

Unleavened Bread 2_2

only those who had faith would have proceeded south. I just want you to think of how that might apply in January, in February, in March, in 1979, in the Worldwide Church of God, the descendants of the children of Israel, and the next multitude.

The ancestors of the Fijians have a tradition that they were there too. They also crossed the Red Sea, and they were there when Aaron was led to build the box that we call the Ark, but they never entered the Promised Land, and that's another story. You could have decided that the way to go was east, or the way to go was north, or go back west and surrender to the Egyptians. You see, you discover interestingly that it's one thing to have unleavened bread, it's another thing to know the direction you're going with it. People sometimes think that they can be unleavened and go in another direction from the Church, but there are two things you learn. You have to move as a group, and you also have to be unleavened. Is that clear? You don't say, well, I'm going to be unleavened, and I'm going west, or I'm going to be unleavened, and at this point I'm going north or east, because you also realize that you have the question of the government of God as well as the question of sin. And so you learn that the God who delivered you because of the blood also asked you to go in a direction that at this point doesn't make sense unless it's a miracle-working God. It doesn't make sense unless this God has special powers to do things for the Church that would deliver the Church and show His magnitude, and so we now do move south by faith. And we come to the shores of the Red Sea in the area of the Gulf of Aqaba that the Greeks later called Kataklima, or Klisma, because an event happened there that the Egyptians thought was cataclysmic.

Now, what you would have discovered is that you would have been in trouble on the twentieth day of the month because you would have seen in the distance the dust of the army and horses and chariots of Pharaoh. He was coming south also, and that was a very reasonable thing to do. After all, the children of Israel were entangled in the wilderness. So you discovered at this point that there is reason again to question the government of God because God has got you now clearly in a position where there is no hope for you. So what can we do? The children of Israel were at this point so frightened they didn't know what to do.

There was no way to go east, that was where the sea was, and to go west was a mountain to climb up, and that got you nowhere. To go north, you would have been overrun by Pharaoh's horses, and to go south were more mountains. You would have starved to death, so they had no choice.

At this point, they should have remembered that Moses carried an unusual stick.

Now, whether this was Moses' legal department, I don't know. There are some people who think that our legal department may be compared to a snake. Let's assume that maybe it is, and it's going to swallow the other snake, and we won't argue that question any further.

I just want you to think about it. You see, the children of Israel forgot that Moses had some special contact with God because God chose to have some special contact with him, and God gave Moses a unique stick. It was a miraculous thing that happened.

At this point, quite unexpectedly, a fog arose and settled north of the children of Israel, and the Egyptians could proceed no further, but somehow there was a very significant amount of light to the south of the fog and no light penetrated to the north. Now, the Egyptians, of course, didn't perceive what was on the other side because they couldn't see the light.

Now, at this point, Moses was told to go east and to go to the Red Sea.

I want you to note that it's every bit as important to know what the children of Israel were doing as well as what they were eating, because too often I think we have assumed that if we just put out sin and then do our own things and go our own ways, we're pleasing God.

But it was both. The children of Israel were asked to put out sin, which made it possible for them to perceive how they ought to conduct themselves while they were walking with God in this wilderness that was still within the ultimate political confines of the state or empire of Egypt.

Now, you know the story from the Bible and from the movie.

The Red Sea uniquely parted, and the children of Israel moved through, and suddenly there was a most remarkable deliverance such as they had never experienced before.

It's one thing to be in the house while somebody dies over there and nobody here. It's another thing to suddenly see the waters stand up on both sides, and you be asked to walk through like here, and the waters do nothing, and it's just as if it were dry land. And this was, from every evidence that we would glean in terms of example and purpose, the night of the seventh day of unleavened bread.

And then the fog lifted, and the Egyptians could see, and the Israelites were crossing over the Gulf of Suez. This was not some little reded place on the north near the Mediterranean.

But for those of you who believe that the crossing was up there near the Mediterranean, and I have my geography wrong, why don't you attend the lectures where that is explained correctly for you? Here the explanation is biblical and different.

It would be very difficult for me to perceive of the wall of waters six inches high on each side in the little red area overflowing the entire Egyptian army.

