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THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

The weekly Sabbath was made for and given to all mankind. As Jesus Christ plainly said:

And he said unto them, **the sabbath was made for man**, and not man for the sabbath: (Mark 2:27 AV)

The weekly Sabbath days were given as a sign to all mankind to identify the true God. The weekly Sabbath day points back to when God created man and it also points to God's "7000-year plan" for mankind. Because the weekly Sabbath day identifies the true God, therefore the Church of God throughout the ages could never lose the true Sabbath without also at the same time ceasing to be the true Church of God! Without observing and holding fast to the weekly Sabbath a church simply cannot be God's Church. [This is not to imply the converse ... that every church that observes the weekly Sabbath must therefore be a part of God's true Church. That is not necessarily the case at all. It is just that **without** the weekly Sabbath any church is very clearly **not** a part of God's true Church.]

On the other hand, the three **annual Feasts** (Unleavened Bread, Pentecost and Tabernacles) and the seven **annual Holy Days** (the 1st and the 7th Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, the 1st Day of Tabernacles, and the Last Great Day) were **not** given to mankind! These Feasts and Holy Days were given to the congregation of God's people! Within the framework established by the weekly Sabbath, these Feasts and Holy Days provide additional revelation about God's overall master plan of salvation for mankind. We need to keep in mind that these Feasts and Holy Days are **not** an end in themselves! They were instituted by God to give us specific additional information!

Now while the Church of God could never lose the weekly Sabbath without ceasing to be God's Church, the Church could lose the knowledge and observance of these Feasts and Holy Days, and still be God's Church. Similarly, the Church could lose the knowledge of tithing and the knowledge regarding clean and unclean meats, and still be God's Church. The Church could also lose knowledge of any number of truths that don't directly impact on our daily conduct (e.g. the knowledge that there is no ever-burning hell, there is no "immortal soul", heaven is not the reward of the saved, etc.), and still be God's Church. Being the true Church of God has never been conditional on having "all truth". The **"sign"** between God and His people is **the weekly Sabbath day!** That is what God tells us in Exodus chapter 31. Notice:

Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: **for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations**; that ye may know that I *am* the LORD that doth sanctify you. (Exodus 31:13 AV)

People (including me in the past because that is what I had been taught) have sometimes misapplied this verse to say that the sign God designated here included the annual sabbaths. But that is simply not true! Let's notice very carefully:

1) Since the weekly Sabbath is a recurring event, God used the plural form "Sabbaths".

2) However, **if** God had intended this plural "Sabbaths" to refer to both, weekly Sabbath days and the seven annual Sabbath days, **then** the second part of this verse should have read: "... for **they are** a sign

between Me and you". But the Hebrew text literally reads: "My Sabbaths you shall keep, for a sign it (the verb "is" is here implied) between Me and you ...". The Hebrew text does **not** read: "My Sabbaths you shall keep, for a sign **they** (then the verb "are" would have been implied) between Me and you ...". Had two different categories of Sabbaths been the subject here in Exodus 31:13, then it would have required God to say: "they are a sign ...". But this is not the case.

3) So the weekly Sabbath day is the sign that identifies both, the true God and the true Church. The following verses in this context also make quite clear that God is speaking about the weekly Sabbath days. Notice:

4) Verses 14-15 clearly identify the weekly Sabbath.

Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it *is* holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth *any* work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in **the seventh is the Sabbath** of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth *any* work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. (Exodus 31:14-15 AV)

5) This weekly Sabbath, that is defined in the previous verses, is now in verse 16 identified as "a perpetual covenant", meaning that any church which does not have this weekly Sabbath cannot be "God's Church".

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, **for a perpetual covenant**. (Exodus 31:16 AV)

6) Verse 17 again clearly identifies the sign God is speaking about as "the seventh day".

It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. (Exodus 31:17 AV)

There is not the slightest hint in this verse 17 that "the sign" could possibly include "the annual Sabbaths".

[Comment: By pointing out that the annual Sabbath days are not really a part of "the sign between God and His people" I am not in any way implying that the annual Sabbath days are therefore somehow "less important", any more than not killing or stealing or taking God's name in vain or not tithing, etc. are somehow "less important" because they have not been designated as "a sign" that identifies God's people. **Everything** we understand that God expects of us is always important; and the principle of James 4:17 is always imperative. But in different ages God's people have had different levels of understanding. Whatever degree of understanding God's people at any given time may have had has always been sufficient to thoroughly test their integrity before God. Knowledge of any number of laws is simply a means for testing integrity.]

7) Verse 18 shows that this is at the time when God wrote out the ten commandments for the second time (after Moses had broken the first two tables of stone). And in the ten commandments it is the weekly Sabbath that is spelled out; the annual Sabbaths are not really directly mentioned at all in the ten commandments.

