

Sincerity And Truth (Part One)

Christ and God's Word

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Freelance writer Charles Hughes Smith begins his essay, which he titled ‘The Entire Status Quo is A Fraud’ by stating the truth in a list of short observations, and then he makes a comment or two after that.

This cannot be said politely: the entire status quo in America is a fraud. The financial system is a fraud. The political system is a fraud. National defense is a fraud. The healthcare system is a fraud. Higher education is a fraud. The mainstream corporate media is a fraud. Culture—from high to pop—is a fraud. Need I go on? We have come to accept fraud as standard operating procedure in America, to the detriment of everything that was once worthy. Everyone in the system maximizes his or her personal gain by going along with the current trajectory even if that trajectory is taking the nation off the cliff. Fraud, as a way of life, caters an extravagant banquet of consequences. While everyone maximizes their personal gain in whatever system of scam and fraud they inhabit, the nation rots from within. We have lost our way and lost the ability to tell the truth, face problems directly, abandon what has failed and what is unaffordable, and accept personal risk as the essential element of successful adaptation.

He really tells it like it is. Nothing is really real and good and worthy out there, or very little of it.

The economist Gary North, whose essay that I got this from (he titled his essay “The Free Market vs. Fraud”), made some observations on what Charles Hughes Smith said. He widens this idea of a completely fraudulent society out to include all of the Western world (not just America, but Europe)—all the Western world including places in Asia and Africa—whatever you would call the First World.

He argues for the truth of science-fiction author Theodore Sturgeon’s law which is: “90 percent of everything is [garbage]” (now Sturgeon used a different or colloquial term but I used ‘garbage’ instead). This is Gary North’s comments:

Our job, then, because 90 percent of everything is [garbage], is to find and utilize the 10 percent that is genuine and worthwhile in this world. It is only that way—if we make use of that 10 percent that is going to actually do something for us in a right way—can we move forward.

I am not convinced that Sturgeon’s 90 percent rule overstates matters at all. In fact, I think it understates matters in most respects. I would lean on Revelation 12:9. It states that Satan the Devil, that great dragon, has deceived the whole world. He has got a grip on this entire cosmos, as we call it, and he has the ability to make everything worthless. And that fact—that he deceives the whole world—drives the correct figure of what is worthless and garbage closer toward a 100 percent.

Now I do not want to be totally cynical (that would not be really helpful), but we live in a world that, from the beginning, God has told us, is a mixture of good and evil. It is a product of Eve and Adam taking of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Obviously in the days of Noah, it got up to probably that 100 percent figure and God had to say “Okay, we have got to start over again.”

But as we progress toward the end in this era, what does Paul say? He says that “evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse” (II Timothy 3:13) and the days of the end will be very “perilous [fearsome] times” (II Timothy 3:1). As we move toward the return of Jesus Christ, I think we will have to look harder and harder to find anything that is good and true in this world. If it is there, it will be hidden and will be clutched to the breast of those who really care about it, who value it.

Please open your Bibles with me to John 17. Because I think in this world in which things are less and less worthwhile, as we move through the end times, we have to focus on what is good and right. We have been given a priceless gift that is right and true and we cannot ever let it out of our sight. I want to begin in verse 14 where Jesus is making His prayer during the Passover evening, and He is praying for His disciples. He says,

John 17:14-19 “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.”

Now I had said, before I read that, that we have been given a priceless gift that is right and true. And it is stated what that gift is, here, right in the passage. God’s Word is a lamp of substance and worth and value in a blinding fog of deception and fraud that Satan has spewn all over this world. We could think of it as a kind of lifeline that we can cling to in the world that hates us.

In Psalm 119:105, the psalmist there says that God’s word is a lamp to our feet—it lights the way, it keeps us from stumbling—and we need to be able to hold on to it, as a life preserver, in a world that is trying to kill us.

As Jesus said, here in this passage in John 17, the world hates us. It may not come out and say so all the time. We are not constantly being harassed or persecuted. But truly it does. It mocks us for what we believe. It criticizes us, for the things that we do, or we do not do, and thinks us foolish. It even tries to hurt and kill us (persecute us, murder us, whatever it is) when things at certain times reach a fever pitch. Those things happen. That is the way of this world. That is what hatred ends up doing.

