

NUMBERS 9:1-14 (THE LORD'S PASSOVER)

The words of today's passage show both a sense of responding to the human condition in mercy, and also a sense of sternness in response to the human condition as well. We will see this as we go along. There is a rigidity in the law which shouts out to us to be careful, lest we fall in to condemnation. The lesson of the law is that we dare not push the Lord's goodness and find that we have overstepped boundaries which He will not forgive.

If a person were to purposefully neglect the observance of the Lord's Passover, they were to be cut off from their people. That is clear, and the penalty is precise and fixed. But is that then end of the story? Or is there a condition in God which, when properly pursued, will find even the disobedient obtaining grace and mercy?

The law is written, the requirements are set, and that is that. Any infraction or failure to meet the written code means getting whacked. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. STOP AND READ 2 Chronicles 30:1-20.

Text Verse: "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Ephesians 1:7

Hell-fire preaching usually has one of two main effects – 1) It will lead a person to the Lord out of fear of being lost, but it will turn that person into a staunch legalist, or 2) it will simply turn the listener further away from the Lord when they see that God is a vengeful ogre who just wants to torment those who won't yield to His rules and demands.

Both of those options are unsound. God is a God of fixed rules, but God is the God who sent Jesus Christ to save sinners, even from those fixed rules.

Hezekiah and those with him failed to observe the Passover at its appointed time. They should have been whacked. But Hezekiah, and those who were willing, petitioned the Lord for a second chance, an undeserved one at that. And the Lord heard them, and the Lord healed them.

When you get fearful about the hand of God coming down on you too heavily, just turn your heart to Him and appeal to Him based on His great love and mercy which is found in the giving of His Son. When You do this, there is nothing in heaven or earth that can keep You from His good and tender mercy. Please remember this as you contemplate the rigidity of the law which is set against us. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Keeping the Passover at It's Appointed Time (verses 1-5)

¹ Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai,

The introductory words of this section vary from the usual opening words which simply say, "Now the Lord spoke to Moses." This more closely matches the opening words of the Book of Numbers. It gives the name of the speaker, meaning the Lord (Yehovah), it gives the addressee, Moses, and it gives the location – *b'midbar sinay*, or "in the wilderness of Sinai." One must ask, "Why has the Lord lengthened this introductory statement in this way?" In questioning the text, one will then pay attention to the surrounding text. In this case, the very next words explain the emphasis...

^{1 (con't)} in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying:

Isn't that odd? "In the first month of the second year." The book of Numbers began with –

“Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first *day* of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt...” Numbers 1:1

That means that the words spoken here actually precede every chronological thing that has been stated so far in Numbers. Further, the events of Exodus 40, which close out that book, are said to have occurred on a specific day. Exodus 40:17 says –

“And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was raised up.” Exodus 40:17

Therefore, the events which are now recorded in Numbers 9 occur sometime during the events of the book of Leviticus, between the first day of the first month and the fourteenth day of the first month. This is because the Passover, which will next be referred to, occurs on the fourteenth of the first month.

What makes this more difficult to understand is that no specific day is mentioned in this verse. It simply says, “in the first month.” Had the Lord given the day this was spoken, the entire thought would have been less obscure. However, He chose to only mention that it is “in the first month.” Normally though, this would mean the first day of the month.

It then seems like an odd placement for Chapter 9 of Numbers, and some scholars, such as Adam Clarke, go into great detail about how such an error could have taken place. Others neglect the basic reasoning of the Lord for placing the account here by simply questioning, but not answering, why it is so placed. Instead of neglecting the context, though, John Lange provides a reasonable explanation for the placement of the passage –

“The present section gives us very plain evidence that all the representations of the book of Numbers up to this point are devoted to the equipment of the army of God for its military expedition. For instance, in respect to time, this regulation concerning the celebration of the Passover by such as were become unclean reaches very far back beyond the fourteenth day of the first month. But it is placed in this connection because here it treats of the completeness of the celebration of the Passover by the entire army of God, and because those who were unclean and those on journeys would be absent at the legal period. This gap must also at length be filled up. The chief stress is thus on the Little Passover.”

