

## The Great Work The Lord Has Done!

The Last Day of Unleavened Bread

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After Israel saw the great work that God had done in Egypt, the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord. But did their reverence and faith last very long? Was seeing really believing? Did they really trust God? I hope to answer that question, and give you more besides.

God intended the eating of unleavened bread to directly serve as a reminder of an essential and extremely important understanding, necessary for our salvation.

**Exodus 13:3** 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 LOORD brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.

When the Israelites left Egypt, they did not leave sin. They left the place of their bondage. They came out of their place of bondage. The Exodus is an analogy of a person's spiritual conversion, especially the earliest stages of that conversion.

**Exodus 13:6-10** "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. [We are to eat it every day, not just when we feel like it.] 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 LOORD 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 LOORD'S law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LOORD has brought you out of Egypt. "You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

God intended the keeping of the last Day of Unleavened Bread, along with the eating of unleavened bread, for the entire seven days, to serve as a reminder of what He has done for us. Unleavened bread is to serve as a reminder to us of what He has done to bring us out of bondage.

Verse 8, shows that what the Lord did was for each of us individually and personally,

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"what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt"—when I came out of bondage. It is not speaking of the whole physical nation of Israel, nor is it speaking of the whole spiritual congregation of Israel, (that is the entire church); it is not speaking of either of these things as a group. But specifically, in verse 8, it is speaking to individuals, and personalizing it. In other areas, as we see, it does include the whole nation of Israel, and the church.

The apostle John recorded Christ's words of personal salvation in John 6:44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." This is very personal in its application. God personally takes us out of Egypt, out of bondage; and then, it is the united collection that is referred to in Exodus 13:

**Exodus 13:14** So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

The Lord brought us out of Egypt as a people, and out of the slavery of sin as a church. This was, and is done, because of what God does.

By the end of their four hundred years of bondage, the Israelites were hopelessly striving through every moment of their slavery, their condition was beyond their control, and they were crying out to God to save them. They were groaning under the burdens of everyday life, without knowing that God was already beginning to intervene on their behalf.

**Exodus 3:7-8** And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.

It is important for us to realize that God mostly works behind the scenes. This exodus of the Israelites was an unusual circumstance where God showed His hand openly and miraculously. He does not often perform a miracle like a pillar of fire, or parting of the sea. But in the case of the Exodus, God did work in a tremendously magnificent way.

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Let us look at what God did in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, and see what lessons we can learn, and apply in our own lives.

What was their attitude after witnessing those breathtaking visible miracles? Were they filled with faith? Were they grateful or ungrateful at what God had done for them personally, and as a people? We can personalize this for ourselves. We can say, here we are, we have just crossed the Red Sea, and then the next day what were our thoughts? Tomorrow what will be our thoughts? Will we still be grateful for what God has done by taking us out of bondage?

Let us continue with ancient Israel, by looking at a summary of what transpired following that Passover in Egypt.

The Israelites, most of whom were living in the land of Goshen, killed and ate the Passover lamb on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup>, and stayed in their homes until morning. Pharaoh, after midnight, calls for Moses to tell them to leave Egypt. Then, the Israelites gather at Rameses, during the daylight part of the 14<sup>th</sup>. They leave Rameses on the night of the 15<sup>th</sup>, after observing the Night To Be Much Observed. They encamp at Succoth, on the weekly Sabbath, during this first Feast of Unleavened Bread.

God does not lead the Israelites by "the way of the land of the Philistines," which is the shortest route to Canaan. Instead, He leads them southeast toward Mt. Sinai, at first along "the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." This is to fulfill His promise to take them first to Mt. Sinai.

From Succoth, the Israelites go to Etham, at the edge of the wilderness. God then tells them to turn south, and go into the wilderness west of the Red Sea. Pharaoh assumed that Israel's divine help had run out, and that they were hopelessly entangled on a dead-end course, since the desert, the sea, and the marshes barred their way out of this trap. God intentionally put them in this situation. God, however, had commanded Moses to take this humanly impossible route, to show the Egyptians once more that He was God, and to show Israel His great power.

God would receive glory from Pharaoh and his army. Glory would have come to God, whether Pharaoh had yielded or not. Pharaoh had rebelled and said in effect, "Those Hebrews will leave this place over my dead body!"

