

Numbers 9:1–14
The Lord's Covenant Meal

Friday, April 26, 2024 ▫ Read Numbers 9:1–14

Questions from the Scripture text: Who spoke to whom in v1? Where? When? After what? What did He command for whom (v2)? On what day (v3)? At what time? According to what? What did Moses do (v4)? What did the children of Israel do (v5)? On what day? At what time? Where? According to what? What had happened to whom (v6)? What couldn't they do? What did they do on that day? What did they say about themselves (v7)? What did they ask? What does Moses tell them to do (v8)? To wait for what? Who spoke to whom in v9? To whom was he to speak (v10)? What conditions would not prevent keeping Passover? What is the "make-up day" for such cases (v11)? At what time must it be kept? In what manner (v11–12)? Who cannot participate in this make-up day (v13)? What must happen to him instead? Why, what hasn't he done? What must he bear? Whose case does v14 address? What does this sojourning stranger wish to do? How must he then do it (cf. Ex 12:43–49)?

Why does God remind them about the Passover? Numbers 9:1–14 prepares us for the evening sermon on the Lord's Day. In these fourteen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the God of the first Passover is the God of the second, and He requires that it be kept, and that it be kept correctly, by all of His church and only His church.**

The Lord (Jesus!) is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The date in v1 places this event at the time of the raising of the tabernacle (cf. Ex 40:17), a month before the censuses that begin in 1:1. It is connected to the setting up of the tabernacle (cf. 7:1) and Israel's preparedness to depart. In two weeks, it will be exactly a year since the tenth plague and the first Passover. The Lord had commanded that this be kept annually, as the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (cf. Ex 12:14, 17–18), but now He comes in His kindness and gives a reminder in v1–4. He is the One Who has commanded the observance and the manner of keeping it.

As with all of the commanded worship of God, He reminds us in the midst of the worship that He is the same as He was when He commanded it, and that He is the same as He will be when that to which the worship looks forward is finally fulfilled. Passover is reminding them that the God of the plagues and the God of promised land is the One Who has set up His tent in their midst in the wilderness.

Passover also reminds them that they owe their existence to the lamb that was slain to redeem them from death. This is why Heb 13:8 takes this truth about YHWH, held forth in the Passover, and declares it about Jesus Christ, in the context of His own sacrifice, His own altar, and His own Supper (cf. Heb 13:8–10). All the bringings-near that we have seen from Leviticus to this point find their fulfillment in Christ, but this is perhaps the most poignant one of all, as the last of the prophets declares Him to be "the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world" (cf. Jn 1:29), and the book of life is called "the Book of Life of the Lamb Slain" from the foundation of the world (cf. Rev 13:8).

Dear reader, the same Lord and the same Jesus as at the creation, at the Exodus, in the wilderness, at the crucifixion, at the time of Hebrews, and the time of Revelation... this same Lord and Christ is the One to Whom (and in Whom!) you draw near day by day in your secret and household worship, and Lord's Day by Lord's Day in the public worship!

Defiling the Passover or skipping it are cause for excommunication on earth and from heaven. The exactness of the day becomes a difficulty for some who were defiled by a dead body (v6). Shall they be prevented from drawing near to God (v7, "presenting the offering" is literally "bringing near the brought-near thing")? Touching the worship of God, and particularly the Passover, Moses wisely does not decide this himself but waits for special revelation (v8). The Lord's answer is not just for this situation but for their generations (v10) and includes not just those who are put outside the camp by the providence of uncleanness, but after they have come into the land, those who happened to be traveling beyond its borders at the time of the Passover.

God still permits (requires!) that these keep the Passover (v10–12), warning that the "make-up date" of the fourteenth day of the second month does NOT leave the day up to preference. Someone who is not prevented by providence from observing on the original date is to be excommunicated (v13).

This has significant implications for the importance of assembling as a church now, under Christ's high-priesthood. God forbids the forsaking of the assembling of ourselves together (cf. Heb 10:25), even as He refers to Christian worship and the assemblies of the church as the fulfillment of the observation of Passover. "Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed," and now we must keep the feast by keeping ourselves clean of the leaven of sin, living unleavened lives of sincerity and truth (cf. 1Cor 5:6–8). There, too, in 1Cor 5, those who defile the feast are to be excommunicated (cf. Ex 12:15).

