



# The Feasts of Israel

## 5. The Feast of Unleavened Bread



The feast of Unleavened Bread falls on the day after "Passover". Passover begins on the twilight of Nisan 14; therefore, the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on Nisan 15. The feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread are closely linked and referred to as one feast in some of the Gospels.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. <sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.

<sup>7</sup> Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. <sup>8</sup> And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." Luke 22:1,7

The day before Passover was known as the *Preparation Day*, the day one prepared for the feasts Passover and

Unleavened Bread. Prior to these feasts families had to prepare. The houses were cleaned, families searched for "Leaven" or yeast and the Lamb had to be prepared for sacrifice. The lamb was to be killed at the twilight on Nisan 14.

The death of the Lamb foreshadowed God's Lamb the Messiah, who would also be killed and entombed at the start of Passover. As the lamb was being cooked in the oven over an open fire, the Messiah's body lay in the tomb. As families all throughout Jerusalem celebrated Passover, God's Passover lamb bore their sins.

After Passover, the next day was the feast of Unleavened Bread which lasted 7 days, from Nisan 15 until Nisan 21, a period when Israel was to be holy to the Lord.

### The Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread

<sup>4</sup> "These are the LORD's appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times:

<sup>5</sup> The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. <sup>6</sup> On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.

<sup>7</sup> On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. <sup>8</sup> For seven days present an offering made to the LORD by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.' "

#### *Biblical Relevance*

The Feast Unleavened Bread was to remind Israel of the speed of their Egyptian deliverance. When the Lord passed over the land of Egypt, all the first born died, except for the house of Israel, where the blood of the lamb marked the door posts and lintel. Pharaoh was outraged and demanded Israel leave Egypt at once; Israel did not have time to wait for the bread to rise before they baked it (Exodus 12:31-37).

<sup>39</sup> And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves. Exodus 12:39

<sup>3</sup> You shall eat no leavened bread with it; 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

#### *The importance of this feast*

This feast along with Passover was instituted as the first two feasts for Israel; they were a reminder of Israel's redemption story. They were to be passed from generation to generation for the ages to come.

This is the first feast the men of Israel were required to present themselves before the Lord at the Temple, the other two feasts were the Feast of Weeks and Tabernacles (Ex. 23:14-17;34:18-23, Dt. 16:16;2 Chr. 8:13)

<sup>16</sup> Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed: <sup>17</sup> Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you. Deuteronomy 16:16-17



In one of the earliest scenes in the life of Jesus, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is keeping Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a boy of 12. Jesus is in the Temple courts in the midst of the teachers listening and asking questions. His parents had already gone ahead thinking he was with them. They returned to find him.

<sup>41</sup>Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup>When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup>After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup>Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup>When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <sup>46</sup>After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup>Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. Luke 12:41-47

### *How was the Feast Celebrated?*

The instructions to keep the feast are listed in Leviticus 23:8 and Numbers 28:19-24. First Israel was to rid itself of Leaven before the 7-day feast. In the Temple, the Priests were to offer special sacrifices. The people were to do no work on the first and seventh days, they were Sabbaths, and they were also to hold a sacred gathering on the first and seventh day. Yeast was strictly forbidden to even be in the homes. In six specific places the prohibition of yeast is emphasized during this feast (Ex. 12:14-20; 13:6-8; 23:15 34:18; Lev. 23:6; Dt. 16:3,8).

The punishment for leaven was severe; the person was to cut off from Israel. There was no tolerance for disobedience regarding this feast, keeping the house and area free from leaven.

