

The Leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herod

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Recorded on April 23, 2022

As I'm sure we're all aware, that over the past week we've been keeping the days of Unleavened Bread with a focus, not only on getting the leaven out of our homes, our cars and our environment but hopefully much more specifically about deleavening our lives. We know that the spiritual lesson of this feast is that leaven is a picture of sin and the important thing for us is not to just deleaven our physical environment in our physical world, but more importantly to deleaven our lives by removing the sin from our lives.

In Jesus Christ's ministry, when He was a physical human being on earth, He highlighted three specific types of leaven in His teachings that He warned us to specifically be aware of. He said, beware of these, be on the look out and make sure you're not falling into these traps. What we're going to do is to look at these three general types of leaven He referred to and discover why is it that Christ specifically pointed these out? We know that leaven is a picture of sin and all sin is bad and something we should avoid and get out of our lives when we are aware of it. Why did Christ specifically point out three different types of sin and say, specifically be aware of these. Get these out of your lives. If you would like a title for this sermon, it's:

The Leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herod

You are probably all familiar with the fact that during Christ's ministry He specifically said, to be aware of the leaven of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herod—He specifically made these statements. We're going to look today at why He called out those types of leaven when we know leaven is a picture of sin and all sin is bad. So there had to be reason why He pointed out these three.

To build a foundation for this, I'm sure some of it will be a review. I'm actually filming this a few weeks before Unleavened Bread but I am sure by the time you are hearing this, some of the introduction is going to be a review. To cover the foundation of this, let's go first to Exodus 13 and we'll start with scriptures of the commandments of the days of Unleavened Bread to see the purpose.

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.*
- 8) *And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'This is done because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.'*
- 9) *It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt.*
- 10) *You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.*
(NKJV)

We know from an Old Covenant perspective that Israel kept these days as a memorial of them coming out of Egypt. As I mentioned in a Spring Holy Day sermon last year, if you look at the overall picture, the night they are eating the Passover sacrifice, God killed the firstborn among the Egyptians. This was the final straw; this was His mighty Hand bringing them out of Egypt. This enabled Pharaoh to give in and say "I give up, get out!" and they finally have the opportunity to come out of slavery. Unleavened Bread is them marching out and leaving Egypt and getting out of this environment. This then enabled them to enter into a covenant relationship with God and start off into the Promised Land on Pentecost. For us, this is not just about these physical events that took place, these have spiritual meanings. For us, Unleavened Bread is about coming out of sin and repentance and taking sin out of our lives and paying attention to that. An annual reminder for us of that need for repentance and the removing sin out of our lives and of being obedient to God. The reason that we know this, is if we look at 1 Corinthians 5 we'll see where the Bible explicitly tells us that leaven is a picture of sin.

- 1 Corinthians 5:1** *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!*
- 2) *And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*
 - 3) *For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.*
 - 4) *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
 - 5) *deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*
 - 6) *Your glorying is not good.* (NKJV)

Notice the next couple of verses because this is where we understand that leaven is a picture of sin.

- 6 continued) *... Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*
- 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)

See from the context, that He is obviously saying that “Leaven” is a picture of sin. You’re talking about this man who is attending the congregation and who is involved in a very sinful lifestyle and saying. You shouldn’t allow this to be part of the congregation. Until this man repents, put him out and don’t let him back.”

In 2 Corinthians he does repent and changes and Paul says:

“Now that that behavior has stopped, let him back in, forgive the guy and go forward—he made a mistake. But as long as he is continuing in this behavior, don’t allow him into the congregation.”

Then he draws into the analogy of putting out leaven. Obviously, what he is saying is “leaven” is a picture of sin. That removing leaven is about removing sin out of our lives.

Let’s go back to our original question of why Christ specifically said to be aware of the leaven of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and Herod. We’re removing the leaven and the whole purpose of why we keep the days of Unleavened Bread is about learning about repentance. The need to take sin very seriously and remove it out of our lives. All sin is bad. Any sin we obviously want to remove out of our lives and get rid of. Why does Christ specifically say these three types of sin? What’s the purpose here of pointing out the Pharisees, the Sadducees and Herod? Why specifically highlight those? That’s what we’re going to look at today. What can we learn from this and what was the point of specifically saying that? Because again, all sin is bad so why does He point these out specifically? Let’s take notice of that in Mark 8. What we’re going to see is, we have to look at two different gospel accounts of basically the exact same event, to get the full story. It’s actually a single conversation that took place between Christ and the apostles. To vet the whole account we have to read both accounts in two different gospels, to get the full story.

Mark 8:13 *And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side.*

14) Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat.

15) Then He charged them, saying, “Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” (NKJV)

Notice in this account in Mark, He doesn’t mention the Sadducees but when we read the same account in Matthew, He mentions the Sadducees and doesn’t mention Herod; we have to put them together to get the full story.

16) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have no bread.”

17) *But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?"*

18) *Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?"*

19) *When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve."*

20) *Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven."*

21) *So He said to them, "How is it you do not understand?" (NKJV)*

In other words, I'm not talking about the lack of bread, I'm talking about a spiritual matter here. In this account, it doesn't go on to explain what He meant by this? Why did He say this? Mark's account doesn't tell us, but Matthew's account does. So, let's turn to Matthew 16:5. If you analyze these two accounts, it's the same conversation that took place but if you put the both together then you get the full picture of what He's saying.

