two lambs of the peace offerings; and these alive, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom intimate. The Jewish doctors ^{f814} dispute, whether, in waving, the lambs were put above the bread, or the bread

above the lambs; which some reconcile by observing, that the bread was put by the side of the lambs:

[for] a wave offering before the Lord; being waved this way and that way, upwards and downwards, and towards the several quarters of the world, showing that the fruits of the earth were owing to the providential goodness of God everywhere:

with the two lambs; not that all the above sacrifices were waved, or any part of them, along with the lambs, but the wave loaves, and they were waved together, as one wave offering to the Lord:

they shall be holy to the Lord for the priests; both the loaves and the lambs, these were separated and devoted wholly to the Lord, and to be eaten by his priests; the peace offerings of a single person were light holy things, as Jarchi says; but the peace offerings of the congregation, as these were, are the most holy things, and so to be eaten only by the priests, and by the males only, in the court of the tabernacle.

Ver. 21. *And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, [that] it may be an holy convocation unto you*, etc.] This proclamation was made by the priests with the sound of a trumpet, that the people might observe that this fiftieth day, or day of Pentecost, was devoted to sacred service, and that they were called to holy exercises in it:

ye shall do no servile work [therein]; what was not necessary for food, as Ben Gersom observes, but what was necessary on that account, as kindling a fire, etc. might be done, (see ^{<RB37>}Leviticus 23:7,8); for this was to be kept in like manner as the first and seventh days of the feast of unleavened bread; the general design of which was to express thankfulness for the appointed weeks of the harvest, and to honour the Lord with the firstfruits of the increase of the earth: and the Jews say, as Ben Gersom observes, that this fiftieth day, being reckoned from the sixteenth of Nisan, fell upon the sixth of Sivan, on which day, they say, the law was given, which is another reason for the observance of it: and it is remarkable, that on this same day the Word of the Lord went out of Zion, and the law or doctrine of the Lord, even the everlasting Gospel, went out of Jerusalem, published by the apostles of Christ to the people of all nations, (^{<4124>}Acts 2:14-36); when they were favoured with the firstfruits of the Spirit, after our Lord's ascension to heaven, and receiving gifts for men, which he now in an extraordinary manner bestowed on his disciples, (^{<411>}Acts 2:1-13); and

which were the firstfruits of all others, after to be given forth in the course of time, and of the effusion of the Spirit in the latter day; and when there was a number of souls converted, as the firstfruits of after conversions among Jews and Gentiles, (^{<4124>}Acts 2:41); and particularly of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, and of the harvest of souls in the end of the world, (^{<4133>}Matthew 13:30,39);

[it shall be] a statute for ever all your dwellings throughout your generations; so long as they dwelt in the land of Canaan, and had their harvest in it, even until the Messiah came, in whom all those types and figures had their accomplishment.

Ver. 22. *And when ye reap the harvest of your land,* etc.] This law is repeated from (^{<6890>}Leviticus 19:9,10); and as Aben Ezra observes, the feast of weeks being the feast of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, it is repeated, that they might not forget what God had commanded them to do at that time, namely, to leave somewhat for the poor; and the Jewish writers^{f815} observe, that this law, being put among the solemn feasts of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, and the beginning of the year, and the day of atonement, teaches, that he that observes it, and leaves the corner of the field and the gleanings to the poor, it is as if he built the sanctuary, and offered his sacrifices in the midst of it; but a much better reason may be given for it, which was, to teach them that when they expressed their thankfulness to God, they should exercise charity and liberality to the poor;

thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: (see Gill on ^{<6890>}Leviticus 19:9”);

thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I [am] the Lord your God; (see Gill on ^{<6890>}Leviticus 19:10”).

Ver. 23. *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] At the same time, in a continued discourse, concerning some other days, which were to be observed in a sacred manner:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 24. *Speak unto the children of Israel,* etc.] For all the people of Israel were concerned in the following precept, and obliged to observe it, even priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and freed servants; though other servants, and women, and children, were not obliged to hear the sound of

the trumpets ^{f816}, and which were blown not in Jerusalem only, but in all cities and towns where the sanhedrim was ^{f817}; and it was the hearing of them the people were bound unto, and not less than nine distinct soundings were they obliged to hear ^{f818}; to which perhaps respect is had in (~~f815~~ Psalm 89:15);

