

# CHAPTER 15

## INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS 15

In this chapter the children of Israel are instructed about the meat offerings and drink offerings, and the quantities of them, which were always to go along with their burnt offerings and peace offerings they should offer when they came into the land of Canaan, (<sup><04151></sup>Numbers 15:1-12); and they are told that the same laws and ordinances would be binding equally on them that were of the country, and on the strangers in it, (<sup><04153></sup>Numbers 15:13-16); and an order is given them to offer a cake of the first dough for an heave offering, (<sup><04157></sup>Numbers 15:17-21); and they are directed what sacrifices to offer for sins of ignorance, both of the congregation and particular persons, (<sup><04142></sup>Numbers 14:22-29); but as for presumptuous sinners, they were to be cut off, (<sup><04143></sup>Numbers 14:30,31); and an instance is recorded of stoning a sabbath breaker, (<sup><04142></sup>Numbers 14:32-36); and the chapter is concluded with a law for wearing fringes on the borders of their garments, the use of which is expressed, (<sup><04145></sup>Numbers 14:35-41).

**Ver. 1.** *The Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] After the murmurings of the Israelites by reason of the spies, (<sup><04142></sup>Numbers 14:2); and their being threatened with a consumption of them in the wilderness on that account, (<sup><04142></sup>Numbers 14:12); and their defeat at Hormah, (<sup><04145></sup>Numbers 14:45): and lest their posterity should be discouraged, and despair of ever enjoying the good land:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them*, etc.] The younger sort of them, such as were under twenty years of age; for those of that age and upwards, who had murmured against the Lord, had been assured by him with an oath that they should die in the wilderness, and not see the land of Canaan, (<sup><04143></sup>Numbers 14:29); whereas those Moses is here bid to speak to were such that should possess it:

*when ye come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto, you*; the land of Canaan, the grant of which is here renewed to them, and an

assurance given of their coming into it and settlement in it; and that they should have dwelling places there for their several tribes and families.

**Ver. 3.** *And will make an offering by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering,* etc.] The first of these respects such offerings by fire, which were not wholly burnt, but part of them were eaten by the priests, (<sup><680></sup>Deuteronomy 18:1); and the latter such as were wholly burnt, unless the latter can be thought to be only an explanation of the former:

*or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a freewill offering;* these were peace offerings, some of which were for thanksgiving, and others were either a vow or a freewill offering, as here: (see <sup><870></sup>Leviticus 7:11,12,16);

*or in your solemn feasts;* as the passover, pentecost, etc. of which, and the offerings in them, (see <sup><820></sup>Leviticus 23:4-37 <sup><870></sup>Numbers 28:1-29:40);

*to make a sweet savour unto the Lord;* for acceptance with him:

*of the herd or of the flock;* a bullock of the one, a lamb or kid of the goats of the other; fowls are not mentioned, because burnt offerings of them required no drink offerings <sup>f193</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the Lord,* etc.] Be it of either kind before mentioned:

*bring a meat offering of a tenth deal of flour, mingled with the fourth [part] of an hin of oil;* this was made of the tenth part of an ephah, or of an omer of fine wheaten flour, which was the quantity of about three quarts; and which was mixed and macerated with the fourth part of an hin, or with a quart and more than half a pint of oil: (see <sup><120></sup>Exodus 29:40); rather this should be called a bread offering.

**Ver. 5.** *And the fourth [part] of an hin of wine,* etc.] The same measure with the oil, and this was wine of the grapes, as the Targum of Jonathan; other sorts of wine might not be used for the purpose mentioned:

*for a drink offering shalt thou prepare;* with the meat offering, to go along with every burnt offering and peace offering; which, as they were the food of God and the provision of his house, it was proper there should be of every kind fit for an entertainment, as flesh, bread, and wine. These were to go

*with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb*; if there were more than one, then a greater quantity in proportion was required.

