

Moses' passover and Hezekiah's passover

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] Let us turn to the book of Numbers, Numbers chapter 9, and the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai in the first month of the second year, after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month of Even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season, according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, ye shall keep it. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover, and they kept the Passover. On the fourteenth day of the first month of Even, in the wilderness of Sinai, according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel. And there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they should could not keep the Passover on that [00:01:06] day. And they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day, and those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man, wherefore are we kept back that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel. And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the Passover unto the Lord. The fourteenth day of the second month at Even, they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs, and so on. Well, we perhaps should read the next two [00:02:03] three verses also. They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it. According to all the ordinances of the Passover, they shall keep it. But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbearth to keep the Passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people, because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin. Now I want to turn, before we speak on it, to a scripture in Chronicles, in 2nd Chronicles the 30th chapter, 2nd Chronicles 30. And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover under the Lord God of Israel. For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, [00:03:04] and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation, so they established a decree to make proclamations throughout all Israel, even from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover under the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem, for they had not done it of a long time in such thought as it was written. So the posts went with the letters from the king, and so on. And then we come down to the 13th verse, they're assembled at Jerusalem, much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, [00:04:03] and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook

Kidron. Then they killed the Passover on the 14th day of the second month, and the priests and the Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings under the house of the Lord. And they stood in their place after their manner according to the law of Moses, the man of God, the priests sprinkled the blood which they received at the hands of the Levites. For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified, therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the Passovers for everyone that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the Lord. For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon everyone that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the [00:05:03] sanctuary. And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people. And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness, and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord. Now, as we go back to the book of Numbers, we find that the Lord here makes a gracious provision for a gracious provision for failure, a greatest gracious provision for things that cannot be helped, that might come in as hindrances among his people. When the Lord gave the Passover originally in the book of Exodus, it had to be kept in the first month of the month of Abib, which corresponds to our March-April. The Passover was to be kept on the first month. And [00:06:04] so now that they've come out of Egypt, and they're in the wilderness, and so it's decided to keep the Passover. And as it says in the ninth chapter, the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness, saying, in the first month of the second year that they were come out of Egypt, they had to celebrate the Passover, and they celebrated the Passover as it was written. Now, there were some men who couldn't keep the Passover. They were defiled by a dead body. We know that the law said that anyone that had any contact with a dead body, that defiled them. And they could not have entered into the congregation until they had purified themselves, and until a certain number of days had gone by, they had to cleanse themselves on the third day, and again on the seventh day, and had to wash themselves with water. I've no doubt that this was a gracious sanitary provision, because anyone dying might have had a contagious disease. And it's been recognized that the laws that God gave [00:07:07] the children of Israel were the best sanitary laws, and it's only within the last 50 or 75 years that the medical profession has discovered some of these very things that have been here in the Bible all the time. The importance of avoiding how disease can be spread by contact, but this was in the scriptures all the time. And the persons had to be separate from those who, from other people, and they had to thoroughly cleanse themselves, and their garments, and their persons with water, before they could come in. And for us, it's a wonderful spiritual lesson, because we have the truth in scripture taught plainly that association with evil is a defiling thing. And if the Lord's people are having association with something that is evil and wrong, well then there's a necessity for cleansing, so that they can really enjoy fellowship with the Lord, and fellowship with the Lord's people. This is a scriptural principle. Well, these men couldn't help it. It doesn't say [00:08:05] what the circumstances were. It may have been their father or their mother that died, and they couldn't help having to bury their father and mother. But it meant that they weren't clean, and therefore they couldn't keep the Passover. So they come to Moses, and they say, we are defiled by the dead body of a man. Wherefore are we kept back that we may not offer an offering of the Lord in his appointed season among the children of Israel? In other words, they say, why should we be hindered from giving the Lord his portion? They're not only just thinking about what they were going to get out of it, but what the Lord was going to get out of it. And I think that's a very important thing, beloved, because you know, so often we think about what we get out of the meetings. But what does the Lord get out of it? You take the breaking of bread, as we had it this morning. Well, I'm sure that every one of us came, we got something. I'm sure we never go [00:09:01] to the breaking of bread without going away feeling