Matthew 16:5 *Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.*

6) *Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." (NKJV)*

Now this time He mentions the Sadducees, doesn't mention Herod but if you put them both together, you see the full conversation.

7) *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."*

8) *But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?"*

9) *Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?"*

10) *Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?"*

11) *How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? —but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (NKJV)*

Notice verse 12.

12) *Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (NKJV)*

Now we have a little clearer picture of what He was talking about. Notice something interesting here. He mentions Herod in Mark's account, but doesn't mention the Sadducees. Here He mentions the Sadducees and not Herod. But when He talks about it, He says beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. He doesn't mention the doctrine of Herod and that's a "tip off" there. Throughout the rest of the

sermon, we are going to go and look at each one of the three groups He's talking about and what they were about. We will look at some specific examples. But let me give you the big picture of what we're going to see in all of this before we go and break it all down in detail. Now also realize, that with Herod there was a group called the "Herodians" who were his followers. As you're aware the Pharisees and Sadducees were religious groups. I'm sure you are familiar with the Pharisees who were the sticklers for the law. These were the men who were always arguing with Christ and always trying to catch Him out saying something wrong because they saw themselves as the spiritual giants.

Sometimes we would joke at Ambassador College, particularly if someone saw themselves as the ultra-righteous, that that person saw himself as a "spiritual giant". He's above everybody else. The Pharisees were the experts in the law, the ultra-religious. Very strict on every detail of everything, but as you're aware, they really missed the boat on the big picture and they were hypocritical in their behavior. and as you're going to see, were ultra-religious but they really missed the point. They really didn't see the big picture and have their hearts right.

The Sadducees were more—to put them in modern day church of God speak—like the people you would describe as "Having one foot in the church and one foot in the world". You'll see this as I go into more detail talking about them. The Sadducees were the priesthood in the time of Christ. If you look at their understanding, Christ even directly told them that they didn't understand the scriptures at all and you will see some blatant examples of that. History also shows us that although they were religious, they were big about absorbing the culture around them. Historically—I'll read a quote later—even before the Romans were in charge in the time of Christ, it was the Greek Macedonian Empire prior to that time where there was a concept referred to as Hellenization. This was where the Jews were absorbing the Greek culture and a lot of their ways of life. As we're going to see later in the quote, the Sadducees were leaders in the Hellenization movement which absorbed the culture around them. So, they were individuals who were religious but also wanted to be part of the world and its culture. We'll see some more detail as we go forward on that.

Herod was a political leader; that's why it doesn't talk about his doctrines. It's not a religious focus, it was a totally secular focus. You have Herod, who was a political leader and then the Herodians which the Bible mentions who are more like the political party—his followers. To put it in modern day U.S. terminology, we're familiar with the Republicans and the Democrats. They aren't really about a religious group, they are about a political philosophy and political organization striving for power and influence and that's more analogous to Herod. You can see the big picture of where we're going. It's basically three general focuses of life, is what Christ is getting at. But there's other specific examples as well.

The Pharisees

We'll start off looking specifically at the Pharisees. Keep in mind we just read that one of the things Christ was saying was to beware of their teachings, the doctrines of the

Pharisees. I mention that, because one of the mistakes some people make is because Christ also said specifically that they were hypocrites. He does call being hypocritical as being one of the leavens of the Pharisees, but He also mentioned their doctrines. We'll talk about why sometimes people think it's just hypocrisy and not their teachings later—it's actually both. In Luke 12, we will first look at Christ's specific statement that hypocrisy is one of the things we need to be aware of. It is one of the things he referred to as a leaven of the Pharisees.

Luke 12:1 *In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2) For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3) Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. (NKJV)*

We know, that obviously one of the things we need to be aware of, in terms of being aware of the leaven of the Pharisees, is that we don't fall into their example of hypocrisy. An obvious definition of hypocrisy that we all think of when we think of this term is when somebody who says they believe X but when nobody is looking, they do Y. They put on a good show. They believe in this but when nobody is looking, they do the exact opposite. That is a true definition of hypocrisy and something that we need to be aware of.

But I think there is another definition of hypocrisy that Christ also speaks about with the Pharisees. It's probably something we are more likely to fall into. There's the blatant hypocrisy that happens. But there is another application of it, a little more deceptive and is a little easier seen and that we are a little more aware of as well. We don't always think of it in terms of hypocrisy. To see an example, we will look at Matthew 23. This is Christ addressing the Pharisees and we'll see something He calls hypocrisy and it's not just the specific, saying you believe X and then doing Y. If you read through Matthew 23, one of the things you'll see is this chapter just a blistering critique of the Pharisees; it's brutal. He doesn't mince words. He tells them exactly what horrible people He thinks they are. It's a brutal critique. But let's notice a specific example He gives. Look at Matthew 23:23.

