

The Feasts of Jehovah

Part 2

Speaker	Ernest Brown
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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] I propose to read them straight away and then work through some of them during the course of the meeting. The first one is Exodus chapter 12 and verse 1.

Exodus chapter 12 beginning at verse 1.

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. 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 [00:01:01] an house.

And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls. Every man, according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. Ye shall take it out from the sheep or from the goats, 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. And they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleaven bread, and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.

[00:02:03] Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire, his head with his legs, and with the pertinence thereof. 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. 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. [00:03:02] 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. 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 forever. Now there are several verses following, detailing the implementation of seven days eating unleavened bread.

And then we come to verse 21.

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said unto them, Draw out, and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover. He then outlined the instructions as given him by God. [00:04:02] And then verse 28, And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. Verse 40, Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.

And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out from the land [00:05:01] of Egypt, this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. Would you turn, please, to the next book, the book of Leviticus, and chapter 23.

Verse 4, These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.

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. In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work therein, but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days. [00:06:04] In the seventh day is an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work therein. Next book, the book of Numbers, chapter 9.

This one, And the Lord spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year, after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season, according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it. Next book, Deuteronomy, chapter 16.

[00:07:12] This one, 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. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the Passover unto the Lord thy God of the flock and the herd in the place which the Lord shall choose to place his name there. And then verses 3 to 8, instructions repeated for the celebration of the feast of unleavened bread.

The next book, the book of Joshua, chapter 5.

Verse 10, And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth [00:08:08] day of the month, at even, in the plains of Jericho. The book of Ezra, chapter 6, and verse 19.

The children of the captivity kept the Passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month. For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them were pure, and killed the Passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. And the children of

Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord [00:09:06] God of Israel did eat, and kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel. And lastly, in the New Testament, first Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 7, 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 [00:10:03] and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Thank you for your patience, listening to those scriptures. There is really no substitute to allowing the word of God to saturate our mind and heart preparatory to meditating upon it.

Each evening we shall consider a subject which in itself is self-contained, but obviously it is helpful if each of us can be present on as many occasions during the week as circumstances permit.

We began last night by considering the motive in view in the feasts of the Lord, in that [00:11:09] God is working towards a grand end, when he can have such a situation as he is satisfied dwelling amongst his people, and that all the blessing that shall be enjoyed, all the glory to his name, shall accrue because of the death and resurrection of Christ.

We took account of the first three verses of Leviticus 23, and we looked at the scope and a little of the detail of Psalm 22.

Tonight we turn to the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread.

[00:12:06] It is no mere accident of circumstance that with a certain number of topics to consider and a certain number of evenings available, that we have to put some together. We have better reasons than that for grouping the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread together.

In short, the Passover, instituted at the time of the deliverance of the earthly people of God, Israel, from the hand of their Egyptian oppressor, Pharaoh, to tell the people that the only way in which they could be delivered from that actual national bondage and slavery [00:13:04] was to be redeemed by blood, the blood of the Passover lamb, God saw fit to demonstrate at the same time that that which began as a feast to celebrate redemption by blood, that this should go on to, it should blend with and become part of, as well as setting off in the remembrance, the memorial of that grand redemption by blood, that the people should be reminded that that which had brought them into initial blessing, initial deliverance from the hand of the oppressor, that that should blend into and become part of something [00:14:02] that affected their lives all the time. This is why a one-day feast, the Passover, merges into, blends with, and initiates a seven-day feast, the feast of unleavened bread, no gap in between. As we've read, the Passover was on the fourteenth day of a month called Abed, one day, a specific feast, the Passover.

The fourteenth day ends at sunset on the fourteenth day of the month, the fifteenth day commences with sunset on the fourteenth day, and from that point, another seven days run on continuously [00:15:02] from the end of the fourteenth day, and so there was no gap in between.