in the seventh month; the month Tisri, as the Targum of Jonathan, which was the seventh from the month Nisan or Abib; which was appointed the first month of the year, on account of the Israelites coming out of Egypt in it; otherwise, before, this month Tisri was the first, and so it still continued, for the fixing the years, and settling the sabbatical and jubilee years, and for the planting of trees and herbs ^{f819}:

in the first [day] of the month shall ye have a sabbath; not entirely as the weekly sabbath, in which no manner of work at all was to be done, but in which no servile work was to be done; and was observed in like manner as the first and seventh days of unleavened bread, and the day of pentecost, (~~f820~~ Leviticus 23:7,8,21);

a memorial of blowing of trumpets; which, according to the Jewish writers, was continued from sun rising to sun setting ^{f820}; but what this blowing of trumpets was a memorial of is not easy to say; some think it was in memory of the wars the people of Israel had with their enemies the Amalekites and Canaanites, and the victories they obtained over them, and particularly in remembrance of the walls of Jericho falling down at the sound of rams' horns; but then it must be by anticipation: it is more commonly received with the Jews ^{f821} that it was on the account of the binding of Isaac on this day, being delivered through a ram being sacrificed in his stead; and on this account it is said, that the trumpets blown on this day were made of rams horns, and no other might be used ^{f822}; yea, that ram's head was used to be eaten on this day, in remembrance of the ram of Isaac, and also to intimate that the Jews would be the head and not the tail ^{f823}: the Jews also say, that this day, every year, was a sort of day of judgment, in which God sat and judged men, and also determined all events of the following year ^{f824}; and this was attended with blowing of trumpets, to strike a terror into them, and put them in mind of the judgment of God, and to induce them to repent of their sins ^{f825}: and it may be observed, that the resurrection of the dead, in order to the last general judgment, will be attended with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, (~~f826~~ 1 Corinthians 15:52 ~~f827~~ 1 Thessalonians 4:16); whether this is so represented

in reference to this notion, let it be considered: but as this was New Year's Day, as before observed, this ceremony seems to have been appointed to express joy for all the mercies and blessings of the last year; and the rather, at this time of the year all the fruits of the earth were gathered in, not only the barley and the wheat, but the oil and wine, and under such grateful acknowledgment, to expect the divine blessing to attend them the following year; and besides, at this time of the year, it was generally thought by the Jews ^{f826}, and by others, that the world was created, and this blowing of trumpets might be in memory of that, and as an emblem of the shoutings of the sons of God, the angels, the morning stars, who sang for joy when the foundations of the earth were laid, (~~f886~~ Job 38:6,7); to which it may be added, this seventh month was very memorable for holy solemnities, as the day of atonement on the tenth, and the feast of tabernacles, which began on the fifteenth, and therefore was ushered in with blowing of trumpets to make it the more significant, and particularly to put the people in mind to prepare for the day of atonement near at hand; and so Gersom observes, that as the sound of a trumpet strikes men with fear, the design of this precept was, to fill the mind with fear, and to excite to repentance and brokenness of heart, and humiliation for sin, and to search their works and actions, and correct what was amiss, and so be ready for the day of atonement: hence Ainsworth thinks, that this was a figure of the ministry of John the Baptist preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; but rather it seems to be an emblem of the Gospel, and the ministry of it, in the acceptable year of the Lord, or the Gospel dispensation, which is sometimes signified by the blowing of the great trumpet, and by the ministers of it lifting up their voice like a trumpet, (~~f2713~~ Isaiah 27:13 58:1); by which sinners are roused and awakened to a sense of their sin and danger, and to hear a joyful sound of love, grace, mercy, peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation through Christ: the Jews say ^{f827}, this blowing of trumpets was to disturb Satan, when he came to accuse the Israelites; it is certain there is nothing gives him more disturbance than the pure and powerful preaching of the Gospel, which he endeavours to obstruct as much as possible, and there is nothing like what that brings to silence his accusations, (see ~~f4048~~ 2 Corinthians 4:3,4 ~~f1218~~ 1 Thessalonians 2:18 ~~f888~~ Romans 8:33,34),

an holy convocation; on which the people were called together to holy exercises; and so the Jews observe it to this day; for after they return home from attendance to the blowing of the trumpets in their synagogues, they

sit down to meat, and spend the rest of the day in hearing sermons, and in other religious exercises ^{f828}.

