

April 2020

Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings to God's peculiar treasure in Christ. This will be a meat-in-due-season letter for the Days of Unleavened Bread.

The Days of Unleavened Bread point us to the high goal which we strive for in our approach to God's Law. God's Law is a perfect law. "The law of the [Eternal] is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7). The Eternal is also a true and righteous judge (2 Timothy 4:8). Those are two of the most crucial factors, but there is still a third dimension to making this work. We must ask God to help our wills to be in tune with His will by coming under His government. We must obey His commands to honor and observe the Days of Unleavened Bread as He commanded. In short, we must "[Become] ye therefore perfect [by keeping God's Law], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect [in law-abiding love]" (Matthew 5:48).

Today's justice system is a farce. It is a demonic play in which the plot depends upon situation rather than righteous character. It is a silly ship of fools; a mockery; a ridiculous sham. Today's justice system is overburdened, drowning in paperwork, prey to courtroom theatrics and politics and prone to corruption, hostile to common sense, rendered ineffectual by a growing mountain of picky technicalities!

Jeremiah said that it is impossible for man to guide his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23), let alone legislate justice for a society that is caught up in the concepts of their own minds. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in our legal justice system. In contrast to mankind's justice system, God's Law and administration are incorruptible, just and perfect. This creates a yearning in all of us for the return of Jesus Christ. Is it not time for God's true system of justice to be set up?

"Become you perfect" is why God ordained these Days of Unleavened Bread. "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh [the works of the flesh—Galatians 5:19–21] and spirit [our unholy thoughts and inward imaginations], perfecting holiness [aiming at sinless perfection] in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

To be in the proper fear of God is to have a wholesome dread of displeasing Him and to abhor whatever might provoke that displeasure and cause Him to give us over to strong delusion. To be in the proper fear of God is to be in obedience to His Law and the proper keeping of His Holy Days.

In Leviticus 23, God outlines His appointed Feasts. Here we find the commanded Holy Days of the Eternal God. Rehearsing these Holy Days annually reinforces our understanding of God's Master Plan of salvation. As we know, they are to be honored and observed as statutes forever in all our dwellings throughout all our generations. The weekly Sabbath, Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost (to be observed on Monday), Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day are all commanded assemblies to be observed.

When properly understood and revealed to us by God, each Holy Day impresses upon us a crucial and imperative key to understand how we are to become born children of the Family Kingdom of God. Before we can enter Sonship into the God Family, we must thoroughly understand God's laws and the penalties for violating them. The Days of Unleavened Bread teach us directly about the Law of God. Mr. Herbert Armstrong taught that the Passover pictures the acceptance of Christ's blood for the remission of past sins. The seven Days of Unleavened Bread following Passover picture to us the complete putting away of sin and the keeping of the commandments after past sins are forgiven.

Our strength alone to keep God's Law is insufficient. We cannot keep the commandments of God on our own power of will and strength. But Christ in us—in the form of revealed doctrine—can keep them. We must rely on Christ to live in us as He was originally revealed. The Law of God reveals to us His nature, mind and character. The Law of God reveals the righteous character we are to build in our lives to make us ready for Sonship in the God Family. Christ taught, "but if thou wilt enter into life [into the God Family] keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:17). If we are to enjoy a future eternal life in God's Family, we must obey God's Law! God's Law will be the system of justice in God's future government. This holy festival, the Days of Unleavened Bread, observed for a complete seven days, teaches us that we should strive for perfection in obedience to the Law of God.

Let us notice the command to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread in Exodus 12:

Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul [person] shall be cut off [put away] from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save [except] that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies [hosts] out of the land of Egypt:

therefore, shall ye observe this day in [throughout] your generations by an ordinance [an authoritative order] for ever (Exodus 12:15–17).

Let us sum up the clearly-defined commands given here. First, all leavening is to be put out of our homes for seven days. Second, unleavened bread is to be eaten for seven days. Third, holy assemblies are called together only on the first and last days—kept as Sabbaths in which no servile work is performed. Notice there is absolutely no command that holy convocations or assemblies are required on all seven days of the feast. This is God's clearly-stated law or statute concerning this particular holy festival. We are told when to keep it—there is a God-ordained time to keep two separate holy convocations, as God's people, to receive teaching from God's ministry about the meaning of these days. On these Holy Days it is forbidden to continue in regular work because God wants your time and your mind on these days. An offering is also to be taken on only the first commanded assembly of these days (Deuteronomy 16:17).

