

LESSONS FROM UNLEAVENED BREAD

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Today is the 15th Nisan ... the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

If we look around our towns and communities ... there aren't many people keeping this Feast today. Most people are looking forward to Easter.

We're definitely in a small minority!

So. Why do we keep this Feast Day? Why are we here today? The simple answer is: God commands it!

But then why? Does God have an important reason? Is there a purpose? Yes. Of course He does! He doesn't do things without a purpose.

All of God's Holy Days are to teach us important lessons ... for this life now and even for our eternal lives.

Leviticus 23:1-2 (NKJV)

1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: **The feasts of the Lord, (Jehovah) which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.**

If only the world believed just this verse. If even Christians believed that and kept them ... what a different world we would live in. These belong to ALMIGHTY GOD. These are God's Feasts.

Leviticus 23:4-8 (NKJV)

4 **These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.**

5 **On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord's Passover.**

6 **And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.**

7 **On the first day you shall have a holy convocation;** you shall do no customary work on it.

8 But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. **The seventh day shall be a holy convocation;** you shall do no customary work on it.”

Today is a commanded assembly. We are keeping God’s Holy Days.

Let us look at the first reference to this Feast:

Exodus 12:14-20 (NKJV)

14 **‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; (something to remember) and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.**

15 **Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.**

16 **On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you.** No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you.

17 So **you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt.** Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.

18 **In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.**

19 **For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses,** since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land.

20 **You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’ ”**

Note: The Israelites here are still in Egypt ... months before the Old Covenant. **These were given as an everlasting covenant before Sinai.**

There are some very specific instructions.

Exodus 13:3 (NKJV)

3 And Moses said to the people: **“Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.**

Exodus 13:6-7 (NKJV)

6 **Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord.**

7 **Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters.**

- No leaven or leavened bread ... put out the leaven and the leaven products
- **EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD FOR 7 DAYS**

The teaching is in 2 parts. There are two parts involved in changing our lives and walking with our God (just like 2 parts to Passover ... Bread and Wine). Put something out ... bring something in. Put out leaven ... bring in unleavened.

(Note: I would recommend actually EATING SOME UNLEAVENED BREAD EVERY DAY of the Feast ... just as a physical reminder).

We can see the reference in the New Testament to 2 parts in:

Ephesians 4:20-24 (NKJV)

20 But you have not so learned Christ,

21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:

22 that you **put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, (the first thing we do is put off something old)**

23 **and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,**

24 **and that you put on the new man** which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. *(The second part ... putting something on ... the new way of life in truth and holiness)*

Ephesians 4:25-29 (NKJV)

25 Therefore, **putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour," for we are members of one another.** *(Put away lying ...put on honesty)*

26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

27 nor give place to the devil.

28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

(Put off stealing ... put on giving)

29 **Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth**, but *(put on)* what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

So ... 2 parts ... PUT OFF OR AWAY AND PUT ON.

A question we could ask is: Does God Himself need the Feast of Unleavened Bread? NO! It's for our benefit ... to help us grow to maturity ... to have a more successful walk with Jesus and our Father. They are for our benefit.

It's good for us to take some time and effort to physically de-leaven our homes at this time of year ... eat unleavened bread.

But ... if that's all that happens ... just purely physical ... then really we have wasted The Feast! There is much more involved ... spiritual lessons.

Leaven is merely a symbol that God uses to teach us key truths. And God has set the Feast days up so we get an annual reminder of things that God knows that we need reminding of.

So let's see what the Bible reveals about the meaning of leaven in our lives.

There are 2 ways that leaven is used in the Bible.

The first lesson that we see pictures sin.

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 (NKJV)

6 Your glorying is not good. **Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?** *(That is a key feature ... you don't need much. You might think it is something that you can ignore. A little bit will spread and cause problems)*

7 Therefore **purge out the old leaven**, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. **For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.**

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, **not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness,** **but with the unleavened bread of**

sincerity and truth. (*What Feast could that actually be? It is rather obvious ... the Feast of Unleavened Bread*)

- Leaven = malice (evil motives/thoughts/intentions) = wickedness (evil actions). Put that out.
- Unleavened = honesty ... truth ... genuineness

So ... PUT OFF/PUT AWAY sinful attitudes and sinful conduct. Put sin away (The Corinthians were too comfortable with sin)

Then ... the 2nd meaning of leaven ... false doctrine.

