

FEAST OF WEEKS

Well, I wasn't planning on doing this, but since I talked about the Feast of Passover last week, it seems like a good time to go through the feasts of Israel and see how they apply to our lives today. Let me start with a few thoughts on the Passover before we get into the second feast, which is called the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. First, I need to make a small correction concerning what I said last week about the Day of First Fruits. Whenever you see a list of the sub-feasts of Passover, it usually looks like the following:

Passover

- ~ Day of Passover
- ~ Unleavened Bread
- ~ Day of First Fruits

I said last week that First Fruits is the day *after* the last day of Unleavened Bread. However, that's not correct. The Feast of First Fruits actually takes place *during* the seven days of Unleavened Bread.

FEAST NAME	Hebrew Month	Present Month	Date	Scriptures
PASSOVER (Leviticus 23:4-14, Exodus 12:1))				
Passover	ABIB	March/April	14	Exodus 12:1-14, Leviticus 23:5
Unleavened Bread	ABIB	March/April	15-21	Ex. 12:15-20, Lev. 23:6-8
Waving Firstfruits	SIVAN	March/April	16	Lev. 23:11
PENTECOST (Acts 2, Leviticus 23:15-23)				
Pentecost				
Fifty Days	SIVAN	May/June		Leviticus 23:15
Firstfruit	SIVAN	May/June		Leviticus 23:16
TABERNACLES (Leviticus 23:24-44)				
Tabernacles				
Trumpets	TISHRI	Sept/Oct	1st	Leviticus 23:24-25
Day of Atonement	TISHRI	Sept/Oct	10th	Leviticus 23:26-33
Booths	TISHRI	Sept/Oct	15th	Leviticus 23:34-44

In the chart, you can see exactly where the Day of First Fruits falls. It comes two days after Passover, during the days of Unleavened Bread. The thing that's incredible is that every certain number of years in the Hebrew calendar, instead of observing First Fruits on the 16th day of the month, it's observed on the 17th day. An extra Sabbath is inserted back to back to the regular Sabbath (the 16th), and First Fruits is celebrated on the *second* Sabbath instead of the first one. That second Sabbath is called a "High Sabbath".

It just so happens that the year Jesus was crucified was one of these *special* years that had a two Sabbaths. Accordingly, the Jews celebrated the Feast of First Fruits on the 17th of Abib that year—the very day Jesus arose from the dead—instead of the usual 16th of Abib. So, Jesus was *literally* slain on the Day of Passover (when multitudes of lambs were killed in Israel, which was the Old Testament type and shadow); and He was *literally* raised on the Day of First Fruits that year (when people offered the first sheave to the Lord, which again, was the Old Testament type and shadow).

There is another important aspect of Passover that I would like to look at before moving on to Pentecost. The spiritual fulfillment of Passover is usually spoken of in the framework of being “saved”. The children of Israel coming out of Egypt represents the fact that through the blood of God’s true Lamb, the Lord Jesus, His wrath passes over us, just as the blood of those literal lambs on the doorposts caused the wrath of God to pass natural Israel long ago. The significance of Passover—that is, its real meaning—is always presented in the context of how it relates to Jesus first, then how it relates to us.

This is good and right. But there is *more* to consider about the meaning of Passover. There is the reality of what it meant to the land and people of Egypt. The purpose of the judgment was two-fold that evening. The first purpose was to bring the children out of the bondage of the power of Egypt. But the second purpose was no less important. The judgement which came upon Egypt that first Passover evening was a judgment upon the “gods” of Egypt.

