

The Second Passover

Who Can Take It and Why

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Good afternoon to all of you. Hope you had a nice couple days. That is all it was, just Thursday and Friday. Seems like just yesterday, does it not? Hope you are all doing well.

It is common practice in the world that if we miss an appointment, we reschedule it for a later time. We do this probably quite frequently. If the appointment is really important, say to see a doctor, let us say if something has gone very wrong and you want to know what you what you have, or let us say, you need to go to a lawyer for some vital matter, then we make sure that we attend the original appointment and postpone it only for the most serious of reasons. We would certainly try to reschedule an appointment with, let us say, a governor of a state or the president of the nation. That is something we certainly would not want to miss.

And of course, the same holds true for God in spades. Actually, it is so much more important that when we have a scheduled appointment with God that we keep it. God's Sabbath and holy days are recurring periods of time—holy time—that really cannot be rescheduled. They are times when God says, "I will be there. Will you?" And there is only one time to do those things.

But for the most important annual event, the Passover, He makes provision for us to keep it at a later time. If there is a need, if we have *unavoidably*, and I stress that word *unavoidably*, miss keeping it at the regular time. So today I would like to take the remainder of the time to review what is called the Second Passover. It is *very* important. It is so important that we take the Passover that God allows us to take a Second Passover or take the Passover at another time if we *unavoidably* miss it the first time.

Let us begin, please, in II Chronicles the 30th chapter. This is the time of Hezekiah. We will read the first four verses and then we will skip down to verse 13.

II Chronicles 30:1 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, . . .

Now this is very interesting and really kind of shocking because Hezekiah was king over Judah and he had really no authority over Ephraim and Manasseh. But because they were Israel too, he sent letters into Ephraim and Manasseh,

II Chronicles 30:1-4 . . . that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel. For the king and his leaders and all the congregation in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at the regular time [meaning in the first month], because a sufficient number of priests had not sanctified themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem. And the matter pleased the king and all the congregation.

So here it is about the same time that Israel was taken out of the land, just before that time. And here God raises up a godly king, Hezekiah, who after his studies and understanding what God wanted him to do, restored the worship at the Temple. And here he is summoning the entire nation, plus Ephraim and Manasseh in Israel, to keep the Passover. But for this year, it was already too late. It was past the time of the Passover or just about at the time of the Passover. And there were not enough priests sanctified to do all the rites and rituals that needed to be done for the Passover. And for another thing, the letters had not been sent out to everyone to gather them to Jerusalem. So it was decided that they would go ahead and keep it in the second month, the 14th day of the second month.

Please drop down now to verse 13. We will read down through 15.

II Chronicles 30:13-15 Now many people, a very great congregation, assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. [So not only did they keep the Passover at this time in the second month, which by the way is called Iyar, but they also at this time kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month.] They arose and took away the altars

that were in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense altars and cast them into the Brook Kidron. Then they slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought the burnt offerings to the house of the Lord.

Here we find that in this one particular occasion, and it is the only place in the Bible where this is shown to happen, that they kept a Passover in the second month, on the 14th day of the month. And here we find out too that they went ahead and kept the Days of Unleavened Bread in the second month. There is no instruction in the Pentateuch for doing that, but I guess they thought that would be all right. And then you find out later in the chapter that they kept an extra week because it was so uplifting that first week of Unleavened Bread that they went ahead and had a second week. And by this time, they were very tired of Matzos and so they stopped.

But this is a good start, one might say, to a revival and to Hezekiah's reforms.

Now, where did they get this permission to keep a second Passover? That is found in the book of Numbers, chapter 9, verses 1 through 5. We will read the first five verses to set the scene.

Numbers 9:1-5 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. [That is very clear. God wants us to keep it 14th day of the first month, Abib, or Nisan.] On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight [God gets very specific here], you shall keep it at its appointed time. [He just said it three times. You shall keep it at its appointed time, the 14th day of the month at twilight. You shall keep it at the appointed time. He is very specific.] According to all its rites and ceremonies, you shall keep it. [do not add to it, do not take away from it] 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.