we've received something. But we don't primarily go to that meeting to receive. We go there to give. Now, a ministry meeting like we're having now, we come to this meeting, most of us are expecting to receive something. A brother ministers the word, and those that listen are expecting to get something. But when we go to the breaking of bread, we primarily go there to give something. And they said, well, now, why should we be hindered from giving the Lord the portion that he's to get from us in the Passover? So Moses says, well, just wait, I'll ask the Lord about this. Now, there's another important lesson. You know, we never find Moses answering a question that was put to him without saying, well, we'll see what the Lord says. We get that time and again when questions came up, when the daughters of Zelophehad came and wondered why they weren't able to get the inheritance, and it was going to pass to another tribe, Moses says, well, we'll see what the Lord says about it. He always asked the Lord, and the Lord gave the answer. And there's a very precious lesson for us too. We've got to [00:10:02] wait and see what the Lord has to say. And he gives us the answer in his precious word to these many things. So the Lord says, yes, that's true, the Lord says, speak unto the children of Israel, saying, if any man of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off. A man might have had to make a journey, might have had to make a trip for some reason or other, and he was away just at the time of the Passover. And so he missed being there to give the Lord his portion in Israel once a year. Well, if that's the case, he says, yet shall he keep the Passover the fourteenth day of the second month at even. So those that were deprived of keeping the Passover in the first month, they were given the privilege of keeping the Passover in the second month. Now, I think there's a lesson here, and that is, it shows perhaps a little, what shall we say, perhaps it shows that they're not up to the completeness of the thing [00:11:08] as they should have been. You see, the defilement or the journey, it was a weakness, it was caused through something that couldn't happen, or maybe it was something that even that could happen. A man may have allowed himself to become defiled by a dead body when he could have avoided it, or a man might have been able, had he considered the matter very carefully, to avoid it being on a journey just at the time of the Passover. On the other hand, there were cases that could not be avoided, but whether it was or not, it showed that they weren't up to the fullness of the thing to be able to partake of it in the first month. So the Lord made provision for the second month. Isn't that, isn't that like the Lord, to be gracious with his people? You see, the least desire in our hearts that the Lord sees that's toward him, he rather encourages it and doesn't [00:12:03] discourage it. The scripture says that he doesn't, he doesn't, he doesn't bruise the, he doesn't break the bruised reed, and he doesn't quench the smoking flax. He'd rather, he'd rather try and blow the smoking flax up into a flame, and he'd rather not break the bruised reed, but see if it could be used. So here we find that the Lord makes provision, and if he made provision for Israel, beloved, he makes provision for us too. Now we're going to see how this worked out in Hezekiah's day. In Hezekiah's day, we're very well along in the history of the kings of Israel and Judah. There have been in Judah some very good kings, and there have been some very bad kings, and in Israel there hadn't been one single good king, because you know in the days of Solomon, Son, Rehoboam, the kingdom got divided, and the northern ten tribes were known as Israel, and the southern two were known as Judah. In the [00:13:01] south there was Judah, and Benjamin, and Levi. Of course the Levites were there to serve in this sanctuary, in the temple, and the priests, and all that, and the rest of the ten tribes, they were in the north. Well, in Hezekiah's, during Hezekiah's reign, the very large number of the ten tribes were carried away captive into Assyria, but there were some left in the right throughout the country of the ten tribes. When the time comes, during Hezekiah's reign, that he gets an exercise to keep the Passover. They hadn't kept the Passover for a long time. During the days of these bad kings, even Hezekiah's own father Ahaz was not a good king. He'd brought a heathen altar down from up in Damascus there, and set it up, and they'd been burning incense at that, and because it was a rather fancy-looking altar, and was a lot more fancy than the plain altar that they had there that the Lord had commanded them,

