

In answer to Moses' request for information, the Lord declared that a second Passover could be held a month after the regular one for the sake of those who had been unable to participate for the reason given, or had been far off on a journey. This is an illustration of the principle stated by Christ in Mk. ii.27 that 'the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.' God's regulations are to be carried out exactly as far as possible; but when something interferes, the time may be changed to meet the emergency. It is interesting to note that while verse 10 makes special allowance for a man who is on a journey, no provision is made for permanent domicile abroad. This would be a strange omission if the critics were right in their claim that this section is post-exilic and was given to people whose centre of gravity was in Babylon.

Verses 11-12 contain a brief summary of the commands given in Ex. xii (see especially Ex. xii.46), so that, even though the Passover is held a month late, it may be certain that its full meaning is clear to those who partake of it. They are to eat unleavened bread and bitter herbs and not a bone of the sacrificial lamb is to be broken. This represents in advance the bitter anguish of the death of Christ, the Lamb without blemish, slain for us and not a bone of Him broken (cf. Jn. xix.36).

In this connection we may note the account in 2 Ch. xxx of a great Passover which was held after a period of neglect of God's ordinances. When it was decided to do this, there was not time enough to prepare to celebrate it at the regular time; therefore it was held on the fourteenth day of the second month. God seems to have wonderfully blessed that Passover, even though it was a month after the regular date.

Under normal conditions postponement of the Passover to the second month is strictly forbidden (13). Unless one really has a valid reason for missing the regular Passover, he must observe it at its proper time or be cut off from among God's people.

God always provided opportunity for Gentiles to enter into the family of Israel. To guard against any misunderstanding He stressed this fact by repeating the principle,