

LEVITICUS

Lesson 33 - Chapter 23

Baruch Levine aptly names Leviticus 23 as “The Calendar of Sacred Time”. So we get a detailed schedule of religious events as ordained by Yehoveh and given to the people of Israel in this chapter. These religious events are most recognizable to us as the 7 Biblical Feasts and this is NOT the first time we’ve been introduced to them nor the last time we’ll get more detailed information about how and when and WHY they are to be observed.

Hebrew scholars will tell you that there are 3 primary sections of Torah where the Religious event calendar is presented; the first is in Exodus chapters 21-23. This section has come to be known among the Hebrews as the Book of the Covenant. The Book of the Covenant consists of those rules and ordinances immediately following the giving of the 10 Commandments in Exodus chapter 20. Recall that the 10 Commandments were essentially the first 10 of what would grow to 613 laws of Torah; however these first 10 laws are also double as the 10 basic principles upon which the remaining 603 laws.....and all future commands of God.....would be founded. There is no law given that does NOT conform to the principles and pattern of the 10 Commandments. And permit me to wonder out loud why the same Church that has long ago determined that the Torah is an obsolete document (the Laws replaced by Grace) and says that to follow the laws and principles of Torah amounts to the dreaded “legalism”, would then turn around and venerate (actually, demand) that those first 10 OT laws, the 10 Commandments, be scrupulously observed?

After the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 21-23) the next section of Torah that adds to the religious event calendar is what we are currently reading in Leviticus 23 coupled with Numbers 28-29; the 3rd section is in Deuteronomy.

Why 3 separate sections of Torah on the Religious event calendar? Are they but repetitions of one another? Do they conflict with one another? No, these sections each give us different aspects of the Religious event calendar, whose primary focus are the 7 Biblical feasts.

It has long been popular for those who oppose literal Bible interpretation, and those who oppose God in general, to point out that there are differences and discrepancies among Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and for me to say that those differences don’t exist would be dishonest. In response to this challenging of Scripture it has long been taught to the Church that the differences we see among the 4 Gospels are not a matter of conflict or error, rather they are but the same events told through the eyes of 4 different men; some were eye witnesses and others gathered their information directly from eye witnesses. As we all recognize in our own personal life experiences, when several people view the same event or hear the same speech or sermon each comes away with a slightly different perception on what

it is they saw and heard. I can tell you with authority that that is the case because after every teaching session I am amazed at the variety of what it is that different people tell me that they heard me say (and DIDN'T hear me say); and of what they thought I MEANT by something I said, and what it is they TOOK from what I said that had application or impact for them. Among the 4 Gospel accounts it should not be at all surprising that each writer sees Yeshua and the acts of His life and ministry a little differently; if that wasn't the case common sense tells us we should suspect some not entirely honest editing took place to make everything appear perfectly consistent. The differences that arise are in some cases a matter of weight and emphasis; .in other cases it's simply a matter of the writer choosing which events to record and which to leave out. It was a matter of what seemed important to that hearer versus what seemed ordinary. And just like hearing testimony at a trial from a number of witnesses, a more complete picture is usually pieced together than hearing from but one; yet, at the same time, we'll often get some information that only confuses the situation. I call this phenomenon "walking around the rock". If each of us approaches a large boulder and each is instructed to stand at a different point around that boulder; and then we're asked to describe what we see in front of us each description is going to vary somewhat because the boulder is not uniform from every angle; it looks a little different depending on the exact spot you are standing. Yet it is absolutely the same boulder for each of us.

It is the same with these 3 sections of Torah concerning the Hebrew calendar of religious events. Each of these 3 sections offers a little different emphasis, or weight, or perspective that when taken as a composite gives us a more complete picture of what God expected from His people in this regard.

Because we are in Leviticus, the priestly section of Torah, we're going to get a more priestly point of view; so there will be a little more attention paid to the required rituals and associated sacrifices of the Biblical Feasts.

Let's read all of Leviticus 23 then as we move along we'll re-read pertinent portions.

Let me warn you in advance that we're going to look in depth at some of the details associated with these various festivals because they play such a central role in the life and ministry of Messiah. We're also going to take a closer look because these passages have been so misunderstood by Christians for centuries that we have come away with some pretty odd and very misguided Church traditions and doctrines as a result.

