

# THE THREE SPECIAL PROVISIONS OF GOD: GOD'S GREAT DELIVERANCE, HIS GUIDANCE AND HIS CALL TO ARISE AND FOLLOW HIM NUMBERS 09:01–10:10

## *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
- other diseases
- 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).
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**I. *Numbers 09:01–14 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** *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."*

## II. *Numbers 09:15–23 The Pillar of Cloud: A Symbol of God’s Presence and Guidance*

There was the provision of the fiery cloud, that is, the cloud that guided God’s people throughout their wilderness wanderings. The cloud was a striking symbol of God’s presence and guidance. Note the Scripture and outline:

1. The cloud came down and hovered above the Tabernacle right after the Tabernacle’s dedication (see note, Exo 40:34-38).
2. The cloud changed its appearance at night, changed into a fiery cloud so the people could continue to see it. This symbolized the continued, unbroken presence and guidance of God (vv. 15-16). Hovering above the Tabernacle by day and turning into a blazing fire by night — the cloud must have been a striking, awesome sight. Obviously, it gave a great sense of assurance, confidence, comfort and security. The people knew beyond any question that God was present with them, there to guide and protect them by day and by night.
3. The cloud guided the Israelites (v. 17). If it lifted and moved, the people followed. If it settled, the people camped.
4. Note the clear statement of this point: the cloud was one of the ways the LORD commanded His people — one of the ways He spoke to His people. At His command, that is, as the cloud moved, the people would either set out or stop and camp (vv. 18-23).
  - a. If the cloud stayed over the Tabernacle, God was commanding His people to remain in the camp (vv. 18-21). Sometimes they remained in camp for long periods of time; sometimes they stayed for only a few days; and sometimes they remained for only one night. Simply stated, the cloud was one of the ways God used to speak to His people and guide them to the promised land.
  - b. If the cloud lifted by day or by night, they followed (v. 21).
  - c. If the cloud stayed above the Tabernacle for two days or one month or one year, the people stayed and did not move. But if the cloud lifted, they followed it (v. 22).
  - d. The people obeyed the LORD’s command by the movement of the cloud (v. 23). They obeyed God’s command to camp or travel as He willed. They obeyed God’s Word — the movement of the cloud — when instructed by Moses, God’s servant.

**Thought 1.** The fiery cloud was a striking, awesome picture of God’s presence and guidance.

(1) God is present with His people, always present. God never leaves the side of a person who truly believes in Him. God is always with us in an unbroken fellowship until we reach the promised land of heaven. His presence walks with us day by day.

**Mat 18:20** “For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

**Mat 28:20** “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

**Gen 28:15** *I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.*

**Exo 33:14** *The Lord replied, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

**Deut 20:1** *When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.*

**Isa 43:2** *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

(2) God guides His people, always guides us. If a person truly believes and follows God, God guides his every step day by day. God guides us every step of the way as we march to the promised land of heaven.

**John 16:13** *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”*

**Psa 23:2** *He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.*

**Psa 25:9** *He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.*

**Psa 48:14** *For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.*

**Psa 73:24** *You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.*

**Isa 30:21** *Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”*

### NUMBERS 09: 15–23 PRESENCE OF GOD; GLORY OF GOD

The cloud of God’s presence hovered, settled, rested, dwelt above the Tabernacle. The Hebrew word is shakan or sakan. This was the Shekinah Glory, the very glory of God dwelling in the midst of His people. The Shekinah Glory was the cloud that symbolized God’s holy presence. It was the very cloud that had guided Israel out of Egypt and that was to rest upon the Tabernacle as long as His people remained totally obedient to Him (Exo 40:34-38). The Shekinah Glory also rested above the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle. Scripture describes the Shekinah Glory of the LORD as follows:

1. The glory of the LORD is like a consuming fire.

**Exo 24:17** *To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.*

2. The glory of the LORD is like a pillar of fire that radiates light.

*Exo 13:21-22* By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of a cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

3. The glory of the LORD is like a fiery furnace.

*Heb 12:18, 29* You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm....for our “God is a consuming fire.”

4. The glory of the LORD is like a light that radiates splendour, a light that is so full of splendour that Peter called it “the excellent glory.”