Matthew 23:23 *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [Notice He is calling what we're about to describe next as hypocrisy] For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24) Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! 25) Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.*

26) Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. (NKJV)

Notice the example He is giving. These men were very meticulous with tithing on their mint leaves and making sure they were covering the smallest detail and He said that was not a bad thing. You are supposed to tithe but they missed the much bigger matters. They totally missed, justice, mercy and faith. They had totally focused on things that are true and that you should do. But there are many more important things that they have totally neglected and missed while being focused on the finer details of this subject. They are totally off base here. This is something I've seen numerous times in the church of God throughout my lifetime. Individuals get really focused on certain specific details, and it's often individuals who are kind of like the Pharisees and who see themselves as the quality control of the church. They are the lawyers for doctrinal accuracy and the first to point out errors in everything. But then you look at their lives and go, "Are they great examples of Christian behavior?" No, you see the opposite and a very unbalanced focus.

When I think of this subject, one of the first things that comes to my mind is an experience I once had. Most of you who have been in the church of God for several decades probably remember what was happening in the greater church of God in the early to mid '90's—particularly if your history goes back through the Worldwide Church of God. You probably remember the massive doctrinal change which was definitely going in the wrong direction which was taking place at that time. Around that time, I left a little before when the largest exodus was taking place and I happened to join another congregation here in Dallas. It was a small group that had formed a year or two prior to when I walked into the group. When I joined this group there were a number of individuals in this congregation who fitted the description of what I'm talking about here. They saw themselves as the doctrinal experts on every finer point of doctrine and the law and saw themselves as the quality control of the church. The reason I say this, is that the environment in this congregation, which I personally experienced, was that if you gave a message in that congregation and there was one little detail which they thought you had wrong or missed or misrepresented a little fact, some of these men were pretty aggressive, almost like the Pharisees described in the Gospels. They would just about meet you stepping off the stage with Bible in hand ready to debate you. They didn't literally meet you getting off the stage but as soon as services were over, they were over at your chair, Bible open to show you, you messed up here, you messed up there and sometimes their critique was accurate. You have a valid point; you are right about that.

Then you stop and look at their lives and go, is this somebody you would look at as a model Christian? Is this someone who, if I follow their example, I would be doing well. If you look at them and go, "Would I want my marriage to be like theirs, my family to be like theirs, and your relationship with others, would I want to follow that?" You would quickly come to the conclusion, "No"; their personal life is a train wreck. You wouldn't see them when you look at them and say that this person is an advertisement for the fruits of the Spirit by how they act and interact with others. You quickly come to, no they

are the exact opposite of that. You don't really want to be around very long because it's not a pleasant experience. What did I see happen in this congregation? Like I said I got there a few months prior to the biggest exodus that was coming out of Worldwide with all the changes that were happening. Over the next year after I was in this congregation, I probably watched about 100 people literally come in the door, into this organization because of the truth. Because it was an organization that was trying to more accurately follow the truth, certainly more than what was happening in Worldwide. A lot of people were coming in there looking for a church home, some place which was going to try to faithfully follow the basic doctrines of the Bible and that was certainly true there. But what would happen was about 100 people over the course of a year walked in the door because of the truth and out the door because of offense. It wasn't like the doctrines being taught there were heretical, they were much more accurate than what was going on in Worldwide. What was driving people away was how they were being treated and the toxic environment this was creating. That's honestly what drove me away. I was eventually one of them who left. I watched this play out over a year of this revolving door of people moving on and it was because of this environment.

To give another example, this is actually a specific example that happened years later but indicative of this kind of approach. I met a gentleman multiple years later after that first example I gave. The first time I met this gentleman we were talking and telling each other stories, typical of conversations you have meeting someone new in the church. Telling you how they first came into the church, how they arrived at where they are today. In today's church of God environment, typically those stories involve, I was in this group for a while and that group for a while and migrated around and they tell you why they did; that's typical of a lot of stories. What was unique about this gentleman's story was, pretty much every group he had been in, he got kicked out of. He was formally invited to move on because everywhere he went, after a period of time, he would stir up conflict with people. He would create a bunch of problems and they would eventually officially invite him to move on and not come back. So, he would move on to the next group and after a period of time the same thing would play out and it was group after group.

What was interesting about the conversation, it wasn't like this gentleman was sharing this story and saying, "I've had a rough past and learned the hard way how to get along with people and correct my mistakes." He was very proud of this. He wore it like a badge and saw it as an indication that he was a warrior for the truth and he stands up for what he believes in and speaks his mind. In some of the cases, some of the issues he was bringing up, he had some valid points. But I was thinking that he's missed the point that one of the fruits of the Spirit is *peace*; getting along with people. Obviously, this was missing because group after group after group, the same scenario kept playing out. That's one of the pitfalls we can fall into. We can get so focused on certain issues and miss the bigger picture. It doesn't necessarily have to be things that are error, it can be something that we are so focused on that's correct, just like the example Christ gave to the Pharisees. They were very diligent in paying their tithes and that was a good thing, but He said, they had totally missed much more fundamental issues. That's one

thing we need to be aware of in terms of the Pharisees in falling into hypocrisy. That's hypocrisy as well.

