

First Day Unleavened Bread—2012 The Perfect Way of God

Fred R. Coulter—April 7, 2012

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 2012. Quite a thing! Time marches on; every year comes along and God has us renew the New Covenant through the Passover and then the Days of Unleavened Bread.

- every year we are to learn
- every year we're to grow in grace and knowledge
- every year we're to understand
 - ✓ what God is doing with us
 - ✓ how He's doing it
 - ✓ why He's doing it

We recognize something very important: *that we're not of this world!*

When we look back at the things with ancient Israel, remember it was *only God* Who could release them from the slavery of the Egyptians. We know that it was *only through the miracles* that God did to fight their battles for them. Likewise with us spiritually, the only way we're going to get into the Kingdom of God is through Jesus Christ, as *'He is the Way, the Truth and the Life.'* Actually, Exodus means *the way out!*

So, when God brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, He did it in a miraculous way, to show us many, many different lessons. We will look at those lessons as we go through the meaning of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

As we always do, let's go to Leviticus 23—all the Holy Days start at this point. All of the Holy Days are the *appointed times* or the *appointed feasts* of God. Isn't it interesting how the most important things are on the framework of the Holy Days. The *appointed times of the Messiah* and all of those things come from here. Most of the religious world, especially the 'Christian world' considers that these feasts are just agricultural feasts, kind of in a bygone time of a people; history is long forgotten. They look at the Bible as something they wouldn't even read or consider or understand, even though every year it's a best seller. That is because people do not really take God seriously, and they don't believe what He says. Rather, they trust in themselves and their own intellect and their own way and their own theologians and their own interpretations and all of the things that 'seem right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death'!

Here in Leviticus 23, to get things started, God made it simple. Remember, as we've covered how many times, *obey My voice* is the summary of the whole Bible, and that is the whole question of our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. That is the whole substance of what our life has to be.

Remember, these are not the laws of Moses. Moses didn't give these. He only told the children of Israel what God said. He was only the messenger, and as Jesus said, 'The messenger is not greater than the one who sent him.'

Leviticus 23:1: And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, "*Concerning* the appointed Feasts of the LORD...[they belong to God] ...which you shall proclaim *to be* Holy convocations, even these are My appointed Feasts'" (vs 1-2). Isn't that interesting?

I even heard a minister in the Church of God say that 'God doesn't keep the Sabbath.' Really? *Yes, He does!* He does it better than any human being could do, because He sends His Spirit to be wherever His people are. On these *appointed feasts* God is there. The question is: **Are we?** And when we come:

- What is our attitude?
- What do we think?
- What do we believe?
- How do we conduct our lives?

Verse 3: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a Holy convocation. You shall not do any work. It *is* a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings." The Sabbath we understand, and many people besides us keep the Sabbath. But again, everything gets down to how much understanding do they really, really have? How much are they yielded to God? Without the Spirit of God these things are meaningless.

Verse 4: "These *are* the appointed Feasts of the LORD, Holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons.... [this is the season of Unleavened Bread] ...In the fourteenth *day* of the first month, between the two evenings, is the LORD'S Passover" (vs 4-5).

Again, it belongs to the Lord. We've kept the Passover and we kept it when Jesus said to keep it on the 14th day of the 1st month, also known as Nisan. That Passover Day was the day that God chose for one of God Who became Jesus Christ to

come to the earth as God manifested in the flesh and to give His life as a perfect sacrifice of the sins of all mankind.

Now then, there is more to it and more must be added to having our sins forgiven. Most people forget that having your sins forgiven is a beginning, not an ending. Having your sins forgiven puts you in a relationship with God. And then you have to enter into covenant with Him through a covenant baptism, as we have covered. As we have seen this year with the Passover on a Friday, there's no room for three days or three nights where we have the portrayal of Jesus being in the tomb.

Tomorrow is the first day of the count to Pentecost because that is the first day of the week during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We begin to count there. If we don't begin to count there, as some have done and take the count to the next first day of the week, they're outside the Feast of Unleavened Bread. That's why God has it this way. There's always a purpose that God has.

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.**" For those who don't believe what God says, they say you don't have to eat any bread if you don't want to. Well, they even take it a little bit further and say that 'you don't have to eat *unleavened* bread.' Well, **they don't believe God!**

Verse 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. In the seventh day *is* a Holy convocation. You shall do no servile work *therein*" (vs 7-8).

Also know that we're to bring offerings for every Holy Day. We also know that in Deuteronomy 16 it says that everyone is to give 'according to the blessing' of the Lord their God. We have the promises that we find in the New Testament that God is able to make 'all sufficiency and all things abound to us' if we're faithful and we give and if we give from the heart and bountifully.

Part of the reason why Cain's offering was not accepted was because it was an agricultural thing, having nothing to do with the firstfruits. Kind of what was left over that he would bring to God, much like the sacrifices that are mentioned in Malachi, the first chapter, that they were bringing to God those that were deficient, those that were deformed. God wants a *perfect* sacrifice; that signifies our perfect attitude and our love toward God and our thanksgiving to God.

Of course, Jesus said it's more blessed to give than receive. I had one man write me and say, 'Why don't you ever ask for money?' I said, 'Well, it's more blessed to give than receive, and God expects there to be reciprocity. Reciprocity is this: ***You give because you have freely received, because someone else has given!*** We know that God commands us to bring the tithes and the offerings, and He will bless us. He will *open the windows* of heaven and do so. And the final blessing for us will be the resurrection from the dead when Jesus returns. So, let's go ahead and we'll take a pause right now and we will take up an offering.