That is the fourth time it is mentioned that they kept it on the right day at the right time. Sounds to me as if that is important to God.

So what do we see here? We see the scene being set that Passover should by all means be kept on the evening of the 14th of the first month. We should keep the Passover as God commanded it to be kept with all the rites. Everything that was done should be done at that time.

Now, we will go on to verse 6, and read the next three verses.

Numbers 9:6-8 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?" And Moses said to them, "Stand still, that I may hear what the Lord will command concerning you."

So what we see here is that in a way two of God's laws clashed and these men wanted to know what they should do. They came there on the day of Passover knowing that they were defiled and that that would forbid them from keeping the Passover, but they wanted to keep the Passover. They did not want to skip it because they knew that it said that if they skipped it (I believe that is in Exodus 12:47) there is an intimation there that if they did not keep it, they would be cut off from the people and usually that means a death sentence and they did not want to die. This was something that they could not avoid, this defilement by the dead man, and they wanted to know what God would say about their circumstance. So Moses, as is right and proper, he said, "You know, be still, quiet down, take some of the weight off your feet, have a seat. I'll find out what God wants us to do."

Numbers 9:9-10 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel. . .

It is very interesting that He says "to the children of Israel" because what He is doing is He is commanding a decision, a judgment that was to apply in all cases, not just to these men that had been defiled. So the approach here is,

"Moses, I'm going to give you a judgment that is much wider in scope than just this particular circumstance. This should be able to cover all of these situations for all time."

Numbers 9:10 . . . 'If any one of you or your posterity is unclean because of a dead body or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the Lord's Passover.'

Here we have basically just two legitimate reasons for taking a second Passover. And in a way, what we could say here is that these two reasons represent a broader category of reasons or excuses but they are not awfully broad. They do represent more things than just being defiled by a dead body or being on a journey. But the excuses, the reasons are very limited.

The first category is uncleanness, and in our day this is primarily being sick or diseased. And the second is absence because of an emergency that takes one to a place where no Passover service would be kept. These are rather rigid though, these two, because God wants us to keep the Passover properly on the day He says it should be kept. He does not want us reaching for this excuse for just any old reason. He wants us to make sure that we plan our lives so that we are going to take the first Passover, the proper Passover at the proper time. And this is just for unavoidable things.

The first case, uncleanness or sickness, one must be sick enough to be quarantined because that is what defilement did, it set you apart, it quarantined you to your tent or outside the camp or whatnot so that you could not mingle with others, you could not have fellowship. So there is no excuse for being tired. There is no excuse for being stressed. There is no excuse for having the sniffles or a cough. It is much more important. Even if you would have, let us say, a cold or an allergy or something like that, that you get in here and take the Passover. The Passover, it overrides everything unless you are confined to bed, let us say. And I am being fairly dogmatic on that point because I understand how important the Passover is. And if it is something, let us say (maybe it is a weird way of putting it), but a routine sickness, that should not keep you away from the Passover.

Now, contagion, you would have to think about that. If one should be quarantined, one should be quarantined, and that would be a legitimate

excuse. But if it is something that is just a minor thing, it would be far better to come in and take the Passover because that is what God has commanded. So I would say that if one is confined to bed, then the excuse is legitimate, or one is quarantined away because you have a contagious disease.

In the second case, the verse suggests not just a long journey but an unexpected one, an emergency. You would not plan a vacation around this time. One should be at home during the Passover season if possible. This excuse should not be used much these days. It should not need to be used, at least here in America, because the churches of God are in many cities and the telephone conference call or the Internet stream are available to most. And so there should be an opportunity to attend a Passover service just about anywhere in the United States. There might be problems in other places but I think people in those cases would have made some sort of arrangement to have a tape or some other thing for that time.

What this is talking about is a last-minute thing that would take you away, like say a death in the family or some sort of emergency that you were not aware of what happened until the very last minute, something that would take you away from your regularly, normally scheduled plan to keep the Passover.

