

“Responding to Grace”

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our church service on Thursday (celebrating the first day of Unleavened Bread), I gave a presentation titled “Responding to Grace.” Following are the scriptures that I mentioned.

Food instruction for the week

Here are just a few of the scriptures that talk about unleavened bread and leavened food.

- Exodus 12:15—“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day, you shall remove leaven [leavened food] from your homes.”
- Exodus 12:18—“In the first month on the 14th day of the month at evening), you shall eat unleavened bread until the 21st day of the month at evening.”
- Exodus 12:19—“For seven days no leaven [food] shall be found in your houses.”
- Exodus 12:20—“You shall eat nothing leavened. In all your dwellings, you shall eat unleavened bread.
- Deuteronomy 16:3—“You shall eat no leavened bread with it [the Passover sacrifice]. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, that is, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.”

Sanctuary Passover

While the vast majority of people realize that the Passover observance became a sanctuary event, it is always fun to watch when friends realize that truth.

- Deuteronomy 16:5-6—“You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you, but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.”
- 2 Chronicles 30:24—Check out how many animals were sacrificed at King Hezekiah’s sanctuary Passover.
- 2 Chronicles 35:7-9—Check out how many animals were sacrificed at King Josiah’s sanctuary Passover.

Here is a question that you might want to consider: How many animals were sacrificed at the sanctuary Passover where the Son of God died? Consider checking what the historian Josephus reported. The high number may surprise you.

Reminder of two leaven lessons

The first lesson was “leaving in haste.”

- Exodus 12:11—“You shall eat with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste.”

The second lesson was putting out sin.

- Romans 6:1-2—Since we are saved by grace, should we sin? Absolutely not.
- 1 Corinthians 5:7—Purge out the old leaven, since you are truly unleavened. Christ is our Passover.
- John 10:28—No one can snatch you out of the Son’s hand.
- John 10:29—No one can snatch you out of the Father’s hand.

Because we are saved

- Exodus 20:1-17—God spoke these words: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Then, He gave them the Ten Commandments.

(For the record—I view the Jewish Talmud and the 613 commandments differently from the way I view the Bible and the Ten Commandments.)

Only five commandments?

- Matthew 19:16—A man asked: “What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”
- Matthew 19:17—Christ replied: “If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”
- Matthew 19:18—The man asked: “Which ones?”
- Matthew 19:18-19—Christ mentioned only five of the Ten Commandments and then summarized them with the phrase “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

(In Romans 13:9-10, the apostle Paul also summarized only five of the Ten Commandments with the phrase “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But his chosen five were not exactly the same five.)

Question: Did Christ teach that we should keep only five Commandments?

My answer: Matthew 22:36-40 gives a larger list.

- Matthew 22:37—We should love God (with our heart, soul and mind).
- Matthew 22:39—We should also love our neighbor as we love ourself.
- Matthew 22:40—He said: “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

Personal instruction

When we look back at Matthew 19, we see that there was personal, specific instruction for the man who asked Christ about obedience.

- Matthew 19:20—The man said: “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”
- Matthew 19:21—That man needed to give to the poor.

Do you realize that all of us need personalized instruction (beyond the basic teachings of the Ten Commandments)?

More than rituals

- Mark 7:1-5—Some Pharisees and scribes saw Christ’s disciples violating their traditions (their rituals) and complained to Christ about their behavior.
- Mark 7:6-7—Christ paraphrased Isaiah 29:13 to tell them that their traditions (rituals) were worshiping in vain and were teaching doctrines (rituals) that were commandments of men.
- Mark 7:8—Christ said: “For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the traditions [rituals] of men.”
- Mark 7:9—Christ said: “You reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition [rituals].”
- Mark 7:10-13—Christ specifically mentioned how people violated the Fifth Commandment by giving financial gifts to God instead of providing for their parents.

Christ saw their sins

The lesson of John 8:1-11 is a powerful lesson all year long—but can certainly be helpful during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

- John 8:2—The Son of God was teaching in the temple.
- John 8:6—The scribes and Pharisees wanted to test Him and accuse Him.
- John 8:3-4—The scribes and Pharisees brought an adulterous woman to Him.
- John 8:5—They quoted Moses and wanted Him to contradict Moses.
- John 8:6-9—But He stooped down and wrote on the ground. (Although the Bible does not mention what He was writing, He was obviously mentioning some of the accusers’ sins.)

There is certainly a time to help people to overcome their sins (Galatians 6:1). But we should primarily focus upon our own repentance.