

FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Part Three

Tonight we are going to look at the final part of the Feast of Tabernacles—which is the *Feast of Booths*. Because of all the things the feast represents—the completion of the harvest, spiritual unity, a time of rejoicing and great joy, etc.—I believe this part of Tabernacles will not be fulfilled spiritually until the actual return of the Lord. However, since the first two parts of Tabernacles are fulfilled in this age, we can say with all confidence that we are walking in the Feast of Tabernacles right now.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The **fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD**. On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein. . .Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, **when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land**, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. **Ye shall dwell in booths seven days**; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: **That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.***

Leviticus 23:33-36 & 39-43

*Thou shalt observe **the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine**: And **thou shalt rejoice** in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. **Seven days** shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose: **because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.***

Deuteronomy 16:13-15

Last week we talked about the Day of Atonement; how it was a very sober time in Israel. So after the ten days of introspection in the beginning of the seventh month—and especially repentance, fasting, and humbling themselves on the Day of Atonement as they waited in anticipation to see if the sins from the previous year would be forgiven by God—the *fifteenth* day of the month arrives.

Now the mood is just the opposite as it was the first ten days of the month. Now it is time to rejoice with thanksgiving before the Lord, for all the good things He has done for the people. For seven days, the people were commanded to dwell in “booths” made of branches of certain trees. They were to spend those seven days rejoicing before the Lord for all His goodness. They were to rejoice as they remembered their *past* history—how God had provided for them supernaturally in the wilderness after coming out of Egypt. And they were also to rejoice as they remembered their *recent* history—how He had blessed them in all their “increase” and all the “works of their hands” during the previous year.

The main idea behind the Feast of Booths is that of *rest*. At this time of the year, the people entered a rest from all the natural and spiritual burdens they had been carrying the whole year. There was rest from the burden of the sins that had been committed that year. There was rest from the hard, physical labor that was required to plant and harvest the crops that would sustain the nation until the next planting season. This was a time of completion and rest. It was a time to relax and enjoy the fruits of their labor. It was also a time to reflect upon the goodness of God. I don't think it's too hard to see the spiritual application of all this in the lives of God's Israel when Jesus returns.

It will be a time of *spiritual rest* for those of us who have paid the price God is requiring. All the burdens we have been carrying will come to an end. The burden of sin—which not only includes the guilt and penalty of sin, but the power of sin and the very presence of sin—will be gone. The intense spiritual labor, which is so necessary to produce the “fruit of the Spirit” in a person's life, will come to an end because the *harvest* will be complete. The burden of the physical body, with all its limitations and frailties and diseases, will be lifted, as we receive our new, immortal bodies. The burden of loneliness will be lifted, as we are fully united in resurrection life with Jesus and the other victorious saints. The burden of being misunderstood by all those around us will be lifted, as God vindicates us before the eyes of all creation.

There will be seven days (*the Kingdom age*) of rejoicing and thanksgiving, as we remember all the ways God supernaturally protected us, provided for us, guided us, and patiently worked with us, day in and day out, to bring us forth in the *life* we will be enjoying at that time. Can you imagine what it will be like to have all the burdens you are now carrying, removed? Can you imagine what it will be like to gain the “prize” you have been striving for all these years? Can you imagine what it will be like to look back on all the horrible things you went through your whole life, from a place of total and complete victory?

Just as in the natural, the Feast of Booths was the greatest and most joyous feast of Israel's year; so it will be with us. The spiritual fulfillment of this feast will be the most joyous of all the *experiences* we have had up to that point.

Of course, if you are the average Christian, you have been taught that everything the Feast of Booths *represents* will automatically be given to *all* believers, based on their profession of faith in Christ. The doctrine that's taught both implicitly and explicitly in all churches is that we will get everything Booths represents because of what *Jesus* did, not because of anything *we* do or fail to do. As a result, the average Christian can't understand *why* people would strive so hard to overcome sin—especially since they have been told that as long as we are alive in this flesh, we will never completely overcome sin. They can't understand why we live such separated lives, or why we talk about remaining free from evil spirits, or why do all the crazy things we do. All they know is that in the end, we're *all* going to get the inheritance spoken of in the Bible; so what's the point of all this struggle and strange behavior?