(pause to take up the offering)

Now let's continue and go to Exodus, the twelfth chapter, and we'll see a little bit more about the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We've already covered all the things that we need to cover for the Passover, and we've had the Passover preparation CD that we sent to you with five basic sermons on how to prepare for the Passover. We've had the Passover; we know the meaning of it; it belongs to God, and that we are spared from this world just like the children of Israel were spared from Egypt. We'll talk about Egypt a little bit later.

Exodus 12:15: "You shall eat unleavened *bread* seven days; even the first day you shall *have* put away leaven out of your houses; for **whoever eats leavened bread** from the first day until the seventh day, that soul **shall be cut off from Israel.**" That means the blessings of God, even though they are in the geographically area of Israel, will be cut off from them.

Verse 16: "And in the first day *there shall be* a Holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a Holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done in them, except that which every man must eat, that only may be done by you. And you shall keep the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for in this very same day I have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, you shall keep this day in your generations **as a law forever**" (vs 16-17). Then it talks about when you are to have all the leaven put out and so forth.

Let's see some of the things that this pictures. There are some spiritual lessons for us. We have the Night to be Much Observed to the Lord, which we observed last night. This commemorates the beginning of the Exodus by the children of Israel. God did it to the very day, *the appointed day* that He made a covenant with Abraham to do so. Then God brought them out and brought them to Himself. This shows that God has to deal with us and call us out of this world. And it's only by the strength and the power and the might of God that we're able to do it.

We know that in Rev. 11:8 it says that even the city of Jerusalem today is called ‘Sodom and Egypt.’ We also know in Rev. 18 where it talks about Babylon the Great—because everything out of Egypt came from Babylon—He says, ‘*Come out of her My people.*’ We are to live *in* the world, but we are not to be *of* the world. ***The way out of the world, that God has given, is through Jesus Christ our Lord!***

This is why it’s very important what Jesus said. Let’s come back here to John, the fourteenth chapter [transcriber’s correction], and let’s see what Jesus said concerning that He was *the Way, the Truth and the Life!* It’s very important to realize that God has dealt in our lives, and our covenant was between God the Father and Jesus Christ unto eternal life. We know that the Spirit of the Father has drawn us—and that’s by the grace of God, too, by the way. We know that none can come to Jesus unless ‘the Father draws him.’ Likewise, what Jesus spoke on the Passover night:

John 14:6: “...‘I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.’” That’s the whole lesson of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as far as coming out of Egypt. There are a lot of things we need to do; there are other things we need to understand; there are other lessons we need to learn. During the Feast of Unleavened Bread we’re to put leaven out of our homes, and that leaven is a type of sin. The sin in our lives during the Feast of Unleavened Bread is pictured as leaven. There are other times when leaven is all right, but during this special time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

- it pictures *sin*
- it pictures *human nature*
- it pictures *the vanity* of human nature
- it pictures *the evil* that lies deep within
- it pictures also the fact that just like a loaf of bread when it’s all puffed up before it’s baked, *leaven is all throughout it*

Isn’t that interesting? What do we have within us? *We have the leaven of ‘the law of sin and death!’* And only Christ can redeem us from that. This is why we keep the Passover, and this is why we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

After the Corinthians (1-Cor. 5) had not dealt properly with the man who was committing abominable sexual sins with his step-mother and had to be put out of the congregation, because sinners are not going to be in the Kingdom of God. Sinners are not going to be fit for the Church of God. You cannot be *living in sin* and *practicing sin* if you have the Spirit of God.

Paul wrote this to Gentiles in Corinth and he said, 1-Corinthians 5:6: “‘Your glorying *is* not good. Don’t you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?’” That’s what sin does. One sin leads to another sin, which leads to another sin, and then finally ends up in death. ‘The wages of sin are death.’ The thing we need to grasp and understand is that just as the Apostle Paul said, ‘Within me, within my fleshly being, of and by myself ***there is no good***’—*spiritual good!*—unless it is of the Spirit of God. We need to realize that. We don’t save ourselves because of what we do. God saves us ***because of His grace***, and then ***how we obey His voice!*** A little leaven leavens the whole lump!

Verse 7: “Therefore, purge out the old leaven, so that you may become a new lump, *even* as you are unleavened....” They had put leaven out of their houses. If you put leaven out of your house it does absolutely no good to put it out if you don’t realize that your nature needs to be changed. If you don’t realize that you need to be transformed from what you are into what God wants you to be, and unless we understand that every year we go through this—we go through the Feast of Unleavened Bread—and learn the lessons that God wants us to have so that we can grow in grace and knowledge and be continually preparing for the Kingdom of God.

Here’s the reason that we keep the Feast: “...For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.... [You have to have the Passover first and then the Feast of Unleavened Bread] ...For this reason, let us keep the Feast...” (vs 7-8). Those who never looked into the Bible to keep the Feasts of God do not understand what this means.