The nice thing about John Lange is that he takes the reliability of God having preserved His word, both in intent and in order, as an axiom. He then reasons, “Because this is so, let us figure out why He has placed the passage where it is.” In other words, he follows the primary rule of hermeneutics and looks at the passage *in context*. From that context, the reason for its placement will likely present itself.

And the context is that a second, little, Passover is to be held a month after the first. This Little Passover occurs after the events of the previous chapters, but before the hosts of Israel depart Sinai and towards the Land of Promise, Canaan. And so, understanding that these words are exactly where they should be, and that the Lord is instructing the people on a matter which will then pertain to all of the people of God, He continues his words to Moses...

²“Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time.

Remembering that these words precede the events so far in Numbers, and that we are going back to a previous date in time which is between the first and fourteenth day of the preceding month, the Lord had said this to Moses. In essence, “OK Moses, the time for the Passover is coming, and you are to be sure to observe it when that day arrives.” The reason why He is

doing this is because of what it says at the giving of the first Passover while they were still in Egypt –

“And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. ²⁵ It will come to pass when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service.”
Exodus 12:24, 25

The people had been told that when they entered Canaan, they were to observe the annual Passover feast. However, they had not yet entered Canaan. They were still in the desert, and the time of the Passover had arrived. Were they to observe it or not? The delay in entering Canaan was necessary, but they were not in Canaan. To ensure that the feast was to be understood as one which was not limited to entry into Canaan, but was an annual marker to be celebrated despite that, the Lord speaks out these words.

Some scholars disagree that this is the reason for the Lord’s instructions to Moses about the Passover. They instead state that it is because with the sanctuary now standing, the sacrifice of the Passover was to be in accord with the rules of sacrifice at the sanctuary rather than at individual homes.

This is true, and all sacrifices were to be conducted in this way. The blood of the sacrifice was to be splashed on the altar, not put on the entrance to the people’s homes as when in Egypt. However, the primary purpose must be that the Passover was to be observed. The details of how to observe it are secondary to the necessity to do so. And so the Lord now provides these words...

³ On the fourteenth day of this month,

Nothing is said about taking the lamb on the tenth of the month, as was required in the first Passover. There was a specific reason for doing that on the first Passover which was because of the plague of darkness which would cover Egypt for three days. In fact, there are four things which occurred in the original Passover which would no longer be repeated by the people.

The first was eating the lamb in their houses dispersed throughout Goshen. They were now gone from Egypt. The second is taking the lamb on the tenth day of the month. The third was striking the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintels of the houses. And finally, the eating of the Passover in haste. The feast was now to be an observance of what had occurred. The Destroyer would no longer come, the people would no longer depart their homes, and so on. Therefore, there would be these changes to what occurred one year earlier.

³ (con't) **at twilight,**

The Hebrew says *ben ha'arbayim*, or "between the evenings." It seems like a perplexing phrase, but it is one that is based on biblical time. In the Bible, a day is divided into "evening" and "morning." Thus there are actually two evenings to be reckoned. The first began after twelve and runs through until sunset.

The second evening begins at sunset and continues till night, meaning the whole time of twilight. This would, therefore, be between twelve o'clock and the termination of twilight. Between the evenings then is a phrase which allows for the three o'clock sacrifices at the temple to be considered as the evening sacrifice even though to us it would be considered an afternoon sacrifice.

It is a phrase used only eleven times in the Bible and it always points to the timing of the death of Christ, which the gospels record as three o'clock in

the afternoon. It is at this time of day, meaning “between the evenings” that the Lord says...

^{3 (con't)} **you shall keep it at its appointed time.**

The word for “appointed time” is *moed*. It is the same word used when speaking of the tent of meeting – *ohel moed*. It signifies an appointed time, or a meeting. In the words, “appointed time,” in this verse there is surely a reference to both the day and the time of day. On the fourteenth of the month, at the time between the evenings and on that day, there is to be an appointed time; a meeting. It is a fixed time which points to the work of Christ, and thus to maintain the imagery, the details were to be carefully adhered to. It was on this day and at this time that...