Let us straightaway make this an application to ourselves. It is not God's intention that trusting Jesus as our Saviour, knowing the forgiveness of sins, should be kept separately, apart from the rest of our

lives. Just the reverse. Our faith in Christ, being cleansed by the blood of Christ, should mark and characterize the whole of our lives in every department of them. Now, we shall look at this as we go along, and first of all, we look at it in its own setting. The people had been under this bondage for four hundred and thirty years, under a hard taskmaster. [00:16:07] There had been spasmodic attempts to liberate themselves, and they'd all failed. They knew that if they were to be delivered, something miraculous must occur.

God's instruction comes to Moses, the time has arrived.

These are the instructions.

At the time that God had decided, the due time, the fourteenth, the tenth day of the first month, a lamb of the flock or a kid of the goats had to be taken on the tenth day of the month.

[00:17:02] Let us pause there.

We tend to forget, or I tend to forget, that the animal that was taken for the sacrifice was a male of the first year, strong, fresh, vigorous, as often happens in the sacrifices and the offerings, a male is taken, not only as a picture of virility, but in order that the consistent picture presented in scripture might be followed through, that altogether apart from our needs, God's claims must be met, God's claims as to the sins of his people.

And we are told either a kid of the goats or a lamb of the flock.

[00:18:06] I've often asked myself and others why it is that so often, almost exclusively after this, we read of the Passover lamb and not of the Passover goat.

Why is it that so many of the prophets took up the figure of the lamb and so rarely took up the figure of the goat?

Why was it that John Baptist, on that grand occasion, recorded in John's Gospel, chapter 1, about verse 29, said, Behold the Lamb of God, the bearer away of the sin of the world. Why didn't he say, Behold the goat of God that taketh away the sin of the world? It would have been equally valid.

[00:19:02] I have a lot of sympathy for the prophets who felt themselves led to take up the figure of the submissive lamb on so many occasions.

Or a picture of the mighty God manifested in flesh, taking the lowly place, taking our place, in order that our sins might be dealt with before God once and for all.

If there is a distinction that could be readily drawn between the lamb and the goat, perhaps we can say that the nimble goat is a picture of agility or ability, and the lamb is a picture of submissiveness.

Brings to us the ready picture, presented in Scripture, that the Lord Jesus Christ, [00:20:05] the antitypical Passover lamb or Passover goat, was not only able to save, but willing to save.

And perhaps these two elements come out in the goat and in the lamb. It's something perhaps you might like to take away and think about. At all events, whether the goat or the lamb, taken on the

tenth day of the month, subjected to the most intense scrutiny, is there any flaw?

Is there any imperfection?

Is the little animal lame? Is it blind in one eye?

Is there a blemish in the flesh or the skin?

[00:21:01] Is there any medical condition that means it's less than perfect? If there were, the lamb or the kid had to be immediately discarded as unsuitable to represent the fact that only that which meets God's critical eye and scrutiny, as being completely flawless, would do as a picture of the sacrifice that God required to deal with sin.

And then that four-day scrutiny, not only at the beginning of the period, but under critical eye for the four days, and then only when it was seen to be demonstrably perfect [00:22:04] in every detail by the fourteenth day, it was fit to be taken as a picture of God's requirement as to sin.

Taken, slain, the blood applied to the doorposts and the lintel so that those who were in the house could be seen to be sheltering under the power of that blood. How graphic the picture is.

The people warned that God's messenger, God's angel of death, would pass over that evening and that if there was no blood sprinkled or applied to the doorposts and the lintel of [00:23:08] the house, the firstborn would surely be slain.

And we read that in every household in Israel, in the nation, they did exactly what Moses conveyed to them of the message of their God.

And they were delivered.

And every household in the land of Egypt, the Egyptians, the firstborn was slain.

The judgment of God was applied where those within the household were not sheltering underneath the blood.

