

From Corruption To Perfection

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When God made the covenant with Abram and changed his name to Abraham, God required something of him that Abraham had to do to fulfill his part of that covenant. If we look in Genesis 17:1-5 it says:

Genesis 17:1. *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be perfect. (KJV)*

The King James Version says blameless instead of perfect.

2) *And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."*

3) *Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying:*

4) *"As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.*

5) *No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. (NKJV)*

Now Abraham was required here to become perfect. The Hebrew in Strong's is number 8550 and that is *without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincere, without spot, undefiled and sound or whole*. So, there are a number of meanings to that word that's all inclusive here. Abraham was required to pursue becoming perfect as a condition of the covenant that his descendants would inherit the land and also inherit ultimately the kingdom.

We find the same requirement and command was made by Jesus to the New Testament church in the midst of His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:48.

Matthew 5:48. *Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (NKJV)*

Here the Greek word is Strong's number 5046, which means *complete* and here it includes *mental and moral character of being total and complete, also of full age*. Back in Genesis 1:26-27 at the creation of man it says:

Genesis 1:26. *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

27) *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (NKJV)*

When God created man, it was the beginning of a process of God creating sons. Being made in the image of God in its entirety involves more than just the physical form or shape or appearance. It was the beginning of the forming and molding and shaping of beings with free will and choice into having the character and mind of God. Why did God choose to go through this process that involved so much suffering to reproduce Himself? Why did God create man with the corruptible human nature that we have and then require us to overcome that nature to become perfect?

Today I want to consider the journey that we are required to take to go from the state of corrupt human nature to a state of perfection. If you want a title, it would be

From Corruption To Perfection

We are going to start out in Ezekiel 28:11-19 where the corruption all began. Of course, this is the fall of Satan.

Ezekiel 28:11. *Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying,
12) "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him," ...
(NKJV)*

Now we know here that He is speaking at that time. In Isaiah it defines him as Heylel, meaning *brightness or the morning star*, who is the one that would eventually become Satan. Isaiah 14:12 has his name as Heylel or the morning star or brightness. Unfortunately, in Isaiah the translators have used the word Lucifer from the Latin translation.

12b) ... *"Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.""* (NKJV)

Something is sealed when it is complete and he was perfect in every way and full of wisdom and he was the full measure then of beauty, of wisdom. He was whole and complete. He was perfect.

13) *"You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold." ...* (NKJV)

There are nine precious stones here that are mentioned. They do correspond to nine of the twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel. I really don't know what the full intent and meaning of those stones are. It is just interesting here.

13b) ... *"The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.""* (NKJV)

So, he was a created being, but he was created with great talents and great skills. Everything was given to him and he did not have to work for that. It was created in him here. He was kind of in that sense created with it all.

14) *““You were the anointed cherub who covers;”” ... (NKJV)*

We know there are the covering cherubs that cover the mercy seat where God sits and he was originally one of those.

14b) *... ““I established you;”” ... (NKJV)*

Basically God created him and gave him everything that he had.

14 continued) *... ““you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.”” (NKJV)*

He was surrounded with wealth, with magnificence, with splendor and with beauty. It was his total surroundings.

15) *““You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created;”” ... (NKJV)*

He lived for a period of time, a way of life of perfection without spot, without blemish. He was upright. He was whole and he was sincere.

15b) *... ““till iniquity was found in you.”” (NKJV)*

The Hebrew word for “iniquity,” number 5766 in Strong's, can be *iniquity, unrighteousness, wickedness, perverseness or unjust.*

16) *““By the abundance of your trading”” ... (NKJV)*

The New International says:

16) *““Through your widespread trade”” ... (NIV)*

Continue in the New King James Version.