^{3 (con't)} **According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it.”**

The words here include all of the required details of Exodus 12, where the Passover was first instituted. However, it would also include the details of sacrifice for such an animal which are recorded in Leviticus, including the splashing of the blood upon the altar. A problem arises here simply because of the number of people in the camp, and the amount of time it would take to sacrifice all of those lambs between the evenings. This is especially so because there are only three priests at this time, Aaron and his two surviving sons.

There are a few things to consider. The Passover was mandatory, and the Lord would not have mandated something the priests could not accomplish. Therefore, we can assume that the people probably slaughtered their own lambs and brought the blood to the priests. The Levites have not yet, at this time in the chronology of events, been selected to assist the priests.

Secondly, there may still be a mixed multitude, not yet reckoned as native Israelites. So not all counted in the census would partake of the Passover because no uncircumcised person could do so according to the original instructions given in Exodus 12 –

“And when a stranger dwells with you *and wants* to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. ⁴⁹One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.” Exodus 12:48, 49

Though the census is future to the narrative now, the numbers do not change. As was seen in Numbers 3, there were 22,273 firstborn of Israel recorded. If one were to figure on large households of 10 for each firstborn, which would be a huge exaggeration, that would equal 222,730 people. Then add in the 22,300 Levites with their families of ten each, and you would have a total of 445,730 people. If one lamb fed 10 people, that would be 44,573 lambs. If one fed 20, that would be 22,287 lambs. And this is figuring very high on family size.

The number is completely manageable when taken in this light. In fact, Josephus records that during temple times, one year 256,500 paschal lambs were sacrificed. The Passover would have been handled as the Lord required, and without the difficulty some scholars attempt to find.

⁴ So Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover.

This verse confirms the supposition that the primary purpose of the Lord’s words is to ensure that the people knew the Passover was to be observed, even though they were not in Canaan. The necessity of holding the rite is the preeminent reason for the command. How it should be conducted is secondary. This same thought continues to be seen, even into the next words...

⁵ And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at twilight, in the Wilderness of Sinai;

The record is specifically showing the event (the Passover), the day (the fourteenth of the first month), the time (between the evenings), and also the location (the Wilderness of Sinai) were all kept according to the word of the Lord. This is the primary reason, and it was given as a memorial which would look forward to the coming Christ. Each word looks forward to Him. He is our Passover Lamb; He was crucified on the fourteenth day of the first month. He died between the evenings, and his crown was woven from thorns, represented by Sinai. The word Sin from which Sinai is derived means “thorn,” as in a thorn bush. The name Sinai means “Bush of the Lord.” The people’s observance of this feast looked forward to the coming of Messiah and the true redemption found in Him.

What is curious is that only the Passover, and not the Feast of Unleavened Bread, is mentioned. However, for the context of instituting the Little Passover, the words now are given. It is probable that Unleavened Bread was observed, but the issue of this chapter is “What happens if I miss the Passover.” Because of that, only the Passover is mentioned. And it was conducted...

^{5 (con’t)} according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.

It is certain that many details of the Passover, and how it was conducted, have been left out. However, the issue at hand deals with what lies ahead in the coming verses. Regardless of the details, we don’t have, we do have the statement that the people did as expected, and they observed the Passover at its proper time. From here, there is speculation that the Passover was not celebrated again during the entire time of the wilderness wanderings. The reason for this is found first in verses already read from Exodus –

And when a stranger dwells with you *and wants* to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. ⁴⁹ One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.” Exodus 12:48, 49

No uncircumcised person could partake of the Passover. But this is recorded in Joshua 5, just days after crossing the Jordan –

“At that time the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Make flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time.’ ³ So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. ⁴ And this *is* the reason why Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt *who were* males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵ For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised.” Joshua 5:2-5

Just a few verses later it says –

“Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho.” Joshua 5:10

Jewish tradition says that no Passover was held because of this. However, this dismisses the fact that some of the people twenty and above who were circumcised remained alive, even until the last year before crossing the Jordan. Further, everyone nineteen and below who were born before the Exodus, and who would enter into Canaan with Joshua, were all circumcised. It is those who were born in the wilderness that were not circumcised. The reason for that will be addressed when we get to Joshua 5 hopefully around early to mid 2022. Until then, there is no reason to

assume that those who were brought out of Egypt, and who were circumcised, didn't observe the Passover.