*And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; **and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.***

Exodus 12:11-12

Even though the firstborn of the people and animals died that night, God was really executing His judgment against the gods of Egypt. The people suffered *because* of the sentence executed against those gods. Many Christians don’t understand that the real battle has *always been* between the true God, and the gods of the nations. God created man to worship Him. The crux of man’s rebellion and the first issue with God is not the sins of murder and rape and drug addiction and alcoholism and gambling. God’s issue with mankind is idolatry—following other gods. That’s why the *first* of the Ten Commandment is: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me”. Consider the following passages regarding God’s judgment on Egypt:

*But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. **And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.***

Exodus 7:4-5

*Thus saith the LORD, In this **thou shalt know that I am the LORD**: behold, I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.*

Exodus 7:17

*And he said, To morrow. And he said, Be it according to thy word: **that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God.***

Exodus 8:10

*And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there; **to the end thou mayest know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth.***

Exodus 8:22

*And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that **the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD.** And they did so.*

Exodus 14:4

*And **the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD,** when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.*

Exodus 14:18

The issue was God's name. The issue was God's honor. The issue was showing the Egyptians who the real "Lord" is because the Egyptians had *priests* for all their various gods, and those priests had real, *supernatural* power. That's why they could duplicate the first few plagues that Moses called down on the land. It was the supernatural power these priests could demonstrate that convinced the people of Egypt that the gods they represented were real. The *purpose* of the various judgements which God sent upon Egypt—including the final one on Passover, and the eventual annihilation of Pharaoh and his army—is stated very clearly. It was that the Egyptians would realize that the God of heaven is the *true* God. Later, after Israel had been delivered, the Lord says something very interesting. He says the gods of Egypt, and of all the nations, are actually demon spirits.

*And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD. And they shall **no more offer their sacrifices unto devils,** after whom they have gone a whoring. This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.*

Leviticus 17:6-7

*They made him jealous with their **foreign gods** and angered him with their **detestable idols.** They **sacrificed to demons,** which are not God-- gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers*

Deuteronomy 32:16-17

Before the children of Israel became God's peculiar treasure, they were just like the nations; they were just like the Egyptians. They worshiped and served various gods. But after they became the people of God, He tried to *enlighten* them regarding the reality of evil spirits. So whenever you read the Old Testament and you come across the term *idol* or *god*, don't think carved images or stone pillars. Think evil spirits because that's what the images represented. Whenever you read how Israel was involved in idolatry or whoredom, or when you read where God says they committed abominations in the land, don't visualize them burning incense to images—even though that's what they did. Understand the *spiritual reality* of the situation. They were involving themselves with demons. They were worshiping evil spirits.

Therefore, what the Feast of Passover reveals to us, perhaps more than anything else, is God's *hatred* for these demon-gods. It's important that we understand God hates Satan and his demons. He hates them so much, He has chosen to never forgive them or redeem them. He hates them so much, He created a Lake of Fire in which they will be *tormented* day and night, forever (*Matt. 25:41*). He hates them so much, He's going to cast anyone who is *like them* into eternal torment as well.

Passover also shows us that while God hates Satan and his angels, He *loves* mankind and desires to redeem as much of the human race as possible. But there is a problem. Satan, through his many evil spirits, has firmly *entwined himself* in the very nature of mankind—in our desires, our thoughts, our motives, and our personalities. He has entwined himself in the people God desires to redeem. If God decided to cast Satan into his angels into their final doom now, billions of people would automatically have to go with them into that torment because they are just like them. Actually the situation goes much deeper than people simply being like the demons. People are actually *manifesting* the evil nature and desires of these demons through their own thoughts, desires and actions, all the time.

The battle has *always* been between the true God and the demon-gods which are entwined in mankind, which mankind constantly chooses to follow and serve. The battle is always been to *separate* the evil spirits from the personalities of the people God wants to redeem. You would think that after being told the truth about the gods of the nations—that they are nothing but evil spirits—the Israelites would have gotten the message and stayed away from those spirits, but they didn't. The whole history of Israel is one of turning to these demon-gods. Unfortunately, not much has changed. While Egypt represents the *world* (and Pharaoh the *prince* of this world) in the Old Testament, Babylon the Great is the New Testament counterpart of Egypt.