Taking Ex 12:15 with Num 9:13, we see that those who absent themselves from the commanded worship are to be subject to excommunication, just as much as those who are present but defiled. The passive "shall be cut off" reminds us that what the church does on earth reflects something that God Himself does from heaven. And, in fact, the Lord was doing this at the time, in Corinth, even though (because?) they had been failing to exercise church discipline in connection with the Supper (cf. 1Cor 11:29–32).

Church membership is required for taking the Passover. Finally, the Lord reminds them that "church-membership" is required for Passover participation. By concluding with v14, He reminds them of how He had concluded Ex 12, enabling a stranger to participate if he fully converted, and his household came into Israel under one of the tribes (cf. Ex 12:43–49). One was not admitted to the Passover simply by desiring to keep it to YHWH (cf. Ex 12:48). He had to join the congregation and receive the covenant sign (cf. Ex 12:44, 47, 48).

How are you keeping yourself clean from the leaven of sin? When are you tempted to skip church, even when you're not really providentially prevented? Of what church are you a member?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for granting unto us to come near to You in Christ. Please grant that by Your Spirit's work, we would keep a clean conscience before You, and that we would not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Please grant to Your church to take the purity of Your congregations seriously, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP15 "Within Your Tent, Who Will Reside" or TPH196 "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Numbers, 9 verses 1 through 14. These are God's words. Now, you always 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, let the children of Israel, keep the Passover at its appointed time.

On the 14th day of this month, at Twilight. These shall keep it and it's a point of time according to all its rights and ceremonies you shall keep it. So, Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover. And they kept the Passover on the 14th day of the first month of Twilight.

In the wilderness of Sinai. According to all that Yahweh commanded Moses So, the children of Israel did. Now, there were certain men who were defiled by human corpse. So that they could not keep the Passover on that day. And they came before Moses and Aaron that day. And Those men said to him, we became defiled by a human corpse.

Are we kept from presenting the offering of Yahweh at its appointed time among the children of Israel? And Moses said to them stand, still that I may hear what Yahweh will command. Concerning you. Then you always spoke to Moses saying. Speak to the children of Israel saying. If any one of you or your posterity is unclean, Because of a corpse or as far away on a journey.

He may still keep Yahweh's Passover. On the 14th day of the second month at Twilight. They may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They

shall leave none of it until morning. More break, one of its bones. According to all the ordinances, Of the Passover, they shall keep it.

But the man who is clean and is not on attorney and ceases to keep the Passover. That person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he did not bring the offering of Yahweh. At its appointed time, that man shall bear his sin. And if a stranger dwells among you and would keep yahweh's Passover, He must do.

So according to the right of the Passover and according to its ceremony, You shall have one ordinance both for the stranger. And for the native, Of the land. So far the reading of God's inspired. And Aaron twerk. So, the Tabernacle was completed and consecrated. The first day. Uh, the first month of the second year, And now that it has been raised up.

They are ready to have it as the center of the Feast of unleavened bread. And you know, of course that the Feast of unleavened bread is initiated by the Passover. So the Lord in his Mercy gives Moses this reminder, That they are to keep the Passover. It's been a year since they kept the Passover.

Uh, in Egypt, Exodus 12. And so, the very next one that comes Uh, even though the Lord has given them instruction, The very first one the very next one that comes the Lord gives them a reminder. Uh, in his Mercy. And so, They are to keep the Passover and they do.

According to what was instructed? In Exodus chapter 12. It is. Reminding them. That the God who? Uh, delivered them from Egypt and that Mighty way. And the plagues culminating in the tenth plague on the night of the first Passover and delivering them out of the land of Egypt. The God to whom they were instructed to keep Passover when they came into the land is the God who is with them now.

In the wilderness at Sinai and who will be departing with them as they are about to hear when they're given instruction for departing. And this is one of the great things that the Lord does for us. Every day when we come to worship him as a family, and especially every week when we come, To worship Him in the assembly.

He reminds us. That he is the same God. Uh, whom we see interacting with his people. And so many events in the history. Of his people. Uh, in the scriptures, he is the same God. He will be in the last day when we have come into the the fullness of that, which Christ has earned for us.

And in the same power and the same Glory as then in the past and as then in the future, He is to us today in our house. This very God is the one. Uh, with whom we walk and Fellowship in our home day by day. This very God is the one.

