

# *Solemnity and Rejoicing on the First Day of Unleavened Bread*

The Night to be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread – are they times for rejoicing?

I believe that the answer to this question is “Yes”... and “No”!

## **Exodus 12:41-42 KJV:**

**And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.**

See how the NKJV words this:

**And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day... *that very same night actually – the night that began Abib 15]*...it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt . This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations**

Please notice that the words “to be much observed” in KJV appear in the NKJV as “of **solemn** observance”

In this article, I would like to examine the seemingly opposite concepts of rejoicing and solemnity on the Night to be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread.

## *Meanings of “Shimmur”*

These words translated in the NKJV as “solemn observance,” and in the Rotherham translation as “solemn observances” come from the single Hebrew noun *shimmur* (Strong's 08107) which can mean simply:

Observed, an observance, night watch, watching, vigil.

But let us dig a little deeper! This Hebrew noun “*shimmur*” is derived from the root verb “*shamar*” (Strong's 08104) which can mean:

Observe, watch, watch for, regard, heed, mark, take heed, take note, look narrowly, pay attention.

All of these are words from the “looking and watching” aspect of the word. But there are other aspects too:

Save, wait for, retain, celebrate, perform (e.g. vow), reserve, refrain, abstain, attend, cares, indignant, maintained, remain, spare, spies, keep, keeper.

On these last two words, the main stronghold of a castle is called a “keep” and a keeper is an old word for a jailer or prison guard. This leads us to the protective aspect of the word “*shamar*”:

Guard, guardsman, officer, watchman, bodyguard, sentry, doorkeeper, gatekeeper, keep watch, protect, be on one's guard, preserve, be guarded, preserve, protect, have charge of, keep watch and ward, defending, diligently keep, keep oneself from, restrain, confine, have charge, save life, hedge about (as with thorns), take care, being careful, beware, secured, treasure up, hoard, circumspect.

You might remember that the original city of Samaria was built on a hill which was purchased by King Omri from a man named Shemer, a name which means “preserved.” Omri named the city after Shemer. The old Hebrew name for Samaria was “Shomeron” which can mean: “Shemer’s hill,” “Watch-tower” or “Hill of preservation.”

When applied to the Night to be Much Observed, this word indicates at least two things: Firstly, God’s people should be protective of this precious observance. Secondly, our great, all-powerful God protects and even restrains His people – for our own good.

## ***Solemnity or rejoicing?***

After the solemnity of Passover Night on Abib 14 each year, we have tended to look at the following night and day – Abib 15 – the Night to be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread – as a night and day of great rejoicing. And in some ways, they certainly should be; I don't wish to take away from that.

But, as with so many other matters, we must beware of the influence of Satan and his cunning counterfeits. The Easter season – set as it is at this same time of year, ingeniously intertwined with God's Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread season – is perhaps one of Satan's cleverest counterfeits.

For those of us who have spent some of our earlier lives in the professing Christian churches of the world, can we still – perhaps in the back parts of our consciousness – unwittingly harbour some vestiges of – and preferences for – the doctrines we learned there? For example, have we in some ways likened Passover Night to the world's Maundy Thursday? Passover Day to the world's Good Friday? The First Day of Unleavened Bread to Easter Sunday?

Let us be careful not to turn things around by forgetting that God's true holy days came first; Satan's clever counterfeits came much later! Let us take some time to examine this, because these and other remnants of the world's heathen and idolatrous religions possess great potential to be spiritually harmful to God's children.

First of all, let us refresh our memories by taking another look at the timing of Jesus' death and resurrection. We know very well that Jesus' crucifixion was *not* on a Friday and that His resurrection was *not* on a Sunday morning, as Satan would have the world believe. We believe that Jesus died in the afternoon of Passover Day – Wednesday Abib 14 in the year 31AD.

