

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

In less than three and a half hours, the Days of Unleavened Bread will be over. Sunset will have arrived and you will be able to go out and buy whatever it is you like, your favourite sandwich or butty (or whatever it is the English might like). Life returns to normal, so to speak.

We are looking at the end of the seven Days of Unleavened Bread and so it is an appropriate time to ask the question, “Were these successful Days of Unleavened Bread?” Did you feel that they were profitable, successful? Obviously the question remains as to how you define “successful.” For some I guess it is getting through seven days without eating leavened products. If that is your degree of success I am afraid that we in the office fell horribly short of your good standard – because one of the diligent staff members brought in a lovely big tub of shortbread – and “everybody knows that shortbread is unleavened.” Correct?

We were happily munching away on it until Jane Coleman came in the next day. She happened to realise that SOME shortbread is NOT unleavened! Something got moved out of the office in a hurry! We had been “sinning” for a day, so you might say it wasn’t a particularly successful day in the Days of Unleavened Bread for us. A good number of us fell short. Fortunately, the Eternal does not then require that we go ANOTHER seven days to make up for the time we missed!

In looking at the Days of Unleavened Bread, and evaluating as to whether these were successful Days of Unleavened Bread, I would like to do something different. I would like to take you through a particular book of the Bible today and have a look at the aspect of the Days of Unleavened Bread and some of the lessons that God requires that we learn from that. It is the book of Exodus. Most people considering the book of Exodus find that their discussion revolves around a number of issues, such as:

- Chronology
- Who was Pharaoh’s daughter? Was it the maiden on the left who is understood to be Hatshepsut?

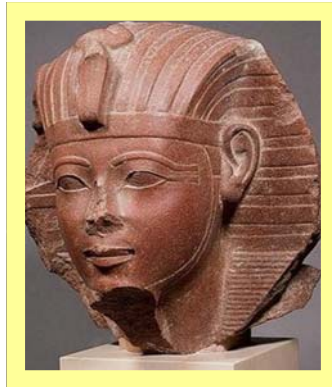


- Was the Pharaoh who withstood Moses, Tutmos III?



BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

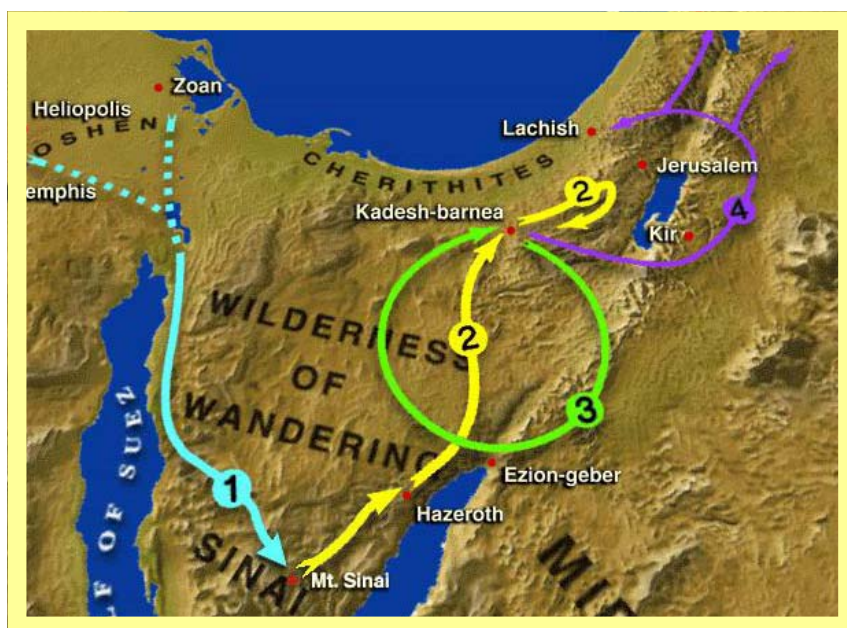
- Or was the Pharaoh of the Exodus his son, Amenhotep II?