What does Jesus say in Matthew 5? Hatred is murder, and hatred that is allowed to be let run its course ends in murder. That is what they eventually do to Christians. Because they hate us. It may not be on the surface, but it is there. Because they are being driven by one greater than them who also hates us: Satan the Devil.

Satan hates us for believing God's Word and also for escaping his prison of lies. We were once his captives and he wants us back. He hates that God chose us out of this world, opened the gates of the prison, and showed us the way out. And He did it through His Word, and our believing His Word, and all the work that He did to free us.

Satan the Devil hates us for having eyes that see through the choking smog of deceit he has thrown in the faces of all the rest of humanity. He hates us for seeing through his lies, in other words, that we can say: "That's not right. That's not good. The end of that isn't going to be prosperous or helpful." He does not like that because he has got everybody else fooled and he wants to fool everyone.

But because of God's great gift—both His grace and His giving of His Word—he does not hate everyone. He has lost some of those he considered to be his. So he hates us. He hates God, of course, more than us. But he hates us because of the association that we have with Him—that we are part of the body of Christ. He hates us for following our Savior and also for following the words that He left for us to understand and practice. He hates everything about us.

He hates that we have hope. He does not want us to have hope. He does not want us to think that we will have eternal life through Jesus Christ. He thinks that we will have it through the ways that he has come up with, that are lies, because there is no eternal life except through Jesus Christ. So he hates us that we know the truth and we know the way.

Notice here in John 17 what Jesus specifically does not ask for. He says He is not going to ask for it. Notice what He says in verse 15: "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one." So He specifically says: "God, I want You to leave them amidst all that fraud, all that deceit, all that hatred, all those negative vibes that Satan pours out." That is interesting. He left us right in the maelstrom to face all those things—the hatred, the fraud, the evil—every single day, and many times every single day. He wants us to be able to live in it and overcome it—to rise above it. So we have to remain there and we have to fight it.

But what does our Savior actually request in our behalf? First of all, in verse 15, He says: "Put a hedge around them. Keep them from the evil one. Make sure that Satan cannot touch them directly." And that is a wonderful blessing, a wonderful gift, that we have God and His angels protecting us from the worst that Satan could do. So we have that protection and we should thank God for it very regularly.

But notice what He also says there in verse 17. He asks specifically that we be sanctified by His Word, by the truth ("Sanctify them by Your truth"). Do we understand what "Sanctify them by Your truth" means?

Well, 'sanctify' can have many different shades of meaning. It could mean "set them apart" as in "put them in a different category" and it certainly means that.

It could mean 'consecrate' or 'dedicate' (like you would dedicate a building—you set it apart for a certain purpose). It can even go so far, which 'consecrate' tends to show, as to 'make holy'. So He is asking God to make us holy by the truth.

It can also mean, as I mentioned, show them to be “different,” show them to be strange, show them to be odd, show them to be not like these others. And all of this that He asks for us, in using the word ‘sanctify,’ is done by God’s truth.

God’s truth is the tool—the means, the vehicle—by which all of these things are done. The very truths of God, which we believe and practice, shout out to all the world—to anyone who wants to see—that we are not like them. We are different. We are, in their eyes, as I mentioned, strange. We could even say that we are *alien* to them. It is almost like we are not even human. We are otherworldly in truth (we will see in a moment that we are actually heavenly). And it is these same truths that continue the transformation into something other, that is into the image of Jesus Christ.

So we are not frauds like the rest of them. We are not deceived. We have had our eyes opened so that we are completely different. We may look like them. We may have the same physical attributes as them. But, inside the mind, we are different. The Word of God has changed us. It has already begun its process of transformation. We are something altogether different because we know and follow the truth—the words of God that He gave us.

So, on this first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, I think it is worthwhile for us to remember and appreciate what we have been given in the Word of God. It is that unleavened bread of sincerity and truth that we are to eat during these seven days. Not just during these seven days, but all the days of our lives.

We go through this ritual every year to remind us that this needs to be going on all the time. And we will see, as we go through this sermon and the next, just how vital it is for our growth and transformation into the image of God. The Word of God is key. We need to be ingesting it often.

So, if you will, please turn back to Exodus 13. We are going to touch base with the instructions on this piece of unleavened bread. We will read verses 3 through 10—the whole passage there—which is the second passage of instruction that God gave through Moses about this particular feast. The other one is in Exodus 12:15-20, which we will not go through.