## ***With a high hand?***

Approximately fifteen hundred years before Jesus' crucifixion, after sunset on that same day – at the beginning of Abib 15 – the evening we keep as the Night to be Much Observed – the Israelites began their journey out of Egypt “with a high hand”:

### **Exodus 14:8:**

**And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand.**

### **Numbers 33:3:**

**And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.**

With a high hand? Were they partying as they came out? The phrase “with a high hand” might be a pretty good word-for-word translation for the Hebrew words “ruwm-yad.” But it does not necessarily mean that the Israelites were whooping it up with rejoicing as they went. Other more modern Bible translations render “ruwm-yad” as:

- **In a mighty hand (i.e. the hand of God),**
- **With a mighty hand (i.e. the hand of God),**
- **With an uplifted hand**
- **Triumphantly**
- **Boldly**
- **With boldness**
- **Heads high and confident**
- **Without looking back**
- **With great power (i.e. the power of God).**

On this last one, please remember the protective aspects of the words “shimmur” and “shemer” as discussed earlier.

Perhaps we should be emulating the Israelites in these ways as we keep the Night to be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread this year – by putting the accent on God and His great might.

***Night to be Much Observed and First Day of unleavened Bread: 31AD***

Let's go forward in time again – forward approximately fifteen hundred years later, on this same night of the year that the Israelites began their journey out of Egypt, safely nestled in the mighty hand of God.

What do we see? We see the body of Jesus – lying in His tomb – stone dead! And His body, on that night, was not a pretty picture. It certainly was not as portrayed by so many of the Renaissance artists – a clean, marble-white body with a few tiny puncture holes in its hands, feet, side and forehead.

Think about it! Because of the onset of the holy day (First Day of Unleavened Bread) sunset, His body had not yet been thoroughly washed and prepared for burial. Joseph and Nicodemus had hurriedly wrapped Jesus' body in linen cloth with some spices and buried it temporarily, with the idea that the women would return later to complete the permanent preparations:

**Matthew 27:57, 59-60:**

**Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus... When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.**

**Mark 15:42-43, 46-47; 16:1:**

**42: Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus... Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid... Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.**

**Luke 23:50, 52-56; 24:1:**

Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man... This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment... Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

**John 19:38-42:**

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.

We don't need to watch "The Passion of the Christ" movie to fully understand that Jesus had five large holes in His body from which His life blood had drained: one in each of His wrists, one in each of his feet, and one in His side.

**John 19:1:**

**Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.**

This must be one of the greatest understatements of the Bible! The skin, muscle and flesh had been flayed from Jesus' back and perhaps other parts of His body by the cruel – and illegal – strokes (possibly thirty-nine of them) of the flagellum.

**Isaiah 50:6:**

**I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.**

His face was raw and bleeding where His torturers had ripped out the hairs of His beard. His body was covered in dirt and a stinking film of His own dried blood, gall, sweat, and even (possibly) urine; plus the disgusting, probably-diseased spit of His torturers:

**Mark 14:65:**

**Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.**

**Luke 18:32:**

**For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon."**

And, finally, He had some fair-sized holes in His forehead and scalp – the result of the crown of thorns being cruelly jammed onto His head:

**Matthew 27:29:**

**When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"**

Depending on the type of bush the thorns were cut from, it is possible that these head wounds were infected by poison, puffed up and yellow.

Two hundred and fifty odd years ago, Johann Sebastian Bach wrote this moving chorale, specifically homing in on the abuse to Jesus' head:

**O sacred head, sore wounded, defiled and put to scorn.**

**O head, covered with blood and wounds, full of pain and full of insults!**

**O head, wreathed for mockery with a crown of thorns!**

**O head, once splendidly adorned with highest honour and adornment, but now outrageously abused.**

So, for any who could see it, this is how Jesus' body looked on the Night to be Much Observed in 31AD.

