

Place: Lurgan Baptist: 5:2:2008

Readings: Lev 23:15-21 Acts 2:1-4

FOCUS ON THE FEASTS

5. THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

Names were very significant in the ancient Jewish world. They usually reflected the character, history or meaning of that to which they were attached. Now this feast is,

1. VARIOUSLY NAMED:

It is called the “*feast of harvest*,” (Ex 23:16) because it marked the beginning of the summer wheat harvest just as Israel’s earlier Feast of Firstfruits marked the beginning of the spring barley harvest. It is called “*The Feast of Weeks*,” because seven weeks were counted from the Feast of Firstfruits until they came to observe this feast. (Ex 34:22) It was also said that on this day that God revealed Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai and delivered to him the Ten Commandments, and although there is no Biblical support for this many in the past spent the whole night of Shabuot in studying the law. (Ex 19:3) In later rabbinical writings it was known as the fiftieth day, and of course that is what Pentecost means. 1.

2. SIGNIFICANTLY TIMED:

For we see here in God’s prophetic calendar, the chronological and orderly sequence of events. The type

and the anti-type are not left to our imagination or speculation. Luke penned the divinely-inspired meaning when he wrote “*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come.*” (Acts 2:1) the word “*fully*,” telling us that the type and prophecy in (Lev Ch 23) was wonderfully fulfilled. You see, it was exactly fifty days after the resurrection of Christ that the Holy Spirit came. The Passover had to precede the Firstfruits and the Firstfruits must come before Pentecost. So Christ had to die before He could rise again and the Holy Spirit could not come until Christ was glorified. Do you recall the words ? “*The Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.*” (Jn 7:39) These words imply that the Holy Spirit would be given after the glorification of Christ. My do you see how accurate is Bible Typology ? Now this feast is not only 1, 2,

3. WONDERFULLY FULFILLED:

For this feast speaks of the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. You see, the Son honoured the Passover by dying. The Father honoured the Feast of Firstfruits by raising Christ from the dead. The Holy Spirit honoured the Feast of Weeks by coming on the disciples of Christ as they waited in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. So the divine order in these feasts is worth noting.

1. The Passover: The Death of Christ.

2. The Firstfruits: The Resurrection of Christ

3. The Feast of Weeks: The Descent of the Holy Spirit:

Now I am stressing this order for one purpose. To let you

see that Pentecost was predetermined epoch in the mind of God. My the Holy Spirit could not have come on any other day than the day that was appointed. *Don't get the idea that the ten days of praying by the disciples in the Upper Room caused the day of Pentecost.* This day was divinely appointed by God. Now this does away with the notion held in some circles today that you have to wait to experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that you must go through stages to Pentecost. That you have to tarry, wait, ask for the baptism of the Spirit. Now it is true that the disciples did tarry in obedience to Christ's command " *but tarry ye*," but don't stop there " *tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem.*" So if anyone tells us that they are tarrying for the baptism of the Spirit we have every right to ask, " *is it at Jerusalem ?*" More importantly we have to ask, " *is it necessary ?*" That all depends, depends on what ?

Depends on whether or not the tarrying of the disciples caused the descent or baptism of the Holy Spirit. And the answer is no. My the Holy Spirit did not come on the day of Pentecost because the disciples tarried, prayed, or met certain spiritual requirements. *The Holy Spirit came on this day because that's when God planned for Him to come.* A man approached a preacher some time ago and said, " *we had a powerful meeting the other night, the Holy Spirit came down.*" The preacher said, " *you are 3,000 miles out and 2,000 years too late.*" Now we need to grasp this, because there is much confusion here. Some times our hymns that speak of the Holy Spirit, are requests for His advent, ignoring the fact that He has already come. My we may ask for a deeper realisation of His power

and presence, but that is quite different from asking for something that has already been given. Now if we put (Acts Ch 2) and (Lev Ch 23) together we will notice what happened at Pentecost. At Pentecost,

(1) THE COMFORTER WAS FURNISHED

The Holy Spirit was given. He came. Is this not how the Lord Jesus describes the Holy Spirit ? " *And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you for ever.*" (Jn 14:16) the Holy Spirit came. Now this does not mean that the Spirit of God had not ministered on earth before Pentecost. The Old Testament has much to say about the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is mentioned eighty eight times in the Old Testament. He is mentioned in twenty two of the thirty nine Old Testament books. The Holy Spirit worked in *Creation:* " *The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" (Gen 1:2) The Spirit of God empowered men of God to serve Him.

