

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Numbers 9: 1-14

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. Today we will read Numbers chapter 9, verses 1-14.

In Numbers chapters 7 and 8, the time is brought back to the first day of the first month in the second year after the Exodus. Moses raised up the tabernacle and anointed all the objects and utensils in the tabernacle with the holy anointing oil, making them most holy. The glory of God then filled the tabernacle, and He called Moses from the tabernacle. Moses drew near to listen to God's command. God revealed to Moses the ordinances concerning offerings, and He also performed the consecration ceremony for Aaron and his sons for seven consecutive days. On the eighth day, the high priest and the priests began to serve officially.

At the time of their first service, Aaron's eldest son and second son, Nadab and Abihu, were struck down for burning incense with profane fire. Moses immediately summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, from the household of Uzziel in the family of Kohath, as recorded in Leviticus chapter 10 verse 4, to carry the bodies of Nadab and Abihu outside the camp. The high priest Aaron and his remaining two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, had to continue fulfilling the priestly office until the twelfth day of the first month; that is, for five consecutive days after the consecration to the holy office, they had to serve officially.

In Numbers chapter 7, we see why Moses was so strict that the priests could not leave their post just because there was a death in the family. From the first day to the twelfth day of the first month, the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel had to present offerings for the altar. One tribe came each day, and the offerings presented over the twelve days were exactly the same. The priests had to receive the offerings at the entrance of the tabernacle of meeting and offer them on the altar.

Numbers chapter 8 tells us that on the twelfth day of the first month, Moses was to transfer the service in the Holy Place to Aaron and to ordain the tribe of Levi to serve God in the tabernacle in place of the Israelites. The Levites were to become the wave offering that the Israelites offered to God. They were to be separated unto God, and God then gave them as a gift to Aaron and his sons to perform the work of the Israelites in the tabernacle.

We see that Moses led the Israelites for eight and a half months to build the tabernacle according to the blueprint God had revealed on the mountain. After Moses raised up the tabernacle on the first day of the first month, he was extremely busy for twelve consecutive days. In addition to the works described above, Moses also received before God various ordinances concerning worship and service, and he taught the entire congregation of Israel to carefully observe them. These are all recorded in Leviticus.

Verses 1-3: “Now 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: ‘Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it.’”

By the twelfth day of the first month, the priests had begun to serve, the whole house of Israel had already presented their offerings, and the Levites had also been ordained to carry out the affairs of the tabernacle. On the fourteenth day of the first month in the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt, that is, exactly one full year after the Exodus, they were to keep the Passover in the wilderness of Sinai according to the date appointed by God, at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month.

The first Passover was kept in Egypt. God sent the destroying angel to strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, including both man and beast. But because the households of Israel had put the blood of the lamb on the lintel and the doorposts, the destroying angel passed over them, and the firstborn in the households of Israel

were preserved. This manifested the grace of God's redemption. Pharaoh king of Egypt was also willing to let the Israelites leave Egypt because of this matter. The Israelites had originally been slaves in Egypt, but now they were freed from bondage. This manifested the mighty power of God's deliverance.

The Passover caused God's people to receive redemption and to be released from bondage, so that they could come forward to serve God according to God's original ordination. The Israelites found the purpose and meaning of their existence. Therefore, in Exodus 12:14, God says, "So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance."

It is the same with the saints today. We were all originally dead in trespasses and sins, without any hope. Yet because we received the salvation of Jesus Christ, we have already passed out of death into life, and we have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Not only is our living filled with peace and joy, but we have also found the value and purpose of life. Therefore, we should all remember the Passover, for it was on this day that Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross for our sins.

According to the ordinance in Leviticus 23:5-14, after the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be kept for seven consecutive days, typifying that every Christian is willing to live a sinless life throughout his whole life. This does not mean that we no longer sin, but that after we sin, we can, through confession and repentance, apply the precious blood of Christ, so that our sins may be forgiven and we may be as white as snow before God and justified by Him. During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the day after the Sabbath was the Feast of Firstfruits, which was precisely the day Jesus Christ rose from the dead. We also need to keep the Feast of Firstfruits, remembering Christ's resurrection and ascension.

