

THE FEASTS OF THE LORD

Leviticus 23:1-44

Foreshadowing God's plan of the ages from the past eternity to the future eternity

by

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

(Leviticus 23:15-21)

1. The Time.

Fifty days after the feast of the firstfruits, on the first day of the week, Israel kept the feast of Pentecost, according to God's commandment:

“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days” (Leviticus 23:15, 16).

We have already seen that this **“holy convocation”** was called the feast of Pentecost because **“Pentecost”** means *“fiftieth.”* It was also called the **“feast of the weeks”** because seven weeks elapsed between the feast of the first-fruits and Pentecost. Therefore, these two feasts were intimately linked together; this is an important fact for us to note.

Christ had honored the Passover by becoming the Paschal Lamb on the very day of the feast. God the Father had honored the feast of the firstfruits by raising His Son from the dead on the very day when the Jews were observing this **“holy convocation.”**

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come” (Acts 2:1)—fifty days after the resurrection of Christ—the Holy Spirit honored that feast by descending in great power upon the **“devout Jews”** assembled in the temple in Jerusalem—to keep the feast and to obey the Lord Jesus in His express command that they **“tarry in Jerusalem”** to wait for **“the promise of the Father.”**

This exact fulfillment of the types, even unto the very day, could not have been mere chance. On the contrary, it reveals how marvelously God had foretold His great purpose and plan through these **“shadows of good things to come.”** While He was on earth, immediately following Peter's confession, **“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,”** the Lord Jesus had said to His disciples, **“Upon this rock I will build my church”** (Matthew 16:18). Upon this rock of eternal truth He had said He would build His Church—a then future work of grace.

Before He went to the cross, He told His disciples repeatedly that it was “**expedient**” for Him to go away, in order that the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, might come unto them. (See John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15). And after He rose from the dead, He told them further:

“Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

“And, being assembled together with them” after His resurrection, He **“commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence . . .**

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:4, 5, 8).

It was in obedience to this express command that the disciples, having seen the risen Lord ascend into heaven, **“returned . . . unto Jerusalem”** and **“continued with one accord in prayer and supplication”** (Acts 1:12, 14). Then **“when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place”** (Acts 2:1).

They were in the temple to keep the feast of Pentecost, and with them were other Jews who did not accept Jesus as their Messiah. They were there to observe the empty form and ritualism of the feast; and blinded as they were by sin, they **“mocked,”** and said that the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, were **“full of new wine”** (Acts 2:13). But their mocking and their unbelief did not alter the fact that **“the promise of the Father”** was given in that day, which marked the beginning of the Church. **“I will build my church,”** the Lord had said.

And from Pentecost till the translation of the Church, He has been fulfilling His promise, and will continue to fulfill it until His Bride is complete!

The Church of the Lord Jesus is a New Testament organism, my friend. Until you get this fact clearly in mind, you will not be able rightly to divide the Word of Truth. In Old Testament times God dealt first with the whole race, then especially with one particular nation, through whom He promised to send the Redeemer, and through whom He gave to the world the Bible. The word **“church,”** which means *“the called-out ones,”* is not an Old Testament term.

Stephen rightly refers to Israel as **“the church in the wilderness”** (Acts 7:38), in the sense that Israel was **“called out of Egypt.”** And Psalm 22:22 is a definite prophecy concerning Christ and the Church, as the Holy Spirit distinctly explains in Hebrews 2:12.

But otherwise, the word **“church”** is strictly a New Testament term.

Paul bore testimony to the fact that the Church is a New Testament body when he wrote to the Ephesian Christians, saying:

“Ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (something not hitherto revealed, not something 'mysterious') . . . which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel . . . to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:2-6, 9-11).

2. One Offering—Two Wave-Loaves.

The truth declared in the words just quoted from Paul, saying that Jew and Gentile should be **“fellowheirs, and of the same body”** in the Church, was set forth in type by the one offering, yet with two wave-loaves, on the feast of Pentecost.

The two loaves represent Jew and Gentile; the one offering speaks of the one Body in Christ. **“Ye shall offer a new meal offering unto the Lord”** (one offering), God said to Moses as He called to him out of the tabernacle at the foot of Mount Sinai. And further, the Lord said, **“Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth deals”** (Leviticus 23:16, 17).

Many New Testament references throw a flood of light on this typical teaching. Space here permits us to look only at a few:

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:12, 13; compare Gal. 3:27, 28).

