

## **You Are His – His Deliverance Proves It!**

**NUMBERS 28:16-25**

*(Reading: Exodus 12:1-30; Numbers 28:16-25)*

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ...

In the life of every nation there is a special day at least once a year.

A day when the special identity of that country is remembered.

For some it is their Independence Day.

That commemorates when they were able to throw off their colonial masters.

For others it may be the date that their land was first settled.

For others still, their national day is the anniversary of when a treaty was signed acknowledging the rights of the natives of that country.

That day is a public holiday.

There will be unique events organised for that day.

And it will specifically focus on how that has made them the people they are today – whether Americans, Kiwi's, Portuguese, Taiwanese, or Aussies!

Old Testament Israel had such a day too.

A day which certainly celebrated their freedom from foreign oppression.

But it wasn't a liberation done through some of their own countrymen.

For it was God Himself who in the tenth plague against Egypt killed all of their first born eldest male offspring – animal and human.

He saved His people and those others who feared Him through their painting the blood of year old male lambs upon the side and tops of the doorframes of their houses.

Exodus chapter 12 tells us that as God's Church then looked to Him in that act of worship, He blessed them with redemption.

### ***What a salvation it was too!***

For that very night the Lord rescued His people from the land of slavery, the house of bondage.

They were free – free to now serve the Lord their God.

There we see the difference this day is to all those other national days.

Because those earthly nations celebrate a freedom of certain rights and privileges their citizens have.

This day, though, means that Old Testament Israel had no rights but simply the privilege to witness to the Lord God through their worshipping and serving Him.

Now, in our text, we are about to hear of what would be done by the priests over the next seven days.

But let's notice what first of all happens on the evening of the fourteenth day.

This is the Lord's Passover referred to in verse 16.

For it was the remembering of it privately that happened on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month.

Deuteronomy 16 verse 6 says that in their families they must celebrate it when the sun goes down, on the anniversary of the departure from Egypt.

And that's certainly what was detailed in Exodus 12.

There is some detail there as to what happened on the first Passover and how that is to be remembered.

This is what our first aspect is about.

For THIS FEAST RECALLS THE LORD'S PASSING OVER.

So they have celebrated the Passover on the second Sabbath of the first month.

Then the next seven days are set aside to really bring home to them what that event involved.

Because they were, in a way, reliving it.

For seven days they eat their bread without yeast in it.

You see, while yeast may make the bread taste nice, it took more time then to bake the bread.

So it would have been a week without the women having to get up early in the morning, and work for at least three hours to get the baking done.

For they would first let the bread rise with the yeast in it for 45 minutes. Then the intense kneading for ten minutes.

Followed by a second rising time of 45 minutes.

After that a further intense kneading for ten minutes.

And then a final 45 minutes rising.

Instead, this week it was the flat and hard loaves quickly made which was all they could have.

They were remembering they had to be ready to go at any time.

There could be nothing that held them back!

Naturally, this would have got lots of questions from the kids.

They would have been curious when you did that really thorough search through your home looking for any possible yeast.

But especially I don't think they would have liked that bread!

That asking the question about what this means in Exodus 12 verse 26 has today become a tradition amongst Jews.

But it was not meant to be a set part of the ceremony.

It's similar to when Moses spoke of tying God's commandments on their hands and foreheads in Deuteronomy 6.

That wasn't meant to actually mean they have those phylacteries physically on those parts of their bodies, as Orthodox Jews do today.

Rather, the question was to come out naturally, as your children will ask you questions about why you do things differently than the world around them?

Especially what it means to be Christians in this world.  
And if your children aren't asking you that, you really have to wonder if you are truly living by God's Word!

So the children then couldn't really miss how important this occasion is.  
I mean, there was a holiday of seven days!

You wouldn't forget that, would you  
kids!

But it was a bit of a different holiday to the ones you know about.

No normal work would be done.

Each of those seven days the priests would offer up the same number of sacrifices as they had on the new moon day.

Everyone who was physically able was expected to be there.

### ***And what sacrifices they were!***

For seven days the very best was offered up to the Lord.

The bulls and rams and lambs were all without defect.

While the people were eating that hard bread the Lord got the best!

So it was a holiday alright.

Because what is a holiday but a holy day?

That's the original meaning of the word.

And on these days God's people were to meet with Him.

This was all preparing Israel for taking over the promised land.

For they had only once so far celebrated the Passover.

The third occasion didn't happen until the days of Joshua in Joshua 5, forty years after the second time in Numbers 9.

There would be a difference the next time, though, because then it would be the festival of the Unleavened Bread.

Last time the Passover had simply been a sacrifice.

Congregation, we see the progression of God's line through the Old Testament.

These people He is making into a nation – a chosen people, a royal priesthood.

And exactly so that they would declare the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His wonderful light!

Perhaps you recognised the words I've just quoted.

They're from the apostle Peter's first letter.

And while it may seem strange to put the New Testament into the Old like this, isn't that exactly what the Lord is doing here?

