



biblestudy

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

God's Second Annual Feast Day

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THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Introduction

Psalms 105:23-45

23 *Israel also came into Egypt; thus Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.*

24 *And God caused His people to be very fruitful, and made them stronger than their adversaries.*

25 *He turned their (adversary's) heart to hate His people, to deal craftily with His servants.*

26 *He sent Moses His servant, {and} Aaron whom He had chosen.*

27 *They performed His wondrous acts among them, and miracles in the land of Ham.*

28 *He sent darkness and made {it} dark; and they did not rebel against His words.*

29 *He turned their waters into blood, and caused their fish to die.*

30 *Their land swarmed with frogs {even} in the chambers of their kings.*

31 *He spoke, and there came a swarm of flies {and} gnats in all their territory.*

32 *He gave them hail for rain, {and} flaming fire in their land.*

33 *He struck down their vines also and their fig trees, and shattered the trees of their territory.*

34 *He spoke, and locusts came, and young locusts, even without number,*

35 *And ate up all vegetation in their land, and ate up the fruit of their ground.*

36 *He also struck down all the first-born in their land, the first fruits of all their vigor.*

37 *Then He brought them out with silver and gold; and among His tribes there was not one who stumbled.*

38 *Egypt was glad when they departed; for the dread of them had fallen upon them.*

39 *He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to illumine by night.*

43 *And He brought forth His people with joy, His chosen ones with a joyful shout.*

45 *So that they might keep His statutes, and observe His laws.*

This is the second in our Bible Study series explaining the annual feasts of God as outlined in the Bible. These annual feasts reveal God's master plan for the salvation of mankind, and picture what God has planned for every human who has or ever **will** live. The first Bible Study explained the meaning of the first step toward salvation **by reviewing** the Passover service. The Passover pictures being saved from sin by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. If you have not studied our first lesson on Passover, you may want to read it before undertaking this study.

Before beginning the study of the second annual feast, The Feast of Unleavened Bread, it is worthwhile to emphasize a very basic point. That point is that these annual feasts are not Israel's feasts or the feasts of the Jews—they are the feasts of the Lord:

Leviticus 23:2-4: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts. **3** 'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. **4** 'These are the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times.' NKJ [*See also Numbers 28:16-25*]

QUESTION

Do the above scriptures tell us whose feasts are outlined in Leviticus 23?

Notice, the passage quoted above says these feasts are the FEASTS OF THE LORD. That means they were not started by men, but by the Lord. >>

QUESTION

What are the three Feasts of the Lord mentioned in the above passage?

God calls the weekly Sabbath HIS FEAST right along with the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. Except for the Sabbath, which is the subject of the 4th Commandment, the feasts mentioned in this passage are largely unknown to most people. In fact, many would be very surprised to learn there are people who still observe these feast days, rather than the traditional Christian holidays which are not found in the Bible. >>

The Feasts of the Lord bear great significance for modern Christians, as this Bible Study will show. One principle in studying these feasts that the reader should keep in mind is that God's Feasts reveal the plan of salvation he has set in motion for all humanity. What happened in the Old Testament to the ancient Israelites shows how God works with his people today. God is the one who stated emphatically, "I am the same yesterday, today, and forever!" In other words, God doesn't change. The Holy Days or Feasts God established for his people picture events from which every modern Christian will draw spiritual lessons. To understand the rich meaning of the Feasts of God is to understand the depth of love God has toward his creation.

The scriptures in this study are largely from the New King James Version of the Bible, unless noted. Please look up the scriptures in your own Bible to substantiate for yourself the points being discussed in this study. The purpose of this Bible Study is for you to prove these truths from your own Bible.

The Exodus

Most people in western society are familiar with the dramatic fleeing of the Israelites out of Egypt, which is commonly referred to as the Exodus. This story is found in the Bible in the book of Exodus. It tells of the Israelites who had been held in captivity by their oppressors, the Egyptians, and their deliverance through divine intervention. Before the Egyptians released the Israelites, however, God brought several plagues upon them. The final plague resulted in death to the firstborn children of the people of Egypt. The Israelites were spared this horrible plague if they

remained in their homes the night of the plague, and if they smeared lamb's blood on their doorposts, then ate of the Passover lamb, which symbolized the future New Testament sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, for sin (**See following quote**):

1 Corinthians 5:7: 7 For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. NKJV

QUESTION

What is the name given to Christ in the above scripture?