*And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become **the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.** For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.** . . . Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.*

Revelation 18:1-4 & 8

Please notice what is said of Babylon—it has become “*the habitation of devils*” and “*the hold of every foul spirit*” and “*a cage of every unclean and hateful bird*”. As it was in the days of Egypt, so shall it be in the days of Babylon. Just as the Egyptians worshiped and served all kind of gods, so today, those who are part of Babylon serve all kinds of gods. Just as the gods of Egypt were in fact demons, so Babylon is filled with devils, foul spirits and unclean birds. And just as God's judgment came upon the demons of Egypt, so His judgements will come upon the demons of Babylon.

Just as Israel refused to stay uninvolved with demons after they became the people of God, so many *Christians* refuse to stay uninvolved with demons *after* they have become the people of God. The blindness of Israel, regarding the fact that they were involving themselves with evil spirits when they got involved with the idolatry of the nations, is the same kind of blindness that comes over New Testament *Christians* when they involve themselves with evil spirits as a result of being involved with the idolatry of the unsaved world around them.

Many of God's people involve themselves in the *idolatry* of sports and entertainment; in the *idolatry* of seeking after honor and fame; in the *idolatry* of seeking after material wealth and living in luxury; in the *idolatry* of family, and everything else Egypt's children seek after. When they do this, they are involving themselves with evil spirits, just like Israel of old, but they are blind to this reality.

The Lord said the gods of the nations are *devils*. In many parts of the world people *still* worship images of stone or wood. Hindus, Buddhists, and other religions still have literal idols that they feed, burn incense to, and bow down to, just as in the days of the Old Testament. The Roman Catholics bow before stone and wood images of Mary. The Eastern Orthodox church bows before icons. Idolatry like what went on in the Old Testament is still happening all over this planet.

Of course, Protestant Christianity does not engage in this kind of *crude* idolatry. Ours is a much more sophisticated version. But it's idolatry all the same. Just because the idols of Protestant Christians are no longer stone images or wood carvings, that doesn't make them *any less* of an idol or a false god. Whether the idolatry is practiced with images and statues, or whether it's in the form of a lusting after material possessions or things immaterial—like vain-glory—it's still idolatry; and all idolatry, whether visible or invisible, involves false gods, which are demon spirits.

Unfortunately, the people who involve themselves in modern forms of idolatry are not the only ones who are blind. Many ministers who claim to have spiritual insight regarding these matters have no more understanding of what's going on than the people who are involved in the idolatry. These ministers, who claim to see, say those who are involved in idolatry are just walking in "the flesh". They are *blind* to the fact that those who practice idolatry are involving themselves with evil spirits. As a result, they teach God's people that it's just the flesh that seeks after money; that it's the flesh that seeks after power; that it's the flesh that seeks after vain-glory; that it's the flesh that craves after sports and entertainment, etc.

When preachers or Bible teachers stand behind their podiums and sanctimoniously proclaim that the *unsaved* are serving the Devil, or that the unsaved are involved with evil spirits, Christians nod their heads and say, Amen! But when *Christians* practice the *same kind* of idolatry as the Egyptians, suddenly everything changes! Suddenly this kind of idolatry is different and has nothing to do with the Devil or spirits. Suddenly it's all just the "flesh".

It is disheartening sometimes to realize how many people are willing to let their favorite preacher or Bible teacher call God a liar. God said *anyone* who serves an idol; *anyone* who is involved in any kind of idolatry—whether it's the old fashioned, visible kind, or the more modern, invisible kind—is involved with evil spirits. Yet multitudes of preachers and Bible teachers ignore what God has said, and instead claim just the opposite—that idolatry is just a problem of the flesh.

Next, I want to recap what I said last week about the spiritual meaning of the days of unleavened bread. Just as every Israelite had to avoid leaven for seven days, so every person who comes to Jesus for salvation (ie: eats the Passover Lamb) must forever put away his *former way of life*, which is full of worldliness and sin. The lesson of *leaven* is clear: it doesn't require much to leaven a whole ball of dough. In like manner, just a little *sin* in a person's life, if not dealt with, keeps working and working until the whole personality has been poisoned. That's why God commands us to put away sin—and that's why the people who say you can't stop sinning as long as you are human are not only liars who deny God's word, they are destroyers of the brethren. They are responsible for the destruction of any child of God who, as a result of listening to this lie, allows a *little sin* to eventually consume them and destroy them.

