

# Seeking My King & His Kingdom

## #21 Parable Of The Woman & The Leaven

Matt. 13:33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened."

The common interpretation of this Parable is:

"Woman" represents the Church

The "Leaven" represents the Gospel

"Three Measures Of Meal" = Humanity

Conclusion: The "Leaven of the Gospel" is to be so introduced by the Church into the "Meal of Humanity" that the whole world will be converted to Christ.

1. This seems to contradict other prophecies. [Luke 18:8; Isa. 63:3, 5; II Peter 2; Jude]

2. The "Leaven" cannot mean the "Gospel." If "Leaven" meant the Gospel we have a strange contradiction for the Gospel does not work like leaven. Leaven when put in meal works by "itself," and if left "alone" it will leaven the whole batch of dough.

3. "To say this parable teaches that the Gospel is to win the whole world to Christ is to make error equal truth."

a. "If the leaven represents the Gospel, the woman the church, and the meal the entire human race, then we have to confess that our Lord erred in His judgment and entirely over-estimated the power of the Gospel to find a response in the hearts of men.

b. After eighteen centuries of Gospel preaching we cannot point to a single country where all its subjects make even a profession of Christianity; nay, the world over, we cannot find a single city, town, or hamlet where everyone of its inhabitants is a believer in the Lord Jesus.

c. No; this parable shows us the secret working [hid] of a putrefying element which spreads nothing but corruption. The Gospel as far as converting the world is regarded as a failure."

Remember: Jesus was a Jewish rabbi, speaking to Jewish disciples.

A. "3 Measures Of Meal"

1. The woman and the leaven did something to the 3 measures of meal.

2. It appears in Gen. 18:6 for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. Influences how it should be interpreted in Bible.

Gen. 18:1-8 Abraham receives 3 visitors -Jesus Christ and 2 angels.

As Abraham was sitting near the entrance to his tent during the hottest part of the day,

<sup>2</sup> he glanced up and saw three men standing there, not far from him. As soon as he noticed them, Abraham ran from the tent entrance to greet them and bowed low to the ground.

<sup>3</sup> "My lords," he told them, "if I have found favor with you, please don't leave your servant."

<sup>4</sup> I'll have some water brought to wash your feet while you rest under the tree

Jesus told him in verse 5 to "Go ahead and make a meal." So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready Three Measures Of Fine Meal; knead *it* and make cakes.

Next, Abraham ran to the herd, found a choice and tender calf, and gave it to the young men, who went off in a hurry to prepare it.

8b ...placed the food in front of them, and stood near them under the tree while they ate.  
From that day to the present day, the "3 measures of meal" are emblematic of a meal offering.  
Consider: All ministry must 1<sup>st</sup> be to the Lord.

- a. He ministered personally, immediately, speedily, generously [best he had].
- b. His service was marked by humility - bowed before them
- c. Abraham served the meal personally to the Lord. He did not partake.
- d. He stood nearby to be available.

Note: It also included a blood sacrifice.

3. Judges 6: God called Gideon, a farmer, to become the deliverer of His people.

Judges 6:12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him,  
The LORD is with thee, thou Mighty Man Of Valor.

God's Words To Gideon: Judges 6:14-16

1. I will give you the strength to overcome the opposition.

Judges 6:17-24 Gideon prepares an offering to The Angel of The Lord.

6:18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present,  
and set it before thee. And He said, I will tarry until you come again.

6:19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and Unleavened Cakes of an ephah of flour:  
the Flesh he put in a basket, and he put the Broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under  
the oak, and presented it.

- a. This was a costly thing to do when food was scarce. [sacrificial offering]
- b. Ephah of flour = 3 measures of meal
- c. God set the task before Gideon. In response, he prepared the sacrificial offering.
- d. When God calls me to a task, He will equip me as I respond and offer myself a living sacrifice.

Note: It also included a blood sacrifice.