Well, one answer to this kind of thinking has to do with the concept of the “harvest”. At the time of Booths, the *last* harvest, which was the harvest of fruits and nuts, had been completed. In fact, one of the reasons for this feast was to rejoice because all harvests of the nation had been brought in. Remember what we just read: “...because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, **therefore** thou shalt surely rejoice”. Israel was to rejoice seven days because the Lord had blessed their harvests.

*Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, **the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit** of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*

James 5:7

Today’s view of the term “harvest” does not come from the Scripture. It comes from the church’s long obsession with evangelism. Whenever Christians read the above passage, they automatically think the “precious fruit” that’s being referred to are masses of sinners getting saved in some last-days revival. But the fruit in this passage has nothing to do with a fictional end-time revival. It’s a reference to the *fruit of righteousness* that God is waiting to see established in *His* people. The fact is, the idea of harvest, according to the Scripture, has much more to do with God’s children than it does the Devil’s children.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

John 15:1-4

*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: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, **and gather his wheat into the garner**; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*

Matthew 3:11-12

The Father is looking for a the *image* of his Son in people. He’s looking for a harvest of fruit—the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus said the Father is the “husbandmen”. It is *the Father* who decides which branches have had long enough to bear fruit and must now be cut off; and which ones should be given more time to bear fruit. It is *the Father* who decides which branches have had their chance to “abide in” Jesus, but who have refused to do so and must now be removed from the Son; and which branches need to be given more time to learn how to abide in Him. The Father isn’t watching sinners and expecting fruit from them. He’s watching believers, and He is expecting fruit from them. Regarding the believer (ie: branch) who produces no fruit, it’s stated very clearly that the Father will cut that person *out* of His Son forever.

John the Baptist, when announcing the coming of Israel's Messiah, said that when He comes, He will "gather His wheat into the garner". Jesus wants to gather His fruit (ie: wheat); and the Father wants to gather His fruit (from those who are in Christ). Everything is about harvesting fruit from God's people.

*Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did **yield fruit** that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, **some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.***

Mark 4:3-8

Harvest time is not about a great, last-days revival sweeping the world. Harvest time is report-card-time. Harvest time is when the truth is revealed. Harvest time is when we find out how much FRUIT the SEED that was sown in our hearts by Jesus, has produced. For some, that seed will produce 30-fold fruit. For others, it will produce 60-fold. For a few, it will produce 100-fold. For still others, it will produce no fruit because of the various negative conditions of the soil.

What does 30, 60, or 100-fold increase symbolize? Well, later Jesus says the "seed" is the "word". The word of God is sown in the hearts of men in order to produce the character of God in them. The character of God is the fruit of the Spirit and the image of Christ. In other words, the seed will produce varying *degrees* of Christ-likeness in a person's life. We can manifest different percentages of the nature of God. This concept is reflected in Paul's desire to see believers "*filled with all the fulness of God*" (Eph. 3:19) and grow to "*the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*" (Eph. 4:13)—both of which would be one-hundred fold fruit.

We do not automatically produce one-hundred fold fruit just because we have been forgiven and justified by the blood of Christ. There are requirements for the *spiritual* growth of fruit, just as there are requirements for the *natural* growth of fruit—and the more fully we meet those requirements, the more fruit we will bear. One of those requirements to bear fruit is that we *abide* in Christ, the Vine. The amount of fruit that we end up producing will be in direct proportion to how well we fulfil this particular requirement. The fact is, we can stop producing fruit at any time because of our own choices.

*The sower soweth the word. And these are they **by the way side**, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown **on stony ground**; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And*

these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

Mark 4:14-19

The other three types of ground Jesus spoke about didn't produce any lasting fruit. The first type of ground was *wayside* ground. The seed that fell on this type of person was actually destroyed by Satan. It didn't remain in the person's heart long enough to even sprout.

