

# THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Leviticus 23:6-8; Exodus 12:15-20

## INTRODUCTION

- For most of us, life without bread would be unimaginable
- Bread is important culturally, and health-wise, but also religiously
- It is found in the tabernacle
- The breaking of bread is a term describing the fellowship of believers around a meal
- The word bread is used figuratively (Psalm 127:2; 43:3)
- Bread featured prominently in the life and teachings of Christ
  - ✓ He refused the devil's temptation to turn stones into bread
  - ✓ He taught the disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread"
  - ✓ He described his ministry of healing as "bread" given to children (Matthew 15:26)
  - ✓ He miraculously fed multitudes with bread
  - ✓ Jesus is called the "bread of God" and the "bread of life" (John 6:33,35)

- ✓ At the Last Supper, he declared the bread to be his broken body
- It is a particular bread we are considering today, “unleavened bread”, and the feast which bears the same name.
- The Feast of Passover was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan, while the Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan and continued for seven days, the first and last days being special Sabbaths
- The terms Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread are used interchangeably in Scripture, and the two feasts were observed as one (Ezekiel 45:21; Matthew 26:17; Luke 22:1)
- At the very first Passover in Egypt, the Israelites were commanded to eat the meal in haste, fully clothed, with shoes on and staff in hand, because the Lord promised them a swift deliverance from their bondage.
- One of the reasons they must eat unleavened bread is that there was no time to allow the leavening process to take place in the dough
- By baking unleavened bread, the children of Israel were not only obeying God, they were confessing their trust in God that he would indeed deliver them speedily
- But leaven in Scripture is a type of evil and sin, so there is much spiritual significance in this ordinance to eat only unleavened bread during the feast, and to remove all leaven from the houses and lives of God’s people

## **I. THE PICTURE OF CHRIST THE LORD**

### **A. Christ is the bread of life**

1. Manna is a type of Christ, who is the bread of God “which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (John 6:33)
2. As bread gives man health and life, so Jesus Christ brings eternal life to all those who believe upon him (John 6:35)

### **B. The unleavened bread portrays Christ’s purity**

1. He knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21)
2. In him is no sin (1 John 3:5)
3. He is without sin (Hebrews 4:15)

## **II. THE PURGING OF CORRUPTING LEAVEN**

### **A. Leaven as a type of evil**

1. The leaven (sourdough or yeast) was introduced to the lump of dough, which began the fermenting process, causing the bread to rise
2. It was forbidden to be offered with blood and with any burnt offerings (Exodus 34:25; Leviticus 2:11; 10:12), though could be included with thank offerings (Leviticus 7:13; Amos 4:5), and for the wave offering at firstfruits (Leviticus 23:17)

3. Only a small amount of leaven is required to affect the whole lump (1 Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9)
  - a. It can creep in without out notice
  - b. Small sins lead to greater sins
  - c. "Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."
4. Leaven spreads quickly (cf. Hebrews 12:15)
5. Leaven puffs up (1 Corinthians 5:2)

## B. The leavens of the New Testament

1. The leaven of the Pharisees – hypocrisy (Luke 12:1)
  - a. The Lord Jesus firmly rebuked these hypocrites and exposed them for the wicked sinners they truly were (Matthew 23)
  - b. They have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5)
  - c. Robert Murray McCheyne said, "What a man is on his knees before God, that he is, and nothing more."
2. The leaven of the Sadducees – liberalism / unbelief (Matthew 16:11-12)
3. The leaven of Herod – worldliness and politicising (Mark 8:15)

- a. Herod was a “fox” that liked to pander both to the Jews and Gentiles (Luke 13:32)
- b. We are warned against being conformed to this world (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18)
- 4. The old leaven – the former life (1 Corinthians 5:8)
  - a. We are to forget those things which are behind (Philippians 3:13)
  - b. We must never regard with fondness the former life of sin (Numbers 11:4-6)
  - c. We must not look back with guilt on those sins that Christ’s blood has forgiven
  - d. But we ought to look back at the past life with abhorrence, with humble gratitude for God’s redeeming grace, and with a resolve to never return to it again (Ephesians 2:1-3)
- 5. The leaven of malice (1 Corinthians 5:8; Matthew 5:44; Proverbs 24:17-18; 1 John 2:9-10)
- 6. The leaven of wickedness (1 Corinthians 5:8)
- C. All leaven must be removed
  - 1. “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14)
  - 2. “Flee also youthful lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22)

3. "...bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5)
4. "Neither give place to the devil." (Ephesians 4:27)

### **III. THE PARTAKING OF THE CONSECRATED LOAF**

#### **A. First the Passover, then the Unleavened Bread**

1. The typological order is critical here
2. First the sinner must come by faith to the justifying blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ
3. Only then can he be sanctified by the removing of the leaven and the feeding upon Christ
4. Legalists think they do not need the blood of Christ, but can justify themselves before God by purging the leaven from their lives
5. Antinomians on the other hand, think that they can be justified by the blood, but have no need to remove leaven from their lives
6. "As the Passover is a type of the death of Christ, so the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a type of the "Walk" of the Believer, and there should be no interval between the salvation of a soul and its entrance on a holy life and walk." (Larkin)

#### **B. The bread of nourishment**

1. While negatively the leaven must be removed, positively, the bread must be consumed
2. The feast held during Hezekiah's rule, shows the joyous celebration of God's grace that it was intended to be (2 Chronicles 30)
3. The Christian life is not just a removing of evil, it is a replacing of it with Christ, righteousness, joy, peace, and all other benefits of grace that he gives us
4. The justified believer has left the old leaven behind him, and now "keeps the feast" in sincerity and truth, daily feeding upon Christ (1 Corinthians 5:8)

#### C. The bread of remembrance

1. The unleavened bread is called "bread of affliction" because it recalled the bondage they suffered in Egypt, and the deliverance that God wrought for them (Deuteronomy 16:3)
2. Today, the Jews eat the "matzo" which is striped and pierced, yet do not see the clear picture of Christ in it
3. Christ gave to the church the Lord's Supper which is an ordinance of remembrance, to bring to our hearts and minds the suffering of Christ on our behalf

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Only those who have been saved by the blood of Christ, our Passover, may begin the new life of holiness pictured in the Unleavened Bread

2. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?
3. Are you seeking to purge out the leaven of the world and the flesh from your life?
4. When was the last time you removed something from your life that you were convicted about as being displeasing to God?
5. While Israel's offerings were not to have leaven, all of their meat offerings were required to have salt, which is the opposite of leaven
6. Is your life, thoughts, actions and words "seasoned with salt", bringing the savour of Christ to others, and the preserving effect of a righteous life to the world? (Mark 9:50)
7. Will you pray with David: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23-24)