**Ver. 6.** *Or for a ram*, etc.] Whether for a burnt offering or a peace offering; or rather and for a ram <sup>f194</sup>, as many versions:

*thou shalt prepare [for] a meat offering two tenth deals of flour mingled with the third [part] of an hin of oil*: which was the quantity of six quarts of fine flour, and about three pints and a quarter of a pint of oil.

**Ver. 7.** *And for a drink offering thou shalt offer a third [part] of an hin of wine*, etc.] The same quantity of wine was to be used in the drink offering as of oil in the meat offering, (<sup>Q1504</sup>Numbers 15:4,6):

*[for] a sweet savour unto the Lord*, that it might be acceptable to him.

**Ver. 8.** *And when thou preparest a bullock [for] a burnt offering*, etc.] Which was a larger offering, and required a larger meat offering and drink offering, as (<sup>Q1509</sup>Numbers 15:9,10) show:

*or [for] a sacrifice in performing a vow or peace offerings unto the Lord*; by which latter are meant freewill offerings; for though both sorts here mentioned were peace offerings, yet these were more particularly called so.

**Ver. 9.** *Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat offering*, etc.] Much larger than either for a lamb or ram, even one consisting

*of three tenth deals of flour*; or nine quarts of it:

*mingled with half an hin of oil*; two quarts and a pint, and somewhat more.

**Ver. 10.** *And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine*, etc.] The same quantity as of oil, and a little more:

*[for] an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord*: this, according to Jarchi, refers only to the meat offering and the oil: for the wine was not a fire offering, not being put upon the fire.

**Ver. 11.** *Thus shall it be done for one bullock*, etc.] Such a quantity of flour and oil for the meat offering, and such a quantity of wine for the drink offering as before expressed; making no difference between one young or old:

*or for a ram*: which, Jarchi says, was thirteen months and one day old:

*or for a lamb, or a kid*; for a young one of the flock, whether of the sheep or goat, whether a lamb or a kid of the goats; which, according to Jarchi, were within a year, not a year old.

**Ver. 12.** *According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to everyone, according to their number.*] That is, in proportion to the number of the cattle, be they of which sort they would, should be the quantity of the meat and drink offerings.

**Ver. 13.** *All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner,* etc.] Meaning that all Israelites should with their sacrifices bring their meat and drink offerings of the quantity directed to as above:

*in offering an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord*; when they offered any burnt offerings or peace offerings: the Jews say, that all sacrifices, whether of the congregation or of a private person, require drink offerings, excepting the firstborn, the tithes, the passover, the sin offering, and the trespass offering; but the sin offering of the leper, and his trespass offering, require them<sup>f195</sup>: the Targum of Jonathan is,

“all that are born in Israel, and not among the people, shall make these drink offerings thus;”

for though an uncircumcised Gentile might bring burnt offerings and peace offerings, yet not meat offerings and drink offerings with them; (see Gill on “<sup>(-0228)</sup>Leviticus 22:18”); only such as were proselytes of righteousness, as in (<sup>(-0154)</sup>Numbers 15:14).

**Ver. 14.** *And if a stranger sojourn with you,* etc.] A stranger, or proselyte, not of the gate, but of righteousness, as Ben Gersom and the Jewish, writers in general interpret it;

*or whatsoever [be] among you in your generations*; whether such a proselyte settled and continued among them, or only stayed with them awhile:

*and will offer an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord*; is desirous of offering a burnt offering or a peace offering to the Lord in an acceptable manner:

*as ye do, so shall he do*; bring the same meat offering and drink offering, according to the nature and number of the cattle he brings for sacrifice.

**Ver. 15.** *One ordinance [shall be both] for you of the congregation,* etc.] Or “O congregation”<sup>f196</sup>, as Ben Melech, and so the Targum of Jonathan, “O whole congregation”; though Aben Ezra denies it to be vocative:

*and also for the stranger that sojourneth [with you];* the same ordinance, statute, or appointment, respecting the above things, were equally binding on one side as on the other, an homeborn Israelite and a proselyte of righteousness:

*an ordinance for ever in your generations;* to be observed by them, one and the other, in all ages, until the Messiah came and abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances:

*as ye [are] so shall the stranger be before the Lord;* not in things civil, but religious, and particularly with respect to the above sacrifices and offerings: Ben Gersom and Aben Ezra say this respects the burnt offering only, which was before the Lord.