16b) *... ““you became filled with violence within;”” ... (NKJV)*

The word here for “violence” is Strong's number 2555 which means *unjust gain*. It is also translated as *cruel, to damage, injustice, oppressor, unrighteous and violence.*

16 continued) *... ““and you sinned;”” ... (NKJV)*

The Hebrew word for “sinned” is Strong's number 2398 which means basically *to miss the mark, to bear the blame, to offend* or it can mean *to lead astray.*

16 continued) ... *“therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God;”* ... (NKJV)

The New International Version says:

16 continued) ... *“So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you,”* ... (NIV)

He was driven out in disgrace. The word for “profane” in Strong’s from the New King James here is basically *broken or defiled, polluted*. It can even mean *prostitute and wounded or stained*.

16 continued) ... *“and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.”* (NKJV)

The original King James Version says:

16 continued) ... *“I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.”* (KJV)

It means literally *to destroy*. There’s no way out. There’s no way to flee or to be undone.

17) *“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty;”* ... (NKJV)

The New International Version says:

17) *“Your heart became proud on account of your beauty,”*
... (NIV)

In Strong’s it shows that “lifted up” means *to be lofty or haughty*. It is *exalting the self to raise up to a great height*. So, he became proud and lofty, not realizing that the beauty that God created him with was nothing that he had done on his own. It wasn’t his own accomplishment at all, but simply that which he was given.

17b) ... *“you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor;”* ... (NKJV)

The King James Version says:

17b) ... *“by reason of thy brightness;”* ... (KJV)

Here “corrupted” is Strong’s number 7843, which literally means *to decay or to ruin or to become corrupt*. That word is used one hundred and forty-six times in the Old Testament; eleven times as corrupted, twelve times as corrupt. It’s used as *to mar or marred, to spoil* and also *to cast off*. It is all some form of the word destroy ultimately.

His wisdom and his skills then became decayed or rotten or totally corrupted, ultimately destroyed. The splendor, from “for the sake of your splendor” was beauty and brightness, because his brightness was both in his beauty and his being super intelligent.

17 continued) ... “”I cast you to the ground,”” ... (NKJV)

The King James Version says:

17 continued) ... “”I will cast thee to the ground”.” ... (KJV)

The New International Version says:

17 continued) ... “”So I threw you to the earth”.” ... (NIV)

Again, it literally means to throw out or to throw down, to cast away.

17 continued) ... “”I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.”” (NKJV)

The King James Version says:

17 continued) ... “”I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.”” (KJV)

The New International Version says:

17 continued) ... “”I made a spectacle of you before kings.”” (NIV)

Here again the words used as “gaze,” “behold” or “spectacle” are Strong’s number 7200. It means that they will have an opportunity *to consider or to discern or to take heed or perceive*. Understanding God’s plan here, I do believe that the King James Version is the right translation in that this is a future event. It’s not something that has happened in the past, but at the end of this age that all may have the opportunity to see Satan and grasp the fact that he is the being that has brought all of the destruction and all of the trouble on this earth.

18) “”You defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities,”” ... (NKJV)

The New International Version says “desecrated” for “defiled.” The sanctuaries literally are a holy place or a sanctuary. His iniquities are his perversity and mischief.

18b) ... “”by the iniquity of your trading;”” ... (NKJV)

The King James Version says:

18b) ... *“the iniquity of your traffic”*. ... (KJV)

The New International Version says:

18b) ... *“by your dishonest trade”*. ... (NIV)

He became very dishonest or perverse or unrighteous in his trading, merchandising or trafficking. Today we would just say it was dishonest business practices. It became the way of get, rather than the way of give.

18 continued) ... *“therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all who saw you.*

19) *All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; you have become a horror, and shall be no more forever.”* (NKJV)

In Romans 6:23 it says:

Romans 6:23. *For the wages of sin is death ...* (NKJV)

We know that the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement is the removal of Satan. Turn to Isaiah 14:12-14.

Isaiah 14:12. *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!*

13) *For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;*

14) *I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”* (NKJV)

He had reached a point that his pride blinded him to the point that he thought that he was more powerful than God, the very God that created him.