The first set of instructions that we are given there in Exodus 12 were given before that momentous Passover when all the firstborn of Egypt died. It seems that this set of instructions, here in Exodus 13, was given on the first day of unleavened bread sometime during their leaving of Egypt. Maybe when they stopped at Succoth or wherever it was (maybe they had a rest stop), Moses gave them this information. I do not know. It just appears to be that way.

Notice the emphasis that Moses puts in this by his repetition of certain things.

Exodus 13:3-10 And Moses said to the people: “Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt [so it is this day; he set it on the first day of unleavened bread], out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be

seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt.’ It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.”

What Moses does here, in this passage, is that he explains the link between God’s miraculous work of freeing them from their bondage to the Egyptians, and the festival. The link is between God’s work and the festival; and the festival requires us to eat unleavened bread for seven days. So we see a linkage there between what God did and what we are doing now, in eating unleavened bread for seven days—particularly the eating rather than the putting away of the leaven that we find in our homes. The emphasis is on eating unleavened bread.

Maybe I tried to, in my inflections in reading the passage, highlight a few things. In both verse 3 and in verses 8 and 9, Moses emphasizes that we observe this day to remember, or memorialize (commemorate), that God had to do something extraordinary. In our modern lingo, we might say He had to “flex His muscles” or He had to exercise His strength (here Moses uses “by strength of hand” or “with a strong hand the Lord has brought [us] out of Egypt”). But He had to do something extraordinary—something outside the course of normal procedure—to redeem us and loose the bonds that held us to this ungodly or anti-God world, of which Egypt is a type. So it was not a normal occurrence that God would do.

He showed, like I said, by flexing His muscles, by stepping into history, not just how strong He was, but that He could come into history and separate a people for Himself—redeem them from the slavery that they were in.

But the emphasis seems to be, at least the way I am reading it now, that this was something rare and remarkable. It was not normal. That God was beginning to do something here, and He wanted to do it with some flair and pizzazz and to show His strength at just how much power He had over this world—over Satan the Devil. He showed Himself strong. He made a display of His strength so that it would be very obvious to everyone looking at this—everyone reading about this through all time—that God did something really astounding and stupendous in bringing a whole nation out of slavery in one day.

So God reached into the normal course of this world, disrupted the normal flow of events as they would have gone. They would have just gone on and the Egyptians would have continued to use the Israelites, as they had over the previous generations. But He stopped that so that He could pluck them (or, in the antitype, pluck us) from imprisonment by the god of this world.

And you know what, what is even more astounding is we, especially, were not even aware that we were enslaved. The Israelites were aware that they were slaves. But what had happened to us, we had no idea.

We thought we were free as birds. We live in the freest country in the world. We can do whatever we want, say whatever we want, be whatever we can be. Yet He called us out of that, to an even greater freedom, and redeemed us to be His people.

So what happened in Egypt, of course, is merely a type of what He did in calling and choosing each one of us. We are to be able to pull lessons from what He did with the Israelites in Egypt and apply them to us. So with each one of us, He must step into history once again. He must put His hand into the world that He normally does not do too much with (He allows it to go on—He is Sovereign. Of course, He can do whatever He wants).

But, normally, He lets things move along, like it says there in Ephesians 2 (“according to the course of the world,” which Satan runs as its master). But He steps into history with each one of us. And against all the antagonism, and weapons, and fraud, and dirty tricks of Satan and his demons—and all his human minions that he has running around here and there—He rescues us from the Devil’s high-security prison to deliver us free, forgiven, and clear to live a new way of life: A life of true freedom.

Like I said, most of us were ignorant of our imprisonment. But you know what, it is worse than that because most of us were unwilling escapees from this world, meaning most of us had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the truth. We resisted Him. We did not want to be strange. We did not want to be different. We wanted to eat what everybody else ate. We wanted to do what everybody else did. We wanted to be able to say what everybody else said. We wanted to be able to celebrate those holidays that everybody else did—because they were fun, they were tasty, they were good, whatever.

But God had to pull us out of the prison, like the angel pulled Peter out of the prison (he kicked him and told him to “Get up and let us go” and had to lead him out by the hand), because we like our imprisonment. We think it is fun. Satan has made it seem to us that this is the life. This is just the way it is. We have to make the best of it. We have to make the most of it.

