

First Day Unleavened Bread—2013 Getting Rid of the Leaven *Within!*

Fred R. Coulter—March 26, 2013

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, 2013. Yes, time marches on, and we're all that much closer to the kingdom, but we don't realize how far the kingdom has yet to come. Part of the reason is that we don't know how far God is going to let the world progress in its technological advancements. We don't know how everything is going to finally come together. We know the parts that have to be there at the end, but we don't know how it's going to arrive at that point.

This is why the most important thing to understand is not when will Jesus return. The most important thing is to *make sure that we will be there when* He returns. That's why we have the Sabbath and the Holy Days, God's continuous education plan in the *school of eternal life*.

That's why we're here. God is doing something *with us* and *through us* and *to us* that is profound and important. As you know, for all the Holy Days, we always begin in Leviticus 23. The Word of God, Jesus said, is like a seed. And a seed is that which is for whatever plant or tree or vegetable, or whatever may be—the same thing applies to animals and human beings—and when you look at the seed you don't know what it will produce; you don't know what it will become.

But with us, as human beings, the Word of God is like a seed. The Old Testament is like a seed, and the New Testament is the growth of that seed into the meaning and understanding for what the Sabbath is and the Holy Days are. This is why we always begin here; so we can understand and know the Word of God and understand what God wants, and never forget and never be slack, and never be letting up, but always to be diligent and applying ourselves in the ways of God in our love and obedience to God and Jesus Christ.

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..."'" (vs 1-2). Today, that is the Church. We are the Church, every single one of us. And we can liken every one of us like unto a seed, as well. We don't know yet what it will be when we are raised from the dead.

How are we going to grow? Let's apply all of these things according to the Word of God, concerning the appointed Feasts of God. These are the *appointed times*, and every major thing that God does is based upon the *appointed times* and

the *Holy Days*.

In between we have the weekly Sabbath so we can come to God and we can learn, grow, overcome and our lives can be changed. That's what conversion is all about. That's what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about. First, we need to remind ourselves that the Sabbath Day is that which sanctifies the Passover and the Holy Days.

We just had the Passover and the Night Much to be Observed last night. Today, we are going to look at a parallel how the Israelites came out of Egypt and their biggest problem was that they were removed from the environment. As we will see, *the environment of Egypt was not removed from within!*

"...which you shall proclaim *to be Holy convocations, even these are My appointed Feasts*" (v 2). God owns them! They belong to Him! He originated them! They don't belong to the Jews; they don't belong to the Church—they *belong to God*, and everyone who is going to be in obedience and loving God is going to be keeping them.

Then He gives a command, v 3: "Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of rest, a Holy convocation..." When it's a Holy convocation, always remember that it is not just getting together with people, with brethren. That is good! That is fine! And wherever that is possible, we need to do that. However, the *Holy convocation* is God the Father and Jesus Christ *within us*, and we, individually, worshipping God. When that is done, and that is taken care of, and as we will see with the meaning of Unleavened Bread for the first Holy Day, then everything else is all that much better.

So, He says, "...You shall not do any work. *It is* a Sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.... [Then starts the framework for the Passover and the Holy Days]: ...These *are* the appointed Feasts of the LORD, Holy convocations which you shall proclaim in their appointed seasons" (vs 3-4). Who appoints the seasons? *God does!* That's why He's given us the Calculated Hebrew Calendar.

Verse 5: "In the fourteenth *day* of the first month, between the two evenings, is the LORD'S Passover... [we've already had that] ...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" (vs 5-6). You must

put it outside of your home. Those are the *physical* things, but we're going to learn today what are the *spiritual* things.

Verse 7: "On the first day you shall have a Holy convocation.... [that's today] ...You shall not *do any servile work therein*." You can do whatever is necessary for the preparing of food for having a feast.

Verse 8: "But you shall offer a fire offering to the LORD seven days...." That's for the priests, what they were to offer. We will see in just a minute what we are to offer. When we come before God in these Holy convocations, we are to bring an offering and we are to acknowledge every single thing we have *comes from God!* We have nothing of ourselves. God has given everything.

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

Now let's come to Deuteronomy 16, and you know the Scriptures here, so I won't belabor the point. But let's just ask ourselves as we go through:

- What are the greatest blessings of God?
- Are the greatest blessings of God the *material* things?

or

- Are they the *spiritual* things?
- *Spiritual things!*

Much greater than gold, fine gold, because it leads to eternal life. That's what we need to consider: not only the *physical*—which God gives; but the *spiritual*—which is more important!

When we come together, we are told here, Deuteronomy 16:16: "Three times in a year shall all your males appear before the LORD your God in the place which He shall choose: in the Feast of Unleavened Bread... [which is now] ...and in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. And they shall not appear before the LORD empty."

Obviously, the daily sacrifices were for those at the temple or tabernacle (Num. 28; 29). There were the daily sacrifices that were given. These are offerings that we bring of the substance of what God has given to us.

Verse 17: "Every man *shall give* as he is able... [that's different offering from the *fire offering* that God commanded] ...according to the blessing of the LORD your God, which He has given you." We need to count those blessings.

