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BIBLE STUDY

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**“KEEPING PASSOVER AT**

**THE APPOINTED SEASON”**

**Numbers 9:1-23**

***Numbers 9:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,"***

***Numbers 9:2 "Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season."***

This episode concludes the section relating events that took place before the census of 1:1. This gives a specific time, which precedes much that we have already been reading. Passover is to celebrate the night the Hebrews were spared from the loss of their firstborn in Egypt. Death passed over the houses that had the blood of a lamb over the door. At the very same time every year, they were to remember that night, and be thankful to God. The passover had been made an ordinance forever, but we do not read where they kept it during their wilderness wanderings. All of this was a type and shadow of our passover Lamb {Jesus Christ}.

***I Corinthians 5:7 "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:"***

***I Corinthians 5:8 "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth."***

***Numbers 9:3 "In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it."***

The law did not leave any room for excuses for not keeping the passover. Notice {at even}. This passover was a shadow of the great passover, when the Lamb of God shed His blood for all mankind. The Jewish day began at approximately 6 in the evening and continued to 6 the next evening. This is how Jesus ate passover with His disciples just after 6. He was captured and tried during the night. At 9 A.M. in the morning, He was Crucified. At 3 that afternoon, He commanded His Spirit to leave His body. He was the Passover Lamb before 6 on the very same day He had eaten with the disciples. All of these things happened between 6 P.M. and 6 P.M. He was even in the tomb before 6 P.M. This day is a day God had set aside for this purpose. To vary the day, is to disbelieve. This 14th day in their first month is very similar to our April. Our date varies because the Jews month changes with the full moon.

***Numbers 9:4 "And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover."***

***Numbers 9:5 "And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel."***

That very first passover should be fresh in their minds. They should remember well the passover which brought them new life. Moses tells the people to keep passover. God underscored the importance of the Passover by commanding Moses to have Israel observe this festival at its appointed time on the fourteenth day of [the first] month at twilight. The first Passover was celebrated prior to the exodus from Egypt. It was through the events of the Passover that the Lord delivered his people from slavery. So it was appropriate to celebrate it again in the first month of the nation’s second year out from Egypt. This was the first remembrance of that passover. They did as Moses commanded.

***Numbers 9:6 "And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day:"***

***Numbers 9:7 "And those men said unto him, We [are] defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel?"***

The issue at stake was what to do with certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man. Could they celebrate passover? There were some Israelites who had been disqualified from participating in the Passover on the appointed day because of their contact with a human corpse. Such contact brought spiritual defilement on them. They came to Moses to ask, “Why should we be excluded from presenting the Lord’s offering at its appointed time”? Many believe the two men to be Mishael and Elizaphan, who in obedience to Moses had just recently buried Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:4). Those who touched a dead body were considered unclean for seven days. They had been out of the camp, because of their uncleanness. They did the right thing, coming to inquire what they should do.

***Numbers 9:8 "And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you."***

***Numbers 9:9 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"***

***Numbers 9:10 "Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or [be] in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the Passover unto the LORD."***

***Numbers 9:11 "The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, [and] eat it with unleavened bread and bitter [herbs]."***

It appears, there had been no ordinance pertaining to this specific thing at this time. This was only the second Passover, so Moses had no precedent from which to answer them. So he instructed them to wait while he went before the Lord to see what he would command about the matter. Moses inquired of God, what should be done. When Moses inquired of the LORD, He answered him immediately. The answer is “yes,” but one month later. God’s answer was gracious and provided an ordinance for future generations. Those in a similar situation could wait a month and observe the Passover in the second month, on the fourteenth day at twilight, still keeping all of the required regulations. They wouldn’t have to miss out. Even these things of separation do not exempt a person from keeping passover. The handling of this situation set a pattern for generations to come. They were setting a precedent. The only adjustment God made for them, was a one-month delay of observing. The very same requirements, of unleavened bread and bitter herbs, are to be eaten.

***Numbers 9:12 "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it."***

This symbolizes the body of the Lord Jesus. Jesus had no broken bones, so the bones were not to be broken in this sacrifice. Every aspect of the passover was to be kept, but one month later.

***Exodus 12:46 "In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house; neither shall ye break a bone thereof."***

***John 19:36 "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."***

***Numbers 9:13 "But the man that [is] clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin."***

Then God dealt with two further cases that Moses didn’t anticipate. The first concerned an Israelite who simply skipped the Passover. But it is added that if the man . . . is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, he shall be cut off. It is a threat of sudden death at the hands of God.

***Hebrews 10:28 "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:"***

***Hebrews 10:29 "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"***

That person was to be cut off from his people, bearing the consequences of his sin, which would have meant banishment or death. Interestingly, in the New Testament era, similar mistreatment of the Lord’s Supper by the Corinthians resulted in sickness or death. The person that would do such a thing as this is, in effect, denying God. This is the basis of their lives. Those who do not observe this in remembrance of what God did for them, are truly not His. The blessings are not for him. This is like denying Christ, and the great sacrifice He made for us. The way to life is through the blood of Jesus.