Matthew 16:5-12 (NKJV)

5 Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Then Jesus said to them, "**Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.**"

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."

8 But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "**O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?**"

9 Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?

10 Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?

11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to **beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**"

12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of **the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.**

Leaven = false doctrine/false teaching.

The warning is applicable to us too.

So leaven seems to picture sin and false doctrine ... so we'll look at each of these in turn.

LEAVEN AS A SYMBOL OF SIN

Putting leaven out of our homes (and lives) for a week pictures putting sin out of our lives ... and clearly ... it takes action.

It is easy to become casual ... lukewarm ... very easy for us to begin to tolerate poor behaviour in our lives ... to let our standards fall ... to become more and more worldly.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is an annual reminder to keep our lives clear of sin. When we see it ... put it out ... put it away.

We need to leave our sinful life behind us ... and walk forward towards our Promised Land.

Some believers think all you need to do is "accept Jesus". Tens of millions believe that! Then it's all finished ... Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

But that's not the picture shown by Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. There is some action to take.

Think about Israel's position at the first Passover.

- they'd kept Passover ... protected by the blood ... and eaten the roast lamb
- God had passed over
- but ... did they just stop now? ... stop there? Was that it?

Do we stop once we're covered by Jesus' blood? No! Israel had been set free from slavery ... but now had to get out ... leave the land of slavery ... leave Pharaoh ... leave the bondage ... leave their old lives.

The picture is the same for us: Leave our old lives (our spiritual Egypt) ... move out ... move forward ... towards The Kingdom of God.

Romans 6:1-14 (NKJV)

1 What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?**

2 **Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

3 Or **do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?**

4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life.**

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

6 knowing this, that **our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**

(We didn't know it at the time)

7 **For he who has died has been freed from sin.**

8 Now **if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,**

9 **knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more.** Death no longer has dominion over Him.

10 **For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.**

11 Likewise **you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.** *(We should be dead to sin. We should not enjoy sin)*

12 **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.**

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but **present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.**

14 **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.** *(Sin had dominion over us ... but we have been delivered)*

Romans 6:16-23 (NKJV)

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? *(You choose)*

17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

18 And **having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.** *(Israel was set free. We have been set free)*

19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now **present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.**

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

22 But **now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.**

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So don't spend time "hanging around" in spiritual Egypt ... under spiritual pharaoh. Stop playing around in the world and thinking it is okay.

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We are in the world ... spiritual Egypt. We can get comfortable. It can shape our values and standards. Don't get shaped by the world. If it starts to contaminate us ... put it out ... put it away. Get out of Egypt. Get out of the world!

We need to watch out for complacency ... familiarity ... being just "so used to it" ... we no longer really see how bad it is. So we end up accepting so much more sin in our lives. The world is weird ... heading for destruction. We need to put on better standards.

1 John 2:1-6 (NKJV)

1 My little children, these things I write to you, so **that you may not sin.** **And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

2 **And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

3 Now **by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.**
(Being obedient. Putting on the new man)

4 **He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**

5 But **whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him.** By this we know that we are in Him.

6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.
(Be like a little Jesus ... WWJD ... What Would Jesus Do?)

Don't sin! Put sin away! Put on right living ... living like Jesus does (not just "give your heart to the Lord").

1 John 5:1-3 (NKJV)

1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

3 For **this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**

Verse 3 in the Greek: "that we keep on keeping His commandments".

It represents a spiritually UNLEAVENED LIFE!

Hebrews 12:1-4 (NKJV)

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (lay aside every weight = put away the sin)**

2 **looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,** who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 **For consider Him** who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

Run with endurance ... running ... taking action!

All the way ... to the finish line. Not like Israel ... where only Joshua and Caleb finished the race ... entered the Promised Land.

LOOK TO JESUS ... not just as the Passover Lamb ... but also as our High Priest ... our Commander-in-Chief.

Don't get weary ... let your guard down ... let a little leaven creep in ... a little "harmless compromise" with sin.

We'll be alert for physical leaven in the next 7 days ... but the real lesson is for ALWAYS ... FOR EVERY DAY!

LEAVEN AS A PICTURE OF FALSE DOCTRINE

Jesus had warned His disciples about false doctrine.