Some people don't like that idea at all. They say, "No, the Pharaoh of the Exodus was none other than Rameses II – the longest reigning of the Egyptian pharaohs:

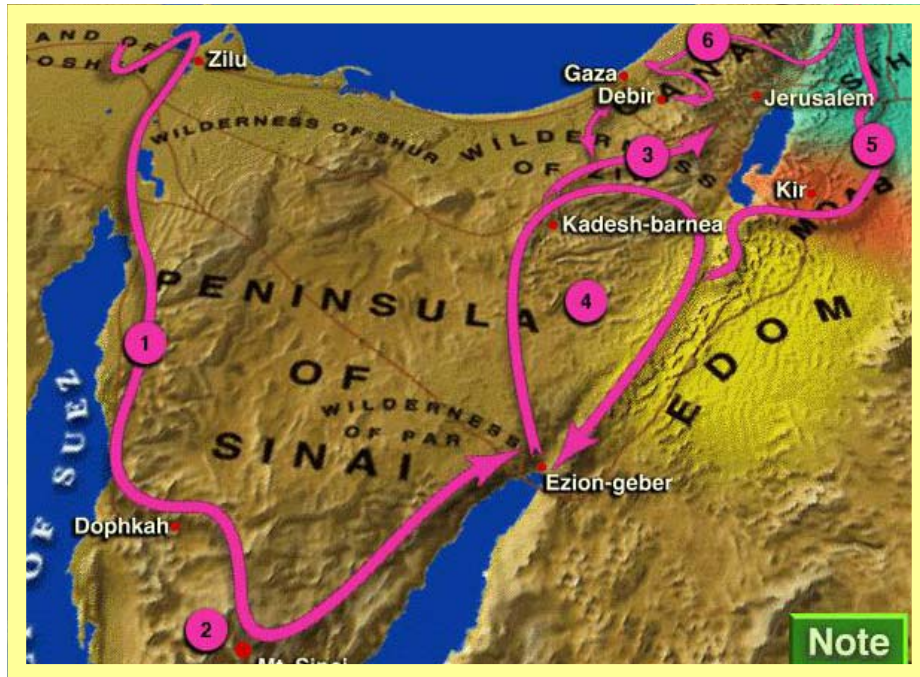


Of course it is not just chronology that gets people involved in the book of Exodus. There are many questions people have. "How did the Children of Israel get out of there? What route did they take? Did they go by the Mediterranean coast?"



BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

“Or did they come this way?”



“Depending on which route they took, where did they cross the Red Sea?”

“Is the Red Sea up in the north?”

“Is the Red Sea what some people call the Bitter Lakes?”

“Or is it what we call the Red Sea today – as opposed to the ‘Sea of Reeds’ as in the Bible? If it is the Red Sea, is it the western arm or is it the eastern arm? Then once we have solved all of that, we can work out where Mount Sinai is.”

All these things can be of interest. They can be of value in many ways in understanding and accepting that God’s Word is true. They are very important, but in reality these questions that people love to focus upon are not REALLY the focus of the book of Exodus.

The Days of Unleavened Bread and the lessons we are to learn from those days are, in fact, the REAL lessons.

Let’s put away the “memorable” things that you have seen in this sermon. You have seen these pieces of great imagery. Will you go away from this sermon and only remember these photographs? Or are you interested in something else?

Let’s learn a lesson from that time as we come to the end of the Days of Unleavened Bread. What is it that God desires from us in terms of the Days of Unleavened Bread? Certainly, He doesn’t want us eating leaven. As far as I know, none of us went digging in the trash can at the office to try to find that tub of shortbread after it had been thrown out.

What is it that God desires from us in terms of the Days of Unleavened Bread? We have

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

the book of Exodus. We have its name. The name of the book of Exodus comes to us from the Greek language. It simply means, "A going out." That is straightforward. That is what the book is all about: a going out.