Let's not only count the blessings physically and spiritually, but let's also understand the principle, too, because here we have an example of

in time of trouble. And that's what they had when they were building the second temple.

Haggai 1—here's a great lesson for us to learn. Yes, there are things that we have to do above and beyond. We look for God's blessing *spiritually* and *physically*. Here they came out of the Babylonian captivity and they were set to build the temple. Just like everything else that God has commanded, there are people who do not follow through and do what is necessary. Even in difficult times they start looking out for themselves alone. So, God said:

Haggai 1:2: "Thus the LORD of hosts speaks, saying, "This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built." Then came the Word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, '*Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your finished houses, and shall this My house lie waste?*'" (vs 2-4).

We're not just to come before God on the Sabbath Day; because the greatest spiritual work in our lives is not done on the Sabbath Day. It's done during the week.

Verse 5: "And now therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, '**Consider your ways**.... [this is what we need to do everyday] ...You have sown much, but bring in little; *you* eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you dress, but no one is warm; and he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes.'" (vs 5-6).

That's a good description of inflation. That's pretty much what we are confronted with today. Many people—instead of helping do the things that are necessary to build up *their* spiritual character, do the things to build up other people's spiritual character, to do the things that God wants us to do....

Remember, when we're talking about the temple here, we now are a temple of God with the Holy Spirit within us. So, now God is working much more directly and more closely connected to us, through us and with us. We need to realize what we need to be doing so that we can develop the greatest spiritual character possible. That's the whole reason for it. Yes, there is the aspect that we have of tithes and offerings, that is true. That fits in with it. Tithes and offerings by themselves, without the spiritual intent, really do not fulfill the purpose of what God wants. That's why He tells us in Deut. 16 that we are to give according as we have been blessed. We need to consider that!

God says, 'Get busy' as it were, v 8: "Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build this

house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified,' says the LORD."

Remember what Paul said? *He that glories, let him glory in the Lord*; and whatever we do, we should do things that glorify the Lord! There are many spiritual parallels here for us to learn.

Verse 9: "You looked for much, and behold, it came to little! And when you brought it home, then I blew on it. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. 'Because of My house that is waste, and you, each man runs to his own house.'"

Spiritual parallel: Are we developing the spiritual character that we need? *That's the whole reason for the Feast of Unleavened Bread!* God wants us to grow and develop, and we have all the tools. We have them before us; we have them in plenteous supply. We have peace. We have the time. We need to *consider* what we are doing!

Are we about our Father's business to build the spiritual character within? That's the whole thing we need to understand concerning the Days of Unleavened Bread. Just like a person can bring a big offering; like Jesus said of the rich men who brought theirs and put in the treasury at the temple, but the widow came along and put in her two mites, and Jesus said, 'She's given more than they all.'

It's not just a *physical* thing, it is what is in the heart and what is in the mind, and the attitude and things behind it. That's what's important, because everything—as we're going to see today—that is contrary to God's way within our lives, beginning within, represent *the leaven of self and sin, and yes, in some cases, even Satan the devil!*

So, we'll take up an offering, relying on God's blessing, relying on God's promise. You know that we serve the brethren with this in everything we do. We use it to:

- preach the Gospel
- serve the brethren
- proclaim the Word of God
- to help you grow in grace and knowledge

(pause for the offering)

Here in the New Testament is a direct command to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the New Testament leaven is a type of sin *during* the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Paul says, because people were looking to the outside, rather than the *inside*. This is what we need to understand; this is what we need to realize that the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about *what it is inside!*

1-Corinthians 5:6: "Your glorying is not

good. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" And you know the story of the immorality that was in the midst of the Church there.

Verse 7: "Therefore, purge out the old leaven..." We're going to see that's not just the leaven of bread, but the leaven that's *within*, the leaven of sin!

"...so that you may become a new lump... [be changed and converted] ...*even* as you are unleavened..." (v 7). They put the leaven out of their homes. It is true, if you put the leaven out of your homes and you're very scrupulous about it, *if you are not busy putting the leaven out of your lives, then you've only changed the exterior!* You haven't changed the interior!

Here's the whole basis for it, Christ died for our sins, so Paul reminds them "...For Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." (v 7). We covered what a great an awesome sacrifice that that really is, was and is.

Verse 8—here's why we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, "For this reason, **let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness...** [It's telling us the old leaven—physically; nor the leaven of malice and wickedness—which is in the heart and mind] ...**but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and Truth.**" That's where it all begins.

Let's see how Jesus emphasized this to the scribes and the Pharisees. Oh yes, they were scrupulous in doing all the things necessary to appear righteous to men, but notice what Jesus told them because they did these things. Unless you have the spiritual insight and the Spirit of God, it's just like Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees:

Matthew 23:24: "Blind guides, who filter out a gnat, but swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of extortion and excess. Blind Pharisees! First cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, so that the outside may also become clean" (vs 24-26). God wants

- a pure heart
- a clean heart
- a right attitude

led by the Spirit of Truth, which you have within you to do so.

Verse 27: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful *on the outside*, but within are full of the bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness. Likewise, you also

outwardly appear to men *to be* righteous, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (vs 27-28).

