



BETHEL AG CHURCH
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE

THE FEAST OF THE UNLEAVENED BREAD



"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 5:8

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

All the Feasts originated with the Lord as it was His desire to meet with His people, on His terms and on His grounds of approach. They were His Feasts. The Lord was the Host and Israel was His guest, invited to feast with Him.

The Lord commanded Israel to keep these set appointments three times in a year. **Deuteronomy 16:16**, *“Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord, 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 Me empty; every man shall give as he is able”*. (Read also **Exodus 23:14-19**).

There are three major Feasts, yet these Feasts may be broken up into seven Feasts just as there are three major colours in the rainbow that is made up of seven colours. Three is the number of eternal Godhead. In the Feasts, one comes to know the fullness of the Godhead; for the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are seen at work in these particular Feasts.

1. The Feast of Passover – **Leviticus 23:4-5**
2. The Feast of Unleavened Bread – **Leviticus 23:6-8**
3. The Feast of First fruits – **Leviticus 23:9-14**
4. The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) – **Leviticus 23:15-22**
5. The Feast of Trumpets – **Leviticus 23:23-25**
6. The Feast Day of Atonement – **Leviticus 23:26-32**
7. The Feast of Tabernacles – **Leviticus 23:33-44**

The Feast of Passover took place in the first month; the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) took place in the third month, and the Feast of Tabernacles found fulfilment in the seventh month. All these feasts were fulfilled historically and literally in Israel up to the time of Christ. In the Cross, Christ fulfilled historically and personally the types and shadows (symbolic) in the Feasts. The external form, or rituals, of these feasts are done away with, (**2 Corinthians 4:18; Hebrews 8:13; Romans 2:20**) what then remains? The things that remain are the spiritual and eternal truths hidden in the previous external forms. These truths are to become experiential in the Believer's life.

All feasts were **God's** appointed **time** to meet his **people**

FEAST	DATE	SIGNIFICANCE
PASSOVER	Nisan 14	Spring Passover speaks of redemption. Messiah, the Passover Lamb, would be sacrificed for us.
UNLEAVENED BREAD	Nisan 15-21	Spring Unleavened Bread speaks of sanctification. Messiah's body would not decay in the grave.
FIRST FRUITS	Nisan 16	First fruits speak of resurrection. Messiah would rise from the grave on the third day.
WEEKS (PENTECOST)	50 days after First fruits	Weeks or Pentecost speaks of the age of Holy Spirit. Messiah would send the Holy Spirit to inaugurate the Church Age.
TRUMPETS	Tishri 1	Trumpets point to the Rapture of the righteous. Messiah returns to rescue the righteous and judge the wicked.
YOM KIPPUR	Tishri 10	Yom Kippur points to the salvation of Israel. Israel repents of her sins and turns to the Messiah for salvation.
TABERNACLES	Tishri 15-21	Tabernacles point towards the future day when Christ establishes His Messianic Kingdom and reigns over all the earth.

What is the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is named after the bread that is to be eaten during the Passover. The Hebrew Scriptures call this feast "*Hag Hamatzot*". "*Matzah*", and the plural "*matzos*" are the Hebrew words for "*unleavened bread*." Therefore, this holiday is known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The Feast was a reminder of God's miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians' bondage, for when Israel fled from Egypt in the middle of the night; there was no time for the bread dough to rise. So the Lord commanded, "*Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.*" (**Deuteronomy 16:3**).

Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan and lasts for seven days. Because the Feast of Unleavened Bread (a seven-day holiday) begins the day AFTER Passover (a one-day holiday), often the two holidays are blurred together and collectively referred to as "*the eight days of Passover*." In the days of Jesus', it was also common to call all eight days the Feast of Unleavened Bread (**Luke 22:1,7**), so the names of these feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread were often interchanged.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread gets its name from the requirement to get rid of and to avoid leavened bread; and to eat unleavened bread for these seven days (**Exodus 12:15**). An observant Jewish home will painstakingly prepare the home weeks before the arrival of the Passover and will clear the home completely out of any kind of leaven or leavened food items. Everything is scrubbed, scoured, cleaned, and freshened in preparation towards this feast.

(Leaven is a substance, typically yeast or other leavening agents like baking powder that is added to dough to make it ferment and rise.)

