

ZOOM STUDY: IMPORTANT BIBLICAL SYMBOLS

YEAST

1.) What do you recall about the events surrounding the first Passover?

Exodus 12:1-3,5-7, 14-20 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, “This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ...The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs. ...This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance. For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day. For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born. Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread.”

Leviticus 2:11 “Every grain offering you bring to the LORD must be made without yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey in an offering made to the LORD by fire.”

2.) Can you guess what yeast symbolized in these contexts?

3.) How should the Christian congregation respond when a fellow-Christian caught in open unrepentant sin? Why is this the loving response for all involved—both the brother/sister and the congregation as a whole?

1 Corinthians 5:1-2,5-8 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father’s wife. And you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? ...[H]and this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord. Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

4.) Based on the previous passage, what is the connection between the Passover festival and the Feast of Unleavened Bread which followed? How does Paul explain that this is a picture of what God has done for us in Christ?

5.) Why is yeast a fitting symbol for false teaching and hypocrisy?

Matthew 6:11-12 [Jesus said,] “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Luke 12:1 Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

6.) In Scripture (as any other writing) immediate context rather than typical use determines meaning and connotation. In this short parable what does yeast illustrate?

Matthew 13:33 He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

7.) How has the kingdom of God, which started out so small, expanded and permeated the world in keeping with Jesus’ parable?

8.) Although yeast can be used to symbolize two opposite things, what is the common element in both cases?

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, pure and true, by your body, delivered into death for us, you forgive our sins so that through faith in you we can live new in holiness and righteousness before our Father in heaven. For our souls’ sake, keep us from malice and wickedness and save us from the yeast of false teaching and tolerating sin. Amen.