And God has to shake us awake and say: “No! That’s a fraud. That’s a lie. It’s deceit. It’s all a scam. All these things you think you like aren’t good. You know what they finally end up in? Death! There is no life beyond this supposedly good life that you’re living because it is all sin. Even the good is tainted by evil.” Because that is the way of this world. It all has the taint of Satan’s sticky fingers on it and God has to shake us awake to it.

Do you know the term ‘Stockholm Syndrome’? That is where a hostage begins to take the side of his or her captors. Patty Hearst was the big one in the 1970s who got Stockholm Syndrome and went around with the terrorist group that she eventually joined. That is the sort of thing that we all were. We had Stockholm Syndrome. We loved our captor. We loved the things that our captor told us to do. We loved all his motivations. And God had to slap us hard across the face and say “Hey, get with it! You’re with the enemy and you’re going to die if you keep playing along.”

So God did what He could do, to wake us up and drag us out, and eventually we came. And He went to all these lengths, whatever it took, to get us to open our eyes to the truth because He loves us. It may seem harsh at times what He does. Here we learned the truth about clean and unclean meats, and then our boss takes us to the seafood place, and we have to take a stand—or not. God does that oftentimes to people coming out of the world, in one way or another. I do not mean specifically that thing, but He makes them face the lies of Satan and stand for the truth.

Let us go to Ephesians 2. We will read the first ten verses here. This will kind of be a summary of what I just said.

Ephesians 2:1 And you He [God] made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins . . .

We were dead because we were following the way of life that ends in death, and there is nothing beyond that. We were spiritually dead.

Ephesians 2:2-5 . . . in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others [all the rest of humanity that were on the earth at that time]. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) . . .

He did it all. If He had not done what He did, we would have never left the world. He saved us because He loved us.

Ephesians 2:6 [Not only that, He] . . . raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus . . .

Remember, earlier I said He made us other-worldly—He made us heavenly. He raised us above the rest of humanity into something different: Something good and spiritual; something that no longer had the taint of this world, but had the shine (let us say, the glory) of the heavenly.

Ephesians 2:7-8 . . . that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God . . .

So even the faith that you thought you had was actually given to you by Him. He had to go and do just about everything for us to get us to turn. And He did.

Ephesians 2:9 [And he says we have not been saved] . . . not of works, lest anyone should boast.

God wanted all the glory to Himself for what He did. He did not want you to boast that you had some part to play in it.

Ephesians 2:10 [This is what He is doing:] For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

He called us out of this world to make us, create us, into something different and He gave us works to do—works that He had prepared, works that He had designed—so that they would bring us to a place of completion. And so He, then, after He called us and gave us forgiveness and gave us His Spirit, said: “Okay now, go do these works because your creation isn’t finished. You need to be sanctified by My truth.” And that is what Jesus asked for: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” So He gave us His Word along with the faith to do it, and the Spirit—to be like Him, to have communication with Him, to have a relationship with Him—so we could have the help that we needed.

Now let us go to Exodus 12, if you will. We will read verses 37 through 39. I want to pick up something here to kind of continue the link between unleavened bread and eating it during the feast.

Exodus 12:37-39 Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children [besides the women]. A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock. And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

Here we have the image, the illustration, of the children of Israel being told by Moses and the people he sent around “Hey, we’re leaving. Let’s go. We are assembling here in Rameses. Everybody be ready. We’re going to head out of here as soon as the sun goes down.” So they did. And they did not have time to bake bread. We could say that we eat unleavened bread during this feast because the Israelites had only unleavened bread to eat, having left Egypt in haste. That would be true, but it would be rather simple. But I want you to notice the last clause of verse 39 where it says, “nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.”

It was not just the fact that they only had unleavened bread to eat, but they had not provided for themselves at all. They were by no means ‘preppers’ as we talk about today: People who put things aside for a rainy day or the apocalypse (or whatever it is that they do), whatever reason they do these things—for the breakdown of society. They, in their leaving Egypt, had only enough time to slap a few ingredients together to make bread. But they left out the yeast as there was no time for the bread to rise. So why even put it in there? They just kind of mashed it down and off they went. You could say that unleavened bread was probably the ancient equivalent of instant breakfast: Make something really quick and take it along with them.