How does that come about? That’s why ‘religion’ is a substitute for the way of God. God’s way is the *way of life!* In the New Testament, it is a way of living and a way of conversion, so that we are changed on the inside, and then the outside does not present a problem, the outside will be clean, as well.

Jeremiah 17 is quite a chapter; there are quite a few things in here for us understand and realize. Once we know the Word of God, God holds us responsible for it:

- We are to act upon it!
- We are to live by it!
- We are to do it!

Not only that, those under the Old Covenant never had the Holy Spirit *within* them. Those of us who have repented and been baptized, we need to constantly be growing in grace and knowledge.

But here is what happened to those Jews; here’s what happens with a little leaven and how it works when it grows to the full. Remember what God told Abraham about the land that He was going to give him, that the sin of the Amorites had not yet come to the full. Well, here’s the description of the sin coming to the full with Judah, and a very prophecy of the Jews and the scribes and Pharisees, to whom Jesus was speaking:

Jeremiah 17:1: “The sin of Judah *is* engraved with a pen of iron...” [practiced in; engraved in; made it part of their character] ...with the point of a diamond; *it is* carved upon the tablet of their heart and upon the horns of your altars.” Isn’t that something?

This is why Jesus told them that ‘you’ve got to change the inside.’ You can make it look good on the outside. God doesn’t want that. Notice what He says when men trust in men, trust in their devices, place these devices as a standard of behavior in the law and commandments of God and the Spirit of God, which they did. They had their traditions that rejected God’s way.

I want you to think about this in relationship to the Church, because how many people still idolize a man who is long dead? Did the apostles idolize anyone but Jesus Christ, Who was not an idol? *No, they did not!* But too many people say that if ‘thus and such’ a man didn’t say, well then, that’s not true. The answer is that man was never Jesus Christ! So, if you trust in him, notice what it says here:

Verse 5: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Cursed *is*

the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the LORD.” Notice what will happen. I want you to think about this down through the history of the Church. I want you to think about this in two ways:

1. physical people in the world
2. those who have been in the Church but made a man an idol instead of worshipping God the Father and Jesus Christ

Verse 6: “For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes. But he shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land that is not inhabited.” Stop and think:

- Where are all the thousands that used to gather for the Feast of Unleavened Bread?
- What did they ever learn?
- Were they really converted?
- Were their hearts changed?

Only God knows! The only thing we can do is look at the fruits of what has happened to their lives, and many of them are like this, out in *a spiritual desert.*

Verse 7: “Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD and whose hope is the LORD.” That’s what we are to be like:

- *trusting* in God the Father and Jesus Christ
 - *hoping* in the salvation that They have granted
 - *overcoming and changing* daily
 - not letting *the sin within* take us down
- but*
- praying everyday
 - *overcoming* everyday
 - *cleansing our heart* and mind everyday

to get the leaven within out! That’s what conversion is all about! That’s what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about!

Verse 7: “**Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose hope is the LORD.** For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters... [Psa. 1] ...*it* sends out its roots by the river, and *it* shall not fear when the heat comes...” (vs 7-8). Water is likened to the Holy Spirit, that is taken inward in the plant and it grows and remains green. Just like us: we drink in of the Holy Spirit of God. We drink in of the Word of God. We have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ so that we can be *changed within*—regardless of how devastating the sins have been in the past!

“...but its foliage shall be green; and he is not worried in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit” (v 8). Compared to that, we still have to fight this—don’t we? We’re going to see that one of the greatest men in the Bible had his

great sins.

Verse 9: “The heart *is* deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?” A lot of people say, ‘Well, you know my heart.’ They may mean it in a right way, but the truth is that no one knows any human heart other than God. That’s why He’s called *the heart-knowing* God. Notice what God says that He does. He’s doing this with us:

Verse 10: “I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.” Let’s see that this is New Testament doctrine. Yes, even Revelation doctrine. Yes, even doctrine of the churches, and how God views the churches.

Revelation 2—let’s see what Jesus said, especially after giving the correction that He gave to Pergamos and Thyatira. What was the trouble with those churches? *They weren’t changing within*, and they were accepting the doctrines of the Nicolaitans, the doctrines of Satan, the doctrines of Jezebel. God had to correct them severely.

But notice what He says when He said to the Thyatirans and their false doctrines with Jezebel, Revelation 2:21: “And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, but she did not repent.” Remember, God *always gives us a space of repentance*. That doesn’t mean that God is not aware if correction does not come instantly. Notice what He said He would do after that space of repentance.

Verse 22: “Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their works.” Where do works come from? *From the inside!*

Verse 23: “And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know... [This is Jesus Christ speaking to all the churches. So, we all better sit up and pay attention very carefully to this] ...that **I am He Who searches the reins and hearts...**” He wants to know what is inside:

- Do you really love Me?
- Do you really obey Me?
- Will you really follow Me?
 - ✓ Even in difficult times!
 - ✓ Even when it’s hard sledding!

Just like those in the book of Haggai. They thought, ‘Oh well, we’ll take care of ourselves, then we’ll tend to the Lord’s business afterward.’ That’s completely backward! You tend to the Lord’s business *first*, and then you tend to yours. If you tend to yours and you don’t have the blessing of God with you, then how are you going to succeed in your business? But if you tend to the Lord’s business first, then He will *bless* you your business.

