

Numbers 9: 1-14

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[0 : 00] Numbers chapter 9 verses 1 through 14. Now let's put this into context because we need to understand it accurately because there's this phrase here. Well let's read the text and then we'll put it into context, okay?

The Word of God says, Thus the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Now let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. On the fourteenth day of this month at twilight you shall observe it at its appointed time.

You shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances. So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover. They observed the Passover in the first month on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight in the wilderness of Sinai according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses.

So the sons of Israel did. But there were some men who were unclean because of the dead person so that they could not observe Passover on that day. So they came before Moses and Aaron on that day.

Those men said to Moses, Though we are unclean because of the dead person, why are we restrained from presenting the offering of the Lord at its appointed time among the sons of Israel? Moses therefore said to them, Wait, and I will listen to what the Lord will command concerning you.

[1 : 16] Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the sons of Israel saying, If any one of you or your generations become unclean because of a dead person or is on a distant journey, he may however observe the Passover to the Lord.

In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight they shall observe it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it until morning nor break a bone of it. According to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it. But the man who is clean and is not on a journey and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people, for he did not present the offering of the Lord at its appointed time.

That man will bear his sin. If an alien sojourns among you and observes the Passover to the Lord according to the statute of the Passover and according to its ordinances, so he shall do.

You shall have one statute, both for the alien and for the native of the land. Numbers 9 verses 1 through 14. I want you to see this evening an observation of freedom.

[2 : 19] The observation of freedom. The observing of the Passover, the sons of Israel. This is the first annual observation of the Passover. It would be the second keeping of the Passover.

The first one being the day of their exodus from Egypt. We remember the Passover was initiated or began as God was preparing for the death angel to go throughout Egypt and to slay the firstborn of the Egyptians.

And he had the Israelite nation take the blood of the lamb and put it over the doorpost of their houses so that the death angel would pass over the house. And they were to eat their meal in haste with their sandals on their feet and their loins girded up ready to go.

And they left immediately following this event. So this was the beginning. This is the first annual observation of it or the first time they observe it as God commanded them to do as they left Egypt because God called them to have this continuous ongoing observation of their freedom.

Every part of the Passover has a great symbolic reference which we will get to in just a moment. Now what you need to understand to get it in its context is that Numbers 9 has this same phrase.

[3 : 32] It is the first month of the second year after they came out of or after they have come out of the land of Egypt. If you go back to Numbers 7, Numbers 7 says that these things happened after they had come out of Egypt.

It says then the leaders, let me find it. Now on the day that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings and altar and utensils. When did

he complete the tabernacle?

It was found in the book of Exodus. At the end of the book of Exodus. Now I'm not asking you to turn around a lot. What I want you to know is that the events that transpire in Numbers 7, 8, and 9 verses 1 through 14 precede and date the things that happen or are recorded in Numbers chapter 1 through Numbers chapter 6.

Okay? Now I know that kind of messes with us a little bit. But let's put it in chronological order so that we can understand it. At the end of the book of Exodus, Moses completes the tabernacle. And he sets up the tabernacle. And the tabernacle is erected. And the Shekinah glory of God fills the tabernacle. And that is the beginning of the second year. Or the beginning after they had come out.

[4 : 38] A year had transpired. They had built everything that was supposed to be in there. He erects the tabernacle. They're still at Mount Sinai. They were camping out there a year, right? He completes it. The Shekinah glory of God comes in.

As soon as the Shekinah glory of God comes in, then the people begin to do what is recorded for us in Numbers chapter 7. That is, the leaders begin to bring their offerings of dedication. And they begin to bring the oxen and the carts that the Levites were given.

And then the events that are recorded in Numbers chapter 8 happen. That is, that God sets apart the tribe of Levi to minister in the tabernacle, to do the work. And then the very next thing that happens, the very next thing that transpires, is the events recorded for us, which we have read tonight.

Numbers chapter 9, verses 1 through 14. And that they observe the Lord's Passover. Now, after the completion of the tabernacle, the dedication of the tabernacle, the setting aside of the tribe of Levi, the observance of the Passover, Passover, then Moses counts the people, numbers the people, establishes the camp of the people, and then they do what happens in Numbers 9, verses 15 and following.

They begin to leave. That's why we're breaking up Numbers 9 a little bit, because the first 14 verses tell us what happened. And then if we were to read it chronologically, we'd have to go back, read Numbers 1 through 6, the things that happened in the rest of that month, and then read what starts happening in Numbers 9, 15, they begin to move.

[5 : 58] So what I want you to see, why did I say all that? To put it in context, they observe their freedom before God ever commands him to count how many people are there. Okay? Now, why did Moses not write it like that?

