

THE TALE OF TWO CHURCHES
Part IIIC
“Things The Corinthians Did Not Know”
(A Little Leaven Leaveneth the Whole Lump)
1st Co. 5:6

INTRODUCTION

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church concerning several things that they were ignorant of. He used the phrase “know ye not” to indicate their ignorance which affected their behavior. We have discussed several crucial issues that the Corinthians were ignorant of that caused problems in Corinth. Today, we will consider another. The Corinthians were ignorant of the fact that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”.

The International Standard bible Encyclopedia records that:

“leaven” consisted always, so far as the evidence goes, of a piece of fermented dough kept over from a former baking. The lump of dough thus preserved was either dissolved in water in the kneading-trough before the flour was added, or was “hid” in the flour (the King James Version “meal”) and kneaded along with it.”

Leaven is used figuratively in Scripture of a corrupting agent introduced for the purpose of expanding. The Corinthians did not know that their boasting over immorality in the Church beled their ignorance of just how serious the problem was.

- I. LEAVEN IN USED LITERALLY AND METAPHORICALLY IN SCRIPTURE OF A FERMENTING AGENT THAT INCREASES AND SPREADS.
 - A. There are several leaven related terms used in the Old Testament.
 1. Chamets is the Hebrew word for leaven which is used literally and figuratively in the Old Testament. (It is used literally of that which fermented bread); Ex. 12:17 (a mixture of that which defiles..i.e.. Israel in Egypt); Ex. 12:15 cf. Lk. 22:7(was forbidden for seven days during the passover)
 2. Sehore -- is the bread produced by leaven. Cf. Ex. 12:15,19
 3. Matstsah is a Hebrew term used often in the Old Testament to emphasize that which is without fermentation. Cf. Ex. 12:39 (had a longer shelf life); Deut. 16:2-4; 23:15; Ez. 45:21 cf. Matt. 26:17 (was a festival celebrated in the nation of Israel during the passover); Ex. 29:1-2 (used metaphorically to exemplify sanctification-- hallow is qadash to dedicate, set apart; that which is uncorrupt); Ex. 34:18 (seen in Israel being removed from Egypt -- the conjunction kiy explains the reasoning)

- B. Two leaven related terms are used in the Greek.
 - 1. Leaven is the Greek word zume which is used in Scripture of a fermenting agent.
 - 2. Azumos is used to translate “unleavened” in the Greek.

- C. Definitions of leaven would include:
 - 1. **“Substance causing expansion of doughs and batters by the release of gases within such mixtures.”** -- Encyclopedia Britannica
 - 2. **“ (That which) is bred of corruption and corrupts the mass with which it is mixed. Hence it represents "malice" (the evil habit) and "wickedness" (evil coming out in word and deed) as opposed to "sincerity" and "truth"** -- Fausset Bible Dictionary
 - 3. **A product used as a corrupting agent for the purpose of expansion.**
-- Context of Scripture

II. LEAVEN IS USED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS DOCTRINE THAT SPREADS ULTIMATELY CORRUPTING THE PURPOSE OF ITS OBJECT.

- A. The Lord used leaven to illustrate the corruption of the Kingdom from the Heavens. Matt. 13:33 cf. 16:6,11
 - 1. The use of the word “another” is allos, an adjective that indicates one of the same kind. Cf. vs. 31
 - 2. The Kingdom from the Heaven is reference to what happens to the kingdom Christ would have reigned over, after He is gone. Cf. Matt. 13:19 (satan stops ones from believing the good news concerning it); 13:24 (tares are placed into it);
 - 3. The leaven was used by a woman in a meal. Vs. 33
 - a) She “took” -- lambousa -- which is used in this form of to take something that is available. Cf. Rom. 7:8 (of the sin nature taking occasion)
 - b) “Hid” is the word krupto (aor. Act. ind.) which indicates to conceal; hide; something that is not visible. Cf. Matt. 13:44 (of treasure in a field); Col. 3:3 (of the life of the believer being in Christ); Heb. 11:23 (of Moses by his parents)
 - (1) The leaven was placed (into) -- inside of.
 - (2) “Meal” is aleuron -- flour.
 - 4. The result of the placement of the leaven is that the entirety of the meal came to be affected.

- B. The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees was bad doctrine. Matt. 16:6,11
 - 1. The Lord uses two words to warn the disciples to be on guard for the doctrine of the Jewish leaders.

- a) The word “take heed” is horao which notes **to gaze with mental discernment of thought; to perceive; to be on the lookout for**. Cf. 1st Thess. 5:15 (of being on guard of returning evil for evil)
 - b) “Beware” is prosecho which means **to pay attention to; focus upon; to observe for the purpose of learning or avoiding certain behaviors**. Cf. Lk. 21:34 (of things that will affect the heart); 1st Tim. 1:4 (of myths)
 - c) The word “of” is the Greek preposition “apo” from -- to separate away from.
2. “Doctrine” is didache -- teaching taught for the purpose of one practicing what is taught. Cf. Rom 6:17 (of doctrine to overcome the sin nature)
 3. The doctrine of the Jewish leaders is seen as being “hypocrisy”
 - a) “Which is” is the relative pronoun haytis -- “the same is” -- Strong’s lexicon
 - b) “Is” -- estin notes continuous action
 - c) “Hypocrisy” -- “the acting of a stage player”. -- Joseph Thayer Matt. 23:13 (they teach one thing and do another); 1st Tim. 4:2 (is characteristic of legalism)

III. THE CORINTHIANS WERE UNAWARE OF THE EFFECTS OF LEAVEN IN THE LOCAL CHURCH.

- A. Evidence the Corinthians did not know that leaven spread was their boasting. Vs. 6
 1. The word “boasting” is kauchema which is **to express extreme confidence in a belief or action**. Cf. Heb. 3:6 (of the believer’s hope)
 2. The Corinthians were confident they were responding correctly to the issue of the man with his father’s wife. 1st Co. 5:2
- B. Paul warned them of the problem of their stance. Vs. 6
 1. “Little” is the word mikra -- which is “of quantity or mass small, little, insignificant.” -- Friberg lexicon cf. John 16:17 (of time frame of the Lord’s departure)
 2. “Lump” is phurama -- “a knead; a mass of dough” -- Strong’s lexicon cf. Gal. 5:9
- C. The apostle urged the solution to the Corinthians’ problem. Vs. 7
 1. “Purge” is ekkarthairo which means to cleanse out completely. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:21 (of one purging himself from vessels of dishonor)
 2. The purpose of purging out the old lump was for the purpose that there might be a new lump.
 3. “For even” -- “just as” in a similar way as the passover lamb

4. The “passover lamb” represented a cleansing from past cf. Mk. 14;1; Heb. 11:28
5. The Corinthians were urged to not keep “the feast” (celebration of passover) with the old leaven, likened to the tradition of riding bread of leaven during celebration of the passover. Vs. 8 -- ***‘Let your whole lives be as a sacred festival, i.e. consecrated to God.’ As a feast lasting seven days was connected with the slaying of the paschal lamb; so a life of consecration to God should be connected with the death of our passover — Christ. This feast is not to be celebrated with the old or corrupt leaven, which is explained to mean the leaven of malice and wickedness.***” -- Charles Hodge Commentary

CONCLUSION