During this holy festival, God directs us to remove all leavened products from our homes. We eat unleavened bread throughout the week to remind us of the haste with which Israel fled Egypt.

Observe the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the [Eternal] thy God: for in the month of Abib [on the 15th] the [Eternal] thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night. Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover [lamb] unto the [Eternal] thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the [Eternal] shall choose to place his name there. Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it [the Passover lamb]; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day [the 15th] when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life (Deuteronomy 16:1–3).

God gives us these physical practices to help us grow in our understanding of the spiritual significance of the days. Learning to obey the Law of God builds godly perfection in our lives. The called of God are very familiar with the use of analogy, parables and symbolisms in the Bible to convey a message from God. Scriptures regarding the Days of Unleavened Bread serve as examples of these teaching techniques of God.

The people of ancient Israel were taught the principle of deliverance from this society and its laws as they fled from Egypt. It is a good idea to read the book of Exodus before the Days of Unleavened Bread. Not only is the story of Israel's journey out of Egypt recorded there, but the Law of God is also expounded directly in this book. The symbolism of Israel's

perilous exodus from slavery to the Promised Land was not only used to teach them, but it is meant to benefit us today as we comprehend the spiritual lessons of their pilgrimage.

In Hebrews 11, the faith chapter, we see a connection between Egypt and sin. Revelation 11:8 also likens Egypt to sin. Following the analogy of Israel's deliverance by God's intervention, we also make our exodus by miraculous intervention. Pharaoh can be equated to Satan. Immediately as the Israelites embarked en route to escape Egypt, they were chased by Pharaoh. So, too, for us today: the moment we forsake our sinful ways, Satan is hot on our heels trying to tempt us back into disobedience to God's Way of Life (1 Peter 5:8). He is a *no-law deceiver*; he constantly connives to bring us back into the slavery of sin (Romans 6:16). His goal is to prevent us from becoming perfect like our Father and thus keep us out of God's Family.

Just as the Israelites were miserable under conditions of slavery in Egypt, so have we suffered under the influence of Satan's world—a world of misery, disillusionment, discouragement and frustration. Satan's way is contrary to that of our promised land—the Kingdom of God. So, one lesson we learn is that we are on a journey away from the captivity of Satan and his system. The Israelites encountered a multitude of obstacles on their exodus, as do we. God tested ancient Israel to determine their commitment to His Law. He knew they would not live up to this test because they lacked His Holy Spirit.

O that there were such an heart [a nature or Spirit] in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever (Deuteronomy 5:29).

God knew ancient Israel could not obey His spiritual Law regardless of their intent or promise. Ancient Israel was never offered God's Holy Spirit. They were given God's laws, but, as a nation, they were purposely denied access to God's Holy Spirit. God gave proof, through Israel as His example, that without God's Holy Spirit, humanity is helpless. The ancient nation of Israel knew about God and could appeal to Him, but without His Holy Spirit in them, the Israelites could not have the law-abiding love of God in them and they consequently could not perfect holiness in the fear of God. The fear of God is always equated, identified and coupled with obedience. They go hand in hand. You can tell the people who sincerely fear God. They are implicitly, absolutely and whole-heartedly devoted to obedience to God as He was originally revealed.

Israel's examples of failure are for us today so that we do not have to pay the price that they did.

Now all these things [the failures of ancient Israel] happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written [aforetime] for our admonition [our instruction], upon whom the ends of the world [the consummation of the age] are come (1 Corinthians 10:11).

Along our journey, our departure from Egypt, which is a symbol for sin, we are tested by God as He proves our hearts.

For whom the [Eternal] loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth [or calls]. If ye endure chastening [sore trials and experiences], God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement [corrective guidance through sore trials and experiences], whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards [illegitimate], and not [begotten] sons (Hebrews 12:6–8).

