

Unleavened Bread 1_2

I'll wish you a very fine festival, even though I won't be here for the last day, but we will all extend also our best wishes to any who may be traveling through and to our brethren in the South Pacific.

This morning, Mr. David Albert addressed a very important question that I would just like to remind you of again how easy it is to find fault with the way things are, or in others, and to use small matters that seem great to be a source of stumbling.

One of the principles we're learning here for the days of Unleavened Bread is what constitutes sin, and it is important that we take a look at the meaning of this day from the beginning of the festival so that we have an understanding of what it is that we are to be reminded of and what it is that we should be doing and what God does for His people.

For the simple reason that there are many people who talk about sin in the blood of Christ, but very few really understand what that means.

Let's take a look at the question from another perspective.

In a sense, most of you are here because, I didn't say all, but most of you are here because of a general conviction that the work that has been done both by Mr. Herbert Armstrong and by the Church collectively around the world is unique and in some way reflects the biblical revelation as it has not been otherwise discoverable anywhere else.

This does not mean, however, that we should take for granted everything that the Church does, or to assume that everything that your neighbor in the Church does is what the Bible expects us to do.

That is, we do not use someone else's mistake as an excuse for justifying our own mistakes or sins.

What we learn, of course, is that the Passover, which now is the previous day, reflects what God chose to do for us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

We presume that in the two congregations assembled here and or where the visitors were that there was a general understanding in advance of that festival, which is not an annual Sabbath, but this festival has the meaning of the paying for sin.

So we start out with a Passover from the perspective of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, the Anointed, who pays for sin, which tells us something fundamental about the nature of how God deals with the material world and with the human family.

God is not like many who today are judges.

When God defined the way that man should go, he laid out in his own life, so to speak, that is the perfect example, and he expressed this in the person of Jesus Christ.

Christ is the express image, both in appearance and in character, of the Father in heaven.

Now when Christ was on earth, he reflected the character of God.

That character in the sense is the way people ought to live, or the way beings ought to express themselves one to another.

When defining that character, we shall come to the question of law, and we will note also the question of the transgression of that law, which is sin.

But first we note that God does not start out the festival season with the seven days of unleavened bread, where we intellectually discover what sin is, and then we come to the Passover, where we discover who paid the penalty.

It is the reverse order.

We start out with the Passover, which was slain between the two evenings at the same time that the evening sacrifice was slain.

Remember there was a morning and an evening sacrifice? That Passover lamb was the forerunner of the Messiah who paid a penalty in our stead.

What we discover then is that God first reveals to us what he must do.

We do not approach God by reason.

Reason may be important, but this is not the manner in which we do.

We approach God through faith in Jesus Christ.

That is, being creatures not governed by nature by the law of God, except as parents have instructed children, and children have read the Bible, assuming in this case we are not addressing children, but we are addressing adults for the moment.

Most of you came into the church as adults from a world in which you were not growing up in the church, but growing up in the various traditions and customs of the world.

So the first thing that must be done is to place yourself in a connection with God or in a position or relationship with him, which means that the guilty past, whatever it may have been, and however dimly you perceive it, must be eradicated so that you stand before God with an attitude of faith and confidence in what God can do.

You are not asked to stand before him on the basis of an intellectual grasp of law.

You stand before him on the basis that everything that you once did or stood for or are is laid aside.

That the penalty for those past mistakes has been removed.

I think it's important for us to grasp the starting point.

We start with a recognition of what man cannot do for himself, except that God does expect us to have faith in what God can do, and a recognition that everything that we did or stood for has to be in some way re-evaluated, revised, or expunged.

The Passover is a picture, then, of the need, first of all, of the removal of the penalty that naturally comes on every human being.

We all have different problems.

For some of you, the problem may just simply be getting along with other people in the church.

One of the biggest problems is that you tend to copy what other people do, good, bad, or indifferent.

I hope you realize this because it is a very common thing.

I want to tell a little story that might help us understand.