Some people believe that the reason he did not write it like that is because in the construction or his leading of the Spirit, he is leading up to the most important things. So he starts with the counting of the people, and then he starts with the numbering of the tribes and how the tribes are to count, and then he goes to the tribe of Levi, and then he goes to the offerings of the leaders, and then he goes to the observance of the Passover.

He's building up to the most important events. Now, I'm going to give you a secret to the book of Numbers, and it's something that we have seen repeated for us in the first nine chapters and something that will not continue throughout this because it is much like the book of Judges.

When you read the book of Judges, the book of Judges is a spiral. It starts out pretty good, and it very quickly begins to spiral downward. I don't know if you realize that or not. As you read the book of Judges, things are degrading.

Things are going downhill really quick. And then until you get to the end of the book of Judges when it says, In those days there was no king in the land of Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes. My personal interpretation of the book of Judges is that the book of Judges mimics for us the occupations or what is going on in this world.

[7 : 16] Man starts out pretty good because in Judges it starts out with the righteous people who came in with Joshua, and it ends with there was no king in the land of Israel. Every man did what was right in his own eyes. So it starts out in obedience, and it ends in complete rebellion.

This world started out in man living in obedience and will end in man living in complete rebellion. What we have in the book of Numbers is we are very quickly introduced to the absolute obedience of the nation of Israel.

They are doing everything commanded them to do. At the base of Mount Sinai, they are obeying him completely. Now, we do not have to read very far.

We do not have to know a lot of church history to realize this, or not biblical history, I mean. It doesn't take long because they take a few days' journey, and they get to Kadesh Barnea, and they look in the heavens and the land, and they say, Ah, we can't do this, and they begin to live in rebellion.

The book of Numbers begins with a listing of the absolute obedience of the nation, and it ends with the absolute disarray and disobedience of the nation.

[8 : 21] And it's showing how they degraded. The turning point in this, hopefully you'll see by the end of the night, is this observation here, the observation of the Passover.

Passover is they realize with a renewed vigor their freedom. I almost called this, entitled this message, a celebration of freedom, but I realized in studying and contemplating this, it really is not a celebration, it's an observation.

It becomes, for the nation of Israel, and I know I'm giving a long introduction before we get into it, but stay with me if you will, okay? The Passover was to be an observation. That is, that we stop, we be still, and we observe what God has done.

We are, not we, but the Jewish people were to eat their meal in haste. They were not to break any bone of the lamb. It was to be a spotless, perfect lamb, which they had observed for seven days prior to the slaying of that lamb.

That is, they were to be intimately acquainted with it. They were to eat bitter herbs that would remind them of the bitterness of their slavery. They were to eat unleavened bread that would remind them that they had to leave in haste, and that all uncleanness must be put aside from them.

[9 : 30] It wasn't really a celebration, it was an observation. They did a lot of things. I remember one time when we were down at Normandy, we had a gentleman come in, a Messianic Jew, that is, a Jewish individual who had come to Christ, who came in and went over the Passover meal with us.

And there's not much in that meal other than the lamb that is very appealing to eat. It wasn't intended to taste good, because it was to remind you that your freedom costs something.

All right? It wasn't supposed to be tasteful, it was supposed to be observant. God did something.

What happens in the nation is that it becomes a celebration. And it becomes more of a festival than just a reminder, much like Christmas and Easter in our own time.

More than a reminder, it becomes just a celebration. Should we celebrate Easter? Sure. But it should be by way of observing that empty tomb, right? And observing what has happened. And so we lead into that with the text that we have before us.

So we see here in this observation, I want you to see just four things from this text. Okay? Four things we see this. Number one, there is a recognition. There is a recognition.

[10 : 46] It says, and then the Lord spoke to Moses. At this particular time, after the tabernacle was completed, after the Shekinah glory of God filled the tabernacle, after the leaders gave of the dedication offering, after the Levites had been set aside.

All these things, by the way, is in perfect timing because God always works in perfect timing. The Lord speaks to Moses and says, Now, now let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time, on the 14th day of the month, at twilight.

You shall observe it at its appointed time. You shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances. The first thing we recognize is this is a direct response to a command of the Lord.

Now, this is the Lord, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, which is Yahweh. Right? This is the covenant name of God. So, this is covenant God commanding them to observe this festival, to observe this event called Passover.

He said, now is the time to do it. He had kept them there long enough that their annual celebration or their annual observation would be at that place. They would have time to stop.

