

ULB doesn't mean sin. It can be analogous to it, but not literal. These days come to an end and we go back to eating fluffy bread. It's not OK to sin 51 weeks out of the year.

Mainstream Christianity has adopted this mentality. That's it is OK to sin it up just before observing their holiest days. Mardis Gras is a clearly pagan and demonic ritual where folks act like fools and drink to excess just before the fertility goddess Astarte is worshiped on the first Sunday following first full moon which follows the spring equinox. The twelve days of Christmas are taken from the pagan Saturnalia celebration which includes the same type of debauchery but in winter time. Sin it up, then worship the pagan gods. Rinse, repeat as necessary.

Doing the same thing for a week that was actually commanded by Yahweh is really the way to go. Builds unity and shows we're all on the same playing field. The pagan holidays kind of have this, but not really. Followers of Yahweh are commanded to purge the leaven from our homes (and cars and offices) and eat ULB for 7 days, with book ended Sabbaths. Quite specific and rather unusual. Most would never get rid of a starter lump. In fact, some are even passed down through generations. Having to start over each year, with the new grain, is very cool but not something one would come up with.

This puts the whole nation on the same playing field. With the pagan holidays, you have a lot of latitude. Even though tomorrow many will hunt easter eggs, share candy, and feast on unclean meats, those are pure pagan traditions. There's no commandment there at all. At least not in the bible. With the Torah, believers, the family of God, the commonwealth of Israel, all do the same stuff at the same time. Whether rich or poor, tall or short, whatever genetic nationality, we do the same exact thing. In Israel in the past and in the coming kingdom, we will all purge the leavening and have new lumps year after year. There will be no leavening found in the kingdom for a week during the 1000 years. This sameness is peaceful. This is a snapshot of a culture which we only yearn to really know today. We keep these days in this Babylonian world the best we know how, understanding that trying is much better than not. We hold to the customs of the Torah because we yearn for Torah to be the law of the earth, with Yeshua as king. We practice for that day to come.

Slide 2 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1Co 5:6-8)

This one is a total slam dunk for us. No question the first century church did this. Paul explains Messiah is our Passover. What we just did is as mirrored off the first century church as was can

possibly do. This is not so we can be technically accurate, although that is important. But if we are to believe in this faith, we must pattern our lives after it and fully adopt it.

Paul is writing to the church at Corinth, a pagan city with a mixed congregation of Jew and Gentile. He says “our Passover” “let us celebrate the feast”. He does not segregate based on birth status. And, in context, he uses this as a foregone conclusion while writing about other things. It shows they have been doing this for a good while and it’s a foundational thing. We are blessed to have this information because it shows we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. As we keep the festivals, we see how to apply them as analogies and metaphors to other parts of life, just as Paul does in this passage. The analogies and metaphors never replace the literal, real application. The literal is the foundation so we all have the same reference point from having the same God-ordained experiences.

While we don’t replace the natural branches and need to be respectful, we are not second class citizens in the kingdom. We receive the blessings and the cursings once we are adopted into the family. This puts us in a tough position because Christianity calls us Judaizers while Messianic Jews call us gentiles. Such is life, but we are who we are and cannot change it.

This is very problematic for those who try and decouple Torah from Christianity. 1 Corinthians was written in about 53 AD. A full twenty years after the Messiah ascended. Paul, and the other apostles who visited Corinth, taught them to either learn or continue keeping the festivals, particularly the Passover. That’s just impossible if the Torah was considered obsolete and Christianity was a new religion. Our Messianic Jewish brethren also teach that Passover is optional for Gentile believers. This is also problematic for that perspective as well. My friends, the apologetic is comprehensive. We are on the right path keeping Passover, ULB, and the rest of the festivals in a New Covenant context.

Slide 3 While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. On the day after the Passover, on that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. The manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year. (Jos 5:10-12)

Because we are blessed with the knowledge of the continuity of scripture, that the Passover applies to us so its history also does, we get to learn and apply that knowledge to our walk.

