

Numbers 9

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Hope you're in Numbers chapter number 9. That's where I'm headed. I hope to meet you there as soon as possible.

We've already read it. We've read all 23 verses of it. And we're getting to the Passover. Chapter 7, they got their wagons, they got their U-Haul stuff, they got loaded up.

People were giving just whatever the need was. They gave sacrificially, but they just said, whatever you need to make it happen, we're going to give and we're going to meet. And in the last chapter, we saw that God separated a group of people called the Levites.

We saw the measure in which they just gave their lives for the service of the Lord. And in those first four verses, they were reminded, or we are reminded as we read it, of the purpose that we give sacrificially and we live sacrificially.

It's because it makes much of Jesus and magnifies Him, which is the greatest cause that anybody should live for. And now we're in Numbers chapter number 9. So the children of Israel, they've left Egypt.

[0 : 57] They've accepted a covenant with God. They've rested near Sinai for a full year. They've now prepared to move on to conquer Canaan. They took a census. They've organized an army. They've organized their priests.

They've purified the camp. They've dedicated certain people and offerings. And now they're ready to celebrate their first Passover since Egypt. We are a year out from the first Passover and the exodus out of Egypt.

And do you remember where the first Passover was? The first Passover happened before they went through the Red Sea as they're waiting there. And it was a symbol. It was showing them of the things that are going to come.

And they sacrificed the lamb and the blood was put upon the door. And then they escaped. And then they cross over the Red Sea. And now they've been a year out. And it appears that God is reminding them of this.

This commitment they are to make this at the same time each year. So this is the first time that they're having it looking back upon it. For now it's a time of remembrance. That it was fulfilled.

[1 : 55] When they sat down at the Passover the first time, God had not yet fulfilled the symbolism of the Passover and exodus event. And it was only going to occur. Now they look back and they see what it was. And it should cause for a time of celebration.

So in the first three verses here, we find that God invites them. The Lord spoke in the Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. The first month of the second year if they come out of the land of Egypt. And let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season.

And it seems here that he's having to remind them of it. You would think they would know it's been a year out. It's time to celebrate what God's done. But he says, I want you to do this. He invited them back to the dinner table.

They've come here. And it says, it's come. Time to have this time with me again. And let's come. Let's celebrate the redemption for you. Come celebrate the relationship that we have one another.

What a gracious invitation. From the last time until this time, they had already begun worshipping a golden calf. And what a forbearing and forgiving God we have. I want to ask you to raise your hand in here because you might be talking about somebody else in this room.

[2 : 58] But have you ever had company over for dinner? And when they left, you thought, they're never coming back to our houses. All right? I've been to many of your homes one time before. I've never been twice.

I might be that guy for you. You don't tell some people to make themselves at home because you don't know how they act at home. All right? Say, make yourself at my home. All right? Act like we act at the house. Well, there's God.

And he extends this to them. And he offers this Passover to them before they go to the Red Sea. And then you would think a year later he wouldn't want to commune with them. He'd want nothing to do with them.

And he invites them back to this time of worship because we're reminded that when they're there, they're in captivity. And when Moses goes to Pharaoh, the two things that God says he wants, he says, let my people go so that they may serve me.

Let my people go so they may worship me. That he wanted time with them. That's what Moses was saying. Let us go and spend time. Let's go commune with our God. And that's what they were seeking permission for.

[3 : 53] And that's what they got. And they've been invited back to worship. Regardless of the snakes and the sins of this week, you're invited to commune with him. And so, no matter we think about coming back and worshipping God and we talk about having a past and then we're excited that God would use people like Levi.

But you know, even in the short cycle, you failed God between this Sunday and next Sunday, he is going to welcome you back to worship him. You failed God between right now and tomorrow morning, he's going to welcome you back to him.

Because in the story of the prodigal son, he is that faithful father. The emphasis is on that prodigal son, but shouldn't it be upon that faithful father who waited there and he says, come back to me.

Children of Israel, it's been a year. We said we were going to do this once a year. Why don't you come back? It's time to commune. We should be excited about that. And he remains faithful here to us. Verses 4 and 5, we learn something about duty and delight.

And Moses spake unto the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover. And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, even in the wilderness of Sinai, according to all that the Lord commanded. So did they, the children of Israel.