[11 : 54] We see and we recognize that God is commanding them to do it. And we recognize that everything that God is commanding them has a purpose. Just like we said, no bone was to be broken on the lamb that was slain.

Why? God said, be careful not to break any bones. Because we recognize that's pointing to the lamb who's hanging on the cross, that no bones would be broken.

We recognize that in all of this, this was to be a reminder, a very vivid reminder of what God had done for them and what God was going to do for all mankind.

Every command God gives his people to observe throughout scripture is always pointing to those two things, what he has done and what he is going to do.

Every one of the sacrifices given in the sacrificial system was not just a reminder of God forgiving them. It was a reminder of what God was going to do in forgiving them. Every festival that God puts before his people, the festival of lights, the festival of, you know, the palm branches, there's all this festival of booths, the festival of trumpets, all these things are giving to remind them of what God had done, but also to remind them of what God is going to do.

[13:08] It is a recognition that God is in control and God is moving things ahead and God is moving things to their perfect end. And we see this here. It says, so Moses, verse four, so Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover here and notice their complete total obedience.

They observed the Passover in the first month, on the 14th day of the month, at twilight in the wilderness of Sinai, according to all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did. May we never fail to recognize this, that throughout the first nine chapters of the book of Numbers, and even when we get into chapter 10, at least the first half of chapter 10, we acknowledge that everything God commanded them to do, they did.

This is literally a mountaintop experience. Now, we know that this obedience is coming on the heels of probably one of their greatest acts of disobedience, and that is the building of the golden calf, right?

When Moses tarried up on the hill and they didn't know where they were, he was on Mount Sinai, there's 40 days and he had the golden calf and he came down. But then there was also the slaying of the nation where he called the people from the tribe of Levi to go back and forth throughout the nation and to slay everyone his brother.

[14:22] And there was this great, so there was this fear of the Lord that was falling upon the camp. And there was the shame that God had, that they felt because of their disobedience and their desire for God to be with them.

If you just put it all in the context, God says, I'm gonna let you go, but I'm not gonna go with you. And Moses is like, oh, we're not gonna go without you, oh Lord. You have to go with me. I will not go without you. And then as they hang out there and they do what God told them to do and they're seeing God's faithfulness, they're seeing God's goodness, they're in the bubble for a year right there at Mount Sinai and they're not having any problem living in obedience.

Because here's the thing we recognize, it's not hard to obey in here. It's hard to obey in the wilderness out there, right? Obedience is really easy in this bubble.

I mean, I don't know if you've picked that up or not, but for a year they hung out at the Mount of the Lord and there was no battles, there was no terror, there was no pain other than that that was going on inside their camp.

There was nobody ridiculing them, there was nobody mocking them, there was nobody attacking them, there was nobody opposing them. God had them there and they were living in obedience. They were doing everything God told them to do.

[15:34] It's gonna change the moment they step out away from Mount Sinai. But we recognize here that they observed this because God commanded them to and they wanted to.

They had a desire to obey and that is worth acknowledging. As a matter of fact, that great desire to obey leads us to the second thing and that is the request or a request that was made.

Because it says they observed it, but there were a couple who couldn't do it because verse six says, but there were some men who were unclean because of the dead person. Now, I don't know who the dead person, but it literally means the soul of a dead man.

It must have been someone in particular, but there was someone who had died and they had to take the body and go bury the body outside the camp and because of all of the laws and all the regulations which God had given to them in the book of Leviticus, they were then pronounced unclean.

And since they were unclean, they could not come before God in worship and they could not come before God with the Passover and they could not bring a sacrifice until after an appointed and allotted amount of time. So here is the request that is made.

[16:35] They so wanted to observe the Passover in obedience to what God had commanded them. They said, Aaron and Moses, this just isn't fair. What should we do? So it says, so they could not observe the Passover on that day.

So they came before Moses and Aaron on that day. Those men said to him, though we are unclean because of the dead person, why are we restrained from presenting the offering of the Lord at his appointed time among the sons of Israel?

Now, this is the first annual observation of this, which means that this is new territory, right? This is the first time Moses or Aaron is confronted with this question.

And we have, there are a lot of things in church leadership, pastoral leadership. They point to the book of Exodus quite a bit. They point to the man Moses quite a bit in church leadership and pastoral leadership because this is a great example.

Moses is a great example of a leader, even though he fails at times. Moses often is a great example of a leader. And we see this here. He is faced with a new question. And rather than Moses going, well, I think we should.

[17 : 35] Moses does what every individual ought to do. Moses therefore said to them, wait. It's okay to wait every now and then. It's a hard thing. It's a hard word, right? Moses says, wait.