READ LEVITICUS 23 all

We get the typical beginning to a passage of Leviticus where it is stated that God is speaking to Moses and telling Moses what he is to relate to the people of Israel. So while these passages are presented from a priestly point of view they are still directed to the nation of Israel as a whole, not JUST the priests.

Yehoveh tells Moses that what follows is about something He calls His "fixed or appointed times" of sacred occasions. The Hebrew word translated as fixed or appointed times is *mo'ed*; and fixed times or appointed times is a good and accurate translation of *mo'ed*. These times

are more than fixed, however, they are also sacred. They are sacred to Yehoveh and they are therefore to be considered sacred to the people of Israel. Let's remember that sacred simply indicates that something has been set-apart as special. And while we won't go there for now I also want you to fully take-in and ponder that GOD's sacred times are special because they **are** holy; and that the sections of the NT which SEEM.....and I underline SEEM.....to indicate that suddenly all of God's sacred times are turned on their heads and Paul now calls them negative things such as being of the "elemental spirits" and "worthless" just doesn't pass the smell test. This is a terrible translation, taken out of context, that is the result of an anti-Jewish agenda that has held the Church hostage for 1900 years. It is one thing to acknowledge and recognize the fulfillment of the prophesied transformation of the sacrificial system from employing the blood of goats and bulls each day to atone for Israel's sins, into a once-and-for-all sacrifice of Yeshua's perfect blood for atonement. It is quite another leap for Yehoveh to carefully lay out these fixed times of holy observances in Holy Scripture, declare them good and mandatory **and permanent**, and then supposedly turn around with the advent of Yeshua and not only cancel them but declare these exact same sacred events as having always been worthless and as only things that have come from man's debased mind. And although **that exact theology** is taught consistently in our era (usually coupled with replacement theology or the latest trend that Jesus was never FOR Israel) it comes from a sad and sometimes purposeful misunderstanding and mistranslation of those NT passages, and an even more dreadful ignorance of the Torah. These sacred observances WERE NOT overturned by Yehoveh....in fact, almost every story we have of Jesus going to Jerusalem is for **the purpose** of His required and joyful pilgrimage to observe one or another of these Biblical Feasts, and that is not conjecture. Are we to assume that Yeshua was observing Levitical rituals at the same time they were being deemed evil by the Father who instituted them? Or, conversely, that His message to His current and future disciples was "do as I say but not as I do?" Nonsense.

The first fixed time, **mo'ed**, that Yehoveh deals with, is the Sabbath. And yet there is a differentiation made between Sabbath and "fixed time" (and rightly so). For as I have taught you in prior lessons, unlike what some think, the Sabbath was NOT first instituted as one of the 10 Commandments given to Moses on Mt. Sinai; the Sabbath was established way back in Genesis 2 at the time of Creation:

NAS Genesis 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

Rather than inventing the Sabbath at Mt. Sinai, God simply reinforced the duty of Israel to observe the Sabbath, an observance that had obviously long ago been forgotten by mankind.

NAS Exodus 20:8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11 "For in six days

the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

The key word here is “remember”. The Hebrew is **kazar**.....and it means to recall, to bring back from memory. The sense of it is to bring back something that used to be. The Sabbath Day observance was NOT originated between God and Israel, it was established between God and all mankind in general at the end of Creation.

The Hebrew word for Sabbath is **Shabbat**, which, of course, is quite different from **mo’ed**, which means fixed time. So what the term Shabbat amounts to is different from what goes on during a **mo’ed**. This will become clearer as we move through today’s lesson. We’re going to look at this from a little different angle than what we normally have because we find that there are a number of KINDS of Sabbaths..... Shabbats.....and they each have a different meaning and place in the religious events calendar.

Verse 3 speaks of the kind of Sabbath we are most familiar with: the 7th day Sabbath, formally called Shabbat. And this type of Sabbath contains 3 elements that separate it from all other days of the week (days 1-6) as well as from all other fixed times that have been assigned some Sabbath-like requirements.

