

A Three Days' Journey Into The Wilderness

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As we talked about on the First Day of Unleavened Bread, the First Day of Unleavened Bread is the anniversary of when the Israelites began their exodus out of Egypt. But, there's a lot more meaning packed into the seven days of Unleavened Bread than just that first day when they began the journey. And one of the keys to seeing the significance of all the different days throughout the seven days of Unleavened Bread and how they tie into the story is paying attention to a detail that's mentioned numerous times throughout the Exodus story. If you're like myself, you have probably read over this detail numerous times throughout your life and you've read the words and it just never dawned on you. You never really knew what to do with it. You didn't know how to fit it into the story. What I'm referring to is the repeated reference throughout the Exodus story of a *"three days' journey into the wilderness"*.

As we're going to see today, this particular reference is mentioned at the burning bush incident where God's talking to Moses. And, it is brought up several times throughout Moses's negotiation with Pharaoh to get the Israelites released from slavery in Egypt. This specific reference to a *"three days' journey into the wilderness"* gets repeatedly referenced and made a big deal out of. What we're going to see today is what this teaches us. Where this fits into the story. And, what the lesson is in this, not only for Ancient Israel, but for us today as New Covenant Christians because there's an important spiritual lesson tied to this as well.

So, if you'd like a title for this sermon today, it's:

A Three Days' Journey Into The Wilderness

Now, to see the first time that this reference is made turnover to Exodus 3. This is the burning bush incident when God first tells Moses, "I've got a job for you. I need you to bring the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and to bring them to the Promised land." And we'll pick up the story here in Exodus 3 and Verse 16. It says,

Ex 3:16 *"Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, 'I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt; 17) and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.' ' 18) Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'"* (NKJV)

Notice it's very specific. It's not just "Let us leave here and get out of slavery and be free." "Let us go worship our God."

It's specifically, "We have to go three days' journey into the wilderness."

And this specific detail is mentioned multiple times because, as we're going to see, there's a very significant lesson in all of this. Now, if you notice here, he mentioned specifically, "We need to go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to our God". Now, as we follow the references, you're going to see two important things tied to this.

One is sacrificing to God, and the other is having a feast.

And in both cases, it's referred to "We have to go this three days' journey into the wilderness so that we can sacrifice to God, and we can have a feast". So, now notice that, because we're going to follow this as we go through the references.

Now, look over to Exodus 5 in Verse 1. Now, this is when they have the first encounter with Pharaoh. When Moses is giving the, "Let my people go" message. But let's notice here in Exodus 5, in Verse 1, it says,

Ex 5:1 *"Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.' "" (NKJV)*

Now, notice that they're not only going to sacrifice, they're going to hold a feast to Him in the wilderness. But now let's keep reading and notice the details. It's not just in the wilderness, it's "three days' journey into the wilderness".

2) *"And Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go." 3) So they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." "" (NKJV)*

Notice again, this "three days' journey into the wilderness" they needed to go. And that's when they're going to sacrifice to Him and have a feast to Him.

Now, let's turn over to Exodus 8, because what we're going to see here is an account where there's multiple interactions between Moses and Pharaoh trying to negotiate their release. Well, here's an event where Pharaoh says, "Well, sure, you can sacrifice to your God and have a feast, but do it here in Egypt. Do it in Egyptian territory, and I'll let you do it." What I want you to see in this example is that Moses then turned around and says, "No, it's too hostile. We can't do it here in Egyptian territory. We have to be three days' journey into the wilderness before we can do it." And then Pharaoh's going to go, "Okay, well you can leave, but you can't go that far." You know, because it's a very

specific detail of having this three days' journey out of Egyptian territory.

But now let's pick up the story now in Verse 25 of Exodus 8, it says,

Ex 8:25 *"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land." (NKJV)*

Notice he's conceding. "Yes, you can go sacrifice to your God, but do it here in Egypt". You know, don't leave, just do it here in the land. And now in Verse 26,

26) "And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? 27) We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us." (NKJV)

Notice again, it's very specific. We have got to do this three days' journey into the wilderness then we can sacrifice and have a feast to Him. And we're going to see later why he keeps making a big deal out of this distance here. Notice, in Verse 28,

28) "So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me." (NKJV)

Notice he's saying, "Okay, you can leave, but not three days' journey distance out of Egypt. Just go a little ways." We are not going to continue to read the rest of the chapter, but, if you read through the rest of this chapter, what you will see here is Pharaoh reneges on even what he's already said here of allowing them to leave. He basically digs his heels in, and he never lets them go until after the death of the firstborn. The plagues just keep getting worse, and worse, and worse and then, finally, after the death of the first born, he's like, "Okay, I've had enough, just get out! Everybody get out of here!" It's at that point that he finally does this.

Notice here multiple times, he's making this big deal out of a *"three days' journey into the wilderness"*.

So, what is this about? What's the significance of this?