They readily believe, in the world, that all the holidays of this world are found in the Bible, and that they’re Christian, and that they should do them. Although, it’s generally known that all these things are pagan. The truth of the matter is there isn’t one word in the Bible showing that we should keep the holidays of this world. That’s why we have the book: *Occult Holidays or God’s Holy Days—Which?*

“...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” (v 8). And that is the heart and core and meaning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread—***to have our natures changed*** by getting rid of sin and vanity.

Let’s come back to Psalm 39; this becomes very important for us to understand. King Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes, which says, ‘Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,’ and showing that the striving of things and the human nature and the way

that it is and how it functions and how it behaves is just like a striving after wind.

- Did you grab hold of that piece of wind?
- Where is it?
- Where did it go?
- What happened to it?
- How about the last breath that you breathed, where did it go?

Now you're taking another one, etc. But human nature is vain, sinful, carnal and needs to be changed!

Psalm 39:4: "O LORD, make me to know my end and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how short lived I am." Yes, we're just like a vapor—WHOOSH!—that comes and goes compared to the eternal God. It doesn't matter how long we live in the flesh, because unless we live forever, what have done? We're going to be just like that last breath you took—it's gone!

Verse 5: "Behold, You have made my days as a handbreadth, and the span of my days is as nothing before You. Surely every man at his best state is **altogether vanity**. Selah." Why? *Because there's no spiritual good in man by and of himself without the Spirit of God!* Even then that is only given so we can

- so we can overcome the flesh
- so we can overcome the sin
- so we can overcome human nature
- so we can overcome the carnal mind

What the Days of Unleavened Bread really teach us is this: *We are sin from head to toe throughout, staffed with every cell of our being with the law of sin and death!* We act as though we're so important. We act as though we're so great. Satan the devil is right there to puff us up! Yes, right there! That's why the things in the world do not count.

Yes, we need to live in the world, but when we come out of spiritual Egypt we are not *of* the world. We can't compromise. That's why God says to eat unleavened bread seven days—no compromise! We can't be compromising with that.

Verse 6: "Surely every man walks about in a vain show! Surely they are in an uproar in vain. He heaps up riches and does not know who shall gather them. And now, LORD, what do I wait for? **My hope is in You**" (vs 6-7). He said in Psa. 34, 'Oh taste and see that the Lord is good.' When you do, you will see God's way as compared to human's way. Human's way as enhanced by Satan the devil. Here's what David said:

Verse 8: "Deliver me from all my transgressions..." That's what we want, every one of us. Only God can rescue us from Satan the devil,

just like only God could rescue the children of Israel from Egypt. Only God can change our human nature through the process of getting rid of sin—that's why we put the leaven out—and putting in the righteousness, having our mind transformed as we are shown in the New Testament.

Let's see how God deals with us and how these things work and how we are to be completely yielded to God, Psalm 138:1: "I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praise to You." Yes, all those gods out there in this world are nothing! All the idols! All the religions! All the things of men! ***They are nothing!***

God has said, 'You are going to do a great word for Me? You going to build a temple for Me? You going to build a wonderful building for me? How are you going to do that, seeing as how I have created all those things? How are you going to honor Me with that?' Look what happens every time someone builds a temple. What happened to Solomon? Doesn't even say that He qualified for eternal life! No, God says, '*To this one will I look, he who is of a broken spirit and a contrite heart, and trembles at My Word.*' That is holds the Word of God in awe, in love and obedience!

If we don't do that and we have a 'religion' God says that He *hates religion!* Why? *Because it's man's way of endeavoring to make himself good without God and Jesus Christ!* There's no way that can happen.

Verse 2: "I will worship toward Your Holy temple... [That's where we pray—right? *Our Father in heaven and Jesus Christ at the right hand!* That's what we do today.] ...and praise Your name for Your loving kindness, and for Your Truth; for You have magnified Your Word above all Your name." The Truth of God is above all! Everything we have comes from God:

- from *His Truth*
- from *His righteousness*
- from *His perfection*

We're going to see that the main thing that God wants us to do is to be *perfected!* That's why we get rid of the leaven! That's why we, in order for this perfection to take place within us, God's Spirit *within us reveals* the sins that we have so we can repent! So, we can ask God to *forgive* us, and then we can be put in *right standing* with God the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Verse 3: "In the day when I cried, You answered me..." Yes, we have had a lot of answered prayer, brethren. Let's pray that prayer for all of those who are sick. And also all of those who are sick I've said how many times? You better learn

how to take care of your own body. You better learn what you need to do. That's our responsibility! Then we will have less sickness and we won't have the trauma of so many serious diseases that are in the world, and yes, even in the Churches of God. From that, brethren:

- pray for God's intervention
- pray for the repentance of everyone involved
- pray for the healing that only God can do

And if not then, we ask *why*? Is there something we need to do? That's all part of it.

- We're to grow *in grace and knowledge*.
- We're to grow *in understanding*.
- We're to grow *in faith*.
- We're to grow *in love*.

All of these things.

"...and made me bold with strength in my soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD, when they hear the words of Your mouth.... [that day is coming; hasn't arrived, yet] ...Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD" (vs 3-5). Of course, we can apply that to us, because we're going to reign as kings and priests—aren't we? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 6: "Though the LORD is high, yet He has respect to the lowly; but the haughty... [the puffed-up ones of vanity and selfishness, lust, greed, idolatry and all the works of the flesh!] ...He knows afar off." Interesting, everyone wants to live in their sins and have the blessings of God. But God shows that's not the way it comes.

