

First Day of Unleavened Bread—LIVE

The strongest hold is changing and converting the mind

Fred R. Coulter—April 11, 2017

Here we are for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We know the command back in Lev. 23. Lots of times it's good to do detailed study, but there are times when you do overview studies. That helps you fill in the details later. God was very wise in putting it in Lev. 23, because it was a test of faith. It's the only place in the Bible where all of the Holy Days are listed with the dates.

He shows in the first couple of verses that these are His appointed times, Holy convocations and they belong to Him.

There are some people, because the first part of Lev. 23 talks about the Sabbath, who are willing to accept that and cut it off at v 3, rather than go to vs 4 and 5 for the Passover. They don't realize about blindness.

We're all sitting here, because of the law of gravity. Out in space at the space station they're floating around. On earth, the law of gravity is there. It has to be very powerful to hold everything in, plus God has put an atmosphere around it, which then is held because of the law of gravity.

What people don't understand with the Bible and the Word of God is that everything works automatically, like the law of gravity; you drop something, it falls. You throw something up, it's going to come down. *Likewise with sin!*

What God has done, He has put all of this information in Lev. 23 as a starting point, not a finishing thing. It's like the framework, whatever you're going to build: car, house, plane. Whatever you have a framework and you put all the details on it. That's why there's the rest of the Bible.

God also knows that there are those who will not believe, so they will not accept what is written in Lev. 23 as applying to themselves. Or, as the Jews have done, they take the Old Testament and say, 'We don't want the New Testament,' and they don't understand. Isn't it interesting with the Jews?

When are the Jews going to be saved in mass? *When Christ returns!* He says He's going to save the tents of Judah *first*. They don't realize they have part of the framework, but the cornerstone of that framework they have rejected, because they don't keep the Passover on the 14th. That cornerstone is Christ.

For those of us in the Church, let's come to Leviticus 23:4: "These *are* the appointed Feasts of the LORD, Holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons."

We went out last night and looked at the full moon. It was appointed to be there. It's the season of the year and it was there, exactly where it should be. God is faithful.

"...Holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons." *Shall* does not mean 'I wonder if I will or not.'

Remember when you were a kid and mom said, 'You shall shut the door.' She told me 'You shall not lie,' but I caught her in Christmas. Nevertheless, when I did, I got the switch on the legs and I had to go pick it.

God doesn't do that. He just lets the blind lead the blind and all the disasters we see in the world are the result of people falling in the ditch, being led by Satan the devil.

Stop and think for a minute. Can any man solve the problems of what's going on in the Middle East? *No way! Christ has to do that!* But because they don't know the appointed times they don't know anything about Christ returning. Some of them have vague ideas, but they don't know.

Verse 5 is the Passover.

Verse 6: "And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD. You must eat unleavened bread seven days." I've covered sermons in Exo. 12, but there it says 'You shall do no servile work.'

We talked a little bit last night about a very interesting point after Jesus gave the sop to Judas. The disciples didn't know what He said. Since Judas had the purse they thought He said to go buy something for the Feast or to give something to the poor. That also proves Jesus did not keep a 15th Passover because the 15th is a Holy Day and no servile work, no buying and selling. Even in a little detail like that the Bible proves itself true.

Nowhere does it say the Passover is a Holy **Day**. It says it's a Holy convocation, v 7: "On the first day you shall have a **Holy convocation**. You shall not *do any servile work therein*, but you shall offer a fire offering to the LORD seven days..."

They are listed in Num. 28. If you go there you will notice when you come to the Passover, it does not mention a single sacrifice. Since all of those were the required ones for the temple, and there's not a single one for the Passover, that tells us it was always domestic.

As we saw, during the days of Jesus the majority of people were keeping it on the 14th. It also

shows here in Deut. 16 the difference between the required offerings for the children of Israel for the priesthood and the nation and the offerings that we are to give.

Deuteronomy 16:16: “Three times in a year shall all your males appear before the LORD your God in the place which He shall choose: in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before the LORD empty.”

That doesn't mean all the women stay home. That means you're not going to put a 'shall' on every woman because if she's pregnant she can't travel. If she's recovering from giving birth, or if she has to take care of people who are sick and can't come. If a male is not able to come, he is to give his offering to someone else who's coming to Jerusalem to represent him.

Verse 17: “Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God, which He has given you.”