The 7th day Shabbat, first, prohibits “work”....in Hebrew, **mela’khal**. Second it is a sacred day and is to be treated as such; and third it must be observed by all Israelites no matter where they may be.

But verse 3 puts a little finer point on what “work”, **mela’khal**, amounts to; it says the 7th day Shabbat is to result in “complete rest”. In Hebrew the words used in this verse are **Shabbat Shabbaton**. The best English translation that explains the sense of this two-word construction is probably “the **most** restful cessation from assigned tasks”. In other words of all the holy observances.....the balance of which almost all result from observing the Biblical Feasts....whereby some of those holy feast days require resting from daily tasks, the 7th day Shabbat is to be the one whereby the cessation of work is to be the **most** extreme. It is the one whereby absolutely no work is to be done. To what extent this is to be taken is shown to us in Exodus as regards the gathering of Manna; a double portion was to be gathered on the 6th day of the week so that it didn’t have to be gathered on the 7th day, the Shabbat. There is even a case in Numbers whereby God ordered a man executed for gathering sticks (presumably for a fire) on the Sabbath. Let me reiterate: we are talking here about the 7th day Sabbath, Shabbat, the one that comes as the last day of every week, each and every week. The Sabbath that was instituted as the last act of Creation.

Yet there were other Shabbats than just the 7th day Shabbat. For instance, as concerns the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the 1st day of that feast is “a Shabbat”, as is the LAST day of that same feast. Others of the various Feasts also have special Sabbath days associated with them. There are also Sabbath years (meaning every 7th year).

But there is a distinction made in Hebrew between **THE** Sabbath and **A** Sabbath. **THE** Sabbath is referring ONLY to the original 7th day Sabbath. **A** Sabbath is any other ordained day of rest.

Here's the thing: Sabbath literally means rest or cessation. If we were to call the 7th day of the week an English word that properly corresponds to the Hebrew "Shabbat", it would be "REST". Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Rest. So anytime God orders a sacred time when one's regular duties were to be put aside the Bible terms it a Sabbath. But the 7th day Sabbath is above all these other days. In fact the NAME for the 7th day of the week is Shabbat....all the other days of the week are simply referred to in the Bible by number (1st day, 2nd day, and so forth).

Now one of the main reasons a Sabbath was declared on the first day of a Biblical Feast was so there was time to make preparation. Therefore a Sabbath, or better a Shabbaton, did not require that ALL work stop. Women could prepare food and men could gather wood for fires, etc. Regular work such as a tradecraft (like if a man was a carpenter) was to cease on that Shabbaton. But he could do other things that were primarily associated with preparing for that particular Biblical Feast. So the 7th day Sabbath was for man's physical and spiritual rest so he could regenerate, but it was also to mimic God's cessation from doing anything that creates; the other so-called Sabbaths were generally so Hebrew folks could prepare for the associated Biblical feast.

One other little thing and we'll move on: the words "it shall be a Sabbath to the Lord" at the end of verse 3 are VERY important. The Hebrew grammar used here uses the possessive form of the word; therefore it makes the Sabbath as a possession of the Lord.....the Sabbath belongs to God. It's His. That makes the Sabbath "holy property" and we've discussed in prior lessons the terrible results for one who would dare to trespass against God's holy property. The OT Hebrews fully understood that the Sabbath belonged to God as did the Hebrews of Yeshua's day; so compare Lev. 23:3 to Jesus' comments in **NAS Luke 6:5 And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."**

Of course Son of Man was one of several favorite ways Jesus used when referring to Himself. And here (for those who say Jesus never said He was God) is a place where all those Jews around Him knew full well what He was saying; that He, Yeshua, was the possessor, the owner, the Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was Christ's holy property; it was His domain. He couldn't have said that He was God in a more forceful way than He did here.

So Sabbath can refer to the recurring 7th day of the week or it can refer to a special day whereby SOME work is set aside at the beginning of a Feast or it can refer to that 7th year whereby the fields are not to be tilled or planted; and Sabbath can generally refer to ANY God-established and sanctified cycle consisting of 7's.....7 days, 7 weeks, 7 years, 7 years of years (Jubilee), 7 weeks of weeks (Pentecost/Shavuot), and so on. Knowing the Hebrew words helps us because USUALLY in Hebrew the word **Shabbaton** is used to refer to days of rest that are associated with the Biblical feasts, while **Shabbat** is used to refer to that unique once per week 7th day of rest.