[5 : 00] And so once again, we're being reminded in the book of Numbers, you're going to see that a lot, that they're doing exactly what God told them to do. I want to remind you in here that duty or obligation is not opposed to delight.

In the Christian life, I've often said that we need to move from duty or discipline to delight. I've said that a lot, thinking about, you know, you have this discipline in your life to get up in the reed or to pray or to do the things that are right.

And we should move on from discipline on to just enjoying it and delight. But the problem with that, it makes discipline or duty seem like a lesser thing and the light were a thing to be preferred above duty.

But they're both there. It was time to go to the Passover. God says, the point in time, so go and do it. And in their doing that, they found the delight. Isaac Watts says it like this.

We sung one of his songs this morning. Did anybody Google to see if I was right or not? As a teenager, he told his dad that he wasn't satisfied with the singing. He said, worshiping God ought to be the most exciting thing in the world.

[6 : 02] And the way that people are doing it doesn't bring excitement to it. And so he wrote, I believe, some 600 hymns. And when I surveyed the wondrous cross, it would be the most famous. Well, here's another one, a lesson known.

It's called, praise ye the Lord, tis good to raise. And it says, praise ye the Lord, tis good to raise our hearts and voices in his praise. His nature and his work invite to make this duty our delight.

And one of the reasons that oftentimes we don't ever get to the point of enjoying the Christian life and finding the joy and the delight in it is that we've never done it out of duty and out of discipline, just knowing it's the right thing to do.

And so he says, guys, it's time to come again, and you should make this duty your delight. It's important for us to listen and to wait upon the Lord. Verse 6 and 8, verse number 8 says, And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.

What he's saying there is they said it's an appointed time. Everybody should come to Passover and be involved in this. And so people came to them, and they had some problems.

[7 : 07] They said, I can't come. It might have been they just buried a family member. And because they had touched the dead body, they're now not allowed to be involved in that type of service. And so they come to Moses, and when they do, Moses says, Let me go and speak to God about this.

And so Moses said, Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you. So that's one example where Moses says, Wait upon the Lord. And then in verse number 23, At the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents, And at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed, And they kept the charge of the Lord at the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses.

You see in the first part here that Moses doesn't just give an answer. He says, I must talk to God. They come to him, and they say, We can't make it to this. I have buried. My hands are unclean.

And he doesn't just make up an answer. He says, Stand, stay still for a second. Let me go and talk to God about what's going on. You know that you and I would be in much better shape if we answered questions like that.

If we said, Let us go speak to God and consider what His Word says before we give an answer. Husbands, before we make a decision in our family, Wouldn't it be alright if we just said, Could you just give me some time to pray about that?

[8 : 20] Would you give me some time to look at the principles that ought to be driving the direction of this? When people, your co-workers are asking for advice, And they're talking about stuff, And you just kind of shoot from the hip, And you give them some maybe some Christian cliches, Could you go to them and say, Let's really pray about this together.

Let's say, What does the Lord say about this? And open up the Word of God and show them. Every one of you in here are first responders. You should be EMT workers, Constantly ready to help people.

And wherever you're going, They ought to know that you're the type of person that doesn't run from a problem, But you're going to help them. Which ought to challenge every one of us in here. Not just the students that would be formerly in the training center, Who've been taking a Bible doctrines course the last couple weeks, With Brother John, A handful of people meet on Monday, Other people are involved in the foundations, But every one of you ought to make it the objective of your life, To be a serious student of the Word of God.

First of all, Being that it's through the Word that you get to know God, Which is your desire of your heart. As we've said, We've seen in the Old Testament and the New Testament, They say, We just want a glimpse of you. We just want to see you. How do I see you?

And he says, You men of Galilee, Why stand you gazing? Don't be standing around just looking up. The Bible makes it very clear where we should be looking. So we want to see God. It's in His Word. And then secondly, Because of the job that you've been given as a believer, That you're supposed to help.

[9 : 40] They need somebody there to help them, To give them a reason, To give them, To be able to answer their questions. We should be dedicated to this Word. So let's answer like Moses did. When somebody comes to us, They say, I can't be involved right now.

What should I do? Moses said, Let's go and talk to God. The Passover wasn't every weekend. It was once a year. So we see it's a heavy thing that they're going to miss out on it. And that God made a provision for them.

We'll look at here in a second. And then they waited under the cloud, Because being under the cloud was more important, Than moving forward on their journey. Verses 16 through 22. This cloud reminded them that God was with His people.

