

## James And Unleavened Bread (Part 3)

James 5

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A few years back a minister mentioned something that made a lot of sense to me. This was not the only thing that has made a lot of sense to me that he said, but this one in particular really struck me for some reason, and that was he said the festivals in which **we** commemorate God working on behalf of man last one day. Passover lasts one day. Pentecost lasts one day. Trumpets lasts one day. Atonement lasts one day. Those are all things where God does something to step in to intervene and work in behalf of man.

But the feasts in which **we** play a part in this lasts an entire week. We have the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasts seven days, and that is a period of time where man and God work together to bring about virtual utopia on earth, both physically and spiritually, but it takes awhile because man and God must work together to produce it. Changing man's world to God's world will take one thousand years, and then at the end Satan is going to come back in and do some destruction.

The symbolism of living in tabernacles itself gives you an idea that you are going on a long journey. It is not something that can be done quickly. It is a lifetime of experience. Of course we have the seven Days of Unleavened Bread which typify our coming out of sin, and also coming out of this world, to follow God. The Protestant doctrine of "once saved, always saved" to the contrary, this process takes a lifetime of hard work and constant vigilance in order to maintain it. We may spend twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years learning the ways of Satan, learning the ways of this world, allowing our human nature to lead us about by the nose. We also need an equal amount of time to unlearn it and begin to learn God's way and to do God's way.

That is why God calls us whenever He sees fit in our lives and gives us a chance over a period of time, and I would say that for most people who are hearing me now, they have been in the church for many years. I think the church today is quite a bit more mature, at least as far as years go, than it was in the past, and we know from experience that it takes a long time to learn the way of God. While we are learning it, we know that God never promises that it is going to be easy. If it were easy, the church of God would have millions of members rather than just a few thousand scattered about the globe.

No, the godly life we have been called to is probably the most difficult life that any people on earth have ever lived. I am not talking physically. Most of us have it pretty good physically. We live in places around this world where the lifestyle is fairly

comfortable, where we do not have a "hand to mouth" existence. The life we have called to is **trying** to us spiritually and emotionally, and we have to weather our way through it. But it is not an impossible life either. That is the bright side of the equation, because we have God's promise that His way is easy and His burden is light. His yoke is easy.

Let me put it that way. This does not mean that it is going to **be** easy. We still have a yoke. We still have a burden, but in the end it is a very easy burden in a way. It is a light burden because in the end it is the most rewarding and fruitful life that men can live. Now it may be tough, but when we look back on it in the Kingdom, once we reaped the rewards of living this way, we will look on it and say *Wow! It could have been a lot worse*. If God says we can succeed, well then, we are going to succeed. We **will** be with Him in the Kingdom, and that is what these Days of Unleavened Bread are all about. During one week each year God reminds us of our responsibilities on our Christian pilgrimage, and He gives us hope and confidence and encouragement so that we can make it.

Today I am going to be completing a series that I started two years ago during these Days of Unleavened Bread. During the feast days of Unleavened Bread of 1996 I had two sermons in which I went over most of the book of James, but I did not go into two sections of chapter 5 that I told you I would get to at some point and here two years later, I have gotten to it. So we are going to look at James.

First I want to lay a foundation so that we can "hook" James together with the Days of Unleavened Bread, and whoever gets the tapes a couple of years down the road and listens to Parts 1, 2, and 3 successively is going to hear the first part of Part 1 over again, because it has been two years and I do not want to leave anybody behind, scratching their heads and saying, "What does this have to do with the Days of Unleavened Bread?" Hopefully I can show briefly how James applies to this holy day period. First turn to Exodus 12:15. These are God's instructions to Moses about the Days of Unleavened Bread.

**Exodus 12:15-20** Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. [That is pretty dire.] On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. [We can eat on this day and prepare it.] So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting

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ordinance. 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 leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations you shall eat unleavened bread.

Very interesting. Three times in this section, six verses, He says *you shall eat unleavened bread*, and only twice He says *do not eat anything leavened*.