Verse 7: "Though I walk in the midst of trouble..." Yes, we will be in the midst of trouble; we are living in the end-time and these are perilous days and troublous times. Satan the devil is walking about as 'a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.'

"...You will revive me... [Yes, we may have to suffer a bit. We may have to learn some lessons because of what we have done, but God will revive us.] ...You shall stretch forth Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand shall save me" (v 7).

- Isn't that what God did for the children of Israel in Egypt?
- Isn't that what God did when they went through the Red Sea?
- Isn't that what Jesus Christ has done through His sacrifice and crucifixion and shed blood?
- *Yes! To rescue us from Satan the devil!*

Here is the key and a special meaning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is why we put out the leaven. This is why we eat the unleavened bread, v 8: "**The LORD will perfect His work in me...**

[As we have covered and mentioned many times, *we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus* 'unto the good works which God has before ordained that we are to walk in them.' What God is doing with that lump of dough, unleavened lump of dough, is that He is going to: *mold us! fashion us! form us!* Into being His very son or daughter through Jesus Christ.

"...Your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever; do not forsake the work of Your own hands" (v 8). Isn't that interesting? We are the work of the hands of God through His Holy Spirit. We are to be perfected!

Now let's look at something that is really quite important when we understand it. Let's come back to Matthew, the fifth chapter, and see that's one of the things that Jesus Christ said right in the Sermon on the Mount. One thing you need to understand and very few people realize this: When you read Matt. 5 it seems that there are some kind of contradictions, that there some things that why would God ask you to do that? *But He did it to demonstrate a point*, and the answer is not contained in Matt. 5; the answer is scattered throughout all the rest of the New Testament. Just like it was there in Psa. 138—*perfect your work in Me*.

We know that Jesus did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. First of all, He started by showing the spiritual attitudes that we need to have. And these spiritual attitudes can only come with the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God can only come by getting rid of the carnal self and the 'puffed-upness' of human nature. We are to be renewed and changed and eventually transformed at the resurrection. Here's how He starts out:

Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." By the way, all of these blessings are quotes or near quotes from the Old Testament. Look at the foolishness, indeed, of those who say that the Old Testament has been fulfilled and the Law has been done away, because we know that Jesus said, 'Don't even think that I've come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I haven't come to abolish them, but to fulfill them' (v 17)—and that means *to complete and make full*. We will show how that is and how we are to be perfected.

Verse 4: "Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Yes, we'll go through trials and be mourning.

Verse 5: "Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.... [You're not all puffed-up in vanity and how great you are.] ...Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" (vs 5-6).

Is that what we are doing? Are we longing for, hungering for, thirsting for the Kingdom of God, the way of Jesus Christ, the mind of Christ, the understanding of the Word of God? Brethren, stop and think! As I wrote in my February letter, we have great responsibility laid upon us, because ‘to whom much is given, much is required.’ You think about that with everything that we have, and let that be that which will inspire us and uplift us and bring us the zeal and the understanding that we need, so that we *hunger and thirst after righteousness—God’s righteousness!* We’ll see two things that Jesus said in just a bit.

Verse 7: “Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God.... [And, of course, a lot of these things are only going to be fulfilled in the resurrection.] ...Blessed *are* the peacemakers, for they shall be called *the* sons of God. Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (vs 7-10).

We’re going to be persecuted for it—various ones at various times and by various means have been persecuted even unto death! All the apostles were martyred. How many Christians were killed and fed to the lions? How many were killed during the Inquisitions of the Roman Catholic Church, and that claims to be the Church of God!? *Not the true God!*

Look at William Tyndale, the first man—called of God, of course, to translate the New Testament from the original Greek and the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. What happened to him? The world hated him and hounded him and drove him out of England. He could find no peace but to go hide alone and translate the Word of God. Finally, he was betrayed and arrested and put in the prison in Valarde in Belgium where he was 15 months frantically working to finish the Old Testament. He had to ask for wrappings for his legs and a cap because it was cold. He did all of this by candlelight. What a fantastic thing that he did! How was he rewarded? *He was strangled and burned at the stake!* But he was a man of love and glorified God! His last prayer, before they choked him and burn him, he said, ‘Lord, open the eyes of the king of England.’ *God did!*

His Bible was published and almost immediately after it was published there were those, instead of trying to learn more of the Greek and more of the Hebrew to improve it, they wanted to tweak it so it would fit their own thoughts, their own philosophies, their own previous papal inclinations.

Now we find here that Jesus said that we’re

to teach even the ‘least commandments’ (v 19), and you’ve got to be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees. The only way you do that is with the Spirit of God. Then He shows here concerning sin. He says that anger is the same as murder. All murders start from within. All murders come from hatred. All murders come from sin. Murdering *is* sin! He said, if you murder your brother and you’re angry with him and call him a fool, you shall be in ‘danger of Gehenna fire.’