As it was with the families of human beings, so it was with the families of the cattle. [00:24:01] Well, the well-known picture which we pick up. But perhaps having read for brevity the first fourteen verses, and again I must leave to your meditation these beautiful ancillary details that the lamb being taken, the flesh was roast with fire, unleavened bread, bitter herbs with it, they had to do it in the remembrance of the bitter bondage that they had suffered as a nation for so long. It was done in proper balance, not raw, not sodden, but roast with fire, and so on. Verse eleven, your loins girded, ready for the journey, your shoes on your feet.

Something to take away as to our mental, moral, spiritual alertness.

[00:25:01] I fear very much that we believers on the Lord Jesus Christ in this and other countries have the sharp edge of our spirituality blunted by the relative affluence in which we live.

They had their loins girded, shoes on their feet, staff in their hand, ready for the journey, eating in

haste, it is the Lord's Passover. Read this chapter through, and the others, and see how often it is said, it is the Lord's Passover, with this grand statement, when I see the blood, I will pass over you. Well, even here, they were told that in the memorial of it, in the remembrance of it, year by year, they had to follow the Passover feast by seven days' feast of unleavened bread. [00:26:08] The leaven had to be put away out of the houses, they had to examine all the houses, every room, make sure that leaven was excluded, they had to make sure that the bread that they baked had no leaven in that, and they had to make sure that having baked the unleavened bread, that that had to be their stable food for a week. We shall observe the feast of unleavened bread. And lastly, in Exodus 12, it is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt, this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations. Now, it has been said in the notices that we shall be taking some account of the dispensational significance of these events.

[00:27:03] Now, that happened within the national confines of Israel.

They actually were delivered from the oppressor Pharaoh in Egypt.

They were delivered out of Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness. After 40 years, they were taken across the Jordan and into the Promised Land.

So they had, as to their circumstances, they knew what it was to be in Egypt, they were going to know what it would be like in the wilderness, and apart from two of them, Caleb and Joshua, their descendants were going to know what it was like in the land of Canaan. [00:28:05] Caleb and Joshua, as scripture tells us, are the only two who actually went into the Promised Land of those who left Egypt.

Now, it's significant, even within the national confine of Israel, and we read the scriptures for it, we read in Exodus that they celebrated, first of all, the Passover in Egypt.

We learned from Numbers chapter 9 that they celebrated the Passover in the wilderness.

The instruction given in Deuteronomy, we call it, as having happened historically in the book of Joshua, they celebrated the memorial of the Lord's Passover in Canaan. [00:29:01] Egypt, wilderness, and Canaan.

Every phase of their actual geographical journey was marked by the remembrance of the Lord's Passover.

It is a picture that there is a time coming on earth when the nation of Israel, who, because of their flagrant disobedience to God, instead of being at the head of the nations, are now at the tail, kicked about from pillar to post, that they will ultimately be in peace in the Promised Land, the land of Palestine.

Now, many of them are there now, certainly not at peace, certainly not there as a result [00:30:03] of dependence upon God or faith in him, but scripture affirms that there will be a time when the nation of Israel will be recovered, reinstated, and restored to the land of Palestine in dependence on God as a result of a great personal deliverance, God's intervention in person, in the person of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. At a time in history which will be the most difficult, the most tragic, and the most painful

and sorrowful for the nation of Israel, called indeed in scripture a day of Jacob's trouble, when it just seems that everything's on top of them, they're about to be annihilated, God will intervene in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, he will personally deliver them [00:31:03] as Moses, typical of Christ, was enabled to deliver them from the hand of Pharaoh, and they will be in the land, restored, reinstated, enjoying the blessing. That picture of the Passover lamb, slain, consumed in Egypt, and the blood applied to the doorposts and the lintel, scripture tells us, was looking forward to the time when Jesus, the Son of God, would come into the world and take upon himself the burden of the sins of the nation of Israel, and he would give due answer to the righteous requirements of God as to the sins of the nation of Israel, [00:32:01] and then and only then would there be true national deliverance. Scripture says, Romans chapter 3, God was right in remitting the sins of the past, because all the time God was looking on and had in mind that when Christ came into the world he would die at Calvary and answer fully to God for every sin that the nation has dealt with. Because of the disobedience of the nation of Israel, coming to a climax in the rejection of the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he came in his public ministry, when he was under that constant scrutiny from God and man for almost four years, [00:33:02] maybe that's why the Passover lamb had to be scrutinized for four days, as a picture of the fact that the Lord Jesus was under public, under divine, under demoniacal scrutiny for almost four years and demonstrably sinless. Not a flaw in him could be found. As a result of his rejection by the nation of Israel, Jesus was crucified. He died.