**Exodus 12:34** So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders.

In the Exodus, they could not take any leavening with them. They had no time. They got out before the bread could rise.

**Exodus 12:37-39** Then the children of Israel journeyed from Ramses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. 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.

So it was "lickity-split," "Let's get up and go! We don't have time to make that good yeasty bread."

In Exodus chapter 13 the instructions are repeated.

**Exodus 13:3-7** And Moses said to the people: Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, 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

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service in this month. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the LOORD. 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.

Now let us go to Exodus chapter 23. I hope you are picking up the gist here of what is going on.

**Exodus 23:15** You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty).

**Exodus 34:18** The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt.

**Leviticus 23:6-8** And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LOORD; seven days you **must** eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LOORD for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

**Numbers 28:17** And on the fifteenth day of this month [Abib] is the feast; unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days.

**Deuteronomy 16:1-4** Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LOORD your God, for in the month of Abib the LOORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the LOORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LOORD chooses to put His name. You shall eat no leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. And no

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leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall any of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until morning.

I am sure by now you have noticed the common element in all these verses. In these verses God tells us twelve times to eat unleavened bread seven days. He puts it in various ways, but He keeps telling us you shall, you must **eat** it. There is a reason for that. He tells us about putting leaven out, or not eating leaven only four times, so which seems to be more important? Putting the leaven out? Or making sure that we eat *only* unleavened bread? Seems like almost three to one He favors making sure we eat unleavened bread seven days. If you are eating unleavened bread, (this is the point), you do not have time to eat the leavened kind. If you are busy eating unleavened bread, you are too full to eat leavened bread.

Let us go to I Corinthians 5. We going to change this just a bit and swing it into a more spiritual area. Paul is getting on the Corinthian church here a little bit for their practices.

**I Corinthians 5:6-7** Your glorying is not good. [Your pride in what you have done here is misplaced, he says.] 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.

Christ cleaned us up. The leaven is gone from us. Paul said we need to be concentrating on keeping ourselves unleavened. Only a little bit of leaven will leaven all of us. Do your best to stay unleavened.

**I Corinthians 5:8** Therefore 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.

Paul touches on this same idea as well, but he gives us a plain clue about what our unleavened bread is to be. He says that it is something pure, something unalloyed, something undefiled and true. Matthew 4:4 says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Physical bread is not enough obviously. To live in the fullest sense, to be complete and whole, we need to eat, we **must** eat, as it says there in one place, God's unleavened Word.

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**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.

This kind of links this with I Corinthians 5, does it not, where Paul says we need to be eating the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth? But Jesus, the Word, is full of grace and truth. In Revelation 19:11, He is called "faithful and true." In John 4:23-24, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that we must worship Him in **spirit** and in truth. So we have "sincerity and truth," "grace and truth." We have "faith and truth" and we have "in spirit and in truth." God's Word is first of all **true**, and then it is pure, full of grace, faithful, spiritual, sincere.

Let us go to John 6. We touched on some of these verses in the Passover service.

**John 6:32-35** 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 6:53-54** Then Jesus said to them, Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

So like we have seen in these previous verses, Christ **is** the embodiment of God's Word. He is the Word. He is the bread. He is totally unleavened, and as He goes on to say, as we saw in the Passover service, we have to eat His flesh and drink His blood to have eternal life. We have to **consume** what He is, what His character is, His way of life. Everything about Him we must ingest, and ingesting it, use it. We do this in one way by participating in the Passover service. We commemorate it once a year. We renew ourselves to that covenant we have made when we eat unleavened bread, which symbolizes His body, and we drink wine, which symbolizes His blood. But this alone is

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not enough. Just going through the ritual is not enough. We must also study the Bible, the written Word of God. We must digest it, and then we must **live** it, because what good is belief without action, without doing what we believe? What we believe should manifest itself in how we act. We must take that step to turn belief into life, into living.