*In judgment I will pass through the land
I will destroy those who remain at war with Me
In My anger, I will strike with My mighty hand
A crushing blow for all the world to see
But there is also mercy for those who pay heed
I will not strike those who have faith in My word
When I see the blood, then it is agreed
That I will extend mercy, even I the Lord
Their judgment came in a Substitute
An innocent Lamb for them has died
My righteousness to them I will impute
For to their hearts, the Lamb's blood they have applied*

II. The Little Passover (verses 6-14)

⁶ Now there were *certain* men who were defiled by a human corpse,

It is believed that these men were Mishael and Elzaphan who had carried out the bodies of Aaron's sons when they died before the Lord. As it was during their ordination, their deaths could not have happened before the eighth of the month. The Passover is on the fourteenth, and so if defilement lasted seven days, they could not eat the Passover.

Leviticus 21:1 shows that touching a dead person would bring defilement. That referred to the priests, but the principle must be true for anyone.

However, there is nothing recorded which says how long that defilement would last. For this reason, it is assumed that the law of purification for that very purpose, which is found in Numbers 19, has already been given, and the people were aware of it. Whether correct or not, they are considered defiled. Thus...

6 (con't) so that they could not keep the Passover on that day;

According to Leviticus 7:1, defilement meant that a person could not participate in a sacrificial meal, specifically a peace offering. This appears to extend to the Passover, and therefore, a defiled person would be excluded. No matter what, the people were unclean, they understood that it lasted for a certain duration, and it meant they could not eat the Passover.

6 (con't) and they came before Moses and Aaron that day.

It is of note that it says they came before both Moses and Aaron. Moses is the lawgiver, but Aaron is now the recognized high priest. If a matter of uncleanness which could be resolved was seen, then he would be the one to handle it. However, if it was a matter which could not be resolved by him, then Moses would be the one to provide the necessary directions.

Regardless of any other events in the timeline, this had to have occurred during the first month as stated in verse 9:1. This is because Numbers 5:2 said that everyone who was defiled was to be put outside the camp. This means that these men, if they were defiled, could not have come up to Moses and Aaron inside the camp. Therefore, the unclean in the camp had not yet been put out.

Though it is incredibly hard to pin down the exact timing of some events, it is also impossible to find error in the events as they are recorded. The unseen hand of the Lord has ensured that His word was carefully recorded

and maintained without contradiction or error. Difficulties are seen, but they are simply difficulties to us, not such that would speak against the integrity of the word.

Understanding this, the reason for including this passage in a place which is seemingly out of place, is because it deals with how to handle those people who could not participate in the regular Passover. For them, a special provision will be made based on their next words to Moses...

⁷ And those men said to him, “We *became* defiled by a human corpse. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the Lord at its appointed time among the children of Israel?”

Though the men were said to come before both Moses and Aaron, their words are to Moses alone. The preposition is in the third person singular. They understand that Moses is the leader and the one to first make a determination concerning the matter.

The words of the men here may be more directed toward the loss of a right rather than a fear of failing to perform a required duty. They had left Egypt just a year earlier, and were probably excited at the prospect of observing the Passover. However, it may be that they also do fear that missing out on the Passover could be a cause of incurring the wrath of the Lord. It seems as if there is a two-pronged reason for coming forward as they have.

It is fair to guess that these men are, in fact, Mishael and Elzaphan. They had been instructed to accomplish the task of carrying away the dead. And more, they were Aaron’s sons who had died. In this, they would be the most likely to feel deprived of not observing the Passover. If their defilement was accidental, or not related to the events which are recorded in Leviticus, they probably would have just accepted their lot. But in their case, it was for the Lord’s honor, and the continuance of the priesthood, that their defilement had come about.

The Hebrew words say, *temeim l'nepesh adam*, or “defiled by *the soul of a man.*” It does not say, “by a corpse.” It is the same term used in Leviticus 21:1 when informing the priests not to become defiled in this way. The idea is that of a dead body, however. When a soul leaves the body, we mourn not for the body, but for the soul that has departed. The body without a soul is defiled, and that defilement transfers to whoever touches it. Such is the case here.