If I were to give you a definition other than just "A going out," I would like to expand it a little and say it would be better described as being:

"A calling out of a people to live in a covenant relationship with the Eternal."

That's not quite Greek. The book is known as "A going out" but it really encompasses a lot more than that.

Let's take a moment or two to look at the book of Exodus because one of the things we will notice about the book is that it does focus upon the Holy Days, the Festivals that we have just participated in. The focus of the book of Exodus is upon the first Holy Days. We can't escape that.

We start off with the Passover in the first 12 chapters. We have an introduction in the first chapter, the calling of Moses in chapters two and three, and then in the remaining chapters we have the dealing with Pharaoh, and Israel as they are prepared for the Passover in chapter 12.

Chapters 13 and 14 deal with another issue: the Days of Unleavened Bread, the leaving of Egypt. The departure from Egypt is in chapter 13 and the crossing of the Red Sea is in chapter 14. In chapter 15 is the Song of Moses and various other details. In chapters 15 - 18 it is onwards to Sinai. When they get to Sinai, they have the Feast of Pentecost (chapters 19 and 20). There is the giving of the law, the statutes and the establishment of the Book of the Covenant for Israel with the Eternal.

Is the focus of the book JUST the leaving of Egypt? Is the leaving of Egypt an end in itself? I think each and every one of us can appreciate that it is not.

Yet for most people, the book of Exodus exists for historical purposes only, historical purposes to have great debates about. "It doesn't teach us anything today." Or does it?

If we go back into those early chapters of the book of Exodus we find that the Eternal gave instructions to Moses. The first of those instructions is when the Eternal appeared to Moses in a burning bush at Mount Sinai:

Exodus 3:11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

"Who am I? I am a refugee! I fled that land! The guy on the throne who is Pharaoh now is the son of the guy who tried to kill me! What is going to be different?"

12 He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

Moses had to act in faith. God said, "This is going to be the sign. When you bring the Israelites out, you are going to come here and you are going to serve Me." Is that encouraging? It was really putting Moses "on the spot." It was really requiring an act of great faith on Moses' part.

As we have seen, the English Standard Version translates the latter part of verse 12 as:

12 ... when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

These people were in servitude already. They were slaves in Egypt and God was bringing them out to be servants yet again! Oftentimes modern translations tend to opt for the word "worship" rather than "serve." The word "worship" as it is used today is too "touchy-feely" to really convey what God was intending! When people use the term, "worship" today, they are looking to be made to feel good themselves! "I will sing all these worship hymns because it gets my blood flowing. I feel good!"

No, the Hebrew says, "You will SERVE Me." It is from that same root word that we get the term "servant." They were to be servants to the Eternal rather than seeking their own self-satisfaction. That is something that Israel lost sight of very quickly, even when they came to Mount Sinai.

God talked about Moses speaking to the leaders and elders of the Children of Israel. He said:

8 And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

"Sacrifice" is another "uncomfortable" word in terms of the 21st century! "Sacrifice" means, "give up something of yourself." People don't like that today. The concept of sacrifices, of actually making an animal suffer as an atonement, is repugnant to many people today, just as the idea of "serving God" is repugnant to people who simply wish to "worship" Him.

Here are some more instructions from the Eternal:

Exodus 5:1 Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'"

There are no "ifs," "if you would," "please," "could we," "perhaps," or "would you see a way to let us have this time off." No, "Let My people go that they may hold a Feast to Me in the wilderness."

3 Then they said, 'The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.'"

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

Pharaoh should have been smart and learned from that. The Israelites didn't do it. It was a life or death situation: whether they did what God wanted or didn't do what God wanted. If they weren't prepared to do what God wanted, they were going to be subjected to pestilence and the sword – in addition to the rigour and hardship they already suffered.

Moses was told:

Exodus 6:6 Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians ...

“This is going to happen!”

6 ... and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.

