

Unleavened life

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. 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.

Exodus 13:7-8

This feast of unleavened bread that coincided with the Passover was instituted by the LORD for Israel to commemorate their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. As noted in these verses, this annual feast was to be a reminder to those Israelites of God's powerful and swift deliverance, after the final plague upon Pharaoh and his kingdom caused him to relent and send the Israelites away in haste. It was not only a reminder for those delivered, but the annual observance would also be an opportunity for them to rehearse the history to their children, that they also would be aware of God's great power to deliver His people from the bondage of the world.

However, beyond that purpose, we also see the further reach of the symbolic lesson of that literal deliverance employed centuries later by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Gentile Corinthians: *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:6-8).* Just as the purging of leaven from the Israelite households was to remind them of their release from the bondage of Egyptian slavery, the apostle uses the image of leaven representing sin to emphasize to the Corinthian church the importance of purging known sin, and in this context evidently flaunted, from their midst. Just as the Israelites were to flee the bondage of Egypt after that Passover night when the Lord protected their households from the death angel, so New Testament believers are to remove themselves from the bondage to worldly sin, by the power of Christ's eternal sacrifice, which was the ultimate Passover fulfillment.

Just as these memorials for Israel were to remind them of the LORD's grace and mercy in delivering them, so that they would walk in His ways, how much more should we who have been eternally delivered by His grace be constantly remembering to live thankful lives unto Him. "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2)