



"God hears and sees, and you are not alone in your struggles.
Remain firm and stable for God has your deliverance planned."
—Joyce Meyers

20-Mar-20

Deliverance and Unleavened Bread

In a few weeks, members of the church of [God](#) will be observing [Passover](#) and then the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These springtime festivals memorialize the redemption and exodus of the children of Israel from Egyptian slavery. In [Exodus 13:3](#), 8-9, God says that we are to keep the latter feast as a memorial of what He did in delivering them from the Egyptians. Its story and symbols picture God's deliverance of the elect from this evil world and the corruption of a life of [sin](#). It also reminds us of how much [Jesus Christ](#) does for us and the response God expects from us as a result.

Deliverance has past, present, and future applications. In a New Testament context, Passover and the [Days of Unleavened Bread](#) teach us that eternal life is a fulfillment of Jesus' ultimate promise of deliverance. Until that time, we can find encouragement in the earlier examples of God's [love](#), protection, and redemption of His servants and rely on Him to deliver us from our present troubles.

Surprisingly, the Bible's first use of the Hebrew word for "unleavened bread," *matzah*, is not in the account of Israel's exodus from Egypt. Instead, it appears in [Genesis 19:3](#), four hundred years earlier, describing Lot in

Sodom serving his angelic guests a meal that included unleavened bread. Lot, too, was divinely delivered from corruption: "When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, 'Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city'" ([Genesis 19:15](#)).

In *Barnes' Notes*, commentator James G. Murphy writes that the angels who rescued Lot included one whom the man addressed as *Adonai*. Though the Hebrew word *Adonai* can refer to men, the way it is written in [Genesis 19:18](#), "with the peculiar vowel pointing which limits it to the Supreme Being," means He may have been personally present to accomplish Lot's escape. The *Keil & Delitzsch Commentary* also notes this as a possibility. Perhaps He was there in His role as [Melchizedek](#).

Shortly after the close of the first millennium AD, a French rabbi known by the acronym "Rashi" wrote that Lot's deliverance occurred during the week-long observance of Passover (the Feast of Unleavened Bread). He provides several connections between Lot's rescue and the Israelites' liberation from slavery some four centuries later. An online article by Yosef Tzvi Rimm, "Matzah Resolutions: Exodus and Lot," explains that Rashi's commentary shows that "the Holy One, blessed be He, imprinted something special in [the world](#) in the Passover season, even before the exodus from Egypt." For example:

- In [Genesis 19:3](#), Lot made a feast and baked unleavened bread for his angelic visitors. In [Exodus 12:8](#), God gives instructions for the Passover: "eat the flesh . . . with unleavened bread."
- In [Genesis 19:13](#), the angels tell Lot that God sent them to destroy Sodom. In [Exodus 12:23](#), God promises rescue from the Destroyer for the Israelites under the blood of the lamb.
- In [Genesis 19:14](#) (*English Standard Version* [ESV]), Lot tries to warn his sons-in-law, urging them, "Up! Get out of this place." In [Exodus 12:31](#) (ESV), Pharaoh echoes his words, ordering [Moses](#), "Up, go out from among my people."

We know what happened when God delivered the Israelites from Egypt. In it, God once again associates unleavened bread with deliverance. In [Exodus 12:3](#), 6, God commands them to take a lamb from the flock on the tenth day, and on the fourteenth day to kill it at twilight. "And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it" (verse 7). He explains in verse 13: "Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

[Exodus 12:17-18](#) brings in the additional obligation for the Israelites in this deliverance:

You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought all your armies out of the land of Egypt. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leavening shall be found in all of your houses.

Finally, in [Exodus 12:50-51](#): "Thus all the children of Israel did; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, according to their armies."

For a final example, we will review a less-familiar New Testament event found in Acts 12. In "Why Was Peter Imprisoned on Passover?" in *Israel Bible Weekly*, Dr. Nicholas J. Schaser proposes a series of connections between Peter's rescue and that of the Israelites' from Egypt. [Acts 12:1-4](#) recounts Herod's arrest of Peter, his imprisonment, and the assignment of sixteen soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out for a public trial after the feast.

- In [Acts 12:7](#), an angel strikes Peter on the side, freeing him from his shackles. In [Exodus 12:12](#), God says that He "will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt" to free His people.

- In verse 8, the angel tells Peter, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals." This phrasing, Dr. Schaser points out, is like the Passover instructions in [Exodus 12:11](#): "And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet . . ."
- Another similarity appears in [Acts 12:10](#). When the angel and Peter arrive at the gate "that leads to the city," it opens of its own accord, that is, without human assistance. Luke mentions specifically that the gate was made of iron. God says in [Deuteronomy 4:20](#) that He delivered Israel out of Egypt, which He describes as "the iron furnace."

God delivers His people in all times and in many fascinating ways!

In [John 6:48](#), Jesus says, "I am the Bread of life," explaining in verse 50, "This is the Bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die." During the Passover service, we recount His words in [John 6:54](#), which speaks of the ultimate deliverance, "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The apostle Paul expands on this in [Colossians 1:13-14](#), "[The Father] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

The Weymouth New Testament renders [I Corinthians 5:7](#) in this way: "Get rid of the old yeast so that you may be dough of a new kind; for in fact you are free from corruption. For our Passover Lamb has already been offered in sacrifice—even Christ." During the week-long observance of the Days of Unleavened Bread, remember what Christ our Savior has already done on our behalf, and through "eating His flesh"—symbolized by our consuming of unleavened bread—"live for righteousness" ([I Peter 2:24](#)) and ensure that His spiritual DNA, His very character, becomes our own.

- John Reiss

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Remaining Unleavened](#)

by John O. Reid

We have a tendency to put matters behind us once we are finished with them, but we cannot afford to do this with the lessons we learn from the Days of Unleavened Bread. John Reid shows that those lessons are eternal!

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