**Exodus 14:1-9** Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the

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sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so. Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.

Here we see what leads up to the sixth day of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Just as Egypt is a type of the slavery of sin, Pharaoh is a type of Satan the Devil! And just as Pharaoh did not want the Israelites to escape his bondage, Satan does not want sinners to escape his bondage, which is slavery to sin. Satan pursues us, but as the Days of Unleavened Bread represent, God is saving us out of that, and removing us from that bondage.

As baptized Christians, we are often pursued by Satan; he sets obstacles in our way in an attempt to cause us to stumble, and discourage us from obeying God. The Devil will do anything he can to keep us from receiving eternal life. He will try to deceive us into thinking God's way is too difficult in order to get us to quit striving to overcome—to return to the life of sin that we have forsaken.

It was humanly impossible for the Israelites to escape from Pharaoh; everything was against them, it is also humanly impossible for us to overcome Satan's influence. But with God, all things are possible. As you know, He has given us the Holy Spirit to fight these things, and to resist.

Just as God made it possible for Israel to escape from Pharaoh's army, through His miraculous power, God, through His Holy Spirit, makes our spiritual obedience, overcoming, and growth possible. Receiving the Holy Spirit is pictured by the Day of Pentecost, as you well know.

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Now let us get back to ancient Israel. On the sixth day of the Feast, the Israelites (approximately two million of them) encamp by the seashore northeast of the Pi-hahiroth range of mountains, which jut abruptly into the sea. So the Israelites are trapped by the mountains to the south and west, the Red Sea to the east and Pharaoh's army to the north. It was the most hopeless situation a human being could imagine.

**Exodus 14:10-12** And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

The parallel for us today, is when people leave the church and they go back to the bondage of sin, they are doing the same thing as these Israelites were saying they wished they had done.

**Exodus 14:13-14** And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

That is what He was doing for the entire seven days, during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, as they were in the process of leaving Egypt.

It is important to notice what Moses told them to do in their panicked frame of mind. In fact, this admonition is good advice anytime anyone feels panic stricken or has a wave of anxiety. Moses patiently answered the people's hasty accusation with three commands to meet this emergency:

1. "Do not be afraid."

**Psalms 3:6-8** I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon

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Your people.

This is a guarantee that we have as God's people, and it is also a guarantee that the Israelites had as they were leaving Egypt, but they had a hard time remembering that, as we also do today.

We are to walk by faith and not by sight, of course. The psalmist prays for the Lord to save him now as He has in the past. The Lord has the prerogative to give or withhold as He sees fit. This prayer does not replace work; instead it is what makes the work effective. So Moses said, "Do not be afraid!"

2. "Stand firm."

**Job 37:14** "Listen to this, O Job; Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.

So Job, in his panic, was coming out of his trial, and God pointed this out. But first, He had to tell him to stand still, and pay attention to what He had to say. Stand still and watch the "salvation of the Lord."

And the second part of this is—"Be still," That is, "Stop all action and become inactive, because I the Lord will act by myself on your behalf."

**Psalms 46:10** Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

There are times when we have to stop what we are doing, pay attention, and just wait for the "salvation of the Lord."

3. *"See the salvation of the Lord."*

*It means pay attention to it, "the deliverance of the Lord," for the Lord will fight for you.*

**II Chronicles 20:17** *You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O*

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*Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed.*

*Judah's response was not to be merely passive; they were not to take up arms, but were to exercise faith, and to offer prayer and praise.*

*So although there are works to be done, to make it a living faith, there are times when God just has to subdue it, because we are totally incapable of anything. The instruction there in II Chronicles 20 is to exercise faith, and to offer prayer and praise. The Israelites were in this situation. There was not a thing that they could do to save themselves.*

**Exodus 14:15-22** *And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen." And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night. ["all that night," was the Last Day of Unleavened bread.] Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.*

*With the single gesture of Moses' upraised hand over the sea, the Lord drove back the sea by means of a strong east wind all that night. God then opens a pathway through the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to walk across.*

*The width of this separation of the waters must have been somewhere around half a mile wide, to allow two million people to pass through in one night, before the wind died down during the "last watch," approximately between 2:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. just prior*