so he got taken up. I heard [00:14:03] a brother say once that Ahaz was the first modernist. He saw a very fancy altar, and he brought that down, because he thought that was more modern than just the plain one that they had. And anyhow, Hezekiah, he sought to put these things right, and he felt that the God had to be honored. Now Hezekiah wasn't perfect, and nobody is, and we find some things in Hezekiah's life that weren't as they should have been, but in the main, we find Hezekiah, especially in his early days, seeking to honor the Lord. So he says, we haven't had this Passover now for a long time, we'll keep the Passover. Well, he takes counsel. You notice it says there in verse 2, the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the Passover in the second month. I take it that the king just didn't put out an edict on his own responsibility. He got an exercise about it, but he takes counsel with the others. He calls the [00:15:03] princes in, and he calls the princes and the congregation in Jerusalem. He calls the different ones in. And apparently, when they talked over the thing, it says they found that the priests, the priests that should have really been teaching the people, and that should have been the leaders in this thing, they hadn't sanctified themselves, and they were allowing themselves to be defiled by various things. So they decided to take advantage of the provision that the Lord had made for a day of declension. They said, well, this is a day of declension, we're not up to keeping the Passover in the first month, so we'll keep it in the second month. Well, it was lovely to see that they kept it. They wanted to keep it. They wanted to give the Lord his portion. They wanted to keep the Passover. So, they kept the Passover in the second month. Now, another thought we get here is, it says, in the king, verse 4, they gathered together in Jerusalem, and it says, [00:16:05] the thing pleased the king and all the congregation. So they established a decree to make proclamations throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan. They just didn't send this around the kingdom of Judah, but they decided to send the messengers right throughout the whole length of the country, from Beersheba in the far south to Dan in the far north, right throughout the land of the ten tribes that were in that section that had departed from God's center in Jerusalem. The majority had been carried away captive, you see, to Assyria, but there was still some left. So, the servants go. And you notice what it says there. It says, verse 6, so the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, according to the commandment [00:17:03] of the king, saying, ye children of Israel, turn again to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria. You see, a number of them have escaped out of the hands of the kings of Assyria. Now, the time has come for you to turn away from your idols and turn to the Lord, because in the northern kingdom, ever since Jeroboam set up those golden calves, they'd be worshiping them. And whenever it speaks about a bad king in either Israel or Judah, it says, he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. The outstanding sin was that they turned the hearts of the people away from worshiping the Lord to worship idols. And now that the majority of them have been carried away, the Lord causes Hezekiah to be exorcised to send them a message. And these men that came were the Lord's messengers. Now, beloved, God has given us his precious word to guide us, and that should be sufficient. But so often, we don't think, we find that it's not [00:18:06] sufficient. You know what I mean? We have to be reminded. The word itself should be sufficient for us. These people had God's word in their hands. It should have been sufficient. But it was necessary for someone to point out what the word said to them. So that's what these servants of God do. Hezekiah sends them up, and they point out to the people what they should do. They says, turn to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you. Turn away from your idols. Stop worshiping those idols. Worship the Lord, that you know that God called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob out, your forefathers, or Israel, as Jacob is called here, no doubt with a purpose, because it's reminding him of God's covenant promises to them. Turn to him. What was the result? It says, without going into all that they said, it's interesting to read [00:19:03] it. It says in verse 10, so the posts passed from city to city throughout the country of Ephraim

and Manasseh, even under Zebulun. But they laughed them to scorn and mocked them. When they went throughout part of the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, they laughed them to scorn, and they mocked them. They said, oh you people should turn away from those idols to the Lord. Well, they just mocked the Lord's servants that went with the message. Verse 11 says, nevertheless, you know, the nevertheless is in Scripture. Have a lesson for us, and it's always good when you have something bad means you that in it says, nevertheless, there's something good. Nevertheless, it says, divers of Asher, many that means, of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. You see, they, why did they come to Jerusalem? Well, because they humbled themselves. I suppose it was a humbling thing for these 40 people from the north, who had, who'd thrown over the worship of God as it was established in Jerusalem, and had followed these [00:20:06] idols all these hundreds of years, to humble themselves, and then to say, well, we realize after all that Jerusalem is God's center, we'll go back there. But they humbled themselves. It's always a good thing to humble ourselves. We never go wrong by taking a humble place. They humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Also in Judah, the hand of God was to give them one half to do the commandment of the king and the princes by the word of the Lord. And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of the unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. But what, what then happens when they all come there? Well, they all gather there at Jerusalem, and they're all there wanting to please the Lord. And I've no doubt that they must have done some searching of the scriptures, such as they had in those days, that was the part of the word that they already had. They had the five books of Moses, we know, and they had the, they had the Psalms of [00:21:01] David and the, uh, the writings of Solomon. That was, uh, those scriptures they had. And also they had some of the prophecies of Isaiah and Hosea and Micah, those three prophets, uh, those three prophets, those Isaiah, Hosea and Micah. If you look up the first chapter of each of those books, you'll find that they prophesied during the days of King Hezekiah. So the people, the, uh, Isaiah and Hosea and Micah had all been prophesying, had all been telling them what the Lord's mind was, and reminding them how they departed from the Lord, and calling them back to the Lord. Well, all this ministry had an effect on them. And when they all get to Jerusalem there, they look around and see these, uh, these altars to various idols that the people burned incense to, and they thought, well, we've got to get rid of these. So you know what they did with them? They hauled them all off to the rubbish dump. That, the Valley of Kidron was, was the city rubbish dump. That's where all [00:22:02] of them, that was the city dump. And they just took this stuff and they hauled it all down there to the dump and threw it out there. Well, that was the right place to put these idolatrous altars that they had used to, uh, to worship these idols. They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, verse 14, and all the altars for incense, that's the incense to false gods, took them away and cast them into the Brook Kidron. So you see, they cleansed the sanctuary and they cleansed the temple and they killed the Passover on the 14th day of the second month. And the priests and the Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves. The priests and the Levites that should have sanctified themselves hadn't done so. So that's what they did. They got ashamed. They realized, I suppose, that the people who came to worship were more, more, more cleansed than they were. And so they sanctified themselves and they set to work to do the work that had to be done. And then they found that a number of these that had come down from these northern, uh, these, uh, [00:23:07] the territory of the, of the northern tribes, they hadn't had time to cleanse themselves. Even though the Passover was in the second month, they still weren't ready to partake of it. They hadn't had time to, uh, to wash themselves and cleanse themselves and for the time to take place for at least seven days to go by so that they would be able to keep the Passover. But their hearts were right. They really, they really wanted to honor the Lord and please the Lord. Says that verse 18, a multitude of people, even many from Ephraim and Manasseh. Now I think that's remarkable because it tells us in verse 11, that divers of, no, in verse 10, that those of Ephraim and