Notice what He says concerning adultery. This is kind of hard for people to accept and understand. Verse 27: “You have heard that it was said to those *in ancient times*, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, everyone who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (vs 27-28). That’s a hard one to overcome—*isn’t it? Yes, indeed!*

He doesn’t give the spiritual solution, and He’s showing that lust cannot be overcome by discipline of your own mind. Lust cannot be overcome because of what you do. *You need the Spirit of God!*

Verse 29: “So then, if your right eye shall cause you to offend, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is better for you that one of your members should perish than *that* your whole body be cast into Gehenna.” That’s a rather cruel thing to do. How can it be that God loved the world, gave His only begotten son and that He’s merciful, longsuffering and kind, and then He says do this, and He’s not telling you this to demonstrate what you *should* do, He’s saying to demonstrate to you that *you can’t do it on your own! You cannot do it without the Spirit of God!*

Let’s see how He ends up here with it, v 48: “Therefore, you **shall be** perfect...” Become; you have come from this point of lust, and even if you cut off your arm or gouge out your eye you still lust. So, there must be the *inner* change. That’s why the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The bread has been changed from within, because of what is in it—the leaven. This is why we’re to get all leaven out of our homes during the Days of Unleavened Bread, and why we’re to unleavened bread.

Because we are to become “...perfect, even as your Father Who *is* in heaven is perfect” (v 48). How about that? What is He stating here? *He is stating the whole goal of the New Covenant!* What He is not stating here are the steps necessary to do this. That’s why we have the rest of the New Testament, so that we can become perfect.

Matthew 6: 33: “But *as for* you, seek **first**... [primarily] ...the Kingdom of God and His

righteousness...” Then you will be able to overcome the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. All of those things are of this world. You cannot use worldly techniques to become spiritual, because all of those come from Satan the devil. You have to change, grow and *be perfected within!*

“...and all these things shall be added to you” (v 33). We’re going to see what it means to be *perfected*, because that’s the whole theory, the whole story, the whole meaning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

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Now let’s continue on for the message for the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Holy Day, and let’s ask: How are we being perfected? *There are things that we need to do!* Let’s see what those are, and let’s see how we need to make that the main goal in our lives. Jesus said, ‘become perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.’ You can’t have any greater righteousness than that.

Let’s understand that God has called us out of this world; we’re *not part of* the world, but we *live in* the world. Therefore, we need to understand that we can’t have the world affecting us so that we live like they do. Especially concerning the things of ‘religion,’ concerning the things of how the world is. Go back and read the message of the Church of the Laodiceans. They’re lukewarm! Why are they lukewarm? *Because they’re not cold and they’re not hot!* They’re in-between, and if you’re in-between then you compromise. Too many of those who are Laodiceans—unless they have repented—have compromised and become lukewarm and have become ‘ho-hum’ about God’s way. They haven’t really caught the vision that God the Father, the Ruler, the Sovereign of the universe has been dealing in their lives. What must we do?

- ***We’ve got to act with fervency!***
- ***We’ve got to act with zeal!***
- ***We’ve got to act with repentance!***

As Jude wrote in helping some people come out of sin, he said, ‘Some you save with mercy and kindness.’ In other words, you even hate the garments that they have, because they’re so stained with sin. We’re going to learn what not to do, and what to do. We are not only going to learn *what to do*, but *how to do it*.

2-Corinthians 6:14: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have in common?*.... [Nothing!] ...And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial?.... [Those are the sons of Baal: foolishness,

vanity, lust, greed!] ...Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement *is there between* a **temple of God** and idols?....” (vs 14-16). Each one of us are a temple of God (1-Cor. 3:16—*know ye not that you are the temple of God and that God dwells in you?*) Isn’t it fantastic that God the Father and Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit of God, dwell in us? *Yes!* And with the power and Holy Spirit of God you can get rid of sin:

- We can overcome *lust!*
- We can overcome *hatred!*
- We can overcome *greed!*
- We can overcome *anger!*
- We can overcome the *works of the flesh!*
- We can overcome the *world!*
- We can overcome Satan the *devil!*

Not agree with it!

“...For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,’ says *the* Lord...” (vs 16-17). That’s what the whole Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures, brethren, and to have our minds and hearts focused on

- the Kingdom of God
- the love of God
- the faith of God
- the hope of God
- the fruits of the Spirit

—not the works of the flesh!

“...‘and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you; and I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty” (vs 17-18). That’s quite a promise—isn’t it? That’s what God wants. He wants to take and *convert* us and *mold* us and *teach* us. That’s what the whole purpose of the ministry is for, *to teach and perfect* the saints.

- The up-building!
- The lifting up!
- The inspiring of!
- The teaching of!

Coming from God the Father—through His Word, through His Spirit—to all of us together. Even as Paul said to those who were teachers: ‘You who teach others, don’t you teach yourself?’ *Yes!* We’re all to be going and learning—aren’t we? Every year! Every day! Every Sabbath!

2-Corinthians 7:1: “Now then, beloved, since we have these promises, we should **purge** ourselves... [To get rid of! ‘Purge out the old leaven that you may become a new lump.’ *Yes, indeed!*] ...from every defilement of *the* flesh and *the* spirit,

perfecting Holiness in *the* fear of God.” Holiness is *living God’s way*. God’s way is perfect.

David knew that God’s way was perfect. Listen, brethren, if we are to be perfect ‘as our Father in heaven is perfect,’ then we need a perfect way to get there—isn’t that correct? Since we are imperfect, we need to be changed, transformed, and renewed—that comes from the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Truth—from the perfect God Who loves us, from the perfect Savior Who gave Himself for us—and is right now is giving us the very mind that Jesus had.