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one (Jew and Gentile), and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us . . . to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace” (Ephesians 2:14, 15; compare Ephesians 2:11-18).

The disciples gathered in the temple on the day of Pentecost, and baptized with the Holy Spirit, were Jews (Acts 2:5).

Gentiles did not keep the feasts of the Lord; these were a part of the Jewish worship.

And when the Holy Spirit came upon that assembly in Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago, it was as though the Lord presented one of the two wave-loaves, in fulfillment of the type.

It was not until sometime later that the second loaf was **“waved,”** when in the house of Cornelius, a Gentile and a Roman soldier, the Holy Spirit came in the same demonstration of power. (See Acts 10:1-11:18).

Then Gentile, as well as Jew, was filled with the Holy Spirit.

God chose Peter to be His mouthpiece on both occasions; and the two sermons preached by this disciple, first in the temple on the day of Pentecost, and then in the house of Cornelius some time later, are well worth our prayerful study. They were uttered by inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God; and it is about Him that they speak—His coming into the world to lead men to a saving knowledge of Christ crucified, Christ risen, interceding, and coming again in great power and great glory.

Throughout the centuries every true believer has rejoiced that in the Body of Christ there is no color or class, no kindred or tongue, that all are “**one in Christ Jesus.**” It is easy for us—Gentiles—in our day to accept this beautiful truth, as a part of our heritage received from Christian forefathers; but, humanly speaking, it was not easy for Peter and his Jewish brethren to have fellowship with Gentiles. Only a miracle could break down “**the middle wall of partition,**” and only a miracle did bring this very thing to pass.

Two wave-loaves—one offering!

What a significant type of the unity of Jew and Gentile in the one Body, which is the Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! This is a searching truth, and it carries with it the grave responsibility of manifesting Christian unity and love!

Just here let us recall what we said at the beginning of this study of Pentecost: This feast is intimately linked with the feast of firstfruits, coming fifty days after that “**holy convocation.**” The single sheaf was waved before the Lord first; then the wave-loaves. We have seen that Christ is “**the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.**”

There could be no life for the sinner until Christ died and rose again. But there is yet another wonderful truth for us here.

In the economy of God we are even now, from the moment we are born again, “**quickened,**” “**raised**” to “**walk**” with Him “**in newness of life**” (Ephesians 2:1-10; Romans 6:4; Colossians 3:1-3). God sees us in this present life seated “**in heavenly places in Christ Jesus**”—not as separate sheaves, but bound together in a union that is real and abiding. This also is a searching truth, and it carries with it the grave responsibility of walking in purity of life, keeping our garments “**unspotted from the world**”!

3. The Fine Flour and the Leaven

“**Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven**” (Leviticus 23:17).

Just as the fine flour without leaven in the feast of unleavened bread speaks to us of the sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus, with all the excellencies and glories of His person, so here in the two wave-loaves of Pentecost we see the believer's two natures:

- A new nature in Christ Jesus, of which the fine flour is a shadow;
- The old nature ever present with us in the flesh, of which the leaven is a type.

Paul was constantly teaching this two-fold truth throughout his letters; hence the struggle he described between the old nature and the new in the sixth and seventh chapters of Romans.

John recognized the same truth when he wrote to Christians, saying: **“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”** (I John 1:8). Here he was talking about the old, Adamic nature. But in the same epistle he wrote: **“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not”** (I John 2:1). We cannot live without sin in the flesh, but we can and we should live without sin on the conscience; for **“if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”** (I John 2:1). We must confess and forsake the sinful acts which give expression to the sinful nature, or our fellowship with God will be broken, and our testimony before the world will be marred.

We are not talking about our standing before God; that is perfect, because the Father sees us identified with the Son in His death and resurrection. But the Bible does not teach the eradication or the suppression of the old nature; it does teach the counteraction of it by the power of the Holy Spirit in the life.

By God's grace the old nature need not be dominant; but even Paul said: **“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing”** (Romans 7:18). And the leaven in the two loaves of Pentecost typified this very truth, for leaven in the Word of God is always a symbol of sin.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6). These are the words of the Lord Jesus!

4. A Holy Sacrifice.

The two wave-loaves were accepted by God, even though they contained leaven, because they were presented with the burnt offering, the sin offering and the peace offering.