RE-READ LEV.23: 4-8

Now without doubt these Biblical Festivals interrupted the daily and weekly flows of the Israelites' every day life so they did not come without inconvenience. The purpose of these

festivals were as reminders; reminders of God's overarching, immutable preeminence. Without doubt the people of Israel had no idea of the prophetic nature of each of these Biblical festivals, these "fixed times". We Believers of today can see it but they did it simply out of obedience to the Law. Certainly some of these holy days were great fun for the children as it broke the monotony of life for them; but in many cases it was a lot of work for the adults. And in 3 of these festivals it was required that they be celebrated AT the Temple. Therefore if one lived in or near Jerusalem that was one thing; but if one lived far to the south or north from Jerusalem that was another. Preparation would need to begin sooner; journeys of several days would have to be undertaken to arrive in time for the appointed day. There was a certain amount of danger in every journey, and the cost of travel was greater.

In verse 5 we begin to get the dates and requirements for the Feast of Unleavened Bread also called the Feast of Matza, or just Matza. Now what can get confusing is that depending on how one chooses to look at it, Passover is essentially part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or Unleavened Bread is part of the Feast of Passover; the two Feasts, though separately named, are intricately connected. The Passover sacrifice is to be offered on the evening of the 14th day of Nissan. Nissan roughly corresponds to our March-April time frame meaning that this is a spring feast. However Nissan is ALSO the 1st month of the year for the Hebrews; or better it's the first month of the Religious event calendar the Hebrews used. I'm not going to get into calendar issues anymore than I have to, but just know that there were TWO main types of calendars that the Hebrews used (plus a couple more minor ones.....one for tithing animals and the other for tithing fruit): the civil calendar and the religious event calendar. Don't get all confused by this; it's not much different than our concept of a fiscal calendar and our civil calendar. That is, in our modern civil calendar we have a 365-day year and the first month of our civil calendar year is January 1st. But, for you folks who are in business when it comes to accounting practices for tax purposes you can make your fiscal calendar year anything you'd like: you can start the year in any month you see fit.....Feb, March, August, December, it doesn't matter. So there are still 365 days, 52 weeks, 12 months and so on for BOTH a solar calendar and a fiscal calendar year....its just a matter of deciding on the starting point for each calendar that varies.

The Hebrew *religious* calendar makes Nissan the first month. The Hebrew *civil* calendar makes Tishri the first month (Nissan and Tishri are about ½ a calendar year apart). Each calendar still has the same number of days, months, and weeks. Jewish New Year is a civil calendar event (not a Religious calendar event), so it occurs on the 1st day of Tishri, the 1st day of the New Civil year. Since Nissan is the first month of the Religious Calendar then the first festival of the yearly cycle is in Nissan.

Now just to confuse you a little more it is only by redaction....that is editing from later times.....that we even have some Bibles using the NAMES of the months for reference here in Leviticus or anywhere in the Torah for that matter. During this era the months did not HAVE names (at least they were not named by the Hebrews), rather they were just numbered 1,2, 3.....on up to 12. In fact it was not until the Jews' exile to Babylon that the Hebrews gave names to the months of the year and naturally they at first adopted the Babylonian names. A few years after their return to Judah, the Jews Hebrew-ized the Babylonian month names, but they are still very recognizable from their Babylonian originals.

The point is that the most correct and literal renderings of the Torah will call Nissan the 1st month and usually Tishri is called the 7th month. So by Biblical definition New Years day falls on the 1st day of 7th month! Is it any wonder that people's eyes roll back in their heads when they're trying to figure out exactly when some event occurred back in the early Bible days?

Anyway on Nissan 14 in the evening before its completely dark the Passover Lamb is to be slaughtered. Remembering that a Hebrew day has ALWAYS started at sundown (not in the morning) then it is understandable that IF the lamb was to be slaughtered as instructed on Nissan 14 it had to be done before night fell or the calendar would have turned to the next day, Nissan 15. And none of this need be guessed at because in verse 5 where in English it says "on the 14th day at twilight".....the Hebrew words for "at twilight" are ***bein ha-'arbayim***. And these words, while not precise in they're meaning, definitely indicates a time sometime after mid-day (noon) and BEFORE it gets dark.

