

### **Study 31: Leviticus, Part 4 Leviticus 23 Unleavened Bread**

Let me begin by saying that in the course of these studies, you may be sure I will “step on some toes,” especially if you hold to certain interpretive models that are based on the ideas of men, rather than on Scripture. Now, when this happens (notice I didn’t say “if”), you will be faced with a choice. Those who are immature in the faith, or who are too proud to admit that they *might* not know everything, will probably leave in a huff and never return. That would be unfortunate, but sometimes you have to just let the Lord work on people like that, praying they will mature to the point that they will be able to hear teaching that contradicts their opinions. The more *mature* among you will, I hope, be driven back to the Bible. It is my prayer that Christians will *get to know* the Word of God! When the apostle Paul commended the Bereans (Acts 17)<sup>1</sup>, he did so because they were sensible enough to *verify* what he was teaching by checking it against Scripture. Many Christians today believe things that simply are *not* in the Bible, and many others *refuse* to believe what actually *is* there.

You may have noticed that some who try to defend false doctrines will do so by appealing exclusively to *Old Testament* passages. I’m thinking particularly of the promises given to Abraham. You may have noticed that those who claim that the Middle Eastern nation called “Israel” today is the heir to these promises will *never* use the *New Testament* to support this claim. They quote *only* from the Old Testament. Why do you think that is? It’s because if you use the New Testament, you will find that it *does not support* what they are teaching! The book of Galatians is the **most dangerous book in the entire Bible** to someone who holds to the Dispensational system of thought. The inspired apostle Paul teaches the very *opposite* of what Dispensationalism teaches. The Old Testament nation of Israel was merely a type and shadow of Jesus Christ, the true Israel, and it is He to whom the promises were given, and it is in Him that they are fulfilled. So, whether or not ancient Israel ever held the territory that was promised to Abraham (and the Bible says they *did*)<sup>2</sup> is a *moot* point! The promises given to Abraham were given to, and would be fulfilled in, Christ! **Romans 4:13**<sup>3</sup> makes it clear that the “land” that was promised was not simply a Middle Eastern territory, but the whole world!

One of the fundamentals of the Christian faith is that we must interpret the Old Testament in light of the New. It is true that the New Testament is in the Old concealed, and the Old is in the New *revealed*. That is, if you are trying to understand the Old Testament without knowing and understanding the New, you are bound to go wrong! To make it about Israel, or anything, or anyone else other than Jesus Christ is to *nullify* the Word of God.

**Two weeks ago**, we heard began learning about the feasts of the Lord, and discovered that they were actually a kind of *rehearsal* of future events. The first one we examined was Passover, and it was found that this feast was actually a “preparation day” (no matter which day of the week on which it fell) for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Before we get to that, however, we have a few more things to point out about Passover.

During the **Passover Seder** (a supper that commemorates the Exodus), unleavened bread (called *matzah*) is eaten. If you haven’t seen it before, note that it is both **striped** and **pierced** (see illustration below). There is a time in the Seder they call *yahatz* (also spelled *yachatz*). *Yahatz* (meaning *divide*) is the fourth step of the ceremony. Three pieces of matzah have been placed in a white bag (called a *matzah tosh*) and are taken out and shown to everyone present. The leader then says, “This is the *lechem oni*—the bread of affliction—which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry—let them come and eat. All who are needy—let them come and celebrate the Passover with us....” The Seder leader takes the middle piece, calls out, “Yachatz!” and breaks it. He then takes the larger piece (called the *afikomen* “that which comes after,” because it’s saved for last), wraps it in a linen cloth, hides it somewhere in the room. The children enjoy a game of looking for it.

There is speculation as to why 3 pieces of matzah are used. Some of the rabbis of old suggested it represents Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If so, the middle piece would stand for Isaac, and the breaking of it would be symbolic of the *Akedah* (the binding of Isaac) by Abraham. However, Isaac was only a type, as we know, and was not really “broken,” i.e. he wasn’t actually killed as a sacrifice. Jesus was. BTW, Gen 22:2 is the first time in Scripture where the word *love* is used: God said to Abraham, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” And, of course, this was the very mountain on which Jesus was crucified.

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<sup>1</sup> **Acts 17:11-12** says, “Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12 As a result, many of them believed....”

<sup>2</sup> **Joshua 21:43-45** says, “So the Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. And the Lord gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass.” **Joshua 23:14** says, “...not one word of all the good words which the Lord your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed.” **1 Kings 4:21** states that “Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt.”

<sup>3</sup> **Romans 4:13** says, “It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be **heir of the world**, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.”