Now let's put this all together. We do not know when this being was created in the whole eternity of time and we do not know how long he existed before he sinned. How did the pride originate? He may have been the most intelligent being that God had created. He may have been the most beautiful being that God had created. Was there an extended period of time that the angels and other created beings told him how beautiful he was, how intelligent he was that he ultimately turned the focus to himself? We don't know. What were the events or how long the period of time that the pride began to sprout and to grow in him we don't know, but it would have been over a period of time. Think of it. Until pride and arrogance and conceit were allowed to develop in this being they had never existed. This was a learning experience or a new experience for God. The whole concept of pride had never existed before then. Here is the first attitude of “it's all about me,” total selfishness and self-centeredness. Job 41:34 states:

Job 41:34. ... *He is king over all the children of pride.*" (NKJV)

In John 8:44 Jesus was recorded as saying:

John 8:44. ... *he is a liar and the father of it.* (NKJV)

Up until this time in eternity that God had existed, there had never been a lie told. This was something new for God to witness also that was introduced into the universe. Back in Ezekiel 28:12 it says "take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre." This had to grieve God terribly what he had become. God mourned at the fall of Satan. God had created this perfect, beautiful, extremely intelligent being and now this being was basically corrupting himself in his pride, or the pride being the root and the core of his corruption. This was a new experience for God to have one of His creation rebel. This had to grieve God greatly. Until the point of Satan's rebellion there had been total harmony and Godly love in the universe.

We don't know or understand what all happens in the spirit world, but it speaks of him becoming dishonest in his trading practices. Until this time all that happened in the spirit realm was done in Godly love and giving. Now this being was introducing the way of get, the way of taking advantage of others. That's something, too, that God had not experienced or witnessed before. Go over to Psalms 36:1-2. The New International words this best. It says:

Psalms 36:1. *An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: there is no fear of God before his eyes.*

2) *For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.* (NIV)

So, there are two characteristics here that come with pride; the first being no fear of God, and the second being that pride will blind us as to what sin is. Satan became blind to what sin was and had ultimately no fear of the God that created him. Again, we don't know how much time passed in the process that he managed to persuade one-third of the angels to go with him. He probably used deceit and lies and promises, just like the politicians of our world today. He no doubt worked the same then as he influences our leaders today with promises of offices, positions, bribes and politics. He so blinded and deceived himself in pride, in arrogance and conceit that he thought he could remove God and take over from the being that was the head of the universe and he allowed himself to totally lust after that power and position that God had. He introduced something else that would have grieved God greatly, and that was war and violence that had never existed until then.

What occurred over this unknown period of time was that a very intelligent, beautiful created being transitioned from perfection to total and utter corruption. In the process of Satan's rebellion there was much destruction in the physical universe that had been created, too. We don't know when God decided to work out a plan of reproducing Himself and creating sons. Up to that point no beings had been created as sons of His

own family. Was God's decision to create man made before the one that was Heylel became proud and corrupted himself? Did he rebel because he was to have part in the creation of sons of God that would ultimately be more powerful than he would be or would rule over him, or did God decide He would not create more spirit beings without them going through the process of growing in the character of God first after what had happened with this being? That we don't know.

Back in Genesis 1:26-27, which was quoted earlier, it says:

Genesis 1:26. *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

27) So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (NKJV)

This creation was a process to make man in the character and likeness of God as well as in appearance. God had witnessed and saw all of the factors that went into this Heylel being going from perfection to corruption. Did God decide to reverse that process by creating man and taking many from a state of corrupt human nature unto perfection? Of course, what is the core of human nature? If you have been around for a while, you remember Mr. Armstrong used to say vanity, jealousy, lust and greed. "It's all about me" is the core of human nature. In 1 John 2:16, a verse that we are familiar with, it says:

1 John 2:16. *For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. (NKJV)*

Of course, we know that was the core of Eve's nature when she ate the fruit in Genesis 3:6.