And I will listen to what the Lord will command concerning you. So here's the request. The request is we want to obey. We want to follow, but we can't because we're considered unclean. There's an individual who died.

We had to take care of that individual. We had to do our due diligence and our duty. And we had to, we had to fulfill our obligations here. But why does that keep us from fulfilling our obligation of obedience to God? And what we're amazed at is how much they desire to obey him, how much they desire to, to worship him through this observation.

And they go to Moses with this request. And Moses does the only thing that anyone should ever do. It says, okay, that's valid, but let's just wait. Because rather than giving my opinion and my interpretation on the subject, let us see what God has to say concerning you.

Because we need to be careful how quickly we move forward into uncharted territory without a clear leading and clear word from the Lord. So Moses says, wait. Let's see what it is God has.

[18 : 41] So the recognition is that the people did what God commanded them to do. The request is, God, what should we do if we are restrained from keeping it? How can we move forward in obedience when there are other obligations placed upon us?

And Moses does what we should do because oftentimes when God is calling us to obey him, we are faced with new territory and we have to wait and see what the Lord says concerning us.

And Moses was not afraid to wait because he met with the Lord, right? He would go to the tent of meeting and God would speak to him as a man speaks face to face and he would have interactions with him. He says, I know God's got an answer to this.

By the way, any question, any request we may have, we know God's got an answer to it. The problem is that we often have to wait to hear what his answer is to that. So Moses tells them to wait. Now, the Lord does answer that because it tells us in verse 9, when the Lord spoke, then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the sons of Israel saying, if any one of you or your generation, so God is setting a standard here.

[19 : 43] Moses is not gonna have to come back with this question in the future because now this territory, this new territory has been traversed and we do not have to ask this question again because God is setting a standard.

If any one of you or your generation becomes unclean because of a dead person or is on a distant journey, he may however observe the Passover to the Lord. In the second month, on the 14th day at twilight, he shall observe it, they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

So here we see that God is giving a standard. Verse 12 says, they shall leave none of it until morning nor break a bone of it according to all the statutes of the Passover, they shall observe it. So here's the answer God gives.

God says, okay, if there is a valid restriction upon you from observing the Passover at its appointed time, then you can observe it one month later.

God is giving opportunity. Let's move that forward a number of years because there seems to be, this Friday will be Good Friday, right?

[20 : 49] So Good Friday has been historically recognized as being the day of Jesus' crucifixion, Sunday being the day of his resurrection.

There's always these great Bible studies if we really want to get real deep and say, well, that doesn't add up because Jesus says, just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three

nights, so will the Son of Man be in the belly of the earth three days and three nights.

And if you go Friday to Sunday, that's not three days and three nights. Some people say, well, that doesn't, how can it be Friday? Now, I don't want to make anybody upset. I'm not trying to offend anybody, but the question is, how does that work?

And then the other question would be, how did Jesus and his disciples eat the Passover, but yet Jesus was slain at the same time the Passover lamb was slain? Now, that's something we find in Scripture, right?

Because it says that the Pharisees would not go into the praetorium because they did not want to be unclean so that they may keep the Passover. It also very clearly says that Jesus was slain at the same time the Passover lambs were being slain.

[21 : 52] Yet we know the Last Supper was a Passover supper. And we wonder why. Well, same principle we have here. Because of the great influx of Jewish people of that day coming from outside of Jerusalem, the Passover had to be eaten within the walls of Jerusalem, had to be eaten there to rightfully observe it.

This is why Jesus commanded them to go into the city and to find a room prepared for them. That was kind of the confines. And because of the great influx of people coming from across the whole Roman Empire, the city of Jerusalem, most Bible scholars believe, would never hold that many people.

So there seemed to be back-to-back days of observation for the Passover because it's the only way the city would have ever been able to hold that amount of people.

So it is, at least, historically possible for Jesus to have had a Passover meal with his disciples the whole time understanding he was the true Passover lamb that was going to be slain on the day of Passover.

Now, to answer the Friday question, I don't know. Just to be honest with you, I don't know. And that's okay. But we do know that he fulfilled completely because of this standard that God is setting before, that if one is constrained geographically, he may observe that Passover at another time.

[23 : 21] Here he sets the standard as being a month later. So God answers the request. This leads us to the third thing, which is the restriction. There is a restriction on this observation, and we need to pay attention to that because verse 13 and 14 give us the restrictions that God lays out.

He says, But the man who is clean and is not on a journey and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people, for he did not present the offering of the Lord at its appointed time.

What is he saying is, Just because I am making an allowance for some to observe it at a different time does not mean you get to choose when you observe it. Right?

