

Exod 03-06-15b

Principles associated with the Passover. We took a little detour to look at the millennial observance of the Passover, which will still be observed in the first month, on the 14th day of the month. One thing you may not have known is, God also specified an observance of the Passover on the 14th day of the second month, as opposed to the first month.

And this was specifically in the case of those who had been defiled, or disqualified, from observing the Passover the first time around. I find this very fascinating. You'll see the details of this in Numbers chapter 3. The Lord spoke to Moses, I'm sorry, Numbers chapter 9, and it begins in verse 3. Numbers chapter 9, 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.

First month, second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt. Let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. On the 14th day of this month, first month, at twilight you shall observe it at its appointed time, observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances.

So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover. They observed the Passover in the first month, on the 14th day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai. We want to talk about a string of prepositional phrases.

According to all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did. But, verse 6, there were some men who were unclean because of a dead person. So they could not observe Passover on that day.

Can you think of somebody who would have been in a status of unclean because of contact with a dead person at the time of the observance of a very famous Passover? How about the people who prepared the body of the Lord for burial? Wrapped Him in garments and applied the spices. What did they do? They were obviously defiled by contact with a dead body. And even though it's the body of the Lord, it would appear to still constitute ritual defilement, a ritual status of unclean.

So what do you do in a case like that? Do you have to wait for next year? Here's what God told them. These men came to Moses in verse 7 and said, we're unclean because of the dead person. Why are we restrained from presenting the offering of the Lord at this appointed time among the sons of Israel? Now remember, the first Passover is still very fresh in their mind.

And these men are sweating, not observing the Passover. God seems to attach a great deal of importance to this observance, and we're unfortunately in a state of being unclean. But what happens if we don't observe this Passover? Moses therefore said to them, wait, I will listen to what the Lord will command concerning you.

So Moses spoke to the Lord in verse 9 saying, I'm sorry, the Lord spoke to Moses. Moses

brought this up to the Lord. And the Lord responded, spoke to Moses saying, speak to the sons of Israel.

If any one of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a dead person or is on a distant journey, can't get back to the observance, he may observe the Passover to the Lord in the second month on the 14th day at twilight. They shall observe it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

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. 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. If an alien sojourns among you and observes the Passover to the Lord according to the statute of the Passover and according to his ordinance, so he shall do. You shall have one statute both for the alien and for the native of the land.

We're going to see more about the role of the alien and the ordinances and statutes that apply to him as we go further into the story of Israel in the wilderness and the giving of the law. But this is an interesting provision because there are some who are not in a status where they can observe the Passover and God says, well, you don't just get a bye. You don't get an exemption.

You wait a month and then observe it. Now, on the same day of the month, which tells us how important the 14th is and with all of the same regulations and statutes. Now, this provision is not here just to get people in Israel by.

It's been recorded in the pages of scripture, which means that we have the opportunity to observe, interpret, and apply. So if you put your mind to work on this, why would God record for us the ordinance that applies to people who missed the Passover the first time around, but they catch it up the next month? Well, what did we talk about at the beginning of our first lesson? The firstborn son missed his inheritance the first time around and he sort of catches it up after the younger son has been the first to receive it. You know, Esau didn't do too badly, Ishmael did not do too badly, and Israel as a nation will not do too badly by the time human history is resolved.

They just missed the opportunity the first time it came around. What happened to the nation of Israel when the genuine Passover came along? They were not qualified. They were corrupt and defiled and they did not observe, they didn't recognize the Paschal Lamb when He came.

And yet, Paul says, all Israel shall be saved. What's going to happen in the resurrection? You have Ezekiel chapter 45. You have the observance of the Passover in the Millennial Kingdom.

You have the Lamb of God who has returned, who has fulfilled the promises of God to Israel. And those Jews, those believers who fell in the generation that did not recognize Christ will rise again because they are Old Testament saints and they will get the chance in, if you will, the

second month on the fourteenth day of the month to observe. What is the interpretation of this? God is loathe to cut us off.

It is not the will of God that any should perish. His dealings with Israel in the Old Testament, He says, all day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and stiff-necked people. Turn you at my reproof.

Why should you die, O house of Israel? Even if we have failed, even if we miss it at a big junction point, even if we waste a lot of time, or if we foul up and go down the wrong road, God is waiting to catch us up. His grace is there. As long as we are alive and breathing air, God still has a plan for our lives.