But that clause in verse 39 means something else. It means that since they had not provided food for themselves, someone else had to do it. They did not take a lot of food with them. And we can see that they ran out of food pretty quickly. That someone else who had to provide the food for them was God. Moses did not have the food to give them. Aaron did not. Joshua did not. No one had food at a certain point, and they had to turn to God who provided happily to them.

Now we could say that God, first of all, was the One who caused them to leave in such haste. So He caused this scarcity of food so that unleavened bread was their only option. He was hustling them out by moving Pharaoh to say, “Get out,” to make all the Egyptians say, “Get out,” to Moses saying, “We’ve got to leave. They’re going to kill us.” So they left in haste and all they had with them was unleavened bread.

A second thing is that once that short supply of unleavened bread was consumed, they would have to subsist on what He provided. They were going out in a wilderness that did not have a great deal of food. And if we are talking two-and-half million people (if we count the six hundred thousand men plus an equal number of women and all the children that they had), you get up to a pretty good number of people—and the mixed multitude as well. So how do you supply food for so many?

Do you remember, in the New Testament, when Jesus had five thousand mouths to feed, they said: “How are we going to find food for this great multitude?”

Well, the great multitude that came out of Egypt was many times bigger. Who is going to provide food for them? God, of course. They would have to subsist on what God Himself would provide. And what He provided and granted actually came on the scene after the seven days of the feast were over. But it gets mixed in with the idea here of unleavened bread: Manna.

Let us go Exodus 16, pick up a few verses here. We are going to read the first six verses and then we will read verses 31 through 35. Here they are, on the other side of the Red Sea. They traveled a little bit down the coast there. It says:

Exodus 16:1 And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month [so they have already been out there a month] after they departed from the land of Egypt.

So this is in the second month.

Exodus 16:2-6 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, “Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger [“Oh, woe is me!” I am sure they *were* hungry]. Then the Lord said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.” Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, “At evening you shall know that the Lord has brought you out of the land of Egypt” [by providing food for them].

Let us go down to verse 31.

Exodus 16:31 And the house of Israel called its name Manna [and that is basically ‘What is it?’ in Hebrew] . . .

What is this stuff? They did not know. It just appeared in the dew, as it were, every morning.

Exodus 16:31-32 . . . And it was like white coriander seed, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey [it sounds like it was pretty good]. Then Moses said, “This is the thing which the Lord has commanded: ‘Fill an omer with it, to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’ ”

God says, “I want you to save some of this so that further generations down the line will know what I did; that I fed an entire nation, on foot in the wilderness [however many millions it was], for forty years, never missing a day except the Sabbath” (which He had told them to gather twice the amount on Friday). So He had, week after week, after all those years, provided the same food, the same amount, for them to eat, to subsist.

Exodus 16:33-35 And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations.” As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

So God provided this stuff—this manna, this ‘What is it?’, this “We don’t know what this is, but it’s good and it tastes like coriander and honey.” And they learned to make it all kinds of different ways, and it sustained them throughout forty years.

Now notice why He said He did this. It is found here in Exodus 16:4 where He says “that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.” My instruction. I believe the word there is ‘Torah,’ which is ‘instruction’ more generally. He wanted to see if they would obey His words that He gave to them. So eating unleavened bread (or, maybe we should say, eating the manna—eating the food that God provided) was a test to see if the Israelites would follow His instructions. It is the same for us.

Let us go to Deuteronomy 8. We were just here in the offertory sermonette, but I am going to be a little earlier in the chapter.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, [one:] to humble you and [two:] [to] test you, [and three:] to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

Now we are beginning to see some things pulled together here. He expands on the idea that manna was a test to them to see whether they would follow His instructions. He says that God provided for them a kind of food—a substance of sustenance—that they and their ancestors had no experience with. In fact no one ever, Israelite or not, had any experience with this food.

For forty years He provided to them something that was foreign to them, to their experience—something strange—that they had to say every day they saw it (and made the name for it)—‘What is this stuff?’ It was something, as I have used the term, otherworldly. The food itself was something that was not of this earth, not of this world. As a matter of fact, He calls it, in Psalm 78:25, “angels’ food.” Angels, of course, we think of as heavenly creations of God and this manna was associated with the heavenly. They thought it came out of heaven.