The generation who fled Egypt was punished by having to die out in the wilderness due to a lack of faith. They were brought through ten plagues, across the Red Sea, heard the voice of YHVH, and then doubted. This was the purpose of the 40 years of wandering, so that generation would die out and not be able to cross in. The next generation was tasked with entering the promised land and was not circumcised. This means they did not observe the annual holy days while in the wilderness, which sounds shocking, but makes sense as they had no agricultural economy to support the days. They didn't make bread, they ate manna. In effect, they were unleavened for years. When it was time to cross over and fully embrace their identity and mission, they had to be circumcised and observe Pesach – this first Pesach in 39 years. When they tasted the grain of the land, the manna stopped and they had to then fend for themselves. They were officially weaned. The tasking was then to enter Canaan, harvest, feed themselves, observe the Torah, and take the land.

The lessons here for us abound. We were in Egypt in our former faiths. Whether we came from a Christian background or from nothing, we were kinda lost. We knew who God was, we knew who Jesus was, but we weren't quite there. Once we learned the truth about the Torah and other points of doctrine that mainstream Christianity has wrong, we entered our own spiritual wildernesses. We realized we had sinned big time. While the golden calf was a one-time event, we had been keeping pagan holidays and religious rituals our entire lives. We were guilty and our fathers (and mothers) surely inherited lies, vanity, and things in which there is no profit. This is a very difficult place to find oneself. We did not want those things to be true. We wanted to find a way to not change. If the information we were (and are) learning is true, then how many are lost? How many who are convinced - beyond convinced - they are right aren't? What about our families? All those family dinners around Christmastime. Those Easter Egg hunts.

What about the other side of the equation? Never having kept one Sabbath at all. Never considering what we ate mattered. Believing doctrines that negate personal responsibility at all and that salvation is just something fleeting. We did stuff wrong but we also failed to do stuff right. The list is really long, brothers and sisters. We are all sinners in need of a savior indeed.

Messiah wiped away those sins. He Mediated for us. He called us out of the darkness and the Holy Spirit guided us through our personal wilderness journeys. It took time. Lots of time. It's an ongoing process. Being converted is the beginning of the journey and that journey is long. And it comes with heartache.

We have to break with our families at times. We don't want to. We want them to come along. Perhaps after a while they will. We are blessed to live in a time where the divisions aren't as permanent as Aaron's sons who burned the strange fire or those who worshiped the golden calf.

Praise Yahweh we don't have to experience that. And we don't know why some are called to our walk and others not. It is not for us to judge anyhow, but it sure is painful at times.

Slide 4 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Messiah (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Messiah Yeshua. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Eph 2:1-10)

Paul is writing to the Ephesians here and specifically those of the Gentiles – people like us. The parallel with the transition of the Hebrews from Egypt to the Jordan are present. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We have now been called to live properly and obediently. The Hebrews in Egypt knew they didn't belong, but they didn't know God until He was revealed through the plagues and then at Sinai. How Paul started the conversation in Ephesus and other places, we do not know. The Holy Spirit had a lot to do with it. But we know he taught them Torah.

Slide 5 About that time there occurred no small disturbance concerning the Way. For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen; these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business. You see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. Not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship will even be dethroned from her magnificence." (Act 19:23-27)

Paul was teaching across Asia, which we would consider Asia Minor or Turkey today not China or the far east, for Gentiles to adopt Torah. They had to put away the false gods and adopt worship of the one true God through His Son, Yeshua. We have clear evidence of the gentiles being taught to adopt Torah all over the place... if you want to see it. And he was being successful. The letter to the

Ephesians means the church withstood the pressure to continue worshiping Artemis and being idolators. The church at Ephesus mattered enough to get the first warning in the book of Revelation. Stopping the worship of false gods means more than just putting idols away. It means changing your practices and lifestyle. But not changing it to nothing, changing it to the worship of Yahweh. We were duped into a lifestyle of idolatry. Once we were shown our error, we began the process of getting it out of our lives and changing to worship the true God in the way He has commanded.

Slide 6 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands— remember that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Messiah Yeshua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. (Eph 2:11-13)

Today, we leave the Passover season and look forward to Pentecost. The Days of Unleavened Bread come to a close and we continue our walk with Yeshua. We've experienced the renewal of this season, although imperfectly, being still physically in Babylon but spiritually near. We are part of the commonwealth of Israel and not strangers to the covenants. We have hope in God and are grateful that the blood of Messiah has allowed us to be grafted into the vine and fellow heirs according to the promise.