

THE SPECIAL PROVISION OF GOD: THE GREAT DELIVERANCE NUMBERS 09:01–14

Introduction

Three of the greatest needs people have are the need for deliverance, for guidance, and for a strong challenge. Why do we need deliverance? Because we are enslaved by the enemies of this life, enemies such as...

- cancer
- heart disease
- diabetes
- drugs
- alcohol
- immorality
- pornography
- sin
- greed
- anger
- malice
- death

In addition to deliverance, people need guidance throughout life as they confront the pitfalls and enemies of this life. Decisions often have to be made, decisions that arouse a desire for some guidance that will tell us what to do. But not only do people need deliverance and guidance, they also need a strong challenge in order to give them fulfilment throughout life. People need a sense of purpose, meaning and significance throughout life. They need to have a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment, a sense that they are accomplishing something in life, making a contribution to loved ones and to society.

What is needed is the very special provision of God Himself. God provides deliverance. He wants to deliver us from the enslavements of this life, deliver us from sin and death to live eternally in the promised land of heaven. But this is not all: God wants to guide us in every decision and step we take day by day. God wants us to have the security and assurance that we are making the right decisions and taking the right steps throughout life. But even this is not all: God wants to challenge us, to give us the greatest challenge that could possibly be given in life. God wants to extend a call to us, a call to arise and follow Him — for He has the greatest purpose, the most meaningful and significant call in all of life. This is the subject of this great passage: *The Three Special Provisions of God: God's Great Deliverance, His Guidance, and His Call to Arise and Follow Him*, Numbers 9:1-10:10.

- I. The provision of the Passover: a symbol of God's great deliverance (vv. 1-14).
- II. The provision of the fiery cloud: a symbol of God's presence and guidance (vv. 15-23).
- III. The provision of two silver trumpets: a symbol of God's call to arise and follow Him (ch. 10:1-10).

Numbers 09:01–14 The Provision of the Passover: A Symbol of God's Great Deliverance

The first provision of God focused upon deliverance, the provision of the Passover. The Passover celebrated the great exodus from Egypt, God's great deliverance of His people from Egyptian slavery. Remember that Egypt is a symbol of the world with all its bondages and enslavements. The Passover was instituted by God to stir His people to remember their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt (the world). Note the Scripture and outline.

1. God Himself commanded His people to keep the Passover (vv. 1-5). It had been one year since God's people had left Egypt, one year since they had celebrated the first Passover. At that time, back in Egypt, God had commanded His people to keep the Passover and to do so every year thereafter. He had established the feast to be a memorial, an annual celebration to remember their great deliverance from Egyptian slavery (Exo 12:2-3, 14). Why, then, was God now having to remind His people to celebrate the Passover? Were the people going to remember — going to take the initiative on their own — to celebrate the feast? Or were the people careless? Lax? Negligent? Indifferent? Failing? Scripture does not say: it simply says that God once again commanded His people to keep the Passover, the commemoration of their great deliverance from Egyptian slavery.
 - a. The people were to celebrate the Passover at the appointed time: at twilight of the first month, the fourteenth day (vv. 2-3).
 - b. The people were to be careful: make sure that they followed all the rules governing the Passover (v. 3).
 - c. Note the obedience of Moses and the people: they did everything exactly as the LORD commanded. They kept the Passover (vv. 4-5).
2. God showed great compassion and grace in the Passover: He made a very special provision for the unclean and the traveller (vv. 6-12).
 - a. A very special problem arose at this particular Passover. Some persons were unable to celebrate the Feast because they had been in contact with a dead body and were counted unclean (ceremonially, spiritually unclean). Death is the result of sin, a symbol of corruption and decay. Therefore to illustrate this truth, a person who came in contact with death was counted spiritually unclean. The ceremonial laws of uncleanness stressed the importance of being spiritually clean, the importance of having one's sins forgiven.

These persons wanted to participate in the Passover, so they approached Moses. Moses simply told them to wait until he could seek the LORD's will (v. 8).
 - b. Note the compassion and grace of God: a very special provision was made for the unclean and for the person away on a journey (vv. 9-12). These persons could celebrate one month later, after they had been declared cleansed. However, they had to be careful to follow all the regulations: to eat the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, not leaving any of it until morning nor breaking any of its bones (v. 12).
3. God issued a strong warning: the Passover was of critical importance. A person must keep it (v. 13). This is a picture of the importance of the LORD's Supper. God declared that any person who deliberately failed to keep the Passover was to be cut off. A person will suffer God's judgment. As Gordon J. Wenham points out: "This is a threat of death by the hand of God and of eternal judgment." (Gordon J. Wenham. *The Book of Numbers*, p. 99).

4. God extended an open invitation to all, to the alien or foreigner as well as to the native-born (v. 14). There was an open door for any person to celebrate the Passover, as long as the person had become a true believer and member of His people. There was only one condition for any person — any foreigner or any native-born — to become a member of God's people: that condition was faith in God, believing and following God exactly as He dictated, approaching Him for the atonement (reconciliation) and forgiveness of sin through the blood of the sacrifice. This was the very purpose for the Abrahamic covenant, to bless all the people and nations of the world (Gen 12:1-3). Therefore, any person who came to God through the blood of the Passover Lamb was acceptable to God.

Thought 1. There are four significant lessons for us in this passage.

- (1) Jesus Christ is the true Passover Lamb, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

1 Cor 5:7 *Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*

1 Pet 1:18-19 *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

Isa 53:5, 7 *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed....He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.*

- (2) God commanded His people in the Old Testament to acknowledge His great deliverance through celebrating the Passover. God commands us to acknowledge His great deliverance by Christ through celebrating the LORD's Supper.

Mat 26:26-28 *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (cp. Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20).*

1 Cor 11:23-26 *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

- (3) God issues a strong warning about the LORD’s Supper; the LORD’s Supper is of critical importance to Him: a person must not approach nor partake of the LORD’s Supper, in an unworthy manner. If he does, he brings judgment upon himself. This is exactly what Scripture declares:

1 Cor 11:29-30 *For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.*

- (4) God extends an invitation to every person to celebrate the LORD’s Supper. There is only one condition: believing God, approaching Him for the atonement (reconciliation) and forgiveness of sin through the shed blood of Christ. God opens the door into His presence for any person to be saved and delivered from sin — through the sacrifice of His Son. There is an open invitation to all.

Mat 11:28 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

John 7:37 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.*

1 Cor 15:3-4 *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

1 Tim 2:4-6 *Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.*

Heb 2:9 *But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

Isa 1:18 *“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”*

Isa 45:22 *“Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.” ■*