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*to sunrise. Keep in mind that the pillar of fire was lighting the Israelites' way.*

*Meanwhile the waters formed a wall on the right, and on the left. According to Psalm 78:13, the Lord 'made the waters stand up like a heap.'*

**Exodus 14:23-28** *And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled the army of the Egyptians. And He took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.*

*Sometime during the morning watch, the Lord looked down. In Scripture, this look is never just visual, but a demonstration of some wrath or mercy on God's part. From the pillar of fire and cloud, the Lord looked down at the Egyptian army as they began to pursue Israel across the recently formed valley in the sea, and threw it into confusion.*

*'God is not the author of confusion,' so the confusion came from the Egyptians themselves, whose minds became terrified leading to their confused state. God troubled the Egyptians with panic attacks. The army panicked, and became disarrayed, when God's presence became apparent, and they realized that they were up against a superior Challenger, and an overwhelming force.*

*This look of God took on concrete proportions, because the pillar of fire must have suddenly lit up the sky, with such a flash in the darkness that the chariots careened against one another. The horses were probably one on top of the other, as they scrambled to get away, and the chariots were probably tipping over. Meanwhile there was also unleashed such a spectacular display of thunder, lightning, rain, and earthquake, that the boldest and most arrogant of Egypt's charioteers were struck with*



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terror.

*Asaph the psalmist described this scene:*

**Psalm 77:16-20** *The waters saw You, O God; the waters saw You, they were afraid; the depths also trembled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; Your arrows also flashed about. The voice of Your thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook. Your way was in the sea, Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps were not known. You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.*

*There was a lot more going on than just the waters coming back down on them. It was terrifying. If you have ever been in an earthquake, you know how terrifying that is. The very foundation that you are standing on no longer seems solid, so you immediately have terror racing through you.*

*By this time, the thoroughly distracted Egyptians had another problem: God made the chariot wheels come off, or jam against one another, so that the Egyptians had difficulty driving. They had enough, and were willing to forget about Israel altogether, but it was too late.*

*The Lord had begun His fight against Egypt as was promised. Israel had nothing to do at this point other than stand still and watch the victory won on their behalf; because with the upraised hand of Moses, the walls of water cascaded toward each other to resume their place, just as dawn broke.*

*Pharaoh lost all the men and chariots that he had committed to that engagement. The text never says that Pharaoh himself died here, even though Psalms 136:15, records that God "overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea." It leaves some doubt as to whether he was actually killed, or not. I have a note in my Bible, from the class at Ambassador College, Old Testament Survey; it says that Pharaoh lived for sixteen years after the destruction of his army. So, it is questionable, it is not firmly a fact, of whether he lived or not, but it appears in history that he lived for another sixteen years. But, when you look at Psalm 136:15, it seems to indicate that everyone died. Either way, he got the point that God is Sovereign.*

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**Exodus 14:29-31** *But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. So the LOORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LOORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LOORD, and believed the LOORD and His servant Moses.*

*Verse 31 is a pivotal scripture of the sermon,*

*The fear of the Lord was the signal of a responsive attitude of submission and love, equivalent to putting one's whole trust in Him. The fear of the Lord is having a proper reverence for God, because of how great He is compared to us. We have to understanding how we compare to God, how great He is compared to how insignificant we are. That is the proper perspective on life.*

*Biblically, the actions most frequently associated with the fear of the Lord are: serving God and obedience to His commandments.*

*The fear of God is linked to wisdom, and is part of the covenant between God and His people. To fear God is to be in awe and reverence of Him, and to trust Him. Fearing God means hating and avoiding evil. It means much more than that, but that is a brief summary.*

*It is not too much to say, that fearing God is virtually synonymous with having faith in Him. Deuteronomy 10:12-13 is a suitable summary of what is included in the fear of the Lord:*

**Deuteronomy 10:12-13** *"And now, Israel, what does the LOORD your God require of you, but to fear the LOORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LOORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LOORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good?"*

*Pharaoh is the picture of one who did not fear God. By the time Moses brought seven different plagues upon Egypt, Pharaoh knew God well enough to fear Him properly, but he did not. Though Pharaoh appeared to repent, Moses replied, "I know that you ... still do not fear the Lord God." Even after Pharaoh allowed Israel to flee Egypt, his*