The Holy Spirit came upon *different men of God,* judges, kings and prophets to accomplish His purposes. The Holy Spirit worked in the life of *Christ.* When our Lord preached in Nazareth He said, " *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.*" (Lk 4:18) So the Holy Spirit had ministered in creation, in the history of the Jewish nation and in the life of Christ. But now the Holy Spirit was going to come in a new and special way. In our Lord's Upper Room ministry He reveals to us,

(a) WHO THE HOLY SPIRIT IS:

Look if you will at (Jn 14:15-18) Notice here that the Lord Jesus affirmed that the Holy Spirit is

- **PERSONAL:**

The Holy Spirit is not an “*it*,” but a “*He*.” (Jn 14:16-17 16:7-15) Here Christ refers to the Holy Spirit as “*He*,” and “*Him*.” The Holy Spirit is not an influence or emanation from God, some kind of power or energy flowing from Him, the Holy Spirit is a person. My it is an insult to refer to any person as an “*it*.” Suppose you are at the shopping centre with your little boy. Someone approaches you and says “*Is that your son ?*” “*Yes, that’s my boy,*” and you reply “*Well, what a pretty little it you have there.*” Would you not be offended ? The Holy Spirit is not an “*it*,” but a person. My don’t grieve the Holy Spirit by denying His personality. He is not something but someone. It is true, “*He came sweet influence to impart,*” but He Himself is not an influence but a person. Christ also affirmed that the Holy Spirit also performs a ministry

- **PARALLEL:**

To His. (Jn 14:16) In Greek there are two words for “*other*.” The first means allos another of the same kind, the second is heteros which means another of a different kind. When Christ speaks of “*another Comforter,*” He uses the word “*allos,*” another of the same kind. In other words, the Spirit is to be thought of as another like Jesus

Christ. What the Lord Jesus did for His disciples by His personal presence with them, the Holy Spirit would do for believers by His personal presence within them. But did you notice that Christ declared that the Holy Spirit is,

- **PERMANENT:**

Look if you will (Jn 14:16-17) You see, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit could come upon individuals but His presence could be withdrawn. King Saul had an experience like this. The Spirit did come upon him, but when Saul disobeyed and displeased the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him. (1 Sam 16:14) In the same way, when David confessed his sin of marital infidelity he pleaded with the Lord, “*take not thy Holy Spirit from me.*” (Ps 51:11) Now you and I need never pray that prayer in this age. Today the Spirit of God lives in the hearts of believers and He stays there for ever. When you receive Christ as your Saviour, the Holy Spirit comes into your heart to live there as part of your life. (Rom 8:9) He can never be withdrawn. Money can be withdrawn from your bank account, but the Holy Spirit can never be withdrawn from your heart. Christ says, “*And I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.*” (14:16)

You may ask, “*Why didn’t the Holy Spirit come sooner ?*” Because God has His calendar. John says, “*the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*” (Jn 7:37) You see, God has His timetable. First the Passover, the Lamb was slain, then the Feast of

Firstfruits, the Lamb was raised and now fifty days later the glorified Lamb of God sends the Holy Spirit and He came right on schedule. But think not only of (a)

(b) WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES:

For the Holy Spirit was given to enable the church to carry out its work. What does the Holy Spirit do ?

- ***The Ministry of the Spirit is ILLUMINATION:***

The Lord Jesus said, “ *But when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth.* ” (Jn 16:13) Some time ago in the U.S.A. called a person for the position of “ *resident theologian.* ” Do you know something? The Bible declares that every believer has a resident theologian, the Holy Spirit dwelling within. You see, spiritual truth is unveiled to us daily as we saturate our minds with the Scriptures allowing the Spirit of God to teach us.

- ***The Ministry of the Spirit is CONSOLATION:***

The word that the Lord Jesus used in John’s gospel to refer to the Spirit, Paraclete is from two Greek words which mean “ *One called alongside to help.* ” When you feel courage in the midst of a threatening situation, when you feel hope in a time of despair, when you feel power in the midst of a challenge, that’s the ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life.