We also looked at the meaning of the Feast of First Fruits last week. The concept of the First Fruits is an important one in the economy of God. The idea of the first fruits is that it's the first part of a larger amount to come. The setting apart of a first fruits sanctifies the *rest* of the harvest. Jesus Christ is the greatest of all first fruits. It is because God accepts Him that the rest of the body of Christ is accepted. One day, the Lord's entire body will be completely harvested.

Also, as I said last week, when we eat the Passover Lamb, a first fruits of *us* is made alive spiritually and resurrected to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. That part is our *spirits*. A first fruits of our whole person is reaped in anticipation of the full harvest, which is the rest of the person, soul and body.

This brings us to the Feast of Weeks. This was the second feast in Israel's religious year. It was called the Feast of Weeks because it came 7 weeks and a day after the Day of First Fruits:

From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD.

Leviticus 23:15-17 NIV

The word "Pentecost" is related to the number fifty. It comes from the fact that this observance was celebrated on the fiftieth day, counting from the day of First Fruits. The celebration of Pentecost occurs during our month of May. There are some very interesting things about this feast to be understood. First of all, Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai around this same time (Ex. 18:1). As a matter of fact, it is believed by most scholars that it was on this very day that the Law was given to Israel. To this day, the feast of Pentecost is associated in Jewish thinking with the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.

Israel actually became God's holy nation at that time. That is when both God and the people entered into a *covenant* with each other. It was the covenant at Mt. Sinai that made Israel a nation. So in a very real way, the nation of Israel was "born" on the original Day of Pentecost. On the *first* Pentecost, God writes His Law on tablets of stone and brings the Old Testament nation of Israel into being. Then, 4000 years later, on another Day of Pentecost, the fulfillment of what the original Pentecost typified comes to pass—God writes His Law on the hearts of men and brings the New Testament Church into being.

*And when the day of Pentecost was **fully come**, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 2:1-4

In the Old Testament, the convocation of Pentecost signaled the *conclusion* of the wheat harvest. Remember, a *first fruit sheave* of that harvest was offered before the Lord fifty days prior, on the Day of First Fruits. Now, the rest of that harvest is brought in. Jesus was the sheaf offering, and the Jews who believed were the rest of that harvest.

While the Feast of Weeks, or the Day of Pentecost was the fulness of the first fruits of the Barley harvest, it was also called the Feasts of First Fruits because it was *double* celebration. In one sense, this feast was a celebration of the harvest of Barley and the Wheat that had been completed. On the other hand, these harvests were themselves a first fruits of yet *another* harvest that was to come at *the end* of Israel's growing season. That final harvest was the *fruit* harvest.

You see, Israel had two main harvests a year—one at the beginning of summer and one at the end of summer. The spring harvest was a grain harvest (Barley, Wheat and so forth). The fall harvest, which was the greatest harvest, was a *fruit* harvest (dates, various fruit trees and grapes). As it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual. When the Day of Pentecost was fully come—meaning, when the fulfillment of the type and shadow under the Laws came—not only the Jews (Barley) were harvested into the kingdom, but that harvest went on to include the Gentiles (wheat) as well.

That harvest included not only salvation, but also, the Baptism of the Spirit (which is really what Pentecost represents). Pentecost went throughout all Israel and overflowed to the nations. The Old Testament Feast of Weeks was a single day. The New Testament fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks is a *spiritual season*—and that season lasted for many centuries. The season of Pentecost lasted from the Day of Pentecost in 33AD. till the 1950's. As a season of first fruits, it will have its fulness or completion in the Feast of Tabernacles, the last feast of this age.