Genesis 3:6. *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. ... (NKJV)*

Basically here it's filling the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life that were the factors in her making that decision. Eve gave into the core of the corrupted nature of Satan and man has been giving into that ever since. This was the beginning of a direction that man has been going ever since. The Bible is a history of man and of society going through the various states of corruption. The corruption was so bad that God had to destroy all but eight people in less than fifteen hundred years after He created man. Now we are living in a society that is compared to the days of Noah, or the world as it was just before the flood. In Genesis 6:5-6 it says:

Genesis 6:5. *Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

6) And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. (NKJV)

Again this was a situation where the world had reached a point that God was grieved and lamented that He had made man and had allowed them to so corrupt themselves. God does not change. He would be grieving over the state of the world today just as much.

We in the church today know that we are living in the end time which was prophesied to be very corrupted, however we all have probably found the attitude of hatred and it has to be my way and it's all about me. We have experienced since the presidential election just an absolutely shocking attitude and hatred among the people today that I don't think any of us would have dreamed of. Every day we are definitely seeing more of the calling of good evil and the calling of evil good. We try not to let the world influence us, but we probably don't begin to realize how much it all does rub off on us and has rubbed off on us. We in the church are fighting a battle to change from corruption to perfection, or putting on a new man. In Romans 12:1-2 it says:

Romans 12:1. *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. (NKJV)*

We are to change the whole mindset from it's all about me to it's all about others.

2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJV)

He is saying here that a transformation of our minds has to take place and we need to be transforming or changing from a state of corruption to a state of perfection. In Ephesians 4:17-24 it says:

Ephesians 4:17. *This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18) having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; (NKJV)*

God has not shown them light, and the people are blinded by pride. There are two factors going here.

19) who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (NKJV)

That's basically following the corrupted practices of Satan.

- 20) *But you have not so learned Christ,*
21) *if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus:*
22) *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, (NKJV)*

Satan's corrupt mind got him lusting after the throne of God. Here again, "corrupt" here can literally mean *to shrivel or to wither by moral influences or to deprave, to defile or to destroy*. This is a progressive state of corruption like something that is rotting. It starts small and grows progressively larger until the entire object is in a state of corruption and can only be destroyed.

- 23) *and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*
24) *and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (NKJV)*

We will continue in 1 Peter 1:13-15.

- 1 Peter 1:13.** *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*
14) *as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;*
15) *but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,*
16) *because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." (NKJV)*

Peter is quoting this command to be holy. It was given four times in the book of Leviticus. The first time it was given in the book of Leviticus is in chapter 11, which is the chapter defining unclean food. Let's go back to Leviticus 11:44-45. This was all on the definition of the unclean foods and towards the conclusion it says:

- Leviticus 11:44.** *For I am the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth.*
45) *For I am the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. (NKJV)*

This is defining those foods that are to be avoided. In this chapter the word "abomination" is used thirteen times. That is more than it is used with any other single topic in the entire Bible. In Matthew 15:11 when Jesus and the disciples were criticized for eating with unwashed hands Jesus said:

- Matthew 15:11.** *"Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." (NKJV)*

What is the big lesson then for us that the first command to be holy is given with the topic of unclean foods? Yes, unclean foods do corrupt or would corrupt the body. Perhaps the greater emphasis today is what our minds are feeding on. Turn on the television and it is full of abominations. Go to the internet and it is filled with corruption and abominations. Just looking at the advertising on TV or in magazines or on billboards and we just cannot get away from the unclean mental food that is out there that we are faced with all of the time that we have to avoid.

Turn over to Ephesians 4:25-32.

Ephesians 4:25. *Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.*

26) "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

27) nor give place to the devil.

28) Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

29) Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. (NKJV)

Here again don't let any rotten or worthless bad words come out of your mouth.

30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

31) Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

32) And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. (NKJV)

The transition from corruption to perfection involves a lot more than just not sinning. It involves the growing in the fruits of the spirit or growing in Godly love.

Each year we go through the holy day cycle and with each passing year we grow in a little bit deeper understanding of what the holy days do mean. The holy days do remind us of the process that God is taking us through from a state of corruption to perfection. The Passover is a reminder that we cannot do it on our own and that God started the process by having Christ pay the death penalty for us. The Passover season starts off with the self-examination process and an awareness of our need for greater ongoing repentance.

