

THE DOCTRINE OF LEAVEN

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1. **Definition** - Leaven is a substance used to produce fermentation, acidity, in dough or liquid; it is the material used to produce a gas that lightens dough or batter and causes it to rise or expand. As a metaphor leaven is used to represent that which modifies or lightens a mass or an aggregate by mingling with or permeating the mass or aggregate.

2. **Vocabulary:**
 - a. שֵׁאֵר – se’or – (Heb. noun) – leaven (Exodus 12:15, 19, 20; 13:7; Lev. 2:11); leavened bread (Deut. 16:4)
 - b. חֶמֶץ – chametz – (Heb. n.) – that which is leavened (Ex. 12:15); or leavened bread (Ex. 13:3, 7; Deut. 16:3)
 - c. מַצֹּת – matzot – (Heb. n.) – unleavened bread (Ex. 12:18)
 - d. מַצוֹת – matzot – (Heb. n.) – unleavened bread (Ex. 12:17)
 - e. ζύμη – zume – (Greek noun) – yeast, leaven (Matt. 13:33; 16:12; Lk. 13:21)
 - f. ζυμώω – zumoo – (Gk. verb) – to ferment, to leaven (Matt. 13:33; Lk. 13:21; 1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9)

3. **Leaven** is used in the Bible universally to **represent sin or some form of evil** or sinful or evil people. (Matt. 16:11, 12; 1 Cor. 5:6; cf. Gal. 5:9)

4. The **first reference to leaven** in the Bible **is its absence** from the bread prepared for the two angels by Lot. Apparently leavened bread was the food of the doomed evil people of Sodom. (Gen. 19:3)

5. The **second reference to leaven** is also negative. The Israelites are told to **remove all the leaven** from their houses beginning with the “**Passover**” and continuing for the seven days of “**Unleavened Days**” representing their separation from the evil of Egypt. (Ex. 12:8, 15, 17, 18-20, 34)

6. The **third reference** to leaven is given by God to Moses as part of the **spiritual law code** of the “**Mosaic Covenant (or Law).**” (Ex. 34:18, 25)

7. Leaven is to be **excluded from any sacrifice offered by fire** to the Lord as expounded in the Mosaic Covenant. (Levit. 2:11-16; 6:14-18; 10:12; 23:6)

8. Leaven is **used in irony** demonstrating Israel's disobedience. (Amos 4:5; cf. Levit. 7:12, 13; Jer. 7:8-11)
9. In the New Testament "**the leaven of the Sadducees**" is their sin of false teaching, human viewpoint based on rationalism. (Matt. 16:6, 11, 12) They denied the resurrection of the dead. (Luke 20:27)
10. The **leaven of the Pharisees** is their sin of hypocrisy demonstrated by their religious **legalism and ritualism and false teaching**. (Matt. 16:6, 11, 12; Mk. 8:15; Lk. 12:1)
11. The **leaven of Herod** is the sin of worldliness and his love of power. (Mk. 8:15)
12. The **leaven of the incestuous believer** and the Corinthian church is the sin of licentiousness and the sin of arrogance. (1 Cor. 5:5-7a; cf. 1 Cor. 5:1, 2) "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."
13. The **leaven of the Galatians** is their **sin of legalism**, insistence upon circumcision as a means of salvation. (Gal. 5:1-9)
14. Therefore, God prescribed the use of unleavened bread as part of the "**offering by fire**" on each of the seven feasts of Israel. (Ex. 12:8; 34:18-26; Levit. 23:6, 13, 18; Levit. 23:25, 27, 36)
 - a. The use of unleavened bread in the **feast of Passover** and during the **feast of Unleavened Bread** is a type of the offering up of the sinless (unleavened) sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. (1 Cor. 5:7)
 - b. The use of unleavened bread on **the feast day of First Fruits** (the first day of the barley harvest) is a type of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 15:20, 23b; cf. Ex. 34:26; Deut. 16:4)
 - c. The **use of unleavened bread** in the other four feasts of Israel; **Pentecost, Trumpets, Atonement, and Booths** (or Tabernacles also called the "**Feast of the Ingathering**" – Ex. 23:16) **represents the perfect provision** of the Lord Jesus Christ who will bring about the prophetic fulfillment of these feasts. (Levit. 23:16-44; Deut. 16:9-17; cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 8:1ff; Rom. 11:1, 2, 25-27; Rev. 12:6, 14-17; 1 Cor. 15:25, 26)

15. However, **leaven is used on the feast of Pentecost** (also called the “**Feast of Weeks**” or a second “**First Fruits**”) to produce “**two loaves of bread**” for a “**wave offering,**” (a new grain offering), **not offered to the Lord in fire.** (Levit. 2:12, 13; Levit. 23:16, 17; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:10) This is **in addition to the other grain offerings** presented in fire. (Levit. 2:1-11a; 23:18; Num. 28:27-31)
- a. The **Feast of Pentecost** signals the **end of the wheat harvest.** (Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Levit. 23:15-22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:10)
 - b. These **leavened loaves are presented** (waved to the Lord) but **not offered in fire.** (Levit. 2:12, 13) They are part of the “**Peace Offering for thanksgiving.**” (Levit. 7:11-14; 23:19, 20)
 - c. These **leavened loaves** were to be only $\frac{2}{10}$ of an **ephah** (1.5-gallons) (Levit. 23:17)
Note: 1-**ephah** = 1-**bath** (liquid) approximately **7.5 gallons**
7.5 gallons ≈ 1-bushell (dry measure)
 - d. The feast also speaks of the **beginning of the nation of Israel** when the **Mosaic Law (Covenant)** was given. (Ex. 19:1-6)
 - e. The **leavened loaves** of bread **represent the “mixed multitude”** making up the new nation of Israel. There were faithful and unfaithful believers as well as unbelievers. (Ex. 12:37, 38; cf. Num. 11:4)
 - f. The “**dispensation of the church**” also began on the day of Pentecost with believers in Jesus Christ receiving the baptism of the Holy spirit. Like the nation of Israel the “**Church**” has been a mixture of faithful and unfaithful believers. Therefore, the Church, “**the fine meal,**” (the whole lump), has been **infected with the leaven** of sin and evil. (1 Cor. 5:6-8).
16. In the same way, **Jesus uses leaven** in the “Parable of the Leaven and the Meal” to represent **the infiltration of apostasy** during the time of **the Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens.** (Matt. 13:33; cf. Luke 13:20, 21; Matt. 13:11)