You do not have the freedom, Jewish people, to choose the day, if you say, Well, last year, so-and-so observed it on the 14th day of the second month, and I find that a more convenient time for me.

I'm kind of busy on the first month of every year, so I'm going to wait until the second month to observe the Passover. The Lord says, You can't do that. You do not have the freedom to choose when to obey. The only time you could do it on the second month is if there was something beyond your ability or beyond your reach that kept you from obeying.

[24 : 35] God wanted them to walk in perfect obedience, but he was not giving them the opportunity to choose when they obeyed. He was just giving them the opportunity to fulfill their observation of that, and to keep them, he was opening the door in case they were kept away from it or restricted from observing it because of something that came upon them.

He did not say that you could do it whenever you wanted to because he says the man who was clean and was not on a journey did not have the right to choose, Well, I'll just wait until the second month. As God says, If it is within your power to obey it when you are called to obey it, then you have to obey it then because if you do not walk with incomplete obedience when you can, then you will be cut off from your people, and he says, And you will bear your own sins.

Just as we find in the New Testament where it says, To him who has the ability and the power to do good and does not do good, to him it is sin. Because when God gives the opportunity to walk in obedience, we do not have the right to choose to postpone that obedience until a more convenient time.

God placed restrictions here and says it has to be a very unique set of circumstances. Verse 14 says, If an alien, that is a non-Jewish individual, sojourns among you and observes the Passover to

the Lord according to the statute of the Passover and according to its ordinances, so he shall do. You shall have one statute both for you and the alien and for the native of the land. What is he saying here? The other restriction is this. You're not just welcome to come in however you want to. You say, Well, I'm not a Jewish individual. I can come in uncircumcised.

[26 : 07] I can eat however I want to. God says, If you want to observe the Passover to me, then you have to observe it as everyone else does. There is one statute that is you had to be circumcised.

You had to do it this way, this manner, eat this food. Why is God doing this? Because God is a welcoming God. We see this throughout the Old Testament. There's always this mixed multitude with them.

That's why God's always referring to the aliens. He's not referring to, you know, big-eyed green or gray people, right? He's referring to the aliens who are non-Jewish people. He's always referring to those outside of the nation because he knows that others will be drawn to him.

As a matter of fact, that's what the Jewish nation was supposed to be, the people who drew others to him. But what he is saying is, Whosoever will may come, but they're going to come on my terms. That's important. Because the God of the Old Testament says you have to come in a particular way, just like the God of the New Testament, because he is the same God, says you can only come one way.

[27 : 10] No man comes to the Father yet through the Son. And whosoever will may come, but they have to come through Jesus Christ. The invitation and the opportunity to observe it is there, but the restriction ensures that you only come in one particular way.

And if you do not come in that way, then you have no right, no part, no parcel in that observation. God says it is the same standard or the same statute across the board. So here's the recognition, here's the request, here's the restriction.

Now, as we read this, we close with this fourth and final thing, and it's the reality. This reality that we glean from this. This is, according to the first verse, the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt.

The first month of the second year. They had been free for one month in one year. Or actually, just one year. This was the beginning of the second year.

Here is the sad reality. The nation of Israel does not observe the Passover again until Joshua leads the people to observe it after he has led them into the promised land.

[28 : 26] 39 years later. They observe it here. The next observation of the Passover is found when Joshua takes them into the promised land.

They're circumcised, therefore cleansed, because no uncircumcised male may eat of the Passover. And one aspect of the disobedience of the nation is while they're in the wilderness, they did not circumcise their male children.

So Joshua leads them to be circumcised, and the very first thing they do in the promised land is they observe the Passover. While they were desirous to obey here, the reality is this is a short-lived ambition.

Because it is easy, it is easy to begin with heartfelt obedience and worship and a heartfelt desire to live in faithful obedience and yet fall into a disobedient discontentment when God puts us in the wilderness.

The sad reality is that for those 20 years and old and upward, this was the only time they observed the Passover. Because they die, having never observed it again.

[29 : 44] Because they bore their own sin. We see this, and we are reminded that the New Testament tells us these things were written for our instruction, for our benefit, that we may be reminded, as Paul says, that he who thinks he stands would be careful to ensure he does not fall.

look how excited they are to obey here and be reminded that as God leads them, they never obey again. We must be diligent to lead our lives in a direct observation of the freedom we've been given for his glory and his glory alone.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for this night. God, thank you for the opportunity we have been given. Lord, may we be constantly reminded of the freedom you offer, the gift of salvation, and Lord, may we be moved to walk in obedience because of it.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[32 : 34] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.