*2 Pet 1:17* He received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with whom I am well pleased.”

5. The glory of the LORD is a light so glorious and brilliant that there is no need for a sun.

*Rev 21:11, 23* It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal...The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

6. The glory of the LORD is a light so brilliant that no man can approach it.

*1 Tim 6:16* Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen. □

### **III. Numbers 10:01–10 The Two Silver Trumpets: A Symbol of God’s Call to Arise and Follow Him**

There was the provision of two silver trumpets, a symbol of God’s call to arise and follow Him. The Israelites were just about ready to begin their great march to the promised land. One final thing remained: the making of two silver trumpets to control and coordinate the people as they marched through the wilderness to the promised land. Other trumpeters were, no doubt, strategically stationed throughout the tribal camps to pass the signal along to those on the outer edges. Keep in mind that there were at least two to three million Israelites camped around the Tabernacle. It was only natural that the two main trumpets stationed at the Tabernacle, the hub of activity, would be very special trumpets.

1. God Himself gave the command to fashion the trumpets. They were to be made of hammered silver (v. 2). No one knows exactly how they were shaped; but it is generally felt they were long, straight pipes, with a flared opening at the end. They could be blown to make different sounds or signals.

2. There were three *general purposes* for the trumpets (vv. 3-7).
  - a. The trumpets were used to call the whole community of believers for general assemblies. Note that both trumpets were blown to call the people together.
  - b. The trumpets were used to call only the leaders together. Only one trumpet was used to signal the leaders (v. 4).
  - c. The trumpets were used to signal the tribes when to begin marching (vv. 5-7). Note that one blast signalled the tribes on the east to march; another blast signalled the tribes on the south to march. That is, a different signal or blast was used for each purpose.
3. Note that the only persons allowed to blow the trumpets were the priests, the true sons of Aaron. This was to be a permanent law for all generations (v. 8).
4. There were three very *special purposes* for the trumpets (vv. 9-10). Keep in mind that we have already looked at three *general purposes*; now, Scripture gives three very *special purposes* for the trumpets.
  - a. The trumpets were to sound the alarm for war (v. 9). Both trumpets were to be used to sound forth the battle cry for mobilization against an enemy.
  - b. The trumpets were to sound the alarm for prayer: this is a picture of prayer arousing God to remember, rescue and deliver His people.
  - c. The trumpets were used to blow in times of joy and rejoicing — at the appointed feasts and New Moon festival (v. 10). The trumpets were to be sounded over the Burnt Offerings and the Fellowship or Peace Offerings. They were to be a memorial, a reminder of God’s covenant with His people and their covenant with Him.

Note the strong declaration: “I am the LORD your God.” God is declaring that He is the Sovereign, Omnipotent, Omniscient LORD God of the universe. He is the only living and true God with the power to rescue and deliver His people. Therefore they must sound the trumpet alarm for prayer: for Him to arouse Himself and act on behalf of His people — rescuing and delivering them from their enemies.

**Thought 1.** The trumpets were a picture of God calling His people to arise and follow Him. So it is with us. God calls us to arise and follow Him to the promised land of God, to heaven itself.

**John 8:12** *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

**John 10:27** *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”*

**John 12:26** *“Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.”*

**2 Cor 5:7** *For we live by faith, not by sight.*

**Gal 5:16** *So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

**Eph 4:1** *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.*

**Eph 5:2** *And live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

**Eph 5:15-16** *Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise.*

**Col 2:6** *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.*

**1 Pet 2:21** *To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*

**1 John 1:7** *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

**Thought 2.** What a strong exhortation for believers today: to sound the alarm for prayer, to cry out to God for Him to rescue and deliver us from the pitfalls and enemies of life.

**Mat 7:7-8** *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”*

**Mat 26:41** *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*

**Luke 18:1** *Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.*

**John 15:7** *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.”*

**Eph 6:18** *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

**1 Th 5:17** *Pray continually.*

**Deut 4:29** *But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all our heart and with all our soul.*

**1 Chr 16:11** *Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.*

**Psa 34:6** *This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.*

**Psa 61:2** *From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*

**Psa 91:15** *He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.*

**Isa 58:9** *Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: “Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk.” ■*