“...**I am He Who searches the reins and hearts**, and I [Jesus Christ] will give to each of you according to your works. But to you I say, and to *the* rest who *are* in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will not cast upon you any other burden, but hold fast what you have until I come. And to the one who overcomes, and keeps My works unto *the* end...” (vs 23-26).

- we are to have the works of God
- we are to have the works motivated by the Spirit of God
- we are to be led by the Spirit of God
- overcoming sin within
 - ✓ not being led by our own ways
 - ✓ not seeking our own devices
 - ✓ not seeking our own means

but always the ways of God! He say if you do that, “...I will give authority over the nations” (v 26).

All the way through the book of Jeremiah, God gave the children of Judah—Jerusalem and the people there—opportunity to repent, opportunity to change, opportunity to come out from underneath the things that they have done and the curses that were coming because of sin. Just like us, we are living in a nation that is going down, down, down, deeper into sin! Whenever that happens, when people look for measurements of conduct, and they look to how bad the world is, and then look and see that they’re much better than the world, they kind of think: ‘I’m safe.’ *Maybe not!*

Let’s see what God says, let’s see what applies to Unleaven Bread for us today. What does God tell us? *If you’re out there doing your own thing, return to Me! If you have forgotten Me, and things haven’t been going well, return to Me!* God says through Jeremiah to the children of Israel:

Jeremiah 3:22: “Return, O backsliding children, *and* I will heal your backslidings.” “Behold, we come to You; for You are the LORD our God. Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the high hills, *from* the multitude of mountains. Truly, in the LORD our God *is* the salvation of Israel” (vs 22-23).

That’s the way we need to go *spiritually* within the Church—correct? *Yes, indeed!* As we read these things, remember where we started. The Word of God in the Old Testament is like a seed and it grows. When we read these things, let’s apply them to ourselves, just like we did in Rev. 2, and apply them spiritually to what we need to do, because God wants us in His kingdom. But it’s not going to start with the adjustments to the outward behavior alone. It has to be finished with the *inward*

change and conversion within, getting the leaven of sin out from within.

They confess their sins, v 24: “The shameful thing has eaten up the labor of our fathers from our youth, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. We lie down in our shame...” (vs 24-25). That is coming to this nation! Shame is coming upon us! Punishment from God is coming upon us!

“...and our confusion covers us...” Isn’t that the same thing with the Church? Could you not say this of the Church? Has that not happened to the Churches of God? *Yes, it has!*

- Where is the repentance?
- Where is the change?
- Where is the confession of sin?
- Where is the yielding to God?
- Where is the righteous indignation?
- Within?
- *Yes, indeed!*

“...for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God” (v 25).

Are we not to obey the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ—Who was the Lord God of the Old Testament? What did Jesus say? *The one who hears these things that I am saying, and will practice them, I will liken him to a man that has built his house upon the Rock!* That Rock was Christ—correct? *Yes!* And the floods came, the wind blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall; because it was founded upon the Rock!

‘But the one who hears these things of Mine and does not practice them, I will liken to a foolish man who built his house upon the ground, and the floods came and the rains came and the wind beat upon the house and great was the fall of that house!’ Exactly the same thing here in Jeremiah. God says this, not only to His people Israel today, but He says it to His people, His Church, today. Look at the seven churches in Rev. 2 & 3 and you see problems and difficulties—don’t you? *Yes, indeed!*

- What does He say? *Repent!*
- What do you do when you repent?

Jeremiah 4:1: “If you will return, O Israel,’ says the LORD, ‘Return to Me. And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, then you shall not be removed, and will swear, “As the LORD lives”...” (vs 1-2). This is what it has to be within every one of us.

- Is God the Father and Jesus Christ

dwelling in us?

- Is He dwelling in you?
- Is He dwelling within the Church?
- Is this not the spiritual work that He is performing?
- What is the goal of that spiritual work?
- *To present us perfect to God the Father!*

“...in Truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; then the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him they shall glory” (v 2). There’s the same solution.

(go to the next track)

We’re going to examine some parts of the book of Job. Many people, when they read the book of Job, can’t understand why God did what he did. They can’t see the sins that Job had.

Compare his behavior, which was blameless. God said Job was blameless and He let Satan have at him. Finally, God said, ‘He’s in your hands, but spare his life. Job was stricken with boils from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet, and he got a broken potsherd to scrape the pus, threw ashes on himself and then the maggots came and were in his flesh. His three friends came and tried to comfort and console him. He was just devastated and wretched looking; in pain and agony.

His three friends sat there with him for seven days and didn’t say a word. Then in Job 3, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. Then he went on and began justifying himself, and accusing God.