7 I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

It is very dogmatic language. Some of it is Hebrew. Hebrew tends to be a very forceful language. There is a degree of certitude about this. “This is going to happen. If this does not happen, something else will happen – because the Eternal is intervening”. The Eternal is working to do something amongst these people, to bring something about.

In verse seven we see the ultimate purpose of the Passover and the ultimate purpose of the Days of Unleavened Bread. They weren't just an end to themselves. They weren't just a, “Get the Egyptians.” They weren't just, “Free the Israelites.” They were for a greater purpose, a purpose that should always be in the forefront of our minds, so that WE can be God's people.

7 I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God ...

This is a reciprocal relationship. It's a covenant relationship. “You will be My people. You will live the way I want you to – and I will be your God. I will deliver you from all of the problems that confront you, that beset you.”

Through these early chapters of Exodus we see an emphasis: an emphasis on becoming the people of God and serving Him in the wilderness. The whole purpose of the Exodus is of becoming the people of God and of serving Him – not just going out into the wilderness “to have a good time for ourselves;” not, “so that I can live the way I want to live,” but rather the way the Eternal would have it presented to us.

That was accomplished through being redeemed by the Passover Lamb. As we read through the book of Exodus, we see the emphasis on the first of the Holy Days. The focus is on the Passover (although that is not a Holy Day) followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost. There is very little, if any, reference to the Promised Land in the book of Exodus. Any reference to the Promised Land is totally secondary. It is all about THIS particular time.

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

The book of Exodus could mention the Feast of Trumpets. It could mention the Day of Atonement. It could mention the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. It does in terms of the statutes and judgments and the laws that God gave to Israel. But it could talk about the physical observance of them because the book of Exodus starts sometime prior to the Passover and runs all the way through to the next Passover in chapter 40. In between, they would have kept the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day.

But it doesn't refer to them. It doesn't refer to them because God wants our focus to be upon the here and now! There is a reason why the Promised Land doesn't feature in the book of Exodus as it does in some of the subsequent books. There are lessons God wants us to learn in terms of being prepared for that.

Half the book of Exodus emphasises deliverance, to getting out of Egypt, to getting to Mount Sinai.

The other half deals with living as the people of God. That is the aspect that most people are so quick to pass over in terms of the book of Exodus. There's no real interest in that.

The book can be divided into two general divisions. On the one hand, the deliverance of the people and bringing them to Mount Sinai as God had promised in Exodus 3, and then how God dealt with and taught the people to be His people: how they were to serve Him.

If we look at the latter half of the book, Exodus 19 – 23 deals with the giving of the law. Exodus 24 deals with the covenant relationship being established. In Exodus 25 – 40 we have the building of the Tabernacle. Tucked in there, is a very salutary lesson because the Eternal knows we are human framed. There's the lesson of the golden calf. Israel didn't take too easily to living as the people of God. They were still given to the idea of Egypt.

Let's spend a little time on this latter section. We frequently deal with chapters 19 – 23, the giving of the law. That is very much part of our thinking and appreciation. We also deal with the aspect of a covenant relationship in chapter 24. But let's spend a moment or two on chapters 25 – 40, the building of the Tabernacle.

Here is a rendition of the Tabernacle, prepared a few years ago from all of the available material, by an Israeli.



BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

Is it the final word? No, other people have read the same things and come up with very different configurations. But this one is rather interesting in terms of what he was able to put together.

In the Tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies, there was to be the Ark of the Covenant covered by the Mercy Seat which was overshadowed by the two cherubim with outstretched wings.



We find that relevance in terms of the Tabernacle because this Tabernacle had a purpose. The purpose of the Tabernacle was to be a dwelling place for the Eternal in the midst of Israel! The Mercy Seat, on top of the Ark of the Covenant, was to be where the presence of the Eternal rested. He told them:

Exodus 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.

He is a different Being from the gods of Egypt that had been destroyed. He wished to dwell in their midst. He wanted not only for them to serve Him, to be His people, He wished to be their God! He wished to be WITH His people, to guide them and to direct them.