To whom We Gather in Christ by faith. Through the worship that has been given us on the Lord's day. Uh, the worship that God designed for us and commanded us in the Lord's day assemblies. And so that is a big part of what he's reminding them and teaching them here that he is still that God that he was and he is already that God that he will be And that here they are in another year.

The first month of another year, And there is You know, there are the new ways by which he has given them to come to him. The Tabernacle is brand new, the Ironic priesthood is brand new. The dedicated Levites for The service. Of the Tabernacle the labor that frees, the aaronic priesthood to do their Duties and worship leadership.

As we heard about last week, all that stuff is brand new but he's the same God. And even when these things are obsoleted in Christ, he will be The same God. Now, difficulty arises. Uh, with these men who have been defiled, Perhaps someone died suddenly near them or perhaps they were the ones who had to bury.

The person who had died. Um, but they are ceremonially unclean. And they. They have been prevented, of course. They have to be outside the camp and Um, observe the washing and And come back, Etc. And so, They could not keep the Passover on that day verse 6 says, And they want to know why.

They cannot bring near the drawing near the coming near. Um, In the English of our verse 7, it says, why are we kept from presenting? And that word is the word for causing to draw near? The offering, which is the noun for the thing which is brought near. And so, why are we kept from bringing near the brought near thing?

Of Yahweh at its appointed time, among the children of Israel. They understand how great a thing this is. Uh that God has given them the way by which we come near to him. And they haven't been able. To participate. So, Moses does not. Take upon himself, either to say, go ahead and participate or to say, Well, that's That's the regulations that's tough.

Maybe next year. Moses, and his humility. Uh tells them to stand still and as he waits upon the offer to command concerning them, And the very next verse verse 9, Yahweh spoke to Moses, And the Lord gives the instruction. And he gives instruction that is not just now but for the future so he says if any one of you or your posterity or descendants, your seed is unclean.

Because of a corpse and we see especially that future Generations are in consideration because he also says, or is far away on a journey that is he is outside the boundaries of Israel. I mean right now, the, you know, all of Israel is gathered at At Sinai, in this newly arranged, Around the Tabernacle.

And so a far away, J. Would just be outside the camp as these these men have had to be because of their ceremonial uncleanness but the day is coming, when the Lord will have settled them in the land and if you were ceremonially unclean, you would not have to go outside the boundaries of Israel.

And so, he adds to the regulation that which is, especially for. Once, Israel is in the land, And has the boundaries of the nation. And he, he gives them an accommodation. Uh, neither are they to partake in the wrong way? Nor are they to ignore? Partaking. And so, If they're unclean, they certainly must not defile the Passover of the Lord by taking in an unclean condition.

However, Those who are clean and those who are not far away. He says, if they fail to keep the Passover that they will be, they are to be cut off. From among the people. In other words, to put it pretty plainly. Missing. You don't have a good reason. As grounds for excommunication.

Uh, and so In, uh, First Corinthians chapter 5. There is the reminder that we have to do both since Christ. Our Passover is sacrificed And since the Feast of the Lord, now comes every single week. Uh, and there being the Feast of the Lord's day at the very least and probably Uh considering First Corinthians 11, the Feast of the Lord's supper it is all the more necessary to carry out.

Church discipline for the church as a whole, and for each believer to keep short accounts with God. So that we don't have a defiled conscience. So that, we maintain that Holiness and the Apostle there in First Corinthians 5 uses this language. He says, Christ Our Passover is sacrificed so it's time to get the leaven of sin out of your house.

You have to keep it in the right way. And so, we see here in Numbers Chapter 9, Uh, that If someone was To violate, keep it in the wrong way. They were to be cut off from the people. But, if someone He was not on a long journey outside the boundaries of Israel.

And was not. Uh, By the enforcement. Of some censure. Kept from gathering with the people. That if they failed to keep what the Lord had given, And that they were to be excommunicated that were to be cut off. From among the people. In fact. Uh, although it is implied here.

The, the people themselves were To do this cutting off. Some form of excommunication. It leaves open. What? We also see in First Corinthians 11, Uh, that those who are coming to the feast in the wrong way. Uh without properly Discerning the body of Christ coming to take their own supper in their way rather than the Lord's Supper in his way.