So, let’s see as we go along with this how much you can see what Job’s sins were. And to help you with it, what I am doing is reading the entire book of Job. When that is finished and edited, we will send it to you. This will help you. I’m going to ask you: Other than self-righteousness, what was Job’s sin?—*because he did have it.*

Let’s begin in Job 11:4—Job was confronted; his friend said, ‘You did this sin,’ and he never did that sin. ‘You did that sin,’ and he never did that sin. ‘You had this thought,’ and he never had that thought. So, after Job got done speaking, then Zophar the Naamathite said this to Job:

Job 11:4: “For you have said, ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in Your eyes.’” *I’m clean! I’ve done no sin!* Yes, he was blameless, in the letter of the Law, just like the scribes and Pharisees. They were clean on the outside, but God is dealing with Job’s heart—his mind and his attitude. So, what is his sin?

Job 9:32—let’s see what Job said; here’s an accusation against God; God is unfair: “For *He is*

not a man, as I *am*, that I should answer Him, that we should come together in court.... [He wanted take God to court! Think of that!] ...There is no umpire between us... [one judge, one umpire] ...*who* might lay his hand upon us both” (vs 32-33). So, he reduced God to a man! *Let him come and talk to me.*

Job 11:4—Job had said: “... ‘My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in Your eyes, [God].’.... [Zophar said to him]: ...But oh, that God would speak, and open His lips against you” (vs 4-5). Yes, God did that! And Job wanted that. Yes, Job wanted these things also.

I’ll leave the reading of the book of Job to you and see if you can figure it out yourself. I’ll tell you when I get toward the end. Let’s see how Job fared. He really went through a lot. He was righteous in the letter of the Law.

Job 23:1 “And Job answered and said, ‘Even today *is* my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh, that I knew *where* I might find Him, that I might come even to His seat!’” (vs 1-3). *I’ll march right up to the throne of God and let Him know what I have done!*

Think about this; think about what Jesus said when the apostles asked Him, ‘Lord, increase our faith.’ What did He say? *When you’ve done everything that has been commanded, say ‘we are unprofitable servants!’*

Verse 4: “I would lay *my* cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words, *which* He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. Will He contend against me with *His* great power? No, surely He would give heed to me.... [God will listen to me! Is that right?] ...There the righteous might reason with Him; and I would be acquitted from my Judge forever” (vs 4-7).

My! What words against God! Have you ever talked to God that way? *or* Against God that way? Job was pretty righteous. Notice how Job was not going through this trial very well. It was a severe trial; worse than anything that any of us have gone through—correct? Stop and think about the trials that you have gone through. Think about the difficulties that you have been confronted with. Think about your attitude toward God.

Job 27:1: “And Job continued his speech, and said, ‘As God lives, He has denied me justice; and the Almighty has made my soul bitter’” (vs 1-2). Whoa! Job was getting quite a case of bitterness—wasn’t he?

Verse 3: “As long as my breath *is* in me, and the breath of God *is* in my nostrils, my lips shall not

speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit” (vs 3-4).

- Was he talking against God?
- Was he making himself equal to God?

Think about this in relationship to our standing before God.

- Do we have sins that we’re not willing to admit?
- Do we have sins that are like leaven in us?

A little leaven leavens the whole lump! See what happened to Job. This expanded and grew *and grew and grew* and became a terrible and horrible thing!

Verse 4: “My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.... [Yet, he was right in the midst of deceiving himself.] ...Far be it from me that I should declare you {Bildad the Shuhite Job 25:1} to be right; until I die I will not retract my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness, and I will not let it go; **my heart shall not shame me so long as I live**” (vs 4-6).

Whoa! What a case of self-righteousness that is—right? *Yes, indeed!* So, Job was really going through it. His three friends accused him of sin, and accused him of some things that they thought he had done wrong. They couldn’t read his mind either; all they could do is see what was happening. They couldn’t read it.

Job 29:14—notice how Job looked here. Notice **I**: “**I** put on righteousness, and it clothed **me**; **my** justice *was* like a robe and a diadem. **I** was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. **I** was a father to the poor; and the cause, which I did not know, **I** searched out. **I** broke the fangs of the wicked, and plucked the prey out of his teeth. Then **I** said, ‘**I** shall die in my nest, and **I** shall multiply **my** days like the sand.’ **My** root *was* spread out to the waters, and the dew lay all night upon **my** branch” (vs 14-19). Notice *I, me, mine!*

Verse 20: “**My** glory *was* fresh in me, and **my** bow was renewed in my hand. They listened to **me**, and waited, and kept silent at **my** counsel” (vs 20-21). When Job walked in a room it was ‘Ahhhh, there’s Job!’ and he missed that glory!

Verse 22: “After **my** words they did not speak again; and **my** speech dropped on them. And they waited for **me** like the rain; and they opened their mouth wide *as* for the latter rain. **I** smiled on them *when* they did not believe; and the light of **my** countenance they did not cast down. **I** chose out their way, and sat as chief; and **I** lived like a king in the army, as one *who* comforts the mourners.” (vs 22-25). Job was all struck with himself! He couldn’t see what he was doing wrong!

All of Job 31 tells the whole story. There are many *if* statements in here challenging God—*if; if I!* Let's see if we can read a few of them:

Job 31:5: “**If I** have walked with vanity, or **if** my foot has hurried to deceit, let me be weighed in an even balance so that God may know that I am blameless.... [Challenging God!] ...**If** my step has turned out of the way, or my heart has walked after my eyes, and **if** any spot has cleaved to my hands; *then* let me sow, and let another eat; and let my harvests be rooted out. **If** my heart has been enticed by a woman, or I have laid wait at my neighbor's door, *then* let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down upon her” (vs 5-10).