The second type of ground was *stony* ground. Notice that these kinds of people "*receive the word with gladness*" when they hear it. They *believe* the gospel. In other words, they "believe in Jesus". Yet something is wrong with their ground—it's not broken up. Their hearts are still hard (full of stones) and unrepentant. The result is that before the seed has a chance to produce any fruit, they are offended because of persecution or tribulation and they fall away.

The third kind of ground is *thorny* ground. Jesus said these people, "*when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to perfection*". Please notice that He didn't say they produced absolutely no fruit at all. He said they brought no fruit forth "*to perfection*". In other words, fruit *did* begin to grow. They had some fruit for a while; but it was destroyed by the choking action of the thorns—that is, the cares, riches and pleasures of this life.

Stony ground and thorny ground people are believers. They have heard the gospel message and they have received it. This is especially true when it comes to thorny ground people. They *started* to produce fruit, but it was killed by the riches and cares of this life. Unsaved people will *never* even begin to produce fruit. They may acquire morality and religious principles; they may join a church and do religious works; but they will never begin to produce fruit. Only a person who has received the seed of Christ can begin to produce fruit. Only a genuine believer can fall away from the faith.

So at the time of the harvest; when we enter the spiritual fulfillment of the Feast of Booths, not every Christian will have the same *amount* of fruit to present before the Lord at Jerusalem—and the amount of fruit we bear will determine the kinds of rewards we receive. Some believers won't have any fruit to present and for them, the Feast of Booths will be a *very unpleasant* time indeed.

Another thing to consider is the idea of God dwelling with His people. One of the purposes of the celebration of Booths was to remind the Israelites how God protected and sustained them when they came out of Egypt and wandered through the desert for 40 years. It was to remind them of the true nature of their calling. During those 40 years, they dwelt in tents or temporary shelters. They were truly strangers and pilgrims on this earth; and they were to remain pilgrims, even after entering the Land of Promise.

Like them, we are in a kind of wilderness experience. We have been delivered from Egypt (ie: the world) through the blood of Christ but we have not yet taken full possession of our promised land—which is *perfection*. When we enter the spiritual fulfillment of the Feast of Booths, we will look back on our wilderness journey and remember how God protected us, provided for us, and led us through our own personal wilderness experiences.

Here I must digress for a minute. Unfortunately, there has been some confusion with regards to the spiritual meaning of Booths because some of those who received insight about the meaning of these feasts, have failed to recognize that Booths is *not* for this age. Consequently, they have tried to see a spiritual fulfillment of this feast at the end of the Church Age. But whenever you move Booths back into this age you immediately run into problems and create doctrinal errors. One of the problems I have come across in this area has to do with what it means to enter the Promised Land. As I said, the Promised Land of the believer is the sanctification (ie: perfection) of the *whole* person—spirit, soul and body.

The Church System has always taught that Israel entering the Promised Land represents us dying and “going to heaven”. It has always said that crossing over Jordan represents physical death. There are even Christian hymns and spirituals that talk about “crossing over Jordan”—meaning, dying and going to heaven.

Fifty years ago, God began to open the spiritual understanding of certain men, regarding what it really means to cross over Jordan. Unfortunately, some of these men perverted that revelation without realizing it because they didn't apply this understanding of body, soul and spirit to what God was showing them. The result was, once they saw that crossing over Jordan represented going on to perfection, and that it was possible to go on to perfection in *this* life, they started preaching the possibility of *reaching immortality* before the literal, physical return of the Lord.

What these people failed to realize was that the Scripture is very clear in this regard. It's not God's will, nor is it His plan, that we reach physical immortality before Jesus returns.