<sup>4</sup> And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall *any* of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning. Deuteronomy 16:4

<sup>7</sup> 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

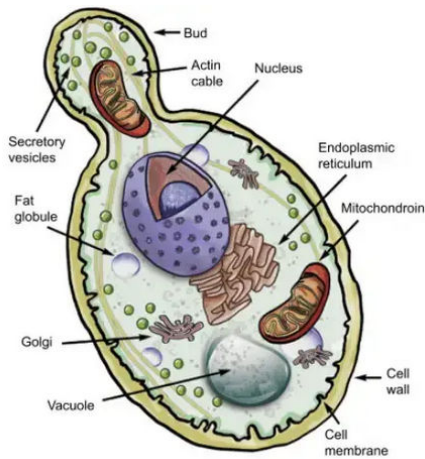
<sup>15</sup> Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. Exodus 12:15

### *What is Yeast?*



Yeast is a micro-organism that is defined as part of the fungi family; they produce asexually and do not require sunlight. They digest sugar and excrete carbon dioxide and alcohol as by products. They yeast cells population will begin to multiply rapidly as long as there is enough food (sugar) and the conditions are right such as temperature and moisture.

When yeast is put in warm dough it begins to digest the sugars and multiply. The yeast produces/excretes carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide bubbles are trapped in the dough. Alcohol is also produced but in the baking



process, the alcohol is burned off. The bread is puffed up with air pockets created by the yeast after it is baked, allowing the bread to be fluffy and substantial rather than flat. When Israel was leaving Egypt, they did not have time for the yeast to raise the dough.

Yeast is also used to create wine by letting the yeast cells digest the sugars in the grape juice and excrete alcohol, wine becomes alcoholic. Yeast cells naturally appear on the grape skin and in the environment. They along with other micro-organisms are involved in the decaying process of life. For example, animals eating decaying fruit have been known to become drunk from the alcohol that naturally is produced from the yeast on the skin. When fruit ripens in the warm sun, it can be alcoholic.

Yeast has a decaying affect on life therefore the Bible uses it as a metaphor for sin.

The picture of searching your house for yeast is a great analogy for us to search our lives for any hidden sin. Israel was to take the yeast and rid it from their midst, in the same way we should rid our lives of sin, removing it from our life like the yeast.

<sup>6</sup>Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? <sup>7</sup>Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Corinthians 5:7

<sup>11</sup>How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." <sup>12</sup>Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matthew 16:11-12

#### Modern Observation

The Passover and Unleavened Bread Feasts are both celebrated as feasts, so preparations for both feasts coincide together. The observant Jewish house will be cleaned prior to Passover, this includes washing and painting walls, boiling cooking items, carpets are cleaned, and clothes are thoroughly washed inside and out. Special china is brought out for the week in preparation of the holy days.

The night before Passover is a special day it is a preparation day; the fathers of each household perform a ceremony known as *Bedikat Hametz* or "Search for Leaven" ceremony. The term used in Hebrew for Leaven is *hametz*, meaning sour.

#### ***Bedikat Hametz: Searching for Leaven***<sup>1</sup>

The night before Passover, immediately after sundown, one begins the search for leaven ([Code of Jewish Law](#), Orach Chayyim 431:1). The aim of the search is to be sure that no leaven has been left behind after the cleaning of the house. The procedure includes these items: a candle; a feather, which acts as a broom; and a wooden spoon into which the pieces of bread will be scooped. First, a candle is lit, and the following benediction is recited:

*Barukh atah adonai eloheinu melekh ha'olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al be'ur chametz.* Praised are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has made us holy by [mitzvot](#) [commandments] and instructed us concerning the burning of the hametz.

Since by this time the house has been thoroughly cleaned and the chances of finding any leaven are minimal, it has become customary to put a number of crumbs of bread in places where they can be easily found in order to prevent the recitation of a benediction in vain. The crumbs of bread that are found and the leaven left over from breakfast should be guarded lest a new search become necessary. After the search for leaven, one recites the following formula of annulment: "All leavened food and grain fermentation that are in my possession, that I have not seen or removed, shall be null and considered as the dust of the earth."

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish\\_Holidays/Passover/At\\_Home/Leaven.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Passover/At_Home/Leaven.shtml)

## ***Be'ur Hametz: Burning the Leaven***

The following morning, usually sometime between 10 and 11 o'clock, the leaven is burned, and again the formula for the removal of hametz is recited, with a slight variation:

"Any leaven that may still be in the house, that I have or have not seen, that I have or have not removed, shall be as if it does not exist, and as the dust of the earth."