What are the main instructions to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

The Bible gives only three instructions for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Special sacrifices were to be offered in the Temple on each of the seven days of the feast (**Leviticus 23:8, Numbers 28:19-24**). The first and seventh days of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread were Sabbaths with prohibitions on all work. (**Exodus 12:16, Leviticus 23:7-8, Number 28:25, Deuteronomy 16:8**)

Another important requirement was the prohibition of ANY leaven. (**Exodus 12:14-20, 13:6-8, 23:15, 34:18; Leviticus 23:6, Deuteronomy 16:3,8**)

Not only is the eating of leavened foods (such as bread and rolls) forbidden during the feast, but even the presence of leaven within one's house is unlawful. The Lord commanded Moses, *"Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven FROM YOUR HOUSES. For whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel."* (**Exodus 12:15**) Disobedience to the divine command carried the death penalty. Another command stated, "Unleavened bread shall be eaten SEVEN days. And NO LEAVENED bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in ALL YOUR QUARTERS." (**Exodus 13:7**). The extent of the restriction was further emphasized: *"And no leaven shall be seen among you IN ALL YOUR TERRITORY for seven days."* (**Deuteronomy 16:4**)

Any leaven, no matter how small the amount or how discreet its presence, is not permitted during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is not enough to simply refrain from eating leaven, or from touching leaven, or even from looking at leaven by storing it away in a hidden place. All leaven must be PURGED out. Failure to do so brought death.

What does leaven symbolize in the Holy Bible?

Leaven is seen to be symbolic of sin, human weaknesses, infirmities, false doctrine, or corrupt practices. (**Matthew 16:6,11; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; Galatians 5:9, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13**). The ancient rabbis also believed that *"leaven represents the evil impulse of the heart"*.

For an example, Lord Jesus warned his disciples about the *"leaven of the Pharisees"* (Matthew 16:6) as they symbolized hypocrisy. The Pharisees "say and do not". They do not practice what they preach. Hypocrisy works like leaven in a Believer's life; unless it is purged out and put away, it causes one to be puffed up.

Also, Jesus warned the disciples about the *"leaven of the Herod"* (Mark 8:15) that symbolized the spirit of worldliness that has to be purged out.

Matthew 16:6, *"Jesus said to them, 'Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.'"*

Mark 8:15, *"And he (Jesus) cautioned them, saying, 'Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.'"*

Paul identifies a leaven of Corinth in **1 Corinthians 5:2** talking about the leaven of malice and wickedness that needed to be purged out from the church of Corinth.

Leaven is well-suited as a picture of sin because it rapidly permeates the dough, contaminates it, makes it sour, ferments it, and swells it to many times its original size without changing its weight. Since leaven pictures sin, only unleavened bread (matzah) was used in the Temple (**Leviticus 2:11; 6:16-17; 10:12**). Offerings had to be pure, and anything leavened was deemed impure and unfit.

(Please note: In one occasion, Lord Jesus used leaven in a positive way in His Parable of the Leaven (**Matthew 13:33**). He compared the Kingdom of God to the leaven, which described the growth of the Kingdom of God - how it may have very small beginnings but will increase until it has had a powerful impact. Like the leaven, the Kingdom of God become agents of change slowly and transform cultures. Also, though the Kingdom of God works invisibly, its effect is evident to all. When we accept Christ, His grace grows in our hearts and changes us from the inside out – **2 Corinthians 3:18**)

What does the Feast of the Unleavened Bread symbolize?

Passover picturizes the substitutionary death of the Messiah as the Passover Lamb to redeem the people of Israel, the Feast of Unleavened Bread picturizes the burial and sinless sacrifice of the Messiah, and the Feast of First Fruits picturizes the resurrection of the Messiah.

Isaiah prophesied the Messiah's unique burial hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. *"And they made His grave with the wicked – but with the rich at His death, because he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth."* (**Isaiah 53:9**) Normally, one who dies a criminal's death receives a criminal's burial (usually cast out of the city along with garbage). God honoured the Messiah with burial in a rich man's tomb. The Messiah was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (**Matthew 27:57-60**), a member of Sanhedrin to emphasize the innocence of the Messiah.

Another key fact that surrounds the Messiah's burial was the fact that His body did not return to dust. King David prophesied of the Messiah: **Psalm 16:10** – "*For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*" The sons of Adam were SINNERS under the divine curse: "*To dust you shall return.*" (**Genesis 3:19**). As a pure, sinless sacrifice, the Messiah was not under the curse to return to dust, neither did He see corruption. The Messiah fulfilled the Feast of Unleavened Bread in that He was a PURE, SINLESS (WITHOUT LEAVEN) sacrifice. Furthermore, the body of the Messiah was not permitted to decay in the grave (like dough soured by leaven), but was resurrected on the third day because He was not a sinner under the curse of death and decay.