**John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

They are our life and in the doing of them, in the believing of them, is what is going to lead us into His Kingdom. We will be building the character that God requires and we will make entrance into His Kingdom guaranteed, because He is faithful.

Let us go to John 4. What does Jesus Christ Himself say that this food that He digested during His own life [I am talking spiritually here] did for Him? This is just after He had talked to the woman at the well.

**John 4:31-33** In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But He said to them, I have food to eat of which you do not know. [You are not aware of what gives Me strength.] Therefore the disciples said to one another, Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?

They did not get it. They thought He was telling them, "Oh yeah! Joe Schmoe over here brought Me a bagel," or something. That is not what He meant at all.

**John 4:34** Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

This food that He had available to Him—the Word of God, the will of God—gave Him spiritual energy. It energized Him to do what God wanted Him to do. It *compelled* Him along the way of a Christian life. He just did not want to do anything but God's will and God's work, because this unleavened bread that was in Him, that was Him, that was from God, just *urged* Him and drove Him on, and the physical things of this world took a very back seat to this unleavened bread that He is talking about here—the word.

See, Christ did not just learn the Word of God, the scriptures, so that He could debate the scribes and the Pharisees on it. It was not just head knowledge to Him. He did not even learn it just to keep from sinning, just to avoid doing wrong. He not only knew it

backwards and forward better than anyone, He **lived** it. What good is the knowledge without it being lived? He not only kept Himself pure from sin, (because as Paul said, the law tells us what sin is), He knew the law, He knew it so that He could go through His life and avoid those things that were not right, but He then used His knowledge and understanding by doing God's will. It was not static to Him. It was not just between His ears. It came out in His hands. It came out of His mouth. It came out of His feet. Everything that He did showed Him eating unleavened bread, if you will.

Let us see this in Acts 10. This is Peter's preaching in Cornelius' household, traditionally the first Gentiles that the early church was aware of being converted.

**Acts 10:38** God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

See, His anointing just did not put Him up on a pedestal. It **compelled** Him to do good works. Then we must remember that God has called us to follow this example. We must walk in His steps. We may not have the Holy Spirit and the power in the same measure as Jesus Christ did, but we can always use what we have and build upon what we have been given, and grow in it. James says in James 4:17, "To him who knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin." That is kind of interesting to think of it in these terms of eating unleavened bread and not eating leavened bread. If we are just not eating leavened bread and just sitting on our duff, and something comes up where we have the ability and the opportunity to do good, even with all that leavening out of our lives, we are still sinning because we are not doing good, we are not doing our good work, we are not eating unleavened bread. So we know that we should be doing good, and we know ways to do it because we are ingesting the word.

I showed in the first two sermons in this series what specific practical works that James suggests that we do. If you remember those sermons, it is the whole gamut of our lives. It talks about our mouth. It talks about pure and undefiled religion which is to visit the widows and orphans in their distress. It talks about praying for people's healings. It talks about (which we will get to later), not oppressing those who are weaker than us. It talks about not respecting a person's power or wealth or status. It goes on and on. James is a very "nuts and bolts" type of book, where he tells you *how* you can have "faith and works." He shows you how you have faith *with* works, how they go together. The major part of chapter 2, right in the middle of the book, is where he takes quite a bit of space to show that if you have faith alone, it is not complete. Faith must show itself and be manifested in works, in the things that we do.

**Matthew 5:17-19** Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

This is the one who not only knows them, but does them, and teaches them.

**Matthew 5:20** for I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

That is interesting. Jesus said that the scribes and the Pharisees had a righteousness. They were very meticulous about keeping the law. You know that from what we see in the Gospels. They got to the point where they would cross to the other side of the street to avoid a woman. Now you might say, What does that have to do with keeping the law? But they found something in there, and they were meticulous about keeping it. They had six hundred or whatever rules on how you keep the Sabbath, what you can carry on the Sabbath. They had all kinds of detailed instructions that they were to follow, and the good Pharisees tried their best to keep every one of them. Their whole code of conduct was an attempt to keep God's law by **not** sinning. So Jesus acknowledges that they had a form of righteousness, because keeping the law so one will not sin is "doing right."

