



""

—

22-Mar-13

Do Not Confuse the Lessons (Part One)

Over the years, some have firmly stood by the idea that the church should observe the [Feast of Unleavened Bread](#) in the same manner as it does the [Feast of Tabernacles](#): by leaving our homes and observing *all* the days together isolated from [the world](#). The thinking is, "We will be more diligently pleasing [God](#)." But is this true, and if not, why not?

A brief look at this question should help us keep all [the holy days](#) with an eye more closely focused on what God truly desires to accomplish in us through them and not what "we think" is pleasing to Him.

The primary and simplest reason that we do not keep Unleavened Bread just as we keep Tabernacles is because *God does not tell us to keep it that way!* God gives us His basic instructions for keeping the holy days in Leviticus 23. The specific instructions for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles appear in verses 33-36 and 39-42. Although verses 40-42 are unique to the way we are to observe Tabernacles, this in and of itself does not prohibit us from keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the same way, *but should we?*

A reading of [Leviticus 23:5-17](#) brings out some major physical differences between the two Feasts. Clearly, [Passover](#) and Unleavened Bread symbolize

the separation of a select group from the world and its sinful nature, but those who comprise this group—from the beginning of the early harvest through to the harvested firstfruits—live and work within this evil world!

Although Christians are no longer slaves to [sin](#) and are born by spiritual regeneration into the Family of God, their participation in Christ's sacrifice requires a similar cost of service in righteousness. Because they are still physical, they are subject to the effects of living by [faith](#) within a world under the curse of sin. This obviously connects with Christ's prayer on the night before He suffered and died. In [John 17:13-21](#), He plainly says that His disciples would be sanctified and must live according to the truth in a world directly opposed to the truth:

But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My [joy](#) fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

Conversely, the Feast of Tabernacles pictures complete separation from Satan's world of sin. It depicts a time of perfect rejoicing in the abundance of God's harvest of the [firstfruits](#), subject no longer to the curse of sin and the sorrow of drudgery in this world. They now enjoy refreshing and completely satisfying labor under the direct rule of the Prince of [Peace](#)! The time that is foreshadowed is, of course, the thousand-year reign of [Jesus Christ](#) (see [Revelation 20:4-6](#)), when [Satan](#) the Devil and his evil influence have been removed (see [Revelation 20:1-3](#)), and humanity can learn to serve God in peace and prosperity (see [Isaiah 2:2-4](#); [9:1-7](#); [11:1-16](#); etc.).

As we have kept God's holy days over the years, we have come to understand that they are not only memorials but teaching tools that God has provided to sharpen our understanding of His plan and purpose every time we observe a particular holy day or group of them. Do we really appreciate our responsibility to seek God's pleasure and purpose in keeping the holy days as He prescribes? We can glean many lessons from the unique way each is to be celebrated, lessons that would be lost if we decided to apply the distinctive aspects of one festival to another.

Valuable lessons may be learned when we observe the feasts according to God's way, but they would get lost if we tried to apply to them what we believe are good ideas. At the very least, our sincere but mistaken additions to God's instructions would not produce the blessings of understanding that we would have received if we kept them properly, and at the worst, they would actually produce division, hardship, and a failure to hit the mark—sin!

Consider something that may seem to be a bit peripheral, but it is a very real and blatant example of trying—with the very best of intentions—to overlay God's simple instructions with our own, and in doing so, completely miss the point. During Jesus' lifetime, there was never a question of whether or not the [Sabbath](#) and the holy days should be kept. The controversy was over *how* they were being kept.

Jesus repeatedly had to show the people where they had lost their way by focusing on a manmade list of dos and don'ts for Sabbath-keeping rather than on God's mind and purpose. That list of rules, created sometime between Ezra and the Maccabean revolt, had been made with the best of intentions to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath, yet it had produced a very distorted and hypocritical imitation of God's true way.

Also in Christ's day, many Jews were mistaken over the correct time to observe the Passover. This had resulted from changing the Passover sacrifice from an individual family event, which God had commanded in [Exodus 12:3-8](#), to a Temple sacrifice at some point after the Babylonian captivity. Both of these errors, among others, played a part in the inability of most Jews to

discern Jesus Christ for who He really was—the God of Creation ([Colossians 1:16](#); [Hebrews 1:2](#)) and the real Passover Lamb ([John 1:29](#); [I Corinthians 5:7](#)).

Even though God certainly allowed many of these errors to exist within a people who did not have a mind to see and ears to hear, we have no excuse to be blind and deaf. We have been given God's Spirit to handle His Word accurately and put the pieces together in their proper order ([II Timothy 2:15](#)). If we faithfully seek God's way and not our own, celebrating the holy days produce a treasure trove of blessings toward understanding His plan and our parts in it.

In Part Two, we will look at the specific problems that arise when we keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread like the Feast of Tabernacles.

- Mark Schindler

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Why We Observe Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

We keep the Days of Unleavened Bread, not just as a memorial of the Passover and Exodus event, but because of what the Lord did to bring us out of sin (typified by Egypt). What God does sets everything in motion, significantly eclipsing what we are required to do. God continually does battle for us, breaking down the resistance of Satan (typified by Pharaoh). While God compels us to make choices, He is with us all the way, leading us out of our abject slavery to sin into freedom and eternal life. It is God's calling that makes a difference; no one ever volunteers to follow Him. All that God did to get physical Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land served as a type of what God does for us, calling us out of this world into the Kingdom of God. God is sovereign, necessitating that we diligently seek Him in order to be like Him, yielding to His sanctification, getting rid of all our false gods, worshipping Him in spirit and truth. As a branch attached or grafted to a vine, we cannot do anything without Jesus Christ, who alone

enables us to produce or bear fruit through God's Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, and Christ's own Spirit dwelling in us. God is exclusively the God of His people and no one else.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Why We Must Put Out Leaven](#)

by Earl L. Henn

To people new to the church of God, deleavening our homes before the Feast of Unleavened Bread seems very strange and Old Covenant. They also learn that circumcision, another Old Covenant practice, is not required anymore under the New Covenant. So, why must we put leaven out, yet we do not have to circumcise our baby boys? The late Earl Henn explains this apparent contradiction.

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).