And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God. (Exodus 31:18 AV)

So, while it is an absolute requirement for the true Church to have the weekly Sabbaths, the true Church could lose the knowledge of various other truths, including the knowledge of the annual Feasts and Holy

Days, and still be "the Church of God". And it is unlikely that, since Jesus Christ returned to the Father's throne a few days before the Day of Pentecost which is recorded in Acts 2, the Church of God has **ever** had "all truth".

Now that the knowledge of the annual Feasts and Holy Days has been restored in this age through Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, it is vitally important that we hold fast to that knowledge and understanding. Towards that end we rehearse every year the meaning and the significance of all of these annual Feasts and Holy Days "in their season". And we are now "in the season" of Unleavened Bread.

So let's examine these Days of Unleavened Bread more closely.

THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The instructions for the Days of Unleavened Bread start in Exodus chapter 12.

And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month *shall be* unto you the beginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. (Exodus 12:1-2 AV)

Here God instructed Israel to from then onwards start the year with **the first new moon in the spring** of the northern hemisphere. Now notice the next instruction:

Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, **in the tenth day of this month** they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house: (Exodus 12:3 AV)

Notice that the Passover lamb (representing Jesus Christ) was **selected**, but not "slain" on the 10th day of this month that had just been appointed to be "the first month of the year".

Let's now continue with the sequence of events in Exodus 12.

And ye shall keep it up **until the fourteenth day** of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **in the evening**. (Exodus 12:6 AV)

The expression "in the evening" in the Hebrew reads "**between the two evenings**", meaning in the period of time limited by sunset (the first evening) and the onset of total darkness (the second evening), the period of time we call "DUSK" or "TWILIGHT". And so this verse is correctly translated in the Jewish Publication Society translation as follows:

and ye shall keep it unto the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **AT DUSK**. (Exodus 12:6 JPS)

The period of "dusk" is at the start of the day, starting immediately after sunset.

The 1977 New American Standard Version, the New International Version, the 1982 New King James Version and the 1989 New Revised Standard Version have also all correctly understood this Hebrew expression "**between the two evenings**". Here are these translations:

And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it **AT TWILIGHT**. (Exodus 12:6 NAS)

Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel

must slaughter them **AT TWILIGHT**. (Exodus 12:6 NIV)

Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **AT TWILIGHT**. (Exodus 12:6 NKJV)

You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it **AT TWILIGHT**. (Exodus 12:6 NRSV)

These four translations, in addition to the Jewish translation, show that the term "between the two evenings" is quite clearly understood to be a reference to the period of "dusk" or "twilight". And this is always **AT THE START OF A DAY**.

This point is also shown in several other verses.

The JPS translation of Leviticus 23:5 reads as follows:

In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month AT DUSK, is the LORD'S passover. (Leviticus 23:5 JPS)

The NIV, NAS, NKJV and the NRSV all translate this verse as "AT TWILIGHT".

The JPS translation of Numbers 9:3 reads as follows:

In the fourteenth day of this month, AT DUSK, ye shall keep it in its appointed season; according to all the statutes of it, and according to all the ordinances thereof, shall ye keep it.' (Numbers 9:3 JPS)

Again the NIV, NAS, NKJV and the NRSV all translate this verse as "AT TWILIGHT".

The JPS translation of Numbers 9:5 reads as follows:

And they kept the passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, AT DUSK, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel. (Numbers 9:5 JPS)

Again the NIV, NAS, NKJV and the NRSV all translate this verse as "AT TWILIGHT".

The JPS translation of Numbers 9:11 reads as follows:

in the second month on the fourteenth day AT DUSK they shall keep it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; (Numbers 9:11 JPS)

Again the NIV, NAS, NKJV and the NRSV all translate this verse as "AT TWILIGHT".

So we have now seen **FIVE DIFFERENT VERSES** where the Jewish translation freely admits that the Passover was to be killed "**AT DUSK**". And we have seen four different recent English language translations which translate all of these five verses to read "AT TWILIGHT". Yet people will argue about a "late afternoon Passover"?

There should be no doubt that God instructed the Passover to be killed at dusk at the beginning of the 14th day.

So the Passover lamb was "set apart" for exactly four full days. It was set apart on the 10th and 11th and

12th and 13th days ... four days. Then, at the very start of the 14th day it was killed.

Let's continue in Exodus 12.

Exodus 12:8 reads:

And they shall eat the flesh in THAT NIGHT, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. (Exodus 12:8)

Exodus 12:6 had spoken about killing the Passover lambs at dusk on the 14th day. Exodus 12:7 added some instructions about what to do with the blood. The phrase "THAT NIGHT" in verse 8 can only refer to the night of the 14th day (the night that follows the "dusk"), as thus far no other day has even been hinted at.

The instructions continue with verse 10.