When we lived near the campus and our children went to Imperial schools, which was our grammar and high school, our children in general, not necessarily everyone, but our children in general, found it much more difficult to say no to temptations put in their way by other children who went to school, who attended Sabbath services, who were here for the annual occasions, who were in that sense culturally and socially a part of the church.

Only when we moved away, which was the primary reason for going west, or I squeally remember it, gave that advice long ago, Mr. Kanima, we should read American history to perceive what I am saying.

In Fiji they always went east, young man, whereas in America the address was to go west, young man.

Now, the important thing is, having acquired contact with children in the public schools who did not attend the church, our children in general immediately perceived the difference between what we were expected to do and what children in the world did.

I'm saying this because one of the big problems of the second and the third generation is we just tend to drift along with what the group does.

We tend to be influenced by what the group does, and the group may be made up of those who were born, parents already in the church, or those who came in at age 14, whose parents were then being converted as an illustration, and you had 14 years of another way of life and you all attend the same public schools in the area, or you attend the same congregations, and it is not always easy to distinguish what we should be doing.

What we have to recognize is that whether we were born into a family that was in the church, whether we attended church regularly from the beginning of our lives, or whether we came in as teenagers, or whether we came in at age 60, there are always temptations and influences that lead us in the direction wherever we wish to go.

For some people the temptation can be money, for others the temptation is to lie, for others it may be alcohol, for others it may be drugs, for others it may be Sabbath breaking, you know it might be food, whatever the problem.

These are all later to be defined in the law, we will come to that for the moment.

But we have to recognize, and this is important, that whether we were reared in the church or not by nature, you were born with a mind that had no direction of itself.

You are not governed fundamentally by instinct, you may be governed by instinct in the sense that you grasp or could nerf, but apart from those fundamental instincts that are physiological, your mind was non-directional, it goes whichever way you as parents taught your children or whichever way you children were influenced by other children, and you learned things from other children in school, from neighbors in the block, from relatives, your mind responds on the basis of the way you are reared before you are ever able to say, but why do I speak the language of my parents? You just started learning and mimicking, and language is the best illustration.

You don't know why you speak the language you do when you are little, you are only speaking it because you hear it, and it somehow registers on the other person's mind, and you are able to communicate.

You could hatch two little chicks and a hatchery, and they can communicate with each other without ever having seen a hen.

Little children are not like that.

We influence little children as adults long before they have the capacity to decide whether they want to be influenced.

I need to consider this because it means that all of you who are parents here or who are older in no way 100% would agree with every other parent in how to rear children.

That's why you don't agree with what they're doing, isn't that right? Because so often you see, well, if they were my children, I would treat them this way, and this clearly indicates that even in the church, much less the world and its confusion, each individual is reared and influenced slightly differently, even in the same family as parents themselves change, and as children who are older influence little children and bring other influences in.

Just in mind, we become aware of the fact that the non-directional human mind that isn't programmed in a certain direction becomes programmed on the basis of influence.

Happy is the child who is reared in the church, provided the parents, of course, are doing what the Bible says and not departing widely from it.

Far happier than some who are reared in the world in the drug cult, with parents who are on drugs or alcohol or smoking, mothers who may have been prostitutes to whatever the tragedies in the world it may be, of course, there are some very responsible families in the world.

But it doesn't matter.

Every single human being at some point has transgressed the law of God and is in need of the removal of the penalty of sin.

Now generally speaking, this is not comprehended by the intellect fundamentally, though it is important that it is comprehended instead by an evaluation and an internal perspective of one's attitude.

Sometimes children do not tell the truth, oh yes, they did learn in school you shall not bear false witness, but that doesn't mean that if you learned you shall not bear false witness that children have never told a little fibber, or that parents haven't done the same thing to cover up what they didn't want the children to know.

That reflects itself on the area of the conscience.

The conscience becomes a kind of touchstone that tells us how close or how far we may be from the things that we have learned.

Now we may be learning wrong, and if you depart from wrong you may be going in another wrong direction or you may be going in the right direction.

Conscience doesn't define right from wrong, it only defines how you depart from what you were taught.