But He says His disciples have to go **beyond** this. They not only have to try not to sin and do their best not to sin against laws, but He later goes on to elucidate on those laws in the Sermon on the Mount, that they are much more stringent in actuality than what the Jews were keeping. Jesus said, You have heard it said in the law that such and such and so and so, but I say to you that it is even more stringent than this. If you even look at a woman to lust after her, you have already committed adultery. It is not just the very act. It is looking at the woman in lust. Christ's disciples have an even higher standard than what the Pharisees and the scribes had. Of course we have to repent when we do transgress them, but beyond that Christ's disciples have to go the second mile.

Christ's disciples have to love their enemies and bless them that curse them. Christ's disciples have to do good to those that hate them. They have to do charitable deeds.

They have to forgive seventy times seven, and it goes on and on and on. Peter said, Do we have to forgive them seven times? and Jesus says No! Seventy *times* seven! There should be no end to your forgiveness, if they repent. How much more strict is our way of life than even the Pharisees or the scribes had to do? We have the spirit of the law to keep, and we have to do good. We not only have to chase the leavening out, but we also have to eat unleavened bread.

"Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and keep one's self unspotted from the world." This is where James and the Days of Unleavened Bread come together. Notice first He puts "doing good." This is pure and undefiled religion. First you visit the widows and the orphans in their affliction, and second, keep yourself unspotted from the world. In the first case we have **eating** unleavened bread, and in the second case we have **getting rid** of the leaven. This is where the two concepts come together of eating unleavened bread and the book of James.

So our personal commission you might say, is two-pronged. First: Do good. Second: avoid sin. To keep a proper relationship with God we have to be doing both. I think one of the reasons why the first one is "doing good" is because if you are doing good, you do not have time to sin. If you fill your life with doing what is right, sin does not have a place, and so the avoiding of sin becomes so much easier. First, do good. Do what is right, and if you are doing what is right, your chances of doing what is wrong are automatically minimized, and that is what Jesus did. He said He was anointed, and He went about doing good. That is the example we follow. We have been anointed, and we must go about doing good. If we want to summarize this entire introduction here, Christians must not only remove leaven, but they must also eat unleavened bread, i.e. fill themselves with God's word and **live** it. The latter, eating of the unleavened bread, is more than likely the most important.

With this background we are going to get into the book of James. I want to review just a moment to help your understanding about why he wrote this book. The dating of this book is very important as far as me coming up with this reason for why he wrote it. It looks like James was written in the year 60 or 61 AD, or maybe the early part of 62 AD, right around that time. This is important because Paul was probably in prison at this time. He was, in a way, "out of the loop." He could not get to the churches as well, so what I think, and other commentators agree with this if they do not have an ax to grind about this book like Martin Luther had, but they think it was written in response to abuses to Paul's teaching in Galatians and Romans.

Remember, in Galatians and Romans he talks about justification by faith very much in

depth, and they believe that James was written to counterbalance, if you will, or correct the abuses that some people in the church were doing to Paul's teachings about grace and law and faith and how they all work together, and justification. What we have in James is his **full** agreement with the apostle Paul on these very important doctrines, very foundational doctrines. He fully agrees with Paul that we are justified by grace through faith in Christ. He did not have any problem with that whatsoever, but just like today (and this is where we start getting into the area of prophecy in the book of James) they had antinomian element. Antinomian means "anti-law." There was antinomian element in the church among them who had begun to twist Paul's writings very horribly. Peter mentions this too, that "some people *wrest* the scriptures of our beloved brother Paul."

They were all fighting this. James chose to fight it by sending out, if you will, a member and co-worker letter to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. Maybe this was a code for all the churches, the "Israel of God." He was sending out a letter to deal with these anti-law Christians who were teaching that all one had to do was to believe, and he would be saved. Since Paul was probably in prison, James took up his pen, using his authority as pastor of the church in Jerusalem and as brother of Christ and an apostle, to send out this message to the people in the church so that they would have the balance as to what these antinomian people were teaching.