It was there at day to shelter them. And then at night there was a fire above them, That would lead them in their way. This cloud is a visible picture, Of God's presence in their lives.

As Jesus will ascend in the clouds, They now have this cloud to be a reminder of them, That God is with them. And the fire cometh to signify, That the comforter has come. We see that cloud, And we see the fire in the New Testament.

[10 : 43] I like how George Mueller put it. You know, The man that ran the orphanages, And he never asked for money. He would write his reports, Of how God took care of him. But he said, The stops of a good man are ordered by the Lord, As well as the steps.

We know that it says there, That the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Something that I tell teenagers quite often, Is that the right man with the right heart, Will take the right steps. He'll end up in the right place, And with the right person.

You don't have to worry about your future spouse. You don't have to worry about, Where God would have you to serve. If you'll take care of your heart, It will make sure that you're taking those right steps, That will lead you into the rest of it. If you can tell the heart of a person, You can tell the direction they're headed in life.

So not does God only take care of the steps of us, But he also takes care of our stops. And you may ask at times, What it is that God is doing. And he always has a purpose.

In Deuteronomy chapter number 8, In verse number 2, This is what God is saying about, What he's going to do with the children of Israel, For those 40 years. And he says in Deuteronomy 8, 2, He says, And thou shalt remember, All the way which the Lord thy God, Let thee these 40 years, In the wilderness.

[11 : 50] To humble thee, And to prove thee, And to know that was in thine heart, Whether thou wouldst keep this commandment, Or no. God had a purpose in these 40 years. I often thought that they were just on a treadmill, Non-stop.

Have you ever looked at a map? Have you ever thought about, How do they spend 40 years in this wilderness? You would think they would accidentally, Run into the promised land, That there's not enough space for them, To keep going.

Because large portions of their time, Was just simply waiting upon the Lord. Because God says, I'm drawing you to me, Before I take you to another place. And so it says here, That he was doing this to humble them.

That he was doing this to prove them. He was doing this to see what was in their hearts. And to see what would, If they would keep the commandments. And every one of us in here, Would say that there's been times in our life, Where we felt like we were waiting.

We didn't know what the next step was. We found that God had put a stop in our lives. And we said, God what is it you're doing? There's so much to be done. There's so much that I personally want to get involved. Do with my life. Why are you having me here, Kind of in a holding pattern right now.

[12 : 53] And we learn that he has a plan in it. He has a purpose. And that he is not forsaking us. The life of the children of Israel, Was a life of daily and hourly dependence. They had to look up for guidance.

There's no landmarks in the wilderness. Okay. There's no go to this place and take a ride. Go down to the kangaroo mart. Turn a ride on whatever road. They just had to follow the Lord.

They had to trust it. So yesterday Ben and I were driving up to the food pantry to meet the other teenagers. And they have a new exit. So I had two GPS's running on my phone.

I had Waze. And I had the one that comes on the phone. And they were contradicting each other. And they were saying to do different things. And so then there was Thatcher who knows a little bit about everything.

He was telling Ben where he thought we should be going. And I told Ben, I said, I'm driving. You take the phone. Tell me what turns to make. So he had the voices going on of the two GPS's.

[13 : 48] He had Thatcher telling some story about aliens. And he had the word to look at. And he was following the directions. I said, Ben, just stay with the written word. Don't listen to any of the other voices.

Just stay with the written word. You can't trust anything else. You've got to stay with it. And the children of Israel, they had no other way of going about finding this. They said, God, if you don't lead us, we don't go anywhere.

We'll have to stay here unless you take us. A few chapters ago, remember that? He said, I'm so fed up with you guys that you're going to go in there, but I'm not coming with you. And they said, Hey, we're stopping. We don't care about getting anywhere.

If you don't go there with us, there's no reason for us to be there. There is no promised land. If there's no communion with you there, and God shows them here that their stops are ordered and that he has a plan.

And then we get down to verse number nine through 13. And we see the provision that is made. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or your posterity shall be unclean by the reason of a dead body or being a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the Passover unto the Lord.

[14 : 53] And the fourteenth day of the second month at even. So what a loving God that we would have. He would say that if you needed to be gone away for this long trip, or if there was some reason there was a death in the family, he said that a provision is made for you.

That one month later, but then he says, But you've got to follow it exactly to the T. That you have to do exactly what was to happen. It is a half version of it. It's the other thing one more time.