As I mentioned, there's a common misunderstanding in regards to the leaven of the Pharisees. When people mention the leaven of the Pharisees they go:

"That's not really their teaching that is just hypocrisy. Christ said we should pay attention to their teachings; we just shouldn't follow their example."

That comes from a misunderstanding of a particular scripture that actually turns out to be a manuscript error that has caused all the confusion. It is here in Matthew 23. If you read the very beginning of the chapter, there is a scripture in which most every English translation, there is an error that inverts the meaning of what Christ was actually saying. It creates a head scratcher. It's not just the English translations, it's actually in the Greek manuscripts.

Matthew 23:1 *Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.*

2) saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

3) Therefore, whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

If you read verse 3 the way it is written in English—again it's in the Greek manuscripts as well—it certainly appears that what Christ is saying is that the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat so whatever they teach you need to follow, just don't follow their example because they are hypocrites. It sounds like that is what He is saying. If you read the rest of the chapter, it doesn't match, because the rest of the chapter is this blistering critique and He even tells them how bad their teachings are and calls them *blind guides*. This just doesn't match with anything else the Bible says. It's not just this chapter, all throughout the Gospels, Christ doesn't have anything much that is positive to say about the Pharisees. He literally critiques their teachings by saying that they reject the commandment of God and teach the doctrines of men. So why, with Christ saying that, would He ever say whatever the Pharisees say you should do, just don't follow their example?

We're going to see the problem is a manuscript error. This was actually discovered by a Hebrew scholar named Nehemia Gordon, who nailed down what the actual problem here was. Just to explain the context of what this was about, he wrote a book about this whole experience of how he was asked to look into this and discovered what the issue was. The book is titled, The Hebrew Yeshua vs the Greek Jesus and I am actually going to quote from that. But just to explain the story, Nehemia Gordon is what is called a Karaite Jew. What that means is he is a Jew who rejects all the rabbinical tradition, their oral law and the things they added to the Old Testament—he rejects all that. He believes in following the Old Testament as it's written but he doesn't believe that Christ is the Messiah and that the New Testament is scripture. So, this wasn't something he proactively looked into on his own, because from his perspective, the New Testament is

an historical document, it's not scripture. He has a good friend who is a Messianic Jew who does believe in the New Testament.

This guy, like a lot of people, myself included, read this for years and scratched their heads and he asked himself,

“Why in the world would Christ ever say to follow whatever the Pharisees teach because in numerous other places in the New Testament He tells them how bad their teachings are. Why would He say that?”

What happened was—Nehemia, even though he doesn't believe in the New Testament, he is known for being an expert in ancient languages and manuscripts and history and his ability to research these things. This is why his friend asked him to look into this. He came to Nehemia and said that there is something wrong here and we don't know what it is. This just contradicted everything about the New Testament, so there must be some error here. He was trying to nail down what it was. Nehemia began looking into this and the first thing he did was started examining all the Greek manuscripts and he found they all agree with what is written in the English and he can't find a problem. Then he discovered that history records that the book of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew, it wasn't originally written in Greek. He discovered there were Hebrew manuscripts of the book of Matthew that had survived today which were not translated from Greek. They are original Hebrew manuscripts. He obtained one and read it and then discovered what the problem was.

Let me read you a couple of quotes. The first one from this book explains what is meant by Christ when He said that the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, what exactly does that mean? He explained that was a reference to rabbinical authority. Rabbinical Jews look at this idea of Moses' seat, the Sanhedrin and the Rabbinical authority, very similarly to how Catholics would look at the Pope. The Catholics view the Pope as being the vicar of Christ. In other words, an easy example—ask an informed Catholic why they keep Sunday. They won't even try to defend it from the Bible, they will openly tell you the Bible teaches Saturday, but the reason we keep Sunday is because the Pope changed it. In their mind the Pope has that authority and that is the key. This whole concept of Moses' seat is because the Jews have a very similar view of Rabbinical authority to Catholics and the Pope. Let me quote from Nehemia, explaining this idea. This is from The Hebrew Yeshua vs the Greek Jesus and from page 3.

The metaphorical interpretation of Moses' seat as Mosaic authority seems likely. It is a basic Pharisaical doctrine that the Rabbis have the authority of Moses. This is expressed in a well-known Mishnaic account about the dispute between Rabban Gamaliel II and Rabbi Joshua. These two Rabbis disagreed about when Yom Kippur was to fall in a certain year. Rabban Gamaliel sat in the Rabbinic court and hence Rabbi Joshua was compelled to accept his ruling even though he knew it was factually wrong. Rabbi Dosa explained that Rabbi Joshua must give into Gamaliel's ruling because [and then he quotes from the Mishna Rosh Hashanah 2.9]

“If we go and challenge Rabban Gamaliel’s court, we must also challenge each and every court that has presided since the days of Moses until now. Each and every set of three Rabbis that preside as a court over Israel are equivalent to the quote of Moses.” [He’s quoting from Mishna Rosh Hashanah 2.9. Returning to Nehemia’s comments]: So the Rabbis really believe they preside in the place of Moses.