That's how we do it. Think of it today. It's been bearing down on my mind, when I look at the Middle East and then I look at America, all the roads, all the cars, all the stores, all the goods, all the groceries. I go into the supermarket and I can buy anything from any place in the world if it's something that I want. If it isn't there, I go to the clerk and say, ‘Why don't you have it?’

We did that with Bubby Pickles, because we have Bubby Pickles with our sandwiches on the Sabbath. They didn't have any for two months. Now we've got six jars in the refrigerator.

All of that IS available. Look at the world. They're minds are so far from God. You talk about being blind, *deceived!* If you mention God, you have got to be a nut. Satan provides enough religious nuts so that they're convinced, if you believe in God, you are a nut. that's the way the world is.

All of this tells us that with Satan the devil in charge of this world men never have the answer to how do you stop sin or mitigate it. It takes God, His laws and His way.

Deut. 8 tells us that when your gold and silver is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied—your cattle, herds, you live in sealed houses—He says to beware *‘lest you forget the Lord your God’* that He gives you the power to have those things. God is One Who gives you the power to have wealth.

That's why tithes and offerings are important. It teaches us to always put God first in everything. It also teaches us to manage our money and finances in a way that works and don't get in

debt. That kills everybody. It's going to kill the whole world.

People have been saying for how many years, ‘It's going to crash, it's going to crash.’ It's like this balloon. It starts out real little, gets bigger and bigger. Someone says, ‘It's going to break.’ It gets bigger and bigger. They say, ‘It's going to break.’ One day it will!

That means we have to feed the flock and preach the Gospel. That takes funds and money. That's what we operate with. Besides everything we have is either digital money, paper money, federal reserve note; that's what we operate on. Soon is coming *the mark of the beast*. I need to give a sermon on how the world is going to say, ‘Hallelujah! Hooray! What a great thing this is.’ Then our faith will be tested. **Will you believe?**

(pause for the offering)

We're going to read a verse that even the world knows but doesn't understand. They claim it but don't realize what it means. I'm sure every atheist would read John 3:16 and look at all the trouble going on in the world and say, ‘How can God be a God of love with all this going on?’

It's just like when Lazarus was sick and Jesus stayed away deliberately four days to make sure he was dead; He knew Lazarus was dead. When Jesus got there Martha said, ‘Lord, if You would have been here he would not have died.’ Jesus said, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he'll be raised.’

Martha said, ‘I know he'll be raised in the last day.’ No, Jesus meant *that day*. Isn't that interesting because that also gives us a principle for the second resurrection.

Why did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? *Not only to show His power to do so, but He wanted Lazarus to be in the first resurrection!* If he had remained dead, he would have been for the second resurrection, which then is a foretaste of the second resurrection. God's plan is so much bigger and greater than we can understand.

I'm already working a sermon for the Elders' Conference where I'm going to show the fantastic things that God is doing around the world. It all has to do on the one verse that Jesus said, ‘Behold, I come in the clouds and *every eye* is going to see Me’ (Rev. 1). How is that going to happen?

When you understand the Word of God is true and does not lie and it will take place exactly as He said, just like every single thing concerning the Passover Day, even the soldiers gambling for His clothes and dividing His vesture was foretold thousands of years before, at least 1500. The Word of God is true. Every word of God will be fulfilled.

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him **may not** perish, but may have everlasting life.”

There are a lot of things that God doesn't tell us. He doesn't tell us how He loves the world, while we're facing destruction. How does He love the world when people die from wars, earthquakes, and everything like that? How does He save those in His Church and the world will hardly know it? But He will.

Believing here means *continuously believing*. You just don't have an opinion. You just don't say, 'I accept that; that's good. I've been a bad boy. Lord, forgive my sins.' Because God wants to know, 'What are you going to do about it once you're forgiven?' Which is what the Feast of Unleavened bread pictures.

“...may not perish...” Very interesting! Paul wrote that if Christ was not raised, then those who died in Christ will perish (1-Cor. 15). You need to think about that for a minute. They were dead but they didn't perish. Perish here does not mean just to die. Perish means *cease to exist forever!*. There are a lot of other sermons we could take from that right there beginning in that chapter.

Ephesians 2:1: “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins.” You were alive in the flesh, right? But you were dead in trespasses and sins, because without the Holy Spirit of God, you are the walking dead. That's why Jesus said, 'Let the dead bury their dead.'