So, technically, Passover is but a one day event celebrated in afternoon and evening; a one day Biblical Feast on the 14th of Nissan. And it was used to commemorate that awful and wonderful evening in Egypt when the Lord smote the Egyptians by killing all firstborn of Egypt including people and livestock. The Hebrews were told to slaughter a lamb and paint it's blood on the doorposts of their houses; and when the Lord saw the blood He would pass by and not kill the firstborn of that home. Of course the next morning Pharaoh released Israel from his grip and they began their exodus.

In case it hasn't occurred to you yet Passover is NOT connected to a certain day of the week. In other words the 14th of Nissan will change from year to year as to exactly WHICH of the 7 days of the week it falls on. That is part of the problem with determining the exact chronology of Jesus' crucifixion because all the Bible timing we're given is based on Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And once again the dates of these Feasts are based on the day of the MONTH, not the day of the week. Example: Christmas is always on Dec. 25th, a specific day of the month. It doesn't matter what day of the week it falls onMonday, Wednesday, Saturday, whatever....., it MUST be December 25th. Easter on the other hand moves around a bit because it is based on being the first Sunday after Passover or after the new moon depending on one's viewpoint. So regardless of the day of the month it MUST be on a specific day of the week, Sunday.

The day following Pesach, Passover, is the 1st day of another Biblical Feast the Feast of Unleavened Bread or Matza. The 1st day of Unleavened Bread is ALWAYS Nissan 15th. Now in verse 6 where the words "the Feast of Unleavened Bread" are written an important word is typically left out in English translations: and that word is "pilgrimage". Literally verse 6 says "**the Pilgrimage** Feast of Unleavened Bread". The Hebrew word that is typically just dropped and not translated is ***hag***.....pilgrimage. This is important because 3 of the Biblical Feasts are made distinct from all the others with this designation of being a pilgrimage. This means that any festival that is a "hag" cannot be celebrated at one's home (at least not by the adult males); rather it required for one to be present at the Temple in Jerusalem at the appointed day of this Feast. Technically Passover is not a pilgrimage feast, but Unleavened Bread is. Yet because Passover is like the kick-off for the Feast of Unleavened Bread the two are treated like one festival for purposes of pilgrimage. So though not technically correct sometimes the 3

pilgrimage Feasts are called Passover, The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and Tabernacles (Sukkot). More correctly, the 3 pilgrimage feasts are Unleavened Bread, Shavuot and Sukkot.

Further the day after Passover, the 15th of Nissan and therefore the 1st day of Unleavened Bread is also a Sabbath. Not **THE** Sabbath but **A** Sabbath as we discussed earlier. It is to be a day **not** of complete REST but rather a day of ceasing from **normal** work so that the SPECIAL work of preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread could be performed. A few minutes ago I told you that there were 3 requirements for THE Sabbath day, the 7th day: 1) absolute and complete rest from any type of work whatsoever 2) that the day was holy, and 3) that the day had to be observed by all Israel wherever they were. Well, the kind of Sabbath that was called for on Nissan 15, the 1st day of Matza, only met 2 of those 3 criteria; that is it was NOT to be a day of complete rest but it was to be holy and it was to be observed wherever a Hebrew might live. Further even though Hebrews call this day a Sabbath the Bible only calls it a sacred occasion on which regular work is not to be done....the word Sabbath does not appear in that passage. Yet by Bible definition a sacred occasion on which some degree of cessation from regular work occurs IS a Sabbath. So the Hebrews aren't wrong by injecting that word "Sabbath" and it was common knowledge over the years which was which. But it can sure confuse the daylight out of us poor gentiles.

Beginning on the 1st day of Matza and continuing for 7 days no leavened bread can be eaten by a Hebrew. In fact no leavening.....nothing that causes fermentation.....can even be present in one's house. Yet we'll find that it is actually EIGHT days that no leaven is eaten because on Passover, the day before the beginning of the Feast of Matza, no leaven is to be present or eaten either. So there is actually an eight-day stretch of a prohibition on eating leavening or even having it present in your home.