Most of us are unlikely to be deceived by Catholics ... Jehovah's Witnesses ... Mormons? Our real danger is more likely to be from someone among the Churches of God with new and exciting material.

If someone appears to be "Church of God" ... we might tend to be more relaxed ... let our guard down a little bit ... give more credibility to what they say or teach. After all ... they are one of us.

Hopefully ... we're fairly okay with our understanding of God's truths ... but it is still necessary to stay alert for the leaven of deception.

The New Testament gives many many warnings about deception and deceivers among God's scriptures. The warnings are there for a reason!

Some of the strange doctrinal ideas in the last few years are:

- Calendar
- Passover ... the 14th or the 15th?
- Pentecost ... Sunday ... Monday ... or Sivan 6?
- Jesus ... when was He crucified ... on a Friday?
- Sabbath ... how long does it last ... from sunrise to sunset?
- Sacred Names

Wrong teaching leads to —> wrong believing leads to —> wrong thinking leads to —> wrong actions.

Wrong actions leads to —> harm or death.

PCG ... there are a small number of suicides alleged following family break-ups
RCG ... the Doctrine of Common ... Dave Pack says to liquidate family funds ... family assets.

Deception is in and among the Churches of God.

Galatians 5:1-4 (NKJV)

1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.

3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law.

4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (*"Estranged from Christ" ... severed from Christ*)

Verses 1-4 deception from what appeared to be "credible teachers".

Galatians 5:7-9 (NKJV)

7 You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?

8 This persuasion does not come from Him who calls you.

9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

Galatians 5:12 (NKJV)

12 I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!

Even a little leaven can cause huge damage! The Galatians seemed to have missed out on salvation. See:

Galatians 1:6-7 (NKJV)

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,

7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

These Galatian believers ... if they didn't repent ... then ... they will be in the Lake of Fire?? They had heeded other teachers that had come with false teaching.

Here are a couple of helpful parables.

Matthew 13:24-30 (NKJV)

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;

25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

26 But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'

29 But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' ' "

A warning of tares among the wheat. Tares among the Church members ... right until the end (now?). BE ALERT! BE VIGILANT!

Matthew 13:33 (NKJV)

33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

"Hid". In Greek = concealed ... secretive?

The popular explanation is: the Gospel is spreading worldwide ... all around the world. But ... in context of Jesus' use of leaven ... it is more likely a warning ... false teaching secretly introduced into the Church. This is what tares would do ... bring in the teachings of the evil one. Then it permeates and corrupts the entire church ... which could include us individually.

We need to remain vigilant to the risk of false doctrine ... just as we're vigilant to physical leaven during the Feast.

And sometimes the change from truth to false or error is slow ... almost imperceptible. We need to be on guard. BE VIGILANT!

Peter prophesies of false teaching in the Church.

2 Peter 2:1-3 (NKJV)

1 **But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them,** and bring on themselves swift destruction.

2 **And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.**

3 **By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;** for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.

- Secretly brought in (like leaven hidden?)
- Deceptive words = words of deception = a message of deception = they are teaching deception ... false teaching.

So. WATCH OUT! And that includes religious teachers ... not just other brethren.

If we spot false teaching? PUT IT AWAY!

2 Timothy 1:13-15 (NKJV)

13 **Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.**

14 That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit that dwells in us.

15 **This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.**

Verse 15 is a warning. All of those in Asia — all of the brethren that Paul taught in Asia — have turned away! How did that happen? This is the Apostle Paul!! Possibly the greatest of all of the Apostles!

That wouldn't have happened instantly. It no doubt took time! But how would it have started? A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Eventually ... they turned away. That shows us the danger of false teaching.

Our security against deception ... our antidote to false teaching ... is to know the truth! **Hold fast to what we know is true.**

2 Timothy 3:13-17 (NKJV)

13 But **evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.**

14 But **you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,**

15 and that **from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**
(From the Old Testament)

16 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,**

17 **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

So. In conclusion. Here we are today. The seven days of Unleavened Bread stretch before us. We'll all be fairly diligent about avoiding leaven and leavened products in our homes and lives.

But ... the more important lesson ... is to learn the Lesson of Leaven ... which we can apply every day ... all year ... **to watch out for sin ... to watch out for false doctrine** ... in our lives ... and whenever we find any ... PUT IT AWAY!