

SPIRITUAL LEAVEN

By Marie Casale
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THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

We know these scriptures and have obeyed them since our conversion.

Exo 12:15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

Exo 12:19 Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.

Exo 13:7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

But here is a good question. If we shall put out of our houses every speck of physical leaven, what have we accomplished? The answer is that we shall have accomplished the letter of the law. Now look at this scripture:

2Co 3:6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

This means in the context of casting out physical leaven that it really means nothing as far as our spiritual salvation is concerned. But the spirit of the law is casting out the spiritual leaven. And what is the spiritual leaven? We have all been taught that leaven represents sin and this is true, but sin is too general a term, for there are many scriptures that describe spiritual leaven in greater detail that we ought to be focusing in on during these days of Unleavened Bread, and that is what this article aims to do.

Let's start with the seven churches of Revelation. We have made the mistake of focusing in on these as church eras so much that we have forgotten the messages to the churches. How many have noticed, for example, that there are seven major sins mentioned here that the churches are told to repent of?

1. You have left your first love. Repent and do the first works.

1John 5:3 says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous." Have any of God's commandments become grievous for us to keep or have we failed to grow in his commandments by not meditating in his law night and day as Psalms 1 tells us to do?

2. You have the deeds and/or doctrines of the Nicolaitans

This word means victory over the people either by oppressive doctrines or oppressive authority. Our church and home leaders must examine themselves in this.

3. You have the doctrine of Balaam which taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication.

Balac, King of Moab hired Balaam to curse Israel when they came out from Egypt so he could destroy his enemies. He told Balaam that he would promote him to very great honour for cursing Israel. The Lord would not allow Balaam to curse Israel so he got around God's word by teaching Balac to tempt

the Israelites to eat things sacrificed to idols and commit fornication so that God himself would destroy them. 2Peter 2 describes false teachers who teach false doctrines in the church as comparable to Balaam who loved the wages of unrighteousness. Are there any ministers in our church willing to teach false doctrine for some promotion or gain or advantage?

Jesus said in John 6:57, "He who eats me shall live by me." So if we eat things sacrificed to idols, we are living by doctrines of idolatry instead of doctrines of God." Do we have any false doctrines in our church?

The word fornication is the Greek pornea which means a wide variety of sexual sins including adultery and divorce and remarriage while the first spouse is still living which Jesus said is adultery. This sin is allowed in many of the churches today) [Ref 1] [Ref 2]

4. You allow Jezebel to teach and seduce my servants to eat things sacrificed to idols and commit fornication.

Are women permitted to teach in our church or do we obey 1Corinthians 14:35? See previous example for eating things sacrificed to idols and fornication.

5. You have a name that you live and are dead for your works are not perfect.

You profess and believe in God and Jesus Christ, but don't do what he says.

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Jas 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Jas 2:18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

6. You are neither cold nor hot but lukewarm. Therefore I will spit you out of my mouth.

This seems to have to do with lack of zeal for God and his ways. Here are some scriptures having to do with zeal.

Num 25:11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

Psa 69:9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

Psa 119:139 My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

1Cor 14:12 Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

Tit 2:14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

7. You think that you are rich and increased with goods, but are actually wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.

You are unaware of your true spiritual condition.

Because of our human nature we are all able to see faults in others sooner than in ourselves. So to know how we measure up in God's sight, we have to earnestly pray, fast and persistently ask God to show us the true spiritual condition of ourselves and our church as he sees us.

Shouldn't we examine ourselves to see if we or our churches have any of these problems?

Now let's look at some spirit of the law scriptures about leaven and being 'puffed up' that we need to meditate on to see that they are not lurking in our hearts.

1.

These scriptures show a puffed up attitude of superiority over others and pride of spiritual or physical gifts and accomplishments as if we have gotten them ourselves.

1Cor 4:6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be PUFFED UP for one against another.

1Cor 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou GLORY, as if thou hadst not received it?

We can cast out this leaven by meditating on others as being better than ourselves and on whatever we have as being given by God. Remember the example of Nebuchadnezzar who pridefully claimed that the kingdom he built was for his own glory.

Phl 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

2.

Here we see leaven in the Corinthian Church in speeches of those who were sure of themselves that Paul would not come to them because he was not able to come as soon as he intended but sent Timothy instead. How often do we express ourselves as sure of what we intend to do. This is a puffed up attitude and Paul corrected it by saying "If the Lord will". It is repeated again in James 4:15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

1Cor 4:18 Now some are PUFFED UP, as though I would not come to you.

1Cor 4:19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are PUFFED UP, but the power

1Cor 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

1Cor 4:21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?

3.

Here was a sin being committed in the church and the Corinthians were 'puffed up' and 'glorying' rather than 'mourning' that this person might be removed from them. We might say, "I wouldn't do that!" But if we have laughed and gotten enjoyment at a movie scene in which sin was being committed in a funny way instead of mourning and turning off the movie, that attitude is what this is about. These scriptures also show that we are to examine and cast spiritual leaven out of the church as a whole too, not just out of ourselves as individuals.