Then we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which really represents the core of the process of transforming from the state of corruption to perfection. If asked what the Days of Unleavened Bread symbolize today most people in the church would say putting sin out of our lives. That is true, but it's a very incomplete answer and possibly missing the most important point or aspect of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Let's go to Exodus 13:3-7.

Exodus 13:3. *And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the Lord brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.*

4) On this day you are going out, in the month Abib.

5) And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month.

6) Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord.

7) Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters."
(NKJV)

We put so much emphasis on the last part of that verse that we can lose what the feast is about, which is defined in the first part of that verse. When do we remove the leaven from our homes? Do we do it during Unleavened Bread or before Unleavened Bread? Leaven represents sin. I think we all can agree on that. Do we remove the sin during Unleavened Bread or do we remove it before Passover and the beginning of Unleavened Bread? It is too easy to see the Feast of Unleavened Bread in what we can't eat. I can't sin. I can't eat this. I can't eat that. In a sense that God's law restricts me; it's the things I can't do. Back in verse 6 and the beginning of verse 7 the emphasis should be on what we are commanded to eat, not what we can't eat. In Exodus 12:15-20.

Exodus 12:15. *Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. (NKJV)*

There are two parts to this: What we are commanded not to eat, and what we are commanded to eat. It is what we are commanded to eat that some fail to spiritually do or to grasp the meaning of.

16) On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat — that only may be prepared by you.

17) So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance.
(NKJV)

Notice it is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is not the fast of leavened bread. There is a big difference.

18) In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

19) *For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land.*
20) *You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.*" (NKJV)

Again, there are two parts to this command. Go over to Leviticus 23:6, the holy day chapter.

Leviticus 23:6. *And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.* (NKJV)

Here it says we must eat it. It is a feast. It is a festival. It is a solemn assembly, but it is a feast day. We are to be feasting. Again, it is not the fast of leavened bread. In the past I remember some have taught that you do not have to eat unleavened bread during the Days of Unleavened Bread, but we've seen several commands here that we are to eat it. In Exodus 12:15 and 20, in Exodus 13:6, in Leviticus 23:6 and also in Deuteronomy 16:3 we have definite commands to eat unleavened bread.

Deuteronomy 16:3. *You shall eat no leavened bread with it; 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.* (NKJV)

If we don't eat unleavened bread, we are missing what these days are really about. Continue in Leviticus 23:7-8.

Leviticus 23:7. *On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.*
8) *But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day shall be a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.* (NKJV)

Merely removing sin from our lives is not enough. It has to be replaced with something and that's what the Days of Unleavened Bread are about and what they teach us. Not sinning does not make us righteous. It can make us self-righteous. Take an example of a monk in a monastery where the only people he has involvement with are the other ones that are there. He spends his time in study and prayer or whatever he does at the monastery. You know, it's not all that difficult not to sin in that kind of an environment. He can keep control of his mind so that he's not thinking wrong thoughts. He isn't influenced by the TV, by the internet, by just being out in society in general. He can get by basically without sinning for a considerable period of time. Does that make him righteous? What happens when he goes out for a drive to a relative's house and someone cuts him off in traffic or when the TV is on full of sexy fornication or using foul language or when he goes shopping and some rude person shoves the door in his face

with his arms full of groceries or a whole number of other things. The real test is when he has to interface with other people. When dealing with people on a daily basis in all of life's situations and frustrations, it's a little bit more challenging not to sin. We are familiar with 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 where Paul is speaking of the Days of Unleavened Bread.