## ***Disciples rejoicing?***

And what about the disciples? Were they rejoicing on the Night to be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread in 31AD? Were they rejoicing over the “saving death” of their Master? Not at all! At Gethsemane on the previous night, they had all fled in fear from Jesus’ captors:

### **Mark 14:50-52:**

**And they all forsook him, and fled. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.**

In his fear Peter had denied three times that he even knew Jesus. Despite all He had told them in advance, they all wondered what could have gone so terribly wrong! Somehow, Jesus’ forewarning of what was to happen to Him had completely gone from their memories:

### **Luke 24:17-21:**

**And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel**

They had forgotten that Jesus had repeatedly told them that all this had to happen – and why:

### **Mark 10:34**

**And they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.**



He had even told them in advance how they would grieve bitterly:

**John 16:6, 20-22:**

**But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart... Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.**

Their deep sorrow, anguish, fear and doubt were inconsolable because they had forgotten Jesus' promise of His resurrection. Later, Thomas even refused to believe his fellow-disciples when they told him that they had actually seen Jesus since His resurrection.

**John 20:19:**

**Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews.**

The disciples were in hiding lest they be arrested for their association and friendship with Jesus. They were quaking in fear lest what the Jews and the Romans had done to Jesus be repeated on each of them.

So was that Night to be Much Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread a time for rejoicing? Certainly not in 31AD!

The morning after – still Abib 15 – a Thursday in that year – the morning we gather for the first Holy Day service of God's sacred year, Jesus was still in the same condition – lying dead in His tomb. Abib 16 – a Friday that year – He was still dead in His grave. Abib 17 – a Sabbath that year – He was still dead in His grave – at least for most of the day.

## ***Finally, a reason to rejoice***

Then shortly before sunset on that late Sabbath afternoon – exactly seventy-two hours – three days and three nights after His friends had laid Him in His tomb – He emerged from it. He didn't need someone to roll the stone away from the mouth of the cave, that late afternoon, so that He could leave it.

That was done – probably some time a little later – by one of His angels for the benefit of the human visitors. (Matthew 28:2).

Jesus was once again alive – the Son of God – a great and powerful Spirit Being. The thick rock walls – seemingly so solid and impenetrable – were no barrier to Him. To Him they were just a mass of whirling electrons. He had the ability to walk right through them!

That weekly Sabbath was the one that fell during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So, according to Leviticus 23:9-14, the following day was the day of the annual Wave Sheaf Offering.

Now here, truly, was a day of rejoicing! When though? On the Wave Sheaf Day? Or at the end of Abib 17 – the day that marks Christ's emergence from the tomb – seventy-two hours after He was laid in it?

### ***On Wave Sheaf Day?***

In 31AD, the end of the seventy-two hours fell just before the sunset that closed the weekly Sabbath day. This time marked the end of Jesus' physical trial of debasement, torture and death. It also marked the end of the ordeal of God the Father – that of separation from His only Son.

We believe that, that sunset was the time when the Wave Sheaf was cut and the “raw” sheaf of grain was waved for the first time. The sheaf was then threshed, winnowed into granular form, perhaps ground into flour and was poured into a bowl. The following morning – the first day of the week, Abib 18, corresponding to the time that Jesus paid a brief visit to His Father's heavenly throne – the bowl of grain was waved in the temple before God. There appears to be rich symbolism in all three of these steps.

So, Wave Sheaf Day – either at the end of the Sabbath or on the Sunday morning – might be a more appropriate time for rejoicing.

## ***At the end of Abib 17?***

So, when is the proper time for rejoicing? Again, should we celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Wave Sheaf Day? Or on the day corresponding to the end of Jesus' seventy-two hours in the grave at the end of Abib 17?

Wave Sheaf day does not always begin at the end of Abib 17 as it did in 31AD . Wave Sheaf Day never falls on the First Day of Unleavened Bread and, of course, because the First Day of Unleavened Bread always falls on Abib 15, it can never coincide with Abib 17.

## ***And your point is?***

Yes, just what is my point in all this? I am not, of course, intimating that we should be celebrating Easter – again, perhaps the cleverest of Satan's counterfeit "feast days." Nor am I saying that we should turn Abib 17/18 or Wave Sheaf Day into feast days that were never commanded as such by God.

My main point is that the Night to be Much Observed and the rest of the First Day of Unleavened Bread should be kept with some level of solemnity.