But that alone should tell you something of the story.

But the Egyptians, as you know, perished in their attempt, and God delivered the children of Israel.

Now we learned from this what is probably more important now than any other lesson.

As the children of Israel went along, God gave them laws, he told them what sin is, they were asked to put it out. But we have to do something as a group. The festivals were given to God, sorry, by God, to the church as a group. Abraham was not commanded to keep these days, he was commanded to keep the Sabbath, that came in the days of Adam.

The festivals were given to the church. Abraham was asked to, in this sense, to walk as a singular individual or a few members of the family, was not a collective group.

But once there is a collective group, this group is asked to enact certain things.

And that particular thing that is most important is to remove sin, like you remove leaven, but you are also to do it as a group. You do it as a collective group, and you learn when you keep these days that you should repeat and discuss and examine what is written in the Scripture.

And when we do this about this day, we discover something remarkable. This is the only festival that I know of where in the beginning the children of Israel had to do something in addition to the unleavened bread, that is to walk in a certain direction during the entire period as a group, which tells us that we must work together as a group to do the work we are called to accomplish.

You are not asked to do this on the single day of Pentecost, the single day of trumpets, you weren't asked to do it on Passover either, or on the day of Atonement, and at the Feast of Tabernacles you are only asked to stay at a certain place. This is the one festival that at the beginning they were asked to do something very special, and that is to work together as a group and to stay in order and to go from one place to another till a job was done, till they had in fact completed seven days of leaving Egypt from the area of the Nile to the east shores of the Suez, and that was in actuality the real, the political heaven bread that children of Israel marched through the land and escaped.

If we were to apply this principle today, we would discover how important it is to work together as a group, because if the children of Israel had said, well, I think there's another way to get on the other side of this branch of the Red Sea, those who would have essayed to do it another way would never have escaped. So let me now say something very plain.

There is a way of escape for the Church of God today that is called the Worldwide Church of God, just as there was an escape for the children of Israel through the stick that Moses had in his hand that parted the waters of the Gulf of Suez and delivered them from the armies of Pharaoh.

But there are those who are not of this fellowship, and some who may not later be of this fellowship, who are here, you have to make your decision, who don't believe that the Church is going to escape in the crisis at the close as it escaped from the armies of Pharaoh.

And I will prophesy very plainly, he who does not believe there is a way of escape will not have one, and you will have to learn what it's like to go north to be recaptured by Pharaoh's army and dealt with as someone who tried to leave the world and now is going back into it, compromising.

And we'll discover the world still, someone who tried to leave the world and now is going back into it, compromising. And you will discover the world still doesn't want you, you can compromise with it all you wish. And that's the tragedy of the congregation that is described in the last third of the third chapter of Revelation. Just remember that there is, in the story of Unleavened Bread, a day as well as a way of escape. And that there will be people in this generation who will reason and do things that not even the carnal minded children of Israel did in their day.

They were too scared to think of any other explanation.

And God did deliver them. Years later, after they had received the law which helps to define sin as you read it, and examples which help you even more to evaluate what sin is and righteousness, the children of Israel were now east of Jordan and had received a repetition of the law that is Deuteronomus, the second giving of the law. Moses repeating it in the 40th year after the children of Israel were out of Egypt. This was in the area that we would call Jordan, the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. And he repeats to a new generation, the basic principles add some things here, clarifies it, because it's no longer a wilderness trek, you are now entering the Promised Land.

And we come to the story of the death of Moses, and now we're in the days of Joshua.

And we will now point up a very important facet of our story.

So the children of Israel at this time are east of Jordan.

And what we discover is the children of Israel were asked to cross over the Jordan River.

And this river backed up on the north, and so the children of Israel could cross over.

And now after that event, we learned in verse 9 that the children of Israel were circumcised and in verse 10 they encamped at Gilgal and they kept the Passover on the 14th day of the month at even in

the plains of Jericho. Jericho is now a town, Old Venice City, that overlooks the area of the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

Now, what we have here is a very interesting account.