The fact that there are *two* festivals called first fruits reveals that there is to be *two* harvests or two fullnesses. The first harvest has been in progress since the Day of Pentecost, and it includes both Jew and Gentile. This harvest relates to salvation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The second harvest is the harvest of FRUIT. It's not a harvest of multitudes more humans at the end of this age. It's the *maturing* of the crop that has *already been* brought into the kingdom and filled with God's Spirit. This is why it's so critical to know the difference between being filled with the Spirit and coming forth in the life of God. The former has to do with the Feast of Pentecost; the latter has to do with the Feast of Tabernacles.

The first two feasts of Israel—Passover and Pentecost—have to do with bringing us into the kingdom of God initially, and then filling us with the Holy Spirit. The last feast of Israel—Tabernacles—has to do with bringing us forth in resurrection LIFE. Being anointed is not the same as coming forth in life.

During Pentecost, two large loaves of bread were baked and given to the High Priest. He would wave them before the Lord and then burn them with fire as an offering. The loaves were made of fine flour, which represents the unblemished nature of the Lord Jesus. The fact that they were burned speaks of the fires of God's judgment which fell on Christ, and which falls on every true saint as he presses forward in the Lord.

John the Baptist said: "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*" (Matt. 3:11). Many of the events of our life, although we may not appreciate them at the time, are for the purpose of purifying bringing us from a state of raw material that needs much sifting and purification, into a state where we have become bread that is fit for the use of God and man.

One interesting thing about these two large loaves is that they were to be baked *with* leaven. In fact, this is the only time leaven can be offered to the Lord. In every other feast, the Lord commanded unleavened bread as offerings. What do these two large loaves of bread symbolize; and why were they allowed to contain leaven after the stern injunction just 50 days prior to not touch any leaven?

Some Bible teachers hold that the leaven in the two wave loaves of Pentecost portrays the fact that at the time of our baptism with the Holy Spirit, we still have a sinful nature. This leaven is not exactly the same kind of leaven that was to be avoided during the days of unleavened bread. That leaven represents the putting away of all sinful *deeds*. It was not possible for the children of Israel, nor is it possible for us, to *remove* the sinful nature that we are all born with. That leaven remains with us, even when we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

There is a very important lesson to be learned in the difference between these two kinds of leavens. We are *not* responsible to dispose of the *internal* leaven that is our sin nature because we don't have the power to do that. What we *are* responsible to do, because we do have the power to do it, is stop or *restrain* that internal leaven from openly manifesting itself in our deeds and actions. We can't remove the internal leaven, but we can certainly restrain that internal leaven by exercising our wills against it. That's called putting the deeds of the body to death: "*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do **mortify the deeds** of the body, ye shall live*" (Rom. 8:13).

Understanding this is very important because there are ministers out there who are actually saying the exercise of the will to *restrain* that internal leaven is not what Christianity is all about. They are teaching that *restraining* the desires of the sin nature is the big error of the church system. The church system teaches people to obey all kinds of external rules and regulations which *restrain* the sin nature. But restraint is not the answer. The answer is to have God *remove* those desires. Thus, these ministers place the exercise of our wills against sin (ie: *restraint*) over and against the work of the Holy Spirit, which will eventually take away those sinful desires.

The problem with this error, like most other errors, is that it's only a half truth. Yes, the permanent answer for our sin problem is to have God remove the desires of that nature from us. However, the fact is, God requires *our co-operation* in the process of removing those desires. We must do our part; and our part is to exercise our wills 100% against that sin. If you think God will take away the desires of your sinful nature just because you ask Him to or you *believe* He will—or as one minister recently put it: "*if you become fully persuaded in your hearts*" that He will—you are living in a religious fantasy world.

The Holy Spirit can only take away our sinful desires as we *fully* exercise and exert our wills against those desires. As we do this, we are doing our part to “crucify” those desires. This frees the Holy Spirit to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. He takes those desires away and replaces them with *new creation* desires. But if you don’t *fully engage* your will against sin, you are doomed to remain a prisoner of, and a slave to, that sin until you go into the grave.