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*disobedience in giving pursuit indicated that he did not fear God. As a consequence, God destroyed Pharaoh's army, just as He promises to bring judgment upon all those who do not fear Him, while preserving those who do.*

**Malachi 3:5** *And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, against adulterers, against perjurers, against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, and against those who turn away an alien—because they do not fear Me," Says the LORD of hosts.*

**Malachi 3:16-17** *Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him."*

*So those who fear by reverencing the Lord, and meditate by contemplating His attributes, are written in a book of remembrance.*

*In addition to fear of the Lord, Exodus 14:31 tells us that Israel learned to believe the Lord, and that they began to have faith in the Lord. It took all of those visible miracles to bring them to that point, and no doubt them both fearing God in a terrifying way, as well as fearing God in a reverencing way as well, to come to this point of believing, and actually having faith in Him.*

**Exodus 14:31** *Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses.*

*We are going to see that, sadly, that did not last.*

*Simply put, faith is the belief that God exists, and that He will do exactly as He says that He will in His inspired written Word. It is by this faith that we have to live if we want to please God, and to know the peace of mind that comes only through trust in Him.*

*It is through this faith that we are justified, and by which we can gain the strength of*

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*godly love to obey God's commandments. This is the kind of faith required for salvation.*

*Faith, of course, is required for both our physical and spiritual salvation. The faith of Moses' parents is especially significant in light of what is transpiring in our nation and the world today. For three months Moses' parents hid the baby Moses—in spite of orders by the government to the contrary. We may come to this point, where we have to disobey the government, and hide one another from them, because persecution is coming, and it appears to be coming our way first. We may have to do what Moses' parents did, in hiding Moses the baby from the government at that time. That will be an individual choice that each one of us has to make in the future.*

*Some might have thought that they should have handed baby Moses over to the authorities, and just "trusted God." They trusted God all right, but they also acted to keep Moses safe. They fulfilled the works part of faith, had they not their faith would have been a dead faith because "faith without works is dead." But there is a key element in here. Moses' parents were willing to give their lives for Moses if they were caught, because that was the penalty for such a thing as a slave in Egypt, was death. So the question is, are we willing to give our lives for someone in the church who might need protection?*

**Hebrews 11:23-29** *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.*

*As an adult, Moses, in faith, chose to please God rather than please himself, or rather than fear the government. It was not easy for Moses to have to appear before the powerful Pharaoh again and again with only bad news to give him. Moses must have wanted to be anywhere else other than before Pharaoh. Moses "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." So, the same faith that parted the Red Sea can work for us.*

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*We must see "Him who is invisible," to truly see the salvation of the Lord.*

*Sometimes we feel like God does not hear our prayers because we have not received what we are praying for. But if we are children of God there is no doubt that God hears our prayers. Here are three very familiar scriptures that express this:*

**Psalm 34:15** *The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.*

*There is no doubt, it is an absolute. And if He hears our prayers, He answers them.*

**1 John 5:14-15** *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

*But the answer may not always be "Yes." Often it may be "Not yet." The key to answered prayer is in verse 14, "if we ask anything according to His will." Not our will, but God's will. How do we know what His will is? By His inspired written Word. Does what we are asking match that?*

*It may be that God may have something for us to do first. It not only has to be asked "according to His will;" It may be that His will has to be done first—before our prayer is answered. Let me explain that by turning to Hebrews 10:*

**Hebrews 10:36-39** *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: "For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." [Actually, if anyone draws back he is not doing the will of God.] But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

*Faith chooses between the attractive but temporary pleasures of sin, and the prospect*

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*of disgrace for the sake of Christ. The apostle Paul shows Moses to be a real hero of faith, who had an intelligent regard for the hopes of the nation of Israel. We also are to accept "disgrace" and reject "the pleasures of sin," and we can do this if we, like Moses, anticipate our reward. Moses was always looking to the reward, and always looking to the end of God's plan. That way it put all of the rest of God's plan into perspective. But the children of Israel only looked at what God was doing at the immediate time, and so they could not see the whole plan of God, and where He was headed with them.*