“They shall be holy to the Lord,” God said to Moses (Leviticus 23:20). And we are **“accepted in the beloved”** (Ephesians 1:6) —accepted in the beloved Son, because **“Calvary covers it all!”** It covers all the old nature, and we are complete in Him. He has reckoned all that He is to us, and **“the iniquity of us all”** was laid upon Him when He became our Sin offering. The **“seven lambs without blemish”** (Leviticus 23:18) pointed on to Christ. And His shed blood covers all our sins.

Some years ago, after I had preached one evening at the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, I was riding home on the elevated train when my attention was attracted to a group of people on the car who were looking intently at one of the advertisements. The placard was printed in red letters; and as these people looked at it through a red-stained glass, they were exclaiming over the strange thing they saw. All the red letters appeared to be wiped away, blotted out.

Why? Because the glass through which they looked was red also.

Something like this God has done for you and me, my friend. Our sins are crimson, but washed in the blood of His Son, they become “**as white as snow**” (Isaiah 1:18). We are “**accepted in the beloved,**” because “**God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself**” (II Corinthians 5:19). Therefore, He says to us, through the pen of the inspired writer: “**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (or 'spiritual') service**” (Romans 12:1).

5. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And now we have come to that truth regarding Pentecost, about which there is so much confusion and fanaticism; that is, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is not an experience to be sought and prayed for after conversion; it is a dispensational act, and takes place at conversion. There is no such thing as being born again, and yet not having the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To be born again is to be made “**a new creature in Christ Jesus**” by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus said plainly that it is the Holy Spirit who convicts men of sin and who regenerates the sinner. (See John 16:7-11; compare John 3:3-8).

But some will ask: Were the twelve disciples and those other “**devout Jews**” who received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost not born again before that memorable day? Yes; they were; but we must remember that they lived during two dispensations— before the cross and after the cross.

To the disciples the Lord said, “**I will build my church.**” They were among the faithful remnant in Israel who, during His earthly ministry, believed Him to be their Messiah. Therefore, when the time came for the Church to be formed, to them was granted the added experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit, and of being among the first “**living stones**” to be built into the Body of Christ.

But, my friend, you and I do not belong to that small group who lived when Christ was on earth. You and I were born nearly two thousand years too late for that experience—of living in two dispensations. We live on this side of the cross; and ever since the day of Pentecost, all sinners who have accepted the finished work of Christ on Calvary have, from the very moment they believed, been baptized with the Holy Spirit. To be a Christian is to be baptized with the Spirit of God.

Moreover, the miracle that accompanied the descent of the Holy Spirit was for a testimony to the fact that this was a work of God.

The “**rushing mighty wind,**” the “**cloven tongues like as of fire,**” and the speaking in “**other tongues**” were enough to convince the most skeptical that this demonstration of power was from the Lord God. And some such signs and wonders were needed to mark the new thing which God was about to do in the earth— in calling out “**a people for his name**” (Acts 15:14).

The beginning of the Church of the crucified and risen Lord was thus made known by this mighty demonstration of “**power from on high.**”

But nowhere in the Word of God are we told that the gift of tongues accompanies salvation in this age. On the contrary, Paul expressly stated: **“Whether there be tongues, they shall cease”** (I Corinthians 13:8).

It is very clear that, in this Church Age, the Holy Spirit is working silently in the hearts of men, convicting them of sin, and creating in them new life in Christ Jesus. And His power is just as mighty, just as efficacious, in this quiet work of grace as it was on the day of Pentecost! He is able to quicken those who are dead in trespasses and in sin; and He is able to empower the sinner saved by grace for a holy walk and a true testimony before a Christ-rejecting world.

The believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is possible for the Christian to grieve Him; and it is equally possible for the child of God to be **“filled with the Spirit.”** But at conversion He enters the heart to stay. (See John 14:16, 17.)

Peter testified to the meaning of the miracle that took place on the day of Pentecost, when he said:

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:16-18, 21).

Now in Old Testament times the Holy Spirit had come upon individuals for special services. He came upon Saul, upon David, and upon all the prophets. But not until Pentecost did He come into the world to dwell among men—in the Body of Christ.

Let me ask you the all-important question, my unsaved friend: Will you let the Holy Spirit of God work a miracle of grace in your heart, giving you new life in Christ Jesus? If you will, then He will be your Comforter and Teacher and Guide. He will take the things of Christ, and show them unto you. He will never leave you or forsake you. And by His power you can walk in fellowship with the eternal Son of God. This is the gift of everlasting life. And it is yours for the taking!

~ end of chapter 7 ~

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