And ye shall let nothing of it remain until THE MORNING; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire. (Exodus 12:10)

This is the morning of the 14th day. We understand that days start and end at sunset, so "a morning" is ALWAYS a part of the same day as "the night" which preceded "the morning". And "dusk" or "twilight" is always a part of the same day as "the night" which follows that "dusk" or "twilight".

In the next few verses God is still speaking about the same day, the 14th, the "Passover day", and He explains WHY it is to be called "the Passover".

And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: **it is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night**, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye *are*: and when I see the blood, I **will pass over you**, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt. (Exodus 12:11-13)

The reason for the name "Passover" is because on that night God "**passed over**" the houses of the Israelites; that is what God Himself tells us right here. Yet there are those people who will argue: "yes, the 14th is the Passover, BUT God only 'passed over' the houses of the Israelites on the 15th". Understand that there is nothing inherent in the nature of the lamb that was to be killed that warranted the name "Passover", since that lamb itself was most certainly NOT "passed over"; that lamb was going to be KILLED! Nor is there anything in the act of killing the lamb that warrants the name "Passover".

The only thing that justifies using the name "Passover" is the fact that God Himself "passed over" the houses of the Israelites. The name "Passover" describes an action which God Himself performed. The day is named after something GOD did at midnight; it is NOT named after something WE are supposed to do, or something that is done to the animal.

Now let's examine Exodus 12:14, which is sometimes misunderstood.

EXODUS 12:14 EXAMINED

Here is the KJV text of this verse.

And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your

generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. (Exodus 12:14)

The text was only divided into verses long after it had originally been written, and those divisions are not in any way "inspired". I suspect that this verse is one of the examples where the division is rather unfortunate, leading to some ambiguity in the intended meaning.

Notice how this verse is translated in Green's Literal Translation

And the day shall be a memorial for you. And you shall celebrate it [as] a feast to Jehovah, for your generations. You shall celebrate it [as] a law forever. (Exodus 12:14 LIT)

Notice that Green presents this verse as three separate sentences. The first part is given as a complete sentence on its own. This I believe is a correct representation for reasons which I will state shortly.

One theme (the Passover) goes from verse 3 to this first sentence in verse 14. It concludes the discussion of the Passover. Thus:

"And the day (or THIS day, the 14th of Nisan) shall be a memorial for you."

The next sentence in verse 14 then starts **a new subject**, the Days of Unleavened Bread, which discussion continues up to verse 20 inclusive.

So the discussion of the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread starts with the statements in verse 14 that read:

"And you shall celebrate it [as] a feast to Jehovah, for your generations. You shall celebrate it [as] a law forever."

Our English language translations imply that this is a reference to the day that has been **previously** discussed until this point in time (i.e. the Passover) by the use of the third person pronoun "it" ... "and you shall celebrate it (!) as a feast to the Eternal ..."! It is natural for us to assume that the "it" here must refer to the antecedent, which is the discussion of the Passover.

BUT THAT IS NOT THE CASE AT ALL!

The Hebrew word here translated as "it" ("you shall celebrate **it** ...") is **NOT A THIRD PERSON PRONOUN AT ALL!**

It is in fact **A SECOND PERSON PRONOUN** ... meaning "YOU", either singular or plural in its various variations.

Now while "it" would refer to the day that has been discussed in the previous verses, the pronoun "**YOU**" most certainly does not refer to "ANY DAY" ... it refers to **THE PEOPLE** who are being addressed.

The Hebrew pronoun translated as "it" in Exodus 12:14 is "attah" and it is a **SECOND PERSON** pronoun! [In Strong's numbering system it has the number "859". Check it out for yourself.]

I realize that every translation I have checked translates this pronoun as "it" in this verse, but that doesn't make it right! Once you understand that the Hebrew text here employs a **second person pronoun**, then you should realize that it is simply incorrect to attempt to translate this pronoun as the third person "it", thereby implying a reference to the day **previously** discussed.

Here are a few examples of where this pronoun "attah", in its various forms, is **correctly** translated as "you" in the KJV. In each case I have rendered the translation of "attah" into capital letters for easier recognition; other uses of the second person pronouns in the verses below are NOT the Hebrew pronoun "attah"; they are implied by the forms of the nouns and the verbs that are used.

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because **THOU** (attah) hast done this, thou [art] cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: (Genesis 3:14 AV)

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust **THOU** (attah) [art], and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:19 AV)

But with **THEE** (attah) will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, **THOU** (attah), and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. (Genesis 6:18 AV)

And **YE** (attah) know that with all my power I have served your father. (Genesis 31:6 AV)

And **YE** (attah) my flock, the flock of my pasture, [are] men, [and] I [am] your God, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 34:31 AV)

This should suffice to illustrate that "attah" (in its various forms) should be translated as the second person pronoun "YOU" in reference to the people being addressed. It is not a third person pronoun.

THIS MEANS THAT THE WORD "IT" SHOULD SIMPLY NOT BE USED IN EXODUS 12:14!