Verse 2: “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world... [the way that the world is; the way that the world does] ...according to the prince of the power of the air... [Satan the devil is there big time] ...the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; among whom also we all... [everyone] ...once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the children of wrath, even as the rest of the world*” (vs 2-3).

There are a lot of things we face today from the prince of the power of the air. We have to be on guard. We face things that people centuries ago had no idea about and couldn't face.

The next time you go to the store, because they don't have too many billboards on the highways around here, but look at every sign that is there and every one of those is something to get your attention. And on television, every ad is out there to try and get you to buy something.

I don't know how many here have gotten the pillow, my favorite pillow. Dolores looked at them

for sale up in Target and she said they're worth two bucks. He'll sell one to you for \$50 and give you the second one free.

That's not necessarily of Satan the devil. What I want to bring out is that there are others that definitely are, through the movies, through the things that are done. Even on Watters' World on Fox News. Some parts you have to blank out because he is on the beach talking to all the people involved in their wild orgies.

Even ads: Think about and analyze the ads. Many of those problems could be solved if people would turn to God. These things affect us. We get a tune jingling in our heads. That pillow ad I always mute it. I spent over a week, with prayer and with thought control, to get rid of the end of the little jingle on that ad!

Look at the movies. Look at this society. Everything around us. We have to develop the character of God while all of this is going on around us. It does affect us and we need to repent of some of those things that come.

Now is the time to talk about why we keep these days and what it has to do with all the sin *without and within*. As we're going to see, God wants the conversion of the mind and controlling our thoughts. How do we do that? We're faced with these things, which we could say inadvertent, encroachment into your minds and thoughts through visual and audio, through television and music, through just other people around, through whatever comes about.

We know we are to put away all the leaven out of our houses (1-Cor. 5). Let's analyze why we keep this Feast. They had all the sins going on:

1-Corinthians 5:6: “Your glorying *is* not good. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” Isn't that true? *Incrementalism!* Just think how long Satan has been working on bringing about *the mark of the beast*.

Why do all nations have central banks? *First time in the history of the world!* What has happened? *Satan has done this in every nation so we can look at it with the United States as well!* The principle 'a little leaven leavens the whole lump.'

The way that a wasp builds its nest is with a little bit at a time. Or a swallow building its nest of mud. How many flights does it have to take to bring the mud to build it, and so forth?

So, here in American it started in 1913 with the Federal Reserve Bank. Everybody's going to have money. Isn't that good? *Yes!*

- first thing we had was *war*
- then we had *prosperity*

- then we had *depression*, 1929
- then turn in all your gold and silver to the government

They issued paper money; this note—that means an IOU—is good for debt public and private.

Then we go along and go along and then guess what, shortly after the war, late 50s, early 60s, what did we have as a wonderful convenience? *For the first time ever you could go anywhere and buy anything: credit card!*

Everyone thought, ‘Boy, this is good.’ If I ask you how many credit cards you have—are they sin? What I’m telling you is all of these things are not sin, but they can be *if misused*. I imagine everyone here has 3 or more credit cards. You have one for gas. You could go to any gas station. If you don’t like that one, you can get the one from the company.

Now they have it even with the smart phones. You don’t even have to sign anything. There’s a little machine right there. What they did incrementally, used to go to the grocery store and write a check. One day Dolores went to Knob Hill—favorite store she goes to—writes a check. Clerk took it and handed it back to her. She said, ‘Why are you doing that?’ He said, ‘It’s already deducted from your account.’

If you give them cash, the clerks don’t know how to count money. I’m bringing out a major point. A little sin develops into more sin, *to more sin, to more sin, incrementally!*

Look at what they’ve done, the same process with education, with government, everything! Now along comes digital angel. Remember that? About 2004. Now they have it that they’ll just tattoo it on your skin.

I wrote in 2007, right in between change of presidents, no one could do anything. Everything crashed down. Bush formed the G-20. Now it’s many more than that because all the central banks are working together. A little more incrementalism.

How many here get paid by direct deposit? *A little more incrementalism!* What is this going to lead to? It’s going to lead to the grand solution to many problems: identity, immigration, crime, thievery. Why do you think they let them hack the credit card companies? *Because they could catch them and stop them!* They don’t want to because they have a greater plan—the *mark of the beast*.