1Cor 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

1Cor 5:2 And ye are PUFFED UP, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.

1Cor 5:3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,

1Cor 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

1Co 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1Cor 5:6 Your GLORYING is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

1Cor 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

1Cor 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

4.

This word 'puffed up' means vaunting of the self. Vaunting is a boastful remark or extravagant self-praise. In TV shows like Happy Days, Fonzie has this attitude and it is made to seem funny.

1Cor 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not PUFFED UP,

5.

This scripture shows that the mind can be puffed up by vain worship. If you put this together with Matthew 15:9 it is clear that people can feel very good about themselves in teaching and obeying commandments and doctrines of men and in participating in religious ceremonies.

Col 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly PUFFED UP by his fleshly mind,

6.

These scriptures show that false doctrine is like leaven

Mat 16:6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the LEAVEN of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Mat 16:11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

Mat 16:12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the DOCTRINE of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Just as false doctrine in number 6 is the opposite of the unleavened bread of truth, hypocrisy is spiritual leaven and is the opposite of the unleavened bread of sincerity. So I have included here many scriptures that show how we can worship God in a hypocritical way.

Luk 12:1 In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the LEAVEN of the Pharisees, which is HYPOCRISY.

1.

You can be a hypocrite in your worship of God if you go around talking about the faults of your neighbor.

Pro 11:9 An HYPOCRITE with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

2.

It is a lot easier to see the faults of others than to see our own. Remember the example of the woman taken in adultery? All those who accused her were not thinking about the sin in their own lives. We need to pray that God will show us the beam in our own eye when we start thinking of the mote in our brother's eye.

Mat 7:5 Thou HYPOCRITE, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Luk 6:42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou

HYPOCRITE, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

3.

Here we see that to keep the Sabbath day with unreasonable and oppressive rules about how to keep it is worshipping God hypocritically.

Luk 13:11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

Luk 13:12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

Luk 13:13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

Luk 13:14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.

Luk 13:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou HYPOCRITE, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering

Luk 13:16 - And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?

4.

You are worshipping God hypocritically if you give alms to be seen and praised by men.

Mat 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Mat 6:2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the HYPOCRITES do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.

Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Mat 6:3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

Mat 6:4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

5.

You are worshipping God hypocritically if you pray to be seen and praised by men.

Mat 6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the HYPOCRITES are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Mat 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

6.

You are worshipping God hypocritically if you fast to be seen and praised by men.

Mat 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the HYPOCRITES, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Mat 6:17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

Mat 6:18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

7.

Here we see that seeking after a sign from Heaven is not only a hypocritical tempting of God, but also is wicked and adulterous. If they sincerely loved God they would have been able to discern that the things Jesus taught and did were a sign from God.

Mat 16:1 The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

Mat 16:2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.

Mat 16:3 And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye HYPOCRITES, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

Mat 16:4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

8.

Here we see that breaking the second commandment, Thou shalt not worship God in vain by teaching the doctrines and commandments of men, is the same as hypocrisy.

Mat 15:4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

Mat 15:5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

Mat 15:6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

Mat 15:7 Ye HYPOCRITES, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

Mat 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

Mat 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Mar 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you HYPOCRITES, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Mar 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Mar 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

Mar 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

9.

Here we see another examples of tempting the Lord which is hypocrisy. The Pharisees came flattering Jesus, but their true motive was to entangle him in his talk so the Herodians could get him in trouble with the Roman government.

Mat 22:15 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

Mat 22:16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.

Mat 22:17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

Mat 22:18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye HYPOCRITES?

Mat 22:19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

Mat 22:20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

Mat 22:21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

10.

Do we know what the Kingdom of Heaven is and what we have to do to enter it? Can we point to the scriptures that teach this knowledge? If we are ignorant of this knowledge it is because our religious leaders have not taught it to us. As the Pharisees did, many religious leaders teach a hypocritical religion that is religious sounding but actually prevents people from entering God's kingdom.

Mat 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

11.

In the Old Testament God commanded three tithes. The first ten percent is taken for the support of the ministry and to preach the gospel. The second tithe is kept by the members to keep the Feast of Tabernacles and the third tithe is taken once every three years to support the fatherless and widows. Some churches rob the fatherless and widows by using third tithe for expenditures other than supporting them. Some rob the fatherless and widows by doing away with third tithe saying that in countries that have social programs to support them, the church does not need to do so. [Ref 3]

Mat 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

12.

Making proselytes for our organization guides the converted one into the tenets and doctrines of our organization while those making disciples for Christ knows that the one converted belongs to Christ and teaches him Christ's doctrines and ways.

Mat 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

13.

It is hypocritical worship to teach small matters as if they are great and great matters as if they are small.

Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

14.