Now, I have to admit, for a number of years in my life, I read right over this and just didn't even notice it. And then when I finally started noticing this, and I started noticing it was mentioned multiple times, I was still scratching my head of exactly what to do with this. And I have to admit, I was more focused on the days part of this. In other words, kind of a measurement of time. I wasn't realizing it's really about a measurement of distance. Now, we're going to see the days part of it, the time part of it, plays a significance as well. And we're going to see as we lay all the details out, how that plays into the whole overall Exodus story and specifically into the Days of Unleavened Bread.

But, again, the bigger issue here is a measurement of distance. For a long time, I didn't realize that because as I was studying the story. I kept looking for -- you know -- you have three days', and then at the end of that, then there's going to be this event. Then they're going to sacrifice to God. They're going to have a feast and I was trying to connect it with that.

And what I noticed in looking at the details of the story is there's no account of them having a feast to God and sacrificing until they're at Mount Sinai. Exodus 19:1 tells us they arrive at Mount Sinai in the third month of the year. Well, they leave out of Egypt in the first month of the year. There's a whole lot more than three days involved there. I kept trying to connect this together in terms of you get to the end of day three and maybe the beginning of day four, and then there's an event. Well, that wasn't in the story. And then I finally realized it's a measurement of distance. To make kind of a connection to our modern-day world today. You've probably heard at one point in your life a scientist talking about the term "*light year*".

You oftentimes hear them talking about, "That particular planet or that star, it's X number of light years away from Earth". And when you first hear the term light year, you might think, "How does a light year compare to a solar year or a lunar year?" Well, it's not really about a unique year. It's about a measurement of distance. Because what they're saying is, if you traveled at the speed of light for the period of a year, that's the amount of distance you would go. And, that's really what they're saying. So, when they say this planet is X number of light years away, they're saying, if you traveled at the speed of light for that many years, that's how far away it is. That's the significance that they're making.

Well, I finally figured this out that the significance here was about a measurement of distance when I noticed a story in the book of Genesis. Turn over to Genesis 30, and we'll see another story here where a three days' journey is mentioned, but the context makes it obvious what this is about. It's a measurement of distance. The point here is separation. That is really the significance of it all. Now, this is in Genesis 30, and the account we're going to break into here is Laban and Jacob talking with each other. Now you're probably familiar with the general context here. Jacob works for Laban for many years. In fact, his wives, Rachel and Leah, are Laban's daughters. In marrying those two, part of what Jacob did was work for Laban for a number of years to get the right to him to marry his daughters.

Well, he also continues working for him. And what we're going to read here is a brief account of them kind of doing a negotiation of Jacob's pay, you might say of how he's going to get compensated for his work in working for Laban. And they make a deal over livestock. Jacob's going to be paid for his services by receiving livestock. Let's pick up here in Chapter 30 and verse 31:

Gen 30:31 *"So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks:"* (NKJV)

In other words, "If you make this deal with me, I'll continue to work for you and take care of your animals. But here's the deal I want to make so that I get paid for my services." And in Verse 32,

32) "Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages." (NKJV)

Now, this'll be my pay. You give me all these animals and I'll consider that fair pay for the work I do for you. In Verse 33,

33) "So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me." 34) And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!" 35) So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons. 36) Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks." (NKJV)

Now again, it's easy to read over Verse 36 and not totally realize what it's getting at here, but just think about the context of what's happening here. They're basically making a deal that all the speckled and spotted animals, those are going to be Jacob's wages and all the non-speckled and spotted those Laban is going to keep.

Well, Laban makes the deal, but he's also not stupid. He looks at this and says, "Okay, I'll make you that deal and we'll separate the animals, but I don't want them hanging around each other all the time because now they're going to continue to intermingle and that's going to produce more speckled and spotted animals. I'm going to lose those to Jacob. That's going to turn out in Jacob's favor. So, I'm going to be smart here. Let's put a three days' journey of separation between the two so that they don't interbreed, and I can keep the numbers more in my favor." That's what he's trying to do here. Because, you know, animals will wander around as they're grazing. They kind of migrate around. They go from field to field looking for good food.

Well, the idea is if you put a three days' journey separation between them, even if both flocks wind up moving around and the herds kind of move towards each other in their natural migration. Well, if there's a three days' journey in between them, they're still not going to come in contact with each other because of the separation that's between them. And see, that's the point of all of this as we put the whole story together. That's what God was trying to create with Israel and Egypt. He didn't just want them to just get outside of Egypt -- just get outside of Egyptian territory. He wanted them to go a three days' journey on the other side of the boundary line of Egypt so that there's a good separation between the two. That's the point of the story here. And that gives us an

important spiritual action in our lives as we apply the Feast of Unleavened Bread from a spiritual perspective.

But now, as I mentioned earlier, this is primarily a measurement of distance. However, the days, the timing does play a role as well. To understand how that plays out and its significance in the whole seven days of Unleavened Bread, the first thing we need to do is to figure out how the days of the week fell the year of the Exodus. In other words, in terms of the Spring Holy Days, when you look at the Days of Unleavened Bread, how did the days of the week fall that particular year? Because we're going to see that plays an important significance for us. And that really reveals one very important parallel for us if we figure out that particular issue. Now, to do that, we're going to need an anchor date.