**Ver. 16.** *One law, and one manner,* etc.] One law respecting these sacrifices, and one manner of offering them; one and the same precept to be observed, and one and the same judgment or punishment inflicted in case of non-observance:

*shall be for you, and the stranger that sojourneth with you;* for Israelites and proselytes; which is said to invite and encourage the latter, and may have a distant view to the calling of the Gentiles in Gospel times, when there should be no difference between Jews and Gentiles called by grace in matters of religion, but would be one in Christ, (~~CHR~~ Galatians 3:28).

**Ver. 17.** *And the Lord spake unto Moses,* etc.] Or continued to speak to him; for the following law was given at the same time as those before:

*saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 18.** *Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them,* etc.] Who only were bound to observe the following law concerning the cake of the first dough, (~~CHR~~ Numbers 15:20), and not Gentiles; so the Jews say<sup>f197</sup>, the dough of a Gentile is free from the cake, though an Israelite kneads it:

*when ye come into the land whither I bring you;* the land of Canaan: this is another assurance of their possession of the land of Canaan, notwithstanding what had been threatened; in (~~CHR~~ Numbers 15:2); it is only said, “which I give unto you”, but here, “whither I bring you”; assuring

them, that as he had given it unto them, he would certainly introduce them into it. The Jews from hence gather, that they are not bound to observe this precept concerning the cake by the law, but in the land of Israel only, and when all Israel are there; wherefore at this time, and even in the days of Ezra, it is separated only by the words of the Scribes; and the reason of it is, that this law might not be forgotten by the Israelites <sup>f198</sup>: there were three countries that were bound to bring the cake, according to the Misnah <sup>f199</sup>.

**Ver. 19.** *Then it shall be, that when ye eat of the bread of the land,* etc.] Of the land of Canaan; when they were about to eat of it, before they actually did; when they were preparing for it, had ground their corn into flour, and had mixed it with water and kneaded it into dough, in order to bake it and make it fit for food; by bread is meant bread corn, such as was the old corn of the land the Israelites first ate of when they entered into it, (<sup>(RSB)</sup>Joshua 5:11,12); the Targum of Jonathan adds,

“not of rice, or millet, or pulse,”

but what was made of corn used for bread; and the Jews say <sup>f200</sup>, there were five things only they were obliged to make the cake of, wheat, barley, “cusmin” or rye, fox ear (barley), and oats; and this is to be understood only of dough made for men’s bread, and not for dogs or any other beast <sup>f201</sup>:

*ye shall offer up an heave offering unto the Lord;* and what that is, is expressed in (<sup>(MSB)</sup>Numbers 15:20).

**Ver. 20.** *Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough [for] an heave offering,* etc.] Of the first dough made of the first corn that was threshed, winnowed and ground, they were to make a cake, and offer it an heave offering unto the Lord; the quantity of it is not expressed, but was left to the people’s generosity; no stinted measure was fixed by the law; but according to the Scribes, or the traditions of the elders, the quantity of the cake was the twenty fourth part of the first dough that was kneaded; not the forty fourth, as Buxtorf <sup>f202</sup> through mistake says; so the Targum of Jonathan,

“of the first of your dough, one out of twenty four (i.e. the twenty fourth part of it), ye shall separate a separation for the priests,”

with which agrees the Misnah <sup>f203</sup>, though according to that, if made to sell publicly it was the forty eighth part of it. Some, because (<sup><041521></sup>Numbers 15:21) begins and ends with **m**, “mem”, which numerically signifies “forty”, think this is an instruction to a bountiful person to give the fortieth part <sup>f204</sup>:

*as [ye do] the heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall ye heave it; as the two wave loaves and firstfruits of their harvest, (<sup><02316></sup>Leviticus 23:16,17).*