But it does reflect to you your attitude.

You discover that there's a little boy who punched you in the nose, you know, he was the neighbor who just didn't like your father, and your attitude is not perfect love any more toward him.

These things you begin to note, the scripture says you shall not kill, then John says you shall not even hate, and Jesus also said you shall love your neighbor as yourself, and he also added you're to love your enemies.

And do good to the little boy who punched you in the nose.

Now you begin to see, when you begin to look in the Bible or to reflect on your conscience, that you are dealing with something in you that needs direction.

And you notice that every other person differs a little in his makeup or in his thinking and in his behavior, and we all have to come to recognize that these differences God can deal with through Jesus Christ who paid the penalty of every one of the overt mistakes or every one of the bad attitudes that comes along when we don't like someone else or try to cover up something from someone else.

I'm speaking here about the little things that we sometimes can look back on when we are in the primary grades or in high school.

So the Passover is that day which tells us that in some way, in general, the past needs cleaning up.

And what we are asked to do is to repent.

Now this is a biblical term, it is also used in literature, but primarily it is derived from religious literature.

It means, in this sense, to regret past mistakes and to set about, to go in a direction that is right, as distinct from the direction that one has been going.

In other words, the first festival of the Passover is a festival to bring to our attention that we can escape the penalties that we were under by whatever way we were going, or thinking, or living.

Now we are asked, it's like the Israelites in the house covered by the blood on the lintel and on the sideposts.

You now are free from the consequences that could be yours, which ultimately would lead to eternal death, never living forever.

Never having a chance, if you please, to visit Fiji, which is a paradise in this world.

And in the kingdom of God we probably will all have interesting chances to visit other areas, but to be cut off from any hope both in time and space of living forever is the consequence of going in whatever direction the non-directional human mind takes us.

Now with instruction we tend to go in one direction or another.

We may be tempted in one direction or tempted in another, and we become directional as we mature.

But that direction now, while you are in the house that's covered with the blood, has to be reoriented.

So you start out with getting rid of the past and focusing in on the direction you should now go.

And this direction in ancient Egypt was typified by the departure from the land of Ramses or the site of Ramses, which in Jewish tradition preserved by Josephus was old Cairo.

And you moved east out of the land of Egypt.

That is, there was now a direction you were to go.

Now the Israelites were merely to do the physical thing of going in a particular direction under a particular leadership.

They were to do it without leaven.

What we learned from this is that once we start out with our guilty past removed, we now must all move in a particular direction.

It's a direction that is without sin, because leaven in this sense is used as a symbol of sin.

And how all defines it clearly in 1 Corinthians, it is not so clearly defined in the law itself.

Except the nature of leaven should have told us what we are dealing with.

Since we are asked to have the law in our hearts and minds, we would automatically presume that leaven is the type of lawlessness.

Leaven permeates everything.

If you put a little leaven in one end of a large loaf, the leaven will finally permeate the whole thing.

So the children of Israel physically were asked to move as a group in a singular direction.

Now in the church, we learn that we also are asked to move as a group.

There are of necessity, as Mr. Antion mentioned this morning, of necessity as the need for leadership to make certain basic decisions.

The leader may be flawed, because no human being other than Jesus Christ has ever been perfect.

Moses was not perfect.

Mr. Armstrong has said he is not perfect.

You don't have to debate those issues.

It is a question of the direction that God wants the church to go and that God asks and reveals to the leaders to go.

In this case, the children of Israel could have gone in any direction they wanted to, but they were asked to follow in a singular direction, where the cloud led them by day and the light by night.

Where Moses went, where God spoke to Moses, this is the route that is without sin.

That is, we are to move out without leaven.

So if the church has overall a responsibility collectively to achieve, we should pursue that effort through the various media that the church has asked for use today, and we also do all these things without sin, both on the job and in our own private lives, dealing with our neighbors and among employees.

Many are here with one another.

Sin is missing the mark, not achieving the goal of God's character, falling short of the spiritual, the mental character aspect of the image of God.