And what I mean by that is we're going to need to find somewhere in the Bible that gives us a specific date. A specific calendar date right around the time of the Exodus and clearly identifies for us what day of the week it is. Because, once we can do that, and if it's close to around the time of the Exodus, then we can count backwards or forwards and figure out exactly how the days of the week fell the year of the Exodus. Well, Exodus 16 gives us just such an example. Turn over to Exodus 16. We're going to read Verse 1. Because we're going to notice that this is going to identify a specific month and day for us. And then when we look at the context of the story we're going to be able to nail down the day of the week. It's in Verse 1.

Ex 16:1 *“And they journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt.”*
(NKJV)

The story starts off telling us we're specifically on the 15th day of the second month. Now we know they left out of Egypt on the 15th day of the first month. That was the First Day of Unleavened Bread, and this is now the 15th day of the second month. If you continue through the rest of this chapter. I'm just going to summarize it because I'm sure you're probably familiar with the general story. This is the account where God basically institutes feeding the Israelites with manna. As it explains throughout the rest of this chapter, they're having this conversation one day and then God tells Moses, “Okay, tomorrow I'm going to start raining food down from the sky six days a week. I'm going to feed you with manna.” And there's a very specific purpose for doing this. It's not just about taking care of the practical needs to be fed for the Israelites. This is very much for the purpose of making it painfully obvious when the Sabbath is.

You know a friend of mine years ago used to joke about making things stupid proof. In other words, he wanted things to be stupid proof. It is just so obvious that it's stupid proof. You can't be so stupid that you would miss it. Well, that's kind of how this is. When food falls from the sky six days a week and then doesn't fall on the seventh day, it's kind of stupid proof when the Sabbath is. The Sabbath is the day that the food doesn't fall from the sky, and you can't miss it. You know, because the other six days

food falls from the sky, that day it doesn't, that's Saturday. You can't really miss it. Well, the whole point of this, as the chapter lays out, was to see if the Israelites would obey God's command to rest on the Sabbath. That was the whole point. Well, given that that's the whole purpose of all of this, it's not just about feeding the people, you have to start reigning the manna down from heaven on the first day of the week. It has to start on Sunday. Because, again, it's a seven-day cycle. It's about lining this up with the week so that the day that they don't get it is the Sabbath. So, again, you have to start it on day one -- on Sunday -- or the cycle just doesn't make any sense.

Well, that means if you're having the conversation today, and you're going to start the manna cycle tomorrow, today's got to be Saturday and tomorrow's got to be Sunday. That tells us for sure that the 15th day of the second month is a Saturday.

That's very useful information!

Now, count backwards from there and what you're going to find out is that the days of the week the year of the Exodus in terms of how the Spring Holy Days fell exactly mirrors how the days of the week fell the year that Christ was killed. And, given the significance of the Mount Sinai covenant and how it is paralleled with the New Covenant, you would kind of expect that. Considering how all that's tied together, you would expect those to mirror one another, and they do.

I'm sure you're familiar with the story of the year that Christ was killed. He's sacrificed on a Wednesday afternoon. He's put in the grave right before sunset. The First Day of Unleavened Bread is on a Thursday. And then Christ is in the grave Thursday, Friday and Saturday. He's resurrected at the end of Saturday. And then on Sunday, He fulfills the wave sheaf. He's resurrected at sunset at the end of Saturday. Sunday, He ascends to the Father and He fulfills the wave sheaf. So, you're probably familiar with how that lays out. And what that tells us is that the year of the Exodus, the seven days of Unleavened Bread, starts on a Thursday and ends on a Wednesday. And the wave sheaf Sunday, again, is right in the middle of the week, just like it was the year that Christ was killed.

Now, that's an important detail!

Now, let's turn over to Numbers Chapter 33, and we're going to see how the events of the Exodus played out. This is the chapter that tells us all the places that they went and all the places that they camped and kind of lays out the sequence of events throughout the Exodus. Now, as we read through these verses, they don't tell us exactly -- they don't specify each day as we're going through the story. But they do give us some solid clues where I think we can kind of nail down those days. Now, to start off with, just to kind of give you an idea of where I'm going with this scenario, I want to share with you a quote from Flavius Josephus. This is from Antiquities of the Jews. It's from Book 2, Chapter 15, and Section 1. I'm going to just read you a brief quote of what Flavius Josephus lays out here. Because what he's getting at is kind of the sequence of events and on what day that he feels that they reached the Red Sea. And I'm going to show

you from the indications of these scriptures, it certainly seems to match.

Now again, he's a historian and he's giving his opinion. That's not equal with scripture. But I think if we put this together. It suggests his timeline is probably right. But again, quoting from Josephus here, it says,

“So the Hebrews went out of Egypt; while the Egyptians wept, and repented that they had treated them so hardly.....But as they went away hastily, on the third day, they came to a place called Baalzephon, on the Red Sea.”