Look at that with everything concerning human behavior, in churches. Now what do they have? ‘*Chrislam*’ services; a preacher and an imam! Isn’t that lovely? The imam is very kind. He leaves his knife at home. That’s the principle of it. But

here’s what we are to do and here is the battle that we are to fight:

Verse 7: “Therefore, purge out the old leaven, so that you may become a new lump...” We are to be changed from the inside out. Leaven just doesn’t come on the outside of the bread, comes on the inside.

“...even as you are unleavened...” (v 7). Here he’s telling us what good does it do to unleaven your homes if you don’t change your behavior, if you don’t get rid of sin. The only way you get rid of sin is:

“...**For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us**” (v 7). Though Christ died for the sins of the whole world, it’s not applied to the whole world, but only to the Church. The Day of Atonement when Satan is removed is when it will apply to the world. That’s why we keep the Holy Days so we know what God is doing and can understand it.

Verse 8: “For this reason, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven... [not with our old way of thinking; not with our old way of doing, but with God’s way] ...nor with *the* leaven of malice and wickedness...”

What happens when you meet someone who is nice? What do you say? *That’s a sweet person!* Leaven sours the person and their thinking and their reactions are not right. And they don’t have love.

The whole purpose of God, through the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and His whole plan of salvation for us is so that we come from under Satan’s control to being under God’s control, and to love Him and to love our neighbor and each other and even our enemies.

Look at us here, we’re a diverse group. I guess we’d be approved by the government, although Muslims are not allowed. Would any of us individually choose to associate with each other, other than the fact that God has called us? *No!* That’s so we can learn love from God:

- by practicing it
- by living it
- by understanding it
- by understanding that we have a long way to go to overcome sin

We need to get rid of the sin of “...malice and wickedness, but with *the* unleavened bread of sincerity and Truth” (v 8)—Truth of God and the Truth of His Word. Jesus said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.’ All of these things fit into these verses.

So, when you read and study the Bible, let all of these different aspects of it fit in with your

thinking as you're reading. I suppose it would be possible for someone to memorize the Bible and yet not understand it; sure would be.

- What do we do?
- How do we do that?
 - ✓ God has provided the way
 - ✓ He has provided the means
 - ✓ He has provided the power
 - ✓ He has provided His Word
 - ✓ He has provided His Spirit

I just got done reading the book *Why is Christianity is Failing in America?* by Philip Neal. Today people cannot tell the difference between people in the world and people who go to church. That's because through incrementalism Satan has changed everything.

What is the major point of entrance? *You have it in the Bible!* I'll bring it up again. 1893, World Fair in Chicago. Two things happened:

1. the Protestants sued to have the Fair closed on Sunday because 'we're a Christian nation'
2. the Seventh-Day Adventists counter-sued because of the Sabbath

They prevailed. It wasn't shut down on Saturday or Sunday. Cardinal Gibbon wrote *Rome's Challenge to the Protestants*, which we have in Appendix N in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*.

Cardinal Gibbon told them very plainly, pointed out in the Scriptures: No place for Sunday-keeping is found in the Bible and you Protestants are on a suicide mission because it says if you don't keep the Sabbath the penalty is death: *spiritual* death. If no repentance, *physical* death. If no repentance, *spiritual* death.

Then he said, 'You'd better get on the Catholic side because it's *our* creation.' Look what's happened since 1893, incrementally all the way down the line.

God gave a warning. How did the Protestants answer? You go on biblesabbath.org. They have there that all of the major Protestant churches answered Cardinal Gibbon. They admitted that Saturday was truly the Sabbath of the Bible. They all pulled a 'yah-but, we're going to keep Sunday.'

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say?... [because we have our sins forgiven, because Christ has called us] ...Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?" The Protestants say *yes* because 'the Law is done away.' God says, right here through Paul

Verse 2: "MAY IT NEVER BE!..." The way that we overcome sin in the flesh is to die to sin.

That's when Paul said, 'I died.' That means the water baptism.

"...We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?" (vs 2-3).

That's why we keep the Passover. We renew the covenant. All covenants require sacrifice from both parties. The sacrifice of Christ is God's part. Baptism is our part and joined into one, and receive the Holy Spirit so that we don't live in sin and walk in sin.