Yet, we should not be discouraged:

There hath no temptation taken you [no sore trial overtaken you] but such as is common to man [God's called]: but God is faithful [to His Word], who will not suffer you to be tempted [or tried] above that ye are able; but will with the temptation [sore trial] also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [endure] it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

God will not allow us to be tried beyond our capacity to endure. We can only escape sore trials before they begin. Once they begin, then we must endure to learn their purpose.

The primary lesson God was teaching ancient Israel, and is teaching us today, is to rely on Him for deliverance (Exodus 14:14). We are not capable of delivering ourselves from sin; we need the Word of God and His Holy Spirit. He will always provide a way for us to endure our sore trials. God's goal is to prove to us that He is our only hope. By coming to this understanding, and yielding ourselves to Him and His Law completely, we enjoy the benefits of coming under His justice system. Our *promised land* lies in our ability to see beyond the present into the future Kingdom of God. But again, we must learn to live under the Law of God. The Days of Unleavened Bread symbolize our exodus from sin and put us in remembrance of our need to remove every act of disobedience to God's Law from our lives.

Question: What is the secret to perfecting holiness in the fear of God? "For as he [a man] thinketh in his heart [mind], so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Here God reveals a fundamental law by which our minds work. All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the

direct result of his own thoughts. We are in essence the sum total of what our thoughts make us. Our thoughts are the building blocks from which all our ideas, imaginations, habits and ultimate character are formed.

Paraphrasing from James Allen's book, *As a Man Thinketh*: The mind guides our footsteps as we progress along the pathway of life. Purity of mind leads inevitably to purity of life. Man is made or unmade by himself, by his own thought process. In the armory of thought he forges the weapons by which he destroys himself, or by the right choice and true application of thought, he can ascend to divine perfection. Man is the maker of his character, the moulder of his life and the builder of his destiny, if he will watch, control and alter his thoughts, tracing their effects upon himself, upon others, and upon his life and circumstances, linking cause and effect by patient practice and investigation, and utilizing his every experience, even to the most trivial, everyday occurrence. The body is the servant of the mind. If you would perfect your body, guard your mind. Keep your hand firmly upon the helm of thought. Right thought is mastery.

Even though this author is not called, and does not address the need for the Holy Spirit to become converted, he accurately confirms Proverbs 23:7. Our actions are always preceded by thoughts. Man has always followed after his own thoughts and beliefs. "I [the Eternal] have spread out my hands all the day [pictures God beckoning Israel to respond to Him in long-suffering patience] unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts" (Isaiah 65:2). In the time of Israel's judges, "every man did whatever he thought was right" (Judges 21:25, *Living Bible*). In short, man reacts to and performs the thoughts he believes in. It makes no difference whether the thought is right or wrong. We are able to choose the thoughts we wish to believe in and act upon. And therein lies the cause of every evil from which this world suffers!

We in God's Church, who have God's Holy Spirit, are to be learning to judge properly between right and wrong, and to choose the right. And that means learning to control our thoughts, from which all our actions spring. David asked God to carefully examine and know his thoughts. He realized that he was not fully aware or cognizant of all his iniquities and wanted God to point them out to him so they could be dealt with effectively.

Search me, O God, and know my heart [mind]: try me [through sore trials, experiences and circumstances], and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting [through proper thought control] (Psalm 139:23).

David wanted his thoughts to be in tune with God's Word. We must never allow this world's satanic ways—via radio, television, the internet, movies, the printed media and the

voice of scholars—to be poured, unchallenged and un-refuted, into our minds. If we do, we are sacrificing our minds to Satan, the Devil. Lot's wife was affected greatly by the media of her world. She became a pillar of salt as a warning to us that we must never allow the media of this world or the voice of scholars to affect or influence our thinking. If we do, God will surely give us over to strong delusion to believe lies.

Question: How do we rid our minds of wrong reasoning?

1. We must recognize our wrong thoughts. Our daunting task requires that we become experts at recognizing and rejecting all that is not Godlike in our thinking. God's Word was inspired, designed and given to us to study and meditate upon for that purpose. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart [mind], that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).
2. Repent of wrong thinking. Once we recognize wrong thoughts, however they may be revealed to us in our emotions, habits, or through God's Word, we must repent—meaning we must forsake wrong thoughts.