Let me back up just one second to help make something clearer: Passover was NOT a pilgrimage feast but Matza was. Although in reading the Bible, especially the N.T., it would appear that people had to bring their Pesach lambs to the Temple for slaughtering that was not really the case. Passover was meant to be as it was in Egypt....something celebrated in home as a family ritual. Yet because of the required pilgrimage journey for the Feast of Matza the journey usually had to begin even BEFORE Passover day to arrive at Jerusalem in time. So much of the Hebrew population wound up having Passover in Jerusalem and necessarily had their lambs slaughtered there just by default; however it was NOT a biblical requirement that they either be in Jerusalem on Passover OR that their lambs be slaughtered at the Temple. Of course the most pious Jews much preferred to have their lambs slaughtered by a priest at the Temple and then cooked over one of the hundreds of public ovens located in and around the Holy City.....just as the most pious Christians prefer to have weddings, funerals, even just prayer occur inside a Church building; somehow it just feels more religious.

The final day, the 7th day, of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matza) was ALSO declared a sacred occasion in which normal work was not to be performed. This kind of Shabbat was just like the 1st day of Matza; it was not that NO work could be done, just not the kind that was one's **regular** work or craft or job. And just so there's no confusion, even though this Sabbath was on the 7th and final day of Matza it was not necessarily on the 7th day of the week. Only every few years did the standard weekly 7th day Shabbat coincide with the last day OR the

first day of the Feast of Matza.

So due to the way days are counted, and due to the order of the Feast days, in 5 out of 7 years the Feast of Matza actually had FOUR Sabbaths embedded into it: the Sabbath of the 1st day of the Feast (which was sometimes called Preparation Day), then as we'll see later another Sabbath for Firstfruits, and then sometime during that next several days there was the standard weekly 7th day Shabbat, and then finally the last day of Matza that was also a Sabbath. Other years one of the Sabbaths would fall on the 7th day Sabbath so there were only 3 Sabbath days.

The Oral Traditions that spell out in tiniest detail every aspect of Pesach and Unleavened Bread are long and tedious. These are to be found primarily in the Mishnah, Tractate Pesachim if you'd like to go read it; it's actually quite fascinating. We're not going to go there or we'd be 2 or 3 weeks simply looking at those rules and regulations. Rather I'd like to spend a little time on something of more significance to my mind: what was the prophetic meaning attached to Passover and Unleavened Bread? In other words what does all that mean to us, and what should it have meant to the Hebrews?

I mentioned earlier that the most central stories about Jesus took place under the backdrop of one or another of the Biblical Festivals.....**pilgrimage** Biblical Festivals. So the Bible had Yeshua going to Jerusalem to participate in these various Scriptural holy days, as every good and dedicated Jew would do. I also need to point out something that I'm surprised is necessary to point out but from talking to many folks I'm afraid it's needed: the great events in Yeshua's life that we Christians generally celebrate did NOT have new Christian holidays invented in order to memorialize them. Rather these great events of Jesus' life **occurred** on long-established Hebrew holidays dating from the time of Moses. The holiday called Passover was not the result of Christ's Crucifixion; Passover had been celebrated for at least 1300 years before Christ was even born. Rather it was that Christ was executed ON that appointed day. Pentecost was not a new holiday created for that awesome moment when the Holy Spirit descended upon men; Pentecost, called Shavuot in Hebrew, was established in the Law on Mt. Sinai. The Holy Spirit merely came on that long established appointed day. So what we're going to find is that each of the 7 Biblical Feasts is but a prophetic example of our Reality of Duality pattern: that is each of these 7 Feasts had a physical component.....the sacrifices and the ceremonies and the feasting or fasting that commemorated a real event such as leaving Egypt or the bringing in of the Spring harvest. Yet each of the 7 Feasts also have a parallel spiritual component.....a higher meaning.....that was not revealed to the Israelites until the coming of Yeshua and even later.