**Ver. 21.** *Of the first of your dough shall ye give unto the Lord,* etc.] As an acknowledgment of his being the sovereign Lord and possessor of heaven and earth, and of his being the owner and proprietor of the land of Canaan; and by way of thankfulness to him for the plenty of bread corn he had given them; and wherefore this cake was to be heaved or lifted up towards him in heaven, as follows:

*an heave offering in your generations:* for this respected not only the first time of their entrance into the land of Canaan, but was to be observed every year when they made their first dough, and was to continue as long as the ceremonial law lasted: this cake was anciently given to the priest, which is meant by giving it to the Lord, but now the Jews take it and cast it into the fire and burn it <sup>f205</sup> the apostle seems to allude to this cake of the first dough in (<sup><05116></sup>Romans 11:16).

**Ver. 22.** *And if ye have erred,* etc.] Gone astray from the law of God, and any of its precepts; every sin is an error, a missing of the mark, a wandering from the way of God’s commandments. Jarchi, and the Jews in general, interpret this of idolatry, but it rather respects any deviation from the law, moral or ceremonial, especially the latter:

*and not observed all these commandments which the Lord hath spoken unto Moses;* in this chapter, more particularly concerning the meat offerings and drink offerings, and the quantity of them, to be brought along with their burnt offerings and peace offerings, and concerning the cake of the first dough to be heaved before the Lord and given to the priest.

**Ver. 23.** *[Even] all that the Lord hath commanded you by the hand of Moses,* etc.] Recorded in this book and the two preceding, whether of a moral, ceremonial, or judicial kind; the whole body of laws given to the people of Israel from the Lord by Moses:

*from the day that the Lord commanded [Moses], and henceforward among your generations;* all that he had commanded, or should hereafter command.

**Ver. 24.** *Then it shall be, if [ought] be committed by ignorance,* etc.] Of the law of God, not clearly understanding the meaning of it, or not knowing of the several precepts of it, and the circumstances of each, and the manner of performing obedience thereunto:

*without the knowledge of the congregation;* or they being ignorant of the true intent of the law and form of obeying it; for this is to be understood not of the sin of a private person through ignorance, but of the body of the people; or of a congregation of them in some particular place, ignorantly and unawares falling into idolatry, or rather into a breach of any of the laws of God, moral or ceremonial:

*that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the Lord;* as an acceptable sacrifice to him; by which it appears that this law is different from that in (<sup><GRH3></sup>Leviticus 4:13-21); since the bullock there was for a sin offering, this for a burnt offering; and besides another creature was to be for a sin offering, as after expressed:

*with his meat offering and his drink offering, according to the manner;* a meat offering, consisting of such a quantity of flour and oil, and a drink offering of such a quantity of wine as directed to, (<sup><GRH3></sup>Numbers 15:9,10);

*and one kid of the goats for a sin offering;* which though mentioned last was offered first, as an expiatory sacrifice for sin, typical of Christ, who was made an offering for sin, and then the burnt offering by way of thankfulness for the acceptance of the other.

**Ver. 25.** *And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel;* etc.] By offering a sin offering for them, a type of Christ, the propitiation not only for the sins of the people among the Jews, but throughout the whole world, (<sup><GRH3></sup>1 John 2:2);

*and it shall be forgiven them;* as the sins of the Lord's people are forgiven them through the blood of Christ, and on account of his stoning sacrifice and satisfaction made for them:



*for it [is] ignorance*; a sin of ignorance, for which reason Christ pleads for pardon on the foot of his sacrifice, and his people receive it, (<sup><4234></sup>Luke 23:34 <sup><5013></sup>1 Timothy 1:13); for that this sin was forgiven on the score of a sacrifice appears by what follows:

*and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord*; the bullock for the burnt offering:

*and their sin offering before the Lord, for their ignorance*; a kid of the goats.

**Ver. 26.** *And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel*, etc.] Which is repeated for the certainty of it, and for the sake of what follows:

*and the stranger that sojourneth among them*; the proselyte of righteousness; so the blessing of pardon, through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, comes upon believing Gentiles as well as Jews, (<sup><5049></sup>Romans 4:9 <sup><4112></sup>1 John 2:2);

*seeing all the people [were] in ignorance*; both the congregation of Israel and the stranger; (see Gill on "<sup><4152></sup>Numbers 15:25").