So, in other words, he's saying, they reached the edge of the Red Sea on day three. Now, again, we know the First Day of Unleavened Bread -- the day they actually left -- was a Thursday. If Thursday is day one, Friday is day two, and Saturday is day three. So, at the end of Saturday -- according to Josephus' scenario -- that's when they reached the edge of the Red Sea.

Now, let's read through the actual Biblical account. Now again, the Bible doesn't specify exact days, but if we count the campsites after they actually leave Egypt, and we make the basic assumption that those campsites were every evening, it appears to exactly line up with Josephus' scenario.

So, let's start reading in Numbers 33:1.

Num 33:1 *“These are the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. 2) Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the LORD. And these are their journeys according to their starting points: 3) They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4) For the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had killed among them. Also on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.”* (NKJV)

Now, notice it specifically, very clearly tells us they left on the 15th day of the first month. We know that's the First Day of Unleavened Bread, and as we've already figured out, that's a Thursday. So, we know for an absolute fact that's when they left. Now, again, we have to do a little speculating as we go forward, but just notice the number of campsites.

And again, let's make an assumption here because, again, it is assumption and speculation, but it's a logical assumption that every campsite would equal a night as we're getting up to the Red Sea. So, now let's pick up in Verse 5.

5) *“Then the children of Israel moved from Rameses and camped at Succoth.”* (NKJV)

That's camp number one. That's Thursday night, according to the scenario we're looking at here. In Verse 6.

6) *"They departed from Succoth and camped at Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness."* (NKJV)

That would be Friday night, according to the scenario we're looking at.

7) *"They moved from Etham and turned back to Pi Hahiroth, which is east of Baal Zephon; and they camped near Migdol."* (NKJV)

Remember Baal Zephon? That's what Josephus referred to. That's camp number three. Again, that would be Thursday, Friday, Saturday night. Now we're at the edge of the Red Sea. In Verse 8,

8) *"They departed from before Hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness,..."* (NKJV)

And notice -- think this through -- because we're going to look at this parallel here in a minute. That would place the crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh's army on wave sheaf Sunday. Interesting parallel, isn't it? But now notice they get to the edge of the wilderness where it's right on the other side of the Red Sea. And then notice the rest of the sentence,

"...went three days' journey in the Wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah." (NKJV)

So, it places the three day's journey into the wilderness. Where? It's on the other side of the Red Sea. Now, follow through the scenario. You start off on Thursday, leaving out on the First Day of Unleavened Bread. They begin their journey leaving out of Rameses where they were all living. Then they spend basically three days', Thursday, Friday, and Saturday journeying from there to get up to the edge of the Red Sea. By Saturday night, they're up to the Red Sea.

Now, Sunday -- which is also wave sheaf Sunday -- they're going through the Red Sea. And that's when Pharaoh's army gets destroyed and drowned in the waters. Now, as we're going to notice, when we turn over to Exodus here in a minute, they spend the rest of Sunday, after Pharaoh's army is drowned, basically having a celebration because they're really happy. Finally, no one's chasing them anymore. They've gotten out of Egyptian territory. The army that was trying to kill them has been destroyed. They stop and have a celebration and that takes up a lot of the rest of Sunday. And then where would three days' journey after that take them? Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, we'd finish out the seven days of Unleavened Bread.

Now to see another reference that supports this turnover to Exodus 15. Now, we're going to just briefly read verse 22. But before we do, I'm just going to summarize the

context of Chapter 14 and 15. Now, Chapter 14 basically tells you the details of the story of the Red Sea crossing. Getting up to the Red Sea and all the events that took place there and then parting the waters and going through the waters. Then Pharaoh's army being drowned and all of that taking place. Well, then in Chapter 15, you have the song of Moses. They basically stop and have a celebration because they're all elated and giving God thanks. He destroyed this army and now they're safe and they're out of Egyptian territory. The army that was trying to kill them has been destroyed. And they stop and celebrate.

But now notice verse 22, because once again we're going to see the reference to the *"three days' journey into the wilderness"* is on the other side of the Red Sea. Once they've gone through the Red Sea. In Verse 22.

Ex 15:22 *"So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water."* (NKJV)

So, what you've got is that the three days' journey -- it's after they've gone through the Red Sea. So, if you have the crossing of the Red Sea on wave sheaf Sunday, and then three days' journey after that, it's the latter part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It's Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Finishing all of this out.

Now, to understand the spiritual aspects of this. We need to remember that the New Testament teaches the spiritual application for us in the New Covenant Church -- of how the Feast of Unleavened Bread applies to us. It teaches those lessons to us in terms of spiritual analogies that it applies to the story of the Exodus.

As I've kind of emphasized a lot in the last few years, one of the keys to understanding spiritually how the Feast of Unleavened Bread fits into the Spring Holy Days -- with the Feast of Unleavened Bread being prior to Pentecost -- is basically understanding the story. Because the Israelites have to go through all their journey getting out of Egypt. Go through the Red Sea. Get three days' journey out of Egypt. Then later they actually go to Mount Sinai and make a covenant with God. They're not in a covenant with God while they're going through the Exodus.