Passover commemorated an event that actually happened. The Israelites actually DID slaughter a lamb, place its blood on the doorposts of their homes in Egypt, and that blood actually DID protect them from death that flowed unstoppable and without mercy into every corner of Egypt. This was a historic happening, well recorded (and Egypt is still bitter about it to this day). Yet Pesach also looked forward, prophetically, spiritually to a day when the lamb that God would provide would come and paint His own blood on the doorposts of each person's dwelling....each person's body.....so that the eternal death that awaits every human ever born would pass-over those who trust Yehoveh's Lamb; and that Lamb was and is Yeshua. On

Pesach day, Nissan 14th, about 30 AD the highest meaning of Passover occurred; Yeshua HaMashiach, the Passover Lamb once and for all mankind, was slaughtered. Of course He died on Passover for that pattern had been established 13 centuries earlier in Egypt.

No one was forced to paint the blood of the lamb on his doorposts in Egypt; and no one is forced to accept the Messiah's blood today; it's a matter of personal choice. Those firstborn who chose wisely in Egypt.....Egyptian or Hebrew.....lived; those who did not, died. Those who accept the protective power of Yeshua's blood today will live forever...spiritually. Those who reject the precious offer will be destroyed...physically AND spiritually. These are not my rules they're Yehoveh's rules. The Passover is one Feast that has already been both physically and spiritually fulfilled. So it is not something we look forward towards but rather we look back in commemoration. Passover is a day of remembrance. It is a finished work.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is all about sin and the resultant decay. Leavening, yeast, anything that causes fermentation was to be absent from every Israelite home and from any food they would eat. Fermentation is a process of decay. The fermentation that causes bread to rise and grapes to break down into alcohol is a means of facilitating decay. Leaven is that agent that is added to food that brings on an accelerated rate of decay, the fermentation, and the Bible makes a direct parallel between leavening and sin. Sin is the agent in man and in the world that results in death and decay. The more leavening that is added the faster and more violent the fermentation process. The more sin that is in us the faster and more violent is our decay...physically and spiritually.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, Matza, was (as was Passover) a remembrance of Israel leaving Egypt. Israel had to hurry to leave so they had no time to prepare bread in the regular and preferred way by giving it time to rise and then baking it. Therefore they made bread without leaven, without yeast (the traditional Bedouin way) and ate that unleavened bread for the first several days after their departure from the land of Goshen. The leaven, the sin, was left behind. No decay, no sin, was to accompany Israel into the new life and new land they had been given. The Torah uses an interesting word to describe what Yehoveh actually did when He saved Israel from Egypt and then took them away from their bondage: redemption. They were redeemed. Redeemed means a price had to be paid for their freedom and indeed it was. Thousands upon thousands of Egyptians (and undoubtedly quite a few Israelites) as well as hundreds of thousands of innocent livestock died in order that Israel was redeemed. Notice the order of things: first, Israel had to accept the atoning blood of the Pesach lamb, AND THEN the sin (the leaven) was removed from their life. NOW they were redeemed. It is the same for us. And all of this was an act of grace by God Almighty.

Yeshua died and went to the grave; but because he was the ultimate Unleavened Bread He had no sin in Him so His body did NOT decay (remember, decay is the result of leavening). Jesus is the bread of life we're told; actually He is the Matza of life.....He is the UNLEAVENED, sinless, never decaying bread of life. He went to the Cross and died; that is the Passover. Then He went into that tomb, did not decay, and He entered in new life; that is the Unleavened Bread. Just as Yeshua died on Passover day He entered the tomb during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The events that occurred in Egypt, the hurried cooking of unleavened bread and the rush to leave are historic; they happened and are well documented. These

things happened on a physical level. On a spiritual level when Jesus was placed in that tomb and His sinless body refused to decay, and then He arose, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was fulfilled. We, in union with Christ, AFTER we have accepted His Passover blood, have the sin, the leaven, removed from our lives as we enter a new life. Our bodies will decay because they are born of leaven, of sin; but our spirits will NOT decay because the leaven, the sin, has been removed from that aspect of our being; rather our renewed spirits will go on to a new and eternal life with our Lord. The Feast of Matza is a remembrance. It is finished both physically and spiritually.

We'll continue next week.