So, using Green's Literal Translation as a basis, the second part of Exodus 12:14 should correctly be translated as:

"AND YOU (attah) SHALL CELEBRATE A FEAST TO THE ETERNAL for (or throughout) your generations. You shall celebrate it [as] a law forever."

This statement does not in any way imply that it has to refer to the day that has been discussed previously. The expression "celebrate a feast" (the Hebrew words 'chagag chag') refers to **THE SEVEN DAY FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD!** The First Day and the Seventh Day of that 7- day period are "Holy Days", but the whole 7-day period is "THE FEAST". And Exodus 12:15-20 then discusses details pertaining to that 7-day period.

Two other passages make quite clear that "THE FEAST" ('chag' in Hebrew) is the period that starts ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY, while the 14th day is "the Passover". Notice:

In THE FOURTEENTH [DAY] of the first month at even [is] the LORD'S PASSOVER. 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. (Leviticus 23:5-6)

And in THE FOURTEENTH DAY of the first month [is] THE PASSOVER of the LORD. And in THE FIFTEENTH DAY of this month [IS] THE FEAST: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. (Numbers 28:16-17)

[Comment: In both cases the last part of the verses quoted makes clear that the Feast consists of seven days.]

These verses show us that "the Feast" spoken about in Exodus 12:14 is "the Feast of Unleavened

Bread", because immediately after Exodus 12:14 we have THE IDENTICAL WORDING which in the above two quotations is included in the verses quoted. Exodus 12:14 is followed by the statement: "SEVEN DAYS SHALL YOU EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD ...!"

That is identical to what we find in Leviticus 23:5-6 and in Numbers 28:16-17; it is just a different way of dividing the text into verses.

This section of Scripture would have been a lot clearer if the two verses Exodus 12:14-15 had in fact been divided into THREE verses as follows:

First Verse: "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial."

Second Verse: "And you shall celebrate a feast to the Eternal throughout your generations. You shall celebrate it as a law for ever. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread."

Third Verse: "Even the first day you shall (have) put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel."

Nothing has been changed from the sequence in which the original text, without any verse divisions, was recorded by Moses. The middle verse of this division into three verses is in complete agreement with Leviticus 23:6 and with Numbers 28:17. And it takes all the confusion out of Exodus 12:14.

So to summarize the discussion of this verse Exodus 12:14 as it appears in our translations:

- 1) The Passover is "a memorial" of the death of Jesus Christ, and it is the 14th day of the first month.
- 2) "The Feast" is a reference to "the Feast of Unleavened Bread", which is seven days long and starts on the 15th day of the first month.
- 3) The word "it" in our English translations is a very misleading mistranslation of the Hebrew second person pronoun "attah". The word "it" should be removed from this verse.

Let's now continue by looking at the instructions God has given us for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Exodus 12:15, as it appears in the KJV reads as follows:

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall (have) 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. (Exodus 12:15)

This instructs us to do two things:

- 1) **Remove** all leaven from our homes before the Days of Unleavened Bread start.
- 2) We are **not eat** any leaven or leavened products during those Days of Unleavened Bread.

The next verse reads:

And in the first day [there shall be] an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an 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. (Exodus 12:16)

This verse tells us that there are TWO Holy Days during this 7-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, the FIRST Day and the SEVENTH Day.

The next verse reads:

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 day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. (Exodus 12:17)

The focus of this verse is clearly one specific day, the FIRST Day of Unleavened Bread, the 15th day of the first month. This is stated very clearly in Numbers 33:3.

And **they departed** from Rameses in the first month, **on the fifteenth day of the first month**; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. (Numbers 33:3)

"The selfsame day" on which God brought them out of Egypt (Exodus 12:17) is identified in Numbers 33:3 as "the fifteenth day of the first month". The expression "on the morrow after" in Numbers 33:3 is the Hebrew word "mochorath" and this refers to "THE DAY AFTER" or "THE NEXT DAY". Note that "on the MORROW after" does NOT mean "on the MORNING after"! The "morning after" is in fact still the same day as the night before. It really means "the DAY after" in the context where "DAYS" are reckoned "from sunset to sunset".

It is also quite clear that Israel did **not** leave Egypt "on the **morning** after" the Passover, because the Bible states unequivocally that they left Egypt "**by night**". This is in complete agreement with the fact that "the morrow after" always starts **at the next sunset!**

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy **God brought thee forth** out of Egypt **by night**. (Deuteronomy 16:1)

So Numbers 33:3 is again telling us that the Passover was on the DAY before the 15th day of the month; it was **on the 14th day!**

Let's now examine the next verse.