Now if we want to know what God's character is, we have to listen to what he instructs us, and he instructs us in the Bible, as we have it here, about right and wrong, both in terms of specific statements and examples.

We have far more instruction about examples than most people realize, and we have many laws that people would like to get around.

But the Bible then becomes the basic guide to enable us to perceive what God's character is or how he would behave in a particular way, and it is ultimately reflected in the way Christ behaved toward other human beings.

The days of Unleavened Bread follow the Passover in this sense, that once you are forgiven of your past, whichever direction you were then facing on the basis of how you were influenced by other people in society, now you are asked to move in a certain direction as the children of Israel left Egypt, Egypt being a type of sin.

You must make the decision of more than staying in the house where the blood protected you, you must now also make the decision to move on with the group when the group moves, because those who did not leave after being saved from death would have stayed in slavery in Egypt.

There is the need therefore to move as a collective body.

It wasn't enough for an Israelite to say, I have been spared, I believe I will head north, somebody says I will head south, somebody says I'll head west, we'll go to Libya, God was going east.

Therefore there is the need of the body, that is the church as a whole, to move in the same direction in terms of the function of the group as well as doing so without sin, that is focusing on what our goals are and achieving those goals with the character of God and not human cleverness or intellectuality, the human cleverness or wisdom and human intellect are important, but they must be made subject to the law of God, they must be made subject to the revelation of God that we call the Bible.

The human mind and human reasoning must be brought into submission to Jesus Christ, who is our captain today, as he was the captain of the children of Israel in the days of Moses.

When the children of Israel moved along, they discovered there were problems along the way, while they were proceeding toward the Red Sea and afterward.

I want to dwell on this point before I get to the question of the Red Sea, but you discover that wherever the group went, there were problems, sometimes there was no water, sometimes there were enemies, sometimes there was no food, sometimes there were snakes, there were problems of all sorts.

It was these problems that the children of Israel had to face up to and every day didn't produce the same kind of problem, sometimes it was an absolute delight by the end of the day, just marvelous, and the next day it might have been just the opposite.

You could never know what problems life would bring as each day goes by, but in every case the children of Israel were expected to face those problems in accordance with the law of God, not in

accordance with human reason, speculation, intellectuality, but with faith and confidence that God could deliver them if they were willing to do what he said.

Maybe they had to go hungry, maybe they had to be thirsty, but they needed sometimes to be patient and to wait for God to provide what they needed.

Out with our minds and reasoning in the right way instead of the wrong way.

So now let us go back, not to the wilderness wandering in Sinai, but while they're still in Egypt, you see there's a statement in the law, seems rather plain, in the book of Exodus.

So we mentioned three times a year, I read this this morning, you're to keep a feast to me, 23, 14. Now there's the feast of unleavened bread, you shall keep seven days, you shall eat unleavened bread as I commanded you at the time appointed in the first month of the year, for in it you came out from Egypt. Now, though this is a verse that is not that precise as a statement, it would be difficult to deny the implication that in this seven-day festival in the month of Abib, the children of Israel went out of Egypt.

That is, it was a seven-day period before they left the final borders of Egypt proper.

So let me illustrate just briefly. If you had decided to take the first step to be protected from the guilt of sin on the Passover, if you had decided to leave Egypt, to leave the land of sin, to go with the group that went with God, you could start out in the direction that was basically east, and you would be following God till you reached the area of the Suez.

This is not the canal, the canal wasn't there at that time, but it's this general area.

And at this time, you would have discovered if you were really smart that the way you would not want to go, if you had known a little bit of the geography, the way you would not want to go is south, because you would be trapped in the wilderness between mountains and sea, and you would have no other place to go. You'd be right along the shores of the Gulf of Suez, and you would never be able to get to the Promised Land that way. So God said, we're turning south.

And at this point, you decided another leader was necessary because Moses, God has message wrong. I want you to bear that in mind.

Moses clearly made a mistake because going south was not reasonable.

We are going to have to in some way replace Moses. Isn't that right, brethren? There's no doubt about it. Reason would clearly tell us. Anybody with an ounce