*The Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures, through symbols, the fact that God wants New Testament Christians (spiritual Israelites) to come completely out of the slavery of sin into obedience to Him! Just as the Israelites had to walk out of Egypt as God delivered them, we must willingly, of our own accord, get out of sin as God saves us. It is God's goodness and mercy that leads us to this repentance from sin, just as He led His chosen people from Egypt to freedom.*

*Eternal life is clearly a gift from God, but it is also clear that God wants us to be willing and actually striving to obey Him. That is our part in His master plan. Keep in mind the Israelites did not leave Egypt without sin; they carried their sin with them as far as their problems, what temptations they were susceptible to. They still had their same inclinations. But God brought them out of the bondage of sin, as He has us, members of God's church.*

*If Christians keep the Passover, yet fail to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, what they have done, symbolically, is accepted Christ's sacrifice and then continued in the slavery of sin. But Paul said that Christ is not a minister of sin. Therefore we must walk away from sin, quit sinning, and keep God's law! The Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures what God is doing as we hurry away from sin. He cleanses us of the leavening within us and we work with Him in this phase of God's plan of salvation. As we keep God's law, we learn to live without sin. We replace that life of sin with a life of obedience and righteousness.*

*Anciently, anyone who ate leavened bread, a symbol for sin, in his home during this festival was to be put out of the nation or congregation of Israel. So for the Israelites it was a very serious infraction of the law. It shows to us the importance of keeping the Days of Unleavened Bread, and the importance of ridding our lives of sin. God does this during these seven days, but of course, we have our part, and we have to walk the walk.*

**Exodus 12:15, 19-20** *'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats*

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*leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. . . . '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 dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'"*

*Ancient Israel is a type of the church. God will not allow unrepentant sinners in His spiritual nation; they will not be allowed in the Kingdom of God! Thankfully we have the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ so that we can be forgiven for our sins. It is the habitual sins; the sins that we refuse to overcome that are the real problem. The ones that we slip into, and that we do not want to commit as Paul said, but we do because of the flesh, those are forgiven as we repent. But the habitual ones, those that we continue to do over and over again, we are refusing God's commands.*

*Let us get back to ancient Israel, by looking at what transpired following their crossing of the Red Sea. On the east coast of the Red Sea, there was great rejoicing in the camp of Israel on the seventh and last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In Exodus 15:1-21, we are given the song that the Israelites sang. The sea that Israel crossed is not named in the actual account of the journey, but in the Song of Moses it is called the "Red Sea," in the fourth verse of Exodus 15, in the English versions of the Bible. There is a great message in that Song of Moses.*

*The history of the journey from the Red Sea to Sinai begins with verse 22, which should start another chapter. The Israelites traveled southeast, roughly parallel to the Red Sea. Along the way they stopped at a number of places, including Marah and Elim, before heading east, arriving at Mt. Sinai nearly seven weeks later.*

*Let us briefly review the symbolic meaning of coming out of Egypt.*

*The annual festivals picture events of historic and future importance to ancient Israel, the world, and the Christian. Recall that when God revealed His weekly Sabbath to the Israelites, it was a sign and a memorial so they would remember that He is the Creator and that they were His people. God also gave them the annual festivals of the Passover and Unleavened Bread, as memorials to commemorate the nation's deliverance from Egypt—a picture for His church today of the plan of God in eventually delivering the entire world out of bondage and sin.*

*Israel's departure from Egypt has great symbolic meaning, as you well know. The*

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*spiritual lesson that their deliverance from slavery teaches is vital to our complete understanding of what God intends the Feast of Unleavened Bread to picture to us today.*

*As you know, the Passover pictures the death of Jesus Christ—His shed blood for the remission of our sins upon real repentance. The second festival pictures our coming out of bondage and God ridding us of sin (by the deliverance of God) as the Israelites came out of Egypt, a symbol for sin, during the seven days of the Feast. Simply stated, the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures obedience to God, and keeping His commandments on our part as God delivers us!*

*God wants us to escape the slavery of sin by obeying Him.*

**Romans 6:16-22** *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*

*In a sense, this picks up where the Last day of Unleavened Bread leaves off.*

*The ancient Israelites were slaves in pagan Egypt. They were not allowed to obey God. Therefore the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which commemorates their deliverance out of slavery in Egypt, also pictures their deliverance out of sin.*