Solemnity, because on this day in 31 AD:

**Jesus was still dead and in the tomb,**

**God the Father was separated from His Son,**

**Satan must have been straining at the bit to strike the world at this time. We don't know what ast restraints God may have imposed to restrain him and his cohorts during this pivotal and potentially dangerous seventy-two hour period when the fate of the world literally hung in the balance.**

**The dead firstborn Egyptians were symbolic of the dead firstborn Son of God,**

**The sinless Jesus had been made sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21),**

**He had even been made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13),**

**Although the first huge (and perhaps most important) step had been taken in the salvation process, it was far from complete.**

The situation on this day in 31AD was precarious, at best. It was *not* a time for rejoicing. These conditions could *not* remain. They *had* to be temporary. Eternity hung in the balance. Events were dangerously incomplete; they *had* to move on!

Yes, a certain level of rejoicing is appropriate on the First Day of Unleavened Bread – because on that day in Moses’ time, God opened up the gates of physical Egypt – the second step towards freedom for physical Israel (the first step was the slaying of Egypt’s firstborn on Passover).

Likewise, on the First Day of Unleavened Bread in 31AD, God opened up the gates of spiritual Egypt – the second step towards freedom from sin and death for the spiritual Israel of God’s church (the first step was the slaying of Jesus Christ, the Firstborn Son of God on Passover).

But, although these were huge and pivotal events, they were still (I hesitate to use the word “only”) initial steps. Abib 17/18 and the Wave Sheaf Day go one step further – on to Step Three. They picture Jesus’ exit from (and initial victory over) death and the grave.

Step Four comes with the Last Day of Unleavened Bread on Abib 21, which pictures:

- **Physical Israel completely escaping from physical Egypt and its Pharaoh once God had brought them safely and miraculously through the Red Sea.**
- **God – just as miraculously, or even more so – enabling Spiritual Israel to escape from sin and Satan... completely,**
- **The baptism of Christian converts.**

*I find it interesting that the Wave Sheaf Day can occasionally fall one day after and outside the Feast of Unleavened Bread... i.e. on those “odd” years when the only weekly Sabbath within the Feast of Unleavened Bread coincides with the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. In those years, symbolically, Step Three occurs after Step Four!*

But even these are intermediate steps.

As the subsequent segments of God's sacred year – and their fulfillments – progress, the salvation process becomes more and more complete, and the appropriateness for true rejoicing increases:

Step Five: The period between the Last Day of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost might symbolize:

- a. The Israelites' journey from the Red Sea to Sinai,
- b. The initial journey of each member of the New Testament church – the Israel of God – from our initial calling to our impregnation with God's Holy Spirit; the receiving of God's law and love into our hearts.

Step Six: Pentecost, which:

- a. Memorializes God giving His law to His Old Testament children at Sinai,
- b. Symbolizes Him giving His Holy Spirit to His New Testament children.

Step Seven: The period between Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets might symbolize:

- a. The time of the Israelites' prolonged period of wandering in the wilderness, tottering from Sinai towards the Promised Land – beset by all of their imperfections.
- b. The lifelong earthly journey of New Testament Israel, stumbling towards the Kingdom of God – beset by all of our imperfections!

Step Eight: The Feast of Trumpets, which looks forward to Jesus' return to earth and to the First Resurrection – the resurrection of His brothers and sisters. Yes, a wonderful and pivotal time. But also a time of wrath, war, death and terrible destruction. Again, like the First Day of Unleavened Bread, a time of rejoicing mixed with a time of awesome solemnity:

**Psalm 81:3:**

**Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon, at the full moon, on our solemn feast day.**

Step Nine: Why don't we go directly from the Feast of Trumpets to the Day of Atonement; and directly from the Day of Atonement to the Feast of Tabernacles? Why do we have these extra days in between? What about the eight days which separate the Feast of Trumpets on Tishri 1 from the Day of Atonement on Tishri 10? What does this period symbolize? At the fulfillment of the holy days, what will happen during this eight-day period? Is this the time of the solemn and terrifying Day of the Lord? If so, is the Day of the Lord a time for rejoicing?