Christ is called our Passover. The Apostles of the New Testament taught that Jesus Christ had fulfilled the **symbol** of the Passover lamb by becoming a sinless sacrifice accounted worthy to take away the sins of the world (*John 1:29*). Why could he do this? Because Jesus Christ was with God from the beginning (*John 1:1*). He was the one through whom God created all things (*John 1:2-3*). He was the rock who followed the Ancient Israelites through the wilderness (*1 Corinthians 10:1-4*). And He was and is God, one of the two beings who occupy the throne of heaven (*Hebrews 10:12*). Christ's life was accounted to be of greater value than the entire creation. His life's blood could thus pay for the sins of all humanity. >>

Following the dramatic event of the final plague, the Israelites were commanded to prepare to leave Egypt. God, through His servant Moses, ordered the people to go out the morning after the plague had fallen upon the Egyptians to "spoil" their captors. They were to ask for articles they could carry **away** with them when they left the land of their captivity—articles of silver and gold and other precious things. This was to compensate

the Israelites for the wages that had been denied them during their bondage.

The Israelites did as Moses commanded. They collected the spoils from their oppressors who gladly gave them all they requested. The grief and fear of the Egyptians over the loss of their firstborn made them willing to do as the Israelites asked. Throughout the day following the plague, the Israelites continued to prepare to leave Egypt. That evening (the 15th of Nisan), the Israelites went out "in haste" from among their captors. Having observed the solemn and fearsome Passover the evening before (on the 14th of Nisan, the first month of the Hebrew Calendar), they now began their journey out of Egypt by the light of a full moon. That night was referred to as **A Night To Be Much Observed** in the Bible, and it is still observed by New Testament Christians today who keep the Feasts God has commanded in the Bible. It is observed today as a special dinner during which God's people reflect upon their parallel deliverance from the bondage of sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ:

Exodus 12:42: 42 It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations. KJV, NKJV

QUESTION

Besides the oppression of bondage suffered by the people of Israel in Egypt, what charge did God level against Egypt? What made Egypt so evil?

Chapter 19 of the Book of Isaiah is a prophecy against Egypt. In this prophecy Egypt is portrayed as being a

land full of idols. The nation was very wealthy, which caused the rulers of the land to be filled with arrogance and pride. Idol worship and the vanity of this world were Egypt's downfall. God used Egypt as a symbol for sin because of this. >>

QUESTION

What does the term “throughout their generations” in Exodus 12:42 mean?

The term simply means that the solemn service mentioned in the scripture above was to be kept by the Israelites forever, perpetually. >>

The Bible tells us the Israelites' escape from Egypt was made in haste. That is significant to the meaning of the Feast that is the subject of this Bible Study. Their hasty departure from Egypt meant the Israelites could not take time to prepare victuals for their journey. *Exodus 12:39* tells us what happened:

Exodus 12:39: 39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves. NKJV

QUESTION

What is meant by the term “unleavened”?

The leaven referred to in this scripture is yeast. Yeast is the substance most often used to cause bread dough to rise. The fermenting of the yeast releases a gas that enters the dough leaving holes that give it a light and airy texture. Yeast is commonly found in the air we breathe. Fresh dough left out for a period of time will puff up as yeast spores from the air enter into it.

This process, however, takes considerable time. The Israelites had to flee Egypt quickly, and thus had to eat their bread baked without leaven. >>

Unleavened bread took on a very significant meaning for the Israelites. **After their exodus from Egypt**, God instituted an annual festival that was to serve as a reminder of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The festival was called the Feast of Unleavened Bread and was to last seven days—the same amount of time the Israelites took to flee Egypt. **Immediately before the festival, they were** to remove leavening from their dwellings. **During the Feast days, the Israelites were only to eat bread that was** unleavened.

The instituted observance of this annual festival, The Feast of Unleavened Bread, introduced some concepts to God's people about what their **lives were** to be like after they made their escape from Egypt. During the festival the flat bread took on a special meaning: it came to represent a sinless life. This sinless life was only attainable if one fled “Egypt”, which during the festival came to represent the way of the world that is in opposition to God's way.

