

CHRIST IN THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

Unleavened Bread & Firstfruits

Leviticus 23: 6-12

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What destroys a people? The Bible tells us:

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

Where there is no **vision** the people **perish**. What is “**Vision**”¹? The Hebrew word literally means “a **revelation or mental sight**”, or better “**The Word of God**”. This is why the second half of Proverbs 29:18 says “**BUT he that keepeth the law, happy is he**”. Vision is something higher than ourselves. It is the Word of the Almighty, the Promise of the Eternal that He has not saved us just to abandon us. “**Vision**” means that God saves us – then leaves us on this earth – to accomplish a *far greater purpose than taking us to Heaven*. If God wanted to take you to Heaven on the day that you accepted Jesus Christ as Savior *He could have done so*. Why not? Doesn't the Bible say:

Hebrews 7:25-26 Wherefore {Jesus} is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. {26} For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from

¹ H2377, **חֵזוֹן**, *châzôn, khaw-zone'*, From H2372; a *sight* (mentally), that is, a *dream, revelation, or oracle*: - vision.

sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

Our High Priest **Jesus Christ** has **saved us to the uttermost**. There is nothing else left to do insofar as receiving the Believer into Heaven is concerned. What does the Scripture say? “**For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:14). By one offering**. The offering of the Blood of Christ on Calvary is sufficient to save every sinner who believes and who calls upon His Name.

So why are we left on this earth? Because God wants us to *take the land for Him, to glorify Him as we win others to Christ*. It is the Lord's intention that righteousness and love flood the land through those whom He has saved. God has a big vision for His people, a vision as big as He is – and He invites us to participate in making this vision come to pass. **When Moses' vision was limited to what man was doing he was no more than a murderer and a coward**. Yet Moses at the burning bush shared in God's vision. He became courageous enough to stand before Pharaoh to say “**The Lord has decreed, Let My people go**”. The **Elijah with vision** was able to stand before the prophets of a false god and mock them, whereas the Elijah without vision *ran from the foolish woman Jezebel*. **Peter** with his eyes on Christ **walked on water**, but visionless Peter **ran from a milk-maid**. The **Apostles with their eyes on the**

Pharisees hid behind a locked door, frightened lest they be crucified as Christ their Lord had been. But when **Jesus appeared in their midst (Luke 24)** teaching them that He had conquered death these same Apostles became brave men. Men without vision hide behind locked doors, and keep Christ locked away in their hearts. **Peter with his eyes on Jesus ignored the mockery of the crowd, and won three thousand souls to Christ**.

Do you have vision? **Noah had vision**. He labored for 120 years while being mocked for his faith in God. Those who have vision will *never give up* no matter what, because they know that they are on the Lord's side - and more importantly, that the Lord is on their side.

During World War II the women of England kept a fireplace poker nearby to fight off the Germans if they were to invade. Someone asked one lady what good she expected to do with a fireplace poker. She replied, “If nothing else, I can let them know who's side I'm on”. There's a lesson in this, dear ones, that we all need to learn. God cannot take the land with murmurers, fault finders, and complainers. Let those who find fault and look for wrong die in the desert with the rest of the first generation of Israel. God rewards those who persist – believing in Him and glorifying Him all the while – with victory. You were born of God to be an overcomer.

1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

God is in you, if you have called upon the Name of Jesus for salvation. The Spirit of God indwells you, and gifts you, and baptizes you into one Body. **Christ is in you, Life is in you (Romans 8:10)**, for God has promised it. He has also promised:

1 John 4:4 ... greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

This is the message of the Scripture. God is in you and with you. Take the land in His Name and for His glory. If you will not, I guarantee that the unbelieving and unloving will take the land in your place. Stand up for Jesus, for He stood up for you. Trust the Lord Who loved you and gave Himself for you. Rest in Him, rest in your faith, but do not be inactive for God. The Lord has not left His people that option. And remember the words of Dwight L. Moody:

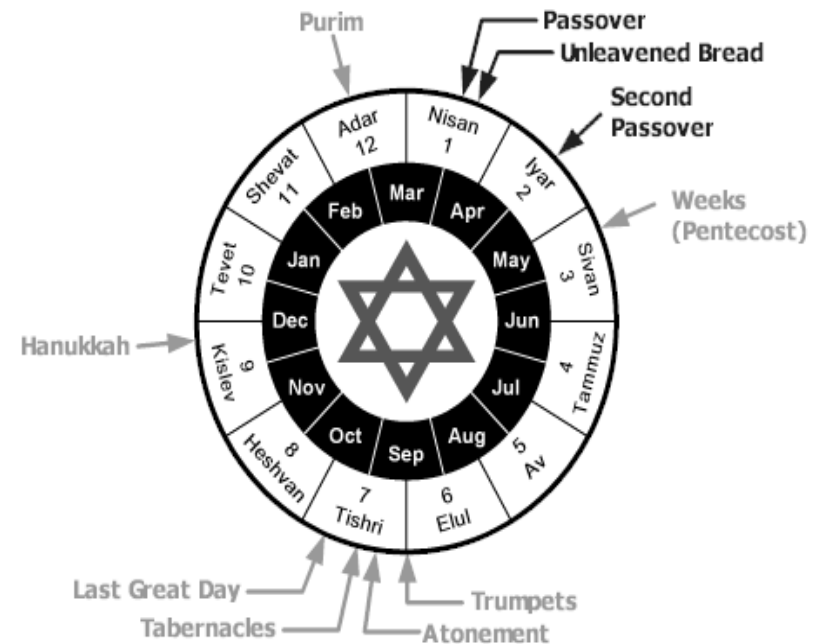
There may be barriers in our path, but God can remove them. There may be a mountain in our way, but God can take us over the mountain. There may be difficulties in the way, but He can overcome them.

Our God is above them all; and if the Church of God is ready to advance, all obstacles will be removed. No man ever sent by God ever failed, but self must be lost sight of. We must be willing to lay down our lives for the cause of Christ.²

May God touch your hearts with these words.

The Feast Of Unleavened Bread

FOCAL Leviticus 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.



2 Dwight L. Moody, *Courage and Enthusiasm*

Israel *had* to be a people of vision if they were going to take the Land of Canaan. They were going to come against a greater numbered and better equipped people when they crossed the Jordan. The Lord gave Israel the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** to first of all (1) Remind them of how He saved them with a mighty hand from Egypt, and (2) to teach them of the Coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. **Vision is always backward as well as forward looking.** Looking backward we see that God told Israel:

Exodus 12:15-17 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. {16} And in the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. {17} And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this

3 illustration from <http://www3.telus.net/public/kstam/en/temple/details/passover.htm>

day in your generations by an ordinance forever.

The **Feast of Unleavened Bread** reminded the Israelite that God brought them out of Egypt in **one day**. He didn't bring them out piecemeal, a few families at a time, but saved *all of Israel*. God did not save all of Israel so that He could abandon her in the wilderness or at the border of the Promised Land. He saved her so that He could use her to take the land. This is why the Feast was to be **an ordinance forever**.

The Feast of Unleavened bread also looked forward to the Coming Messiah. Our Lord Jesus often referred to Himself as “**Bread**”. He told the Pharisees:

John 6:32-35 ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. {33} For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. {34} Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. {35} And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and

he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Jesus is the **Bread of Life**, that whoever believeth on Him shall never hunger. He is God's solution for our lost lives. He is the Unleavened Bread revealed. Jesus said:

John 6:48-51 I am that bread of life. {49} Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. {50} This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. {51} I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Those who believe in Jesus **will live forever**. Jesus wanted us to remember that He is the Unleavened Bread of God, the One Messiah foretold of in the ancient Feast. Jesus even took some of the unleavened (no-rise or unyeasted) bread from the Feast of the Passover that He and His disciples were partaking of:

Matthew 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Jesus is the UNLEAVENED Bread that came down from Heaven. In ancient Israel LEAVENING or Yeast illustrated sin. The Bible says that Jesus is *without sin*.