4. I Samuel 1:24, 28 Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls,  
one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh.  
Then they worshipped the LORD there.

Hannah's offering was one *ephah*—three measures of meal. [sacrificial, keep vow, costly]

Note: It also included a blood sacrifice.

Conclusion: It was a voluntary act of worship in recognition of God's goodness and provisions;  
an act of devotion to God;

3 measures of meal = the unleavened bread of service, sacrifice, devotion, worship, humility,  
yielding - with sincerity, honesty and truth

Consider: This crowd of Jews would know instantly what Jesus had in mind.

- Their mind would flash back to a common offering in Israel - the meal offering which consisted of 3 measures of meal precisely.

Lev. 2: Meal [Grain] Offering was prepared with oil, frankincense and salt, but no honey or leaven. [spoil easily; corruption]

### Prohibitions Regarding Leaven & Honey

Lev. 2:11 "Any grain offering that you bring to the LORD is not to be prepared with yeast [leaven], because anything with leaven and honey may not be offered in smoke as an offering by fire to the LORD.

a. Honey speaks of affection and emotion. "The crucifixion was Jesus submitting to God's will rather than bending to the emotions and pressures He would feel from all the suffering."

Prov. 25:16 Have you found honey? Eat only what you need,  
That you not have it in excess and vomit it.

Prov. 25:27 To eat too much honey isn't good; and neither is it honorable to seek one's own glory.

b. Eating too much honey represents people that are ruled by their emotions, people that are steeped greatly in spiritual pride. They seek their own glory, coming to the belief that they are more spiritual than others. They have come to substitute the Word of God with their feelings.

### Requirements for Salt

Lev. 2:13 "Also, be sure to rub every offering from your grain offering with salt.

You are not ever to remove the salt of the covenant of your God from your grain offering.

Present all your offerings with salt."

### II Kings 2:20-22 - The Salt Is Missing

The burden became intolerable. The men of the city came to the man of God and they poured out the whole story. He said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." So they brought *it* to him.

<sup>21</sup> Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed (purified) this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness (unfruitfulness).'" <sup>22</sup> So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

He placed Salt at the source of the sterile water to cure barrenness.

Salt Speaks Of The Risen Life Of The Glorified Savior. This LIFE is imparted by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to the redeemed sinner. It is the SALT for barrenness!

Ezra 7:10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

For this reason, he was among those whom God raised up to rebuild, cleanse and fill the temple with the worship of God.

Ezra 7:21 And I, *even I*, Artaxerxes the king, issue a decree to all the treasurers who *are in the region* beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, let it be done diligently,

What did Ezra ask for so pure worship might be re-established in the cleansed House of God?

Ezra 7:22 up to one hundred talents of silver, one hundred measures of wheat, one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and Salt Without Prescribed Limit.

King, I must have unlimited quantities of salt! I must never run out of salt - because no matter how costly, no matter how sacrificial, no matter how sincere, God will accept NOTHING that is not seasoned with salt! I MUST have unlimited quantities of salt.

Under NO circumstances, God said in His law given to Moses, were ANY offerings to be brought to Him, or sacrifices made, that were not seasoned with SALT.

Without the salt, they would not be acceptable:

- No matter how sincerely brought
- No matter at how great a cost
- No matter how lofty the motive
- No matter how noble the ideal

God has given you and me UNLIMITED quantities of salt - the fullness of Jesus Christ to live His life in and through us.

I Thess. 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ ALONE who makes your sacrifices acceptable to God.

Only what He does in you and through you merits His approval. Accepts NOTHING LESS!

The Meal Offering Was Not Presented Alone.

It accompanied one of the sacrifices that involved the shedding of blood.

1. Our service to God can never purchase salvation or earn the blessing of God.

Apart from the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. [Heb. 9:22]

2. Those who have been saved by faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ may dedicate to the Lord what He has enabled them to produce.

3. This offering represents Jesus Christ as the Bread of Life. [John 6:32ff] He is the perfect One who nourishes our inner person as we worship Him and meditate on His Word.