In the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month at even, **ye shall eat** unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. (Exodus 12:18)

This verse has also been the source of some disagreements and contentions. Let's see if we can understand this verse correctly. Let's consider the following things:

1) Could Moses count to seven and to eight and to nine and to ten? Or was he a little fuzzy on the difference between "seven" and "eight"? Obviously, Moses had no difficulties of any kind in differentiating between "seven" and "eight". He understood perfectly well that "seven" is not the same as "eight"! We have to at least give him that much credit, right? And besides that, these instructions here in Exodus 12 were really given to Moses **by God Himself!**

2) Now in Exodus 12:15 Moses had already recorded that we are to eat unleavened bread for **seven** days. So what is God (through Moses) telling us here in Exodus 12:18? It is **very clear** that an inclusive

method of counting in this verse actually results in eight days, and not in seven days: the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st days. Is God instructing us to eat unleavened bread for SEVEN days in verse 15, and then He instructs us to eat unleavened bread for EIGHT days in verse 18? What is the answer here?

3) The answer is actually very simple. It is our preconceived opinions that create a problem here for us. But the Bible is actually very clear. So note carefully:

4) **This verse focusses only on eating! It does not address the matter of "putting out" leaven!**

Now in verse 8 God had already instructed that the Passover on the 14th was to be eaten **with unleavened bread**. Then, in verse 15, God tells us that the Passover is to be **followed by seven days** of eating unleavened bread. So how many days of EATING unleavened bread does that make?? Can we add "one plus seven is equal to eight" or not?

5) Understand that eating "unleavened bread" was not a common experience for the Israelites at that time; it was something unusual, something out of the ordinary. So in Exodus 12:18 God highlighted that they would be eating unleavened bread for eight consecutive days, at the Passover and on the following Seven Days of Unleavened Bread.

6) The instructions for "**putting out leaven**" are not identical to those pertaining to "eating" unleavened bread. In verse 8 God had instructed the Israelites to **eat** unleavened bread with the Passover, but God did NOT instruct them to "put out all leaven" at the Passover.

The "putting out all leaven" instruction is only given in verse 15, after the discussion of the Passover has been concluded. And there in verse 15 God very clearly spells out that the "putting away of all leaven" applies to SEVEN days. This is then repeated in verse 19, which we will now look at.

Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. (Exodus 12:19)

Notice the following points about this verse:

1) This verse addresses both, the "putting away of leaven" and the "not eating leaven".

2) This verse clearly delineates the period for which leaven is to be removed as "seven days". It follows that the subject of this verse is seven days, exactly the same as in verse 15.

3) Rather than being seen as being in opposition to the **eight** days referred to in the previous verse (14th - 21st inclusive), the seven days in this verse 19 are actually complementary information to the previous verse. It is a repetition of what was already said in verse 15.

4) The purpose for the repetition in verse 19 is to show that the Days of Unleavened Bread are indeed **only seven**, even though the days on which unleavened bread will be **eaten** are eight!

5) Note carefully that the penalty for eating anything leavened applies to seven days and not eight days. This was already stated in verse 15, which spelled out the terms "the first day" and "the seventh day". The penalty for eating leaven does not apply to "the day before the first day", i.e. to the Passover day, the 14th day of the month.

6) Verse 20 applies to the subject of verse 19, which is seven days. Verse 20 reads:

Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread. (Exodus 12:20)

So what is the explanation for this whole section speaking about **seven** days on which we are not to eat any leavened products and for which we are to put out all leaven, and then (in verse 18) the statement about eating unleavened bread for **eight** days?

The key is to understand that we are talking about two different occasions, and that "unleavened bread" represents two totally different things on those two different occasions!

1) **AT THE PASSOVER** the "unleavened bread" we eat represents **the broken body of Jesus Christ**, which was broken for us. At the Passover our eating of some "unleavened bread" does not represent "us having put out sins and having put into our lives obedience to God and His laws". At that occasion the unleavened bread represents **Jesus Christ's body!**

2) **DURING THE SEVEN DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD** our eating of "unleavened bread" does NOT in any way represent "the broken body of Jesus Christ"! Our eating of "unleavened bread" during those seven days represents us "having replaced disobedience to God and His laws with obedience and submission to God".

3) Because of this difference in the symbolism that is attached to "eating unleavened bread" on the Passover evening, therefore there is **no instruction** to put out all leaven **before** eating the unleavened bread at the Passover. Understand that taking the Passover represents, amongst other things, our commitment to **examine ourselves** (see 1 Corinthians 11:28). "Examining ourselves" would only be a formality if we have decided in advance that there is no more "leaven" to be found in our lives, because we already put all of it out before we even came as far as "the Passover", to that stage of committing our lives to God and appealing to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Recall the Scripture that tells us that Jesus Christ died for us "while we were yet sinners", i.e. BEFORE we had put all "leaven" out of our lives.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8 AV)

4) And so, after taking the Passover, we still have the rest of that day "to examine ourselves" and to continue putting leaven out of our homes (out of our lives), before the Feast of Unleavened Bread actually starts. The instruction to not eat any leavened product only starts when those Seven Days of Unleavened Bread start, because at the start of those seven days a new and different symbolism is attached to "leavened bread" and to "unleavened bread", a symbolism that is different from the one the "unleavened bread" had at the Passover ceremony about 24 hours earlier. Before the First Day of Unleavened Bread starts, "EATING" leavened bread does not picture sin! It is only from the First Day of Unleavened Bread until the Seventh Day of Unleavened Bread inclusive that God has given the symbolism of sinning to the matter of eating leavened bread. But that symbolism does not apply to any other days of the year ... it only applies to those exact seven days each year.