We can still wake up and begin to walk toward that narrow gate. We can still return to the light. It is not too late.

If we are still alive, God hasn't taken us out under the sin unto death, we haven't used up our time on the meter, why should you die, O house of Israel? God makes provision even for when we miss it, even when we fail and take a detour and waste time. There is still provision of God. Why? God is for us.

Sometimes we have the view of God that He is kind of looking for something to hammer us on, and because He's perfect and we're not, He's always going to see us with a dim view and in a bad light, and with a critical frown on His face. And that's not the case. God desires to heal us.

He desires to make us whole, to restore us, to cleanse us, and to set our feet on the right path, to give us a firm place to stand, and this is one of the pictures of that. It's one of the evidences. It may be unavoidable.

Sometimes we find ourselves in a family situation where we can't really do what we need to do. It may be unavoidable that you have to make a journey during the time of the Passover. It may be unavoidable.

Maybe a dead man, guy has a heart attack working on his roof and falls off and lands and rolls over at your feet and touches you and now you're defiled on the 14th Nisan. And that sundown you were getting all ready, you had your lamb and you had done everything, and here inadvertently you come in contact with a dead man. Maybe it's your near relative.

Maybe it's your spouse that passes away on the 13th or the 14th of Nisan, and it's unavoidable. You have to do something and you're defiled or ritually unclean. Sometimes it's our fault.

Sometimes it's out of our control. Either way, we're not in a position to avail ourselves, not in a position to do the normal thing. God says, look, there is provision for you as well.

You're not dropping through the cracks. God has thought of it. God has anticipated it and God has made a way.

There is no problem. And this is the point. There is no problem.

There is no corner into which we paint ourselves that God does not have the power to save, to deliver, to bless, to cleanse, to set us back on the right road. It is a matter of us being observant. What if somebody said, well, I missed the Passover.

I don't really like that Passover thing anyway. The bitter herbs always kind of turn my stomach. I just, I kind of, oh, I was out of town and they don't bother to observe it.

God says, if you don't avail yourself of this grace, you are cut off from your people. There's been a lot of speculation on what does it mean to be cut off, for an Israelite to be cut off from his people? Some think it means execution, taken out of the land of the living. Most of us think that it is the, along the lines of excommunication.

It doesn't say cut off from the land of the living. It says cut off from his people. This means you are outside the camp.

You lose the blessing of being part of corporate Israel. You are, you remember the scene, this has nothing to do with it really, but when Yul Brynner takes Charlton Heston out to the edge of Egypt, puts a stick in his hand and says, go be king of the scorpions. This is being cut off from your people.

Moses had been embraced and had grown up as an Egyptian in the royal household. He was expelled. Here is your scepter and here is your kingdom.

Go rule over the scorpions. Deliver them if you can, Yul Brynner says, in a totally non-biblical scene. But it's memorable, very memorable scene.

This is being cut off from your people. You would lose your citizenship in the nation of Israel. You would be, this has come down to the present day in the shunning that takes place in Israel, in an observant Jewish household, if someone comes to faith in Christ, they will treat them as dead.

In some cases, they will even have a funeral cut off from your people. Seriously, they will have a funeral and say, well, Yoshibob or whatever his name is, he went and became a Christian. He died.

That's the day he died. They have a little funeral. They mourn, wear their sackcloth and so on, and then they go on.

And they never speak his name. They don't acknowledge his presence or his existence ever again. Cut off from the people.

God is a God of standards. He is a God of absolutes. But he is at the same time a God of compassion and a God of grace.

Seek him while he may yet be found. Call upon him while he is near. You get two shots at observing the Passover, first month, second month.

If you miss those two boats, you are cut off from your people. It's just that simple. So we serve the Lord with joy.

We also serve the Lord with fear. We recognize his grace and his compassion. We also recognize that he is a just and righteous God.

And it is only by availing ourselves of his grace and his compassion that we avoid his righteousness and his justice coming down on us. So, Numbers chapter 9, a very interesting passage. And by the way, there was an application of this in the days of King Hezekiah.

If you go to 2nd Kings, actually not 2nd Kings, 2nd Chronicles. 2nd Chronicles chapter 30. Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover to the Lord God of Israel.

It had fallen into disuse. It hadn't been observed in years. The temple had been defiled.

