

The Countdown to the Spring Holy Days

Will this be the same ole, same ole; or returning to your first love?

By the time you receive this, you will be just over five weeks away from God's Spring Holy Days. Each year about this time as I begin to look into the preparation for these days, my thoughts go back to my very first year of keeping them. I look at them with fond memories, as my thoughts pause over the memories of those events that took place at that time. Those memories are now 45 years old.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share them with you because for many people on our mailing list, this will be your very first time keeping these Holy Days. I pray that for you, you will be as blessed as I was to obtain, and retain the same powerful, uplifting and rewarding memories. Maybe this isn't your first time keeping Passover and Unleavened Bread, but you can make it your most rewarding and uplifting time ever. There is a phrase that goes; "you only get out of it, what you put into it."

Memories of My First Holy Days 1972 Approaching My First Holy Days, Passover, and Days of Unleavened Bread

I had been attending church with my dad since late November 1971. Each Sabbath every one greeting you were warm, friendly, and uplifting. There were about 500 people attending. As Passover drew near, I remember my dad taking the time to walk me through the events I was about to experience, including the information that the Passover service would be different. To this day I remember the various preparations leading up to the actual Passover and Unleavened Bread.

One of those memories was seeing my mother, who wasn't yet in the church, though she respected my dad's request preparing our house. I came home and there she was cleaning, literally, nearly everything in the kitchen seemed to be in pieces. I thought we were moving. She was busy cleaning the toaster, oven, all the cabinets were wide open and food was all over the place. The foods were being sorted to be eaten or thrown away by a certain date. At least that is what the notes everywhere said. And it didn't stop there. My mom always kept a clean home, but even so, she went around the house about that time doing her spring cleaning. (I'm writing an article for the Quarterly next

month on the origins of Spring Cleaning as related to the Spring Holy Days. Be on the lookout.) Looking back, I know it was the extreme, but it was what she did.

Just days before the Holy Days began my dad invited me on a trip to the Jewish community uptown to purchase some items for the days that were approaching. I really didn't understand what those days really were or meant, but there I was heading to the Jewish community for a wild awakening. We purchased a variety of items to try when the time came. We came home with all sorts of stuff. When the Holy days arrived we broke open the different items to taste our feast. Some of it was some of the nastiest tasting stuff I had ever eaten. Years later I remember saying, "no wonder those people over there are always fighting with each other, it's because they have to eat this nasty stuff." Don't ask me what it was, it was just nasty. The point of it all was that my dad wanted to give me a positive first time experience, and it was. We laughed while we tried the items, most was great food, but as I said, some wasn't. It was all a part of the experience.

[As a side note: if you've never been in a totally Kosher, Jewish store, let me tell you it was different. If you've never done that, you really need to experience it at least once in your life. Why not take a visit before this Passover? Sorry that a lot of those foods I still haven't acquired a taste for many of those foods. But there are many that are really great.]

Another first time experience was attending the actual Passover service, washing feet, and the bread and wine. Because I wasn't yet baptized, my first time was without the Bread and Wine. What I remember most was the importance of the soberness of the service. How different it was from the talkative services each Sabbath with everyone greeting one another. I especially remember how refreshing I felt sitting there after having my feet washed. It would be another year before I would take the Bread and wine.

One last point I'd like to share is the first and last Holy Days. We drove nearly an hour and a half away. Hundreds and hundreds of people came together. There were two services, and a pot luck in between. How they set up and fed that many people in such a short



"But, let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." I Cor. 11:28

time was amazing. It was very late by the time we returned home on those two days. It was dark, and I was quiet. The long drive home on each of those days my thoughts would be racing and I was asking lots of questions about all of that had taken place. Every year since those first days as I prepare for the Holy Days my thoughts return to those events, events I didn't quite understand, but events I thank God for by allowing me to be a part of.

Each year God gives us opportunity to revisit His Holy Days and create those first love experiences. Every year these Holy Days should be events of warmth and excitement. In Revelation 2 God tells the church of Ephesus: "These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. **Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.**"

In the N.T., we are told in I Cor. 11:27-29 "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in

*an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.**"*

This examination of one's self should go into all aspects of the Holy Days and our lives, not just the Bread and wine. In the process of the examination, don't do it alone, spend time in prayer for our Heavenly Father to direct your thoughts and guide you into the joy of your calling and the opportunity to be cleaned and purified.

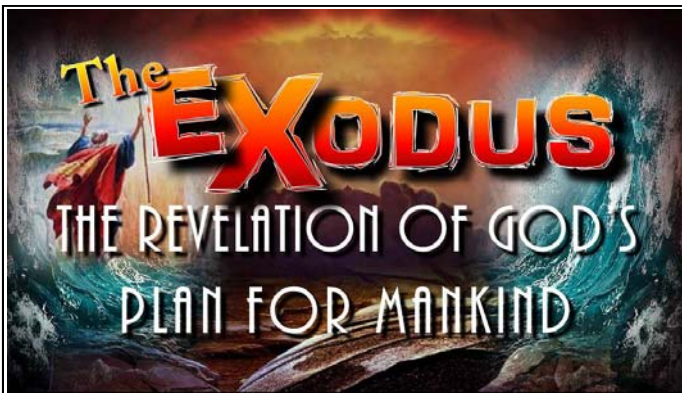
The Holy Days are just over a month away, plenty of time to make them special. Take some time to get with those you meet with to see what you can do to make these Holy Days, the *First Love of Your Calling*.

Plan now with your group and / or family and make this your First Love Passover and Days of Unleavened bread. Plan your activities and have a great Spring Holy Day season. **Don't wait ... Start Planning Now!**

Sincerely your Brother in Christ,



Tom Kerry



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