James was in a wonderful position to do this because he was considered one of the most stringent of the "lawkeepers." Remember in Galatians it said that a group of people had come to Antioch from James, and they caused this stir, and this is where Paul rebuked Peter because they were shunning the Gentiles. Well James supposedly was the head of this "faction" that was very much in favor of keeping the law. What James shows is that he really was not the leader of this faction. He was in full agreement with the apostle Paul. He was just coming at it from a little bit different angle. The law was not done away. It was there for a reason, and that is what he gets into in his book, because his theme is *faith **with** works*. Paul was absolutely right, but he had only described the beginning of the process.

James and Paul used the word *justification* differently. Paul uses it as the beginning stroke of God's salvation. "We are justified freely by His grace, if we believe and have faith in Jesus Christ." This is absolutely true. James though was taking it in the sense of our sanctification throughout our Christian life, and he says that after we have initially been justified, we need to be doing works. He uses *justification* to mean *shown to be upright*, that our works done in faith show God that we are upright. Paul looks at the beginning of the process, and James looks at the rest of the process. We are initially justified by faith. James looks at it from that point on, that we show God where we are

by our works.

So the two go together. "Faith without works is dead," he says. "I will show you my faith by my works." Paul was the beginning of the process, and James is the rest of it. God's stroke is Paul's. God and us together is James', and these two elements work together to produce sanctification, and ultimately salvation. I hope that is understandable.

This background brings us up to the present day because there are people in the church who are saying the same exact thing. Worldwide went along over ten years or so and changed our correct understanding that we had under Mr. Armstrong to basically what Martin Luther thought back at the time of the Reformation. And so, what are we faced with today? The exact same situation that James faced in the first century. We need once again to be re-grounded in this idea of "faith and works" and "law and grace" just like they did in the first century. That was the gist of my first two sermons. So what we have is an amazingly up-to-date book, the book of James written to the "Israel of God" here at the end time.

The first two sermons brought out many of the problems in the church today that are similar to ones that James faced. People talking and not remembering to control their tongues, and getting in trouble by it, and people who are, let us say, "senior" in the church need to be reminded that those who are teachers will be judged more severely than the rest of us. They need to remember that they need to be doing those things that are godly, and to use the godly wisdom and produce the fruits of righteousness. He reminds us about pride, and that we do not want to be adulterers and adulteresses, intermingling, having intercourse, if you will, with the fallen women [churches] of this world. He says, "Don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?" They are enemies of God, and you are showing your carnality by doing that, and on and on it goes.

Another one he says is, "Don't boast about what you're going to be doing tomorrow, because God may have a plan in mind for you that takes you off on a totally different course." Did God not do that with the church? Did Joe Tkach not have his five-year plan about where he wanted the church to go, and guess what happened? God blew it up in his face! Half the church left him, and all his plans for millions of dollars and having the high-life go on and on went down the toilet, and now they are struggling to have any sort of an organization. "Oh! We'll go to this city, and we'll do this," and God says "Uh Uh!"

That is the kind of things James talked about. Not only were they present then in the church of God in the first century, but they are awfully prophetic to what we are going through today. I think you can see that James pretty much has his finger on the pulse of

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what is happening in the church today. I used James because he was the one who wrote the book for God, but it is actually God who knew what was going to happen, and it may not be necessarily that this was specifically written for us. It probably was, but it does not have to be, because it could be that this happens in every generation of the church, because human nature is the same. Yet still it fits and we need to get the meat out of it so that we can be corrected and changed.

Chapter 5 is the one that I did not really go into very well in my other sermon, and it is particularly prophetic, especially the first twelve verses. Four times in these verses James uses end-time phraseology, and what it should do is impart to us a real sense of urgency about it. Look at verse 3, the last part.

**James 5:3** You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

This is talking about our time now.