Here is what we are to do, v 5: "For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified..." (vs 5-6). What did Christ say? *You follow Me, take up your cross and follow Me daily!*

"...with *Him* in order that the body of sin **might be** destroyed..." (v 6)—showing it's a process. We are to overcome. We still have the 'law of sin and death' in us. Yes, He's delivered us from the law of sin and death, but we have to work against it. He has delivered us from it through the power of His Holy Spirit so that we can overcome sin, put sin out of our lives with the help of God's Holy Spirit.

Verse 10: "For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God. In the same way also, you..." (vs 10-11)—who have been baptized into His death. That is your part of the sacrifice of the covenant.

"...should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof" (vs 11-12).

We saw how the lusts come (Eph. 2). This is telling us we still have sin within to overcome and as long as we live we still have the battle to fight.

I remember a man who said, and he was a big mucky-muck in the Church, 'I've been faithful to God for so long'—I think he was in his late 80s at that time—'Satan has no more interest in me.' BAM! Everything he worked for, everything he did was taken from him. God had mercy and didn't take it until he died. Is Satan still interested in us, even in old age? *Yes!*

That's why when we're old we have to remember not to do stupid things. If you have a good wife, like mine, she'll remind me of it.

- What do you do?
- How do you get rid of sin?

Sin works incrementally, sin works like leaven.

Verse 13: “Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not **rule** over you...” (vs 13-14)—in the Greek means *to lord it over*. Think of a slave-master *ruling*. That’s how Satan and sin works.

“...because we are not under law...” (v 15). How many have gone through all those sermons on what does it mean ‘under law’? That means the whole world. It doesn’t mean people who keep the commandments of God alone, but the whole world. The Law is judging them all the time.

“...you are not under law, but under grace” (v 14). What is the difference between being under grace. Not only have you had your sins forgiven, received the Holy Spirit of God, keep the commandments of God, but you, through prayer, have contact with God the Father, the great Sovereign of the universe, and Jesus Christ at His right hand constantly. With the Spirit of God dwelling in you, They have made Their abode *in* you. That’s something!

Verse 15: “...MAY IT NEVER BE! Don’t you realize that to whom you yield yourselves as servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (vs 15-16).

Let’s see how sin works. This is important because this is how you intercept the encroachments that come into your mind visually and by audio. James 1:1-12 shows we’ll have trials and difficulties.

James 1:13: “Do not let anyone who is tempted say, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil*.”

God sets before us life and death, blessing and cursing, good and evil. *We choose!* What’s the acronym for independent free moral agency? *IFMA!* We choose because we can put it away and not do it, or we can think about it, mull it over in our minds for a little while. Kind of let it leaven up. Satan comes along and says, ‘Here’s a blessing for you,’ a benefit.

I was watching the other night: *I Almost Got Away With It*. What happens in every case? People think, here they are incarcerated, they escape, they get away with it. This was one man who was from Mexico, he got away and eventually after eluding the police many, many times, he crossed the border, was in Mexico, doing fine, had a girlfriend he was ready to marry. As a matter of fact, when he was finally arrested she was pregnant. He thought that he

could avoid the consequences of his sentence of murdering someone if he could just disappear into the woodworks and lead a good life. The problem is *a little leaven leavens the whole lump!* They got him. So it’s the same way here.

Don’t say God is tempting you. ***It is you who are yielding to temptation from Satan!*** When you yield, you choose.

Verse 14: “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and is enticed by his own lust.” Look at the process:

- temptation
- yield to it
- comes along
- drawn away
- enticed

At every one of those points you could say ***NO!*** That’s our part in dealing with sin. We can stop it. We can choose to.

In watching things on television, we can choose not to watch it, switch it. Find yourself a blue or black screen so you can hit that and be there. You don’t have to watch all that nonsense going on. People know when they’re doing wrong. A thief knows he’s stealing. He didn’t have to steal, but he saw the opportunity. He thought about it; he planned it. He came back and stole all the jewelry.

They had this one man in Florida that they chased for 25 years. He would rob the elite people of their jewelry and come right into the hotel or motel where they were staying or into their residence. Never be seen, never heard, walk off with it. It took them 25 years to get him, but he planned it every time. Could he have said no the first time? ***Yes, indeed!*** Same way with us.

Verse 15: “And after lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death.”

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Heb. 12 shows us how we are to persistently be looking to Christ so we can overcome sin. Especially today, you can be going along and everything will be fine and all of a sudden the television will hit you or something on the Internet will hit you and there it is.