There had been idols and Asherah and all kinds of nasty stuff set up in the temple. The king and his princes and all the assembly in Jerusalem had decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month since they could not celebrate it at the proper time because the priests had not consecrated themselves in sufficient numbers. Nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem.

They missed. They didn't get their stuff all lined up until after the first month, 14th Nisan had passed. They could not keep it at the regular time.

The matter pleased the king and all the assembly. They resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel from Beersheba to Dan that they should come to keep the Passover to the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem since they had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner. Runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letter from the king and his leaders.

Spoke according to the command of the king. Children of Israel, return to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. Then he will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria.

Remember the northern kingdom went out in the Assyrian crisis when Sennacherib came down. Do not be like your fathers. Do not be like your brethren who trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers so that he gave them up to desolation as you see.

Do not be stiff-necked as your fathers were. Yield yourselves to the Lord. Enter his sanctuary which he has sanctified forever.

Serve the Lord your God so that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. For if you return to the Lord, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who leave them captive so that they may come back to this land. For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn his face from you if you return to him.

See the theme celebrating in the second month. You missed it the first time, but there is still a chance to return. Don't miss it.

Many people of very great assembly are going to gather to keep this feast. But look at verse 10. The runners passed from city to city throughout the country of Ephraim and Manasseh as far as Zebulun, but they laughed at them and mocked them.

This is a dangerous reaction to the invitation from God. They are applying the word of God that there is an opportunity to catch up what was missed. But these laugh at them and mock them.

And it hasn't been done in years. You old fogeys, you're dragging up this old tired thing. They mocked them.

Nevertheless, some from Asherah, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Notice, responding to the word of God is a feature of humility, strength under control, acknowledging what is right. The hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the kings and the leaders at the word of the Lord.

Many people of very great assembly gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem. They took away the incense altars and cast them into the Burkidron.

Kind of reminds you of purging out the leaven out of the household, doesn't it? They're purging out what causes sin, the stumbling blocks, the souvenirs and the vestiges of their idolatry. They slaughtered the Passover on the 14th day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed.

They were humbled. They sanctified themselves. They brought the burnt offerings to the house of the Lord.

They stood in their place according to the custom, according to the law of Moses, the man of God. The priests sprinkled the blood from the hand of the Levites. There were many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves.

Therefore, the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover for everyone who was not clean to sanctify them to the Lord. Notice these people haven't even managed to get sanctified for the second go round because the word came around. They had to make a journey and they didn't get a chance to observe all of the instructions of Moses.

And so even at the second observance, they're on the flaky edge of things. So the Levites

sacrifice, especially for them. Multitude of the people, verse 18, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written.

Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, May the good Lord provide atonement for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, even though he's not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. Remember when Jesus was talking to the Pharisees and he said that it is what proceeds from the heart that defiles a man. It's not what happens on the outside.

He says, you wipe the bowl and you cleanse the dish, but inside you're like a whitewashed sepulcher. You're full of dead men's bones. He said, you need to cleanse what's on the inside.

That's what God is looking for. And God here in this observance overlooks the technical requirements of the law of Moses because of what? Verse 19, may the good Lord provide atonement for everyone who prepares his heart to seek God, even though he missed some of the technicalities. Man looks on the outward appearance.

The Lord looks on the heart. The Lord listened to Hezekiah and healed the people. The children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness.

The Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing to the Lord accompanied by loud instruments. Hezekiah gave encouragement to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the Lord. And they ate throughout the feast of seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers.

And they were having such a good time. And it was such a great spiritual refreshment that when at the end of the seven days, they said, you know, we haven't done enough of this yet. Let's do it for another week.

So verse 23, the whole assembly agreed to keep the feast another seven days, and they kept it another seven days with gladness. How many days does that make? Fourteen. This is a recreation of the spiritual life of Israel.

It is a renewal. It is the they're getting their second wind, so to speak, under Hezekiah's leadership and with Hezekiah's prayer. There is there are a number of principles here, many of which you can recognize.

One I will suggest to you is notice that it wasn't the individual people praying that prompted God to overlook the ritual impurity of the worshipers. It was the prayer of Hezekiah, the spiritual head of a house, the spiritual head of a church. Any of us who function in a role of authority have the opportunity to pray in that function, to pray for those who are subordinate to whatever authority has been assigned to us and for whom we are responsible.