Again, I will appeal to a statement in Josephus that this event here is the story of the seven days of unleavened bread. I have given a sermon specifically on that, so we'll not quote Josephus here, but point up that in the Jewish tradition preserved by Josephus, a priest of the tribe of Levi and of the family of Aaron, he says that when the children of Israel encompassed the city of Jericho, this was during the seven days of unleavened bread.

Now note, interestingly, another aspect of the festival, because if you are to look at events, you should begin to note that God did certain things at this time.

Here we have the city surrounded, and the people march around once each day for six days, and on the seventh day, they march around seven times, the trumpets blow, and the walls fell down flat.

Misen would have told any Israelite that exercise was good, it was worth walking around, but to think that the walls would fall down flat was not reasonable.

Nevertheless, this is what God did. He himself had to take down the bastions of those walls, which would have protected the people inside, and there was nothing that the children of Israel from the outside could do. So on the seventh day, we have here the picture of the crumbling of sin.

In this particular case, the children of Israel collectively had a responsibility.

They had to do each day. It was not enough to eat unleavened bread.

There was also something else to do. That is, they had to, in a sense, terrify the sinners within, so to speak, or to, shall we say, encircle sin.

Jericho was the city of sin, if you please, in the land of Canaan, among the Canaanite Arabs of that day.

And, of course, the Arabs today use the term, the Canaanite Arab, to refer to all these people, because these were Semitic-speaking people, and Semitic-speaking people in the Middle East are all Arabs. There may be Christian Arabs, or there may be Muslim Arabs. And no Canaanite today, who still lives in the land, or may be in Lebanon, or may be in Jordan, or may be in Syria, thinks of himself as other than an Arab. This was an Arab-Israeli confrontation.

It is not something new. It is something very ancient. We know those people spoke a language that was Semitic, because they could communicate back and forth, and the names of their cities are all Semitic. So the Canaanite Arabs, and remember, brethren, an Ishmaelite is an Arab, not because all Arabs are Ishmaelites, but because Ishmaelites, among many other people, are people who live in the area of the East. Where the Semitic language was spoken, and the word Arab is clearly derived from a term that we associate with the word evening. And it was the area where the darkness of evening first began for people who lived in this area, and in the West you know it was still light. You know the word for evening, that is between the two evenings, when the Passover is slain, is ultimately a word from the same basic root as the word Arab.

From this in mind, we have a massive confrontation here between, if you please, the civilization of God as expressed in his law, and the Arab Canaanites who lived in the land of Palestine. And on the seventh day, after sin had in a sense been surrounded and kept in control by the children of Israel, God acted and obliterated the walls of defense, and the city was destroyed.

Now the seven days of Unleavened Bread pictured the 7,000 years of human experience that God has set out. For six days we have to tolerate the city. We have to tolerate sin. We have to try to encompass it as a group, not to let it escape. But on the seventh day, typical of the thousand years, God chooses to see that the walls that defend sin that look so impregnable are totally removed.

And that is the time when sin no longer reigns in the world.

So as a church we have a responsibility, just as the children of Israel there had a responsibility.

Now among the Canaanite Arabs was a woman who believed God, and among the children of Israel was a man of Judah who coveted, just so you know the rest of the story.

There was an innkeeper who bedded men down in several ways, who happened to have been called of God to see that her profession needed reorientation, or is it expurgation. And she had faith, and she trusted God, and just that fragment of the wall under her house where her father and family lived didn't fall. And she was rescued. So out of the Gentiles there is a tiny group that God did call at the very beginning. And God rescued her to show that any Gentile who by faith apprehends what God is going to do for his people may be saved from this destruction that she has to learn to give up the city of sin, the ways of sin, the defenses of sin. And in the same way we have the lesson of a man of the house of Judah who having walked over the rubble of the fallen walls saw some very nice cloth and precious metals that were to be dedicated to God, and he decided to put them in his tent.