5) Notice also that **the death penalty** was only pronounced for **eating** any leavened product during the Seven Days of Unleavened Bread (see verses 15 and 19). There was **no penalty** pronounced for "**finding**" any further leaven during those seven days! In other words: if we **continue** to examine ourselves during those seven days, then there is no problem in us **finding further leaven** in our homes (in our lives), as long as we then don't "**eat**" it (get involved with it). If we do indeed "**find**" further leaven during those seven days, then we must dispose of it as quickly as possible, without ingesting any of it. But "the finding" in itself is not a problem; it is only evidence of a more conscientious self-examination.

6) There is certainly never a problem in us totally de-leavening our homes even before we come to the Passover. The main concern is only that we don't assume that there is nothing more to look out for once

we have taken the Passover, when God in fact expects us to continue with our efforts to deleaven our homes and our lives right up to the very start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and then continue with this attitude of self-examination right through the Feast.

And since Jesus Christ did die for us "while we were yet sinners", therefore, even if we ourselves have already made a thorough attempt to deleaven our entire homes before the start of the 14th day, we should not have a critical attitude towards other people who may still have some more delevaning to do after the Passover but before the start of the 15th day. God has made the rest of the 14th day available to us for that specific purpose. And God's instruction to not eat any leaven starts with the 15th day.

So what does God expect from us for the Days of Unleavened Bread?

1) God expects us to **put out all leaven** and all leavened products **before the start of the 15th day of the month**. In this matter of delevaning it is obviously more important that we focus on delevaning our lives. However, this should never result in us approaching the physical delevaning carelessly or nonchalantly. We should approach the matter of delevaning conscientiously, but without becoming fanatical. We do what we can do, even if it takes a certain amount of effort; but we don't tear up appliances or the floorboards in the diningroom because "some crumbs might be lurking in some hidden crevices". We simply and honestly try our best to deleaven our homes.

2) God requires us to **not eat any leavened products**, starting with the 15th day, for the entire Seven Days of Unleavened Bread.

3) If at all possible, we should try to eat some unleavened bread on all seven of those days. Now, there may well be some people who have allergies and don't tolerate any bread very well. I would suggest that even such people eat at least SOME unleavened bread (homemade rather than some worthless "matzos") every day. Perhaps it could be baked from soy flour or from rye flour or some other flour that does not present any allergy problems? Exodus 12:15 very clearly says: "SEVEN DAYS SHALL YOU EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD", and I am not about to tell anyone that they are exempted from this instruction. While the Hebrew text here does not contain a word for "bread", the word "bread" is clearly inferred, since this is obviously not a reference to fruits or meats or cheeses or vegetables being made "unleavened" specifically for these days; these foods in their natural state are always unleavened.

[Now as far as eating some unleavened bread every day is concerned, I can probably think of some exceptions, like people who are in a hospital being fed by "a drip", or elderly people who no longer have any teeth with which they could chew such bread, or babies before they start taking any solids, etc. But with the above comments I have the normal circumstances of the average person in mind, not the exceptions.]

Now let's look at some of the lessons we should learn from observing this 7-day Feast.

SOME LESSONS WE SHOULD LEARN

The Apostle Paul explained that leaven, because of the effect it has on dough, is used by God to typify sins. Notice what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and [to] Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think [of men] above that which is written, **that no one of you be puffed up for one against another**. (1 Corinthians 4:6)

Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. (1 Corinthians 4:18)

The Greek word here translated as "puffed up" literally means: to inflate, to blow up, to cause to swell up, etc. (from Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament). That is the precise effect sins have on us.

In the next two verses Paul wrote:

it is reported commonly [that there is] fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. (1 Corinthians 5:1-2)

After first admonishing them to not become "puffed up" (1 Corinthians 4:6), Paul has followed this with two statements that some of them were indeed "puffed up" (1 Corinthians 4:18; 5:1-2). He then proceeds to explain **the effect of sin**; it always "puffs people up".

