

The Feasts of Jehovah (2)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread:

Reading: Lev 23 v 1-8, Ex 12 v 15 – 20 (further details in Num 28 and Deut 16) - Historical
1 Cor 5 v 6 – 8 – Fulfillment

Historical points:

- 1) Timing – The Feast of Unleavened Bread was held between the 15th and 21st day of the first month (Abib or Nisan). This Feast was closely connected with The Feast of Passover. In Deut 16 v 6 we read “...*thou shalt sacrifice the Passover at even, at the going down of the sun*” and Ex 12 v 6 records concerning the Passover lamb “...*the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it between the two evenings*”. The Jewish day ran from sunset to sunset and the Jews defined two evenings. The first evening was at the 9th hour (3pm) when the strength of the sun began to decline and the second was at the setting of the sun, the 11th hour (5pm). The Passover lamb was killed ‘between the two evenings’ and almost immediately the 15th day, The Feast of Unleavened Bread, began. It is wonderful to consider that at the 9th hour, as all over Jerusalem the Passover lamb was slain “*Jesus cried with a loud voiceand gave up the ghost*” – Mark 15 v 34. Truly “*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*” – 1 Cor 5 v 7. The Passover meal was eaten with unleavened bread in the night of the 15th.
- 2) Meaning for the Jews – For the children of Israel this Feast, like Passover, was a remembrance of the day they left Egypt, left a life of bondage and became pilgrims heading for the promised land. It was a remembrance of God’s deliverance. Exodus 12 v 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*”.
- 3) The manner how the feast was observed – The most significant point to note is ‘unleavened bread’. In Ex 13 v7 “*Unleavened bread shall be eaten 7 days: and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters*”. In the historical account of the exodus we read “... *and the people took their dough before it was leavened.....it was not leavened because they were cast out of Egypt, and could not tarry.*” Leaven was a small piece of old (sour) dough in high state of fermentation. It was added to a batch of new dough to make it rise. As this process took time in times of emergencies flat unleavened bread was eaten. In the Feast of Unleavened Bread the removal of leaven was a reminder to the people of their hasty departure from Egypt.

The second point to note was that the first day of the Feast was to be a ‘holy convocation’ and this was repeated on the 7th day (see notes on Passover)

- 4) The final historical point to note is that the Feast of Unleavened Bread involved daily offerings. The details of these offerings are found in Num 28 and included ‘burnt offerings, meat offerings and sin offerings’. All of which pointed forward to the life and death of the Lord Jesus.

Prophetic Truth and Lessons for Us:

We find the answer to this in 1 Cor 5 v 7,8 *“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven...”*. The Passover pointed forward to the death of the Lord Jesus and the propitiation for sins. The Feast of Unleavened Bread pointed forward to the result of the death of the Lord Jesus in the life of his people – holy living. The 2 can not be separated. As believers in the Lord Jesus, those redeemed by his blood we have a duty to ‘keep the feast’, implement the truth of unleavened bread in our lives. At the ‘going down of the sun’ the passover lamb was killed; the 15th day began immediately, there was no gap. This teaches us that holy living begins immediately we believe. On conversion our duty is to live holy, remove leaven from our life e.g. Acts 19 v 18, 19 *“And many that believed.....which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men”*. If there is no holy living, we can doubt a person’s profession 11 Cor 5 v 17 *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* The Feast of Unleavened Bread remembered coming out of Egypt. So we are exhorted in 11 Cor 6 to *“Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing”*. The 7 days of the feast might suggest to us the complete cycle of life. Holy living is not just for old people, not just for the young, but for every believer, in every stage of life, in every circumstance – we can not take holidays from holy living.

The significance of leaven. In our bible leaven speaks of sin (with the possible exception of the parables of the kingdom – see Matt 13) e.g. Luke 12 v 1 *“Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”* It is a corrupting agent and will permeate throughout the whole 1 Cor 5 *“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”* As a little yeast added to dough has an effect on the whole lump, so a little sin corrupts the whole; the life of an individual or a Church. Hence the exhortation in 1 Cor 5 *“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump.”* In Ex 13 we find that not only had leaven not to be eaten, but it had to be removed from their person and homes. In the life of a Christian sin has to be removed completely, from every aspect of our life. What we feed on should be feeding the spiritual man, not the flesh. What do we feed on? What is it that fills our time and our thoughts? We should not be connected with sinful practices or associated with sinful things. This might effect e.g. our employment and our leisure and social activities. The children of Israel were also instructed to remove leaven from their home. So we need to beware of what is in our home – what we watch, listen to and read. It is so easy to allow into our home behaviour, an attitude, that we would never ourselves be involved in. Remember the corrupting influence of leaven – *“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”*.

In 1 Cor 5 Paul deals with sin within the Church at Corinth. He gives the warning in v6 *“Know ye not a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”*. Sin can not be tolerated, or played with, nor controlled. It spreads, corrupts and damages. The course of action must be v7 *“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump”* (a reference back to Exodus). Purge means to cleanse thoroughly. Every member of the Church has an effect on the whole and every member has the responsibility to be pure, to be marked by holy living v8 *“Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven”*. At the moment of conversion the ‘old life is passed away’. Paul continues in v8 *“neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness”* i.e. everything which is displeasing to God. In contrast to this we must *“keep the feast.....with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”*.

Mr. Vine has the following comment on I Cor 5 v 6 – 8:

‘This exhortation as to our manner of life is based, then, upon two facts - 1) that sin, like leaven, imparts its nature to all with which it comes into contact and 2) that the sacrifice of Christ demands the putting away on our part of evil’.