

Numbers 28:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein:

Analysis

An holy convocation (מִקְרָא־קֹדֶשׁ, miqra-qodesh)—literally "a called-together holiness" or "sacred assembly." The word miqra comes from the same root as qara (קָרָא, "to call"), emphasizing that God summons His people together for worship. This was not optional attendance but covenantal obligation. The assembly was "holy" (קֹדֶשׁ, qodesh) meaning "set apart" from ordinary time and activity.

No manner of servile work (כָּל־מְלָכֶת אֲבוּדָה, kol-meleket avodah)—literally "all work of labor" was prohibited, similar to but distinct from Sabbath rest. Feast days allowed food preparation (Exodus 12:16) but forbade occupational labor. This rhythm taught that humans exist for worship, not merely work—a counter-cultural truth in both ancient agrarian and modern capitalist economies.

Historical Context

The first and seventh days of Unleavened Bread were full Sabbaths with sacred assemblies (Exodus 12:16; Leviticus 23:7-8). In Second Temple Judaism, these became pilgrimage occasions when Jerusalem swelled with worshipers. Jesus likely observed these convocations annually until His final Passover week, when He became the ultimate Paschal Lamb.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that worship is a divine "calling" rather than human initiative or personal preference?
2. How might setting aside regular times of cessation from work challenge your culture's values?
3. In a 24/7 world, what would "holy convocation"—gathered, unhurried worship—require you to sacrifice?

Interlinear Text

וּבַיּוֹם	הַרְאֵשׁוֹן	מִקְרָא	קֹדֶשׁ	כָּל	מְלָאכָה
day	In the first	convocation	shall be an holy	H3605	work
H3117	H7223	H4744	H6944		H4399
עֲבֹדָה	לֹא	תַעֲשׂוּ:			
no manner of servile	H3808	ye shall do			
H5656		H6213			

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 12:16 (Holy): And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.