Leavening also took on special significance. During the festival, leavening came to represent sin. God wanted to impress on His peoples' minds that they were not to return to the way of this world, but were to strive to live a life free from the idolatry and vanity that were the downfall of Egypt. Thus, for this short period of time they were not to consume anything with leavening in it, but were instead commanded to eat the unleavened bread representing a righteous or sinless life. The festival was to be a memorial of their flight from Egypt for the freedom of God's promised land, a type of the Kingdom of God (For an understanding of the

Kingdom of God, please read our free booklet, *The Gospel According to Christ*).

It is important to remember that God, by Moses, commanded the Israelites, “seven days you shall eat unleavened bread” (*Exodus 12:15*). In his account of this story, Moses wrote in the book of Exodus that the use of unleavened bread was to become a central piece in this annual festival that the Israelites were to observe FOREVER:

Exodus 12:14: 14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance FOR EVER. KJV

QUESTION

What was the purpose of keeping the Feast?

The Feast was to be kept as a memorial. It was to serve as an annual reminder of the deliverance God had given the Israelites from their oppressors. It pictured their need to eschew all forms of idol worship and strive against vanity, which was Egypt's downfall. >>

QUESTION

What is an ordinance?

An ordinance is defined as an authoritative rule or law; a decree or command. God had given an ordinance to the Israelites that this Feast was to be observed FOREVER (Re-read *Exodus 12:14*). >>

The Israelites Obeyed God's Commands

Exodus 12:39: 39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual. KJV

As the exodus began, There wasn't time for the released captives to use yeast in their bread to make it “puff up” or rise into the customary soft loaves. The Israelites were on the move and so their bread remained flat throughout the seven-day journey out of Egypt. The flat bread was later called the “bread of affliction” because of the oppressed Israelites' need for deliverance (*Deuteronomy 16:3*).

The Hebrew word used for affliction in *Deuteronomy 16:3* meant misery, depression, poverty or trouble. All these words can be used to describe the condition of the lives of the Israelites as they suffered under the abusive oppression of their captors. The Bible tells us the Israelites went out of Egypt with a high hand, joyfully.

There are two special days that begin and end the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They are holy convocations:

Exodus 12:15-17: 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 (FOREVER). NKJV

QUESTION

How many days were the Israelites to convene before the Lord?

Exodus 12:15-17 tells us this Feast lasts seven days.

Before that time all leaven was to be removed from the Israelites' dwellings. The first and last day of the Feast were to be holy convocations during which no regular work was to be done. The word convocation means an assembly. The Israelites were commanded to assemble before the Lord in order to hear the word of the Lord as it was **taught** to them (*Deuteronomy 4:10*). >>

While the Feast was instituted as a memorial of the Israelites' deliverance from bondage, it took on a much greater meaning. It should be noted here that the greater significance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread makes it relevant to every human being who has ever lived.

God Gives The Feasts To Israel

The book of Exodus, written by Moses under inspiration from God, is the history of Israel's deliverance from their slavery in Egypt. In the Exodus 12 account, before Israel is delivered from bondage to the Egyptians, God introduces His sacred calendar that includes His annual festivals to be kept (celebrated) as an everlasting ordinance. **The first is the Passover:**

Exodus 12:1-20: 1 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, *2* "This month shall

be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. *3* Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb (to be used for Passover), according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. *4* And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. *5* Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. *6* Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month... *14* 'So this day shall be to you a (Passover) memorial; 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.

Following the Passover, the Israelites were given another feast, The Feast of Unleavened Bread. **While we we have already used portions of the following passage, it is important we read it now in its entirety:**

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.” NKJV

REVIEW QUESTION

How long were the Israelites to eat unleavened bread?

As stated earlier, the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasts a full seven days, and from the first day of the Festival, beginning on the 15th of Nissan, to the last, the Israelites were told they must eat unleavened bread. Before the Feast of Unleavened Bread began, they were to remove all leavening from their dwellings. For seven days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread they were to have NOTHING LEAVENED in their homes. [Note: It is important to understand that God begins and ends days at sunset, not at midnight as is customary today.] >>

QUESTION

What happened to a person if he or she ate leavened bread during this festival?