The Israelites kept the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Firstfruits according to the dates appointed by the LORD, once every year. The New Testament saints are even more blessed, because the Lord Jesus kept the Passover with His disciples at the Last Supper. Luke 22:14-17 records that Jesus ate the last

Passover feast with His disciples and told them that He would no longer eat this feast until the kingdom of God came.

Then in Luke 22:19-20, “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.’” We see that the Lord established the bread and the cup to replace the Passover. Therefore, the Lord’s table every Lord’s Day is our remembrance of the Lord as the true Passover Lamb.

The seven consecutive days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread after the Passover remind us to live a holy life for the week, until the next Lord’s Day, when we come again before the Lord to receive the bread and the cup. If we can deal with our offenses and transgressions in a timely way every week, we will be able to wear fine linen, clean and white, and please God.

Verses 4-5: “So Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover. And they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at twilight, in the Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.”

Moses was God’s faithful servant. According to God’s command, at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month in the second year, in the wilderness of Sinai, he led the Israelites to keep the Passover to God. At this time, the whole congregation of Israel had just gone through eight and a half months of building the tabernacle with one heart and one accord, and they had also presented abundant offerings for the altar. At the same time, the priesthood service system of and the Levites had also been properly established. I believe that this first Passover in the wilderness must have been very glorious. The people offered thanksgiving to God and received God’s rich blessing. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, the Israelites did accordingly. This truly is a beautiful picture.

Verses 6-7: “Now there were certain men who were defiled by a 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. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?’”

In this beautiful picture, however, there were some regrets. The imperfection was that certain men had become unclean because they had touched a corpse, and therefore they could not keep the Passover. The Bible does not tell us who they were. But we know that there were at least two men: on the eighth day of the first month, Nadab and Abihu were struck down because they offered profane fire. On that day, Moses immediately commanded their cousins, Mishael and Elzaphan, to carry their bodies outside the camp.

According to Numbers 19:11, “He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days.” Therefore, the days of uncleanness for Mishael and Elzaphan would continue until the fifteenth day of the first month, so they missed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. These people who had touched a corpse came before Moses and Aaron and said: We are unclean because of a corpse and cannot keep the feast with the Israelites on the appointed day, but when we see the other Israelites joyfully keeping the feast, we also very much want to present our offering to God. Why are we being kept from doing so? Is there some other way to make up for it? The desire to present an offering to God is pleasing to God; yet unclean people cannot come before God, for that would offend God. This was truly a dilemma.

Verse 8: “And Moses said to them, ‘Stand still, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you.’”

Moses’ response was truly good. He knew that God delights in people presenting offerings to Him, and he also knew that unclean people cannot come before God. Faced with this dilemma, he did not act on his own initiative, but instructed them

to wait for the moment. He brought the problem before God to see what God would command.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is also a lesson we need to learn. When the saints bring some spiritual questions and we do not know how to handle them, there is nothing shameful about this. We can honestly say that we don't know, and that we must bring the matter before God to pray and inquire. It is better to be slower and wait for God to reveal the answer. God likes us to bring before Him the things we do not know how to handle, and to wait before Him, asking Him to reveal the answer.

Verses 9-10: "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: "If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD's Passover."'"

Moses brought the problem before God. God not only answered Moses' question, but also brought out other situations in which a person might be unable to keep the Passover. God greatly values a person's willingness to keep the feast, because the Passover is a type of Christ's redemption, which is God's plan of redemption determined in eternity. A person's willingness to keep the Passover shows that he understands God's eternal will and is willing to keep it. Besides those who were unclean from touching a corpse and therefore unable to keep the Passover, there were also those who happened to be away on a journey and therefore could not return home to keep the Passover.

Here God raised only one additional situation, but actually opened the way for other non-voluntary factors that could result in a person being unable to keep the feast. Here we see that God truly values a willing heart. For those who are willing in heart but whose outward circumstances do not allow it, God gave a way to make up for it.

Verses 11-12: “On the fourteenth 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, nor break one of its bones. According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it.”

God appointed another date, one month later, at twilight on the fourteenth day of the second month, to keep the Passover. In this way, those who had touched a corpse and were unclean could be cleansed, and those who were away on a journey could return home. On the fourteenth day of the second month, they could keep the feast; God precisely delayed it by one month.