Your glorying [is] not good. Know ye not that **a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 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: 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. (1 Corinthians 5:6-8 AV)

"Leaven" will inevitably affect **everything** it comes into contact with. And it doesn't really take a whole lot of leaven to achieve this effect of contaminating everything. That is precisely the way sins are, they will contaminate the minds of all those people who allow the sins to enter into their minds. I have seen many occasions where people in God's Church may in general strongly reject certain sins, but when their own children become involved in those same sins, **then** they suddenly become "more understanding" of those sins, and **their own minds** have been affected by the sins of their children. I am not talking about self-righteousness; I am talking about parents actively defending some clear-cut sins of their children (like premarital sex, etc.).

Can we see **our own tendency** to justify the sins of those who are near and dear to us? Because that is **precisely** what the Corinthians were doing when Paul wrote this to them. Paul tells us **to mourn**, rather than attempting to justify the sins of those who are close to us. And the reason is this:

If we attempt to justify instead of mourning about those sins, **then we will inevitably become "puffed up"!**

Can we understand this? Because we have all at some point or other gone through this process of **minimizing and justifying the sins of those who are close to us** or whom we look up to (I mean sins that are openly manifest for all to see, not sins ferreted out by some "investigators"). And we have all also at various times gone through the process of minimizing our own sins, right? We all, including me, are like that. But if we continue to be like that, then we end up being "puffed up".

Do we honestly think that in the sight of God it is **ever** right to defend our sins and the sins of our children? Do we really expect God to say: "Yes, I can understand very well exactly **why** you are sinning against Me. Therefore in your case this sin isn't quite as bad as it would be for another person."? Remember the high priest Eli who defended the sins of his sons, and for that God punished Eli.

Having said this, I might make a few comments about Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG

It is a sad reality that numerous people have taken it upon themselves to malign Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's character. Some have devoted large parts of their lives to sniff out, like some bloodhound, the real or imagined sins of Mr. Armstrong. Others gullibly believe every lie they are told about Mr. Armstrong, because they really **want to** believe those things. Some are motivated by a deep-seated hatred for Mr. Armstrong.

When people come to me with books and articles about Mr. Armstrong's real or supposed sins, my response is as follows:

"If you really want to tell me about sins, don't try to tell me about Mr. Armstrong's sins. If you really want to tell me about sins, **then tell me about your own sins** (or the sins of the author of the book or the article). Give me a detailed and thorough catalogue of **your sins**, and I will examine it and then point out to you where you are in all likelihood **still** justifying yourself! But don't try to tell me about the sins of **a man who has long been dead.**"

I don't question that Mr. Armstrong sinned in some ways at various times. After all, who doesn't ever sin? When confronted by the prospect of reading or hearing about Mr. Armstrong's sins, my response is: who am I to find fault with Mr. Armstrong? I have my own sins to contend with (i.e. they are **conditionally** forgiven by God, **one condition being** that I don't focus on the sins of other people ... "forgive **us our** sins **as we** forgive **our** debtors", right?), and **if** I really want to focus on sins, then I believe that God would want me to focus on **my** sins and faults and shortcomings. **That** is what "putting leaven out" is all about.

I am convinced that Mr. Armstrong made both, some bad judgments and some bad decisions. But it is not as if I myself have never made bad judgments and bad decisions. Again, I have to look at the beam in my own eye before I am ever qualified to look at "the mote" that was in Mr. Armstrong's eye (see Matthew 7:3-5).

Do we really understand Matthew 7:3-5, that the sins of all other people are never more than "a mote" when compared to "the beam" of our own sins? Jesus Christ didn't mince words here. He said very clearly that those who focus on the sins of other people are hypocrites!

Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (Matthew 7:5)

Mr. Armstrong's sins and failings and shortcomings, whatever they may have been, are not the same thing as the situation in 1 Corinthians 5:1. When Mr. Armstrong died in January 1986 the Church was not divided, and whatever his sins may have been, they were certainly not **commonly** reported", except by those who, like bloodhounds, devoted themselves to sniffing them out. And whatever his sins may have been, they are certainly **not now** causing any divisions.

I don't have any time for people who are motivated by hatred and resentment and bitterness, who hold grudges and whose only goal seems to be to establish their own righteousness by exposing (real or imagined) faults of other people.

I have never hero-worshipped Mr. Armstrong, and I don't put him on a pedestal. I also never speak about Mr. Armstrong having been "**the apostle**" or even "**an apostle**"! Maybe Mr. Armstrong was indeed "an apostle"? But people who want to give Mr. Armstrong that title usually have an ulterior motive, because they use **that title** to draw certain conclusions about what Mr. Armstrong said and did, and they want those "certain conclusions" to escape closer biblical scrutiny! They forget that Paul publicly challenged a decision made by **the leading apostle** (i.e. by Peter), because the decision Peter had made was **biblically unsound**! See Galatians 2:14.