Psalm 18:30: “**As for God, His way is perfect...**” Jesus said, ‘I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’ As for God, *His Way* is perfect! This is how we become perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

“...the Word of the LORD is tried.... [Like silver, tried seven times in the furnace. Yes, the Word of God is tried, is true, even down to a tiny phrase can tell us an awful lot.] ...He is a shield to all those who take refuge in Him” (vs 30).

See Psa. 91. We’re heading for a lot of trouble down the road in the future, and we need the protection of God. He ‘puts us under the shadow of His wings.’ The world can’t see that, but just like when the children of Israel were coming out of Egypt, God was there in the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night, just like they were covered with the protection of God. You read Psa. 91. There’s a promise that ‘a thousand will fall at your right hand and ten thousand at your left hand’ and it won’t come near you.

Verse 31: “For who is God besides the LORD? Or, **who is a Rock except our God?**” Remember what Jesus said about hearing His words and doing them *vs* hearing the words and not doing them. The one who heard the words of Christ and did them was like a man building his house upon a rock, and ‘that Rock was Christ’—isn’t it? *He is our Rock, yes, indeed!*

Verse 32: “The God who **girds me with strength...** [we need the strength of the Spirit of God] ...and makes my way perfect.” How? *Because you live by the Word of God!* Just like Jesus said, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’ Everything we have here God has spoken or God has breathed the inspiration of it as if He has spoken. It has been tired and it’s true and it’s great and it’s marvelous. These are the words of life—*eternal life!*

Let’s see what God wants us to do, how we are to do it! Philippians 3 is really quite a section here. We’re all going to go through difficulties.

We’re all going to have trials and troubles. We’re all going to have afflictions. We’re all going to have those things that will test our faith. But if we’re *walking in the Truth* and we are *believing faithfully* in the Word of God, and we are *trusting God*, and *living in His Spirit*, then we’re going to understand.

Notice the attitude that the Apostle Paul had. Stop and think about your life. There are a lot of things in your life you have to forget—isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!* There are things we need to realize and understand that only God can purge away, which is why we’re to learn the lesson but not have it indelibly stamped upon our mind. That’s why we need the washing of the water by the Word. That’s why our part in being perfected by God is to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The Apostle Paul said, ‘Listen, my whole life was nothing but gain.’ He found out that was nothing but sin; he repented of it.

Philippians 3:7: “Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ.” It doesn’t matter. You have things in your life you need to forget, get rid of? ***That’s what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about!*** You can get rid of it! You can have it removed! Just like you get leaven out of your homes.

Verse 8: “But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **count them as dung**; that I may gain Christ.” Dung is ‘skubalon’ in the Greek. Think about that for a minute. Two-thirds of our body are devoted to a sewer system. Isn’t that true? Think about it! *Yes, it is!* Just as we need to have our sewer system working good, we need to be getting rid of the things in our lives so we don’t have a sewer backup *spiritually speaking*.

Verse 9: “And may be found in Him... [Not with the blessing of the high priest with orders to kill Christians, but to be found in Christ.] ...not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from law...” Paul was practicing all the laws of Judaism and was blameless; that can’t be the righteousness, because all of that is out here. The *true righteousness comes from within* with the Spirit of God.

“...but that *righteousness* which *is* by the faith of Christ—the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith” (v 9). Through the Spirit of God Christ gives us *His faith*; that’s God’s faith. In the Greek, Jesus said, ‘have God’s faith.’ That’s something we need to grow in. We’ve got a long way to go because we *are being* perfected, we haven’t yet arrived!

Verse 10: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; if **by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead**” (vs 10-11). That’s the goal, brethren! And just help you be comforted, every single Christian that has been faithful down through the centuries has died and is awaiting the resurrection. Do not worry about death. We’re all doing to die in Adam. Focus on the resurrection like Paul did here.

Verse 12: “Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected... [No! Perfection is a process, and that must be completed, and the completion is faithful unto death, or faithful to the return of Christ and then you’ll be changed.] ...but **I am striving**...” That’s what we need to do.

- We need to have the *works* of Christ.
- We need to have the *zeal* of Christ.
- We need to have the *character* of Christ!

“...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this one thing I do—forgetting the things that are behind...*” (vs 12-13)—everything that’s in this world; everything about how you live your life and sin; everything that is behind.

Remember, even the righteousness that you do today, that’s fine, but you can’t say ‘okay, I’ve had this much righteousness today, I’m going to take some of that and put it for tomorrow.’ *or* ‘I’ve had this much righteousness today, and since I wasn’t so good yesterday, I’m going to take that and apply it to yesterday.’ NO! Everyday is a new day! We go forward everyday in the way that God wants us to go.

Verse 13: “Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this one thing I do—forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth to the things that are ahead, I press...* [As Jesus said, ‘Only the zealous are the ones who are going to attain to the Kingdom of God] ...**toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**” (vs 13-14).

That’s what we need to do. Just like during the Exodus, all the way they had to walk and keep on walking. What they walked today does not count for tomorrow. What they did today got them that much closer. What they would do tomorrow would bring them again that much closer. That’s how we have to count it in growing, overcoming and changing; and getting rid of vanity and sin; and walking in God’s perfect way; and knowing how to live. All the things that are past, forget it! You can’t live in the past. You must live in the present and in the future, because the future is where it’s coming

from.

Verse 15: “So then, let as many as *be perfect be of this mind*.... [This is the mind, this is the attitude. You can go back and tie that in with Matt. 5 with all the beatitudes. These are the attitudes of our mind.] ...**be of this mind**....”—which comes from Christ.

