



[Amos 8:11-14](#)

(11) Behold, the days come," says the Lord GOD, "that I will send *a famine* in the land; not a *famine* of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. (12) And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*. (13) In that day the beautiful virgins and the young men shall faint for thirst. (14) Those who swear by the sin of Samaria and say, 'As your God lives, O Dan,' and, 'As the way of Beersheba lives'—even they shall fall and never rise up again."

A Faithful Version

One of God's annual feasts instructs us in how we can avoid becoming a casualty of such a famine of hearing. The New Testament clearly shows that [Jesus Christ](#) and the disciples observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread (see [Matthew 26:17](#); Mark 14; Luke 22), and the latter did so even after Jesus' death ([Acts 12:3](#); [20:6](#); [I Corinthians 5:7-8](#)).

In the New Testament, leavening and unleavened bread take on added meaning that the ancient Israelites did not grasp. In addition to leavening symbolizing [sin](#), hypocrisy, and pride, Jesus uses it as a metaphor for false doctrine ([Matthew 16:11-12](#)). Conversely, Paul describes unleavened bread as symbolic of "sincerity and truth" ([I Corinthians 5:8](#)). A famine of hearing God's words, then, is like a famine of eating unleavened bread. When such a famine occurs, people turn to eating leavening—false doctrines, false philosophies, and ways of thinking that are ultimately "malice and wickedness."

Remember that this famine, this curse, simply continues the trajectory that the people are already on. They suppress the truth and reject God's Word,

and so [God](#) gives them what they ask for. However, this famine begins in the heart, in the mind. It has its genesis in the regard and esteem—or lack thereof—in which the people hold God's Word. When His Word is not valued, God takes away the hearing of it. The result is stumbling, as the people lack the means to evaluate their circumstances and make right decisions.

The instructions for the [Days of Unleavened Bread](#) give a solution—a simple one, but one that takes continual diligence. God instructs, on the one hand, to remove all leavening and to ensure that none is seen with us ([Exodus 12:15](#), 19-20; 13:3, 7; [Deuteronomy 16:3-4](#)). He is telling us to be vigilant to keep the falsehoods out. We are to guard against this world's philosophies and ways that may *seem* harmless enough, but are actually slowly poisoning the mind.

On the other hand, God instructs us to eat unleavened bread—to take in truth—every day ([Exodus 12:15](#), 17-18, 20; 13:6-7; 23:15; 34:18; [Numbers 28:17](#); [Deuteronomy 16:3](#), 8). In fact, God gives more instructions about eating unleavened bread than about avoiding leavening. If the relative number of instructions is significant, ingesting truth to make it a part of us is more important than avoiding falsehood. Even the name of the festival suggests that the greater emphasis is on the unleavened bread, which ultimately represents Jesus Christ Himself.

Of course, neither action can be neglected—God requires us to do both. Yet studying truth is vital because it enables us to identify and resist the leavening—to recognize what is false because we are so familiar with what is true.

The mind will feed itself on something. If we pass over the truth for something that may not be altogether wrong but is not actually nourishing, over time we will become spiritually weak and unable to resist the lies. All the while, because our minds are full, we may not realize that we are starving ourselves to spiritual death. This does not happen overnight, but it does happen.

This famine of hearing occurs as a result of people not esteeming the Word of God, and because it is not valued and not acted upon, He removes it.

However, it does not have to be that way with us. We have been blessed with understanding—with the ability to hear God's words and rightly respond. If we value the truth, we will continually search it out, and we will hear it. Because we value it, we will recognize what is false and contrary, and not want to have anything to do with it.

The preventative for this famine lies in what we value, what we appreciate, and what our priorities are. If we are seeking God's truth—if we are diligently ingesting this unleavened bread every day and carefully avoiding what is false—God will continue to feed us and bless us with His truth.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[A Subtle Yet Devastating Curse](#)

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[Days of Unleavened Bread](#)

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