Verse 13: “**If I** despised the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they complained against me.”

Verse 16: “**If I** have withheld the poor from *their* desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail.”

Verse 19: “**If I** have seen any perish for lack of clothing, or there was no covering for the needy; **if** his loins have not blessed me, and he warmed himself with the fleece of my sheep; **if I** have lifted up my hand against the fatherless...” (vs 19-21).

Verse 24: “**If I** have made gold my hope, or have called fine gold my confidence; **if I** rejoiced because my wealth *was* great, and because my hand had gotten much; **if I** beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness” (vs 24-26).

Verse 29: “**If I** rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, or exulted myself when evil found him;

Verse 31: “**If** the men of my tabernacle did not say, ‘Who can find one who has not been satisfied with his meat?’”

Verse 33: “**If I** covered my transgressions like Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom.”

Verse 38: “**If** my land cry against me, or its furrows weep together; **if I** have eaten its strength without paying for it...” (vs 38-39).

All of this to declare his righteousness!

I want you to think about all the *if I*'s by the time Job was answered! It's very interesting what Elihu says. Here we find one of Job's sins—there's more than one, but there's one major one that causes all the rest:

Job 35:1: “And Elihu answered and said, ‘Do you think this to *be* right, you *that* say, ‘My righteousness *is* more than God's?’” (vs 1-2). Really? So, he sums it up:

Verse 13: “Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it. How *much less* when you say you do not see Him! The cause *is* before Him; you must wait for Him. And now because it is not so, He has visited in anger yet he does not understand even his great extremity. Therefore, **does Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplies his words without knowledge**” (vs 13-16).

Job was sinning! Vanity is not regarded by God! Job said, ‘Oh that God would come down and answer me.’ What was Job's sin? He had many of them, so we can list them out:

- he said he had no iniquity
- there was not injustice
- he had no sin
- his prayer is pure
- God was judging him without cause
- God denied him just judgment
- his righteousness was more than God's
- accusing God of being wrong

How's that for a start, yet, he was blameless in the *letter of the Law*. Does this not sound like the scribes and Pharisees? Here are some other sins:

- complained against God
- was bitter
- accused God of evil motives
- rebellious
- he wanted to argue his case before God
- he wanted God to answer him
- therefore, he was better than God
- he pleaded with God

He said that he did all of these things, as we read:

- **If I** have not done this
- **If I** have not done that
- **If I** have not done the other thing

We'll come back to the book of Job; we will see that he repented. But let's come to Ezek. 14 and

- there we will find Job's sin
- there we will find our sins
- there we will find why *a little leaven leavens the whole lump*

—and that we must observe the Feast in *sincerity and Truth!* We need *the sin within* removed! That can only be done with the Holy Spirit! Can't be done by being good on the outside. It can't be done by good discipline of yourself. When that happens, *you make yourself and idol*. That's Job's sin! **He worshipped himself!** What happens when you have those kind of idols in your mind?

Ezekiel 14:1: “And some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying... [Here these were

prominent men just like Job. God says to Ezekiel]:
...Son of man, these men **have set up their idols in their hearts...**” (vs 1-3).

- What is the idol that we have in our heart?
- Are we willing to smash it?
- Are we willing to get rid of it?
- What did God say to the children of Israel when they came into the ‘promised land’?
- What should they do?
 - ✓ *Destroy all the high places!*
 - ✓ *Destroy all the idols!*

But they didn’t do it—did they? “...have set up their idols in their hearts and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces....” (v 3). In other words, *their own idolatry of themselves* and their idols was the barrier between them and God.

“...Should I at all be inquired of by them?” (v 3). Should I? Remember what Jesus told us? Remember what we have learned that needs to be done? We need to be cleansed from the *inside out!* There needs to be some idol-smashing within:

- our thoughts
- our ideas
- our evaluations
- our judgments
- all of those things that we think are good

unless they’re motivated by the Holy Spirit; and *unless* there is repentance of those things. So, what you might do is sit down and ask yourself: **What are the idols that I have in my mind?**

I do the same thing. What happens? Look what happened to the Churches of God when the idol became the leader, and the leader made himself an idol, and the leader was lifted up in his own vanity and his own self, rather than humility and serving God.

God says, Ezekiel 14:4: “Therefore, speak to them, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Every man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; **I the LORD will answer him according to the multitude of his idols.**”’” Yes, we’ll see that God did that with Job.

Let’s see what happened when God finally talked to Job, because Job said, ‘Oh, I would that God would come down and talk to me.’ So, God did!

Job 38:1: “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Who *is* this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?’” (vs 1-2).

- You want to take up God?

- You want to accuse God?
- You want to be bitter against God?
- You want to be hateful among each other?

Verse 3: “Now, gird up your loins like a man; for **I will demand of you, and you shall answer Me.** Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?...” (vs 3-4).

- stretched out the heavens
- made the stars
- made the seas
- the clouds

Where were you, Job?
Who were you?