What was Israel's involvement in this? They had a great involvement in the Tabernacle because they had to provide an offering. The Tabernacle had to be made out of something. It had to be made out of the chattels of the Children of Israel. They had to give.

Exodus 25:1 The LORD said to Moses,
2 "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.
3 And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze,
4 blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair,
5 tanned rams' skins, goatskins, acacia wood,
6 oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense,
7 onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.
8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

It is interesting that the Eternal defined what they were to give the offering of: the best they had available, not the worst, not what they had “grown out of,” or “got fed up with,” or “got sick of.” “We can give this away.” No, He was asking for the finest things they had. But He didn’t demand it of them. He said, “Let it be ...”

2 ... From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me.

“They are to be motivated to give this to Me.”

We find the same occurring in chapter 35. In fact, when the offering was taken up, Moses had to tell the people, “Stop! There’s too much!” Obviously the Eternal motivated their hearts to be able to give in a very generous manner, of the best that they had available.

Not only did they have to give of what they had, they had to give in another way as well. They had to give of their skills:

Exodus 31:1 The LORD said to Moses,
2 "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,
3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship,
4 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze,
5 in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.

This man was obviously a very talented man who God motivated and put His Spirit upon to undertake these things.

6 And behold, I have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you:
7 the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furnishings of the tent,

The Eternal gave people ability to do things. He gave them His Holy Spirit. You might think, “Why does an artisan need God’s Holy Spirit?” It is because He needs to do what God wants him to do, and not what His creative instinct might lead him to do! The Eternal didn’t want somebody’s INTERPRETATION of what He had instructed Moses to undertake.

We might have an art exhibition today. There is a general theme given to it. Everyone is intrigued to find out, “How does this artist interpret this idea, this commission?”

The Eternal wasn’t interested in interpretative ideas! He was interested in people accomplishing what HE wanted accomplished. So He placed His Holy Spirit upon these people to accomplish that. He gave them ability.

They were able to then create the Tent of Meeting, the Ark of the Testimony, the Mercy Seat and all the furnishings of the tent:

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

8 the table and its utensils, and the pure lampstand with all its utensils, and the altar of incense,

Great care was taken.

As an aside, at this time in Jerusalem there is an organisation known as “The Temple Institute.” It is a very well-funded organisation which is intent on seeing sacrifices re-established on the Temple Mount, and eventually not only an altar, but a Temple being built there.

For probably the last 25 years, they have been involved in researching everything from the Bible through Rabbinic writings, through any historical records, to try to understand how these pieces of furniture for the Temple were to be, and how they were to be created. It is rather interesting to see the DILIGENCE of these people in going about it. I am not saying that because I support them in any way. I think it’s a wrong endeavour on their part. But they are very keen to find out, “How was it that the Eternal instructed these things to be made?”

They are not going out to find Marc Chagall or some other great Jewish artist and say, “Create us some trumpets for the Temple” and receive their interpretation or ideas of what the implements, the utensils and the furniture of the Tabernacle or Temple were like. They are very careful to try to find out how they were originally.

The Eternal was very intent on this in terms of the Children of Israel, that they would be the way He instructed them to be. Israel had to give of their talents and their skills.

What we could say in terms of Israel is that they had to become PART of the Tabernacle of God! They had to give to it, not just from their possessions, presumably from the material they had taken from the Egyptians, but they had to give of their skills and their talents to the structure of it. They had to make it. They became part of the Tabernacle! They became part of the very dwelling place of the Eternal!

When the apostle Paul talks about us being “built up into a Temple,” I think you can appreciate some of the ideas that exist behind what he was talking about: about us becoming part of a Temple, giving to it.

In the Bible, there are more than 300 verses given to the design and building of the Tabernacle. There are only 56 verses in relation to creation! Where do you think it is that the Eternal is placing the emphasis? Is it upon the building of the Tabernacle? This ties into the Days of Unleavened Bread because we are seeking to put aside the world, to put those things that are sin out of our lives, so that we can be holy to the Eternal, so that we can be fitting to be part of the Tabernacle of God.