*For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, **shall not precede those who have fallen asleep.***

I. Thessalonians 4:14-15 NAS

*And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that **they should not be made perfect apart from us.***

Hebrews 11:39-40 NKJ

Paul said we who are alive and remain to the coming of the Lord will not “precede” those who have died. The writer of Hebrews said the saints who have died will not be “made perfect” apart from us. Both these passages are talking about the resurrection of the body. This is the “promise” the writer of Hebrews is referring to, which none of the saints have yet received. It is God's will that we all receive this promise together, when Jesus returns. We—that is, our bodies—“shall be changed” from mortal to immortality in the “twinkling of an eye” (*I. Cor. 15:50*), at the sound of the “last trump”, when the Lord returns. Therefore, we will not, and we cannot, cross over Jordan and conquer our Promised Land *physically* at this time. But we can cross over Jordan and conquer that land in the realm of the *soul*. Our spirits have already crossed over. Our bodies will cross over when Jesus returns. But the soul must cross over today. It's the soul, the human personality, that must be cleansed and made perfect before the return of Jesus.

The Scriptural teaching regarding the redemption of the body is much different than the traditional teaching of the Religious System. The resurrection of the body held a central place in Paul's writings. It's a crucial issue for Christians to understand, not only because the resurrection is the central hope of the Christian faith, but also because the Bible teaches that one of the purposes of the resurrection of the body is to *reward us* according to our faithfulness (or lack thereof) to God. In other words, a large part of our reward has to do with *what kind* of body we receive when the Lord returns.

Unfortunately, this whole area of understanding is ignored (and even denied) by the Church System because that System tells people salvation as a “package deal” in which we will all get the same kind of resurrected body when we get to heaven. Thus, our focus is shifted from *what kind of body* we will receive—which will be *based* on how we live—to where we will *go* when we die.

Most Christians don't even think about what kind of body they will receive. They just automatically assume we will all get the *same kind* of bodies, based on our profession of faith. But this is Christian mythology. Paul spent an entire chapter explaining the different kinds of bodily resurrection we will experience (*I. Cor. 15*). All Christians are not going to receive the same kind of resurrected body. There will be different degrees of glory and honor granted in accordance to the varying degrees of faithfulness to God. This is why some of the saints who were imprisoned for the sake of the Kingdom, refused to be set free—they wanted to obtain a “better” resurrection (*Heb. 11:25*).

The resurrection of the body has to do with God coming to *dwell* in the body. The reason we still die physically is simply because there is no eternal life in our bodies. There is eternal life in our spirits because the Spirit of God *dwells* in our spirits. The Scripture says: “...*he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*” (*I. Cor. 6:17*). The eternal life that dwells in our spirits, operates on our souls, in order to cleanse them and infuse them with eternal life. But the physical body remains dead. When the Lord returns, God will take up residence in our physical bodies and we shall be changed from mortal to immortality.

During the Feast of Booths, when the people built their little shelters and lived in them for seven days, this represented them dwelling with God. They spent most of their time in those booths praising the Lord and thinking about His goodness. They would read the Law and meditate on their history with Him and their relationship with Him. They would dwell in the presence of the Lord for seven days.

This is a picture of what the New Testament refers to as “abiding in Christ”. We are to abide in Christ, or dwell in God, all the time. But the booth also represented God dwelling in us. The booth was a temporary shelter or tabernacle. The whole idea behind the term “tabernacle” is that of God dwelling with man: “*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people...*” (*Rev. 21:3*). When the Lord returns, we will receive our new bodies, and those bodies will be filled with the Spirit of God in accordance with the level of obedience we have given Him.

*In the last day, that **great day of the feast**, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.***

John 7:37-38

The concept of *life* runs throughout the Feast of Booths. It was during the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus stood up in the Temple and said anyone who believes on Him, out of their *inmost parts* would flow rivers of *living water*. During this feast, gold pitchers of water were brought from the pool of Siloam to the temple. The Priest would pour the water over the altar to signify Israel's gratitude for the rain. Then the priest would recite Isaiah 12:1-3.