Ver. 25. *Ye shall do no servile work [therein],* etc.] Only such as was necessary for dressing food, but not any manual work, such as servants were employed in on other days, as agriculture or any mechanic business:

but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; a burnt offering, and what that was may be seen in (⁴⁰⁹⁰Numbers 29:1-6).

Ver. 26. *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] This phrase, which is a kind of preface to each precept, seems to be used to distinguish one from another, as the preceding one from the feast of Pentecost; and here, the day of atonement from that of the blowing of the trumpets; and afterwards, the feast of tabernacles from the day of atonement; the reason why it is not used before the feast of Pentecost seems to be, because, as Aben Ezra observes, that depended upon the wave sheaf, and was reckoned from it:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 27. *Also on the tenth [day] of this seventh month,* etc.] Tisri, the same as before, answering to part of our September, and part of October:

[there shall be] a day of atonement; for all the sins of the year past; (see ⁴⁸⁶⁹Leviticus 16:29,30);

it shall be an holy convocation unto you: when they should be called together for the exercise of holy duties:

and ye shall afflict your souls; their souls, by repentance, contrition, and humiliation for sin, and their bodies by fasting; and, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it,

“by abstaining from eating and drinking, and the advantage of bathing and wiping, and the use of the bed and sandals;”

hence called the fast, (⁴²⁷⁰Acts 27:9); (see Gill on “⁴⁸⁶⁹Leviticus 16:29”);

and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; a burnt offering, of which (see ⁴⁰⁹⁸Numbers 29:8-11).

Ver. 28. *Ye shall do no work in that same day,* etc.] No more than on the weekly sabbath:

for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God: (see Gill on “^{f828}Leviticus 16:30”); Aben Ezra’s note is,

“for you only,”

that is, for the Israelites, and not the Gentiles; but the atonement of Christ, the antitype of this, was not for the sins of the Jews only, but for the sins of the whole world, of all his people in it, (^{f829}1 John 2:2).

Ver. 29. *For whatsoever soul [it be] that shall not be afflicted in that same day,* etc.] That is, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem explain it, which can fast and does not fast; for a sick person, and a child under nine years of age, were not obliged to fast on this day ^{f829}:

he shall be cut off from among his people; by an untimely death, by the hand of God; the Targum of Jonathan says, by the pestilence.

Ver. 30. *And whatsoever soul [it be] that doeth any work in that same day,* etc.] Any sort of work whatever; for, as before observed, it was to be kept as strictly as the weekly sabbath:

the same soul will I destroy from among his people; with the pestilence, as the above Targum; it seems to be but another phrase for cutting them off, and to signify the same thing.

Ver. 31. *Ye shall do no manner of work,* etc.] Which is repeated, that it might be observed, and to show how strictly God required this day should be kept, and how careful men should be of breaking the command in this respect, and how much he should resent it if they did:

[it shall be] a statute for ever, throughout your generations, in all your dwellings; unto the coming of the Messiah, who, by the atoning sacrifice of himself, would answer to this law, and put an end to it.

Ver. 32. *It [shall be] unto you a sabbath of rest,* etc.] (See Gill on “^{f828}Leviticus 16:31”); and this is thought by some ^{f830} to be the sabbath spoken of in (^{f831}Isaiah 58:13);

and ye shall afflict your souls; in the ninth [day] of the month at even; the fast was to begin at the close of the ninth day, and to continue to the end of the tenth; so Maimonides ^{f831}: he begins to fast and afflict himself at the evening of the ninth next to the tenth; and so at the going out of it he

continues in his affliction a little while of the night of the eleventh, next to the tenth, which is confirmed by what follows:

from even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath; which some understand of the sabbath in general; but it seems to have a particular respect to the sabbath of the day of atonement, which was to last from the evening of the ninth to the evening of the tenth day.

Ver. 33. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] Concerning the feast of tabernacles here repeated and enlarged upon:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 34. *Speak unto the children of Israel, saying*, etc.] Giving them directions about keeping a feast, in which the whole body of them had a very special and particular concern:

the fifteenth day of this seventh month; the month Tisri or September:

[shall be] the feast of tabernacles [for] seven days unto the Lord; the design of which was, partly to give thanks for the fruits of the earth, now all gathered in, (⁽¹²³⁹⁾Leviticus 23:39); but chiefly to commemorate the dwelling of the children of Israel in tents and booths, during their forty years' abode in the wilderness, (⁽¹²⁴³⁾Leviticus 23:43); whereby their posterity in later times would be led to observe the difference between them and their forefathers, who lived in tents or booths, pitched sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, in the open fields, in wastes, and deserts; whereas they dwelt in spacious cities, fortified towns, and magnificent houses; and were possessed of various kingdoms and nations, as was the land of Canaan: the reason, the Jews say ^{f832}, why this feast was kept at this time of the year and not at the season when they went out of Egypt and first dwelt in booths, as at Succoth which had its name from thence, (⁽¹²³⁷⁾Exodus 12:37), was this; because then the summer season began when men commonly used to build tabernacles to shelter them from the heat of the sun, wherefore, if the feast had been kept at that time, it would not have been known that it was kept at the command of God, and in remembrance of the above circumstance; but the month Tisri or September being usually a cold and rainy season in those parts, men were wont to leave their tabernacles and go into their houses; and so it was a plain case that the feast was observed not for convenience or through custom, but that it was at the command of God they went out of their houses into tabernacles at this season of the year, in commemoration of the

miraculous benefit of dwelling in tents under the clouds of glory: and they also say, that for this reason it was ordered to begin on the fifteenth day, because it was on the fifteenth day of the month (though of another month) they went out of Egypt, and the clouds began to protect and accompany them; and this was enjoined them seven days, to teach them that the miraculous benefits of God are always and every day to be remembered: the Jews have a whole treatise in their Misnah, called “Succah”, the “booth” or “tabernacle”; in which they give an account of the form and fabric and measure of their tabernacles, and of their dwelling and dining in them; and of the branches they carry in their hands, and of the manner of carrying and shaking them; and of the pouring out of water at this time, and of their piping and singing and other rites and ceremonies attending this feast; (see Gill on ^{<400>}John 7:2”); besides, the uses of this feast before mentioned, it was typical of spiritual and evangelical things, and especially of the incarnation of Christ, whose human nature is the true tabernacle, in distinction from those typical ones, and in which he is expressly said to “tabernacle” among us, (^{<414>}John 1:14); and it is highly probable that his incarnation or birth was at the time of this feast; at which time the temple of Solomon, a type of Christ’s body, was also dedicated; and this season of the year suits better than that in which it is usually placed; and his baptism and the time of his death show it; (see ^{<400>}Luke 1:1,8 3:22); and as Christ, our passover, was sacrificed for us at the exact time of the passover, and the firstfruits of the Spirit were given on the very day of Pentecost, or feast of firstfruits; so it is most likely, that Christ was born, or first began to tabernacle in human nature at the feast of tabernacles, which we, in Gospel times, are to keep, by believing in the incarnate Saviour, and by attending to the Gospel ordinances he has appointed, to commemorate the benefits of his incarnation, sufferings, and death, (^{<346>}Zechariah 14:16,17); moreover, the dwelling of the children of Israel in booths in the wilderness, and so at this feast in commemoration of it, may be an emblem of the tabernacles of the saints in their present wilderness state: this world, through which they are passing, is like a wilderness to them; their bodies are called tabernacles, which are pitched for a while; and their state and condition here is that of sojourners, pilgrims, and travellers; yea, these tents and tabernacles may be figures of the several particular churches of Christ, in the present state of things, which are set up for a while for the convenience, comfort, refreshment, and joy of the spiritual Israel of God; (see ^{<401>}Psalms 46:4 84:1).

Ver. 35. *On the first day [shall be] an holy convocation*, etc.] When they should be called together to holy exercises, to prayer, praising, and reading the law; and at this present time they observe this day, by rising early in the morning and going to the synagogue, where they sing and pray much; and everyone takes a bundle of branches of palm tree, olive, etc. in the right hand, and a pome citron in the left, and says, blessed be thou, O Lord our God, the Lord of the world, who has sanctified us by thy precepts, and hath commanded us to carry the palm tree bundle; then they shake it, and give a great shout, according to (^{<0962>}Psalm 96:12); all which they frequently repeat on this day, as well as bring out the book of the law, attended with various ceremonies, and read some passages in it ^{f833}:

ye shall do no servile work [therein]; as on the first and seventh days of unleavened bread, the day of Pentecost, and of the blowing of trumpets; but what was necessary for preparing and dressing food might be done.