This also indicates that beginning from the first day of the second month, for two consecutive weeks, Moses had to organize the twelve tribes of Israel into an army, assign the details of the division of labor among the priests and the Levites, and also deal with the unclean persons among the Israelites, matters of mutual offense and indebtedness, distrust between husband and wife, and the ordinance of the Nazirite. These are the matters described in Numbers chapters 1 through 6. Apart from the time being delayed by one month, all the other details had to be exactly the same. When they kept the feast, they had to eat unleavened bread, and they had to eat it together with bitter herbs and the Passover lamb.

Typologically speaking, the Passover lamb typifies Christ shedding His blood and giving His life on the cross to accomplish redemption. The unleavened bread typifies man living a holy and sinless life. The bitter herbs typify the painful life of slavery under Satan’s authority before receiving grace. Because the Passover lamb is precisely a type of Jesus Christ, Psalm 34:20 prophesies, “He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken.”

Indeed, John, as an eyewitness, recorded John 19:33 and 36, “But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.” “For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not one of His bones shall be broken.’” This also exactly fulfilled the ordinance God established at the first Passover, namely, that not one bone of the lamb was to be broken.

In addition, none of the Passover feast was to be left until morning. If it could not be finished, it had to be burned with fire. This shows that we must always have a fresh experience of Christ's redemption. Because we are still living in the flesh, it is difficult to avoid sin. Therefore, every Lord's Day when we receive the bread and the cup, we must have a fresh experience of Christ's salvation. Only in this way can more subjective and practical thanksgiving and praise be brought forth. Although this was a supplementary keeping of the Passover at twilight on the fourteenth day of the second month, the ordinance of the Passover still had to be fully observed, and nothing could be changed or reduced.

Verse 13: "But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin."

If a person who was clean and not on a journey delayed and did not keep the Passover, that is, a person who had no proper reason yet did not keep the Passover, that person was to be cut off from among the people of Israel. The Passover was a great grace God gave to the people of Israel. Except for those who had proper reasons and could make it up on the fourteenth day of the second month, all the others had to keep it and present the offering that should be presented. A person who did not keep the feast on the appointed date and did not present the offering had to bear his sin.

Dear brothers and sisters, for the New Testament saints, this means that every Lord's Day we should come to the house of God, remember the Lord by eating the bread and drinking the cup, and offer ourselves as living sacrifices, coordinating with the other saints to serve together. This is our responsibility, and even more, it is our privilege. Do not lightly miss God's grace.

Verse 14: “And if a stranger dwells among you, and would keep the LORD’s Passover, he must do so according to the rite of the Passover and according to its ceremony; you shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and the native of the land.”

If Gentiles were sojourning among the Israelites and were willing to keep the Passover to the LORD, they could keep the feast together with the native-born, and the same ordinance would apply. As the native-born observed it, the sojourner was to observe it in the same way. It turns out that as early as 3,500 years ago, God had already opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles, just as 1 Timothy 2:4 says, “who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” The gospel of Jesus Christ was originally for all people, while the Israelites were specially chosen by God in the Old Testament to become an example to the Gentiles. From among those obedient Israelites, Jesus Christ was to be brought forth as the true Passover Lamb.

Therefore, after Jesus completed redemption and before He resurrected and ascended into heaven, He said to the disciples: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” The most basic message of the gospel is that Jesus Christ is the Passover Lamb who completed redemption for mankind. Whoever is willing to believe will not perish, but have everlasting life.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord Jesus, thank You. You are the Passover Lamb, who gave Your life and shed Your blood for us to accomplish redemption. This matter was already revealed to the Israelites as early as 3,500 years ago. During the Passover, those who had touched a corpse or were away on a journey could make up the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month; even the Gentiles who sojourned among the Israelites, as long as they were willing to keep the feast, could also keep the feast together with the Israelites. This shows that God values our heart: everyone who is willing to receive salvation, God will not leave out even one. Lord, help us to be thankful people. Having received the benefit of salvation, may we be willing to come to God’s house every Lord’s Day, remember the Lord together with the saints, and commit ourselves together in the church. Bless the

church where I am, so that it may bear a beautiful testimony for Jesus Christ. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.