Then God talks about all that He created; everything that He did! Let’s see what Job had to answer God. This is why we have the book of Job. The reason that it is hard to understand is because we do not understand how much we need to cleanse ourselves with the Spirit of God on the *inside*, so that what we have *in us* is of God and not our ‘good way’ that *we think* God must accept.

Job 40:1: “And the LORD answered Job and said, ‘Shall he who contends with the Almighty instruct *Him*?... [Isn’t that what Job said? *I will show God how good I am!*] ...He who reproves God, let him answer it.’ And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘Behold, I am vile!...’” (vs 1-4). Now Job begins to see the true vileness of human nature, even though he was able to have the *outside appearance* to be the best and blameless—even keeping the letter of the Law nearly perfectly.

Let’s see what is in the mind! What Job thought about himself he was not willing to confront, because he thought he was doing all these things that were really good—which they were. But the problem is, as long as there is the wickedness of human nature, and as long as there is the ‘law of sin and death’ within us, ***we have to fight! We can’t claim righteousness!*** That’s why Paul said that he wanted the ‘righteousness of Christ. He wanted the resurrection from the dead. So Job said:

“...I am vile! What shall I answer You? I will lay my hand on my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further” (vs 4-5).

Now God is going to have the final say. Let’s all try this on for size ourselves, and let’s understand, let’s not have

- idols in our mind
- idols of pet doctrine
- idols of bitterness
- idols of hatred
- idols of glorification of the self

Whatever your idol is in your mind; *that's the leaven that you need to get rid of*. That is the leaven—a little leaven leavens the whole lump—and look what it did to Job!

Here God talks to Job and in effect He's talking to us—is He not? *Yes!* These words are recorded so that we can learn from them:

Verse 6: “And the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, ‘Gird up your loins now like a man. I will demand you, and you declare unto Me. Will you even annul My judgment? Will you condemn Me so that you may be righteous?’” (vs 6-8). Isn't that what the atheists do? *Yes, indeed!* So, God says:

- Let's see what you really are, Job!
- Let's see if you are as good as your words!
- Let's see if you are actually more righteous than Me!
- Let's see what kind of power that *you* have!

Verse 9: “And *have* you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?” No, he couldn't do that, so God says, ‘All right, Job, try this on for size, see if you can do this. If you are so righteous and you are so powerful, and if your righteousness is so that God Himself cannot condemn, then see if you can do this’:

Verse 9: “And *have* you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His?... [If you're really so great, Job, try this on for size. And if you really think that you are righteous, try this]: ...Deck yourself now with majesty and excellency, and array yourself with glory and beauty” (vs 9-10). If you're as good as Me, are you like Me; or is this an exaggeration and *you are worshipping yourself!*

Verse 11: “Cast abroad the rage of your wrath; and behold everyone who is proud, and abase him. Look on everyone *who is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place” (vs 11-12).

- How much power do you really have, Job?
- Are you really like God?
- Besides all the righteousness that he did, did that not come from God?
- Were those not in accord with the commandments of God? *Yes!*
- Who then gets all the credit for that? *God does!*
- Who made the laws?
- Who created the laws?
- Who gave these things for us?
- *God did!*

Now we're going to see the same way in the New Testament and what we need to do and how our lives need to be. God wants our hearts pure, not filled with our own idols. *He wants to cleanse us from the inside out!* So, He said of the wicked:

Verse 13: “Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you” (vs 13-14). Those are pretty stout words—aren't they? In the face of all this, what happened to Job? *Job finally got the point!* Let's ask ourselves:

- Will we finally get the point?
- Will we understand that God's way—through God the Father and Jesus Christ—is the only way?
- That we are to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being?
- That we're to look to God for everything that there is?
- That the righteousness that is necessary to be resurrected from the dead comes from God?
- That is must be with His Spirit within us, motivating the things that we do?
 - How much does the Spirit of God motivate vanity? *None!*
 - How much does the Spirit of God insist in self-righteousness on its own way? *None!*
 - How much of the Spirit of God hates his brother or sister? *None!*
- Where do we stand?
- How is your cleaning project?
- Are you getting rid of the *leaven within*?
- Are you operating with the unleavened bread of *sincerity and Truth*?

or

- With the leaven of malice and wickedness?

Job had to admit! Job 42:1: “And Job answered the LORD and said, ‘I know that You can do all things, and *that* no thought can be withheld from You.’” (vs 1-2). Remember this: God is the *heart-knowing* God, and God is the *heart-cleansing* God! He knows the heart. He has the operation for it. We are to *put in* the unleavenness of *God's way*:

- To change our heart!
- To change our mind!
- To change our soul!
- To change our being!

That is *conversion!*

Verse 3: “*You asked*, ‘Who *is* he who hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore, I have spoken that which I did not understand... [that's

what we do too many times] ...*things* too wonderful for me; yea, which I did not know.... [he cries out]: ...Hear, I beseech You, and I will speak; *You said*, 'I will ask of you, and you will declare to Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; **but now my eye sees You**' (vs 3-5).

What does that mean? That means that *he repented of the idol within his mind, and now he truly sees God as He actually is!* Do we have that in our lives? What did he do when that happened?