**James 5:7** Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord.

That is "end time."

**James 5:8-9** Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. [It is close, so you had better strengthen and establish your heart.] Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

That is pretty powerful, and pretty "end time," if you ask me. These are "the last days." The time is short. Christ's return is soon. The great Judge of all is so close that He is standing at the door. Is He knocking? Have we answered? The connection to the end-time goes even further beyond this. The imagery of the Judge standing at the door is reminiscent of the Song of Solomon 2:9 and 10. I would like to go back there. The Shulamite is speaking here. She is talking about her beloved, a type of Christ.

**Song of Solomon 2:9** ...My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall. [Like a wall of a house. He is standing there looking over into the yard.] He is looking through the windows.

You see a progression here. He is not only looking over the wall, over the fence out

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back, he is now looking in through the windows of the house. He is looking, peering, gazing in to see what is going on inside.

**Song of Solomon 2:9-10** ... [He is] gazing through the lattice. [He is making darting glances, quickly appraising what is going on.] My beloved spoke, and said to me: Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

You can look at this in two ways. In my "Song of Songs" sermon of two years ago I took it to mean the place of safety, that God would call us to go to a place of safety in the spring. It says there is verse 11 that "the winter is past." Whether that is supposed to be taken literally is up to how you believe this all works out, but there is another way to take this. When He says, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away," He is saying, "Leave this world. Clean yourself up, and get out of Babylon," (if you will, spiritually). "Come away and be like Me. Be with Me." In this case the Shulamite responds to His call and goes away with her beloved. This is a very good example because the Shulamite is a type of us, both individually and corporately. Not only is it the person, the Christian, but also the entire church, the Bride of Christ. You can look at it both ways.

Now let us go to Chapter 5. She is having a very bad time here. It is another time He comes to the door.

**Song of Solomon 5:2** I sleep, but my heart is awake; it is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.

That is interesting too. The night is the worst of time in the imagery here. He is saying "Come away" in the blackest of night, when things are worst, when things are bad. But listen to how she answers.

**Song of Solomon 5:3** I have taken off my robe; how can I put it on again?

"It's just too much. I have washed my feet. How can I defile them? I don't want to get dirty. This is grubby. Why should I come here out of the comfort of my bed, put on my robe, put on my shoes, and get all dirty again, and when I come back I'm just going to have to clean up again. It's just too much."

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**Song of Solomon 5:4** My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him.

He was trying to get in, but the door was locked. He could not work the lock from outside. There is even only so much God can do to get us to respond.

**Song of Solomon 5:5-6a** I arose to open for my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh on the handles of the lock. I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone.

There is only so much time that God is going to give us to repent and to respond to the knocking at the door. Notice what happens because of this.

**Song of Solomon 5:6-7** I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had turned away and was gone. My heart went out to him when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. The watchmen who went about the city found me. They struck me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took my veil away from me.

And then she tells the daughters of Jerusalem that if they saw her beloved that they were supposed to let him know that she still loved him. There was a great separation that took place. She was cut off from God, and so weakened by her estrangement from Him, that the Shulamite did not respond when the bridegroom knocked at the door. Notice what happened, that she left the protection of her house and got beat up. In the Passover imagery that is kind of interesting. Do you not remember that God told the Israelites, "Don't leave the house?" At least if she was in the house the beloved would have known where to find her, but she went out into the world, got beat up, got stripped naked. Maybe she got raped. The idea could be in there. She was abused.

Let us go to Revelation 3 and see another interesting correlation here. We will read the letter to the Laodicean church. Try to notice the similar imagery that is being mentioned here.

**Revelation 3:14-15** And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True [Remember that?] Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot...

You have taken off your shoes. You have taken off your robe. You are lying very sedately there in your bed. Your hands are dripping with myrrh. You are all cozy and comfy.

**Revelation 3:15** ...I could wish you were cold or hot.

I wish you were one way or the other instead of just lackadaisical, just lying there on your bed.