There's nothing that places that covenant in the first month of the year. That covenant takes place in the third month of the year at Mount Sinai. So, it's important to understand the story to know how to apply the analogies, and how they apply to us. This whole concept of how the Holy Days apply to us spiritually is taught in terms of analogies. These are things that we can pull directly from the Bible. This isn't just ideas that we made up. So, let's notice how we can see directly from the Bible this concept of it teaching us analogies.

So, turn over to Revelation 11. Now, the context here that we're breaking into is the story about the two witnesses. What they will be doing at the end time, the miracles they'll be performing, and how they will be preaching and warning the world. But there's

a statement made here in the context of all of this that speaks to the concept of seeing Egypt as kind of a general picture of sin. And it's Revelation 11 in Verse 7.

Rev 11:7 *"When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8) And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."* (NKJV)

So, notice it's making a spiritual analogy here to Sodom and Egypt. Sodom is the city that God burned up and completely destroyed because of their rampant sexual sin and homosexuality. Well, it's grouping Egypt in here as well. It's basically connecting the idea that Egypt symbolically is this picture of sin. For ancient Israel, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is about them coming out of Egypt. Today, the Feast of Unleavened Bread is about us coming out of sin spiritually in our lives. Well, this is where we get this concept from.

Well, this concept also comes from Hebrews Chapter 11. Turn over to Hebrews 11 and we'll start reading in Verse 24. It says,

Heb 11:24 *"By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25) choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26) esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. 27) By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. 28) By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. 29) By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned."* (NKJV)

So, he rejected Egypt and the pleasures of sin and what that could do for him. Choosing righteousness and wanting to follow God. This shows us the basic analogy that coming out of Egypt is analogous to coming out of sin.

Well, the same thing can be said in terms of slavery because the big thing for the Israelites was they were slaves and oppressed in Egypt. And the whole thing for them was coming out of slavery and being free and being able to live their own lives as they wanted to without the oppression of slavery. Well, the spiritual lesson for us in this is that sin is slavery for us. We can be trapped in sin and confined with it, just like the Israelites were trapped in Egypt as slaves.

This concept comes directly from Romans 6. It's Romans 6, and we'll start reading in Verse 15. It says,

Rom 6:15 *"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16) Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves*

slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?" (NKJV)

So, it's saying you can be a slave to sin, and you should reject that. In Verse 17.

17) "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18) And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19) I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. 20) For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21) What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22) But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (NKJV)

So, this is how we look at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. We look at it from the standpoint of coming out of sin. And that's how we also look at the picture of leaven. For ancient Israel, they ate unleavened bread remembering coming out of Egypt. For us, we tie it to sin and to coming out of slavery to sin.

And if we turn over to 1 Corinthians 5, we can see that we take this concept directly from the Bible. 1 Corinthians 5 and Verse 1. It says,

1 Cor 5:1 *"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!" (NKJV)*

The context here is there was a guy attending the Corinthian congregation who was actively involved in an affair with his stepmother and the congregation was taking the perspective of a lot of our kind of liberal leftists today of "Oh, we're tolerant and accepting and open-minded". They were actually kind of proud of this. This is what Paul is chastising them for. He is saying "No, that is not how you should be acting here. You should not allow this kind of sin to be around you." But notice as he's addressing this, how he connects the Spring Holy Days to this and how he specifically attaches the concept of leavening and unleavened bread to the whole issue of sin and righteousness. In Verse 2,

2) "And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3) For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. 4) In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5) deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his

spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6) Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (NKJV)

And notice this, he's basically connecting here from an analogy standpoint the concept of this guy in the congregation involved in this very sinful life, and “You're allowing yourself to be around this sin. Don't you know that's contagious! Don't you know that it's like leaven and how it affects bread!” You can leave dough just sitting out exposed to the air and yeast spores will get in it and spread. That's the analogy that he's making. He's connecting leavening to sin. That's the whole picture he's making. In Verse 7,

“7) Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8) Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (NKJV)

So, you can see that this is how the Feast of Unleavened Bread applies for us in our spiritual lives. Because it's not about just a physical journey out of physical slavery for us. For us there's spiritual lessons and putting out leaven -- that teaches us lessons about getting sin out of our lives and living a life of righteousness.

But now to understand how the whole series of events that I laid out -- because I kind of laid out a timeline here -- let's notice all the parallels and the spiritual lessons that come from them. We know from scripture that the Israelites began their exodus out of Egypt on the First Day of Unleavened Bread. The Bible just very clearly dogmatically states that. There's no speculation involved.

We made a few assumptions in terms of the timeline because we've assumed that the number of campsites leading up to the crossing of the Red Sea -- that each one of them basically equates with a day. Now, that's how Josephus in his writings interprets it as well. And that places us again with Thursday, Friday, and Saturday being the days where they journeyed up to the Red Sea. Now that, interestingly enough, places Sunday -- which again would be wave sheaf Sunday -- as the day when they actually crossed the Red Sea, and the armies of Egypt are drowned in the Red Sea and destroyed.