And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Many scholars believe that it was during this ritual that Jesus uttered His words about coming to Him and having rivers of living water proceed from our inmost parts. Jesus was saying: "Come to me; learn of me; abide in me; for I am the fulfillment of the ritual you are now witnessing. If you will come to me and learn to abide in me, you will have living water (eternal life) to share with those around you".

This is one of the major differences between the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. In Pentecost, we are anointed with the *rain* of the Spirit. That's one of the reasons Pentecostals talk so much about spiritual "rain". They have experienced the *anointing* of the Holy Spirit that's poured out on people like rain. Indeed, the very term "anoint" has to do with something being poured over an individual. When the Levitical priests were anointed, or when a king of Israel was anointed, oil was poured over their head. To be anointed is to have something come *upon* you.

Having the rain of the Spirit poured out upon us is *not* the same as having rivers of living water well up from our inmost beings because "living waters" represent *eternal life*. Being anointed and having life are two separate things. Many people are anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach or teach. But not everyone who preaches and teaches walks in life. Not everyone who is anointed has life to share with others. The anointing has to do with the *gifts* of the Spirit; life has to do with the *fruits* of the Spirit.

The apostle Paul knew there was a *difference* between being anointed by God and having the life of God. He mentions this distinction in several places. One such place is in First Corinthians 12, where he speaks of spiritual gifts and ministries, explaining their proper function in the assemblies. He says: "But one and the same Spirit works all these things [the gifts], distributing to each one individually just as He wills" (*I. Cor. 12:11 NAS*). God gives His spiritual gifts to people as He wills. You do not have to be a mature Christian to receive a gift. Receiving a gift is not dependant on our condition. God gives gifts to people according to His own desires and design. After saying all this, he then says: "*But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way*" (*I. Cor. 12:31*).

Here, Paul makes an astounding statement. After describing all the various gifts and their functions, He says: "...yet I show you a more excellent way". There is something *beyond* being anointed; something *beyond* having a gift or a ministry. The anointing is not the goal. The goal is the more excellent way. He then goes on to explain what this more excellent way is.

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and **have not charity**, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and **have not charity**, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and **have not charity**, it profiteth me nothing.*

I. Corinthians 12:31 - 13:3

The more excellent way is charity (or love), which is the nature and character of God. So there is a difference between having the gifts of the Spirit and having the fruit of the Spirit. Gifts and ministries (ie: the anointing) are manifestations of God's *power*. Fruit is a manifestation of God's *life*. The gifts of the Spirit can be given to anyone at any time. But the fruit of the Spirit is quite another matter. Fruit is God's character and His life. Fruit can never be poured out on an individual like the anointing, nor can it be ascribed to our account. It cannot cover us like imputed righteousness. Producing spiritual fruit takes time, just like producing *natural* fruit takes time. It is a *process* that requires growth and change. It only comes as a result of suffering, self-denial, testing, and judgment.

Paul goes on to explain that if believers do not move past the realm of gifts and anointing, if they do not begin to move in the more excellent way, then the anointing they have received will have been wasted. The anointing is a gift, given freely to whoever God chooses, any time He chooses. But life must be produced. Life is the consequence of labor. We must co-labor with the Spirit as He conforms us to the image of Jesus. It is one thing to be anointed; it is quite another thing to have life.

Paul distinguishes between the anointing—which includes all the various manifestations, offices and operations of the Spirit—and the life of God. Yet, he is not setting them in opposition, implying that we should seek either one or the other. He is simply telling us that to have the one *without* the other will not profit us in the end. Indeed, the one is given to produce the other. What this means is, it's possible to have all kinds of spiritual gifts, or move in a powerful anointing, but not have "living waters" coming out from your inmost being. It's possible to be a preacher and not have life. It is possible to be an apostle or an elder and not have life. We can be an evangelist, a prophet, a miracle-worker, or a healer and not have it.

Christians need to realize that the anointing is *not* the nature of God. Spiritual power is *not* the nature of God. Gifts and ministries are *not* the nature of God—and having them does *not* mean we have been transformed into the image of Jesus Christ. Being anointed does not equal being changed—and it's only as we are changed that rivers of living water are produced in us. We can be relatively faithful to a ministry or an anointing God has given us, yet in the end, *miss* the more excellent way.