*Sin enslaves! Those who are not God's Spirit-begotten children do not realize that they are now the slaves of sin. We look at the world and we can see very vividly what it means to be slaves of sin. Sin tends to increase in the one who indulges in it. Sin punishes! It brings sorrow, remorse, and anguish. It afflicts us with physical injury,*



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*sickness, and disease. It produces anxiety, frustration, and hopelessness. It leads to death. There is nothing good about sin, except an immediate gratification for the self. It is just not worth it.*

*People do not realize that only real repentance—turning from sin to obedience to God through the living faith of Jesus Christ—can free them from that penalty!*

**Exodus 14:29** *But the children of Israel had walked on dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.*

*So, we are doing the walking this week, but God is the one who is bringing us out of bondage.*

**Exodus 14:30-31** *So the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.*

*So the Israelites "feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses." They had tremendous respect and a proper fear of God, because of what they had seen Him do for them; and they finally believed that what He said, He meant!*

*After the seven days of eating unleavened bread, when the Lord delivered them out of slavery—out of bondage in Egypt—they still had sin dwelling in them. When they reached the other side of the Red Sea, although they had just been through a type of baptism, sin still remained in them. God saw that they were free from bondage, He delivered them from that. But they were still full of human nature; and it showed up immediately.*

*What was the attitude of the Israelites after they crossed the Red Sea? Certainly, they would have been 'Oh, so thankful,' to say the least.*

*Let us learn from one thing that the Israelites did wrong after crossing the Red Sea. In fact, they had always had this problem, but even the tremendous miracles that they had witnessed did not rid them of this sin. Actually, the continuation of this character flaw*

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*showed that they had only barely just begun to truly fear, reverence, and respect God, and to have faith in Him.*

*The people of Israel responded to a lack of water at Marah in the Wilderness of Shur in a manner similar to their grumbling against Moses at the Red Sea, that the Egyptians were going to kill them. They grumbled before God parted the waters of the Red Sea, and they grumbled after they crossed. Grumble! Gripe! Complain! They still had not learned to trust that God's presence with them is sufficient for their protection and needs.*

**Exodus 15:22-27** *So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" So he cried out to the LOORD, and the LOORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. There He made a statute and an ordinance for them. And there He tested them, and said, "If you diligently heed the voice of the LOORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LOORD who heals you." Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.*

*God allowed the Israelites to complain in this first instance after crossing the Red Sea. However, this complaining continued to be a recurring struggle in their journey to Sinai, and ultimately led to the situation through which this generation of Israel was not allowed to enter Canaan. In that situation in their future, they whined like three year olds.*

*We see in Exodus 15:22-24, that with the large number of people and livestock coming out of Egypt, the inability to find drinking water is a significant problem. There were two million of them, roughly. (What will it be like for the two hundred million man army in Megiddo, imagine the amount of water they will need!) However, Israel has just experienced God's power over the waters of the Red Sea, and so their choice to grumble against Moses about the lack of something to drink is quite ironic really, because they saw that God had powers over the waters, at the very least.*

*The signs in Egypt confirmed Moses as God's choice to lead Israel, and Israel needs to faithfully apply what has been revealed to them, but they do not. Keep in mind this is after the Days of Unleavened Bread.*

*Though the people of Israel had just seen God's power unforgettably demonstrated, they nevertheless forgot, and failed to trust God. In contrast to their unbelief, Moses cried to God to deliver the people from their distress. God showed him a log, and in response to Moses' cry for help, He intervenes by causing the water to become sweet. It was entirely God's direct intervention by showing Moses what to do, and then God of course performed the miracle.*

*The purpose of the event at Marah is made clear in verses 25 and 26, "There the Lord made for them a statute and . . . tested them." The statute was to demonstrate, by means of testing, the principle that if the people would diligently listen to the voice of the Lord, He would graciously care for them as their healer. But they had a very short memory.*

*The statute calls Israel to give heed to all that He has commanded (Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the consecration of the firstborn) and all that He would reveal in the future. That requires that the people follow Moses completely, as the one through whom they will "listen to the voice of the Lord."*

