

The Tabernacle

Feast of Unleavened Bread

Introduction

- References: Exodus 12:15-20, Exodus 13:3-10, Exodus 34:18, Leviticus 23:6-8, Numbers 28:17-18, Deuteronomy 16:8
- The Hebrew word for unleavened bread is *matzah*.
- It is often combined with Passover, but in Scripture it is a connected but distinct feast.
 - It is sort of like separating conjoined twins.
- Observed from the 15th to the 21st of Nisan
 - It begins with the observance of the Passover.
 - This will fall on April 5-13 in 2023 and April 22-30 in 2024.
 - Yes, that is eight days. The explanation is coming later.

The Origin of the Feast of Unleavened Bread

- While both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are commanded in Exodus 12-13, it appears that only the Passover was observed and that it and the Feast of Unleavened Bread was established as memorials.
- God had commanded that the Israelites eat unleavened bread during the first Passover meal – Exodus 12:8
- The Israelites left their homes in Egypt in such haste that they did not have time to leaven their bread dough – Exodus 12:34,39
 - It seems clear that the first day after the Egyptian Passover was not a day of rest as prescribed in Exodus 12:16 – see Exodus 12:31-36, Numbers 33:3
- I think the length of seven days possibly corresponds to their crossing of the Red Sea; from which time they would have safety to prepare their bread with leaven.
- Many see the unleavened bread as reminder of their hardships when enslaved in Egypt, but that is not the right picture. This feast was a celebration of deliverance, a time of joy and not mourning.
 - “The Passover, therefore, was not so much the remembrance of Israel’s bondage as of Israel’s deliverance from that bondage, and the bread which had originally been that of affliction, because that of haste, now became, as it were, the bread of a new state of existence.” – Alfred Edersheim

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

- The feast began on the 15th of Nisan and lasted seven days.
 - The first and last days were considered sabbaths with exceptions – Exodus 12:16

- "...that only being allowed which was necessary for the joyous observance of the festival." – Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple*
- On each of the seven days, special offerings were made in the Tabernacle following the morning sacrifice.
 - A Burnt Offering of two bulls, one ram, and seven lambs, with their required drink and meal offerings – Numbers 28:16-21
 - A Sin Offering of one goat – Numbers 28:22
- According to Edersheim, the people would also offer personal offerings:
 - burnt offerings
 - peace offerings
 - *Chagigah* ("festivity offerings?") – Deuteronomy 27:7, II Chronicles 30:22
 - "Sacrifices of joyousness" – Deuteronomy 16:16-17
 - "In short, it was not to be a heavy yoke of bondage, but a joyous festival."

Later Developments

- Originally lasted for seven days, but Jews today celebrate for eight days.
 - The reasoning behind this is because of the uncertainty in ancient times of whether a (lunar) month was going to have 29 or 30 days. Because of problems that could arise announcing the beginning of the new month (especially in the *Diaspora*), the rabbis decided that major holidays (called *Yom Tov*, or "good day") should be celebrated for two days instead of one just in case they miscalculated the beginning of the month.
 - There are six days considered be *Yom Tov*: Passover, the final day of Feast of Unleavened Bread, *Shavuot* (Pentecost), *Rosh Hashanah*, the first day of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles), and the combination of *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*.
 - For Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, this doubling of the first and last days created an eight-day period.

Truths from the Tabernacle

- The unleavened bread can be a picture of Christ. He is the Bread of Life (John 6:35,51; Luke 22:19), free from the presence of sin (leaven).
 - Leaven is a picture of sin/wickedness
 - No leaven was to be part of any burnt offering – Leviticus 2:11
 - Christ compared false teaching to it: of the Pharisees and Sadducees to it (Matthew 16:6, Luke 12:1), of the Herodians (Mark 8:15),
 - The one instance where some think leaven is used positively is Christ's parable in Matthew 13:33, claiming that the small church (leaven) will affect the entire world. I think the opposite is true, and the leaven is the growing corruption of the church (I Timothy 3:1-13)
 - Paul compared wickedness to it – I Corinthians 5:7-8
- The best picture is that of deliverance. As the Jews were freed in the Passover and ate unleavened bread, so we Christians are freed by Christ and feed upon uncorrupted bread.