The anointing comes on us from outside. It is the manifestation of someone else, not us. We are just a vessel. The vessel upon whom the anointing (gift) comes does not necessarily have to be walking in actual righteousness (bearing fruit) in order to be anointed because it is not the vessel who is being manifested. It is the Holy Spirit. But the indwelling life of God is another matter. Life is not someone else acting through us regardless of our spiritual condition. Life has to come from within us. It has to be our actions, springing from our new nature. Life is the *result* of a righteous moral condition.

If we have allowed God to make us holy in experience we will have life to manifest. If we have not, there will be no living water inside of us to manifest. There may be gifts, there may be anointing, there may be ministry, but there won't be *life*. The anointing is not life. The anointing is to help produce life.

The difference between life (fruit) and the anointing (gifts) is like the difference between the baubles we hang on a Christmas Tree and the life that made the tree grow. God can hang any kind of gift or ministry (even the most spectacular) on any kind of tree He wants to, any time He chooses. The tree doesn't have much to say in the matter. All it has to do is learn how to exercise the gift because the "*manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal...[and] all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will*" (I. Cor. 12:7,11).

This is why our anointing, no matter how outstanding it may be, should never puff us up. The very best gifts can be hung on an *ugly* tree. The issue is not what kind of gift or anointing we have been given, but what kind of *tree* are we? This is what Paul was trying to get across to the Corinthians. He was saying: "Listen people, you have all kinds of marvelous gifts working in the assembly; you are moving under a powerful anointing; but you yourselves are ugly because you are moving in the nature of the old man not the nature of the new man. Stop focusing on gifts and power and start concentrating on spiritual growth; for if you don't allow God to make you new creations, the anointing He has poured out on you will have been wasted. The Spirit was given in order to *change you* and bring you forth in God's image".

Most of those in Pentecost have no idea there is a difference between the anointing and life—and they couldn't recognize that difference, even if you tried to explain it to them. Neither do they realize that the anointing is just a temporary provision. They don't realize that one day, God is going to remove all the baubles and trinkets (gifts and ministries) that have decorated us and made us attractive. Then it will be revealed to all creation just *what kind of trees* we have allowed Him to make us.

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail: whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. **But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.**

I. Corinthians 13:8-10

Prophecies, tongues, knowledge, apostles, prophets, and all other *gifts* are going to fail; they are going to cease; they are going to vanish. They are not the perfect thing. Nor are they the more excellent way. They are only temporary provisions—tools God has provided in order to help us become new creations. One of these days the Father is going to have a crop of sons who have been fully conformed to His image and likeness—and when that day comes, He will put away the tools!

Many Christians spend their whole lives running after the anointing, after ministers who have (or claim to have) the anointing. Multitudes more are willing to travel thousands of miles to experience the power of God for a few hours. Yet you couldn't pay these people to enter the process of transformation that produces rivers of life in them. Can you imagine what it will be like for people like this, when God puts away the tools of the various gifts and ministries? These people are going to be devastated.

Pentecostal people love to *feel* the anointing. Having a powerful anointing is even better. It gives them pleasure and satisfaction, not only because they enjoy helping people, but also because they enjoy the attention they get as a result. Everyone wants to be around the guy who moves in a powerful anointing. Everywhere he goes, he's treated like a king. He's respected by everyone, and even worshiped. People want to hear him talk. They want to hear his opinions. He always has opportunity to minister.

In stark contrast, the process which produces rivers of living water is very un-enjoyable. In order to have that living water, we have to follow Jesus down a bloody trail of emotional pain, hardship, self-denial, persecution, and rejection. Like the Master, we are required to make ourselves of no reputation. We have to learn to keep our mouths shut, only saying what God wants said. We have to learn to be still, going only where the Spirit bids us to go. We have to learn to minister according to God's will and His timing, not according to our own desire to do good, or our own assessment of the needs of those we meet.