You see, it’s one thing to say *restraining* sin with our wills is not the permanent solution to the problem, but it is a necessary step in that overall process. However, it’s quite another thing to mock the whole idea of restraining sin with our will, and then teach people that doing so is not only unprofitable, it’s actually part of the *error* of the church system. That’s false teaching! Quite frankly, I feel sorry for those who listen to these kinds of ministers because they are definitely being deceived by them. Supposedly, these ministers are teaching them how to overcome the sin nature. But in reality, they are leading them to a well that has no water because they are telling them they don’t have to do the very thing God is telling them they *must* do, if they want to really get free.

God is telling His people to exert our wills 100% against the desires that we know are wrong. He says that if we will so this, He will do the rest. But these *morons* are telling us that we must *not* exert our wills 100% against the desires that we know are wrong because doing so will only lead us into will-worship and self righteousness. Instead, we must just believe that God will take those desires away in His own good time. Just keep believing. To anyone who has accepted that lie, I say WAKE UP! You are being deceived! You keep listening to these kinds of minister and you will NEVER overcome your sinful nature.

Another interpretation of the leaven in the Pentecostal loaves is that it represents the *good* leaven of the Kingdom. The leaven signifies the Substance of Christ Himself that would be born in the disciples as the Holy Spirit comes upon them. There is certainly Scriptural justification for this view as well, according to what Jesus said in (*Matt. 13:33*): “*Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened*”. This leaven is the good leaven of the kingdom. We do not attain perfection as soon as we are saved. First, Christ (the good leaven) is born in us. Slowly, over time, just as a little natural leaven works through the whole lump of dough, so *Christ* influences our deeds, words, imaginations, and motives.

Both of these interpretations of leaven are correct. There was still sin (bad leaven) in the one hundred twenty on whom the Spirit fell in the book of Acts. But the coming of the Spirit birthed Christ (good leaven) in them, which worked in them to bring them to perfection. Since Pentecost is the fourth of the seven feasts of Israel; and since these festivals speak of our journey from initial salvation to perfection (which is the goal of Christianity); you could say that after being baptized with the Spirit, we can either go *backward* and allow the leaven of sin to expand in us, or we go *forward* and allow the leaven of Christ to expand in us. If we devote our lives to the leaven of sin, we will reap corruption. If we devote our lives to the leaven of Christ, we will reap eternal life.

The two loaves themselves, I believe, speaks firstly of the union of the Head and the body. “*For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.*” (*1. Cor. 10:17*). Secondly, I believe it speaks of the bringing together of the Jew and the Gentile; that in Christ, He might “*make in Himself of twain one new man.*” (*Eph. 2:15*). The grain had been harvested, and now instead of a sheaf we have two loaves—a body of believers

It's interesting to follow the number "two" through the Scripture. There is Adam and Eve, two and yet one—Eve being the complement, the likeness, the counterpart of Adam. Then there is the sun and moon—the latter being the glory of the former, having no light of its own. There were two rows of bread on the Table of Shewbread in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, which represented the Twelve Tribes of Israel, or the ekklesia. There were two tables of stone in the Ark of the Covenant. The Law is written first in stone, then in the heart and mind of the New Testament believer. Then there were the two silver trumpets that were used for the calling of the assembly, for the journeying of the camps, and for war. Finally, there are the two witness of Revelation. Indeed, the number two in Scripture means witness.

The importance of Pentecost is due to the fact that this feast represents the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. In Passover, the Person and work of the Jesus, the Lamb of God, is highlighted. In Tabernacles, the Person and work of the Father is highlighted. But in Pentecost, it's the Holy Spirit that's highlighted. During the *spiritual season* of Pentecost, the works and manifestations of the Holy Spirit are to be dominant in all areas of the Christian Church. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings spiritual unity among believers. The Holy Spirit is the one who gives gifts and ministries to men according to His own will. The Holy Spirit is not just a good feeling or a manifestation of supernatural power. He is God in our midst, and He is Holy.

The Feast of Pentecost speaks of power—supernatural power. When the disciples were filled with the Spirit, they went forth from the place they were hiding and spoke boldly about Jesus out in the open, in front of thousands of people. And they spoke in many different languages supernaturally. During their ministries, they performed miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the purposes of receiving the Baptism—to be *empowered* for ministry. Through the gifts of the Spirit that we are given, we are able to minister to both the saved and the unsaved.