God raised him from the dead. God took him to heaven. God sent down the Holy Spirit, and on the day of Pentecost, as we shall see later in the week, the Church was formed. Those who at the present time, whatever their nationality, Jew or Gentile, [00:34:09] those who trust Jesus as their Savior, are sheltering under the same blood that shall one day shelter the nation of Israel as such.

Now, we've said the memorial of this was celebrated in the wilderness and in the land.

We read in Ezra the account of a partial restoration when there was a small remnant of the nation responded to the permissive decree of Cyrus the Persian and went back to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. We read in Ezra 6, they celebrated the Passover, and we read that the Passover, having been celebrated, [00:35:05] went on to the remembrance and the celebration of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Whenever you get a proper remembrance, a proper celebration, a proper memorial of the Passover in Scripture, there is always linked with it, as flowing out of the celebration of the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. A reminder that while the Passover occupied one day per year, the full cycle of time had to be occupied with the reflection of what the Feast of Unleavened Bread speaks of. Now, let us turn to 1 Corinthians 5.

[00:36:01] We are on good ground in any type or figure in the Old Testament and applying it to Christianity when we see that the New Testament gives us the authority to do that. Corinth was in a bad way morally, and there is much that Paul the Apostle, in writing to them, has to criticize.

And he starts with this statement in verse 6, which we didn't read, Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven. Consider this, the Apostle says, when you trusted Jesus as your Saviour, you are accepting that your old life isn't good enough for God. [00:37:03] If your sins were to be dealt with once and for all, it could only be by believing that Jesus took your place, died for your sins, and that your old life, marked by sin and sinning, has come to an end as before God.

God says, because Christ has died and you've trusted him as your Saviour, you are saying you're

finished with the old life. Now, Paul says to the Corinthians, he says, purge out the old leaven. He says, be done with the old life. You accept that when Christ died for your sins, he died to bring to an end your old way of living as far as you were concerned. And he goes on to say, the life you live now, as a Christian, [00:38:07] hasn't got to be marked by the kind of conduct or behavior or attitudes that used to mark you before you became a Christian. He says, you've got a new life within you. You've got new appetites, new food. And he said, have nothing to do with all the evil things that used to be true of you. It's a salutary lesson that the only contribution we made to the scheme of salvation was to commit the sins that made it necessary for Jesus to go to Calvary to die for our sins. And if we accept there's nothing we can do to merit God's favor, if we are to be saved, it's as a result of the grace of God, not as a result of our works. [00:39:04] We are accepting, in fact, that our old life is only fit for condemnation, and before God, it came to an end when Christ died for our sins. We are subscribing to that in trusting Jesus as our Savior. Leaven, as always, a picture of evil. He says, purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened. He says, the old life is finished, a new life has commenced, and he says, now think about that Passover lamb. He lifts it out of Exodus 12 and those other scriptures, and he says, Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. Well, there we have it, the authority to say, as well as showing us the basis on which Israel as a nation [00:40:03] will ultimately be brought into blessing when the church dispensation is finished, it's a picture also of the fact that when Jesus died for us, he was dying in the same way as a substitute for you and me when he died at Calvary.

Christ, our Passover, we've seen the similarity, taken, scrutinized, examined, proven to be without flaw. As the little hymn says, he only was good enough to pay the price of sin. He only was sinless.

But then he comes on to this practical matter. Let us, therefore, keep the feast.

That's the feast of unleavened bread. Not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of mollusk and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. [00:41:09] Now, it can be quickly said, it will take all our lives to prove it.