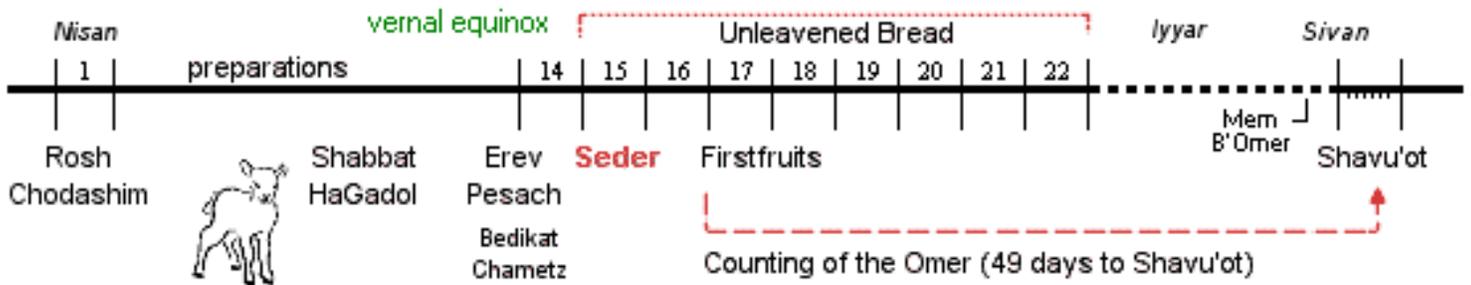
Another rabbinic opinion (it's said, "Where there are 2 Jews there are 3 opinions") is that the three matzah represent the people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites. But why would the priests be depicted as "broken"? This could, of course, be related to Jesus as our High Priest. Of course, as Christians, we would understand the 3 pieces of unleavened bread to represent the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the "Trinity"), and the "middle piece" being Jesus, the Son. After being broken (killed), this pierced ("He was pierced for our transgressions"—Isa 53:5a), and striped ("by His stripes we are healed"—Isa 53:5b) piece of bread is wrapped in a linen cloth (shroud [of Turin?]) and hidden (buried). The children are to seek it out later (women coming to His tomb). This *afikomen* ritual has been a part of the Passover ceremony since Second Temple (destroyed in AD 70) times, and therefore would have been part of the Passover service during the time of Jesus.

During the Passover supper, various parts of the Hallel (Psalms 113–118) were recited. At the conclusion of the meal, Psalms 115-118 are read or sung (cp Mark 14:26). There are some intriguing references to Christ contained in these psalms. For instance:

**Ps 116** says: I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. 2 Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. 3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow. 4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: "Lord, save me!" .... 8 For you, Lord, have delivered me from death... 9 that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living. .... 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. ....15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants. 16 Truly I am your servant, Lord....

**Ps 118** says: 5 When hard pressed, I cried to the Lord; he brought me into a spacious place. 6 The Lord is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? 7 The Lord is with me; he is my helper. I look in triumph on my enemies. .... 17 I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done. 18 The Lord has chastened me severely, but he has not given me over to death. 19 Open for me the gates of the righteous.... 22 The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 23 the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Just one more tidbit of information: In AD 30, when Jesus was crucified, Passover fell on a Wednesday, even though it was still called a "Preparation Day." Day 1 after the crucifixion was Thursday, and was a Sabbath (the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread). Day 2 after the crucifixion was Friday. "When the Sabbath was over, [the women] **bought** spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body." (Mark 16:1). "Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment." (Luke 23:56). Day 3 after the crucifixion was the weekly Sabbath, Saturday. Sunday was actually Day 4 after the crucifixion, and was the first day the women could come to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. Those who insist on an AD 33, Friday crucifixion are left to explain the blatant contradiction between the accounts of Mark and Luke.



**Leviticus 23 [Feast of Unleavened Bread]** 6 On the fifteenth day of that month the Lord's **Festival of Unleavened Bread** begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. [Deut 16:3 calls it "the bread of affliction".] 7 On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. 8 For seven days present a food offering to the Lord. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.

[Because Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are so closely associated in time, they are often called collectively, "Passover." Not surprisingly, the symbolism of the Feast of Unleavened Bread also points to Jesus. Leaven (yeast) almost always represents sin in Scripture; the only exception I can think of would be Matt 13:33, where it is compared to the spreading of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus, of course, was without sin, and in John 6:41, He called Himself the "bread that came down from heaven". Beginning in v 48, He said: "I am the bread of life. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.".... 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."

[At the beginning of His earthly ministry, after He had been baptized, the Gospels tell us that the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness where He spent 40 days fasting. Then, at His weakest point physically, Satan came and tempted Him to create some bread to eat. But Jesus rebuked him by quoting Deut 8:3, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” So, “bread” can also represent the Word of God (which is *also* Jesus! See John 1:1). Cp. Table of Showbread / **Bread of the Presence** in the tabernacle.

[According to **Deut 16:16**, “Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles.” This made it very convenient for God to judge the entire nation at once if He wanted to. Such was the case in AD 66, when the nation gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover), and the city was surrounded by the Romans and besieged until its fall 3½ years later in AD 70.]

Spring		Summer			
<i>Nisan</i> 1	<i>Iyyar</i> 2	<i>Sivan</i> 3	<i>Tammuz</i> 4	<i>Av</i> 5	<i>Elul</i> 6
ניסן	אייר	סיון	תמוז	אב	אלול
Mar/Apr	Apr/May	May/Jun	Jun/Jul	Jul/Aug	Aug/Sept
<b>Pesach (15)</b> Matzah (16-22) Bikurim (18) HaShoah (27)	Ha'atsmaut (5) HaZikaron (14) Lag B'Omer (18) Yerushalayim (28)	<b>Shavu'ot (6)</b>	Fast of Tammuz (17)	† Three weeks of Sorrow † Tish'a B'Av (9) Tu B'Av (15)	Selichot repentance
Fall		Winter			
<i>Tishri</i> 7	<i>Cheshvan</i> 8	<i>Kislev</i> 9	<i>Tevet</i> 10	<i>Shevat</i> 11	<i>Adar</i> 12/13
תשרי	חשוון	כסלו	טבת	שבט	אדר
Sept/Oct	Oct/Nov	Nov/Dec	Dec/Jan	Jan/Feb	Feb/Mar
Rosh Hashanah (1) Fast Gedaliah (3) Yom Kippur (10) <b>Sukkot (15-22)</b> Simchat Torah (22)		Chanukah (25) to Tevet (4)	Asarah B'Tevet (10)	Tu B'Shevat (15)	Fast Ester (13) Purim (14) Adar II leap year

Pierced matzah



Stripes on matzah

