

## **Second Baptist Church of Doylestown**

### **Bible Study Notes**

**9-29-21**

### **Numbers 9**

#### **The First Passover In The Wilderness - Verses 1-5**

**9** The LORD spoke to Moses in the Desert of Sinai in the first month of the second year after they came out of Egypt. He said, <sup>2</sup> "Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. <sup>3</sup> Celebrate it at the appointed time, at twilight on the fourteenth day of this month, in accordance with all its rules and regulations." <sup>4</sup> So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover, <sup>5</sup> and they did so in the Desert of Sinai at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD commanded Moses.

**9:2** This is the second Passover. The first was instituted in Egypt and recorded in Exodus 12. Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread together made up an eight-day religious observance (Leviticus 23:5-6) commemorating the Israelites' escape from slavery in Egypt by God's power.

#### **The Case Of The Unclean Men: Should They Keep Passover? - Verses 6-14**

<sup>6</sup> But some of them could not celebrate the Passover on that day because they were ceremonially unclean on account of a dead body. So they came to Moses and Aaron that same day <sup>7</sup> and said to Moses, "We have become unclean because of a dead body, but why should we be kept from presenting the LORD's offering with the other Israelites at the appointed time?" <sup>8</sup> Moses answered them, "Wait until I find out what the LORD commands concerning you." <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>10</sup> "Tell the Israelites: 'When any of you or your descendants are unclean because of a dead body or are away on a journey, they are still to celebrate the LORD's Passover, <sup>11</sup> but they are to do it on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight. They are to eat the lamb, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. <sup>12</sup> They must not leave any of it till morning or break any of its bones. When they celebrate the Passover, they must follow all the regulations. <sup>13</sup> But if anyone who is ceremonially clean and not on a journey fails to celebrate the Passover, they must be cut off from their people for not presenting the LORD's offering at the appointed time. They will bear the consequences of their sin. <sup>14</sup> "A foreigner residing among you is also to celebrate the LORD's Passover in accordance with its rules and regulations. You must have the same regulations for both the foreigner and the native-born."

**9:6-12** Several men came to Moses because of the predicament they faced: They were "unclean" because of contact with a dead body (or entering the home of a person who had died), and this prevented them from participating in the Passover meal. Notice that God did not adjust the requirements of the Passover. The standards of holiness were maintained, and the men were not allowed to participate. But God did make an exception and allowed the men to celebrate the

Passover at a later date. This upheld the sacred requirements while allowing the men to participate in the feast—a duty for all Israelite men. Sometimes we face predicaments where the most obvious solution might cause us to compromise God's standards. Like Moses, we should use wisdom and prayer to reach a workable solution.

**9:14** God said regarding foreigners and the Passover, "You must have the same regulations for both the foreigner and the native-born." This principle designed for foreigners in Israel doesn't mean we mandate our religion to our neighbors, but in our homes we should live out our convictions. When we have guests in our homes, whether visitors or family, we may be tempted to change or water down our Christian practices. If family devotions, attending church, and mealtime prayers are your practices, don't change these when you have guests. Holidays such as Christmas and Easter should not be reduced to nothing more than society's expressions. Further, you should maintain your family standards even when guests visit—for example, unmarried couples who are guests should not be allowed to sleep together. Maintain your Christian standards and principles. You never know what influence you may have on the guests in your home.

### **Guidance By The Cloud By Day And The Fire By Night - Verses 15-23**

**15** On the day the tabernacle, the tent of the covenant law, was set up, the cloud covered it. From evening till morning the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire. **16** That is how it continued to be; the cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire. **17** Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped. **18** At the LORD's command the Israelites set out, and at his command they encamped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. **19** When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a long time, the Israelites obeyed the LORD's order and did not set out. **20** Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle only a few days; at the LORD's command they would encamp, and then at his command they would set out. **21** Sometimes the cloud stayed only from evening till morning, and when it lifted in the morning, they set out. Whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud lifted, they set out. **22** Whether the cloud stayed over the tabernacle for two days or a month or a year, the Israelites would remain in camp and not set out; but when it lifted, they would set out. **23** At the LORD's command they encamped, and at the LORD's command they set out. They obeyed the LORD's order, in accordance with his command through Moses.

**9:15** The cloud is used elsewhere in Scripture to convey something of the mysterious, awe-inspiring presence of God. He spoke from it when he gave the Ten Commandments at Sinai (Exodus 19:9). Christ was covered with a cloud at his transfiguration (Luke 9:34), and he disappeared into a cloud at the Ascension (Acts 1:9).

**9:15-22** A pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night guided and protected the Israelites as they traveled across the wilderness. Some have said this pillar may have been a burning bowl of pitch whose smoke was visible during the day and whose fire could be seen at night. However, a bowl of pitch would not have lifted itself up and moved ahead of the people, and the Bible is clear that the cloud and fire moved in accordance with the will of God. The cloud and the fire were not merely natural phenomena; they were the vehicle of God's presence and the visible evidence of his moving and directing his people.

**9:23** The Israelites traveled and camped as God guided. When you follow God's guidance, you know you are where God wants you, whether you're moving or staying in one place. You are physically somewhere right now. Instead of praying, "God, what do you want me to do next?" ask, "God, what do you want me to do while I'm right here?" Direction from God is not just for your next big move. He has a purpose in placing you where you are right now. Begin to understand God's purpose for your life by discovering what he wants you to do now!