Unfortunately, the Pentecostal experience has been maligned over the years because of some of the excesses that have been seen in Pentecostal churches. Though this is unfortunate, it cannot change the truth about the gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Because one of the purposes of Pentecost is to empower us for ministry, there are various "gifts" of the Spirit that are provided for the body of Christ, which enable them to carry out the kinds of ministry God ordained for them.

*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But **the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, **dividing to every man severally as he will.***

I. Corinthians 12:4-11

Pentecost has largely to do with receiving the *anointing* of God. The gifts of the Spirit are given to individual believers by God as *He* pleases. They are not given on the basis of our own performance or righteousness, but according to God's good pleasure. Therefore, we should never allow ourselves to become proud because of the gift we have been given. As the apostle Paul said: "...*who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*" (I. Cor. 4:7 NIV). Also, we see that the gifts are given to profit others (*profit withal*).

In Pentecost, the anointing comes upon us *externally* and then manifests itself through us as "ministry" to others. Much of our lives revolves around ministry. There's a lot of *excitement* in Pentecost. Lot's of meetings and gatherings; lot's of fellowship and activity. Everyone has something to share; everyone has something to give. People are getting healed physically. It's a mostly *positive* feast. God is moving through many different people to bless and heal the entire body.

Pentecost also represents a further step of sanctification. It's not just about external power. Most of us do not realize the critical role the Holy Spirit plays in our lives. His task is to *purify* the Church. He is more than a comforter, more than a good feeling. He is sent by the Father to lead us (*Rom. 8:14*) and teach us (*John 14:26*) and guide us into all truth (*John 16:13*)—not only doctrinal truth but *transforming* truth. His purpose is to change us and transform us into the image of Jesus through the process of sanctification (*II. Thess. 2:13; I. Pet. 1:2*). Sanctification is accomplished as we allow the Spirit to convict us of the sins we currently practice, so that He can then deliver us from that sin. This takes serious obedience on our part for the Spirit never forces His will on anyone. As we obey the Spirit, He cleanses us and frees us from the bondage of sin, not only legally, but in experience as well.

However, there is one thing that most Christians fail to understand about Pentecost, and that is, it's a *spiritual season*. All spiritual seasons change and give way to the coming season. That next spiritual season is the Feast of Trumpets, and it has *already* begun. In fact, we are well past the season of Trumpets and have entered season of the Atonement. What this means is that Pentecost is no longer the focus of God. As a result, it should no longer be the focus of the Church.

I believe the season of Pentecost started coming to an end in the 1950's. Ever since then, the enemy has been given the authority and the power to *corrupt* that experience by giving people counterfeit gifts and ministries and displays of power. This is why, as the years roll by, you'll find that there are less and less people who can tell the difference between *genuine* Pentecostal power and the Satanic counterfeit. Today, those who talk the most about the "anointing" seem to have the least amount of understanding about it. In their ignorance, they are attributing the works of Satan to God. If people understood the *character* of the Holy Spirit, they would know that many of today's manifestations have nothing to do with Him.

*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, **the Comforter** will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will **reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement:** Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet*

*many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, **the Spirit of truth**, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall **not speak of himself**; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. **He shall glorify me**: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

John 16:7-15

Here, the Lord tells the disciples He's going away. But He promises to send them a comforter, which is the Holy Spirit. The first thing we notice is that Jesus repeatedly refers to the Spirit as "he" and "him". The Holy Spirit is not some kind of impersonal *force* like electricity, that can be tapped into by anyone who discovers how to apply the proper spiritual laws—including unbelievers. The Holy Spirit is not merely a good influence, or a good feeling, or an irresistible, impersonal "something" like wind or energy. He is a Person and He possesses all the elements of personality. He is not an "it". He is the God of our Salvation. Moreover, His character is the character of the Father and the Son. Therefore, any manifestation of Him will be in keeping with that character—that's why He's called the **Holy Spirit**.