The Apostle Paul did **not** say: "follow me **because** I am an apostle"! He said: "be you followers of me **even as** I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). And I repeatedly heard Mr. Armstrong say, back in the 60's: "**don't believe me; believe the Bible!**" And I believe Mr. Armstrong meant what he said. The Bible, and not Mr. Armstrong's status or title must be the ultimate standard to judge by. And I evaluate everything Mr. Armstrong said and taught against the Bible, just like I do for the words and teachings of any other man.

I also know that Mr. Armstrong's very first response to Dr. Hoeh proclaiming at the Feast in the 1950's that Mr. Armstrong was "an apostle" was to rebuke Dr. Hoeh for having made that statement. In his later years Mr. Armstrong certainly claimed the title of "God's Apostle". Was Mr. Armstrong's initial response correct, or was his later claim correct? I don't really know. But to me it makes no difference whether he was an apostle or not; and for me his status of "an apostle" does not dispense with the necessity to evaluate everything he taught against the Bible.

I do not examine what Mr. Armstrong taught from a critical motivation. I have no desire to find fault with what he taught. However, if it turns out that he was indeed not correct in his understanding in some area or other (and pretty well all of the new churches that have come out of the Worldwide Church of God have made some changes from the way things were taught during Mr. Armstrong's lifetime; so I am no different in that regard), then I change my view to the new understanding. Throughout his entire ministry Mr. Armstrong kept changing and updating the things he taught, and growth in knowledge and in understanding did not stop with Mr. Armstrong's death in 1986.

I don't have any desire to "cover up" whatever sins Mr. Armstrong may have had. I just don't want to know about them, lest it ever turn out that in the eyes of God **my sins** are a whole lot blacker than Mr. Armstrong's sins. He is no longer alive and whatever sins he may have committed make no difference today. Mr. Armstrong has no way to defend any accusations that may be levelled at him, and I know that "the accuser of our brethren" (Revelation 12:10) will certainly generously intersperse any reports of a person's sins with total lies (John 8:44). So the credibility of any "report" would be highly suspect, as far as I am concerned.

Let's go back to the instructions regarding the Days of Unleavened Bread that we find in 1 Corinthians chapter 5.

While during the Days of Unleavened Bread we must put out all leaven, Paul shows that the really important thing to put out is "**the leaven of malice and wickedness**" (1 Corinthians 5:8). The Greek word here translated as "**malice**" refers to "**a vicious disposition**", and the word for "**wickedness**" refers to **putting that vicious disposition into action**. In other words, Paul is here speaking about wrong attitudes towards other people. It doesn't help us very much if we physically deleaven our homes, while at the same time we continue to hold to attitudes that are harsh, hostile and critical towards other people. It is only when we put those wrong attitudes out of our lives that we can THEN keep the Feast with "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth".

In Galatians Paul also explained the principle about leaven:

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. (Galatians 5:9 AV)

If such wrong attitudes are not rooted out when they are still "little", **it is almost impossible to remove them later**. They also have a way of affecting **everybody** who comes into contact with them and entertains them. And like leaven, sins have a way of getting into everything. We need to realize that sins in one area of our lives will surely affect every other area of our lives as well.

Now when we eat unleavened bread, there will also be some "crumbs" that fall from the table. So here is

the point: in large quantities (e.g. a whole loaf of bread) it is quite easy to correctly identify something that is leavened. But when we get down to the level of "very small crumbs", then it is almost impossible to differentiate between crumbs from a loaf of leavened bread and crumbs from some unleavened bread. And in those cases where we are not certain of the origin of those "crumbs", we should just take the approach of removing them to be on the safe side.

Similarly, on large issues (e.g. killing someone or committing adultery, etc.) it is quite easy to correctly identify conduct that is "leavened" and which is not acceptable at all. But when we get down to the level of "crumbs" in our conduct, then it can sometimes be extremely difficult to correctly identify what is sinful and what is acceptable. In such cases it will often be **the attitude** of the person involved that will determine whether something is sinful or whether it is acceptable before God. And one definition of sin highlights this point:

Therefore **to him that knoweth** to do good, and doeth [it] not, **to him it is sin.** (James 4:17)

This is a very subjective definition of sin, focussing on **sins of omission**. It depends on what we know and understand; it depends on things that go on in our minds. Two identical cases of neglecting to do something that is right, with two different levels of understanding on the part of the individuals involved, may constitute a sin for the one person, while not constituting a sin in the case of the other person. Yet to a third party observer the conduct of both individuals may look identical, just like small crumbs from unleavened bread may look identical to small crumbs from leavened bread.

Our focus in de-leavening our lives must be especially on putting wrong attitudes out of our minds and hearts!

So as we observe these Days of Unleavened Bread, let's focus on what it is that God really wants us to do. Yes, we need to approach the matter of de-leavening our homes in a conscientious manner without becoming fanatical. But even more so we need to examine our attitudes towards God and towards fellow-man. And we need to make a determined effort to root out wrong attitudes, so that we can indeed be unleavened in sincerity and in truth.

Frank W. Nelte