

LEAVENS THE WHOLE LUMP

In 1 Corinthians 5, the Bible uses leaven as a metaphor to describe how sin will spread, much like leaven does when it is in a lump of dough. In fact, leaven is used several places in scripture to represent sin, probably most notably in Luke 12:1 where it describes the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7

“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump {of dough}

Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are {in fact} unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.”

This is also a covenant issue – we all share in what each other has, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 12:26-27

“And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if {one} member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.”

That's why it is imperative that verse 7 of 1 Corinthians 5 (above) be strictly followed so that all will not be adversely affected by sin or impurity in the body. The sin in a body, church, or nation must be dealt with. If the person refuses to repent/change, the sin still has to be removed. To clean out the leaven would, therefore, include removing the person unwilling to give up the sin. An example of this is found in chapter 7 of the book of Joshua. Achan, of the tribe of Judah, took items from Jericho that God forbid anybody touching. As a result, Israel was defeated by a very small army from Ai with 3,000 men being killed. Joshua indicated he understood that Achan had to die to cleanse the nation.

Joshua 7:25

“And Joshua said, ‘Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day.’ And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.”

We are to be a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5) and, therefore, are to avoid sin and even flee from immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18). God is a holy God and he wants us all to be holy, both individually and corporately.

1 Peter 1:15-16

“but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all {your} behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy.’”