Here’s a promise. How can we do that? You can do it; everyone can do it. God will give you the strength to do it. God has given you His Spirit to do it. God has given you His Word for you to study so you will know how to do it. “...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, **God will reveal even this to you**” (v 15). God is going to make it known to you!

Lots of times we go along and we discover that there’s some sin in our thoughts, the way we behave. You wonder: Where does that come from? Do you have the Spirit of God? *Yes!* Because God loves you, will He not, through His Spirit, reveal what you need to repent of, so you can repent of it? *Yes!* What is God doing? *God is perfecting us!*

Verse 16: “Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.” Let’s see how that’s going to be. Let’s see the way that we need to walk. Let’s see what it is that needs to be perfected. Let’s see what it is that’s going to bring us to that perfection through the power of God, through His Holy Spirit.

We know that we’re not to be part of this world. Let’s see what we are NOT to do, and then let’s see what we *are to do*. We’re not to go back and live the way that we used to live. As Peter said, it’s like a dog going back to ‘eat his vomit’; *or* a sow going back after it’s been cleansed and polished up for the fair and then it sees a big sewer mud hole and it just runs headlong and jumps in it and squeals and oinks and rolls in it, having a great time in all the of the dirt and blither. NO!

1-John 2:15: “Do not love the world... [We’re going to see that we need to love God!] ...nor the things *that are* in the world.... [Today we have all kinds of gadgets and things—don’t we?] ...If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him... [it is the love of the Father that will perfect us] ...because everything that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father, but is from the world” (vs 15-16). We are not to emulate those things. We’re not be captivated by those things.

Here’s why, v 17: “And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will

of God abides forever.” Remember, the goal is *to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect!* And the goal is *eternal life!* Those other things are passing away. Let’s see what we are to be perfecting, v 3: And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him” (vs 3-4). I wonder how that would go over in a Protestant church? They say, ‘Yea, we’ll do that, all except for number four.’ Think on that one for a minute!

Verse 5: “On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word... [That’s the way! That’s why Jesus is called *the Word!* That’s why we have His Word. That’s why we have the Bible.] ...truly in this one the love of God **is being** perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked” (vs 5-6). That’s how we are to live. God’s way is perfect. God is perfecting in us.

Now let’s see how this is to be done. Let’s see what we are to do. Since we have the Spirit of God; since it is the Truth of God, which is perfect and in it there is no lie; since Jesus is the Way; since God the Father and Jesus Christ dwell in us, we are—through the power of the Holy Spirit—to overcome sin and get it out, just like we get the leaven out of our homes, here’s what we’re to do:

Romans 12:1: “I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy *and* well pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service.” That’s *becoming perfect* as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Verse 2: “Do not conform yourselves to this world... [We’re not to be *of* the world; we are to come out of the world; we are to come out Egypt; we are to come out of Babylon!] ...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” That’s what it is, our mind needs to be converted and changed.

- ***We are to be led by the Holy Spirit of God,*** not by our carnal mind and lust
- ***We are to be led by the Word of God and Jesus Christ,*** not by the ways of this world.

“...in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God” (v 2). What is the perfect will of God?

- ***That Christ be formed in us!***
- ***That we develop the mind of Christ!***
- ***That we develop the love of God!***

Let’s read how we are to be motivated with the love of God, and how we are to yield to God, and how this love of God and love within us—by loving God

the Father and Jesus Christ with all our heart, mind, soul and being; love our neighbors as ourselves and love the brethren as Jesus loved us—what this does for us. Then we’re going to see how we apply it so we can attain to that perfection.

1-John 4:6: “We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception.” In the world is the spirit of deception. Satan is deceiving the whole world! With the Word of God and those who have God’s Spirit it is the Spirit of the Truth to lead us.

Verse 7: “Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God because God is love” (vs 7-8). Think about what God did in sending Christ to make all of this possible!

Verse 9: “In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us; that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.” As we covered the Sabbath before Passover, that Jesus went through a *baptism of blood* unto death. It was His own blood streaming out of His body that was ripped and torn open. Notice what John says of it:

Verse 10: ***In this act is the love***—not that we loved God... [didn’t come from us first] ...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us” (vs 10-12). *Yes, indeed!* That’s what God wants.

- The *leavened* bread symbolizes sin!
- The *unleavened* bread pictures the sinless way of God

—which is based on love! That is what is to perfect us.

Verse 13: “By this *standard* we know that we are dwelling in Him, and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us. And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him” (vs 13-16). That’s something! It’s the love of God that’s perfecting us!

We will see how absolutely manifest that it

is that day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, year-by-year it is the love of God that gives us the power to overcome. It is the love of God that perfects us so that we can be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Verse 17: “By this *spiritual indwelling*, the love of God is perfected within us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.” Yes, we are to fear God—that means *hold Him in awe and wonder and reverence!* We’re not be fearful and cowardly. Let me just say this: ***Those Churches of God that manifest their basic fundamental operational mode as fear, are deficient in the love of God!*** That’s what it says right here.

Verse 18: “**There is no fear in the love of God;** rather, perfect love... [that’s what we’re trying to achieve] ...casts out fear, because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love of God.”