But now, let's think about this from not only the physical perspective, but the spiritual connections that would tie in with all of this. What this means is, this was the final destruction of -- you might say -- the empire of sin. In other words, Egypt being a picture of sin. If we just kind of follow the logic of this idea -- of Egypt being kind of the empire of sin. Again, we've seen that analogy directly from the Bible. Well, that from an analogy standpoint makes Pharaoh and his army kind of like Satan and his demons. If we place the crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh's army on wave sheaf Sunday, that creates an interesting parallel, doesn't it? Because that means not only are the armies of sin defeated on that day, but the threat of death -- being killed by the army that's chasing the Israelites -- is destroyed that day as well. And that ties in directly with the spiritual meaning of what Christ accomplished on wave sheaf Sunday.

So, turn over to Hebrews 2. It's Hebrews 2, and we'll start reading in Verse 14.

Heb 2:14 *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15) and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16) For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham."* (NKJV)

Now think about this. He's saying that Satan had the power of death hanging over the people. It mentions that Christ defeats this through death. But also think about it. When did He totally release us -- all the people -- from the threat of death with His sacrifice? Well, that would be wave sheaf Sunday, right? When He goes before the Father and pays the penalty for all of us. That's when all this is officially destroyed. That's when we're released from the death penalty because Christ's sacrifice can be applied to mankind, and we're released from death. That happens on wave sheaf Sunday.

So, turn over to Hebrews 9. We'll see this in a little more detail here. We'll start reading in Verse 11. Now, this is the account of the ceremony that would play out on the Day of Atonement. So, this actual ceremony it's referring to is on the Day of Atonement. But Christ actually fulfilled this on wave sheaf Sunday. As I've explained in previous sermons, the reason that this appears twice in God's overall Holy Day plan is because the Spring Holy Days are specific to the Firstfruits, and the Fall Holy Days to the rest of mankind. So, whereas Passover is specific to the Firstfruits -- and again, all you have to do is look at the story of who got killed and whose life got saved? Well, it was the firstborn. It is specific to the firstborn. Well, Atonement applies to the rest of mankind. So, that's why you see this repeated more than once. But again, when did Christ actually do this? It was wave sheaf Sunday.

But let's notice what happened there. This is Hebrews 9 in Verse 11.

Heb 9:11 *"But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance."* (NKJV)

From a spiritual perspective, it was wave sheaf Sunday when Christ fulfilled the wave sheaf and enabled His sacrifice to be applied for all of us and to release us from the threat of death. Well, that's exactly -- if we follow the timeline I laid out here -- what

wave sheaf Sunday would mean for ancient Israel. Because that's when the armies of sin -- basically analogous to Satan's demons -- would be destroyed and the threat of being killed by these armies was released from the Israelites. Now, no one is chasing them and trying to kill them. So, you can see the exact parallels that play out here.

As we've emphasized throughout this sermon, the Israelites weren't told just to get out of Egypt. Just get outside of Egyptian territory and then everything's okay. Just get on the other side of the border and then you're all right. That wasn't the instructions. The instructions were, you have get out of Egypt and go three days' journey into the wilderness. All the way up through the Red Sea was Egyptian territory because, you know, Pharaoh's army was chasing them up to the Red Sea.

Well, why was that so significant? Well, if you just think about the Israelites' history and how they acted once they got out of Egypt, you can easily see why that would be the case. Because you know, just going back to the story we read in Genesis of Laban and Jacob and separating the animals. He didn't want them to interbreed. He didn't want them to interact with each other.

Well, if you think about the history of the Israelites, what were they always wanting to do every time life got difficult?

"Let's just give up and go back to Egypt. Let's just go back and be slaves."

See, if you're right next door to Egypt, it's all that much easier to just go, "Oh well, it's just right over there. We'll just walk back over there and join them. Life will be easier." If you're three days' journey away, it makes it more difficult. It's a little harder to go back. And -- as we're going to see -- not only does that apply to them, but there's a spiritual lesson in this for us as well.

But just to notice their history, turn over to Acts 7. Now, the account we're going to read here is actually of Stephen's speech. The sermon he gives right before he gets murdered. He's recounting the story of the Exodus and particularly what happens at the golden calf incident. And, as you know from the story in Exodus, they make the covenant with God. They're fully out of Egypt. They're at Mountain Sinai. They make the covenant with God. Then Moses goes up to the mountain and he's gone a little longer than the people are expecting. What this account tells us is, in their heart, they're already going back to Egypt. So, let's pick up here in Chapter 7 of Acts in verse 37.