What they believe is, if the Rabbi said this or the Sanhedrin decreed that something should be done, that overrides scripture. That’s their point of view. So, when Christ is saying, the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat, that’s what they are talking about. As I mentioned, Nehemia then discovered that the book of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew. He obtained a copy of the Hebrew manuscript. Here’s a quote from page 47 and 48 from his book, The Hebrew Yeshua vs the Greek Jesus that explain the rest of this.

Armed with this knowledge, I finally opened to Matthew 23:2-3 in Shem-Tob’s Hebrew Matthew to see what it said. As already mentioned, the King James translation of the Greek reads, “The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat all therefore whatsoever they bid, you observe, that observe and do but do not ye after their works for they say and do not do.” When I went to look in the Hebrew text of Matthew, I found something quite different. “The Pharisees and Sadducees sit upon the seat of Moses therefore all that he says to you diligently do but according to their reforms and their precedence do not do because they talk but they do not do.” In the Hebrew Matthew, Yeshua is telling His disciples not to obey the Pharisees. If their claim is they sit in Moses’ seat, then diligently do as Moses says. To understand what happened we must compare the Hebrew with the Greek. In the Greek the disciples were commanded all that they, the Pharisees say, but in the Hebrew, Yeshua told His disciples to obey all that he, Moses, said. These are two fundamentally different messages. In Hebrew this is the difference of only one single letter. In Hebrew, “he says” is yomar while “they say” is yomru. The only difference between the two is an unpointed Hebrew text in the addition of an extra vav in yomru, they say. This is the basis for a completely different message and is amazing because a vav is one of the smallest letters in the Hebrew alphabet, really just a single stroke. The addition of this tiny letter changes Yeshua’s message from an instruction to obey Moses, all that he says, to a commandment to obey the Pharisees, all that they say. In contrast, in Greek the difference between “he says” (eipei) and “they say” (eiposin) is a much larger difference. This suggests that the Greek translator misread the Hebrew text as containing an extra vav. Maybe this Greek translator did not even understand who or what the Pharisees were all about.

If we understand this particular error, it solves the whole problem because Christ isn’t saying follow their teaching, just don’t follow their examples, He’s saying don’t follow either one of them because these men, as He says, are *blind guides*. This is also another great lesson that we should never establish doctrine from one single difficult scripture. This is something that I know myself, as most church of God people I’ve

known all my life have scratched their heads over how to explain what this verse is saying. If you go back and look at the Greek it matches what the English says. You have to go back to a Hebrew manuscript to find the problem. The big red flag is that one verse, as it reads in the English, contradicts everything else the Bible has to say on the subject. When you see that, that's the red flag that whatever the problem is, it's in this one difficult scripture. We may not know the answer, but you know that has to be where the problem is because everything else on the subject says the opposite. That's how you know how to figure those things out, even if you don't have the inside story like this.

To look at an example of the Pharisees teachings, turn to Mark 7. We're going to see that the fundamental problem with them was putting their tradition above scripture. As I explained with the history of the "seat of Moses", their view of the Sanhedrin and the Rabbis was essentially like the Catholic's view of the Pope. If the Pope decides now the Sabbath is on Sunday, well now you have to keep Sunday and that is now, essentially equivalent with a commandment from God, even though it's not what scripture says, and is the opposite of what scripture says. They view it like that. This is how the Jews viewed—all the Pharisees anyway—Rabbinical authority and the Sanhedrin—this overrides scripture. So their tradition was more important than what scripture says. Notice in Mark 7:1.

Mark 7:1 *Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem.*

2) Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault.

3) For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. (NKJV)

Notice that phrase, "the tradition of the elders", this is the key to understanding the Pharisees. It's that whole idea of tradition and Rabbinical authority overrides scripture.

4) When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5) Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" (NKJV)

They are not saying Jesus violated scripture, they are saying He violated tradition—that's the problem.

6) He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.

7) And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

8) For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

9) He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.

10) For Moses said, Honor your father and your mother'; and, He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'

11) But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban '—"(that is, a gift to God),

12) then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,

13) making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

14) When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand:

15) There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.

16) If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" (NKJV)

Christ is telling them that they put aside the commandments of God and they taught their tradition. These ritual washings you cannot find in the Old Testament, yet they are trying to hold Christ's feet to fire over them. Find a scripture in the Old Testament that says any of this—it's not there. It wasn't something based on scripture, it was tradition. How do we apply this to us in our day? It's easy for us in our day to look at this and say, those bad Pharisees, they put their tradition over scripture. We in the church of God, we wouldn't do what those bad Pharisees would do. Not so quick; let's think about that for a second. In our world today, we typically don't use the phrase "the tradition of the elders says this". But here's how we do word it.

Ever find yourself sometimes in a doctrinal discussion with people and your defense for your position on a subject is, Mr. so and so taught me X. Or I've always been taught X. Or the church has always taught X, therefore X is true. You know what you're doing? You're saying that the tradition of the elders is X, therefore X is true. It's the same thing—the leaven of the Pharisees. I'm not saying this because the church of God has always taught something that makes it wrong. It doesn't necessarily make it wrong or right. What I like to say is,

"What I have always been taught, is that a historical reference is not a basis for a doctrine. It doesn't prove something; it doesn't disprove something."

