

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

Immediately after the Passover comes a Festival that depicts the next step in the fulfillment of God's master plan. After God, through Christ's sacrifice, has forgiven us of our sins, we must continue to avoid sin, and go on living in the newness of life. How do we live as God's redeemed people? The Feast of Unleavened Bread shows us remarkably how this was accomplished in Christ.

Each year as the Israelites observed this Feast, it reminded them of God's deliverance of their forefathers from Egypt. Just as God delivered ancient Israel, He delivers us from our sins and difficulties.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is the fifteenth day of the month of Nisan, which is the day following Passover. It is a seven-day Festival to the Lord (Leviticus 23:6-7, Exodus 12:7-8,14-17). On the fifteenth of Nisan and for the next seven days, God forbid the people to have any leavened bread in their houses.

God's Commandments for the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Exodus 12:14-17 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. ¹⁵ Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. ¹⁷ And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generation by an ordinance for ever.

God gave a ceremony of searching and removing leaven from the house prior to the festival of unleavened bread in preparation for the festival (vs.15)

Purging Leaven from the House

Spiritually, believers in the Lord Jesus are the house of God (Hebrews 3:6, 1 Peter 2:5). Leaven (sin) is to be cleaned out of our house, which is our body (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19-20).

We cleanse the leaven (sin) from our houses (lives) by allowing the Holy Spirit to reveal to us, through the knowledge of Christ and the Scriptures, the sin that is in our lives. It is only through God's Word that we are able to identify sin in our lives.

2 Corinthians 5:21 Jesus, who became our leaven (sin), died upon the tree so that whosoever would believe in Him would be cleaned of all leaven (sin). For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, was sacrificed for the forgiveness of our sins, thus unleavening, or cleansing, our lives.

Purging Out Of Sin

The fifteenth of Nisan marks the beginning of a seven-day feast period when Israel was to eat bread without leaven (sin) in remembrance of their baking unleavened bread in their haste to escape Egypt. The primary theme of this Feast is the purging out of leaven (sin). Historically, there are two notable events that happened on this day-

1. The Exodus journey beginning from Egypt (Exodus 12:41). In Deuteronomy 16:3, the bread is referred to as "the bread of affliction."
2. The burial of Jesus after His crucifixion, who is the Bread of Life (John 6:35).

The Festivals are fixed appointments of God specifying what He will perform and the exact time He will perform it. The Jews had to hurry to put the Lord's body in the ground because of the High Sabbath that was drawing near. This would

mean that Jesus died on the fourteenth of Nisan, the day of Passover. Jesus was in the sepulcher (grave) the day following His crucifixion, which was the fifteenth of Nisan, the first day of Unleavened Bread.

THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD IN THE BIBLE

- The Feast of Unleavened Bread was so much a part of Passover that the names of Passover and Unleavened Bread were used interchangeably, almost synonymously with each other (Luke 22:1).

- The Feast was to be kept seven days (Exodus 12:15-19). The number seven is the biblical number for completion or fullness. The believer who keeps this feast is to keep it fully unto the Lord and set himself aside completely to Him. The Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks of complete separation from all things that are leavened (sinful) and feeding upon Jesus, who is the believer's bread (John 6:32-36).

- The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a high sabbath day. During Passover, there is an extra sabbath besides the weekly sabbath. These sabbaths are called high sabbaths. The high sabbath of Unleavened Bread can be seen in John 19:31.

- Unleavened bread is used for consecration and separation. It is also anointed with oil. The believers in Christ are to be consecrated and separated to do the work that God has called us to do and to live a life that is holy to Him. If we do this, the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God will rest upon our lives.
 - The bread represents consecration (Exodus 29:2-23).
 - It was included in the sacred vow of separation of the Nazarites (Numbers 6:1-21).
 - It was the food for the priests in the meal and peace offering (Leviticus 2:4, 6:14-18).
 - It marked Israel's divine separation from Egypt's (the world's) life of slavery and bondage (Exodus 12:17,30-34).
 - All leaven was to be put away (Exodus 12:15,19-20). When leaven or yeast is placed in an unleavened batch of dough, the leaven puffs up

the dough. So also, when we allow sin into our lives, it will puff us up in pride and arrogance (1 Corinthians 4:18).

In the Bible, God referred to the leaven of different groups of people:

1. The leaven of Herod (Mark 8:14-15)
2. The leaven of the Pharisees (Mark 8:15, Matthew 23:1-3, Luke 11:37-44)
3. The leaven of the Sadducees (Matthew 16:6-12). The Sadducees did not believe in the supernatural. They denied the existence of the Spirit of God, angels and the resurrection (Mark 12:18, Acts 23:6-8)
4. The leaven at Corinth. The leaven at Corinth was division, jealousy, and tolerance of sexual misconduct (1 Corinthians 5:1-13, 6:9-11, 16-18, 2 Corinthians 12:20-21).

Spiritually, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is kept in sincerity and truth. Sincerity involves purity and serving God with a pure heart. It involves putting away the sin that is in our lives, and separating ourselves from all evil that has a corrupting influence in our life. Historically, Israel learned that keeping the Feast meant a complete separation from Egypt's religion, bondage, food, and slavery, as well as its worldly glory, wisdom, and splendor.

The children of Israel took the dough before it was leavened because they could not tarry in Egypt (Exodus 12:34, 39). As believers in the Lord Jesus, we are to flee the world's ways and philosophies that are contrary to the Word of God.