The level of Christ-likeness that is produced in us; how much of God will dwell in our new bodies; and whether or not we have living water to share with the nations; these are just a few of the things people who walk around with a "*we're-all-going-to-get-the-same-rewards*" attitude need to consider.

It's interesting to realize that many of the things God commanded Israel to do, could only be done in the Land of Promise. Yet they were given all these ordinances while they were still wandering through the wilderness. There wasn't a farm in sight when God gave them all the commandments about the three feasts and all the ceremonies regarding the agricultural year. Because Israel was destined to serve God in the Land of Promise, many of the lessons He was trying to teach them in the wilderness, were things which had to do with when they would be living in the Land.

So it is with us. Our pilgrimage through this world is meant to mature us spiritually and train us in the ways of the Spirit. Just as much of what God taught Israel in the desert was really meant for the day when they lived in the land, so it is with us. Many of the things we are learning today will be used tomorrow, during the *next* age. So we should be learning these lessons well.

Unfortunately, because of all the false doctrines God's people have been taught regarding salvation, many of them are *not* learning the lessons God is trying to teach them today. The result is, they will be sorely disappointed. Those who don't learn the lessons the Spirit wants to teach them today, will not be fit to rule with the Lord tomorrow—regardless of what their pastor or Bible teacher promises them.

There is one particular aspect of Tabernacles that I want to look at in closing—it's this is its eventual *universal* nature. Under the first covenant, the feasts of Israel were literal feasts, and they were strictly for the Jewish people (or the sojourner who would be circumcised and follow the Laws of God). Under the New Covenant, Gentile believers are *not* required to keep the literal feasts but they are required to walk in the *spiritual reality* of what those feasts represent. However, in the Millennium, the *literal* Feast of Tabernacles will be celebrated by all nations in some way.

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do

*not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The LORD will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to **celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles**.*

Zechariah 14:16-19 NIV

I *don't* believe God is going to re-instate animal sacrifices and the whole Levitical order of worship. However, I do believe there will be some kind of literal celebration every year that centers around the original Feast of Tabernacles. I believe this will be very natural because one of the things that is celebrated during this feast is the harvest of the fields, and I think that after the Lord returns, the nations of the earth will return to an agricultural lifestyle.

*And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over **the nations**: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall **they be broken to shivers**: even as I received of my Father.*

Revelation 2:26-27

Jesus said that in the kingdom age, the nations will be “broken to shivers”. Obviously, this is a reference to *breaking the rebellion* of the nations so that they will submit to Jesus and the saints willingly. But I also think it means more than that. I believe the Lord will break them to shivers in a literal sense as well. They will be broken down into small farming villages. There won't be any more big cities with concrete sky scrapers; no more giant shopping malls; no more 8-lane highways full of cars and trucks. I believe the nations will return to an agricultural life—which is a simple, productive and fulfilling way to live.

In any case, the nations which survive the tribulation the wrath of God *will* be required to go up to the literal city of Jerusalem once a year to worship the King and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Already we can see the Spirit of God moving upon some people's hearts to do this. Every year, thousands of *Christians*, from many different nations, converge on the city of Jerusalem during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, in order to celebrate this feast and show the Jewish people the love of Christ. I have been to three or four of these celebrations over the years.

It's very interesting because even though most of the people who attend these celebrations believe all kinds of wrong doctrines—like the Pre-tribulation rapture and the building of the Third Temple—and even though they have no idea what the *real* Feast of Tabernacles is all about, you can still feel the Spirit of God when you are with them because it's not their doctrines God is blessing; it's their heart attitude and their willingness to come to Jerusalem He is blessing. When you witness one of these celebrations, it's easy to imagine what it will be like when the real thing happens. In case any of you might be interested in seeing what it's like, I've posted a video of one of these celebrations on my web site. It's from 1987. I think it was the first one we attended. I had to divide it into 4 parts because of the size of the files. It's only those who have high speed connections. Check it out if you can.