These scriptures tell us that hypocrisy looks good on the outside and so it does not appear to others that the inside (the heart) is dead. Extortion means obtaining something, especially money, through force or threats. It is unreasonable and burdensome demands on others. Excess is indulging the lusts of the flesh excessively.

Mat 23:25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

Mat 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Luk 11:44 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

15.

Hypocrites inwardly hate and seek to kill those whom God sends to them in the way of righteousness.

Mat 23:29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, HYPOCRITES! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

16.

A faithful and wise servant takes care of his Lord's household giving them spiritual food in due season. But a hypocrite who is not really interested in doing his Lord's work takes advantage of his Lord's delay in coming and begins to mistreat his fellowservants and feed the lusts of his flesh.

Mat 24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Mat 24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Mat 24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

Mat 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

Mat 24:49 And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

Mat 24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

Mat 24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the HYPOCRITES: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus told his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and he named this leaven as hypocrisy giving us all these scriptures showing how the heart of a hypocrite works. But he also told his disciples to beware of the leaven of Herod.

The context of when he told the disciples to beware of the leaven of Herod is in Mark 8. After he had finished feeding the huge crowd with the seven loaves and a few small fishes and sent them away he entered into a ship to go to Dalmanutha. Then the Pharisees came to him asking for a sign from heaven and he said no sign would be given to this generation. Then he entered into a ship again and departed for the other side. This was when he charged the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod.

As you read Mark 8 you see that Jesus did not tell his disciples plainly what the leaven of Herod is. So we need to search out the deeds of Herod to see what this leaven might be.

There are two major things Herod did that would qualify.

First was that he killed John the Baptist who told him his marriage with Herodias was unlawful. Herod was committing adultery as her husband and his wife were both still alive. We need to beware of the leaven of sexual sins in the church.

Second in Luke 13:30 Pharisees came to Jesus warning him that Herod wanted to kill him so he should get out of Herod[s jurisdiction. Jesus called Herod a fox a term for being sly and sneaky which could be the leaven he warned the disciples of. Matthew Henry gives this commentary on Luke 13:31-33

Verse 31. and depart hence--and "go forward," push on. He was on His way out of Perea, east of Jordan, and in Herod's dominions, "journeying towards Jerusalem" (Luk 13:22).

Haunted by guilty fears, probably, Herod wanted to get rid of Him (see on JF & B for Mr 6:14), and seems, from our Lord's answer, to have sent these Pharisees, under pretense of a friendly hint, to persuade Him that the sooner He got beyond Herod's jurisdiction the better it would be for His own safety. Our Lord saw through both of them, and sends the cunning ruler a message couched in dignified and befitting irony.

Verse 32. that fox--that crafty, cruel enemy of God's innocent servants.

Behold, I cast out devils and I do cures--that is, "Plot on and ply thy wiles; I also have My plans; My works of mercy are nearing completion, but some yet remain; I have work for to-day and to-morrow too, and the third day; by that time I shall be where his jurisdiction reaches not; the guilt of My blood shall not lie at his door; that dark deed is reserved for others." He does not say, I preach the Gospel--that would have made little impression upon Herod--in the light of the merciful character of Christ's actions the malice of Herod's snares is laid bare [BENGEL].

to-day, to-morrow, the third day--remarkable language expressive of successive steps of His work yet remaining, the calm deliberateness with which He meant to go through with them, one after another, to the last, unmoved by Herod's threat, yet the rapid march with which they were now hastening to completion. (Compare Luk 22:37).

I shall be perfected--I finish my course, I attain completion.

Verse 33. it cannot be that a prophet, &c.--"It would never do that," &c.--awful severity of satire this upon "the bloody city!" "He seeks to kill me, does he? Ah! I must be out of Herod's jurisdiction for that. Go tell him I neither fly from him nor fear him, but Jerusalem is the prophets' slaughter-house."

In the Old Testament the Israelites left Egypt on the First Day of Unleavened Bread after the blood of the lamb was put on the doorposts of their houses. In the New Testament we left spiritual Egypt when the blood of Jesus Christ covered our sins. We have always been taught that coming out of Egypt is symbolic of coming out of the world, but here we see that Jerusalem where Christ died is symbolic of the Egypt we came out of.

Rev 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

So on the First Day of Unleavened Bread we ought to hear sermons about our coming out of the bondage of the Scribes and Pharisees or of the Old Covenant letter of the law administered from spiritual Egypt which is Jerusalem.

If each day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictures a thousand years, (2Pet 3:8) then we can learn from this that all who are called to be Christians in this present age must eat unleavened bread for the duration of that seven thousand years. And the true bread of life we must eat pictures Jesus Christ.

Jhn 6:31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

Jhn 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

Jhn 6:33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Jhn 6:34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Jhn 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

For the Feast of Unleavened Bread let's focus on casting out of ourselves and our churches the spiritual leaven of malice, wickedness, hypocrisy, pride, false doctrine etc. and to eat and live by the true bread of life, our saviour Jesus Christ.

If you are unable to get some references, I can supply them in pdf format.

REFERENCES

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