Let’s see how we can be made perfect in the love of God. This is very important for us to understand. This is called *the love chapter*, 1-Corinthians 13. For years I often wondered—when we just had the *King James Version* of the Bible—why that the word ‘agape’ was translated *charity* instead of *love*, where everywhere else in the Bible it was translated ‘love.’ Well, the dirty little secret is there were papists on the committee of the *King James Version* translating this section of the Bible. They wanted to put their Latin stamp on it—*charity* instead of *love*.

Notice, this covers every aspect of human nature, the futility and sinfulness of what we are and the only way to overcome it is with the love of God, because ‘perfect love casts our fear.’

1-Corinthians 13:1: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.” *Meaningless!* You can see a lot of that on television—can’t you? You can see a lot of that in movies—can’t you? You can see a lot of that in everyday life! You can see a lot of that in politics! My, my, my, yes, indeed!

Verse 2: “If I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith... [Look! This would be considered the complete man in the world—wouldn’t it? How smart he is, how knowledgeable he is, how powerful he is, how faithful he is. Yes, he just removed a mountain and cast it into the ocean yesterday. Oh, what a marvelous man that is!] ...so as to remove mountains... [but, Paul says]: ...but do not have love, I am nothing.” What does it matter?

Verse 3: “And if I give away all my goods, and if I deliver up my body that I may be burned, but do not have love, I have gained nothing.” Talk about self-sacrifice! What a ‘righteous thing’ it was during the Vietnam War. The TV channels played it over and over again when the Buddhist priests would sit down in their lotus position and douse themselves with gasoline and set themselves on fire. Oh, what a thing that they did, how righteous that was!

If you don’t have the love of God you gain nothing! Here’s how we overcome with love, v 4: “Love is patient... [we learn patience] ...and is kind... [we learn to be kind] ...love envies not, does not brag about itself, is not puffed up.” The whole purpose of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, to get rid of the vanity of human nature, the evil that is within, to be changed, to be reconfigured with the Spirit of God and the love of God.

Verse 5: “*Love* does not behave disgracefully, does not seek its own things, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil.” I tell you, we need the love of God to overcome a lot of that. We’d better think about what we are letting into our mind. Remember the sermon series that I did: *Who and What Controls Your Mind?* It’s the love of God that needs to be doing it, not the things in the world. We’re going to be inundated with more and more things. If you think the world is deceived now, *hang on!* It’s going to get a whole lot worse. That’s why we need the love of God and growing, changing and overcoming.

Verse 6: “Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth. *Love* bears all things... [You get through all the difficult things, because you love God and you love the person. There is forgiveness, there is mercy, and there is loving kindness.] ...believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **Love never fails...**” (vs 6-8). We fall short because we’re weak, but *the love of God never fails*. The love of God in your life, and your showing love to others, that *never fails*.

“...But whether *there be* prophecies, they shall cease... [they’re all going to be fulfilled, come to an end] ...whether *there be* languages, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away” (v 8). Just like POOF! Everything in this physical life, when we become spirit beings, will vanish away. God will have perfected His plan.

Verse 9: “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come...”

- Be perfect *as your Father in heaven is perfect!*
- Be perfected *by the renewing of your mind!*
- Be perfected *in Holiness!*

“...then that which is in part shall be set aside. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child.... [same way with us; we need to grow up in Christ] ...For now we see through a glass darkly, but then *we shall see face-to-face...*” (vs 9-12). What’s it going to be like to look at God the Father face-to-face and say, ‘Father, I love You’? And He says, ‘I love you.’

- That’s the whole basis for why we’re here.
- That’s the whole purpose of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

“...now I know in part, but then I shall know exactly as I have been known. And now, these three remain: faith, hope *and* love; but the greatest of these *is* love” (vs 12-13). The greatest love of God was exemplified and shown to us through the Passover. Our greatest love, coming from God, the Spirit is shown through the Feast of Unleavened Bread, that we

- can *get rid* of sin
- can *overcome* human nature
- can *put in* God’s way and primarily the love of God so that we ***obey God’s voice!***

Have a great Feast of Unleavened Bread. Take extra time for study and prayer. Do the things that you need to, to change, to grow, to overcome. Ask God, in special time and prayer, that He will add His Spirit, that He will help you overcome, that you can put away the sins of your life—all of the difficulties and problems, hatred and bitterness, everything that comes up in human life that is just like leaven that spoils an sours everything.

Let the love of God be perfected in you so that you become perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Leviticus 23:1-8
- 2) Exodus 12:15-17
- 3) John 14:6
- 4) 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
- 5) Psalm 39:4-8
- 6) Psalm 138:1-8
- 7) Matthew 5:3-10, 27-29, 48
- 8) Matthew 6:33
- 9) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18
- 10) 2 Corinthians 7:1
- 11) Psalm 18:30-32
- 12) Philippians 3:7-16
- 13) 1 John 2:15-17, 3-6
- 14) Romans 12:1-2
- 15) 1 John 4:6-18
- 16) 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 16
- Malachi 1
- Revelation 11:8; 18
- 1 Corinthians 5
- Psalm 34
- Matthew 5:17; 19
- 1 Corinthians 3:16
- Psalm 91

Also referenced:

- Book: *Occult Holidays or God’s Holy Days—Which?* by Fred R. Coulter
- Sermon Series: *Who and What Controls Your Mind?*

FRC:bo
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