



April 11, 2025

From Disobedience to Obedience and Trust

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast of lower Alabama. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

I can't help but think how quickly the Days of Unleavened Bread have arrived once again this year! We'll have back to back Sabbaths tomorrow (the weekly Sabbath) and then Sunday (UB-1), and then have a double Sabbath (FUB-7 with the weekly Sabbath). The years pass so quickly for us all! Each day draws us closer to Christ's return, and serving with Him for all eternity.

What will be our focus during these seven days of Unleavened Bread? Will we focus on putting sin out of our lives? We are always on the lookout for sins that appear, and then seek to repent and put away those sins. The emphasis on these Days of Unleavened Bread includes practicing righteousness and putting the laws of God deeper into our hearts and into action.

We see this lesson imbedded in the instructions found in Exodus 13. The instruction to eat unleavened bread for seven days is found in both verses 6 and 7. Then referring to this act, *"It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in your mouth."* (Exodus 13:9) By exhibiting the commitment to and action of eating unleavened bread as commanded, we demonstrate and exhibit the sign of obedience to and respect for God's laws. It's a very profound lesson for us all.

The book of Deuteronomy reviews the events concerning the Israelites from Horeb to the death of Moses, and the leadership being passed on to Joshua. There are a number of summary statements in this book.

Here is one: *"And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."* (Deut. 8:2)

The journey into the wilderness in a sense began during the days of Unleavened Bread with the Israelites when *"God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea."* (Ex. 13:18) This was the wilderness in the Sinai Peninsula between the two arms of the Red Sea.

When the Israelites were encamped at *"the Wilderness of Paran"* Moses sent leading representatives of each of the 12 the tribes to search out the land of Canaan and return with a report. (Numbers 13) However, 10 of these "spies" brought a mixed and fearful appraisal that discouraged the people and made it appear that the inhabitants of Canaan would defeat and destroy the Israelites if they tried to take the land. The people verbally attacked Moses and Aaron and then made an accusation against the LORD. *"Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"* (Numbers 14:3) Then they added more insults. *"So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.""* (v.4) There are literally all kinds of lessons and analogies we can draw from this.

Joshua and Caleb then tried to reason with the people and counter the false report of the other ten spies. The people continued to rebel, act irrationally, and demanded to have Joshua and Caleb stoned and killed! Imagine that!

One of the common events that takes place when the Israelites acted improperly is the appearance of the glory of the LORD. *"Now the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel."* (v.10)

God proposed wiping out everyone and making a new nation from Moses. I see this as very possibly a test for Moses to see how he would act. Moses appeals to the reputation of the Lord in the eyes and ears of the surrounding nations. The

Lord agrees to pardon the people, but decreed that all the adults 20 years and above would die in the wilderness and not enter the promised land of Canaan. (vv.23, 29) Only Joshua and Caleb and their families would enter Canaan.

The LORD then comments on the repeated failures of the rebellious Israelite adults. *"because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it."* (v.22-23)

How sobering! But, also how merciful God has been in giving the people multiple chances to turn from disobedience to obedience and trust. The people were condemned to wander 40 years in the wilderness, (a year for each of the 40 days the spies searched out the land of Canaan). (v.34).

The next response of the people is yet another act of disobedience. Instead of humbly repenting and accepting God's punishment and obeying Him, they now take it upon themselves to go forward to Canaan without the leadership of Moses and the LORD!

It's too late now. They go up to a mountain to go on to Canaan but are driven back by *"the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain."* (v.45)

Friends, you and I must take careful note from these recorded events and humbly act according to God's instructions. These events are recorded to both forewarn us and prompt us not to give in to the lawlessness and self-reasoning exhibited by ancient Israel. *"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."* (1 Corinthians 10:11)

As we wander through the wilderness of this present world and age, let us humbly recall the lessons and instructions recorded for us. During these days of Unleavened Bread, might we reflect, and, "let us lay aside every weight, and the

sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1). Our Savior lives within us, and as we eat the Unleavened Bread during these days never forget because of that life, we have a glorious future!

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Scott Hoefker', with a stylized, scribbled flourish at the end.

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