⁸ And Moses said to them, “Stand still, that I may hear what the Lord will command concerning you.”

Here we have a unique event which has no answer as of yet. It shows an imperfection of the law thus far given in its mandated precepts. There is the requirement to keep the Passover, but there is the prescription to not keep the Passover when one is unclean. The missing details have caused an apparent conflict of duties for these men. What will Moses decide? The answer is, he cannot decide. The law is explicit on both accounts, and therefore he must go to the Lawgiver to obtain an answer. And so he tells them to stand while he obtains an answer. In this, he certainly went before the Lord in the tent of meeting, and there petitioned Him for clarification concerning the matter at hand.

There is a lesson here for us which is expressed clearly by Paul when he says to “not think beyond what is written.” In other words, the law has been given to Moses. It contains two prescriptions which are not reconcilable without more instruction. And so he goes to obtain that instruction. The same must be true with us, but in a more complete sense. We have the full counsel of God. What it says is our guide. We are not to go beyond that guide, making things up in order to suit our own will. Rather, we are to seek the Lord’s will from His word, and then properly apply it to our lives.

⁹ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

This is the standard formula which is most often seen when the Lord has words of instruction for Moses. It tells us that he did, in fact, go to seek the Lord in the tent of meeting. And there he obtains the answer to the difficulty...

¹⁰ “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or *is* far away on a journey, he may still keep the Lord’s Passover.

Two exceptions are made here. The first is uncleanness, and the second is being on a journey which would hinder the individual from keeping the Passover. Less likely, but still possible, is that the term may be an idiom which is exhaustive in nature. In other words, it would be like saying, “For any great reason you may still keep the Passover.” If this is so, it would still have to be a true reason and not one which merely fit the man’s convenience.

As a side note, the word of this verse translated as “far away” is pointed in the Hebrew text with a dot above it, known as a *puncta extraordinaria*. This is one of only ten such pointings in the Pentateuch. Rabbinical explanations are that the word either doesn’t belong there, or that it means something other than “far away.” The reason for this is that it is not repeated in verse 13. Although the pointing does call attention to the word, the reason it is pointed doesn’t change the fact that the word is there, and that it should be considered as original. If the words of the Lord are exhaustive in nature, then it is even more appropriately stated as “far away.” It is showing that even to the extreme case, the law applies. Regardless, the provision is made, and it is granted for...

¹¹ On the fourteenth day of the second month,

The Passover for one who cannot make the first Passover is to be held exactly one month later. This is the time of the coming of the full moon, and

so it is appropriate that the exact interval of one month is given. The symbolism of the Passover was not to be missed, even down to the condition of the night sky which points – as all other parts of the Passover do – to the work of Christ.

As the moon is full at night, it is on the opposite side of the earth from the sun. When the sun is out, the moon is hidden. In other words, it is impossible to have an eclipse of the sun during a full moon. Thus, the darkness of the earth at the death of Christ was not merely an eclipse at that time. It was a sign to the people that it was not a natural occurrence which darkened the skies that day, but rather a supernatural one which reflected the state of the heavens at the death of the Lord.

11 (con't) at twilight, they may keep it.

Again as before, the words *ben ha'arbayim* or “between the evenings” is given. Though the month is allowed to be changed for the needs of the individual, the symbolism outside of that is to be carefully maintained. The time of day that Christ died on the cross must be maintained, despite the authorized change.

11 (con't) They shall eat it with unleavened bread

And again, the symbolism is maintained. This was not necessary to be stated for observing the Passover at the normal time because it was already given as a precept at the time of the original instructions. However, someone might think, “I am not observing the Passover on its intended day, and so I can modify the dinner to something nummier that I want.” This cannot be. Christ, the Bread of Life, was and is sinless, therefore, there was to be no leaven in the bread eaten by the observer.

