

# Numbers 9:9-13

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/num/num-9/numbers-99-13/>

*Numbers Chapter 9:9-13 contains the answer to the problem presented in the previous three verses. The issue was that certain men had handled a dead body (making them unclean) and thus were disqualified from celebrating Passover, thus violating the LORD's command. The answer was that the men in this situation could indeed celebrate the Passover. The section included a warning that a person who was clean and could celebrate the Passover and did not do so was guilty and was to be separated from the people.*

The LORD then *spoke to Moses* (v. 9) about his question concerning those who had handled a dead body and were thus not able to celebrate Passover. His response to Moses included two scenarios. The first one was the issue that Moses just presented to Him, that is, *if any one of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a dead person* (v. 10). Though handling a dead body made a person ceremonially unclean, it was not a sin. It was an occasional necessity. This would, of course, have been a common occurrence among the people, so the LORD made accommodation for them.

The LORD then expanded this law to include a second scenario—someone who was *on a distant journey*. The situation in view here was when a person was too far away from Israel to celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. This too would happen regularly, especially later when they inhabited the Promised Land. So, those who fit into either of these scenarios *may, however, observe the Passover to the Lord*.

But they were not allowed to celebrate with those who were clean. Instead of celebrating Passover in the first month of the year as specified in Exodus 12:1 – 6, these people were instructed to keep the Passover *in the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall observe it* (v. 11), exactly one month later. Just as the Levites substituted for the firstborn who were set aside to the LORD, now this later date could be substituted.

As with the regular Passover celebration, *they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs* (v. 12). These items connect Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:8). Also, *they shall leave none of it until morning* (see Exodus 12:10), and they were not allowed to *break a bone of it*, “it” being the sacrificial Passover lamb (see Exodus 12:3, 46). So, they were to celebrate Passover *according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it* (as specified in Exodus 12), just like the celebration the other Israelites had engaged in one month earlier.

[\(To learn more, read our article, “The Original Passover”\)](#)

So, the LORD showed His matchless grace in making provision for those in these situations. Though the separation of the clean from the unclean had to be maintained, the LORD gave His people a way to obey the Law of the Passover.

The LORD then added a warning in verse 13. He said *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* (v. 13). During the tenth plague in Egypt, anyone not observing Passover was killed by the Destroyer (Exodus 12:23). At this time, the person who did not observe the Passover was in great danger because *he did not present the offering of the Lord at its appointed time*. Not celebrating the Passover and the deliverance from slavery in Egypt was an offense against the grace of the LORD their Deliverer.

The person's negligence resulted thus: *that man will bear his sin*. Whether this meant that the person would be executed by the LORD Himself, be sentenced to death, or be excommunicated from the people is not known. However, the consequences were severe because it was very important to celebrate the Passover. It was an annual reminder of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and was not optional.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>10</sup> "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. <sup>11</sup> In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall observe it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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.**