Jesus revealed several different aspects of the Holy Spirit in this passage. First, He called Him the "Comforter". A little earlier He said: "*I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter...*" (Jn. 14:16-17a). This reveals that the Spirit is like Jesus, not only in His ministry of comfort, but also in manner. The Spirit's character is the *same* as the character of Jesus. Did Jesus use His power to pick His disciples up and throw them 30 feet across the room; or throw them over chairs? Did the anointing that rested upon Jesus ever come on the disciples like a sumo-wrestler and thrash them like rag-dolls? If that was not the way of the Master, it cannot be the way of His Spirit, for the Spirit *represents* Him.

The only people who experienced these kinds of manifestations in the Scripture were those who were demon-possessed. The demons in them would react to the presence of Jesus and would manifest all kinds of *violent* behavior, just like the behavior being manifested in so-called revivals today. Any normal person who walked into one of these meetings would not see a comforter being manifested; they would see a *bully* being manifested. Quite frankly, if these blessings are an example of being comforted by the Holy Spirit, you would do well to skip that part of His ministry!

When Jesus said: "...the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matt. 11:12), He wasn't talking about *fleshly* violence or demonic manifestations. He was talking about a spiritual attitude that is in harmony with God's character as a man of war. He was talking about having a *determination* when it comes to overcoming evil and walking in obedience. The violence referred to by Jesus has nothing to do with the ever-growing violence being dished out by the False Prophet in these revivals.

First it was Benny Hinn slaying everyone in the Spirit with the wave of his hand. Next came Rodney Howard-Brown with his new wine, getting everyone drunk and laughing in the Spirit. Christian gatherings started looking like a bar room brawl, with everyone having a rip-roaring good time after a few drinks. Next it was shaking, convulsions, trances, quivering, and paralysis—and the meetings started to look like what goes on in Hindu temples. Next it was animal farm at the Toronto Vineyard, with people acting like chickens, dogs and snakes. Then came the warrior anointing, with people chopping the air or swinging

imaginary swords. Then it was Todd Bentley, kicking people with his biker boots and punching people in the face. Now we have John Crowder getting high on imaginary weed and passing imaginary joints around in his meeting. He calls it “Toking the Ghost”—and people think *this* is the Holy Spirit?

Jesus said the Spirit will not speak of Himself, but will glorify the Son. He will not sex or drugs or drunkenness of glorify or power—especially raw power that's destructive. Yet this is exactly what's being glorified in today's revival churches. Ministers may *talk* about Jesus but the “fire” they're spreading has nothing to do with the *character* of Jesus. It's all about feeling the power on your body. The people who go to these revivals go for one purpose—to get zapped.

<i>The Three Deaths</i>		
Death To The World	Death To Sin (The Sin Nature)	Death To Self (Self Life)
The Feast Of Passover	The Feast Of Pentecost	The Feast Of Tabernacles
Baptism With Water	Baptism With The Holy Spirit	Baptism With Fire (Judgment)
Jesus Christ	The Holy Spirit	God The Father
Egypt Deliverance from the bondage of slavery	Sinai The receiving of the Law to define sin	Jordan River Where the people had to be circumcised again
Outer Court	Holy Place	Holy Of Holies

God's three different phases of His plan of salvation can be seen in the above chart. The Feast of Pentecost, or the Pentecostal experience, related to the Holy Place in the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. Once the season of Pentecost passed, the enemy was granted permission to defile that whole Pentecostal realm of experience through counterfeit gifts, ministries and displays of power. What you are seeing in this false revival that's sweeping the planet is the fulfillment of the Daniel's prophesy concerning the abomination of desolation. The Holy Place realm, or the Pentecostal experience is being *defiled*.

I've gone through the many implications of this in other studies, so I won't go through it tonight. But I just want you to understand what is happening because many people who see all the false power do not realize that there was a *real* Pentecostal experience which for many years the people of God have been enjoying. Unfortunately, that season is over.