**Ver. 27.** *And if any soul sin through ignorance*, etc.] Any private or particular person, by breaking any of the above commands, or any other, not rightly understanding them, or not adverting: to the circumstances required in the manner of performing them:

*then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering*; which differed in this from the sin offering of a congregation that sinned through ignorance; that was a kid of the goats, whether male or female, but this was to be a female goat and of a year old.

**Ver. 28.** *And the priest shall make atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly*, etc.] By offering his sin offering for him:

*when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord*; to whom it is known to be such, before whom all things are naked, open, and well known:

*to make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him*; upon that atonement made by sacrifice; so the forgiveness of the sins of all the Lord's people proceeds upon an atonement made by the blood and sacrifice of

Christ: full atonement of sin and free forgiveness are not contrary to each other.

**Ver. 29.** *You shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance,* etc.] Which enjoins a she goat for a sin offering for such:

*[both] for him that is born amongst the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them;* both sinning through ignorance, the same sacrifice was offered for them, by which atonement was made, and through which their sin was forgiven; by whom are meant homeborn Israelites and proselytes of righteousness, who were under the same laws, and enjoyed the same privileges, as do now believing Jews and Gentiles.

**Ver. 30.** *But the soul that doeth [ought] presumptuously,* etc.] Or with “an high hand”<sup>f206</sup>, or through pride, as the Targum of Jonathan; in an haughty, insolent, bold and daring manner; in an obstinate, stubborn, self-willed way, with purpose and design, openly and publicly, neither fearing God nor regarding man:

*[whether he be] born in the land, or a stranger;* here a stranger as well signifies a proselyte of the gate as a proselyte of righteousness; seeing this presumptuous sinning may respect idolatry and blasphemy, which sins were punishable in proselytes of the gate by the magistrates of Israel as well as by the immediate hand of God:

*the same reproacheth the Lord;* by denying him to be the true Jehovah, by worshipping other gods, and by speaking in a blaspheming manner of him the true God; and indeed every presumptuous sin, which is committed in a bold and audacious manner, in contempt of God and defiance of his law, is a reproaching him the lawgiver, and a trampling upon his legislative power and authority:

*and that soul shall be cut off from among his people,* either by the hand of the civil magistrate, upon conviction of him, or by the immediate hand of God; no sacrifice was to be offered for such, no atonement to be made or forgiveness to be had; (see <sup>4123</sup>Matthew 12:31,32).

**Ver. 31.** *Because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment,* etc.] That is, has broken it through contempt of it, despising it as a command of God, paying no regard to it as a law of his; otherwise such who sin ignorantly break the commandment of God:

*that soul shall be utterly cut off*; or “in cutting off shall be cut off”<sup>f207</sup>; most certainly cut off and entirely ruined and destroyed in this world and in that to come, as the Targum of Jonathan; and Maimonides<sup>f208</sup> understands it of such a cutting off, that the soul itself perishes and is no more; but such annihilation the Scripture nowhere gives us any reason to believe:

*his iniquity [shall be] upon him*; the punishment of it, no atonement being made for it by sacrifice; it shall be upon him and him only, or be “in him”<sup>f209</sup>, not repented of and not forgiven.