Lord Jesus Christ can be truly called the Bread of Life – the unleavened one; the pure, sinless one, who suffered and died for our sins, so that we can have life and life in abundance through Him (**John 10:10**)

John 6:35, "*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."*

John 6:48-51, "*I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.*"

The central theme of **Unleavened Bread** is **Sanctification**.

How is the Feast of Unleavened Bread relevant for New Testament Believers?

Apostle Paul used the purging ceremony for leaven to convey a very important spiritual truth to the Believers in the city of Corinth: "*Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore, 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.*" (**1 Corinthians 5:7-8**)

Paul's message is simple and direct. For all those who by faith have accepted Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, who died for them as a Passover Lamb upon Calvary, are now living in the Feast of Unleavened Bread where purity and separation from leaven are required.

In this context of the Corinthians church, Paul expresses shock and dismay that the Corinthian Believers still partake of their old sins. It does no good to leave a little leaven (sin) with the thought that it does no damage to everything else in life. Paul says a little leaven will contaminate everything else. "*Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?"* (**1 Corinthians 5:6**).

He commands them to purge it out – all of it because a little leaven can be destructive to the wholesomeness that God is bringing into our lives. (**John 10:10**)

Since leaven typically puffs things up, it is associated with that root of many sins - pride. Some of the other spiritually-damaging sins that picture leaven in the Bible are: malice, wickedness, hypocrisy, and wrong teachings (**1 Corinthians 5:8; Luke 12:1; Matthew 16:11-12**)

As a Believer, how do we get rid of this leaven from our lives?

The Feast of Unleavened Bread comes immediately after the Passover and teaches us lessons about how we should respond to Jesus Christ's gracious sacrifice. After He set us (Israelites who were enslaved in Egypt and Believers) free from enslavement-to-sin, would Lord Jesus be pleased to have us willingly go back to sin again? Or would He much rather have us learn, to look at sin as He does, and to strive with His help, to avoid it at all costs?

We want to live a Holy Life because we want to resemble our Lord who saved us. There is a deep human instinct to imitate what we honour and admire. Additionally, because we have experienced the grace and love from God, we find a growing desire to bring delight and pleasure to Him. We do not serve God to get things from Him, but we know that our delight is to know that He is delighted. A life purged out from sin and living a holy life is the deepest way to honour the one who lived and died to serve and save us. We become more and more like Him.

1 Peter 1:15,16, *"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."*

Matthew 5:48, *"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

Is "purged out and holy", in the life of a Believer, called Sanctification?

Yes, Sanctification is a progressive work of God and man, which makes us more and more free from sin. It also makes us be like Christ in our day-to-day lives.

According to the Westminster Catechism, Sanctification is *"the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness."*

It is a continual change worked by God in us, to free us from sinful habits and to form in us Christ-like affections, dispositions, and virtues. It does not mean that sin is instantly eradicated, but it is also more than a counteraction, in which sin is merely restrained or repressed without being progressively destroyed.

We want to live a **Holy Life** because we want to **resemble**
our **Lord** who **saved** us

Sanctification is a real transformation, not just the appearance of one.

(Romans 8:13, Romans 6:12,13, Romans 12:1,2; 1 Corinthians 6:11,19,20; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 7:1, Ephesians 4:22–24; 1 Thessalonians 4:4, 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 13:20, 21, Matthew 5:48).

1 Corinthians 6:11, *“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

Conclusion:

The Holy Spirit is the agent of our sanctification or purification. The work of the Holy Spirit enables believers to lead holy lives, dedicated to the service of God and conformed to Christ-likeness. In contrast to the Old Testament where God designates time, space, objects and people as holy, the New Testament places a more personal focus of holiness: on Jesus Christ and the people whom the Holy Spirit is bestowed. The Holy Bible says, *“you are the temple of the Holy Spirit”* (1 Corinthians 6:19). We do not rely on our own strength to overcome sin but on the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives to be set free from the power of sin and evil.

Galatians 5:16, *“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”*

Galatians 5:25, *“If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”*

Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the dark places of your heart and let God’s grace and power sanctify you fully. He will heal the weaknesses that have tied you to this world and set you free from sin’s destruction. He is working alongside you to make you perfect and whole.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, *“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.”*

Book references:

The Seven feasts of Israel - Zola Levitt

The Feasts of the Lord - Kevin Howard & Marvin Rosenthal

The Feasts of Israel - Kevin J Conner

If you have any further questions, please email us at info@bethelag.in or walk into the church office for any counselling regarding this issue.

67, RING ROAD, HEBBAL, BANGALORE – 560 024

080 6568 7777 | WWW.BETHELAG.IN

TO BE CIRCULATED AMONG CHRISTIANS ONLY.