Ver. 36. *Seven days ye shall offer an offering made, by fire unto the Lord*, etc.] A burnt offering; what this was, and how many were offered on each day, see at large in (^{<0913>}Numbers 29:13-34);

on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; as on the first day; (see Gill on "^{<0935>}Leviticus 23:35"):

and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; which was different from that on all the other days, being one bullock only, etc. (^{<0935>}Numbers 29:35,36);

it [is] a solemn assembly; of all the people, when they were gathered together before the Lord. Some render the word used a "restraint" or "detention", and interpret it of restraining or detaining them from servile work, as in the next clause; so Aben Ezra and Gersom; but this sense seems to make that clause unnecessary and is never used elsewhere where that is:

ye shall do no servile work [therein]; as on the first day; (see Gill on "^{<0935>}Leviticus 23:35").

Ver. 37. *These [are] the feasts of the Lord*, etc.] Besides the sabbath, as Gersom observes; even the passover, the seven days of unleavened bread the day of Pentecost, the day of blowing the trumpets, the day of atonement, and the seven days of the feast of tabernacles;

which ye shall proclaim [to be] holy convocations: as they had been directed, (^{4821D}Leviticus 23:2);

to offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord; which is explained by *a burnt offering, and a meat offering,* which went along with it;

a sacrifice, which the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call the sacrifice of holy things; according to Gersom it was the sacrifice of the peace offerings; but rather it seems to be the sacrifice of the sin offering, which was ordered along with the rest in all those feasts:

and drink offerings; which also accompanied the meat offerings:

everything upon his day; there being different sacrifices on one day than on another, everyone was to be offered peculiar to the day as was ordered; of which (see ⁴⁸²⁹Numbers 28:29).

Ver. 38. *Beside the sabbaths of the Lord,* etc.] The seventh day sabbaths, which were of his appointing, and sacred to his service and worship; on which, when any of the feasts fell, it did not hinder the observance of them, or the offering of the several sacrifices on them; nor were those of the sabbath to be omitted on the account of them:

and beside your gifts; either of the whole congregation, or of a private person, which they thought well to give of their own good will on these festivals, over and above the sacrifices enjoined:

and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the Lord; which seem to explain what is meant before by gifts.

Ver. 39. *Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month,* etc.] The month Tisri or September, the same month, and the same day of the month before observed; only another end and use of this feast is remarked, which was to give thanks for the fruits of the earth gathered in, as follows:

when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land; the barley, wheat, oil and wine, and all others, this being now autumn, when the several fruits were ripe and gathered: ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days; not different from that before mentioned, but the same, one design of which is here suggested, to give thanks for the fruits of the earth: hence this feast is sometimes called the feast of ingathering, (⁴²³¹⁶Exodus 23:16 34:22); as

another use of it is after mentioned, to commemorate the children of Israel dwelling in booths in the wilderness:

on the first day [shall be] a sabbath, and on the eighth day [shall be] a sabbath; because on both there was a cessation from servile work, (^{<40235>}Leviticus 23:35,36).

Ver. 40. *And ye shall take you the boughs of goodly trees*, etc.] Which the three Targums interpret, of citrons; and so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; and the Jews are so tenacious of observing this, that in those countries where this fruit grows not, they will send for it from Spain, where there is plenty of it: the Targum of Jonathan, paraphrases it, “ye shall take of yours”; suggesting these boughs must be their own, or the bundle of them, with others they call the “lulab”, must be their own property, and not another’s; though it is said ^{f834}, if it is a gift it will do, even though it is given on condition to be returned again:

branches of palm trees: which were very common in the land of Judea, and especially about Jericho; (see ^{<41213>}John 12:13); the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem call them “lulabs”, which is the name the Jews give to the whole bundle they carried in their hands on this day:

and the boughs of thick trees; which the Targums and Jewish writers in general understand of myrtles, being full of branches and leaves:

and willows of the brook; a sort of trees which delight to grow by brooks and rills of water: these, according to the Jewish writers, were not taken to make their booths of, though that seems to be the use of them, from (^{<40815>}Nehemiah 8:15,16); but to tie up in bundles, and carry in hands; the citron in their left hand, and a bundle made of the other three sorts of boughs of trees in the right hand, which they called the “lulab”:

and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days; because of the blessings of his goodness bestowed upon them in the plentiful harvest and vintage they had been favoured with, and in remembrance of past mercies, showed to their fathers in the wilderness, giving them food and drink, and guiding and protecting them with the pillar of cloud and fire; and at the same time, also, thankful for the different circumstances they were in, having cities, towns, and houses to dwell in, and fields and vineyards to possess, when their fathers lived in a wilderness for forty years together; and especially such of them expressed their joy before the Lord, who had any knowledge of this being a type of the Messiah tabernacling in human