And when Simon [Magus] saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy [Spirit] was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy [Spirit]. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot [portion] in this matter: for thy heart [mind] is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart [mind] may be forgiven thee (Acts 8:18–22).

Simon Magus thought he could buy God's Holy Spirit. That is how ungodly his thinking was. Simon Magus, like Elisha's servant, Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20–27), sought to use God's miraculous gift for his own benefit. Many of God's apostate ministers have thought to do the same thing—to draw for themselves a following. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the [Eternal]" (Isaiah 55:7). Repent and change your thinking.

There was widespread dishonesty and perversion of justice among the Israelites. Wrong thoughts controlled every area of their lives.

Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity [lawlessness]; wasting and destruction are in their paths (Isaiah 59:7).

What was true of ancient Israel is also true of the entire human race. It is a global problem! God wants us to avoid the things that the Eternal hates.

And let none of you imagine [think] evil in your hearts [minds] against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the [Eternal] (Zechariah 8:17).

O Jerusalem, wash thine heart [your thoughts (#3820, *Strong's Concordance*)] from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain [wicked] thoughts lodge within thee (Jeremiah 4:14)?

Repent!

3. Replace your sinful thoughts with God's righteous thoughts. Mr. Armstrong said: To remove air from a glass we can fill it with water. To remove sinful thoughts from our minds we must fill them with righteous thinking according to God's Law. David knew the importance of filling his mind with the Word and Law of God.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Psalm 119:105).

Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight (Psalm 119:35).

O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day (Psalm 119:97).

God delivered a solemn charge to Joshua concerning the daunting task ahead of him.

This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night [in a reflective, thoughtful way], that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein [Why? So you can perfect holiness in the fear of the Eternal.]: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success (Joshua 1:8).

Once we recognize, repent, and then replace our sinful thoughts, the battle is still not over. Satan, self and society will strive to interject wrong thoughts back into our minds. So, then we must:

4. Submit ourselves to God and resist sinful thoughts when they return. Then repeat points one, two and three. Submit yourselves therefore to God. This involves putting on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11–18) and coming under obedience to the truth of God's Word as it was originally revealed to us.

Resist the devil [push back against evil thoughts], and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Put on the whole armour of God [the Lord Jesus Christ], that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [trickery, tactics and schemes] of the devil (Ephesians 6:11).

Thought, allied fearlessly to purpose, becomes our creative force for perfecting holiness in the fear of God. We are the ones in command of our minds. God has given us the power of choice, and we must choose. Our judgment period—involving our long-term conversion process—began when we made our baptismal covenant. It requires continuous, thoughtful effort. It is a process of "bringing into captivity [enslavement] every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5).

We have a daunting task before us. By right choice and active application of Christ-like thinking, we can perfect holiness in the fear of God. *Perfecting holiness in the fear of God* is based upon the sum of our righteous thoughts according to God's Law. We are here to work at developing a Godlike mind that He can use to develop other minds to think like Him. Our objective in the world tomorrow is to help fashion others after God and His thinking.

The Days of Unleavened Bread remind us to actively search out and destroy all evil thoughts of spiritual leaven in our lives. The Days of Unleavened Bread point us to the high goal we strive for in our approach to God's Law. True justice can only be accomplished through a perfect system. God's Law is a perfect Law (James 1:25).

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good (Romans 7:12).

Paraphrasing James Allen once again: Too many mortals strive to improve only their worldly position—and too few seek spiritual betterment—through that Great Law which is absolutely just, and which cannot, therefore, give good for evil, evil for good. A noble and Godlike character is not a thing of favour or chance, but is the natural result of continued effort in right thinking, the effect of long-cherished association with Godlike thoughts.

Righteousness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom. It is the result of long and patient effort in putting away wrong thoughts. God wants us to stop self-generating our own trials and difficulties by how we think. God wants us to make no provisions for the flesh, to think evil thoughts.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ [in the form of revealed doctrine], and make not provision for the flesh [to think evil thoughts], to fulfil the lusts thereof (Romans 13:14).

We have a daunting task before us—to put on the Lord Jesus Christ as He was originally revealed. The way you visualize Jesus Christ in your mind determines what you will strive to achieve. May you all have a very rich and rewarding Holy Day season by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ—perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Your laborer and servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Litz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".

Robert J. Litz