I've known people in my life in both ditches on this subject. I've known plenty of people who say, if Mr. Armstrong taught X and if Worldwide taught X then X is true and that's the end of the subject because they can't be wrong. I've also known people on the other side of the equation who think if Worldwide ever taught it, it's probably going to be wrong. That becomes a basis for saying something is right or wrong. The fact that it was historically taught, that is a historical reference, it is not a basis for a doctrine. Doesn't necessarily make it right or wrong. If you're making your argument based upon that, that's a huge problem.

Let me give you an example of where this got pounded into my head. This is several decades ago, but over the years I've seen more and more how true this was. During my sophomore year at Ambassador College, I was in a class called Fundamentals of Theology. Various times we would be covering doctrines all throughout this class and various times in class discussions we would get into debates about various subjects. There were times we would even challenge the teacher. I irritated a few teachers myself challenging them on particular points. What was interesting though, was what was happening in this class. Sometimes we were getting into discussions and debates and there were students who would present their argument by saying, I've always been taught X or Mr. so and so said—whether it was Mr. Armstrong or another professor or someone they were quoting. They weren't making a reference and saying so and so taught this or this has always been taught, as a historical reference or comparison. They were saying this has always been taught, therefore it is correct. It was used as the logical basis to defend a position.

My particular professor in that class got irritated with this. You could see it got on his nerves. He taught us a very important lesson and something I have remembered to this day. If you have heard my sermons over the years, you've heard me quote this story numerous times. He got irritated with the class and said:

“Don't ever come into this class and present an argument of what Mr. so and so said or what I've always been taught. Because what Mr. so and so said and what has always been taught is evidence for absolutely nothing. Come into this class with a scriptural argument and I will be happy to discuss that with you. I will stay after class and discuss that with you. I'm always open to discuss those things because that is the basis for making an argument. If you're going to come and argue it's always been taught therefore it's correct, I'm not even going to have that discussion with you because that is not a basis for defending something.”

We, in the church of God, can be very guilty of this. I've caught myself being guilty of it thinking, I've always been taught X therefore it's true. I try to remember, but does that make it correct? Think of it like this just to make a very easy example. Let's take the Sabbath. Worldwide has taught the Sabbath, Mr. Armstrong has taught the Sabbath, every church of God teaches the Sabbath but that in itself doesn't make the Sabbath correct. What makes the Sabbath correct, Genesis 2, seventh day of creation, God instituted the Sabbath, Exodus 20 with the Ten Commandments, He commanded the Sabbath all throughout Ancient Israel. Christ is keeping the Sabbath in the New Testament; the apostles are keeping it in Acts after He is dead. You have these mountains of scriptures that back up the subject and that makes the doctrine correct. You have to be able to defend that. A doctrine has to survive cross examination on that basis. If you find yourself defaulting to, Mr. so and so said this, whoever your favorite teacher is—doesn't matter who Mr. so and so is—if Mr. so and so said it therefore it's true or it's always been taught therefore it's true, I hate to tell you this, but that's the leaven of the Pharisees. What you are saying is, the tradition of the elders is X, therefore X is true.

We, in the church of God today, can be just as bad as those Pharisees if we allow ourselves to fall into that. As I mentioned, if you look at this from a big picture, the Pharisees were the ultra-religious group who saw themselves as very strictly adhering to devoutly following their religion. As you can see, they were really missing the point and really off base.

The Sadducees

The next group we need to look at are the Sadducees. Historically, the Sadducees in the time of Christ, the Levitical priesthood at the time were a part of the group referred to as the Sadducees. As we're going to see, Christ directly critiques them saying that they didn't know the scriptures at all. We're going to see they had some massive doctrinal errors. Sometimes we just look at their perspective and ask, how did they read the Old Testament and come up with some of the ideas they did because some of this is so blatantly obvious? How did they get so far off? You can see this as a "chicken or the egg" argument. Did their doctrines cause them to compromise so much more with the culture around them or was it the culture around them that caused their doctrines to go the way they did? Or was it a combination of both? You could argue, but you can't prove from history which came first. We're going to see this correlation between the two. A lot of their doctrines or understandings really help facilitate their compromising and being a part of the world and the culture around them.

To get an understanding of where they are at and what they believe, turn to Acts 23 and we'll see a couple of examples which will give us an idea of what the Sadducees actually believed. We have an account in Acts 23 dealing with Paul but in a discussion where it clarifies the doctrinal perspective of the Sadducees.

Acts 23:1 *Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."*

2) *And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth.*

3) *Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"*

4) *And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"*

5) *Then Paul said, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people."*

6) *But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"*

7) *And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided.*

8) *For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.*

9) *Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees 'party arose and protested, saying, "We find no evil in this man; but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God."*

10) *Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks. (NKJV)*

Two interesting statements here. It says the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection from the dead or even in angels. That's a puzzling statement because you don't need the New Testament to believe in either one of these. I don't know how one gets through the book of Genesis and doesn't believe in angels because there are so many examples of them being there. And you can easily see a resurrection from the Old Testament as well, so they obviously don't know the scriptures. That's exactly what Christ says of them. Turn to Mark 12:18. This is the Sadducees taking on Christ specifically about the resurrection because, as we just read, they don't believe there is a resurrection from the dead.