How many have seen the video we send out, *Israel of the Alps?* How would you like to live in the Alps? I like those houses; they took the slate and made good houses with them. Think about that! No electricity! No television! No pumps for water! You had to grow everything, process everything and store everything. You had to cut your own wood. Think about just the things we ate here. Think if you had to

produce every bit of this from scratch. Be impossible to do.

But they had other blessings: peace, quietness, fresh air—until they decided to fight against the Roman soldiers by dropping huge boulders on the troops coming up. After that, all bets were off.

Hebrews 12:1: “Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses... [you can add onto to that all those from the time this was written until now] ...let us lay aside every weight...” We have to choose to take it and get rid of it.

“...and the sin that so easily entraps us; *and* let us run the race set before us with endurance” (v 1). This is why the Feast of Unleavened bread is seven days because it’s not all done in one day. As a matter of fact it takes a lifetime, so the seven days pictures a lifetime.

Verse 2: “Having *our minds* fixed on Jesus...” That’s why prayer is important, study is important, knowing the Word of God is important, letting that rule in your mind.

“...the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith... [go back and look at what He did] ...Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him endured *the* cross...” (v 2). Kept His mind on the Kingdom of God, finishing the work of God the Father.

“...*although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God. Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself... [who were against Him] ...so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds” (vs 2-3). Very important.

That’s one of the reasons we have the Sabbath every week. We need the Sabbath every week. What does this do? *This takes us out of the world into being together so that we can study the Word of God!* God has promised to put His presence here spiritually. That’s why He created this day. This renews us and helps us.

Think of the times when you did not keep the Sabbath for one reason or another. Just think about what would happen if you didn’t keep the Sabbath. Start out one time, two times, five times, ten times. What if you went a whole year without keeping the Sabbath? How much would your mind be on the things of God? Probably very little, because everything else crowded it out.

Verse 4: “You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin. And you have already forgotten the admonition that He addresses to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise *the* chastening of *the* Lord, nor grow weary

of being reprov’d by Him; for whom *the* Lord loves He chastens, and He severely disciplines every son whom He receives” (vs 4-6).

Why? *So that we learn to love Him!* Isn’t it interesting, those who defy God, atheists, when they get into battle and it looks like they’re going to lose their lives or someone next to them gets blown up, they begin changing their minds.

That’s why there are troubles and difficulties that come along, *so that we will look to God to help us to overcome them!* Some of them last quite awhile.

What does God want in all of this? Look at King David. David was a man after God’s heart, wrote hundreds of Psalms. One day, because he had been complacent for a while, didn’t happen all at once, then here comes temptation right next door. Bathsheba had her part in it. She didn’t have to go to the bathing place on the roof where the king could look over and see her. So this confronted him.

Rather than tell his servant, ‘Please tell Bathsheba, it would be nicer if she would bathe in the indoor bathing place instead of on the rooftop when I’m up here trying to meditate on God.’ *No!* What happened? *Temptation comes* (James 1). He didn’t rule over it.

He thought, ‘Uriah is at the battle. I’m the king. No one will ever know.’ The truth is, in the palace, the servants know everything.

He sent his servant over there to invite her to his house, into the palace. She knew what was up and he knew what was up. She could have stopped the temptation herself, instead of saying, ‘Well, the king is inviting me over and my husband is out fighting.’

She could have given a note back to the servant saying, ‘My husband is fighting in the battle, and I decline your invitation because it wouldn’t be proper.’ End of story! But she didn’t!

You know what happened. This was a great sin. It involved having Uriah killed in battle, involved the general knowing. She got pregnant so David thought ‘I better bring Uriah home on a little R-n-R.’ He knew what was up and didn’t take the bait. So he gave his life.

This went on nearly until the time that the child was born. Nathan had to come to David and say, ‘You are the man.’ David repented. This is a good example for us. There may come times when we sin greater than we even anticipated because ‘a little leaven leavens the whole lump.’

- Did David know better? *Yes, he did!*
- Did David know he should not have done that? *Yes, he did!*

But he did anyway. When he was convicted by Nathan he repented. Notice from the rest of the story his household was against him the rest of his life. All Israel knew it. They didn't have television reports like we have today, but they had a lot of tongues that are called birds that fly from place to place. This took down the whole kingdom. David prayed and said:

Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (vs 1-2).