So this bread, this manna (this whatever it is), is not a part of human experience. Its purpose, as we saw, was to test their reactions to see what they would do—to see if they would listen to God and how He wanted things done—and that would reveal what was in their hearts, what their insides were like, what their motivations were, whether they were good people or not. Especially it revealed to God how they felt—what their outlook was on God Himself, what they thought about God and what He was telling them to do. It would let Him know if they were receptive or antagonistic toward His instructions.

And you know what, He found out alright! God tried and tried to convince them and help them and make them see that what they were doing was wrong; but they continuously, constantly, murmured. And what do we find them constantly murmuring about? Food and water—the very thing He was providing for them, something that was from His very throne as it were, something out of the heavens, something wonderful and tasty. And they complained about it because “We got to eat the same stuff every single day.” They complained about food.

And what did they say? We read, in Exodus 16, they murmured to get food that they had once enjoyed in Egypt. They murmured to get food that they were used to, that the rest of the world enjoyed. They wanted Egyptian food. They wanted human food. They wanted worldly food. You can go to Numbers chapter 11 and see that they murmured about it there.

And what happened? They all died! They all died in the wilderness. Even though they were given a daily diet of God’s food, they still died. It was not the fault of God’s food—the manna gave them the nutrition that they needed. They died because of what was in their hearts and their reaction to God.

We just sang it. It is in Psalm 81. I just want to pull a few verses out of there just to see the psalmist’s description of this same process. You can follow along in your hymnal if you like.

Psalm 81:6-10 I removed his [meaning the Israelites’] shoulder from the burden; his hands were freed from the baskets. You called in trouble, and I delivered you; I answered you in the secret place of thunder [on Mount Sinai]; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. Selah. Hear, O My people, and I will admonish you! O Israel, if you will listen to Me! There shall be no foreign god among you; nor shall you worship any foreign god. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

That is God’s yearning. He is saying “I want to give you all of these things. I freed you and I brought you out of the wilderness. I have given you My law.” Verse 10 is the first commandment essentially (or at least alludes to it). And He says: “Open your mouth; I want to give you everything that you need, but especially words. Open your mouth and I will fill it. Eat what I provide for you.”

Psalm 81:11-13 But My people would not heed My voice, and Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, to walk in their own counsels. Oh, that My people would listen to Me, that Israel would walk in My ways!

That is a God who has been rejected by the people He bent over backward for. But they rejected Him soundly, the whole generation, because they would not open their mouths to allow God to fill it with His Word. He tried to make them understand. You could hear it in His voice here, what He wanted to teach them and to give them.

The Israelites, in turn, tried His patience at every turn. They never learned the lesson that He wanted them to grasp; and that is that real life (abundant life, we could call it, using Jesus’ term) comes only to those who live by God’s every word. That is what the lesson of Deuteronomy 8:3 is. He gave them food to eat and tried them through it, and they never learned the lesson. They never made the connection that the food that He gave them—the manna that He gave them—was a type of His spiritual feeding of them.

The unleavened life that we are to live is the practice of the whole counsel of God (Paul uses that phrase in Acts 20:27)—all that God gives us—every word. Deuteronomy 8:3 is repeated twice by Jesus, in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, in the same episode there of the temptation by Satan. That is interesting in itself because Satan is constantly tempting us, and it is the Word of God that helps us to overcome those temptations. That is how we can truly live, if we live by the practice of the Word of God.

So the unleavened bread that we eat this week is to remind us of our daily, or constant, dependence on God's Word. If we want that real true life that God offers, we must be eating God's Word continuously. It has got to be strengthening us, nourishing us, sustaining us constantly. Because the fight is constant—the fight against this world and against Satan the Devil. It never really lets up. We are beset on all sides. Everything we do comes under scrutiny. And so if we are going to have the strength to endure to the end and to keep doing what God wants us to do, we are to make sure that we are eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

If you will, please go with me, again into the New Testament, into John chapter 6. We went over these verses during the Passover service, but I want to re-emphasize some of these things. We looked at them from a Passover perspective. I am going to look at them a bit from the unleavened bread perspective.

John 6:26-29 Jesus answered them and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled [It sounds a lot like Israelites, do they not?]. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, [now note this:] that you believe in Him whom He sent.”

A lot of the work of God is wrapped up in believing Jesus Christ. And how do we believe Jesus Christ? By believing His Word, believing what He told us.

John 6:30-35 Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do [They wanted further proof!]? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ” Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” Then they said to Him, “Lord, give us this bread always.” And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.”