Christ is seen in the unleavened bread or *matzah*. Leaven pictures sin. It causes bread to be puffed up, such as man is when filled with pride. And leaven is a species of corruption because it is produced by fermentation. In Christ, there is no sin, and in Christ, there is no corruption. The Passover meal was to picture that the people were participating in Christ, just as we are to now. This is explained by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5. There, he explicitly ties leaven to sin, and how we are to live in Christ just as He is –

“Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? ⁷ Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.” 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

The feast Paul is speaking of here is the fulfilled feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread. It does not mean that we are to actually observe the Passover, but that we are to come to Christ and live out our lives for Him.

¹¹ (con't) **and bitter herbs.**

The bitter herbs were a lesson to the Israelites and to us. To Israel, they pictured the bitter bondage that they were about to leave. For us, it is a similar picture. We are to remember the bitterness of our own Egypt, the life of sin that we had once been a part of. It was a land of torture, bondage, and living under the wicked ruler of this world. The bitter herbs signify a memorial of Christ's work leading us out of that sorry place and to the wonders of eternal life with Him. But they more significantly picture the bitterness that He endured in order for us to receive that blessing of true life in Him.

¹² **They shall leave none of it until morning,**

Two reasons for this point to Christ. First, it is to ensure that nobody would keep any bone or other part of the animal as a talisman or memorial. Secondly, it was to ensure nobody else could gather them and use them for profane purposes. Both show that we are to carry with us the sacrifice of Christ, not in idols, but in our hearts and in who we are. His is also not a sacrifice which can be used by others for their own profane purposes. There is one sacrifice of Christ, and it is only for the people of God to be carried internally. We are to honor and revere the God who gave us this great Lamb and who has redeemed us through His death.

^{12 (con't)} **nor break one of its bones.**

The Passover lamb of Israel was the type made to correspond to the Antitype found in Christ. The fulfillment of this picture is found anticipating Christ in Psalm 34:20, and it is then realized in John 19 which tells of Him on the cross –

“For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not *one* of His bones shall be broken.’” John 19:36

He died prior to the need for the soldiers to break His bones in order to expedite His death. This was anticipated each year in the observance of the Passover by Israel.

^{12 (con't)} **According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.**

The word “ordinances” is incorrect. The Hebrew reads, *ke-kal khuqat ha'pesakh*, or “According to all the ordinance of the Passover.” It is singular, and thus a unified whole. No part of the many ordinances was to be dropped out, but all were to be observed alike. In other words, there are other commands within the law of the Passover which the Lord did not specify. Instead, He highlighted these and then expands on that by

essentially telling them, “These and all things which have already been instructed.”

Later Jewish commentators say that the feast of Unleavened Bread was not observed here, and that it was not necessary to put leaven out of the house. However, this shows that to be incorrect. It was a part of the Passover feast, and it was certainly observed. In fact, the departure from Sinai, as recorded in Numbers 10, occurs on the twentieth day of the second month. That gave sufficient time for those who observed the Little Passover, to also observe Unleavened Bread.

Each of the details given here has been to ensure that the people would not think of changing any of the symbolism of the first Passover. Whether observed in the first month or the second, it was to have the exact same observances, looking forward to the exact same fulfillment in Christ. There was to be no less solemnity regardless of when it was observed.

¹³ But the man who *is* clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the Lord at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.

Verse 10 says, “If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or *is* far away on a journey.” That is being repeated now to show that the Passover observance was absolutely mandatory for those who were able to attend. There was to be no tolerance for any who could observe it and simply wanted to put it off until later. The appointed time was set because it is the same day that Christ died on the cross. An exception was only made for those who were incapable of participating in the observance, but only as clearly specified.

For such a person who refused, he was to be cut off from among his people. The explanation of that is given in the final words, “that man shall bear his sin.” He was to be executed, and his sin would remain unatoned for.

***14 ‘And if a stranger dwells among you, and would keep the Lord’s Passover, he must do so according to the rite of the Passover and according to its ceremony; you shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and the native of the land.’”**

These words are a close repeat of what is stated in Exodus 12. In essence, if someone were to keep the Passover, they were to first meet the requirements outlined there, and then they were to be automatically incorporated into the body of Israel. Here is how it is said there –

“And when a stranger dwells with you *and wants* to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. ⁴⁹One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.” Exodus 12:48, 49

Two of the three signs of truly being an Israelite are given here, Passover observance and circumcision. The third sign, that of Sabbath observance, would go along with this after accepting the first two. The words of Exodus 12 say that if he agrees to these things, he shall be as an *ezrakh*, or a native of the land. The word comes from *zarakh*, meaning native, or home-grown. From that time forward, the stranger was to be counted as Israel. In his Passover observance, he was then bound to the same statute of the Passover as any other.