*God's reference to Himself as, "your healer," indicates that Israel has already been graciously spared from what happened to the Egyptians, and that faithfulness is the means by which they will continue to apply the blessings of the covenant relationship with the Lord.*

**Exodus 23:25** *"So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you."*

*The statute given here is the seed that Moses will give the next generation of Israel, before they enter the land. In the opening statement to the 'Blessings of Obedience,' God says:*

**Deuteronomy 7:12-15** *"Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. "And*

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*He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you. You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock. And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you.*

*What a wonderful, merciful, and gracious promise that is. It is hard to imagine what else He could promise a physical human group of people.*

*Next, for the ancient Israelites, there was a food problem. After setting out from Elim, as they wandered through the Wilderness of Sin, Israel complained against Moses for lack of food. Although the people grumbled against Moses and Aaron, Moses made it clear that their complaint was really against—and heard by—the Lord.*

*In response to Israel's grumbling, God graciously provided both manna and quail. The provision of manna included instructions about gathering it that would shape Israel's life in the pattern of work and rest, as would be revealed more fully at Mount Sinai.*

*Then, there was another water problem. Israel grumbled against Moses a third time. Moses was afraid that the people were going to stone him. They must have been really angry for him to be that fearful of them, and it is amazing how they would have that attitude against their leader.*

**Exodus 17:4, 7** *So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!". . . . So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted [tested] the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"*

*What a flippant attitude they had. Thankfully God is very merciful and longsuffering, and He got them through this.*

*Moses describes their actions as their daring to test the Lord. The events of this quarrel are similar to those that will take place later at the same location and through which*

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*Moses will not be allowed to enter Canaan.*

*After experiencing the plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, and the Lord's provision of both water and food, the people of Israel still showed a hardness of heart, like Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Psalm 95 is designed to encourage us to learn not to repeat the rebellion of a previous generation of Israelites, and to commit ourselves to faithfully pay attention to God's voice.*

*The psalm describes these events in just that way.*

**Psalm 95:7-9** *For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work.*

*To "harden the heart" is to make it dull and unresponsive to God, and the end result is actually anger and hate. Additionally, it has a negative effect that strengthens its disbelief, increases its doubt, and reinforces its uncertainty.*

*Tomorrow, and next week, and next month will you be like the people of ancient Israel in the wilderness after God brought you out of bondage and through the Red Sea? Will there be hardness in your heart? Will you lack faith, and will you be a grumbler?*

*These are "times that try men's souls;" they are challenging and will challenge our spiritual character (possibly unlike any other time in the history of man). Will you stand fearlessly and firm through this time of the end of human rule, and do you see the salvation of the Lord?*

*We have to understand that the Days of Unleavened Bread, and eating unleavened bread, is about what God has done to bring us out of the bondage. Without this knowledge we miss a great deal of God's plan of salvation for us, individually and as a unit.*

*Salvation is a gift from God as the result of tremendous sacrifice by the Father and Jesus Christ. The apostle Peter expressed the importance of "the power of God through faith for salvation" and the value of "the genuineness of faith" during times of trial.*

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**I Peter 1:3-9** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

*Two extraordinary effects of our faith are love and joy, and this joy is so great that it is beyond description—it is beyond words—it is inexpressible.*

*Our faith removes the causes of sorrow, and provides wonderful reasons for joy. Sometimes we are depressed: sometimes it is because we are fearful, often it is because of our own mistakes and ignorance, occasionally it is because of sin, or a tragedy. Whatever it may be, we have good reason to rejoice in the Lord, and have joy in the God of our salvation.*

*The English word "end" from the Greek word telos , in verse 9, is often used to imply the issue or reward of any labor or action. Therefore, we can rejoice because we are receiving what was promised, that is, salvation—the goal of faith. The process is already under way.*

*Many in the "cloud of witnesses" suffered in faith. They were tested. They were afflicted. They had trials from which many were not delivered in this life. Many were struck down with painful, horrible deaths; but faith in God and His promises, gave them the spiritual strength to endure to the end.*

**Hebrews 12:1-2** *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

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*We are seeing and experiencing the great work God has done. He has brought us out of the bondage of sin; now, do we love and trust Him enough to bring us through to eternal life and give us our tremendous reward?*

*May God grant us mercy and peace as we leave bondage behind, and move on toward perfection!*