**Revelation 3:16** So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot . . .

If you are under the covers you are nice and warm and cozy, are you not? But hopefully, if you have got good covers and all, you are not warm or hot, you are just fine. Bed is a wonderful place!

**Revelation 3:16** So then, because you are . . . neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth.

He turns His back, and He goes away (in the Song of Songs imagery).

**Revelation 3:17** Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing—

That is the symbol of the myrrh. It was a very costly ointment, and her hands were dripping with it. She used it to in abundance. She had it to spare. Sounds like the Shulamite was Laodicean, does it not?

**Revelation 3:17** Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

That is how the Shulamite ended up—"wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." By the time things go through there in Song of Solomon 5:8, she did not have anything.

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She had been stripped naked. She was totally destitute.

Now this is what you have to do when you get to that point.

**Revelation 3:18-20** I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

Wow! Does that not seem to link James, Song of Songs, and Revelation 3 together?

**Revelation 3:20-21** If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

This sounds like doing works, overcoming sin, eating that unleavened bread.

**Revelation 3:22** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

We have three very interconnected sections here: James, Song of Songs, and Revelation 3. These three writers have God to thank for their common inspiration. God was the One that crafted this so that we can get three different views of this. They may have several symbols in common. I have mentioned some of them, all three of the five works. James' emphasis is self-evident. His whole book is about works, doing works in faith, faith with works. Solomon uses the imagery of Shulamite responding, seeking, and obeying to show **action** in works. The metaphor is in the story, not necessarily in a particular symbol. John shows that the Laodicean church's works are tepid, unworthy, lacking in zeal, and they needed to **do** these works, repent and be zealous in doing them. All three dwell on the rich.

**James 5:1-3** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up

treasure in the last days.

So God says later on that He is going to judge these people, the rich, who have so much. That is us, by the way. We are the rich. I hope we have not been oppressing those who have come to us for help, who need employment from us, or in whatever way, both physically and spiritually. Because we have more, we have the responsibility to treat those who have less with care and concern and help.

Then Solomon uses the Shulamite's lazy repose, and the dripping myrrh in her hands to typify the life of the rich. John says the Laodiceans think that they are rich, but what they really need is to buy riches. They need to gain them. They probably are rich physically, but they have become awfully poor spiritually, and those are the true riches. In each case the rich come up short. Their abilities and everything else is judged to be lacking. It is a wake-up call for the rich.

Each of these three also includes clothing in their description. James says the wealthy people's clothes are moth-eaten. It is just like the emperor's new clothes, I guess. They thought they were covered, but the clothes had big gaping holes in them. Shulamite takes off her robe, lying in bed naked. She does not even know it spiritually, and then later on when she puts on a cloak, it gets stripped off her and shows her true self. Then John says the Laodiceans are naked and need to buy white garments.

All three mention precious metals as wealth. They mention gold and silver which are accoutrements of the rich. James says that the rich's gold and silver is corroded. That is pretty bad when gold and silver begin to corrode. Silver seems to corrode fairly quickly, but gold does not. So they have been sitting on their hoarded wealth for a long time, doing nothing with it. It is corroded in their possession. Song of Solomon earlier in the book talks about putting gold and silver ornaments on her, but when we get to chapter 5, where are they? They are gone. Her ornaments have been taken away, or she herself had taken them off, which is really sad to think about. It shows a deliberate act, rejecting what had been given by the beloved. And John of course in Revelation tells the Laodiceans to buy gold refined in fire. So all three sections here are linked by these similar ideas. What we have is a prophecy of what is happening in the church now. It is very similar. What does James say to do now that we are in this time, now that we are facing these conditions?