### ***Fulfillment***

The Passover Lamb is a foreshadowing of God's Lamb the Messiah. In the same way, the feast of Unleavened Bread is also a foreshadowing of the Messiah. Leaven symbolizes sin and decay, the power of death. Jesus, God's Lamb was killed and placed in the Tomb on the twilight of Passover in accordance with the Exodus 12; however, His body would not see decay. The feast of Unleavened Bread pictures the burial of Messiah and the feast of First Fruits His resurrection.

Jesus called himself the "Bread of life" come down from Heaven (John 6:51), John the Baptist called Him the Lamb of God, Paul called him the First Fruits of the resurrection (I Cor. 15:20,23). Jesus became our sacrifice, he was buried and resurrected, as one day we will be also. The death, burial and resurrection are pictured in the first three feasts of Nisan.

Isaiah reveals the picture of the Messiah and His first coming seven hundred years before his birth in chapters 52 and 53. The aspects of the first three feasts are revealed here. The fact that God's servant would die for the sins of the world. He would be led like a "lamb to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:7). He would also be sinless, He is called "My Servant" (Isa. 52:14) and "My righteous Servant who will justify many" (Isa 53:11). This servant came to bear the sins of the world, to be the lamb for our Passover; Isaiah reveals his punishment brought us peace (Isa. 53:5). Though He is killed (vs. 9) he shall see the light of life (vs. 11), resurrection.

The seven days of the feast of Unleavened Bread foreshadow the complete (number seven) sinless (without leaven) sacrifice of God's Lamb the Messiah.

13 See, my servant will act wisely [b] ;  
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him [c]—  
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man  
and his form marred beyond human likeness—

15 so will he sprinkle many nations, [d]  
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.  
For what they were not told, they will see,  
and what they have not heard, they will understand. **Isaiah 52:13-15**

1 Who has believed our message  
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,  
and like a root out of dry ground.  
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,  
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

3 He was despised and rejected by men,  
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.  
Like one from whom men hide their faces  
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he took up our infirmities  
and carried our sorrows,  
yet we considered him stricken by God,  
smitten by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to his own way;  
and the LORD has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression [a] and judgment he was taken away.  
And who can speak of his descendants?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living;  
for the transgression of my people he was stricken. [b]

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,  
and though the LORD makes [c] his life a guilt offering,  
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,  
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

11 After the suffering of his soul,  
he will see the light of life [d] and be satisfied [e] ;  
by his knowledge [f] my righteous servant will justify many,  
and he will bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, [g]  
and he will divide the spoils with the strong, [h]  
because he poured out his life unto death,  
and was numbered with the transgressors.  
For he bore the sin of many,  
and made intercession for the transgressors. **Isaiah 53:1-12**

David also writes about the Messiah's death and how His body would not see the corruption of the grave. The effect of yeast is to decay and spoil, the Messiah would be resurrected defying the grave. David knew his body would be in the grave, but he also knows the "Holy One" God's Messiah would not suffer the same fate. Therefore, David looked for his redemption in the *Holy One*, who would rescue him from the grave. Peter quotes from King David in Acts 2:27, calling Jesus the Holy One.



9 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
my body also will rest secure,  
10 because you will not abandon me to the grave, [c]  
nor will you let your Holy One [d] see decay.  
11 You have made [e] known to me the path of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
with eternal pleasures at your right hand. **Psalm 16:9-11**

We were destined to die without hope because of the fall of Adam and Eve. We would decay and rot in the grave (Genesis 3:19).

Paul uses this powerful image of searching for Leaven as we should search for sin. The believer has power over his sin

through the work of the Holy Spirit.

1Co 5:6-8 ESV

(6) Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?



- (7) Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.
- (8) Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