1 Corinthians 5:7. *Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.*

8) *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.* (NKJV)

There is a reason that we are commanded to eat unleavened bread. It is the bread of sincerity and of truth. The Greek word for "sincerity" is Strong's number 1505 which means *clearness or purity*. Not sinning does not make us righteous. Putting sin out of our lives alone does not make us righteous. It can make us self-righteous, but that alone is not going to make us righteous. We don't often hear it these days. I used to hear it a lot a number of years ago in the church. In Isaiah 64:6 it says:

Isaiah 64:6. *But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* (NKJV)

Our own righteousness counts as nothing before God. Literally here our own righteousness can count as filth. In Romans 10:1-4 it says:

Romans 10:1. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.*

2) *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.*

3) *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.*

4) *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.* (NKJV)

Here again he is speaking of those that are trying to establish their own righteousness and not Godly righteousness. A verse we are very familiar with is Matthew 6:33.

Matthew 6:33. *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.* (NKJV)

In Psalms 5:8 it says:

Psalms 5:8. *Lead me, O Lord, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; Make Your way straight before my face.* (NKJV)

Ephesians 4:24 says:

Ephesians 4:24. *And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (NKJV)*

Again, it is the putting on of Godly righteousness. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says:

2 Corinthians 5:21. *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NKJV)*

Taking on that righteousness is not something we can do on our own. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is about growing in Godly righteousness. Turn to Hebrews 12:7-11.

Hebrews 12:7. *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?*

8) *But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.*

9) *Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?*

10) *For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.*

11) *Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (NKJV)*

There is a benefit to the trials and difficulties and sufferings that we all do go through. If we approach our whole calling from the perspective that it is the Feast of Unleavened Bread and not the fast of leavened bread, the process of overcoming may not be quite so frustrating. If we are pursuing Godly righteousness, the natural byproduct will be the removal of sin. It's going to be a factor that will happen in that process of pursuing the fruits of God's righteousness. Pursuing the fruits of the spirit, the righteousness of God will result in the removal of sin. It is so easy to go about our usual routine and all about our normal eating after Unleavened Bread that it's easy to forget what these days really represent in the part of God's plan that is so important to us, but it is the process that we should be doing all year. The Days of Unleavened Bread begin the sacred year and set the stage for the whole year. In 1 Peter 1:22-23 it says:

1 Peter 1:22. *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23) having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, (NKJV)*

Godly righteousness can only come through our relationship with God the Father and our relationship with Christ and by and through the power of the holy spirit. It's not something that we can do on our own. It takes ongoing effort on our part or we can fall right back into that state of corruption. It is the fruits of the spirit that transition the corrupted carnal mind to that perfect mind of God. Of course, the first of those fruits that is listed is agape love. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 13, which is the love chapter. The context of the previous chapter was on spiritual gifts. Paul writes here in 1 Corinthians 13:1-8.

1 Corinthians 13:1. *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. (NKJV)*

There are unconverted men that can give some pretty good sermons. If that factor isn't there, I think we have experienced in the church different times, if we have been in the church any length of time, some of those that have been exactly that. They get up and speak and they strike you as a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal, because in themselves that love of God really isn't there.

2) And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. (NKJV)

Good works alone do not necessarily equate to Godly righteousness. There are a lot of people that do beneficial works for others, but it doesn't mean that they are righteous. Also, you can have perfect or tremendous understanding of the Bible. That does not mean that you are righteous. It means that you have an understanding of the Bible.

4) Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; (NKJV)

Satan's first deadly sin was pride and that is the very core of our corrupted nature. One of the biggest things we have to do is learn to humble ourselves and be humble before God.

5) does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;

6) does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;

7) bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(NKJV)

Love then is the going from the way of get, from a mind that is all about me to a total way of giving and having that concern for others.

8) Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. (NKJV)

We have experienced people that have been very knowledgeable about the Bible but yet in their minds they have not removed themselves out of that corrupted state or made that transition from a state of corruption to a state of perfection. Biblical knowledge and understanding alone do not lead us to a state of perfection if righteousness is not there along with that. We are familiar with Galatians 5:22-23, the fruits of the spirit.