Here is a part of the Scriptures that is so often overlooked and ignored by everybody, I guess, except Jews. It was a Jew who said, “There are over 317 verses here relating to the Tabernacle, and only 56 to the creation. In what is God most interested?” I believe that was Jonathan Sacks the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He made that comment in one of his books. It is a very telling thing to consider. It is also a very Jewish way of looking at things.

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

“What does God reiterate most? Where does God spend most of His time? Then this is most important to God!” It is very important.

If we look at the book of Exodus, we see that our Passover has been slain. We can make that connection, as Paul did in 1st Corinthians 5.

1 Corinthians 5:7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

8 Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

He talks about the consequence of the Passover being slain: that we keep the Feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth – which are covenant relationships. It ties right back into the covenant.

Last year I drew the connection between 1st Corinthians 5:8 and Joshua 24:14 where the Eternal told Joshua and the Children of Israel that they were to obey Him in “sincerity and truth.” That was “without spot or wrinkle.” It is exactly the same thing that the apostle Paul, John and the other apostles speak of in the New Testament.

We have been called out of sin. We have been called to a new way of life. We are learning to differentiate between what is holy and what is profane. It is a very important aspect in terms of being able to come out of sin, being able to identify what sin is, what the leaven of this world is – so that we can live before God in the way which is pleasing to Him.

We have come to God’s “sacred mountain” to enter into a covenant with Him. A little over a week ago we took of the cup which is the cup of the New Covenant. We re-affirmed that – before we started the Days of Unleavened Bread. Each year we re-affirm that covenant relationship with God.

The end result of this is that we, likewise, are to be part of the Tabernacle of God! There is no difference. The end result for Israel was being brought out of Egypt to become part of the Tabernacle of God. The end result for you and me is being called out of this world to become part of the Tabernacle of God.

Paul talks of us being built up as the Temple was built.

Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

The cornerstone was the stone from which all of the dimensions and the lay of the building was constructed. It became the important point from which all of the measurements and all of the levels were established. Jesus Christ Himself is the Chief Cornerstone. If Jesus Christ is the Chief Cornerstone of this Tabernacle, where is He? Does He dwell in the midst of us? Is that what His desire is today? It’s His desire today just as much as it was three and a half thousand years ago for ancient Israel. It has been His desire to dwell with His people.

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

At this point in time, it's not necessarily the physical goods that we have taken from the Egyptians that we give. It's not necessarily the talents, although we do use talents and skills. But it is more than just our physical life. Each and everyone of us are being built spiritually. We talk about overcoming. We talk about building spiritual character. 1st Corinthians 3 talks about that in terms of the Temple yet again: the building up of that Temple.

We are being built together into a dwelling place for God by God's Spirit that dwells in us, the Spirit that He has given to us. We are to be part of His Tabernacle. We shouldn't shy away from it. We should recognise it and understand that.

Ancient Israel had a problem. Exodus 32:1-34 is an inset into this section relating to the Tabernacle. It is the golden calf. Israel got distracted. Moses disappeared for 40 days and 40 nights. "What has happened to this man Moses? We are left out here by ourselves!" The Children of Israel never saw God involved in the situation. They lacked faith. They had no faith in what the Eternal was doing.

As the book of Hebrews tells us so dramatically, they were "stiff-necked" (Hebrews 3). They entered not in because they lacked belief. They didn't have faith. They had turned to the physical very quickly – which is not surprising because God did not give them of His Spirit.

In Exodus 32 we find that the offerings which they gave for the creation of this golden calf ended up being destroyed. They were burned, ground and washed away. The offerings were destroyed. Those offerings could not be used in the true Tabernacle.

What the true Tabernacle is being built of is something that is NOT profane. It is something which is holy, acceptable unto God – and totally different. God is not prepared to accept that which is offered to idols such as the golden calf.