Verse 6: "Therefore, **I abhor myself, and repent** in dust and ashes."

How do we get cleansed within? Let's come to Epistle of 1-John, chapter one. This tells us how to do it. Was Job actually unrighteous within? *Yes, he was!* He had:

- bitterness
- sin
- complaints
- rebellion

—did he not? And he had

- self-exaltation
- self-worship

What do you know!

- Are those not also the sins of Satan the devil? *Yes, they are!*
- Are those not also the sins of human nature? *Yes, they are!*
- Are those not the sins that cause problems in your life and within the Church and between brethren? *Yes, they are!*

Job had a lot of proclamations—didn't he? There's a lot in the book of Job to read. It's going to take some studying and reading on your part to see where some of the arguments that those three men brought were true. Some of them were wrong. All the arguments of Job were completely wrong, though *he thought* he was totally right; though *he thought* he was walking in light, he was walking in darkness!

1-John 1:6: "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth." Isn't that what Job was doing? Wasn't he lying to himself? He didn't want to admit that he was *worshipping himself!* So, he covered it up with all these 'good works.' But remember what Jesus said, '**Cleanse that which is within and then the outside will be clean!**' "...we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth."

Verse 7: "However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with

one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin." It's

- through the Spirit of God
- through repentance
- through yielding to God, through
- through studying His Word
- through living the Word of God with a pure heart

After all, all repentance is to bring us to the point of repentance and having a *pure heart, a clean heart!* That comes with the fellowship between us and God the Father and Jesus Christ. "...cleanses us from all sin."

Notice what else it does, v 8: "If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our own sins... [which is what Job finally had to do in the end—correct? *Yes!*] ...He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned...** [think of that] ...**we make Him a liar...** [Is that not the conversation that Job was having with God.] ...and **His Word is not in us**" (vs 8-10).

We need to have our sins forgiven. We need to have them cleansed. We need to tear down that idol of self-worship. ***That idol of whatever you have between you and God!*** You can't ever do this by disciplining the *outside*. Even disciplining some of the things in your mind, you can never get rid of the sin *within*.

Paul says, 2-Corinthians 10:4: "For the weapons of our warfare... [because this is a war] ...*are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds." What is the greatest stronghold of all? *Self! Mind!*

Verse 5: "Casting down *vain* imaginations... [just like Job; filled with vanity, filled with self] ...and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ."

How do you do that? Let's see how you do that; let's see what we are to do. I want you to read all of Col. 3. We are to put the sin out just like we put the leaven out! We are to put down the arguing, the contentions, the fighting, the hatred. Put that out and replace it with love. Then we are to put on the *bond of perfection*, which is love. We are to let the Spirit of Christ *rule* in our lives! That's how it's done!

Here's what God wants to do with the Church, Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." Let's understand what we need to do. It's through the operation of

love:

- Loving God!
- Loving your neighbor!
- Loving the brethren!
- Even loving your enemies!

From a pure heart! With

- the Spirit of God
- the Word of God
- growing and overcoming

combined together

Verse 26: “So that He might sanctify it...” — to be made Holy! Does God want us to be made Holy? *Yes, indeed!* Who was the one who does it? *While we have the Spirit of God the Father and Jesus Christ in us, we need to **exercise it; use it!***

That happens when the Spirit of our minds are being *sanctified*, “...having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the Word*” (v 26)—which

- instructs us
- convicts us
- teaches us the way of righteousness

And we have the Holy Spirit combined together and that overcomes the *sin within*. That crushes the idols we have in our mind. That gives us the repentance to get rid of them, “...by the washing of the water of *the Word*”

Verse 27: “That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious Church...” That’s what God wants; that’s what the Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about; to get rid of the leaven of malice and wickedness *within* and replace it with the unleavened bread of Christ of sincerity and Truth, and to cleanse the *inside of the cup* first, and then everything else will be clean.

God is there to help us! That’s why we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread! Brethren, let’s learn from the book of Job, and *let’s get rid of the idols within and serve God and let Him cleanse our hearts and minds so that we have pure hearts and love Him in Truth and in sincerity and honesty!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Leviticus 23:1-8
- 2) Deuteronomy 16:16-17
- 3) Haggai 1:2-9
- 4) 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
- 5) Matthew 23:24-28
- 6) Jeremiah 17:1, 5-10
- 7) Revelation 2:21-26
- 8) Jeremiah 3:22-25
- 9) Jeremiah 4:1-2

- 10) Job 11:4
- 11) Job 9:32-33
- 12) Job 11:4-5
- 13) Job 23:1-7
- 14) Job 27:1-6
- 15) Job 29:14-25
- 16) Job 31:5-10, 13, 16, 19, 24-26, 29, 31, 33, 38-39
- 17) Job 35:1-2, 13-16
- 18) Ezekiel 14:1-4
- 19) Job 38:1-4
- 20) Job 40:1-14
- 21) Job 42:1-6
- 22) 1 John 1:6-10
- 23) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5
- 24) Ephesians 5:25-27

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Numbers 28; 29
- Psalm 1
- Jeremiah 17:9
- Job 3
- Colossians 3

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