John 6:40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise Him up at the last day.

John 6:47-51 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live

forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

John 6:57-58 “As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

We read this on the Passover as a reminder that the unleavened bread that we partake of in the service is a symbol of His body—His flesh—that has been given for the life of the world and, more specifically, has been given for those who believe in Him. It will eventually be for the life of the world, but for right now, presently, it is for those who believe in Him.

He says that He gave His life so that we can have life—the same life that He lives, a life that is good, a life that does not end in eternal death—and that life is not just physical existence but is eternal life. And, as He says in John 17:3, eternal life is to know the Father and the Son. It is that relationship. But we could not have that relationship if He did not die for our sins and ascend, after His resurrection, to the Father so He could open the way for us to have that relationship. So He had to give His flesh in order for us to have life—to have the life of God.

Again because of the way He talks about this, the way He presents it to the Jews there, we get this sense, or feel this sense of otherworldliness—that this is something outside the ken of normal understanding. Because it is. Like I said, it is *heavenly*. That, because of this, He makes us to sit in the heavenly places in Christ. There was something more going on here beyond just the physical, that we can see, because it has a spiritual dimension. It is not a corporeal thing, it is not something we can touch, and so we need a symbol, a type, something physical, for our measly brains to grasp at least a little bit of what He is trying to get across to us.

So we have the symbol of unleavened bread to stand for all this spiritual concept that He is talking about. It is very complex. But it is bread, and it is truth, and it is God’s Word, and it is something else. It is all metaphorical that He is talking here, and spiritual.

He is taking the Old Testament illustration, of God giving the Israelites manna, and comparing it to God the Father giving the world (most of all, to those of us He has called—believers) the bread of life. And what is the bread of life? It is Jesus Himself.

We have added another element to all of this. It is not just bread. It is not just God’s Word, His instruction. It is not just manna. But, most of all, the culmination of this symbol is Jesus Christ, our God and Savior. And Jesus then says that those who truly believe—those who have been called and chosen out of this world—will eat of Him and, by that eating, gain eternal life through the resurrection of the dead.

Now let us add verses 63 and then 66 through 69. He is explaining to His disciples here.

John 6:63 “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. . . .

There is no good in looking at this world like the Israelites did. They looked at it totally fleshly. All they wanted was food to eat. But it is the Spirit. This is the level that we have raised the type to so that we can understand that that is the thing that is going to give us eternal life.

John 6:63 . . . The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”

John 6:66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more [because they could not make this leap].

They were looking at it as eating His flesh and drinking His blood and they could not make this metaphorical, spiritual leap into the next dimension—that otherworldly, Spirit dimension that Jesus was actually driving at.

John 6:67-69 Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?” Then Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? [You just told us] You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe [remember, He said it was those who believe] and know [now they were convicted] that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

They (Peter especially) had been given the ability to make that leap from the physical to the spiritual. Once he was convicted of what Jesus said, he knew in his heart of hearts that Jesus was the Christ, and that He had come down from the Father, and He was that living bread, and He was the Manna from heaven; and that if he believed in Him and stuck with Him and endured to the end, he would have eternal life through the resurrection of the dead.

But he had to believe His words because the words are the spiritual component that come into our ears and go into our minds and then work their work on our conviction. And then, by working on our conviction, they work to work works (actions, practices) that are reflective of what God Himself does. And as we do those things, we become more and more like the Son until we are transformed into His very image, and at that point that means eternal life.

Of course, we have been promised that all along. But because we are doing the works that God prepared beforehand for us to do, they are transforming us into what God is. And the more we are like God, the more sure it is that we will make it to the end and be in His Kingdom and have that eternal life. It is an amazing process.

Let us go back to John chapter 1. Did you know that John actually begins his entire gospel with this concept? His first words are “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” He is telling the reader, right in the first words of his gospel, “This is where I am going. That, we are going through this entire gospel to make you understand that this Word, this Person, exemplifies all the words of God—all the instruction of God—and that we must eat of Him.” Verse 14:

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

He does not use the word ‘bread’ here. He does not even talk about eating here. But he is already beginning to work on these ideas—these very deep and spiritual ideas—about the logos (the sayings, the instruction, the word that Jesus Christ came to give us) and he is telling us that He embodied those sayings. And He became flesh for a good reason because He had to give His flesh—His life—for our sins.