So the bottom line here is that the Second Passover should be used only under the direst circumstances and thus it would be a rare thing. But it happens often enough that God made sure that He put the guidelines here for using it. I think it really shows how important the Passover is. That not only does He want us to keep it at the proper time, but if there is unavoidable circumstances where we cannot keep it at the proper time, He says, make sure you take it the next month at that proper time that I will establish here as a second Passover. And I would say that it would be in an extremely rare circumstance where lightning would strike twice so that one would not be able to take the Second Passover as well. So, if such an emergency would come up at the first Passover, it is *very necessary* for us to plan the Second Passover very carefully and let nothing keep us from taking that Second Passover.

Let us go on to verses 11 and 12 here. He tells us the time.

Numbers 9:11-12 "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."

What this basically says is there is only one thing different between the Second Passover and the first Passover and that is the month. Instead of keeping it in Nisan, you keep it in Iyar but it is on the 14th day of the month at twilight. You keep the entire Passover service as you would normally keep it on the first month. Nothing should be left out.

It is very interesting; I will not go into it, but the things that He says that are to be done here: unleavened bread and bitter herbs are to be eaten; they shall leave none of it until morning or break any of its bones. It is very interesting that He would mention those specific things that they should make sure that they do. I will not go into it, but you might want to think about why it was those four specific things that He mentioned, that He says must be done in the Passover. Of course, He is speaking of the Old Covenant Passover here. But it is very interesting to try to look at it from a New Testament standpoint and see why He said that these specific things must be done. So I will leave that to your own study.

The whole ritual should be observed and the only difference should be the month.

Numbers 9:13 "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."

It is very interesting to see how many times in this chapter God says at it appointed time or says exactly when to do it. The first month, 14th day at twilight, second month, 14th day at twilight—at its appointed time. It is about six or seven times that He says that. And usually when God repeats things like that, it is important. So I just wanted to emphasize that, in effect, what God does here is He pronounces a curse on anyone who without excuse does not keep the Passover. And He is particularly talking about here the

first Passover, the one that is on Nisan. If we flippantly or rebelliously or in a careless attitude miss the first Passover, He says there is no second Passover for you and that person should be cut off from the people.

It is very, very serious matter here that He says that such a person should be cut off because what it is basically doing is, a person who would do such a thing is repudiating the covenant and thus repudiating God, rejecting God by saying, I do not want to keep the Passover. It is inconvenient for me or I am not going to do that this year. I have got other things to do, or whatever the excuse happens to be. God says, "If you do not fit these categories, being unclean or sick or how you want to put it, and you're not on a journey, then there is no excuse." It is rather rigid, very rigid, but it is very important.

The Passover is a yearly rededication to the covenant, a reaffirmation of the need of forgiveness, and a recognition of God's deliverance and blessing, among other things. The Passover means an awful lot to us and it should be right at the top of our list of things that we must do at the appointed time each year and that comes right on down to us into the New Covenant.

We will close here in I Corinthians 11, verses 27 through 32. Paul has just reconfirmed to the Corinthians here in verses 23-26 how and when the Passover should be kept.

I Corinthians 11:27-32 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Now, many people have thought that this means that if you do not feel that you are worthy, you should not keep the Passover, but that is not what it is talking about. It is talking about the manner and the attitude in which one takes the Passover. It is very interesting here. Verse 28, "Let a man examine

himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." What we may paraphrase this to say is, "When a man has examined himself, then let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." You are saying we must take the Passover, we should come at it with the understanding of what it is that we are doing and why. And thus we are to examine ourselves, to see the need to examine ourselves, to understand what it is that we are reconfirming and rededicating ourselves to and understanding the great and awesome sacrifice that was done for us.

And so, once we have rehearsed that again and understood that we definitely need this Passover, we should take this Passover. So, in judging ourselves, meaning examining ourselves, we then do not come under the judgment of God and we are once again doing the things that we should be doing as Christians.

I personally know of no one who will be taking the Second Passover this year but I hope this has given you some insight into this rarely used exception. And if someone hearing this needs to take the Second Passover, it would be on the evening of 25 April this year [2002], the 26th being the 14th of Iyar. So I hope that helps.