The person who ate leavened bread was to be “cut off” from the congregation of Israel. They were to be excommunicated, and could no longer dwell among the Israelites. Obviously, leavening took on a meaning that had to do with a person’s physical salvation (that is a person’s opportunity to dwell safely among their own people and under God’s protection). >>

LET’S REVIEW: The Bible tells us God’s feast days were not only for the specific year in which the Israelites escaped bondage, but were to be kept FOREVER! Israel was to annually rehearse how God had intervened to free them from the bondage of Egyptian slavery—AND FOREVER MEANS FOREVER! That means God intended his chosen people to observe this festival perpetually. In this Bible Study you will learn why this festival is to be observed by New Testament Christians as well. >>

The above scriptures reveal God’s calendar, beginning in the spring. The first feast day mentioned in the passage is the Passover memorial, followed by a description of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Passover symbols, as discussed in detail in our Bible Study on that subject, reveal the fact that a person cannot truly gain freedom from the slavery of this present evil world symbolized by Egypt (*Galatians 1:3-4*) without first accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, symbolized by the Passover Lamb in the Old Testament and the wine and unleavened bread in the New Testament [*1 Corinthians 11:23-26* (Christ being the lamb of God that was sacrificed)]. The seven days of unleavened bread that follow teach the need to flee COMPLETELY out of the ungodly, sinful way of this world.

New Testament Christians are required to follow after this example as well, realizing that once they have accepted the blood of Jesus Christ as payment for their sins, they must **discontinue all ungodly behavior that** is of this world. But, as the Biblical example goes on to show, the Israelites, just like Christians today, needed God’s help if they were to make that journey. They needed **God’s continual guidance and help** as

symbolized by the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day that led the Israelites, showing them the way as they trekked out of Egypt for seven days:

Exodus 13:21: 21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. NKJV

QUESTION

***Who was it that guided the Israelites?
Was it an angel as some believe, or was it the Lord, himself?***

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 tells us the one who accompanied the Israelites throughout their journey was none other than Jesus Christ. Be sure to read this scripture and mark it in your Bible. Christ, in both the Old and the New Testaments, is the one who brings his people out from under the bondage of this world! >>

For seven days (seven being God's number symbolizing perfection or completion) Israel took their journey out of Egypt, all the while eating the unleavened bread He had commanded them to eat. They were not to tarry in Egypt, but were to hasten in their journey toward freedom. These seven days symbolically picture a New Testament Christian's life—one of rejecting the way of this world and striving to lead a sinless life [though the Bible tells us we all fall short (*Romans 3:23*)]. The seventh day of eating unleavened bread was the day God severed the Egyptian Pharaoh's hold over the Israelites:

Exodus 14:21-31: 21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the

sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. **22** So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. **23** And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

Comment: Egypt's Pharaoh, the stiff necked, evil minded oppressor who resisted God and persecuted the Israelites is in type the same as the individual who rules over the world today, that is, he is a type of Satan the Devil! If you do not understand the role of Satan in the world today, please request a copy of our article, *Is There Really A Devil?*

24 Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. **25** And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." **27** And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. **28** Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

29 But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. **30** So the LORD

saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

31 Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses. NKJV

QUESTION

Who was the one who punished the Egyptians?

These scriptures show us that the Lord is the one who brings ultimate punishment on evildoers. The Israelites were saved from the fearsome wrath of their enemies by God's intervention, but they were not the ones responsible for destroying them. God destroyed the pursuing Egyptians. This event foreshadows a time in the future when God will judge all humanity, dividing the wicked from the righteous, and sentencing the wicked to death in the Lake of Fire (*Revelation 20:14-15*). This is a fearsome prospect, and one that is intended to deter all men from living the way of sin. >>

In effect, as the waters parted for the Israelites, then rushed in to drown the Egyptian army that pursued them, a picture was drawn that is as relevant today as it was then. That picture shows the step to salvation that must happen for every individual who is to come out of the bondage of sin. That step is baptism. The Israelites went down into the sea, beneath the walls of the water that mounted high above them, and came out freed, the power of sin being crushed as the waves covered over the army of their oppressor. The Israelites were no longer subject to the power of Egypt, just as the Christian is freed, through Jesus Christ, from the power of sin that rules over this evil world:

John 8:33-36: 33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will

be made free'?" **34** Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. **35** And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. **36** Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. NKJV

Israel's Part

Israel's part was to obey God's commands. They did this by **obeying God's command to flee Egypt in haste, carrying their unleavened bread dough with them as they marched away from their captors:**

Exodus 12:33-34, 37-38: 33 And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." **34** So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders.....**37** Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. **38** A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds — a great deal of livestock. NKJV

Israel was to remember how God had intervened and brought them out of bondage by His great power. This is relevant for New Testament Christians **as well**: only God, through Jesus Christ, can really free us from sin! By themselves the ancient Israelites could not have freed themselves from slavery, just as no human can **free him or herself from** the slavery of sin and **from** its penalty, death:

Romans 3:23: 23 For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. NKJ

Romans 6:23: 23 ... the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NKJV

QUESTION

What does the above scripture tell us about sin?

This scripture points out the seriousness of sin. It tells us sin has wages. Those wages are death: that is sin earns us death. In the New Testament Christ is shown as having to pay the penalty for sin through his terrible beating and death so that humanity can be freed from the ultimate penalty of sin — **eternal death**. Though it is given to all people “once to die” (*Hebrews 9:27-28*), God’s plan for his creation will result in an opportunity for all humans through the resurrection from death (*Revelation 20:11-15*) to qualify for eternal life. If they fail, they will pay the penalty of the “second” death (*Revelation 20:14*) in the Lake of Fire! This is very important for Christians to understand, especially in a time like ours when people treat sin very lightly. This is a scripture everyone should memorize! >>

The Days of Unleavened Bread To Be An Annual Festival

This festival was to be an annual celebration for Israel to be kept “from generation to generation” to remind them of how God brought them out of slavery through His intervention and His powerful miracles. They were to recite the history of these events to their children. By doing so they were to instruct their children to keep God’s laws and feasts:

Exodus 13:3-4: 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. *4* On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. NKJV

Exodus 13:8-10: 8 And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.’ *9* It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. *10* You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year. NKJV

QUESTION

When are we to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

When were the Israelites told to observe the Feast? The scripture above tells us it was to be observed in “its season” from year to year. Which season is referred to? It is the spring season. On the Hebrew Calendar, the month Abib (also referred to as Nisan) is the first month of the year. This month corresponds to March-April on the Gregorian calendar that is commonly used today. It is important to note the festival was to be observed at the same time every year! >>

Christians To Keep God's Feasts Today

In First Corinthians, chapter 11 the Apostle Paul states emphatically that he had received direct instructions from Christ that Christians are to keep the Passover:

1 Corinthians 11:23-26: 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; *24* and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” *25* In the same

manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. NKJV

QUESTION

What is different about this ceremony from the one observed by the ancient Israelites:

It is clear from these scriptures that Christ established a new manner for observing the Passover. Since his life's blood was about to be shed for the remission of sin, Christ was showing his disciples how they would observe the Passover in the future. Rather than slaying a lamb, Christ **commanded** them to use unleavened bread and wine to represent his broken body and his blood that were offered up for them in sacrifice for their sins. >>

QUESTION

How often did Paul say you are to keep the Passover?

Some are confused by Paul's statement in verse 26. They think he meant you can take the Passover as often as you want. In churches today, some believe this can be done in a weekly service. That, however, is to ignore what we have already shown in this Bible Study. That is that God revealed his holy calendar to ancient Israel and told them to keep the feasts in their season. This clearly limits taking the Passover **to** once each year on the 14th of Nisan as God clearly commanded in the Old Testament. The Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th of Nisan, following the Passover. To take the feasts in any other order would cloud the meaning of these holy days. >>

This ceremony related by Paul is the same as that practiced by Christ! How did Christ identify this memorial?

Luke 22:15: 15..."With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; NKJV

Christ called this special service the Passover. Paul makes it clear that following God's instruction to keep His Feasts does not end with keeping the Passover, however. He is emphatic that true followers of Christ must go on to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, striving to put sin out of their lives:

1 Corinthians 5:6-8: 6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **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 (Feast of Unleavened Bread), not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. NKJV

QUESTION

What did Paul mean when he told them to "purge out the old leaven"?