nature, they had the promise of, to be their spiritual Redeemer and Saviour: these seven days are kept by the Jews now, chiefly in carnal mirth, and so for ages past, as by carrying the above boughs in their hands, and going round about the altar with them, and, shaking them, and crying Hosanna, and by making use of all sorts of music, vocal and instrumental, piping, dancing, leaping, skipping, and various gestures, even by persons of the highest rank, and of the greatest character for sobriety ^{f835}; and particularly by fetching water from Siloah, when in their own land, and pouring it with wine upon the altar, which was attended with such expressions of joy, that it is said, that he who never saw the rejoicing of drawing of water, never saw any rejoicing in his life ^{f836}: the Jews give this reason of the ceremony, because at this feast was the time of the rains, see Targum of Jonathan on (^{f836}Leviticus 23:36); and therefore the holy blessed God said, pour water before me, that the rains of the year may be blessed unto you ^{f837}; but others have thought there was something more mysterious in it, and that it had respect to the pouring out of the Holy Ghost; for, they say ^{f838}, the place of drawing water was so called, because they drew the Holy Ghost, as it is said, “ye shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation”, (^{f838}Isaiah 12:3); to this our Lord is thought to allude, (see Gill on “^{f837}John 7:37-38”): some of the ceremonies used at this feast have been imitated by the Heathens: Strabo ^{f839} says, the carrying branches of trees, dances, and sacrifices, were common to the gods, and particularly to Bacchus; and there was such a likeness between these and the rites of Bacchus, that Plutarch ^{f840} thought the Jews at this time kept two feasts to the honour of him; whereas, as Bishop Patrick observes, the profane Bacchanalia of the Gentiles were only a corruption of this festival.

Ver. 41. *And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year,* etc.] Every year it was to be kept for the space of seven days, beginning on the fifteenth and ending on the twenty second of the month Tisri or September;

[it shall be] a statute for ever in your generations; until the Messiah should come and tabernacle among men, the substance of this shadow, on whose coming it was to flee away:

ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and that no mistake might be made.

Ver. 42. *Ye shall dwell in booths seven days,* etc.] So that it seems they were not obliged to dwell in them on the eighth day, which was an holy

convocation, a sabbath in which no servile work was to be done as the first, (^{f836}Leviticus 23:36,39). The eighth day was a day by itself, a sort of an appendage to the feast of tabernacles, when they went into their houses again, and kept it as an holy day; and perhaps principally in giving thanks for the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, to which this seems to be appropriated from (^{f839}Leviticus 23:39). According to the Jewish writers, they did not go out of their booths until they had dined in them on this day; and as they went out used to say,

“may it be the will of God that we may be worthy the next year to dwell in the booth of Leviathan ^{f841};”

that is, to feast with the Messiah in the world to come. And to those days the Jews have added a ninth, which they call “the joy of the law”, and which they keep for joy of having finished the reading of the law; which being divided into as many sections or lessons as weeks in the year, were so ordered to be read as to be finished at this time ^{f842}:

all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths; the Targum of Jonathan is,

“all the males in Israel, and even the little ones, that do not need their mothers, sit in the shades blessing their Creator, when they enter there.”

And, according to the Misnah ^{f843}, women, servants, and little ones, are free from the booths (i.e. are not obliged to dwell in one), but a little one, who hath no need of its mother, is obliged to dwell in the booths: and elsewhere it is said, that sick persons, and such as wait upon them, are not obliged, nor messengers upon any business, nor travellers and watchmen in cities, and keepers of gardens and orchards; if such travel, or keep watch in the day, they are obliged to be in them at night, and if in the night, then they are to dwell in them in the day ^{f844}. Jarchi says, that everyone born in Israel comprehends proselytes, who were bound by this law.

Ver. 43. *That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths*, etc.] Which by the providence of God the Israelites were obliged to make for themselves to dwell in:

when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; for the very first place they came to, when they departed from thence, was called Succoth, from the booths they there built:

I [am] the Lord your God; who brought them out of Egypt, made them to dwell in booths in the wilderness, and enjoined them the observance of the feast of tabernacles in memory of it, in which he expected to be obeyed.

Ver. 44. *And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the Lord.*] The several feasts before recited, the order of them, the manner of observing them, and the time.