Once that was done, and once He had given all His instruction that His apostles wrote down in these gospels, then He could begin to work on us spiritually to give us true life. So John immediately points the reader to make the link between Jesus Christ, and words, and (a part of the verse we did not read, but it is right in there) the concept of life. Jesus Christ, words, and life.

He also, then, in verse 14, brings in the concepts of glory. Now I want to give you a definition of glory so that we are on the same page here. This may come up again. The glory that he is speaking of here (“we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father”), we can think of as the brilliant manifestation of God’s character and holiness. Very simple. I used ‘brilliant’ for a reason because it could mean ‘shining’ (like “Ah, the sun is brilliant today” where it is just glaring and bright). But it also means ‘really, really smart’ and ‘really intellectual’ and ‘really helpful and useful’.

So what we see in Jesus is this glory of the Father, the glory befitting the only Son of the Father. What He did, when He came to this world in the flesh, He made a brilliant representation of God’s character and holiness in every step He took, in every word that He said. He brilliantly showed everyone who saw Him what God was like.

Then he adds two other words here: grace and truth. The commentaries seem to think that grace and truth do not describe the Word (‘the Word became flesh’), but they actually describe glory. They are adjectives that describe the glory again. They kind of expand out on this brilliant manifestation of God’s character and holiness. This brilliant manifestation of God’s holiness is full of grace.

We think of grace as ‘unmerited pardon.’ But, in this context, he is probably translating into Greek a Hebrew concept. The idea here is more of ‘chesed,’ which is God’s covenantal lovingkindness. So, in that case, ‘charisma’ here means that God’s glory, which is seen in Jesus Christ, showed God’s supreme goodness and love.

And then ‘truth,’ which would be a Greek synonym for the Hebrew word for truth, means not just factual and actual things (not just reality and what is true), but also it brings in the idea of faithfulness.

So when Jesus came and He gave this brilliant manifestation of God’s character and holiness, two of the things that really stood out was God’s goodness and love on the one hand, and His truth and faithfulness—to it and to us—on the other. Now we could say that these are the ingredients of the bread of life. This is what we are to eat for these seven days of the festival.

Throughout our Christian lives, we are to feast ourselves on God’s righteousness and holiness, and His goodness and love, and all the truths and principles that make up the wisdom of God. That is to be our daily diet and that is the kind of diet, if consistently followed to the end, which will result in eternal life in God’s Kingdom.

Let us conclude in I Corinthians 5. We will just read verses 6 through 8. Remember, the Corinthians were all proud of themselves for tolerating this very perverse relationship between a man and his stepmother. So Paul says:

I Corinthians 5:6-7 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

He went through that great suffering and crucifixion so that we can purged of that old leaven—that we could be forgiven of those sins. And then, of course, on the other side of that is that we are holy, righteous, unleavened. He went through all of that so any kind of any sin that we do does not become us and does not become Him. So get rid of it. And then he says:

I Corinthians 5:8 Therefore [This is his concluding statement: Since this has been done for you] 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.

He charges them to use this Feast of Unleavened Bread to put themselves on the right path, after they wandered off it. He gives them two negative comments that fall under God's command not to eat leavened bread during these seven days.

1. The true path is certainly not one traveled with old leaven. He says “Those were the sins that you were forgiven of in the past. Those are the ones you overcame in the past. Don't let them back in because they will cause you to backslide and, if you're not careful, you will fall away. So get rid of all those things that have crept back in your life from your prior life before God called you.”
2. Nor is the right path one traveled with the leaven of malice and wickedness, which we can understand as any kind of evil of mind (malice) or any kind of evil of words or actions, which would be wickedness. Thinking evil of others and doing evil things against them should never taint our lives—because Jesus Christ is in us and we should not be doing anything that is going to give Him a bad name. They are totally unbecoming of a Christian, one who has been unleavened through Christ.

So both of these cover the fraudulent, deceptive way of this world—the way that Satan wants us to live. It covers that 90 percent that is garbage. Do not get involved in that by any means.

But then he sums up the metaphor of unleavened bread—the way Christ wants us to live, the words that we are to be living by—in two words: sincerity and truth. That sounds a little bit like John's summation of Christ's glory as full of grace and truth.

But we will explore these words, and how they compare to each other and to these other concepts, on the last day of unleavened bread.