**Amos 5:20:**

**Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it?**

Or is this the time of the destruction of Babylon the Great? Now here – despite the great destruction – is some reason to rejoice:

**Revelation 18:20-21:**

**“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!” Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.”**

**Revelation 19:1-4:**

**After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.” Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!”**

## Step Ten: The Day of Atonement:

**Leviticus 16:31:**

**It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever.**

**Leviticus 23:32:**

**It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.**

This day, of course, symbolizes the imprisonment of Satan and his demon cohorts. Perhaps God experiences a certain pang and degree of solemnity on this day as He thinks back to the wonderful potential that Satan had back at the time when his name was still Heylel: *Brightness, Light-Bearer, Shining One, Morning Star*.

But the imprisonment of Satan is another reason for us to rejoice. Before Satan is imprisoned, the inhabitants of heaven will rejoice when Satan and his demons are thrown out of that wonderful place and down to earth:

**Revelation 12:7-10, 12:**

**And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night”... Therefore rejoice you heavens, and you that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.”**

Again we see rejoicing mixed with solemnity. This event will bring rejoicing to heaven, but woe to the earth. But now, upon the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement, the people of the earth can rejoice because Satan is removed from them. So, yes, we can rejoice because Satan will then be put “out of harm’s way” for a thousand years. But, in this case, “out of sight” should not be “out of mind! Because, just like Arnold Swartznegger, he’ll be back!

Isn’t it a paradox, though, that on the first day that we should really feel free to rejoice, that we don’t feel too much like rejoicing – because we are fasting?

Step Eleven: Then we have another four days that separate the end of the Day of Atonement from the beginning of the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. What events will fill the fulfillment of these four days? I’m sure that we will not be sitting around twiddling our thumbs or strumming on harps for these ninety-six hours. I’m not sure, of course, but perhaps this might be the time of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, which will be the cause of more gladness and rejoicing:

**Revelation 19:7:**

**Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.**

As the days go by, we see that the mixed rejoicing and solemnity are replaced with more and more pure rejoicing – as the terrible time of suppression of Babylon the Great and Satan and his demons are put into the past. Most of the negatives are finished. Mainly positives remain.



**Step Twelve: The Feast of Tabernacles:****Deuteronomy 16:13-15 (KJV):**

**You shall observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that you have gathered in your corn and your wine: and you shall rejoice in your feast, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within your gates. Seven days shall you keep a solemn feast unto the LORD your God in the place which the LORD shall choose: because the LORD your God shall bless you in all your increase, and in all the works of your hands, therefore you shalt surely rejoice.**

This Feast symbolizes the wonderful thousand-year period which we call “the Millennium.” But even the time of the Millennium is somewhat solemnized by the knowledge that, at its close, Satan is to be freed from his prison and that some, despite the warnings that will probably increase in intensity as the thousand years come to a close, will fall for Satan’s final, desperate all-out deception. But “this too shall pass” and Satan will be locked away for ever!

Step Thirteen: The Last Great Day, which symbolizes eternity beyond the Millennium, and the unification of God the Father and His children.

**I Corinthians 15:24:**

**Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.**

Although every one of the Holy Days is cause for rejoicing, only upon the fulfillment of the Last Great Day will all the negatives be neutralized. Only then will sin, Satan and death be gone forever. Even though God the Father and Jesus Christ began their victory against death on Passover at the very beginning of their plan, it is only completed at the fulfillment of the Last Great Day:

**Isaiah 25:8:**

**He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.**

**I Corinthians 15:21, 54-55:**

**For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead... So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**

And so we see that the First Day of Unleavened Bread, although, like all of the holy days, is very important – it is just one intermediate step in God’s complete and great plan of salvation.

Also, our rejoicing on this day due to God freeing us from the spiritual Pharaoh and the spiritual Egypt should be tempered with a certain degree of the appropriate kind of solemnity.

*John Plunkett*

*Building Bridges, The Church of God Canada*

*Qualicum Beach, British Columbia, Canada*

*December 13, 2010*