4. God laid down strict conditions for the offerer to meet before the meal offering would be acceptable.

a. It had to be accompanied with oil which is a picture of the Holy Spirit who was given to Christ without measure.

b. It must include salt which speaks of the Lord's purity of character.

c. It included frankincense for a sweet savor [aroma] to the Lord.

d. No honey or leaven

e. Jesus compared Himself to a grain of wheat [John 12:23-25] who was crushed [fine flour] and put through the furnace of suffering that He might save us from our sin.

Remember: Jesus was a Jewish rabbi, speaking to Jewish disciples.

B. Leaven in the Scriptures is the Symbol Of Evil; always used as a symbol of sin.

Consider: When a Jew heard Jesus say that a woman brought 3 measures of meal and hid leaven in it, he immediately knew it was an act of sabotage...an abomination. He would be shocked to learn someone had the audacity, the blasphemy, to put leaven in a meal offering.

1. Leaven corrupts by fermentation; deteriorates by rotting

2. It tends to putrefaction and will "corrupt" everything with which it comes in contact.

3. Children of Israel were commanded: Put it out of your house at the time of Passover on penalty of excommunication. [Ex. 12:15]

God sent them all through their houses with candles and lamps looking for leaven. They were to clear every bit of it out of the house lest any of it get into the three measures of meal, or the Passover feast, and destroy the beauty of the symbolism. They were to search meticulously, to look in corners, on shelves, and back in the closets.

a. It must not come in contact with any sacrifice. [Ex. 34:25; Lev. 2:11; 10:12]

4. Christ used leaven 3x beside in this parable. Beware of the Leaven of:

a. Leaven of the Pharisees Matt. 16:6-12; Luke 12:1 Hypocrisy  
Legalism = form of godliness without the power; pretending to be something you are not, pretending to a status before God which you don't actually possess, being phony, putting on an outward garb of religiosity but inwardly still having the same old evil thoughts and angry moods and bitter attitudes.

b. Leaven of the Sadducees Matt. 16:6-12 False Doctrine  
Skepticism = denial of the resurrection of the body; there is neither angel or spirit  
Life consists only of what you can taste, see, touch, smell, hear and think about.  
No supernatural activity of God in life, no resurrection, no angels, no life after death.

c. Leaven of Herod Mark 8:15 False Doctrine  
Materialism = mixture of religion and worldliness; shameful self-indulgence in worldly desires; great value in life is to be wealthy and powerful

5. Christ ONLY used the word leaven in an evil sense.

6. Apostle Paul uses it in the same way as Christ.

I Cor. 5:6-8 [Man was living in incest with his father's wife. Paul said sexual immorality is leaven within the church and destroys its fellowship.] Your boasting [pride - leaven only puffs up] is not good. You know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough, don't you? <sup>7</sup> Get rid of [purge out] the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough, since you are to be free from yeast. For the Messiah, our Passover, has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> So let's keep celebrating the festival, neither with old yeast nor with yeast that is evil and wicked, but with yeast-free bread that is both sincere and true.

a. Leaven of Corinth = Malice And Wickedness which is contrary to sincerity and truth  
Gal. 5:7-9 You were running the race beautifully. Who cut in on you and stopped you from obeying the truth? <sup>8</sup> Such influence does not come from the one who calls you.  
<sup>9</sup> A little yeast [leaven] spreads through the whole batch of dough.

a. Leaven of Galatia = Legalism: Trying to put people under the Law, under a set of rules by which to live and expecting they will have the power to obey simply by their own effort  
b The very secret of the gospel is that Christ has come to set us free from that. Every effort to obey a rule and thus to satisfy God even with internal obedience, let alone external, is doomed to failure before it begins if you are depending upon yourself for the necessary power. That way of life is called leaven. It too destroys the fellowship of God's people.

Scripture reveals the "character" of the Leaven.