Yes, he says, purge out the old leaven. Yes, he says, have nothing to do with evil.

Galatians says, have nothing to do with evil doctrine. Corinthians here says, have nothing to do with evil behavior.

It would be sad if we were Christians who became numb for what we don't do, or what we don't believe, or what we don't go along with. Yes, we should avoid all evil and every appearance of evil, that's true.

[00:42:06] But really that's the lesser side. We need to be marked by positive Christian virtues. Now, there are certain types or figures used in the Bible to tell us that apart from separating ourselves, dissociating ourselves from evil things and evil people, that we need, in a positive way, to be filling our minds, our souls, our hearts, our lives with good, positive things.

People are more food conscious now than they've ever been.

It's true, you know, what we eat forms us.

[00:43:03] Unless we have a balanced diet and the right kind of regular exercise, we won't be healthy

people, naturally speaking. The Bible says it's even more important to have a balanced spiritual diet and the right kind of spiritual activity and exercise if we are to be healthy in our souls. Now, there are various figures taken up. There is the manna, there is the showbread, and there is the unleavened bread.

Notice, it was important that they didn't eat unleavened bread. It was even more important that they did eat unleavened bread. Now, what does Scripture say about this? Scripture's consistent message is it's not a flight of fancy, it's not an academic mental exercise to say that the food which will do us most good in our souls is to feed on Christ, [00:44:20] personally, who he is, the value of his work, the many offices that he fills, the various aspects of the work that he did at Calvary, that he's doing now, and that he will do in the future. And it is the Scriptures that tell us about Christ.

It is not merely a harsh, rigorous discipline to say we should read something from the Scriptures every day, whether we are fit or unfit, whether we are busy or have a leisure day. [00:45:02] There's no excuse for not taking in spiritual food every day.

And the way we do it is to read all the Scriptures. That happy Scripture in Luke 24 tells us that in order for the Lord Jesus to tell the two on the road to Emmaus about himself in a comprehensive way, he had to draw from all the Scriptures. We need all the Scriptures regularly, in an unhurried way.

How many times as children we've been told, don't bolt your food, take your time, chew it over, digest it properly, and then it will do you good. Well, the Scripture says, and I must leave this for your meditation now, Scripture says we mustn't be one-day Christians. [00:46:05] If one day a week, for most of us, we can give up the whole of the day to one aspect of the Lord's work or another on the first day of the week, we should be doing something every day of the week to fit ourselves for whatever aspect of service comes along, but even better than that, in order that we can function as believers, our hearts being uplifted in praise and in worship of the blessed God. The only way in which we are fitted to function as a holy priesthood Godward and a royal priesthood manward is if our souls are filled with Christ. Now that will only be so if we spend time reading the Scriptures about him and the many offices that he fills. [00:47:02] If we read about the Christian Church, if we read about how the blessing for the nation of Israel is distinct and different from the blessing of the Church, how that there will be a time when Gentile nations, as Gentile nations, are also brought into blessing. And to be able to distinguish, as the Bible does, between the Church, the Israel of God, nationally speaking, and the saved among the nations, will take a long time and much meditation, much prayer. And Scripture says, and we can only affirm, if we are to function right towards God in praise and in worship, if we are to live truly righteous lives to the pleasure of God, it can only be as those who day by day, every day of the week, [00:48:02] feed our souls upon Christ in a positive way and fashion our lives according to him.

Only then can it be said that things like sincerity and, in truth, features of the spiritual feast of unleavened bread might mark us day by day. Now, let us sing our closing hymn, 466, which will give us further cause for meditation on this matter of feeding upon Christ, feasting our souls upon him, and the way in which this will give us the wherewithal to be found well, pleasing to him. 466, O Lord of thee, we ne'er would tire. The new and living food can satisfy our heart's desire, and life is in thy blood. [00:49:04] For this we are pressing onward still, and in this hope would be more subject to the Father's will, e'en now much more like thee.