We have some very great lessons here that we could be very much aware of. The fact that Jesus Christ and the Eternal wanted to be part with them in that Tabernacle, to be at one with them, speaks very much to many of the things that we read of in the Passover.

In John 17, Jesus Christ desired to be with His Father. He desired that those who were with Him could be with them and be as they are. Jesus Christ desires to be at one with us. He wants to be one with us.

We could step back to John 15 and the true vine.

John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

5 ... Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit ...

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

How much closer can you get than a branch and a vine? How much more connected can you be? How close can you be?

The branch is not a branch unless it is connected to the vine and it has the sap of the vine flowing into it to provide life. Jesus Christ talked about “abiding in Me,” this idea of being together, being one.

The desire of the Eternal to dwell amongst us, to dwell with us, is nonetheless today than it was for ancient Israel (whenever it had been). The desire for the Eternal for you and me to be the people of God is no less today than it was in Exodus 6, whenever that was. The desire of the Eternal to have you and me serve Him is no less today than it was in Exodus 3, when the Eternal appeared to Moses at Mount Sinai.

Israel became distracted by the golden calf. They didn’t keep their focus upon what God desired them to be focused upon. Why did they become distracted? Was it because they didn’t appreciate what they were doing out there in the first place? As far as they were concerned, they were just getting away from the Egyptians! To put it another way: they didn’t really appreciate what the Eternal was doing to them. In many ways they couldn’t appreciate that because they did not have God’s Holy Spirit.

You and I should never become distracted. One of the salutary lessons of Matthew 13 is that some seed fell among thorns and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choked the word. People get distracted by the things of this world. They don’t appreciate what it is that God is really seeking to do with them and to accomplish with them.

That distraction is coupled with a lack of faith. The offerings were destroyed. They were of no value to God.

A little while ago I made a comment to you about the name of the book. We call it the *Book of Exodus*. In the Greek, “Exodus” simply means, “A going out.” Actually the person who named it “Exodus” tells a lot about themselves. What did they really understand that God was doing with these people? If all they saw in this book was the going out of Egypt, they were caught in the same trap that ancient Israel was caught in. All they saw was the physical!

“Exodus” is not the name of the book in Hebrew. The name of the book in Hebrew is taken from the first words of chapter one. I think it is an interesting name.

Exodus 1:1 These are the names ...

What a way to name a book! “These are the names.” It goes on to talk about the sons of Jacob who came to Egypt. You might say, “That’s not a particularly good title for the book.”

But there is a relevance to it, a very great relevance. In terms of the Greek, there is a going out. There is the leaving of Egypt which is important. We are called out of Egypt and we are to go out of Egypt. We can’t forget that.

But we are also those whose names God has chosen to build up into a Temple! The Eternal places a lot of emphasis upon the names of His chosen people.

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

We could scroll forward to the end of the Bible. In Revelation 2:17 the Church in Pergamos is being persecuted. What does the Eternal say to them?

Revelation 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers (to the one who overcomes) I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

I have to sit back and wonder at times. “These are the names.” What names are we REALLY talking about here? What is the book of Exodus REALLY about? Yes, it is about the Children of Israel, but it is the Children of Israel teaching you and me, those that God has called to be part of His spiritual Temple, a lesson.

17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ...

... plural! In other words, each of us who has an ear are supposed to listen to ALL seven messages. So this is addressed to us, to each and every one of us. God has a special name for us! Interestingly, He brings in a few other references to the book of Exodus.

Where do we find about manna? In the book of Exodus!

So to the Church of Pergamos:

17 ... To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna ...

... some of the REAL food.

17 ... and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

Is that all it says about names? What about Philadelphia? Once again, “To the one who conquers ...” Is this written just to Philadelphia?

17 ... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

This is said to all of God’s people!

Revelation 3:12 The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

It seems as though we are going to have a lot of names! We are going to have a new name on a white stone. We are going to have “the name of my God,” and “the name of the city of my God,” and “My name.” We are going to have to do a little bit of memory work!