Galatians 5:22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (NKJV)*

Those fruits are totally contrary to Satan's corrupt mind. They are all about outgoing concern for others and the give way; the loving of God first, the loving of our neighbor as ourselves. It is the transition that we have to make from it's all about me to it's all about God and all about other people. When first coming into the church for many just plain keeping the commandments is I can't do this and I can't do that. They can be negative. We, in our conversion process, have to transition from those Ten Commandments being negative to realizing how positive the Ten Commandments are, that they are all about loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves and the benefits of keeping those commandments. In James 1:27 it says:

James 1:27. *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (NKJV)*

It's the growing in Godly love for others, loving God and loving our neighbor; the give way, not the get way. Today in our society it is so easy to become spotted and corrupted by the world that we live in. We do have to constantly be on guard that we do not become corrupted on our journey to perfection. We have a corrupted human nature that we are trying to overcome. Of course, we in the church are having darts thrown at us at every opportunity that Satan has to corrupt us in any way that he can. In our current society, we really are very vulnerable because we have so much of Satan's influence out there.

We can also easily be corrupted by false teaching. In 2 Corinthians 11:2-4 it says:

2 Corinthians 11:2. *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3) But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (NKJV)*

Just looking back at our own history how many allowed themselves to be corrupted by the trinity doctrine of the '90s. When the concept or the understanding of the plan of God, of a Father and Son and family plan, makes sense and are basically simple, no one can understand the trinity because it's something that you can't understand. Yet people are deceived into going back to that.

4) For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted — you may well put up with it! (NKJV)

In the past we have experienced someone coming along that is pushing say a different holy day calendar and it can seem relatively harmless. To many people that go off on their pet doctrines or their pet items, they can be so consumed with pride in their understanding that the end result can be corruption. It's also an area wherein we all have to be cautious. We have another warning in Paul's letter to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:1-9.

2 Timothy 3:1. *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:*
2) *For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*
3) *unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,*
4) *traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,*
5) *having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*
6) *For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts,*
7) *always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*
8) *Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;*
9) *but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was. (NKJV)*

We have experienced that in the past in the church and we will no doubt experience this again in the future as time and conditions continue. Here the Greek for "men of corrupt minds" literally means *depraved minds*. Again, they will utterly perish.

We are living in these end times. We are living in a society that is corrupted in ways that we never would have imagined just a few years ago. It is around us everywhere. Since the presidential election especially, so many people in our country have just totally given themselves over to that corrupted mind of Satan. It's something we all have to be constantly on guard that we don't give our minds over to the conditions and influences all around us in the world today. 1 Timothy 6:3-6 says:

1 Timothy 6:3. *If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,*

4) he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions,

5) useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

6) Now godliness with contentment is great gain. (NKJV)

Here again men of “corrupt” minds is a different word than was used previously. It means *to decay, to perish or to destroy*. Their minds are headed for destruction. If we have been around a good number of years, we have experienced church leaders that corrupted their minds and they are still out there as corrupt leaders. We all could fall victims if we are not watching and on guard. We have all seen people that were quite content when they had little, but as they increased or prospered they became very greedy. Satan was given a lot, but it was never enough for him. It was that mind of Satan; “I have to have more and I want more.” That’s a trap we also can so easily fall into. Many people can put on a good show of righteousness, but it doesn’t mean that there’s not a lot of corruption on the inside. For a final scripture, turn to 1 Peter 1:3-5.

1 Peter 1:3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

4) to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

5) who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (NKJV)

Here it is speaking of an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled. Those that are born into the family of God will be incorruptible and cannot be defiled, but the process again is going through the suffering and results and living and experiencing and seeing the end result of Satan’s way of the corrupt mind that we then do strive for the perfection; that we’re not going to be so easily corrupted again.

God is working to create an incorruptible creation, beings that will not be corrupted because we will all have been there, have all been brought from a state of corruption to a state of perfection. God is working on restoring the universe to a state where there will be no pride, no arrogance, no vanity, no lies, no sin and no greed. He is taking the entire universe to a state of perfect love. He is restoring the entire universe to the state that it was once in. We all need to be working to allow God to take us from that current state of corruption to that state of perfection; something we can’t do on our own, but only through God. Through the power of God we can make that journey from corruption to perfection.