This is why we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread so that we realize we still have the 'law of sin and death' to overcome.

- we need to be washed
- we need to be cleansed
- we need to be changed

Verse 3: "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge" (vs 3-4). Yes, because there's nothing that we can do that doesn't involve God. So he said:

Verse 5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me"—that is with the 'law of sin and death' not through adultery.

- here is what God wants with the correction
- here is what God wants with repentance
- here is what God wants so we can overcome sin

Verse 6: "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts..." Why? *Because the human heart is deceitful above all things!* How do you get rid of a deceitful heart? *You replace that with Truth, with God's Spirit!*

"...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean... [that's the correction that Paul was talking about in Heb. 12] ...wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (vs 6-7).

How do we do that? *The book of Ephesians tells us exactly how we do that!* Conversion is a process. Overcoming sin takes time. It is not accomplished all at once. Let's see what it should be.

These are Paul's long sentences. If you wrote sentences like this for your English class, the teacher would give you an F minus:

Ephesians 4:12: "For the perfecting of the saints..."—that's why we're here, to be perfected. That's why we're under grace and God has given us direct access to Him. That is why there are teachers to teach and all of us be able to teach someone else that you may know or someone has questions. All of this is for the perfecting of the saints.

Stop and think about this. If, when you accepted Jesus, professed His name, stood up in the congregation—they used to have to walk down to the preacher, but that was too embarrassing, so you just stand up. Probably they'll make it you don't even have to do that, just bow your head.

If the work of Christ was completed at that point, why v 12? *If it was completed, you'd be perfect, spiritually speaking! Yes, indeed!* But the truth is, something like that is only the beginning. It's like being begotten and then it takes time until you're born. What happens from the time of begetting to birth? *Perfection and growth!*

Verse 12: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the **edifying** of the Body of Christ." *Edifying* comes from the work 'to build.' What was Christ? *A builder!* Would have been better than a carpenter.

How many have read the book about the lost city of Sepphoris? *Jesus and the Forgotten City* by Richard A. Batey. That was a city four miles from Nazareth. It was the capital city of Herod the Tetrarch. They built four-story buildings. They had paved roads. Where do you suppose Jesus and his brothers worked? Probably right there! That is astounding.

How long is this to last? Verse 13: "Until we all... [prophetic as well as immediate] ...come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man... [or woman] ... unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." When will that take place? *At the resurrection!*

Verse 14: "that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness... [sounds like what Satan does] ...with a view to the systematizing of the error; but holding the Truth in love..." (vs 14-15).

Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. That's one of the best ways to overcome sin. The Truth! *That's how you overcome the deception of the inner part of the mind!*

"...may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ from Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies..." (vs 15-16). We are all important and necessary to God.

If you weren't important to God, God the Father, Who is the One Who initiated the call for you, why would He even bother with you? Think on that! Don't let yourself get down and out and 'oh, woe is me.' *God loves you!* That's the greatest thing that we can have in our lives. We're important. We have something to add to the whole thing and especially at the resurrection.

"...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (v 16). Then he says: vs 17-19, don't do as the Gentiles

Verse 21: "If indeed you have heard Him... [How do you hear Christ? *By God's Spirit leading you!*] ...and have been taught in Him, according to *the Truth* in Jesus." Notice how many times truth and love, Truth and love. That's how you overcome lies and deception.

Verse 22: "That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man..." You fight against the inner struggle with the power of God's Holy Spirit. You're going to have that till you die. There will be times when it will be more intense than other times,

"...which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (vs 22-23).

That is it; the step of renewing the spirit of your mind is repentance. That's why repentance is there right in the daily model prayer. Forgive us our sins.

First thing you do, you honor God. 'Our Father Who is heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.' Just like Paul said to keep your mind fixed on Christ Who is the Beginner and Finisher of our faith, and the Kingdom of God.

Then we get into providing for us, forgiving our sins. Then we ask God to rescue us from Satan the devil. All of that, daily prayer. Especially for us who live in this age because it's everywhere. I think we can say we might have a pretty good idea of how frustrated that Lot was in Sodom.

Verse 24: "And that you put on... [or you put in through study, prayer, living] ...the new man, which according to God is... [being] ...created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth."