Names are very, very important to the Eternal.

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

To Philadelphia we come back to the aspect of being a pillar in the Temple of God. The Tabernacle was simply a temporary Temple, a portable Temple that could be moved around the wilderness and the nation until God saw it appropriate that a physical, permanent Temple could be built.

We have the same imagery here. We have the privilege of being a pillar in the Temple of God, something that upholds it, something that gives it strength and stability. That is what we are called to do.

I mentioned earlier that the aspect of the Promised Land is left out of the book of Exodus, other than the commands to keep the feasts. The aspect of the Promised Land and the latter festivals of Trumpets and so forth are looked over.

We end the book of Exodus with the erecting of the Tabernacle in time for the second Passover. Before the Children of Israel could even start to contemplate the inheritance of the Promised Land, the Tabernacle had to be ready. It had to be built.

What do you think the Eternal is working on at this point in time: other than readying His Temple so that the Kingdom can come and the Temple is ready? It is essential! It is one of those essential elements that we can so often overlook.

Yes, we would LOVE the "Promised Land" to be here. I think that every one of us probably has legitimate reasons for desiring the Kingdom of God to be set up tonight!

The Tabernacle had to be ready so that they could then move on to inherit the land. Let's go back to Exodus again, to where the Children of Israel had crossed the Red Sea. They were standing on the eastern bank of the Red Sea. We have one of the songs of Moses, a very beautiful Psalm. What is the time? When is this? We understand this to be the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. We understand this Psalm to have been initially sung on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread.

Exodus 15:13 "You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.

Then it goes on to talk about the nations round about and how they have recoiled in horror at the way in which God has strengthened and blessed these people.

14 The peoples have heard; they tremble; pangs have seized the inhabitants of Philistia.

15 Now are the chiefs of Edom dismayed; trembling seizes the leaders of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away.

16 Terror and dread fall upon them; because of the greatness of your arm, they are still as a stone, till your people, O LORD, pass by, till the people pass by whom you have purchased.

17 You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.

18 The LORD will reign forever and ever."

BOOK OF EXODUS
(Last Day of Unleavened Bread)

Israel is out of Egypt. Moses is leading them in a song which is focusing them upon the whole purpose of the Exodus, upon what they were doing, standing there. They had been purchased by the Eternal. They had been redeemed. They had been guided by the Eternal, to where? Not just to anywhere, no. His desire was to guide them to His holy abode! He wanted them to be part of His Tabernacle or Temple. He wanted to dwell with them.

17 You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established.

We are going to be planted on God's mountain.

18 The LORD will reign forever and ever."

So we come to the end of the Days of Unleavened Bread and I return to our first question: what has made these days successful? Was it just avoiding leavened bread? That is important. We should have done that. We have all had to repent, not quite in sackcloth and ashes, but we have had to repent and realise that we just shouldn't follow people's lead!

Is it not rather our realising our part in God's plan, realising what this is all about, that we are being built into a Temple, that we are called for an ultimate purpose: to have a very close and intimate relationship with the Eternal, to be PART of His dwelling place. How much closer can you get than that?

We are being built into a Temple.

We are being refined and cleansed so that what we have to offer is acceptable to the Eternal. We are becoming the people of God, by serving Him, by being His servants: His servants as opposed to the servants of sin.

So how do we have a successful Feast of Unleavened Bread? Clearly at times it can be that we come to realise some of the things we need to change, coming to realise just what we do need to overcome to become acceptable and part of that Tabernacle of God; to see this world as this world really is and for what it really is as opposed to the things of God, so that we don't end up being distracted. We can keep focused upon what God is doing and we can accomplish that together with Him.

If we can say that we have done that as a result of the Days of Unleavened Bread, if we have come to see God's plan that much more fully, to have seen how much we need to purify ourselves so that we can be part of that plan, yes, we have had a successful Feast of Unleavened Bread – because we do appreciate what it is all about. ❖