Mark 12:18 *Then some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying:*

19) *Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves his wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.*

20) *Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring.*

21) *And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise.*

22) *So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also.*

23) *Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife." (NKJV)*

They think they have trapped Him in a corner, so how is He going to answer this question? They thought they had "got" Him. Notice His response.

24) *Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? (NKJV)*

In other words, you guys don't get it at all and obviously from their doctrinal perspective, that's correct.

25) *For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.*

26) *But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ?*

27) *He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken." (NKJV)*

He's telling them, you completely missed the boat. As I mentioned, I don't know how one gets through the book of Genesis and doesn't see how there are angels. We don't know a whole lot more about the details of exactly what they believe because the Bible doesn't say a whole lot more and history doesn't record a lot of the Sadducees. We don't have much of their specific writings because their group died out over time and their writings didn't survive so we can't really piece all the details together. Did they just philosophize this away as analogies or something? I don't know. Just look specifically at the belief in the resurrection and how that would affect one's behavior. Let's just notice that you don't need the New Testament to understand there is a resurrection. The New Testament certainly fills in a lot of details but notice Daniel 12 and what I want you to notice is getting the basic idea that there is a resurrection to eternal life to live in the Kingdom of God and there is a resurrection to condemnation and the lake of fire—eternal judgement. You don't need the New Testament to get that basic idea. The New Testament gives us the details but you can get the concept right out of the Old Testament.

Daniel 12:1 *At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.*

2) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt. (NKJV)

If you look up the Hebrew word for *contempt*, what it means is “abhorrence”. They will have “everlasting abhorrence”. *Everlasting life* and *everlasting abhorrence*, what are we talking about? Resurrection to eternal life, resurrection to condemnation and the lake of fire and my point is, to get these basic concepts, you don't have to have the New Testament. The New Testament and the book of Revelation fills in a lot more details, give us a framework from which to understand the whole big picture. But the basic idea of the resurrection, a return to life and condemnation, you can get that out of the Old Testament. It even tells us that the Pharisees believed in the resurrection, but the Sadducees didn't.

Think about how that would affect your life and your behavior if you don't believe there is anything beyond this life. If you don't believe there is a motivator of, if I'm faithful to God through this and I endure through hard times, there's a reward of resurrection to eternal life or punishment if I don't and the lake of fire. If you erase that out of the equation, what is your behavior going to be? You're going to be a lot more likely to say, if life is going to be painful and difficult then I can compromise here. I'm still going to the temple, I'm still playing church, but I can compromise with the culture around me because God wouldn't want life to be too painful for me. He wouldn't want it to be too difficult or hard. That would be easy to do that. Notice in Hebrews 11, how important this motivation is in our lives as Christians. Even if we don't have all the details right, understanding that there is a resurrection, that there is eternal judgment. That is an extremely important thing that motivates our behavior and how we live today.

Hebrews 11:13 *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*

14) *For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.*

15) *And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.*

16) *But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (NKJV)*

This is referring to the heroes that are talked about in this chapter of faith. In the Old Testament, those who were converted and given their chance at salvation then, what motivated them? What kept them going? It was the promise of the resurrection in New Jerusalem. That's the heavenly country they were seeking. This is what motivated their behavior to remain faithful to God and kept them going. That's particularly difficult when life gets painful. If you read through the rest of this chapter, you see lots of things like the great feats that were accomplished through faith and God delivered people and they were rescued from pain. But in the latter part of the chapter, what you see is all the people who endured through hardship and lost their lives and were tortured and went through all these grueling trials. What was it that motivated them to go through all of this? Look over in verse 35, we'll pick up right at the end of the discussion of those who were rescued from problems.

35) *Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. (NKJV)*

The resurrection to eternal life was what was motivating their behavior to endure through this.

36) *Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.*

37) *They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented*

38) *of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.*

39) *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise,*

40) *God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. (NKJV)*

What got them through all of this? It was the hope of the resurrection. The belief that there is eternal life, that God is going to reward you if you go through all of this. If you give up following Him and being faithful, there is a lake of fire out there that you're going to receive. That motivated their behavior. Imagine a group of people who don't believe this is in the equation. Obviously, their view of Christianity and following God is, "Let's

just have a good life now.” You can see that if they got into a situation where if they have to be faithful and follow this, it’s going to be painful and they are going to lose their position, their power, life is going to get painful and they are going to get persecuted— “Well God wouldn’t want me to do that. I can compromise, I can give in”; this is exactly what motivated their behavior.

Let me read a little historical information on them. This is from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. This is not specifically referencing the time of the Romans in Christ’s time but it’s giving you some of the historical progression of how the Sadducees group developed. We don’t have a lot in history but you’ll see they are talking about how the priestly class, even from the time of the Persians. They were being dominated by the Persians, it started there and then with Greeks and on down. When you understand the history, you see this compromising. What we would call one foot in the church and one foot in the world.