Hebrews 4:15-16 For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. {16} Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

This is *so important* to the Believer-Priest in Christ. We have a High Priest in Jesus Who is sinless. He made payment for our sins with His own dear Blood on Calvary – there is nothing that stands between us and God. Because of this we can **come boldly unto the Throne of Grace** to find help in time of need.

The **Feast of Unleavened Bread** also had another purpose, and that was to teach the believer that **we are to live apart from sin**. The ancient Jew followed

a ritual called "Bedikat Chametz" - the search for leaven. The housewife and the children would go through the house with a feather and a dustpan looking for leaven. If it was found it was to be swept up and tossed out of the house.

Beloved, God saves us so that we can serve Him – not so we can freely sin. We are told:

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: {8} Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The Christian – just like the ancient Jew – is supposed to continually “take out the trash”. We are set apart by the Unleavened Bread of Heaven. We took Him into our lives. We are therefore to live for Him and through Him for God's glory. Like the Psalmist David we continually ask God to:

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: {24} And see if there be any

wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Our vision becomes diminished when we wallow in sin. God cannot walk with us when we live like Canaanites. God **works in you to will and to act according to His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12)**. We love the Lord our God, and so we walk in love and in obedience.

Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

If we will be blessed, we must walk in love and without the leaven of sin – inasmuch as it is possible. Yet we will sin – sadly – until the day that we meet God in glory.

This is what the **Feast of Firstfruits** emphasizes – our coming glorification.

The Feast of Firstfruits

FOCAL **Leviticus 23:10-11** **Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the**

priest: {11} And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

When Israel came into the land which God gave them they were supposed to take the **firstfruits of the harvest to the priest**. The priest would take the shock of corn or of wheat and *wave it* unto the Lord. After waving it:

FOCAL Leviticus 23:12 And **ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf a he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD.**

What was all this about? **Firstfruits** looked forward to the time when – *because Messiah had come* – that the people would be *glorified* and purged from all sin. We read in:

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 But **now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. {21} For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. {22} For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. {23} But every man in his**

own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Jesus Christ is the **firstfruits of them that slept**. Prior to Jesus the glorified body was not possible. But because Jesus fully paid the penalty for our sins we shall one day have a glorified Body like our Risen Savior. What a wonderful day that will be! If Christ is a pattern for our resurrected bodies (and I believe the Scripture clearly insinuates that He is), then we can learn a lot by studying Christ in His resurrected state. For instance:

John 20:24-27 "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

Everyone remembers the Bible story of "Doubting Thomas", who wanted to see Jesus in the flesh before he'd believe the resurrection account. But rather than

focus on Thomas, focus on the risen Christ for a moment. Jesus offered proofs that He was indeed Christ to Thomas by displaying the nail and spear scars on His resurrected body. Jesus obviously retained some of the features of His earthly body, even in His glorified state. But even more interesting is the fact that the disciples were in a locked room, hiding, and Jesus easily entered this room. The scripture doesn't say that anyone let Him in, but that "the doors being shut, and (He, Jesus) stood in the midst". This leads me to believe that, if Jesus is our pattern, then in our glorified states the normal limitations of our human bodies are superseded. We will no longer be bound by the locked door, restrained by the wall. Furthermore:

Mark 16:11-14 " And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

Jesus appeared in another form to two of His disciples, which leads me to believe that the resurrected body is malleable or controllable in its likeness by the user. But I'm not talking something alien, or monstrous, for we also read:

Luke 24:36-43 "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them."

Jesus so suddenly appeared before the disciples that they were startled, believing they were seeing a ghost. The glorified body that Jesus possesses is not limited

by space or time, though by His very words His body possessed a likeness to flesh and bones. You could touch Jesus, for He said: "it is I myself: handle me, and see". Jesus had a type of substance, for He said "a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have". And though He had no need of sustenance to survive in His glorified state, Jesus ate food while His disciples looked on.

If Jesus Christ is the Firstfruits of those who sleep – and the Scripture says He is – then one day we will have a glorious body like His. The firstfruit is the best, but it is also the same. We look forward to that blessed day!