Manasseh laughed them to scorn. But apparently some even there among those that laughed them to scorn, God touched their hearts. And because it says many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun had [00:24:06] not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them saying, the good Lord pardon everyone that prepare of his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And you notice what it says in verse 20, and the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people. Now what do we learn from this? We learn beloved, that sometimes because of conditions that exist in a day of departure, it's not always possible to be up to the height of what we should be. But that what the God looks at, is the, is the heart of his people. What God looks at is the motive that's in the heart. I don't think we should take any read, we should we shouldn't try [00:25:04] to read into this, the idea that we can do away with what God has told us in his precious word, or that we could let down on any standard that God has set up in his precious word. But it does show us that sometimes when it's not possible, because of the very conditions of the day of departure, to carry out the word in its fullness, that God honors what is done as far as it is possible to do it. I think that's what we see here. Their desire was right. They took advantage of the second month, and even when they took advantage of the second month, some would still have not been able to keep the Passover. But they've made that long journey down from up in the north, the very fact that they come down from Ephraim and Manasseh, and Zebulun was right up in the very north, the very fact that they'd come down there on that long journey was a proof that there was a real desire in their hearts to seek the Lord. And I think Hezekiah recognized that. Hezekiah had [00:26:02] spiritual discernment. Well he says, as much as to say, well Lord, these people have come all this distance, and they've left their idols behind up there, they've come away from them, it's true, for hundreds of years they'd be worshiping those idols up there, but they've come down to seek thy face here in Jerusalem. Pardon them, Lord. And the Lord pardoned them, and He must have made known, I believe the Lord must have made known in some way, that He accepted Hezekiah's prayer, because it says the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people. So they must have known, there must have been some indication that was given by the Lord that the Lord had healed the people and enabled them to keep the Passover there on that second month. And the Torah of Israel, verse 21, says, that were present in Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness. And the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord. And Hezekiah spake comfortably to all the Levites that sought the good knowledge [00:27:02] of the Lord, and they did each throughout the Feast seven days offering peace offerings and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers. They offered peace offerings, and they made confession. Where they'd been, where they, where the Lord had exercised them that they'd been wrong, they confessed it. And the Lord, the Word of God says if we confess our sins, He's faithful and just to forgive us. And that applies to the Lord's people. The Lord's people have done wrong things and they confess them. The Lord is faithful and just to forgive. And it says, verse 23, they so, they so, they were so enjoying the Lord's presence there gathered together, it says, and the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days. They weren't satisfied with having seven days conference. What would we do, brethren, if we had a seven days conference and then at the end of it, we'd say, well now we're going to have another seven days. I'm sure a lot would be saying, well we're just about worn out as it is, we couldn't put up with another seven days. But they did, they had another seven days together. And I'm sure the priests and the Levites must have done a lot of [00:28:02] explaining and talking and explaining the Word to them during that time. They had another seven days. And Hezekiah gave them a thousand bullocks, you see, there were a lot of people there that needed feeding in all that time. And it says in verse, to come on that further on now, verse 26, so there was great joy in Jerusalem. Now notice what it says here in verse 26, for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem. There hadn't been

such a Passover since the days of Solomon. Isn't that a wonderful thing? In a great day of departure. Now as we read Isaiah, and as we read Hosea, and as we read Micah, we can see it was a day of departure.