Uh, you remember the Lord was cutting off. From among them. Uh, people who did this many were ill and some had died. Some had fallen asleep in the Lord and he was chastening that congregation. So this is very serious in Numbers chapter 9, and it continues to be very serious in the Church of Jesus Christ.

It is an ongoing reality and regulation. And so we see that. Missing. Missing the drawing near to God. In Christ through that which Declares to us. His sacrifice as the lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Uh, Uh, something that God responds to Um, With very serious penalty, indeed.

The Ox communication that Um, performed on Earth was joined. That, which the Lord would do also from Heaven as this continues today. When the Lord teaches us about, Excommunication for instance, in Matthew 18, warning, that that, which is done on Earth. According to the Lord Jesus's words, Is the church being brought into line which that which has been done.

Uh, in And yet the Passover included not just The corporate worship and the initiation of the Feast of unleavened bread of the people as a whole, but it was very much a household observance, as well. Each of them was to observe it as a house and It's probably implied here.

When it says, according to all the ordinances that it's observed, As a house. And if the household is too small for one lamb, you can get two households together for that lamb that here, if the head of the household is ceremonially unclean the whole household must wait. Uh, then and perhaps, even if it's not just the head of the household that if anyone in the household is ceremonially unclean.

They would keep it together because that was part of the regulation. And so, the Lord adds Uh the reminder in verse 14 about the so stranger, who sojourns among them now he had given that instruction in Exodus chapter 12, verses 43 through 49. Um, that not only the slave who was bought with money.

Um, And wanted to be part of the household in order to partake of the Passover. And therefore, had to be circumcised in order to become a full-fledged member of the household, but that any stranger who wanted to become a part of Israel could circumcise himself and his household and become a household in one of the tribes of Israel that they could convert as it were.

And this was very important in Exodus chapter 12, Because, A mixed multitude came out of Egypt with Israel as we read there. And so Among this mixed multitude would be many of these houses that That would convert in order to take the Passover unto Yahweh. And then it also looks forward, of course to When Israel was in the land and they would have Sojourners, who came and dwelt among them strangers, who came and sojourned among them as resident aliens and had the option then of actually converting and becoming Israelites.

By that circumcision by joining the tribe. Of. Who's in whose region, in whose land, they dwelt? And the Lord reminds them. That he has made. Provision. That households could be added even to the Old Testament Church that it wasn't merely an ethnic church it was a covenantal Church even then So there were strangers, who could be Um, added to the people by taking the Covenant sign and Devoting themselves to the Lord and becoming Israelites.

And then there were Israelites who would be put out of the people. Because they did not participate in Drawing Near to God. In the way. That the Lord has commanded and so let us see that our God.

And so, let us see that our God is the same today as he was then.

He is the same today as he will be. In the last day. And he is the God whose church draws near to him in Christ. And therefore, since Christ Our Passover Lamb is sacrificed. Let us be sure that we never miss the Lord's Day Assembly. And the Lord's Day worship and the Lord's supper and the Lord's Day worship unless Providence.

Positively prevents us from doing so. But let us also be sure. That we are keeping short accounts with got And dealing with our sin by laying hold of Christ and being cleansed by him. Who has figured to us, not only in the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, but also in the washings, Let's ask him to help us.

Our gracious. God and our heavenly father, we pray that You would Grant the ministry of your spirit, to us by your son, that you would give us Faith. To be sure about our life with you and our interaction with you. Day by day and week by week. That you are the same God as we saw at Sinai.

You're the same God that we shall see. At the last day, you are the same God. As the day that Christ, the Lamb of God. Uh, was slain to take away the sins. Of the world to take away our sins. So give us that hearty confidence in you. And grant that we would see, How your worship assemblies on the Lord's days?

Or the Fulfillment of this Passover. So that we do not. I'll keep now, annual feasts but this glorious weekly Feast. But do not let us Lord, take the weekly Feast for granted or lightly. Because it comes so frequently in your mercy to us. But help us to live in such a way that hates And when we do send Grant that we would deal with it seriously in our own lives and we pray for the church.

That you would grant that the church would deal with it seriously in the church's life. So that we might rightly draw near to you in Jesus. Thank you that you give us. To draw near to you in Jesus. And whose name, we ask it. Amen.