II Tim. 4:3 For the time will come when they will Not Endure Sound Doctrine, but according to their Own Desires [Lusts], *because* they have Itching Ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; <sup>4</sup> and they will turn *their* ears away From The Truth, and be turned aside to Fables.

II Pet. 2:1-2 But there were False Prophets also among the people, even as there shall be False Teachers among you, who privily [like hiding the leaven in the meal] shall bring in Damnable Heresies, even Denying The Lord That Bought Them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And Many Shall Follow Their Pernicious Ways; by reason of whom the WAY OF TRUTH SHALL BE EVIL SPOKEN OF.

Truth: Pursuing sound doctrine is not just an issue of "knowledge" but spiritual protection from sin.

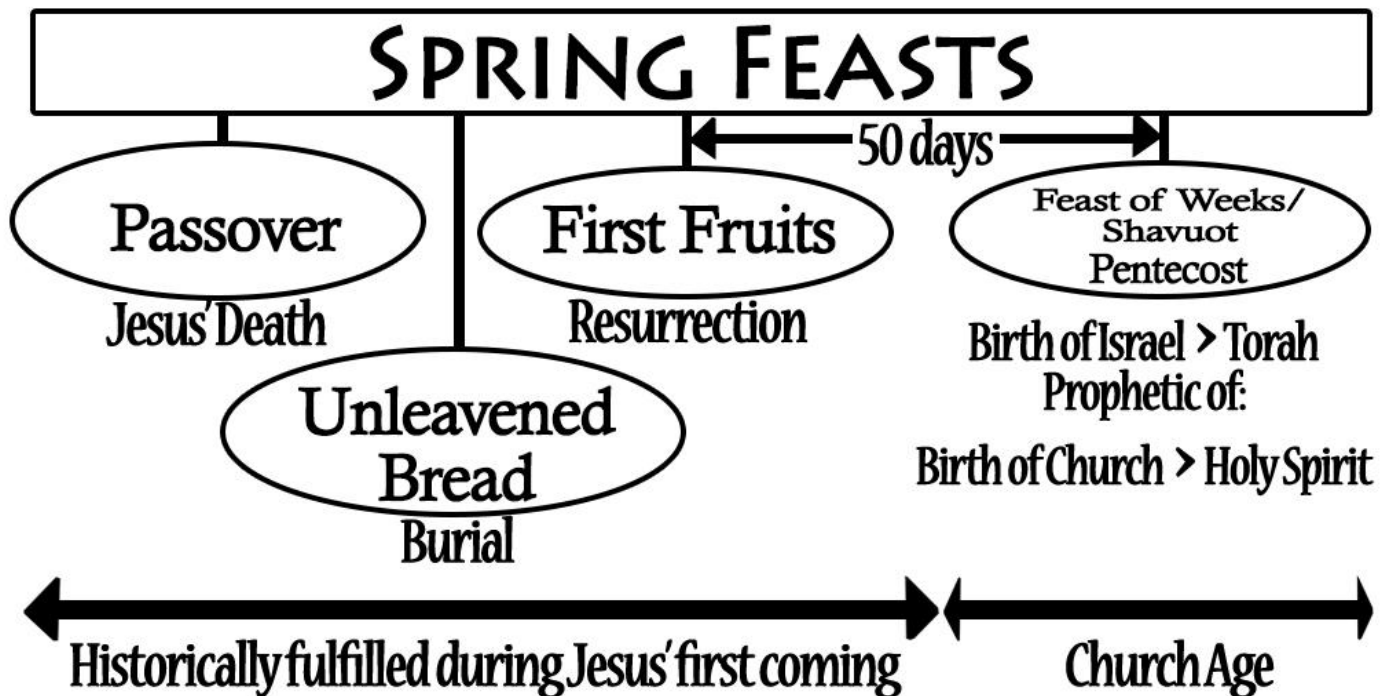
Interesting Note: The 7 feasts of Moses are both commemorative and prophetic. They foreshadow the coming Messiah and His ministry.