It is a picture of faith in Christ. A native who did not observe the Passover was to be cut off. He was demonstrating no affiliation with Christ. However, a foreigner who did observe was to be counted as native of Israel, sharing in its commonwealth. Such is the relationship of those who are in Christ. Paul shows as much in Romans. In the end, it all comes down to a matter of the

heart. The physical pictures and requirements of the law only point to spiritual truths in Christ.

We cannot rely on externals to get us to heaven. We can only rely on Christ, whom all of these things we keep seeing pictures. He is the fulfillment of everything we see, and in Him is the embodiment of this otherwise impossible law. But the Lord is gracious enough to give us all second chances, even if we fail at first. The lesson of Hezekiah which we brought up at the beginning of the sermon shows us this.

The people had failed to observe the Passover at its appointed time, and for reasons not allowed under the law, and yet the Lord still heard them and responded by accepting them. This is the marvel of God in Christ. Yes, there are types and pictures which point to Him, but they cannot completely reveal the magnificence of the mercy and grace of God toward truly repentant sinners.

God is not a cosmic pushover, but He will not refuse the cries of one who turns to Him, even if it is later than was originally intended. His love, grace, and mercy go beyond the rigid walls of the law, even to the furthest extent of the human soul willing to turn to Him in faith that He will respond. Let us then accept this premise, and let us not think that we have gone beyond His ability to forgive us. If we are still alive, we haven't. Call on Christ and because He is the Lord's Passover, He will be your Passover too.

Closing Verse: "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1:13, 14

Next Week: Numbers 9:15-23 *How are we obedient to the word? By...* (Keeping the Charge of the Lord) (17th Numbers sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. It may seem at times as if you are lost in a desert, wandering aimlessly. But the Lord is there, carefully leading you to the Land of Promise. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Lord's Passover

Now the Lord spoke to Moses

In the Wilderness of Sinai; words he was relaying

In the first month of the second year

After they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying:

“Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time

On the fourteenth day of this month, so to you I submit

At twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time

According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it

So Moses told the children of Israel

That they should keep the Passover; so he did to them tell

And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day

Of the first month, at twilight, in the Wilderness of Sinai

According to all that the Lord commanded Moses

So the children of Israel did, by and by

Now there were certain men

Who were defiled by a human corpse, to their dismay

So that they could not keep on that day the Passover

And they came before Moses and Aaron that day
And those men said to him
“We became defiled by a human corpse, as the Lord to us did tell
Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the Lord
At its appointed time among the children of Israel?”
And Moses said to them
In order for this issue to see through
“Stand still, that I may hear
What the Lord will command concerning you
Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying
These words to him He was then relaying

“Speak to the children of Israel, saying:
‘If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean
Because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey
He may still keep the Lord’s Passover, as will now be seen
On the fourteenth day of the second month
At twilight, they may keep it
They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs
So to you these things I do submit
They shall leave none of it until morning
Nor break one of its bones, to these rules they shall commit
According to all the ordinances of the Passover
They shall keep it
But the man who is clean and is not on a journey
-----and ceases to keep the Passover

That same person shall be cut off from among his people

-----that guy shall be done in

Because he did not bring the offering of the Lord

At its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin

'And if a stranger dwells among you

And would keep the Lord's Passover, as detailed by Me

He must do so according to the rite of the Passover

And according to its ceremony

You shall have one ordinance; so you are to understand

Both for the stranger and the native of the land

Lord God, we are even now in a wilderness

And we are wanting to be led by You

Without You to direct, our lives would be a mess

And so be our guide, O God; You who are faithful and true

We long for the water in this barren land

May it flow forth from the Rock, our souls to satisfy

Give us this refreshing, spiritual hand

And may we take it, and to our lives daily it apply

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone

We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise

Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown

Hallelujah we shall sing to you for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...