And if we were just to read those prophets and all that they say about the people, Isaiah says, the Lord says in the first chapter of Isaiah, I have brought up children and they've rebelled [00:29:05] against me. The axe knoweth his owner and the ox his master's crib, but my people knoweth me not, saith the Lord. And Isaiah really has to lay it on the line that they've departed from the Lord. And you might say, well, is it possible to have a revival among the Lord's people in such a day of departure? Well, it was in Hezekiah's day. And later on again in Josiah's day, just before they got led into captivity. Now, the reason why I'm saying this is brethren, is that conditions come in among God's people that discourage us. And sometimes we're inclined to get discouraged. Things don't go along as they should. Sometimes we have people that go off and leave the meeting, and the brethren get upset about it. And some, almost on the point of giving up, they say, well, what's the good of going on? We live in the day of departure. Everything seems to be going to pieces. The world around us is going on to destruction. The Lord's coming is very near. We might as well throw up our hands and give up. And what's the good of even coming together to [00:30:02] the meetings? We don't get very much out of them when we do come, although I don't agree with that. I feel that every time we come to the meetings we get something. But I mean, you hear people say that sometimes, and they're almost inclined to give up. Well, Hezekiah could have said that. Hezekiah could have said, well, after what Isaiah and Hosea and Micah have been telling us, we're in a pretty bad state. What can we do about it? Hezekiah says, it is a bad state. We're not even up for keeping the Passover in the first month. And we're going to keep it in the second month. And even though we're going to keep it in the second month, a lot of people are not even ready to keep it now. But let us obey the Word of God. And they did. In spite of the declension, in spite of the departure, their desire was to honor the Lord. And God honored them. And I believe that still holds true. There's a good principle in this. We live in the day of departure, that's true. And maybe there are many, in many things, brethren, we're not up to what we should be. And because of the broken condition of God's people, and because of the divided state [00:31:03] of the church, we might say that we find it very difficult always to carry out everything as we should carry it out. But I believe that the Lord looks at any desire that there is to carry out his Word, even in a feeble way. And the Lord was pleased to see the desire on the part of Hezekiah and the people in Jerusalem. And he was very pleased that there were those in the north, in Ephraim and Manasseh, even though many of them up there laughed God's servants to scorn, there were those who were willing to humble themselves. And because they humbled themselves, and the Lord saw the honesty of their hearts in desiring to please him by coming to this Passover in Jerusalem, the Lord healed them and enabled them to honor him by keeping his Word at this Passover. And then they had another seven days of Passover, and I'm sure they all went back to their homes rejoicing in the Lord. And they got a great blessing, but don't you think that [00:32:01] this was something that really rejoiced the heart of the Lord? To see that in spite of the departure, there were those in Israel, both in the south and in the north, who really were willing to obey his precious Word. Wherever there's a desire to obey the Word of God, that's something that the Lord is pleased with. And may the Lord enable us, brethren, in spite of all the departure and the failure that there is in our day, to keep our eyes on the Lord. That's the only place. If we look at ourselves, we'll get discouraged. If we look around, we won't find anything very encouraging. If we look at one another, we will have something we can find fault with. Are we going to give up? I would say, well, there's brother so-and-so, he's not doing what he ought to do. I'm going to leave the meeting because he doesn't act right. Is that the right thing to do? No. Let's keep our eyes on the Lord. If I'd have just been looking at my brother and I might have left the meeting 30 or 40 years ago. But it's the Lord that keeps us where we are because

we want to follow him and serve him, and not just be in the place where we are just because we like or dislike somebody else. Let's [00:33:02] keep our eyes on the Lord. That's the great lesson we learn here. In a day of departure, the Lord is the same. And the Lord honors any desire that there is on the part of his people to put him first.