There's a line He's drawing through covenant history.

It's a constant progression that will lead to Christ's coming.

Because, notice, for the seven days of the festival there is also a sin offering.

So the people must be ceremonially clean at all times.

When verse 23 speaks about preparing these offerings in addition to the regular morning burnt offering it confirms the special character of each of those days.

In this way the constant sacrifice for sin pointed to the ultimate sacrifice Christ would be.

As the saints then were dependent on these outward forms of worship it's also important to see how THIS FEAST STARTS THE CYCLE OF ALL FEASTS.

This is the second aspect to this text.

Congregation, here and in Leviticus 23 the Passover Feast is mentioned first. Now, we might think that's because it is in the first month of the year.

But there's more to it than that.

For we saw in the verses 11 till 15 that the Jewish calendar was lunar rather than solar.

So the month was more emphasised than the year.

But there were still the four seasons found throughout the twelve months – or thirteen months if they were catching up.

And which season do we have here?

Ah, it's spring.

Growth is in the air.

The harvest begins.

In fact, 49 days after the Passover it would be the Feast of Weeks.

It's also known as the Feast of Harvest.

That's when God's people celebrate the harvest by bringing its best to Him.

But the Passover is where it begins.

And where their church year ends is with the biggest festival of them all – the Feast of Tabernacles.

That's a feast we'll come to another time, though.

So what the Feast of Unleavened Bread meant then was the complete dedication of their year to the Lord who had saved them.

This meant quite some commitment.

And that's shown through the many years Israel did not celebrate this feast.

The years when they had fallen away from the Lord and turned to worshipping other gods.

It was not easy carrying out the Lord's will this way.

It meant going all the way to where the tabernacle or temple of the Lord was.

That's what Deuteronomy 16 verses 5 and 6 point out.

There the Lord declares through Moses, "You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town the LORD your God gives you except in the place he has chosen a dwelling for his Name."

We see this cycle shown by the times of revival in Israel's history.

Hezekiah after purifying the temple celebrates the Passover in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 30.

And Josiah in the most thorough going reformation of them all, also does the same in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 35.

You see, THIS FEAST STARTS THE CYCLE OF ALL FEASTS.

It's the Lord's redemption that first puts us on the path to being blessed by Him in all those other ways.

No wonder the apostle Paul speaks of Christ's saving work as the first-fruit in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15.

And so it is that we come to the third aspect to our text.

For there is also the fact that THIS FEAST LOOKS TO THE ULTIMATE FEAST.

Earlier in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, in chapter 5 verse 7, Paul has said that Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

It was what Jesus Himself alluded to during that last supper He had with His disciples.

Because that supper was really the last Passover!

Then, while our Lord is dying on the cross it is noted that none of His bones was broken (John 19:36).

This is a direct allusion to Christ being the fulfilment of the Passover lamb.

You see, already in the Old Testament we can see that the Passover was only a temporary ordinance.

The failure of God's people then to keep these ceremonies according to His Word showed that salvation couldn't come to them this way.

And it was never meant to either.

As Hebrews 10 verses 3 and 4 said, "those annual sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."

But that letter goes on further to declare the ultimate fulfilment.

The verses 5 till 7 of Hebrews 10 state, "Therefore, when Christ came into the world he said, 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me: with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.

'Then I said, "Here I am – it is written about me in the scroll – I have come to do your will, O God."'"

By that will, congregation, we have been made holy, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ once for all!

He fulfilled perfectly all that God demanded for being made right with Him.

This is shown in Luke 22 when the Lord Jesus, during the Passover, took bread, gave thanks and gave it to us.

In verse 19 there He said, "This is my body given for you, do this in remembrance of me."

So the Lord's Supper is now the feast the New Testament Church remembers.

While the Lord God used His powerful arm to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt He worked the most powerful force of all in delivering us from sin through the doing and dying of His own dear Son.

While Deuteronomy 5 verse 15 tells the Old Testament Church that they are to rest on the Sabbath day because the Lord brought them out of Egypt, the New Testament Church worships on the day that Christ Jesus rose from the dead.

Sunday is the Lord's Day.

The Passover celebrated the Independence Day of Old Testament Israel.

It was physically and spiritually their 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

But the death of Christ is now our spiritual liberation.

The apostle Paul says of the Lord Supper in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11 verse 26, "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

Congregation, THIS FEAST LOOKS TO THE ULTIMATE FEAST.

For it is the fulfilment of the Passover which we celebrate every time we commune together around the elements of bread and wine.

Yet it's especially what we celebrate in the ultimate way when our Lord Jesus returns.

Because that day is coming.

The great and coming day.

Then the Lord won't come through one angel to pass over but in His Son, He, with all His angels, will completely take over!

Amen.

## **PRAYER:**

### **Let's pray...**

O Saviour God, we lay ourselves and all we have before You now.

You have truly freed us by the salvation that comes only through faith in You.

And now You help us to celebrate that each Sunday, and indeed every day that You keep us here to worship and serve You.

In Your Name – Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.