Paul was referring to the practice of putting leavening out of their homes during the days of Unleavened Bread. He was emphasizing the importance of continuing the practice of symbolically putting leavening that represented "sin" out of their homes so that they would be reminded of the need for every Christian to put sin out of their lives. >>

Paul's instructions to the Corinthian congregation explain the connection between accepting the sacrifice of Christ (rehearsed in the Passover service) and the Christian life of overcoming sin pictured by the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Purpose of God's Annual Feasts

Each Feast or Festival picturing God's plan of salvation is a **period** of time ordained by God for spiritual and physical rejuvenation. God has ordained this time as holy time! God refers to these annual Sabbaths as "holy convocations". A holy convocation is a commanded assembly. It is an assembly commanded by a higher authority. The Lord God Himself calls such assemblies for His people for the purpose of worshipping him:

Leviticus 23:6-8: 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." NKJV

REVIEW QUESTION

How many days were to be set aside for holy convocations during the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

The above scripture makes it clear that the Feast has two days, the first and the last, that were observed as special days on which God's people came together

before him. Note that on these days no "customary" work was to be done. Customary work was the work needed for earning a living. The people were not to go to work on these two days. They could, however, do the work needed to prepare their food and other necessities. >>

Like the Israelites who had to be delivered from their slavery **in** Egypt that was ruled over by a cruel and oppressive Pharaoh, Christians must be delivered from living the way of this world under the influence of Satan the Devil. This world's way is against the way of God. **There is neither submission to God nor recognition of** who the true God is. In fact, many professing Christian churches teach that the very laws of God have been done away with, but God's word says **otherwise**:

1 John 3:4: 4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. NKJV

1 John 2:3-4: 3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. *4* He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. NKJV

Christians are to be separate from the world and come out of such anti-God, lawless thinking:

II Corinthians 6:17-18: 17 Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean (anything that is against God's way), and I will receive you." *18* "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty." NKJV

The Spiritual Meaning Of Leavening

In chapters 4-5 of 1st Corinthians, Paul is explaining the symbolism and meaning of leavening to the Gentile congregation. Please note that Paul is teaching New Testament Christians about leavening in connection with becoming spiritually unleavened or free from sin. The Corinthians were allowing a person to fellowship with them who was **admittedly practicing the sin of fornication** with his step-mother. Such tolerance of sin was causing the congregation to be “puffed up” or arrogant. They considered themselves more righteous and forgiving than God. They were **BROADMINDED!** This is an amazing example of the truth of the scripture that says, “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”. The whole congregation was succumbing to sin because of the sin of one individual. To appreciate the circumstance the Apostle Paul was describing, read Paul’s warning beginning **1 Corinthians 4:17 thru 5:8**.

Just like the congregation Paul was addressing, this world is very tolerant of sin. Even the highest courts of the land endorse openly sinful ways. However, we should always remember that sin is the transgression of God’s law and is not to be tolerated in a Christian’s life or condoned. Doing so is to allow sin to puff up the mind, forming attitudes of arrogance and rebellion against God Himself! By condoning sin, the entire Corinthian congregation became puffed up or vain in their thinking. By putting the sinning member out of their congregation, in accordance with Paul’s instruction, they put out the spiritual leaven that had begun to permeate the entire church. In verse 8 of chapter 5, Paul commands the gentile converts to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread and to keep it without the “leaven of sin” which he defines as malice and wickedness.

Other scriptures that clearly show leavening being used as a symbol of sin can be found in **Matthew 16:6**,

11-12 and **Luke 12:1**. Please review these in your own Bible.

How The Church Keeps The Days Of Unleavened Bread Today

There are a number of examples that show the New Testament Church observed the Festival of the Days of Unleavened Bread. Two occur in **Acts 12:1-5** and **20:6**. You should study these scriptures for yourself and make note of them in your Bible.