Where did we start with this? *'Let us keep the Feast in sincerity and Truth!'*

Verse 25: "Therefore, let each one put away lies *and* speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another. *When* you become angry, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on

your anger; neither give place to the devil" (vs 25-27). Isn't that what David did in the thing with Bathsheba? *Yes, he did!*

Verse 28: "Let the one who stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor with *his* hands, working *at* what *is* good, so that he may impart *something* to the one who has need. Do not let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth..." (vs 28-29). That's a challenge, especially when you drop a sledge hammer on your foot.

"...but that which is good and needful for edification that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not vex... or grieve] ...the Holy Spirit of God..." (vs 29-30).

The Holy Spirit is here to lead us in Truth, love, understanding. If we let sin in the Holy Spirit is still there with us and this is what grates on the conscience. So you're working at cross purposes.

"...by which you have been sealed for *the* day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice; and be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you" (vs 30-32).

Ephesians 5:1: "Therefore, be imitators of God... [that's in the person of Christ] ...as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (vs 1-2). Then he says avoid all of these evil things that come along.

Verse 25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; so that He might sanctify it..." (vs 25-26). This is what Christ is doing with the Church, making it Holy, might sanctify it.

"...having cleansed *it*... [this is prophetic perfect, hasn't all been accomplished] ...with the washing of water by *the* Word" (v 26). Here is what is to happen in our minds and growing and overcoming:

- the Holy Spirit is to lead us
- the Word of God is to cleanse us
- our actions and choices to get rid of sin are to get rid of it
- our confession of sins is to purge it and forgive it

➤ "...the washing of water..." The Holy Spirit is the water. The action is going all the time.

➤ "...by *the* Word." We can look at this as several ways:

1. the Word of God, which cleanses us

2. the Word being Christ Who is in us

Verse 27: “That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame.” That’s what we are to do.

Let’s see the other part of this action. Here’s our part. We’ve see God’s part. He is to help us, watch us, give us His Holy Spirit. Being perfected in the Spirit is different than just becoming a nice person.

2-Corinthians 10:4: “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God... [everything of God: His Word, His Truth, His Spirit, His laws, commandments, law, forgiveness] ...to the overthrowing of strongholds.”

What is the strongest hold that there is? *The mind, changing and converting the mind!* It’s easy to stop something out here. It’s more difficult to change and get rid of it in the mind. Here’s how you do that:

Verse 5: “Casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ.”

That is the challenge! Not some of our thoughts, some of the time, not just when we’re in difficulty and problems, but *every* thought. That is a lifetime objective. We need to keep our mind on what Paul wrote about keeping our minds on the goal, on Christ. We can add this Scripture to it:

Romans 8:28: “And we know that **all things**... [all the problems, all the difficulties, all the ups, all the downs, all the blessings, all the disappointments] ...work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” That’s where we are right here.

1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be... [that’ll take place at the resurrection]...but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is” (vs 1-2).

That’s the thing that needs to always be in the forefront of our minds.

Verse 3: “And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.” That comes with the Spirit of God.

2-Peter 1:1: “Simon Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained *the* same precious faith as ours by *the* righteousness

of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises... [there is nothing greater than this] ...that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature... [having the nature of God and not human nature] ... having escaped the corruption *that is in the* world through lust” (vs 1-4).

That’s the whole meaning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Leviticus 23:4, 6-7
- 2) Deuteronomy 16:16-17
- 3) John 3:16
- 4) Ephesians 2:1-3
- 5) 1-Corinthians 5:6-8
- 6) Romans 6:1-3, 5-6, 10-15, 14-16
- 7) James 1:13-15
- 8) Hebrews 12:1-6
- 9) Psalm 51:1-7
- 10) Ephesians 4:12-16, 21-32
- 11) Ephesians 5:1-2, 25-27
- 12) 2-Corinthians 10:4-5
- 13) Romans 8:28
- 14) 1-John 3:1-3
- 15) 2-Peter 1:1-4

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Leviticus 23:3, 5
- Exodus 12
- Numbers 28
- Deuteronomy 8
- Revelation 1
- 1-Corinthians 15
- James 1:1-12
- Ephesians 4:17-19

Also referenced:

From *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*, Appendix N: *Rome’s Challenge to the Protestants*

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- *Jesus and the Forgotten City* by Richard A. Batey
- *Why is Christianity is Failing in America?* by Philip Neal

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