And he shows that he is loving and providing here. In verse number 14, he makes a provision. If a stranger shall so join among you, and will keep the Passover unto the Lord according to the ordinance of the Passover, and according to the manner thereof.

And who was those strangers? Those people like you and I, who were not born Jewish, that got involved, that followed. Followed them out of Egypt, and they were there, and God made provision for them as well.

So we see that God has made a provision for them, and he understands. But then he says, But there's another group of people. But if a man is clean, and he's not on a journey, and he forbearth 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 sins.

[16:07] That he would be cut off. So first of all, we see there's a provision for those who unwillingly miss, but we find that those who are willfully missing, that they will be cut off. And I'm reminding you here, that God has never made a covenant with his people based upon performance.

He is not saying that you have to achieve something, but he's saying it's a reflection of their heart. He never made a covenant based upon performance. These people are saved as we are today, which is faith. But what was the fruit in their life that they would see?

It's that they would bring an offering. It's that they would be there. And if you didn't make it on the first month, then you would make it on the second month. And you might say, well, what? Hypothetically, what if there was a person who really loved the Lord, and who wanted to bring the sacrifice, and they couldn't make the first month, and they couldn't make it the second month, and I must believe that that hypothetical situation did not take place, and could not take place, because if not, God would have made a provision for it.

And so if you just said, this thing is flippant, I don't care to bring a sacrifice there, then God says that you'll be cut off from my people, because he brought not the offering of the Lord, in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.

The great offering of the Lord, the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the only way which sin can be put away. And if any man will not bring that, in other words, if he will not believe in Jesus, there is certain doom.

[17:27] So by faith, they were supposed to do something. And if they did not have the faith to do that, then they were cut off from the people. And Moses would have known about this personally. In Exodus chapter number 4, he was told that he was a circumcised son, and because of the dispute there, with his wife, he was unwilling to circumcise his son, and as he's walking, God meets him, and God threatens to take his life.

And he says, you need to obey what you've been given here to do. So Moses would know that. And so we look at it, they were showing a lack of appreciation, for the benefits and the blessings, coming out of redemption, and deliverance from the land of Egypt.

I grew up later in middle school, my family began to go to church, and I went to a church that had about 30 people in it. And on one Sunday afternoon, the pastor asked me if I would stay after, and he helped me prepare, as we would take the Lord's supper together.

And he walked me through everything, that was going to happen that night. And as a teenager, he let me sit there, and be involved in it. And I remember for the first time, knowing what it symbolized, and what it meant, and how it was so moving in my life, to be that remembrance of the cross, and never remembering, having seen it like that before, that it was important, that I should have an appreciation for it.

I remember how much time he took, around making sure that we were holy, and reverent, and talking to me as a teenager, and saying, don't do anything dumb. You know, don't be disrespectful, and the way that we should handle it, because it was so serious.

[18:57] And because I loved the Lord, and I loved the cross, as a teenager, I wanted to honor those things, I would not go about it flippantly. And God tells them, that you should not go about these things flippantly either, because even though it's only a symbol, of a thing that's happened, the thing that happened, was so important.

And so there's a connection, between the Passover, and the Lord's Supper, that the former was a type, and now the latter is a memorial, it's the death of Christ. And so as we make together, and we take the Lord's Supper, it's a memorial, that reminds us of what's happened.

The first time, it was a type of what was going to happen, and now we look back on it, and we see it here, as a memorial. 1 Corinthians chapter number 5, and verse number 7, establishes this connection, and it says there, if you'd like to turn, it's there on the screen, and it says, Purge out therefore the old leaves, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened, for the Christ our Passover, is sacrificed unto us.

For even Christ our Passover, He has sacrificed to us. And we may sing about the Lord's death, as we've done tonight, as we've sung about the cornerstone, we may pray about it, and we may read about it, but we may hear about it, but it's only through that supper, that we show it forth, as we come together.

And so when the church has those times, it's important. Anytime we come together to worship, it's important. But did you see the two different attitudes, that were there? For us the Lord's Supper, is not a sacrament, it's not a means of grace, it's a picture of something, that has happened in the past, that does not add to our salvation, it does not secure it, but it's just a memorial back to it.