Acts 7:37 *"This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.' 38) 'This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, 39) whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt,..." (NKJV)*

Notice that they're already wanting to go back in their hearts, and we're going to read here in a moment an account where they physically wanted to pick up a leader and physically go back to Egypt. Continuing in Verse 40,

40) *"saying to Aaron, "Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."*
41) *And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands."* (NKJV)

In their hearts, in their minds, they were already going back to Egypt. Well, it wasn't just in their hearts that they wanted to go back to Egypt. The account we are talking about here is when they're actually at Mount Sinai before they've even left and attempted to take the promised land. Well, as you know from the story, they actually get to the edge of the promised land. The spies look out at the area and several of the spies come back saying, "We're all going to die! There's big giants there. They're going to kill us! We don't have a chance". And a couple of them -- Caleb is pointing out to them that, "No, if we go and take the land, God's going to be with us. And if we just have faith in Him, He will deliver everything into our hands." But the people listen to the 10 spies that tell them the bad story and they give up. What they say is, "Let's now pick a leader and actually go back to Egypt." They don't just want to go back in their hearts. They're literally wanting to march back.

So, turn over to Numbers 14, and we'll pick that story up. It's Numbers 14 in Verse 1.

Num 14:1 *"So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2) And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3) 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?" 4) So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt.""* (NKJV)

Notice it's not just returning to Egypt in their hearts. They're literally talking about, "Let's just pack up our stuff and give up and go back to Egypt." So, you can see here why God would want to say "Don't just get on the other side of Egyptian territory. Don't be across the border where you can look across the water and you can see Egypt. No, get a good bit of separation. Go three days' journey into the wilderness. Just get away from this place because otherwise you're going to be tempted to want to go back."

Well, if we think about this again from a spiritual perspective of how this applies to us. For us it's not just about physically coming out of the physical nation of Egypt and coming out of physical slavery. No, it's about coming out of sin and coming out of slavery to sin. Well, the same analogy applies to us in terms of getting a three days' journey of distance between ourselves and sin. And let's look at this. There's a couple of examples of this. Turnover to 1 Corinthians 5. We'll pick up here reading the rest of the story where we left off a minute ago. It's 1 Corinthians 5. This time we're going to pick

up in Verse 9. But what I want you to note is how Paul is making the point here of not being associated with other people who are actively involved in a sinful life. He's not just making the point that Christians are supposed to put off sexual immorality and other forms of sin in our own personal lives. He's going a step further than that. He's not just saying that you need to stop that behavior yourself. He's saying get away from people who practice that way of life. Separate yourself and get away from it.

This is 1 Corinthians 5:9.

1 Cor 5:9 *"I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10) Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11) But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. 12) For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? 13) But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person." (NKJV)*

And what we're going to see here is the New Testament tells us repeatedly as New Covenant Christians, we're supposed to put a three days' journey between ourselves and sin. It doesn't make that specific reference to three days' journey, but if we just look at the lesson of the story of the Exodus. That's the point it's trying to tell us.

Just like the Israelites, where they needed to get not just right on the edge of Egypt. We need to get away from sin. You need to put some distance in between yourself and sin. Because human nature sometimes wants to get just as close to sin as we can. "As long as I didn't totally do it, you know, but I can get close and dabble with it". That's what our human nature wants to do. God is repeatedly telling us of the New Testament, "You need to put a healthy distance between you and sin." So, you can stay away from it, and it doesn't infect you and pull you back into it. So, let's notice a few more examples of this.

Turn over to Romans 16. Because again, we're going to see a number of examples here where He is specifically saying it's not just that you shouldn't engage in sinful behavior yourself. Get away from people who are actively practicing sin. That doesn't mean we have to condemn everybody who's got a fault. Because we all have faults. We're all wrong in various areas and still trying to overcome. He's talking about those who are blatantly going in the wrong direction. You know, who are blatantly living a life of sin. When you see that, get away from it and don't associate with it. This is in Romans 16 and Verse 17.

Rom 16:17 *"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them." (NKJV)*

Again, it's not talking about taking note of those who just have some faults and fall short in some ways because we all do. It's those who are just blatantly trying to go the wrong way. Stay away from them.

18) "For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. 19) For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. 20) And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." (NKJV)

Paul also mentions in 2 Corinthians the concept of not being unequally yoked. It's the whole idea of not connecting your life -- not being directly connected -- with sinful individuals. It's 2 Corinthians 6 in Verse 14. It says,

2 Cor 6:14 *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15) And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16) And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17) Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18) "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."* (NKJV)

So, again, it is the concept of don't be actively connected with those who are totally pursuing a wrong way of life. One of the ways where this oftentimes becomes a stumbling block for people is in romantic and marriage relationships. Particularly for people who are young in the Church. Those of dating and marrying age. Sometimes the pickings are slim in the Church. Well, they quickly decide that as long as I can find this other person and they'll be peaceful and get along with my religion it'll be okay. Well, you might work that out, but then what about when you have children? Things get complicated because when you raise the kids. Now what are you going to teach the kids? Are they're going to keep Christmas and Easter or are they going to keep God's Holy Days?

You get into all these types of issues. Then just trying to get along with the rest of the family the Church member oftentimes gets put in a situation where they find themselves compromising on their beliefs because they're trying to make peace and they're trying to get along with each other. What that does is they wind up kind of slowly pulling you in that direction. It becomes a temptation to want to pull you back into Egypt -- to follow the analogy. That's the whole reason why He says don't just get out of Egypt. It's not just a matter of going across the borderline and as long as you're outside of Egypt and Egypt's over there, you're okay. No, get some separation. Get a three days' journey on the other side so you can't be looking back and be tempted to come back into Egypt so easily.

