

# “On Your Mark, Get Set...”

## Numbers Chapter 9

In Numbers we learn the hardest lesson of all: To trust God instead of our own reason. Numbers demonstrates that God supplies man with guidance and protection. But man murmurs and complains. God is preparing His people for greatness. We must learn to trust His guidance or we will at best be mediocre.

### Num 9:1 1) At the Start, Remember Me vs 1-5

Thus 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,

- This account in Numbers backs up one month.
- Numbers 1:1 “Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying,”

Num 9:2 "Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time.

Num 9:3 "On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances."

Num 9:4 So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover.

Num 9:5 They observed the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did.

- The Lord, through Numbers, is documenting specific things Israel did to get ready to move out and specific things they did as they were moving.
- Not every day was documented for the 38 year journey but just snapshots here and there. Things that God feels are important for us to understand as we look at these lessons.
- We go back a month to remember that as they journey they remember where it started. At the blood of the lamb. We too need reminding.
- Psalm 51:12 “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation”
- 1 Corinthians 11:25 Communion is a time of remembering “In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”
- There is not an account of Israel keeping the Passover until Joshua 5. It doesn’t mean they didn’t keep it but it may imply that there was a lapse in the wilderness. Joshua 5 certainly tells us that they had not been circumcising for 40 years.

### Num 9:6 2) Passover Provision for the Defiled vs 6-14

But there were some men who were unclean because of the dead person, so that they could not observe Passover on that day; so they came before Moses and Aaron on that day.

Num 9:7 Those men said to him, “Though we are unclean because of the dead person, why are we restrained from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the sons of Israel?”

- Some men, on the day of Passover buried their dead relative or friend. Leviticus 11:31; 19:29; and 21:1 say they become defiled. It doesn’t say they sinned but defiled and that they have to be set outside the camp and fulfill a cleansing ritual.
- Leviticus 7:20 and 22:3 says that if a man is defiled and partakes in the holy things he will be cut off from his people.
- Imagine these men grieving from a loss of a family member. They come to Moses and Aaron and ask great questions.
- Does the Lord put grief on the grieving? They lose their family member AND they lose the opportunity to worship the Lord on Passover? They have to wait another Year?

Num 9:8 Moses therefore said to them, "Wait and I will listen to what the LORD will command concerning you."

- First in uncertainty or unclear direction the answer is WAIT. Secondly LISTEN in Prayer.
- Moses seeks the Lord for this answer. It does not burden God to ask of Him matters that are unclear to us.
  - Tithing when we don't have rent
  - Keeping your commitment when over extended
  - A priest gave David the shewbread when his army was hungry. 1 Samuel 21:3-6

Num 9:9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Num 9:10 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If any one of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a *dead* person, or is on a distant journey, he may, however, observe the Passover to the LORD.

Num 9:11 'In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall observe it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Num 9:12 'They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it.

- God sees the heart of the worshipper.
- He allows provision for the defiled (due to touching a dead person) and a person travelling and cannot get home to celebrate.
- The provision is that they can celebrate one month later but they must keep all the instructions of the Passover just as in the appointed time.

Num 9:13 'But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people, for he did not present the offering of the LORD at its appointed time. That man will bear his sin.

- God knows man so well.
- He knows us that we want to find out how to get out of things.
- There are people who do not avail themselves of those appointed times that God has for man to know and worship Him as well as those times the even benefit man.
- The punishment was severe. Cut off and he bears his own sin.
- In the same manner, we must partake of the Lamb of God - Jesus or we are still in our sin and will be cut off.
- *John 6:53+56 "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. . . . He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."*

Num 9:14 'If an alien sojourns among you and observes the Passover to the LORD, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its ordinance, so he shall do; you shall have one statute, both for the alien and for the native of the land.'

- God even provides for the foreigner whose heart desires to worship him.
- *"A Jew with the purest bloodlines would be cut off if they neglected Passover; the most mongrel gentile would be accepted if they participated in God's Passover."* Guzik

Num 9:15 **3) Cloud and Fire Guide Israel** vs 15-23

Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning.

Num 9:16 So it was continuously; the cloud would cover it *by day*, and the appearance of fire by night.

- In Exodus 40:38-39 we read that the tabernacle was raised. At that time God blessed it with a manifestation of His presence Cloud by day and something that looked like fire at night.
- It was there continuously = the next 38 years
- The image of God in these two elements, show us his provision.
  - Fire - Refines and gives Light in darkness and warmth in the cool of night.
  - Cloud - Shelter from scorching sun.  
Isaiah 25:4 *"For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat"*  
Psalm 121:5+6 *"The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day"*  
In the LORD, we genuinely have it "made in the shade"!

Num 9:17 Whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would then set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp.

Num 9:18 At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped.

- At the "COMMAND OF THE LORD" they would camp or they would go.
- The command was evidenced by the cloud lifting from over the tabernacle and moving. Then they (Israel) would move.
- It is interesting to think about the first time this happened, what chaos that ensued. You know they got better and better at responding to the Lord as the 38 years transpired.
- Also, think we can see the wisdom in following God. But to the man who does not know God, it appears to him foolishness. You go to Church? You read the Bible and it speaks to you? You pray and you say "the Lord told you"?
- Jeremiah 10:23 *"I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps."*
- James 4:13-16 *"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.' Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.' But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil."*
- We look at Israel and we tend to forget the human condition. Here is what really goes on.
  - The Cloud rests on the tabernacle - for days or months. - We struggle with Patience.
  - The Cloud lifts and moves out - We struggle with Procrastination.

Num 9:19 Even when the cloud lingered over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD'S charge and not set out.

Num 9:20 If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the LORD they remained camped. Then according to the command of the LORD they set out.

Num 9:21 If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move out; or *if it remained* in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out.

Num 9:22 Whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out.

Num 9:23 At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out; they kept the LORD'S charge, according to the command of the LORD through Moses.

- Repeated from verse 18 as emphasis. It was by the Lord's command not by the will of Moses or the People.
- This is still the incredible lesson Christians struggle with learning today. Not at are whims or thoughts do we move but only at His command.
- The Christian Life =
  - We were enslaved by sin (Egypt)
  - We receive deliverance by the Blood of the Lamb
  - Communion is set before us as a regular reminder for us.
  - Guided by the Word (cloud) and fire (Holy Spirit) that the world doesn't think is real.
  - Sometimes we are waiting. Sometimes we are very active. But whatever we do, we do at His Command.

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