***Numbers 9:14 "And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land."***

The second case dealt with an alien among the Israelites who wanted to observe the Passover. Such a person was permitted to do so, as long as it was done according to the Passover statute and its ordinances. Aliens who wanted to become followers of the Lord were to be given the same privilege as native Israelites in this case. This is the same thing as the church. If a person desires to take communion with you, he must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Communion" is a remembrance of His shedding His blood and giving His body, that we might be saved.

***Exodus 12:48 "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will 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 one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof."***

***Exodus 12:49 "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you."***

***1 Corinthians 11:28-30***

***28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.***

***29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.***

***30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.***

***Numbers 9:15 "And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, [namely], the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning."***

***Numbers 9:16 "So it was alway: the cloud covered it [by day], and the appearance of fire by night."***

The Israelites had an unmistakable divine GPS guiding them during their entire time in the wilderness, and God’s guidance was always reliable. They were guided by the Lord’s cloud that covered the tabernacle. As long as God's children were in the wilderness, His presence remained with them day and night. The fire and the smoke were an outward sign to let the people know that God was with them. The presence of the LORD was in the smoke. This is the very same fire that was in the middle of the wheel in Ezekiel.

***Deuteronomy 5:24 "And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth."***

***Hebrews 12:29 "For our God [is] a consuming fire."***

***Exodus 13:21 "And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:"***

***Ezekiel 10:2 “And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight.”***

***Numbers 9:17 "And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents."***

***Numbers 9:18 "At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents."***

When the cloud hovered low over the tabernacle, the Israelites remained in camp; when the cloud lifted, the Israelites broke camp and followed the cloud until it stopped again over a new location. They were led of God. It would be so much better for Christians today, if we would realize that the Spirit of God will lead us now, if we will follow. God never changes. We are the ones that change. The cloud would rise, so that the entire group could see, and follow. When it was time for them to stop and set the tabernacle up, the cloud would descend upon the spot. It left no doubt, what the wishes of God were.

***Numbers 9:19 "And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not."***

***Numbers 9:20 "And [so] it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed."***

No matter how long or short a stay between those journeys, Moses recorded that the people carried out the Lord’s requirement and did not set out until he told them to move. It appears, that no one questioned the leading of the cloud and fire. It was apparent enough to all of them that this was God leading them. They had actually heard the voice of God from the mountain when He first spoke the 10 commandments. It had frightened them so badly, they asked Moses to speak to God for them. This cloud and fire {visible to all} reassured them of God's presence. When the cloud stopped, it was time for them to stop. The ordering of the march was not from Moses, but God. This causes me to believe God would rest them from this desert journey a time, and then carry them, again.

***Numbers 9:21 "And [so] it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and [that] the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether [it was] by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed."***

You would think it would be too dark for them to travel by night, but the fire was so bright, it gave light to this near 3 million people. This is not just an ordinary fire, or Light. God is the source of all Light. He could cause as much light as was needed to shine. It would, probably, have been cooler to travel at night. Whatever the reason, they moved when God commanded, night or day.

***Numbers 9:22 "Or [whether it were] two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed."***

It appears, there was no certain number of days they moved, or stayed in one place. If God had a purpose for them staying in one place for over a year, they stayed. One of the most vivid examples of this in the New Testament, was the moving of Paul from place to place. Paul went where God sent him and stayed as long as God wanted him to. Most ministers today follow the guidance of God. They will not go to minister in a place, unless they feel God sent them. They will not stay in a place, if they feel God wants them to leave. The true Christian should make Jesus his Lord, as well as his Saviour. When He is Lord, He controls his moves.

***Numbers 9:23 "At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses."***

The only times they went where the cloud did not lead them, they met with terrible defeat. I say, once more, we should find out what the will of God is for our lives, and then walk in that will. Any other life we lead, will be a failure. They followed the commandments of God spoken through Moses. We must follow the commandments of God. Unfortunately, though, the Israelites as a whole do not obey God much throughout the remainder of the book. A few individuals, including Moses and Aaron, are said later to obey God, but that’s it. From this point forward in Numbers, we will hear mostly grumbling and rumbling coming from the tents of Israel.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What does passover celebrate?
2. Why were the Hebrew firstborn not killed?
3. How long were they to celebrate passover?
4. Who is the Christian's passover Lamb?
5. When was it to be celebrated?
6. To vary the day, is to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Why should the first passover be fresh in their minds.
8. Why were there some men who could not take passover?
9. Many believe the men to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Who had they recently buried?
11. Was this excuse sufficient to exempt them from passover?
12. What did Moses do, when they told him of the matter?
13. When would they take passover?
14. Why was it important that they not break any bone of the passover lamb?
15. Those who refuse to keep passover are, in effect, doing what?
16. He that despiseth Moses' law died without mercy under \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ witnesses.
17. When a stranger practiced passover, what must he do first.
18. "Communion" is a remembrance of what?
19. How did the people know God was in the tabernacle?
20. The cloud covered it by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and the fire by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
21. What will lead the Christians now, if we will follow?
22. Who ordered the march?
23. How often did they move?
24. They went where the cloud \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ them.