See, that was the whole point. That's the spiritual lesson for us because we have to remember that Satan is always looking to play upon our weaknesses and to tempt us to want to get back into a life of sin. If we're right there standing right next to it, it's real easy to tempt us and pull us right back into it.

Turn over to 1 Peter 1. There is a warning here of how we have a lion after us who's always looking to play upon our weaknesses. If we allow ourselves to be in vulnerable positions where we're just right up there on the edge of sin. It's really easy then to get tempted to just step across the line. Whereas, if you try to keep a three days' journey distance it's kind of a buffer that helps you resist it and stay away from it. So, it's 1 Peter 5 in Verse 8.

1 Peter 5:8 *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9) Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10) But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 11) To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."* (NKJV)

A number of years ago, a good friend of mine made an interesting comment. We were talking about this whole concept of Satan testing you and coming after you. And he looked at me one day and he smiled and said, "And I can even tell you how he's going to come after you." I was really intrigued, and I said, "Okay, tell me more." He just grinned and said, "Wherever you're most vulnerable!" In other words, whatever is your weak spot. Whatever's going to get under your skin and punch your buttons. You know, whatever's going to be a temptation that's going to get to you and get under your skin. That's what he's going to do. You know, because he is smart and he's going to calculate what's going to be the most successful route, and he's going to come after you.

To go back to our original analogy, if we don't put a three days' journey distance between us and sin, it's so much easier to play upon our weaknesses. It's one of the lessons of Alcoholics Anonymous. If you're familiar with those kinds of programs, typically what they'll tell someone who's been a bad alcoholic -- typically what'll be the case in their life is most of their friends are drinking buddies. You know, they're people that hang out at the bar and who consider it normal to be drinking heavily all the time. Well, if a person is struggling to come out of that and wants to put that life behind them, they need to find a new class of friends. Because if you're trying to give up drinking, but you're hanging out with a bunch of people that are always getting drunk and always want to hang out at the bar, that's not a good place for you to hang out. If you're trying to overcome that, that's just going to become a stumbling block. Whatever our weaknesses are, we needed to put a three days' journey between us and that sin or, otherwise, we just get easily tempted.

Turn over to James 4. We'll see again, the same principle kind of being hammered home here. It's James 4 in Verse 7.

James 4:7 *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8) Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9) Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.” (NKJV)*

Oftentimes what can be a stumbling block for us is our human pride. That's one of the biggest things that can really trip us up. Notice here it talks about resisting the devil and not being double-minded. Well, that's an easy temptation that we can fall into and how we rationalize and justify wanting to get as close to sin as we possibly can rather than saying “No, that's sin! I want to be a three days' journey away from that. I want a big separation between me and that!” You know, because that's the lesson we need to learn from the Days of Unleavened Bread -- not just putting sin out of our own personal lives in terms of how we behave individually. Just like with the sexual immorality example Paul talked about, it's not just an issue of “I shouldn't be engaging in sexual immorality myself. I really don't need to be hanging around people that are actively involved in that.” Because again, it's infectious and it makes it all that much easier to want to fall into that. “I need a three days' journey of separation between myself and that environment.”

Let's look at one more scripture in terms of how we can make sure that we continue to deleaven our lives. Turn over to Ephesians 6. One of the keys to resisting Satan's temptations to trip us up and to pull us back into sin -- to pull us back into Egypt again, to use this analogy, -- one of the keys to this is putting on what the Bible calls the whole armor of God. So, let's notice here in Ephesians 6 and Verse 10,

Eph 6:10 *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11) Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (NKJV)*

So, again, the wiles of the devil are those temptations that constantly play upon our weaknesses and tempt us back into sin. In Verse 12,

12) “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14) Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16) above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18) praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19) and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth

boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” (NKJV)

As you can see here, he's telling us Satan is always looking for ways to trip us up. We need the armor of God's Spirit and of His character to be able to guard ourselves to keep that sin out of our lives. Well, brethren, as you know, we've just completed the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the whole lesson of this is not just personally coming out of sin. Just like for ancient Israel, it wasn't just an issue of being released from slavery and just getting out of Egyptian territory. They also needed to go a three days' journey into the wilderness. They needed to put a healthy separation between themselves and Egypt because of that temptation to want to go back into Egypt. Well, the exact same lesson applies to us. If we look at this from a spiritual perspective, we don't just need to put off sexual immorality or lust or greed or other issues that we can fall into sin ourselves. We need to make sure that we're keeping ourselves away from an environment of sin like that. That we're putting a three days' journey of separation between ourselves and sin. So, as we complete this Feast of Unleavened Bread, let's learn the lessons that the story of the Exodus teaches us. Not only come out of personal sin ourselves, but let's make sure that we put a three days' journey between ourselves and sin.