1. The first 3 feasts are prophetic of the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Jesus Christ = Suffering Servant
2. The last 3 feasts are prophetic of the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ = Conquering King
3. In the middle is Feast #4 = the Feast of Pentecost or Weeks or Shavuot
  - a. This Feast was celebrated by the nation of Israel. Weeks or Shavuot
  - b. This Feast was prophetic of the birth of the Church in Acts 2. Pentecost

Side Note: Parable #4    Leaven is introduced by woman  
                  Church #4     Leaven is introduced by woman  
                  Feast #4      ONLY Feast that Contains Leaven

## Feasts of Weeks or Shavuot for Israel

1. 50 days from the day the Firstfruits of the barley harvest was waved before the Lord, is Shavuot or the Day of Pentecost.
2. Rabbinic scholars believe that it was on this day that God visited His people after their exodus from Egypt and through Moses, brought the Law down from Mount Sinai. This earthshaking day of visitation, trembling, and betrothal is the birthday of the nation of Israel.
3. God's Presence was unapproachable at Sinai. Moses ordered 12 boundary markers placed around the foot of the mountain to hold back the people lest the fire of God flash out upon them. Amidst the thundering and lightning God came down as a consuming fire and blackened the entire summit.
4. It was a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
5. The Old Covenant is a national covenant between YHVH-God and His covenant people.
6. The nation of Israel was established. They agree to follow Him in devotion and obedience.
7. Moses brought down the Torah or Law for the nation.
8. Because of sin [golden calf] 3,000 died under the Law that day.



## Feast of Pentecost

1. 50 days from the day the Firstfruits of the barley harvest was waved before the Lord, in the summer of the year of Christ's death and resurrection, God visited His people by His Holy Spirit.
2. This was another earthshaking day of visitation and betrothal. Pentecost is considered the "birth" of the Church.
3. Tongues of fire descended from heaven to rest upon consecrated individuals gathered to wait upon God.
4. The fire came down and rested upon the 120 in the upper room, to fill them with the Holy Spirit and bathe them in the glory of God.

5. Whereas 3,000 had died under the Law on the previous visitation 3,000 are now saved by Grace as the Apostle Peter preaches to the crowds coming up to the Feast.
6. On this awesome day in holy history, the 7th day of Sivan on the Hebrew calendar, the Feast of Pentecost comes to its appointed New Covenant fulfillment.

Interesting Note: Lev. 23:6-17

1. Wave Sheaf Offering Of First Fruits was to contain no Leaven because it represented Christ, the "first Fruits" of the Resurrection, who was without sin.
2. Since the Feast of Weeks was one of the "harvest feasts," [offered 50 days after 1<sup>st</sup> Fruits] the Jews were commanded to "present an offering of New Grain to the Lord."
3. But the new "Grain Offering" of "two wave loaves," offered 50 days later, at the Feast of Pentecost [Shavuot, Weeks] [Lev. 23:15-17] was to CONTAIN LEAVEN because:
  - a. Feast Of Weeks, Shavuot was remembered when God "birthed" Israel as His covenant people.
  - b. Feast of Pentecost was typical of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit on the Disciples on the Day of Pentecost [Acts 2:1-4] and those who received it were not free from sin.
- Note: The body of Christ will not be free from sin [leaven] until His return.
4. It is interesting that the Feast of Israel that prophesies the Church is the Feast of Pentecost, the only feast that features leavened bread.
5. Today that harvest continues as people continue to be saved, but there is also another coming harvest whereby God will again turn His attention back to Israel so that "all of Israel will be saved" [Romans 11:26].

God is lifting up, dealing with, and bringing together two entities that are not unleavened and not without sin, even Israel and the Church.

Each had a different birth and each has a different destiny.

Each is a betrothal leading into magnificent future glories. He will remove the leaven!

What a righteous and gracious God we serve!