**James 5:7-12** Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient. Establish

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your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord, that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

It is very interesting what he says here to do. First of all he says, "Be patient." Maybe it can be better translated *Suffer long*. It is not an easy road that we trudge here. The first thing off the top he says is, "Be patient until Christ comes." He is coming. We have that promise, but be patient. Use the time to work like a farmer. He plants a crop, and then he must be patient. He has to rely on the early and latter rain, and he takes his time weeding and caring for those precious fruits of the earth that he hopes to produce, but he must also weather the trials of weather. Sometimes good weather, sometimes bad weather. Sometimes tornadoes, sometimes drought. Sometimes heavy rain, sometimes none at all. He has to fight off the pests. He has to do something about the blight and the fungus. He has a lot of things he needs to be doing in order to produce an abundant crop, but the cycle has a certain length of time before it produces the mature fruit.

So like a farmer we need to be patient and wait for the early rain. Actually the early rain we get early in the growing season. It comes right at the beginning. It gets the seed started and produces the plant, but it is the latter rain that brings the fruit to the point of harvest. It brings it to ripeness. That usually comes in this instance in the mid-spring, which is very interesting, because that is the time that Jesus tells the Shulamite, "Come away!" But you need that latter rain in order to produce the final bit of ripening so that you have a mature fruit, a mature grain, a mature vegetable, or whatever you are growing.

In a way what we have here of the early and latter rain is something like the early and latter temple. One had a good reason for having been built, and then the latter came to finish the job before Christ came. You have the Old Testament and the New Testament. One provides the foundation for the other. So there is a former and a latter. You have a foundation, and then a structure in order for everything to be completed. Maybe what we have is Herbert Armstrong re-establishing the foundation for us, and now we are in the time of the latter rain. We need to put everything in order and get ready to produce the harvest.

The second thing he says is, "Establish your heart." He says, "Strengthen and stabilize yourself." Very sound advice. Get yourself centered once again in God's way and work to strengthen yourself so you will be stable. The ideal of stability is very strong in the book of James. He says do not be double minded, or you will be thrown about like the wind on the seas, but be strong and be stable, and make sure that it is your heart that is especially stable, that spiritual organ where we have our relationship with God. "Heart to heart," let us say, "with God." Make sure that is strong and stable.

The third thing he says is, "Don't complain about the brethren. Don't grumble at one another." We are talking here about our brotherly love one for another. "Love one another," he said. "Lay down your life for one another." "Don't grumble about them. It just drives you apart. It causes disunity." There is strength in numbers. A three-fold cord is not quickly broken. There is strength in fellowship. There is strength in the church and in the togetherness and the love that is in the church.

Fourthly, we are back to truth. He says, "Be honest. Tell the truth." Remember that unleavened bread is the one of sincerity and truth. It is faithful and true, and those other words that I cannot remember right now. Truth was always the foundation. "Full of grace and truth" was another one. "The truth"—hold onto it. He says, "Let your "Yes" be "Yes." Don't waffle. Let your "No" be "No." Remember, I said stability and being of a single mind is very important in James. Do not be double minded. Do not let there be any compromise. Stand in the truth, and speak it, and do it which is what is implied here.

These are the sure ways that James says will help us to endure like the prophets did over the long haul. That is the way Job persevered through his trial and maintained his relationship with God, and maintained his integrity. Of course he had to be humble through it, but he overcame, and he endured. And now we have him as an example. So these are proactive ways, works that should accompany our faith, as James' theme is. They are the unleavened bread that we must eat these seven days.

It looks like *James* has the last word here.

**James 1:21** Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

What did he say to do? Get rid of the leavening. Do not eat leavened bread. He says to lay it aside, and then receive the unleavened bread implanted in you, because "this is spirit and this is life," Jesus said. These are the words of eternal life. They are the words

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by which we will be saved. There is no other word.

**James 1:22** But be doers of the word....

That is the next step. This is part of eating the unleavened bread.

**James 1:22** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Just believing is not enough. You also have to be doing it. Let that faith work itself in action.

**James 1:25** But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work . . .

This can also be translated "be not a forgetful hearer, but one who does work."

**James 1:25** ...This one will be blessed in what he does.

So yes, let us get rid of the leaven, the sin, and then let us eat unleavened bread, and we will be blessed.