[20 : 30] But do you see the two different hearts? It says if you want to be there, and you're not able there, I'm going to make provision for you. And you know it's forsaking, we're told in the New Testament, in the Hebrews, that we ought to be people, that don't forsake one another, we should not forsake.

Which means that missing a service, does not make you a forsaker, of this assembly. That's a heart issue. That there will be times, that something will take you away. It will be a long journey, it will be a trip, it will be something else.

You're on a journey, you go to another place, that does not make you a forsaker. We even find there with Jesus, that when Jesus came into the room, that Thomas was away, doing something else. But his heart was, I want to be there.

And I didn't make it this time, but the next time they get together, I want to be there. Because those are my people, and that's the place where we worship, and we want to be a part of it. And there's another group of people, and he says, you don't even have a heart, to be part of that.

You don't want to be part of it. Don't understand people, who don't want to be around, other believers. I could understand, why somebody might not want to sit in this room, tonight, and hear what I have to say. But I have no idea, why a Christian, would not want to be in a place, where they could study, the word of God, and gather with other people, that worship it.

[21 : 38] And we see that. And we see God talking about that. He's long suffering, he makes provision, but he doesn't have, no tolerance for the heart, that says, I do not want to commune, there with you.

So as we're looking here, we see this importance, of waiting upon the Lord, and knowing that God, has ordained those steps. We see the importance, of looking to God, during those times. And then we see, that there ought to just be, a desire to come to him, and anytime we can get together.

And for us, it's just not the Lord's Supper, but on the first day of each week, we get together, and it's set aside, that we would celebrate, the resurrection. And we say that, around Easter time, that come Sunday, we're going to celebrate, the resurrection, but we don't just do it on Sunday, we do on this Sunday, we do it every Sunday, of the year.

And so in conclusion here, if you say, I really don't know, which way to turn, or which way, or what step to take, I would ask you, are you following the cloud? If so, what is, how do you not see, that this is, a plain command for you?

When they wanted to know, which way to go, they just simply said, follow my presence. They said, what are the next 20 steps, for us to take? He says, I don't want to tell you that, I just want to guide you, into that, daily going.

[22 : 48] And if an Israelite, in the desert, had taken it, into his head, to make some movement, if he wanted to be, independent of Jehovah, if he took him, to move when the cloud, was at rest, or halt while the cloud, was moving, we would see, what the results would be.

You don't just roam around, you don't just go, find your own way, when you're in the wilderness, you need guidance. And we live in a world, that's just the same way. Why would you walk, when he does not walk?

Why would you stop, when he is still walking? Because it's a dangerous life, to live, if you're not following, after Christ. If you're not looking, to him, constantly. Moses said, let me ask God, about that.

He said, where are we going next? Wherever the fire goes, at night we go. Where are we going, during the day? Wherever the cloud goes, at night. So this ought to challenge us, here in this Passover time, as they would look at it, and they would look back, to what God has done, a year later, they were no less, in need of Christ's provision, than they were that time, before going into Egypt.

And sometimes, you're crossing through a Red Sea, and you understand, that you don't walk, unless God's there. But on our daily lives, you should not move forward, without him. And we're reminded of that, here in Numbers, chapter number 9.

[23 : 57] So I just ask you, before I pray, here tonight, how many of you, might recognize, that you're in a place like that? That you just stopped? That you don't understand? Maybe you feel like, you're in a holding pattern, and you say, God, I really like following your steps, but I don't like your stops.

I don't mind walking, while you're walking, but I don't like stopping, while you're stopping. I don't like for you, to leave me here. I want to know, what the answer is, to the question. And his answer is, you have my presence, and look to me, and there's nothing more, that anybody could ever ask for, or need.

Heavenly Father, I thank you, for Numbers 9. I thank you, for the example given. I thank you, for what you did, with the children of Israel, to humble them, because we need to be humbled. I thank you, for what you've done, to make sure, they would follow your commandments, because we need to be tested, to make sure, that we have a conviction, of the follow-up to you.

And I thank you, for what you did, at times, to draw them closer to you. Lord, give us the heart, of your servant Moses, that when we come upon, questions in life, we will follow, in his example, and we will do, as he did, which is to go to you, to find out our next step, to go to you, and get the answers, to the questions, that we have, and those of our friends.

In Jesus name I pray, Amen. This message, was recorded, at Vision Baptist Church, in Alfredo, Georgia. For more information, log on to, www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find, our service times, location, contact information, and more audio, and video recordings.