Probably the priestly party only gradually crystallized into the sect of the Sadducees. After the return from the exile, the high priest drew to himself all powers, civil and religious. To the Persian authorities he was as the king of the Jews. The high priest and those about him were the persons who had to do with the heathen supreme government and the heathen nationalities around; this association would tend to lessen their religious fervor, and by reaction, this roused the zeal of a section of the people for the law. With the Greek domination the power of the high priests at home was increased, but they became still more subservient to their heathen masters, and were the leaders in the Hellenizing movement.

As I mentioned, the Hellenizing movement was the whole focus on taking in the Greek culture and having “one foot in the world and one foot in the church”. How does the leaven of the Sadducees apply to us? If we have the perspective of, I want to attend church and show up and be a part of that because I still want to be in the Kingdom of God but I still really like being a part of the world and fit in with that culture. I don’t want to have to face too much pain so I want to play the fence. If we are doing that, that’s the leaven of the Sadducees.

Herod and the Herodians

To look at our last group, which is Herod and the Herodians. This really isn’t a religious group, it’s more of a secular, political focus. What actually happens to individuals if they don’t believe there is a God and don’t believe in the Bible, then what do we do? We make ourselves God. It’s not a matter of there is a higher power that defines what is right and wrong and I need to conform to that definition of right and wrong. It’s I decide what is right and wrong and whatever my intellect or my emotion decides what is right, that’s what I do. That’s making ourselves God. That’s how Herod approached this. Turn to Acts 12 and we’ll see a couple of examples of Herod’s behavior. You’ll see this approach in his behavior.

Acts 12:1 *Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church.*

2) *Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*

3) *And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread.*

4) *So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. (NKJV)*

Notice he is murdering one of the apostles which is just all politically motivated for his own power. He's not trying to follow any religious doctrine. He sees himself as God. You'll see this in verse 20.

20) *Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food by the king's country.*

21) *So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them.*

22) *And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" (NKJV)*

Notice his reaction.

23) *Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died.*

24) *But the word of God grew and multiplied. (NKJV)*

Herod saw himself as a god and when the people said, he is a god, he said "Sure, I'm a god." He's not saying, "No don't look at me as a god, look to the Creator." He said, "Nope—you can look to me as a god, I'm an authority." It's all a secular, self-centered, worldly approach. That's exactly what his followers did as well. The Herodians are mentioned in Matthew 22. You'll see them mentioned a couple times in the Gospels plotting with the Pharisees and Sadducees at times to be against Christ. One thing they had in common was united against a common enemy—they all saw Christ as a threat to their power. You won't see the Herodians being involved in these doctrinal arguments and trying to trip Christ up on a particular doctrine, because they weren't religious. But you will see them try to trip Him up on a matter of taxes because that is what a politician and a political group would do. This is in verse 15.

Matthew 22:15 *Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.*

16) *And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.*

17) *Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"*

- 18) *But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?"*
- 19) *Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius.*
- 20) *And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"*
- 21) *They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*
- 22) *When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. (NKJV)*

You can see, they were also against Christ as well but it wasn't a matter of arguing doctrine or religion with Him—they didn't care about that. Christ was just a threat to their power so they saw Him as a political threat and that is why they opposed Him. They are allied with the Pharisees for unity against the common enemy. It wasn't that they agreed with the Pharisees doctrine in this regard, it was just they both agreed that they disagreed with Him and He's a threat so let's try to eliminate Him. It's a completely secular view. I know you're familiar with a lot of the basic human nature scriptures of what happens when we try to just follow a completely secular view and lean to our own understanding. We don't have time to go over this but just look in Jeremiah 17, where it talks about the nature of man. One of the things that it talks about is the man who trusts in man and it says he will not see when good comes. It doesn't say good will never come to this man, it says when it happens, he won't see it because he is trusting in himself. He is trusting in his own intellect and emotions to be his guide and that always winds us up in the ditch. This is what happens when we don't believe in God and don't trust in Him to be our guide.

To look at the overall big picture, as I mentioned in the introduction to this sermon, leaven is a picture of sin. That's what we've been doing, keeping the days of Unleavened Bread, focusing on getting sin out of our lives. We know all sin is bad. But why did Christ point out these three approaches? Why did Christ say, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and Herod? Look at the big picture. You have three different major perspectives of life.

You have the ultra-religious **Pharisees** who see themselves as strict and adhering exactly to what the law says, but they have totally missed the point. They have missed the point of changing themselves, of their own lives, of being sincere and humble before God and focusing on what's important. They have totally missed that. Yes, they are really religious but they missed the boat.

Then you have the people in the middle, the **Sadducees**. They are part of the priestly world and involved in the temple but they don't even believe there is resurrection and angels. They don't understand scripture, they aren't really serious about what the Bible says. They are more involved in keeping their involvement in the church and their religious involvement but also being okay with the society around them and staying in good graces with them. They are what we would say today as having "one foot in the church, one foot in the world".

With **Herod** and the **Herodians** what do you have? A totally secular approach. Just totally trusting in man, not believing in God, just following a totally carnal, physical way of life.

You have the three basic approaches and that's why Christ laid these out.

As we learn the lessons of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and taking out the "leaven" in our personal lives, let's learn from these three approaches in life. Let us see how they might apply to us and what areas we may need to repent of to remove that leaven from our lives. So then we can follow Christ's examples and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and of Herod.