And we can pray effectively before the Lord the way Moses prayed for Israel, the way Hezekiah prays for Israel, for these worshipers. It is only going to be an effective prayer if there is response and if there is a right heart. God can't overlook negative volition.

God cannot overlook those who reject and ignore and rebel against God. But if someone has that spark, if someone is seeking, we can pray for them. And God, in response to that prayer, can overlook a lot, can heal them, can move them down the road.

It's an opportunity. God is probably going to do that anyway. But we have the opportunity to exercise our understanding of that principle as those who carry authority and to pray that prayer.

You also see another principle of 14. There's lots of occurrences in Scripture where two sets of seven come into play. There's a fascinating one we don't have time to look at of the rule of a king and something happening in the 14th year.

If you go back to Genesis, Keter, Laomer and the whole episode of the kings that were subdued, the kings came down from the north and the kings in the area where Abraham dwelt suffered. These men came down and subjugated them for 13 years. And after 13 years, they got fed up with it.

And in the 14th year, they rebelled. And you have this great conflict. And Abraham has to step in in the 14th year to accomplish some deliverance and to establish a new order, a new priority in the land.

Previous to that, the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and the kings of the plain were the hegemony. They were the de facto looked up to leadership. After this, after the 14th year, Abraham is the de facto leader.

He takes nothing of the spoils and so on. You have the same thing in the passage I mentioned earlier in 2 Kings chapter 18. It is the 14th year of the rule of King Hezekiah that Sennacherib came from Assyria against the fortified cities of Judah.

And it's a decision point. Is there about to be a new creation in the sense that the southern kingdom is about to go out and become another victim of the Assyrian domination? It's the 14th year. And there is this conflict.

And in the same way that in the 14th year, Abraham achieves a victory because of his spiritual strength, in the 14th year of Hezekiah, there's going to be a victory because of spiritual strength. That's what you find reflected in the restoration of worship and Hezekiah's spiritual leadership in the land of Israel. There's a lot going on with the number 14.

And so it is no accident in Exodus chapter 12 that we find this 14th day of the beginning of months. We've studied the details of this observance and the inception of the Feast of Unleavened Bread in verse 15 of Exodus 12. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.

The first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. Whoever eats anything leavened from the first day to the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. This is no small penalty.

If someone leaves a leavened lump of dough in their little clay bowl, it doesn't take the trouble to eliminate it from the house during this week. They lose their citizenship. They lose their property.

They lose their name in their clan and in their tribe. It's a serious, serious thing over a lump of dough. Why would God stress this so much? Well, what is our responsibility? We've seen in the broad national perspective that God did not establish the temple under Solomon in Israel until David had purged the Canaanites out of the land.

God cannot set up his temple in our souls until we purge out that which defiles. It is our responsibility. God did not make things that had leaven in them glow in the dark.

He didn't make them magically disappear. He said, you go find them. You carry them out.

You expunge and expel and eliminate these things that defile this symbolic picture of sin. You find it. You get rid of it.

We have to look around in the household of our soul and find those things which defile. God cannot take up residence in a meaningful way. We talked about the indwelling of the spirit, which we never lose, but it can be meaningless.

I'll give you an example. Right now, in the air between you and me, there is a lot going on. There are radio waves.

There are the broadcast signals from 12 to 15 different TV stations here in the Metroplex passing right through this air. If I switched on this box over here and pressed a couple of buttons, I could see and receive, and if there's anything beneficial, I could benefit from those programs. But it is meaningless.

It's not accessible to me, even though it's present. Unless I turn on the receiver. God can be present in us.

God, the Holy Spirit, can be there. The Word of God can be stored away in our soul, but it is meaningless if we are unable to benefit from it, if we're unable to receive it. And the presence of sin negates and silences the voice of the Holy Spirit in our souls to a large extent.

To a complete extent, as I mentioned before, He enables us to identify our sin, to acknowledge it, to return to a walk in the light. But we will stumble about in the darkness if we don't purge out this leaven. On the first day, verse 16, you shall have a holy assembly and another holy assembly on the seventh.

No work at all shall be done on them except what must be eaten by every person. That alone may be prepared by you. We are to pause in our life and cease activity, do nothing but take in

the Word of God.

That's the application. There's a time for us to acknowledge God's role in our lives, God's provision for our souls through His Word. This is the day I brought your host out of the land of Egypt.

You shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance. First month, 14th day of the month, at evening, eat the unleavened bread until the 21st day of the month at evening. Seven days, there shall be no leaven found in your houses.

Whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land. The same rule applies whether you are of native Jewish descent, if you can trace an ancestor back to Abraham, or if you are a citizen by faith rather than by birth. Either way, you shall not eat anything leavened.

In all your dwellings, you shall eat unleavened bread. How many different times has He stressed this principle? It's important. How about us? Do we stress it in our lives? Do we look for the leaven in our lives? Do we allow unholy influences? Do we let stuff come in over our television set? Do we let stuff come in over our radio? Do we let stuff come in in the literature that we read or the movies that we watch or the people with whom we associate? Do we fail to purge the things that corrupt us, the things that defile us? Our soul works on a very simple principle.

You get out of it what you put into it. Concentrate on the Word of God. The engine of our soul is going to produce divine good.

You concentrate or feed it the things of the world, it's going to put out trash and corruption, wood, hay and stubble, even under the best of circumstances. You know, they say in the physical world you are what you eat. The same is true in the spiritual.

And there are places and there are things, there are activities, there are inputs that we need to cut off to keep our souls free of the influence of the world, free of the influence of the flesh, free of the influence of the devil, and cultivate the strength that enables us to redeem the time and do what God wants us to do. It's pictured here by purging out the leaven. Moses called for the elders of Israel and said to them, go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families and slay the Passover.

Notice lamb is in italics as it should be, slay the Passover. This is the Pesach in Hebrew. You shall take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood which is in the basin.

Apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. It's the doorway that is marked.

The doorway is where things come in and things go out. The house is sanctified by the blood. Stay in the house.

That which defiles is not going to cross the blood marked threshold. And we're not going to leave that sanctified house. That's the picture.

The Lord will pass through, despite the Egyptians, when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to smite. You shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever. When you enter the land which the Lord will give you as he has promised, you shall observe this right.

Remember Ezekiel 45? Not only when they enter the land historically in 1400 BC, but when they enter the land for real and for good, you will observe this event as an ordinance. When you enter the land which the Lord will give you as he has promised, you shall observe this right. When your children say to you, what does this right mean to you? You shall say it is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when he smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes and the people bowed low and worshipped.

It is an everlasting memorial to the grace of God. They did not earn, they did not deserve deliverance from the destroyer. It was marked, it was obtained by the sacrifice of the Lamb.

Faith in that sacrifice, that is what we are called to. We hear a lot of great words in church. We hear a lot of things said in and about Christianity, but what it really boils down to is how do we live minute by minute, day by day? What are we shooting for when we make our decisions, when we accomplish our tasks? We ought to be, and this encourages us to, aim for purity.

Aim for that which reflects our deliverance. We are not our own. We have been bought with a price.

And it really doesn't count unless it counts in God's measure. God is the God of accurate scales. You can't fool him.

You can't put lead shot in the bottom of the grain sack and make him think that it's a full bushel when it's not. You can't alter or change or disguise the truth before God. His weights and scales are accurate.

So we want to ensure that we are the real thing. We're the genuine article in everything that we do. And this sort of picture is what reminds us of that and tells us how important God considers it to be.

It's important to find the leaven and purge it out. It's important to observe at the day and at the time and in the way that God prescribes. And it's a challenge for us.

There's nothing in our environment that encourages us to live this way. It is the Word of God and the Spirit of God and the fellowship of like-minded believers that encourages us to live this way. And that's why all of those things are so important to our spiritual growth and our spiritual progress.

Well, there is a historical record now of the actual event of Passover that begins in verse 28. And that's where we will resume next time. But let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we are compelled to bow as the Israelites did when we see the magnitude of your grace and your faithfulness toward us and the importance of the work of Christ on our behalf and how little we respond and how little we have that can contribute in any way to your plan and your purpose. We have only our choice and the recognition of your grace to move forward in your plan and purpose and to seek to reflect your glory to whatever degree it's possible in our lives. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress these truths from your Word on our heart.

We pray that they will resonate, that they will motivate us, that they will catch our attention and sharpen our focus so that we can accurately evaluate what's important in each situation and each circumstance of our lives in the days ahead. We pray that as we see the day of the Lord's return drawing ever closer that you will be with us and enable us to lift our eyes above the earthly and the mundane and the temporary to see the eternal weight of glory that is on the line. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.