

SABBATH THOUGHT 2023-03-25—FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

The previous Sabbath Thought discussed the meaning of leaven and sin. Leaven is not **all** sin, but rather it represents serious sin that is spread to others. Scripture clearly defines it as idolatry and witchcraft¹, divisions and offenses², malice and wickedness³, hypocrisy⁴, sexual immorality⁵, etc. They can be personal sins that affect or influence others, taught as part of a national culture such as idolatry, or evil works that are publicly flaunted as is the case with homosexuality and abortion. Leaven sin, at the very least, exposes others to it. At the worst, leaven sin entices others to commit sin. Solomon mentions the very worst of (and most common) leaven sins:

PROVERBS 6:16-19 These six *things* **doth the LORD hate**: yea, **seven are an abomination** unto him: 17 A **proud look**, a **lying tongue**, and **hands that shed innocent blood**, 18 An heart that deviseth **wicked imaginations**, feet that be swift in running to **mischief**, 19 A **false witness** that speaketh lies, and he that soweth **discord** among brethren.

Whether or not we partake of those sins, they are ever-present everywhere. Many of us participated in leaven sins in the past such as by keeping and promoting the pagan holidays. Paul calls those sins the “old leaven”⁶ because we participated in them prior to our conversion when we followed the ways of the world. After baptism, we are to live in the unleaven of sincerity and truth⁷. This means that when we do sin, we feel shame and remorse and go before God and Jesus Christ in the fullness of repentance. **PERSONAL SINS ARE NOT REPRESENTED BY LEAVEN BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT TO DO THEM AND ARE NOT TRYING TO SPREAD THEM.** Sincerity and truth **is** unleaven because they are foundational for true repentance and required when we come before God and ask His forgiveness for our sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So, what is the meaning behind the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Read what Moses told the ancient Israelites when they left Egypt:

EXODUS 13:3-8 And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, **in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place**: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. 4 This day came ye out in the month Abib [*or Nissan 15*]. 5 And

¹ Especially 1 Sam. 15:23. Also 2 Kings 21:11; Isa 31:7; Ezek. 23:49; 37:23; Hos. 13:2; et al.

² Rom. 16:17.

³ 1 Cor. 5:8.

⁴ Mat. 16:6, 12; 23.

⁵ 1 Cor. 5:1-2.

⁶ 1 Cor. 5:7.

⁷ 1 Cor. 5:8.

it shall be **when the LORD shall bring thee into the land** of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. 6 Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day *shall be* a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. 8 And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.

There are several key aspects mentioned in these verses. First, God brought the ancient Israelites OUT of bondage. While that was specifically physical slavery, it also, and more importantly, included the idolatry of the Egyptians. However, just as central to the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the fact that God brought them INTO a land AWAY from the leaven of the Egyptian idolatry.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was to be a remembrance of when the ancient Israelites came OUT of idolatry (leaven) and INTO a land purged of idolatry (the absence of leaven) because God intended “cut off” the indigent nations along with their leaven sin:

EXODUS 23:23-24 For mine Angel shall go before thee [*to the promised land of Canaan*], and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and **I will cut them off.** 24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but **thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.**

If dough represented the ancient Israelites, they were leavened in Egypt by idolatry; however, God wanted them to stop adding leaven to their lives. If they had “baked in” the Law of God into their hearts and minds, they would stop adding leaven and each succeeding generation would become more and more unleavened. Instead, they kept **returning** to the idolatry of the other pagan nations⁸. This is absolutely clear in Ezekiel 20:7-10.

We are to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the same manner God intended for the ancient Israelites. It begins with a holy convocation on the first day, which is “a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is **That Night of the LORD** to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.” (Exod. 12:42). The evening of the first day is called “That Night of the LORD” because it is GOD who liberated them (and us). It a night to be *much observed*. The English translation “much observed” does not give a full sense of the Hebrew meaning, the root of which means to hedge about, guard, protect, attend to, and preserve. That Night of the Lord is much more than recalling our personal salvation by God—we

⁸ Exod. 34:12-18; 2 Sam. 7:23; 2 Kings 17:7-11.

are to guard, protect, attend to, and preserve it. How do we do that? By purging out the “old leaven,” avoiding the “leaven of malice and wickedness,” and living in the “unleaven of sincerity and truth:”

1 CORINTHIANS 5:6-8 Your glorying *is* not good. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore, **purge out the old leaven**, so that you may become a new lump, *even* as you are unleavened. For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. 8 For this reason, 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.**

While Paul talked about the unleaven of sincerity and truth, he understood this from the teachings of Joshua. In his last days, Joshua reminded the ancient Israelites of all that God did in bringing them out of Egypt and into the promised land (Josh. 24:1-13). He finished by saying:

JOSHUA 24:14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and **serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.**

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a time to PROTECT the memory that God liberated us from leaven sin; a time to renew our efforts to GUARD against the leaven sins of this world; and a time to ATTEND TO and PRESERVE our hearts and minds in the unleaven of sincerity and truth through humility and repentance under the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

This is why Paul concluded his discourse to the Corinthians on the Feast of Unleavened Bread by saying:

1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-11 I wrote to you in an epistle **not to associate with the sexually immoral**; 10 And yet, **you can not altogether avoid contact with the sexually immoral** of this world, or **with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters**, since you would then have to go out of the world. 11 But now, I have written to you **not to associate** with anyone who is called a brother, **if he be either sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner**; with such a person *you are* not even to eat.

What is his message? DO NOT ASSOCIATE with others who are committing and spreading serious sins. They are spreading leaven! How do you recognize leaven sins? Because they are spread publicly without remorse or shame—they are “in your face,” so to speak. They affect others the same way leaven affects dough. We must come away from them; avoid them; and STAY unleavened. We must stay humble and keep sincerity and truth in our hearts and minds through avoidance and repentance. Leaven sin was a serious problem for the Corinthians. Paul dealt with it in his first epistle to them as well as his second:

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-17 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? 15 And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? 16 And **what agreement is there between a temple of God and idols? For you are a temple of the living God**, exactly as God said: “I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 17 Therefore, **come out from the midst of them and be separate,**” says *the Lord*, “**and touch not the unclean**, and I will receive you;

As the name implies, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is about being in a state of unleaven—avoiding ALL leaven as much as possible. It is hedging about, guarding, protecting, attending to, and preserving our hearts and minds in the unleaven we have through Christ’s sacrifice. But is it even possible to entirely avoid leaven sin considering the wickedness of the world and its evil works? No, but we should not intentionally let it into our lives and do our best to steer clear of it. So, how do we stay unleavened in the midst of a world swimming in leaven?

EPHESIANS 6:11-18 Put on the whole armor of God so **that you may be able to stand against the wiles** of the devil 12 Because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities *and* against powers, against the world rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual *power* of wickedness in high *places*. 13 Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so **that you may be able to resist** in the evil day, and having worked out all things, **to stand**. 14 **Stand** therefore, having your loins girded about with **truth**, and wearing the breastplate of **righteousness [of God]**, 15 And having your feet shod with *the* preparation of the gospel of **peace**. 16 Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the **faith**, with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; 17 And put on the helmet of **salvation**, and the **sword** of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God**; 18 **Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints;**

We have the truth and righteousness of God, the peace and faith of Jesus Christ, and the salvation and sword of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. This is the POWER of God; this is the SALVATION of God, and this is the PROMISE of God!

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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