**Ver. 32.** *And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness*, etc.] According to Aben Ezra, in the wilderness of Sinai; for it is a common notion of the Jews, that though this fact is recorded here, yet was committed the first year the Israelites came out of Egypt, quickly after the giving the law of the sabbath: hence Jarchi remarks, that the Scripture speaks of this to the reproach of the Israelites, that they kept only the first sabbath, and on the second this man came and profaned it; but it seems rather to be in the wilderness of Paran where this fact was committed, after the business of the spies and the discomfiture of Israel, and the above laws were given; and stands here in its proper place as an instance of a presumptuous sinner, cut off from his people, according to the above law, which it immediately follows:

*they found a man that gathered sticks on the sabbath day*; plucking them up by the roots, as the Targum of Jonathan, as stubble and the like; for the word signifies gathering straw or stubble, or such like light things, as Ben Melech observes, and binding them in bundles for fuel; and this was done on the sabbath day, by which it appears that that was to be kept in the wilderness, though the laws before mentioned concerning sacrifices, and the cake of the first dough, were not to be put in execution until Israel came into the land of Canaan; and according to the Targum of Jonathan this man was of the house of Joseph, and in the Talmud<sup>f210</sup> it is expressly said that he was Zelophehad, who was a descendant of Joseph.

**Ver. 33.** *And they that found him gathering sticks*, etc.] Admonished him, as say the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi, but he would not desist; wherefore they

*brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation*; to Moses and Aaron, and to the seventy elders, who might be at this time met together, to hear, try, and judge causes; for it cannot be thought that the

whole body of the people are meant; and it is most likely that it was not on the sabbath day, but the day following, that they brought the man to them, who were then sitting in the court; though Aben Ezra observes, that some say they brought him to them the first night.

**Ver. 34.** *And they put him in ward*, etc.] In a certain prison in the camp; perhaps the same in which the blasphemer was put, (<sup>(1942)</sup>Leviticus 24:12); and for much the same reason:

*because it was not declared what should be done to him*: that is, what kind of death he should die, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra; it had been before declared that the sabbath breaker should die, but not what death he should die, (<sup>(2915)</sup>Exodus 31:15 35:2); though some think it was a matter of doubt whether gathering of sticks was a breach of the sabbath, or at least such a breach of it as required death; and the answer of the Lord seems to confirm this sense, as follows.

**Ver. 35.** *And the Lord said unto Moses*, etc.] Who consulted the Lord upon this affair, in the tabernacle, even at the most holy place, from above the mercy seat, where he promised to meet him, and commune with him about whatsoever he should consult him, (<sup>(1252)</sup>Exodus 25:22);

*the man shall surely be put to death*; for as no fire was to be made throughout their habitations on a sabbath day, gathering sticks for such a purpose was a work that was a violation of the sabbath, punishable with death, (<sup>(2812)</sup>Exodus 35:2,3); and the kind of death follows:

*all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp*; as afterwards without the city: of the place and manner of stoning, (see Gill on <sup>(4178)</sup>Acts 7:58”).

**Ver. 36.** *And all the congregation brought him without the camp*, etc.] What was done by the order of Moses and the seventy elders is said to be done by the whole congregation, though it was by a few persons only the man was actually brought out, who were the proper officers to do such business:

*and stoned him with stones, and he died*: stoned him to death:

*as the Lord commanded Moses*: at the time he consulted him in the sanctuary, which he acquainted the court with, and they immediately ordered the execution, which was accordingly done.

**Ver. 37.** *And the Lord spoke unto Moses*, etc.] After the giving of the above laws, and the order for stoning the sabbath breaker; and the rather what follows is connected with them, because it was to put them in mind of these and all other commands; and of so much importance is the precept directed to, that the Jews say, and Jarchi particularly, that it is equivalent to all the commands, and which he makes to be the reason of its being placed here:

*saying*; as follows.

**Ver. 38.** *Speak unto the children of Israel*, etc.] Whom it only concerned, and all of them, except women and children; for priests, Levites, Israelites, proselytes, and freed servants, were bound to wear the fringes, but not Gentiles; nor might the Gentiles make them, what were made by them were not to be used <sup>f211</sup>, since it follows:

*and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations*: the garments on which these fringes were put were such that were made either of linen or of woollen; no other were obliged to them by the law; but according to the Rabbins other garments were also, yet only square garments, which they call the Talith; and if that had not four skirts to it, it was free from them <sup>f212</sup>: on this square garment, and the four corners or skirts of it, were the fringes put; which were a sort of pendants or tassels, which hung down from it, which consisted of eight white woollen threads, sometimes four, sometimes eight or twelve fingers broad <sup>f213</sup>; there were four of them, one at each skirt or corner of the garment: they were, as another writer says <sup>f214</sup>, made of eight threads broad, each of them being knit to the middle with five knots, and of wool spun on purpose for this use; and these were to be wore by them throughout their generations until the Messiah came, and they seem to have been worn by him, (<sup>4000</sup>Matthew 9:20) however, it is certain they were worn by the Pharisees in his time, (<sup>4026</sup>Matthew 23:5); at present this four cornered garment is not any where in common use among the Jews, instead of which they wear, under their other garments, a kind of square frock, with the fringes or tassels fastened to it, and this they call Arbah Canfot; and in their schools, and at certain times of prayer, they put on a certain square woollen vestment, with the said pendants fastened at each corner, and this they call Talith <sup>f215</sup>:

*and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a riband of blue*; or a blue lace, a piece of blue tape, which bound and kept the fringe tight and close,

and being of a different colour, the fringe being white, made it the more conspicuous: the reason why this colour was used, the Jews say <sup>f216</sup>, was, because it was like the sea, and the like the sky, and the sky like the throne of glory: this blue, hyacinth, or purple colour, as the Jews generally take it to be, was of a peculiar dye; the manner of making which is now unknown to them, and therefore they use only the white <sup>f217</sup>.

**Ver. 39.** *And it shall be unto you for a fringe*, etc.] The blue ribbon or lace shall be in or upon the fringe to fasten it:

*that ye may look upon it*; the blue lace making the whole the more conspicuous: from hence the Jews gather, that the night is not the time for wearing fringe, which lessens the sight, and it is not so easily seen; and that night garments are not obliged to have the fringe on them; and yet, they say, a blind man is bound to wear it, because, though he cannot see it, others can <sup>f218</sup>:

*and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them*: this is the general use, end, and design of the fringes, that upon sight of them they might be put in mind of the commandments and put upon the practice of them; these being at the four corners of their vestments, let them look which way they would downwards, before or behind, or on either side, they could not but see them: and the many threads in them might put them in mind of the many precepts they were to observe; and the white colour, the purity and holiness of them; and the blue or sky-coloured lace might lead them to observe the heavenly original of them; or being of a purple colour rather, might direct them to the blood of Christ, for the remission of the transgressions of them: the Jews have many fanciful things about the use and virtue of these fringes, not worthy of notice; and they say, that such who are careful to observe this law of the fringe, are worthy to see the face of the divine Majesty, and will be preserved from evil spirits <sup>f219</sup>:

*and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes*; to have and enjoy, and do those things, in matters of worship, which were of their own devising, and pleasing in their sight, as well as in moral things, what were agreeable to their carnal hearts, and make for the gratification of their senses:

*after which ye use to go a whoring*; which seems to restrain the sense pretty much to idolatry, to false and superstitious worship, which are often

in Scripture expressed by fornication and whoredom; though other sins and lusts also are sometimes signified by the same words.

**Ver. 40.** *That ye may remember and do all my commandments*, etc.]

Which is repeated, that the end and use of these fringes might be particularly taken notice of, and attended to; that so they might not satisfy themselves with and rest in this ceremony of wearing the fringes, but be found in the observance of every moral precept, and of every religious ordinance and duty:

*and be holy unto your God*: as in his presence, according to his will, and for his honour and glory, by keeping his holy commands, and living an holy life and conversation, well pleasing in his sight.

**Ver. 41.** *I [am] the Lord your God*, etc.] Their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, their Lord and Sovereign, their covenant God and Father:

*which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God*; to make it appear that he was their God in a special relation, and that he took the special care and government of them; and which was manifest by the system of laws he gave them to observe, as well as by his provision for them on all accounts, and by his protection of them:

*I [am] the Lord your God*; who had a right to enact laws, and enjoin the observance of them, as he was the Lord Jehovah; and they were under obligation to regard them, as he was not only their Creator but their covenant God and Father, who had bestowed his favours liberally on them.