And you should know the rest of the story. If you've read the account in the Book of Joshua, chapter 7, the children of Israel committed a trespass concerning the devoted thing for Acan, the son of Karmie, the son of Zabbi, the son of Zira, of the tribe of Judah, took of the devoted thing. And here we have this remarkable contrast, someone of the family of Judah who reached out for what was the remnant of a culture that was to be laid aside and buried in a woman who professionally was a sinner, who comprehended by faith the promises of God. Acan and his family who fell under the heap of stones as a penalty of their sin when they were all stoned to death in a former prostitute who became an ancestor of Jesus Christ, Rahab the Harlot, that all who look at the Middle East contemplate the significance of this significant event recorded in the Book of Joshua. Now, many years later, we will close with another experience.

You could find this elsewhere. It's in the Book of Isaiah. It's in the Book of Second Chronicles.

Since you like to read Isaiah, we will turn to Second Chronicles in Chapter 32.

This is the story of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, who encamped against Judah and its fortified cities. Now, in Jewish tradition, this event occurred at the beginning of the Passover season. We will briefly note that here is a man who represents those people who are part, ultimately, of the great Assyrian Babylonian culture and the final great realm that God deals with. In the Book of Revelation and in the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah and some of the minor prophets, but you especially find it in Revelation, it's called Babylon or Babylon the Great. Because the events of ancient Assyria, Babylonia, and I link them together for reasons that I don't need to explain here, Babylonia ultimately as a city swallowed up the Assyrian Empire after it had overextended itself. The final realm has many parallels with the power of Nebuchadnezzar, but it also has parallels with the power of the kings of Assyria. Here was Sennacherib who besieged the king of Judah in the city of Jerusalem and wrote a letter to verse 17 to taunt the Lord, the God of Israel, and to speak against him. As the gods of the nations he wrote, which have not delivered their people out of my hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of my hand. And the children of Israel cried with a loud voice, no,

in this case they did, the Assyrians, in the Jews language so the people would hear them in order to scare them.

That is, they must have read this letter out loud that was being sent to the king himself, Hezekiah.

And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem, verse 19, as of the gods of the peoples of the earth, which are the works of men's hands. And so Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, prayed because of this and cried to heaven, and the Lord sent an angel who cut off all the mighty men of Valor and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. Now this was after the house of Israel fell. So he returned with shame of face to his own land, and when he was come there into the house of his God some years later, his sons came who came forth of his own body, slew him with the sword. Now in Jewish tradition this event occurred.

At the same time, Mus is also a symbol of what God is going to do to protect his church, and if you please, to protect the remnant of the house of Judah at Jerusalem at the crisis at the close, Mr. Begin may be a politician. He is a politician when he talks to Sadat. He is a politician when he talks to Kair. He is a politician when he talks to other Israelis. He is a religious Zalat when he talks to God. He anticipates that God will deliver the children of Judah that we now call Israelis, and that no matter what happens, though it is wise to have every defense possible, that in the end his decisions are ultimately based on what God will do for Israel that he will do for no other people around. We have to bear that in mind every bit as much as we should have borne in mind the Muslim revolution, the Islamic revolution in Iran. Now there was another contrast to this. In Jewish tradition the birth of Isaac also occurred the Passover season.

He is the son of Pumps, whereas Ishmael was the son of the flesh from the servant girl.

And so if we were to look at these four events just pointing up the last one that God gave to Abraham, a son of promise, just as here he delivers Judah, the tribe that is at Jerusalem, and the promise that is made to Abraham to deliver his children and to give them all for the good of the world is now being fulfilled in pictures that are laid out here for the Passover and days of unleavened bread. You might wonder why these events might not have occurred with the Feast of Trumpets, what might not have occurred with some other event in the autumn, but there's a reason because God's deliverance and protection of his people and his calling them out and choosing them, giving Isaac birth, delivering Rahab, all of this is associated with the need of putting away sin.

And this is the festival that concentrates on that. This is not the festival that concentrates on the nature of the government of God in the world tomorrow for a thousand years. That's the Feast of Tabernacle. It's not concentrating on the nature of the removal of the demons and the devil expressed in the day of atonement. It's not concentrating on God's intervention in world affairs, Feast of Trumpets, not concentrating on the birth of the church into the kingdom.

It's concentrating on the fact that none of us will be there unless we do too.