

The Flat-out Truth

God loves object lessons. Object lessons like the potter and the clay and the pearl of great price are scattered throughout the pages of scripture.

The Passover season is jammed full of object lessons. This weekend is the beginning of Passover week. Most people see Passover on the calendar and think it only applies to one or two days, but that's not true.

When Moses went to warn Pharaoh about the death the firstborn, he also told the people to pack up to go. After the death angel crossed over they went out by night, celebrating, but in a hurry.

As a result, the women had not had time to let their dough rise, and when they stopped long enough to bake it, it was flat, without yeast, or unleavened. (Ex. 12:34, 39)

So the season of unleavened bread became part of the annual liturgical calendar. The whole eight days are usually called *Pesach*, or Passover.

In Exodus 12:15 and 17 the people are told to eat unleavened bread for seven days and are commanded to not eat leavened bread, or *chametz* during that same time. Wow, a whole week with no cookies, cakes, Twinkies, waffles, or sandwiches. A person could starve!

Well, or course we don't starve. Instead we eat large flat unleavened crackers called *matzah*. And every time we are out and might reach for a thick piece of chocolate cake, we're reminded.

We all are reminded that God delivered Israel from slavery by His mighty hand. But those of us who believe that Jesus is the Messiah are reminded of something more.

In the New Testament, leaven symbolizes wrong doctrine and wrong attitudes. (Matt. 16:12-13) Just as coming out of Egypt pictured coming out of a sinful environment, the process of de-leavening our homes and avoiding leaven for a week symbolizes the continual process of searching for sin in our lives and in our hearts and putting it far from us.

Even though we have been freed from sin through Jesus' sacrifice, the object lesson is still worth observing. Long after Jesus died the Corinthians were still practicing the Days of Unleavened Bread.

In I Cor. 5:7-8 Paul write to "purge out the old leaven" and to "keep the feast ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Really guarding against eating such a common thing as leavened bread for a week won't save a single soul. But seeking to avoid leaven as a symbol of the sin in my life can really refresh my awareness of how easily sin creeps in. How I'd love to walk truly unleavened in my heart all year long!