In **Luke 4:4** Christ tells us that we are to live by every word of God. While instructing Timothy, Paul said “All scripture is given by the inspiration of God” (**II Timothy 3:16**). Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures from his youth (**II Timothy 3:15**). What scriptures are being referenced here? The holy scriptures of the Old Testament! New Testament teachings were based upon the Old Testament scriptures, and those scriptures are applicable today:

II Timothy 3:16: 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, NKJV

QUESTION

What does the above verse mean when it says ALL scripture? Did it mean New Testament scriptures only?

At the time of Paul’s writing, the New Testament had not been compiled. Paul’s letters were still scattered among their recipients. The gospel accounts were still being written or were in the hands of those to whom they were committed for safekeeping. The Book of Revelation did not yet exist. It is evident Paul was speaking of the Old Testament scriptures from

which he and all other writers of the New Testament frequently quoted. >>

Important: The Old Testament **says** God commanded the Israelites to keep the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread before they left Egypt. At that time rituals involving animal sacrifice had not yet become part of the observance of these annual Festivals. Later on, burnt offerings were added as a result of Israel's disobedience to God:

Jeremiah 7:21-23: 21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. *22* For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. *23* But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.' NKJV

The sacrifices were a foreshadowing that was symbolic of Christ's sacrifice to be fulfilled by His crucifixion and resurrection. These ritualistic sacrifices were not originally part of the commanded holy day observances. Therefore, the sacrifices are not a part of the New Testament observance of the annual festivals, Christ having fulfilled the purpose for those sacrifices by becoming the true and final offering for sin.

Just as Paul told the congregation in Corinth to keep the Feast by putting leavening out, both physically and spiritually, the New Testament church needs to learn these lessons by removing all leavening from their homes. By following the command to remove physical leavening from their homes, Christians are reminded

that they must put sin out of their lives. This physical exercise promotes self-examination that is needed to recognize sin and overcome it:

II Corinthians 13:5: 5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you — unless indeed you fail the test? NASU

Comment: Leavening is a symbol or type of sin only during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Conclusion

God's annual festivals are holy times set aside for worshipping God. They must be observed on the specific days set apart by God. Only God can make time and days holy: humans do not have that authority. God has ordained specific calendar days for the observance of the Days of Unleavened Bread (*Leviticus 23:5-6*). This festival falls during the first month of God's sacred calendar given to Israel in Egypt (*Exodus 12:1-2*). The Days of Unleavened Bread are kept the day after the Passover in the month **Nisan**, the first month of God's calendar. This month corresponds to March-April of our modern calendar.

Two of God's feasts actually require the use of unleavened bread. The first is Passover which falls on Nisan 14, and only requires that unleavened bread be eaten at the Passover ceremony because it represents Christ's sinless sacrifice. During the seven days of Unleavened Bread that follow on Nisan 15-21 all leaven must be removed from Christian's homes, and the participants must eat only unleavened bread during the seven days. This corresponds to Christ's having paid the penalty for sin so that Christians can be delivered from their bondage to sin. That means they can be forgiven

and can put on the righteousness of God
(II *Corinthians 5:21*).

The first and the seventh days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread are holy days that include holy convocations. A holy convocation is a religious assembly commanded by God for the purpose of worship, fellowship, and rejoicing (*Psalms 42:4*). Instructions on how to keep these days are set forth in a number of places in God's word. Please review the following scriptures in your Bible: *Leviticus 23:6-7*; *Numbers 28:17-18*; *Deuteronomy 16:4*; and *Exodus 13:6-7*.

The seven days of Unleavened Bread are annual reminders that we must strive to put sin out of our lives. The number seven signifies completion, meaning a Christian's entire life is to be devoted to putting sin out of his or her life. Just as the Israelites had to step out, marching out of Egypt, Christians perform their part in coming out of sin by "unleavening" their lives. However, human effort alone cannot deliver us from slavery to Egypt or to Satan, the evil ruler of this world (*John 12:31*; *14:30* and *16:11*). To make our escape from sin, God promises a greater power than can be produced from our human efforts. He promises the power of His Spirit to those who repent and are baptized, which brings us to the third step of God's master plan for the salvation of mankind pictured by the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. Pentecost is the subject of our next Bible Study in this series. Be sure to watch for our announcement when it becomes available.

For additional information on this vital subject, we invite you to visit our web site at WorldWatchToday.org or send your requests and questions to:

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