- ***The ministry of the Spirit is EVANGELISATION:***

For when the Risen Lord departed, He left an awesome assignment for the church. You see, His work of reconciliation is to continue through us. (2 Cor 5:18-19) How can it be done ? That is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus said, “ *But 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 Judaea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* ” (Acts 1:8) This is the mission that God has left the church to do, and we cannot do it without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. So at Pentecost (1)

(2) THE CHURCH WAS FORMED

You see, at Bethlehem the Father was preparing a body for His Son to work through. “ *Wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not but a body hast Thou prepared me.* ” (Heb 10:5) But you see, at Pentecost the Father was preparing a body for His Spirit to work through. Paul says, “ *And He is the head of the body the church.* ” (Col 1:18) Now did you notice from (Lev Ch 23) that they were to offer “ *a new meat or meal offering unto the Lord.* ” Pentecost brought into the world something new, the church. My ... the church is not found in the Old Testament, except in a typical or illustrative fashion and ever here we should exercise caution, lest we find the church where God never put it or never meant it to be. You see, the Old Testament primarily relates to the nation while the New primarily relates to the church.

H.K. Downie says “ *At the commencement of the New*

Testament the church was,

* A Pearl to be Purchased: (Matt 13:45) That was accomplished when Christ died.

* A Building to be Commenced: (Matt 16:18) That building commenced on the day of Pentecost.

* A Secret to be Revealed: (Eph 3:5) This task was given to Paul.

Now there are several things here that are revealed in type about the church. Notice,

(a) ITS CONSTITUTION:

Look if you will (Lev 23:17) Do you recall that at the feast of firstfruits individual stalks of grain loosely bound together were used to symbolize the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But at the feast of Pentecost those individual stalks of grain were replaced by a loaf to symbolize what would happen when the day of Pentecost was fully come. On that day 120 believers loosely bonded together by the bonds of Christ ascended the stairs to “ *that upper room,* ” 120 went up but only one body of believers came down. Individuals went up, but a church came down. Did you notice that two loaves were used in the Old Testament ritual ? You see, while there was only one baptism of the Spirit it took on two different occasions. In (Acts Ch 2) believing Jews were baptized into the body of Christ at Pentecost and in (Acts Ch 10) believing Gentiles were baptized into the body of Christ. You see, these believers were constituted a spiritual body by the baptism of the Spirit and from then on in, by this baptism everyone upon believing on Christ is incorporated into the body.

Now this baptism of the Spirit is never mentioned in the Old Testament. It is something new and limited to this present age of the church. Do you recall what the Risen Lord said in (Acts Ch 1:4-5) ? Now this word “ *baptize,* ” has a two fold meaning. There is a literal meaning and a figurative meaning. Now many words in our language have both a literal and figurative meaning. We say that “ *someone going through the waters.* ” Well, that could mean he is wading out in a river, or that he is going through times of difficulty. You see, there is a literal and a figurative meaning. Now literally the word “ *baptize,* ” means “ *to submerge, to immerse.* ” But figuratively it means “ *to be identified with.* ” When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost He identified the believers with their glorified head the Lord Jesus, and formed the body which is the church.

Now this truth is amplified for us in (1 Cor 12:13) That word “ *by,* ” can be translated “ *in or with,* ” but whatever we take it Paul is stressing that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a baptism into the body of Christ. My from God’s viewpoint we were baptized in the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, from our viewpoint we were baptized the moment we believed. My the real purpose of the Baptism in the Spirit is not that Christians may be energized for witness and service, not that we may achieve ecstatic utterance or experience, the real purpose of the Baptism of the Spirit is to bring us into the body of Christ. (a)

(b) ITS COMPOSITION:

Look if you will at (23:17) Now we might well ask the question “ *Why two loaves ?* ” Well, the number of the loaves represents the two component parts of the church, namely believing Jews and believing Gentiles. You see, before Pentecost, the Jews enjoyed special and peculiar privileges as the people of God and the Gentiles occupied a lower place of blessing, but now “ *the middle wall of partition is broken down,* ” (Eph 2:14) “ *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free* ” (1 Cor 12:13 Gal 3:28)

(c) ITS COMMISSION:

For this new meal offering consisted of two loaves and the number two in Scripture speaks of testimony. The Lord Jesus said, “ *It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.* ” (Jn 8:17) “ *In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.* ” This was a principle of the law of Moses which was afterwards carried into the church and other matters. (Deut 19:15 Matt 18:16 2 Cor 13:1) My this new thing, the church was intended to be a reliable witness for God in this world, that is why the Lord Jesus said in (Acts 1:8) before even the church was formed, “ *Ye shall be witnesses unto me.* ” Is this not why the seven churches in Asia are likened unto candlesticks ? The Risen Lord desires each assembly to guide men off the rocks that would wreck their souls and cause them to perish. Is this not our commission ? He wants us to guide souls that are tossed by sin and Satan into the heavenly harbor. This is why the Holy Spirit has been given to us,

to enable us, to empower us, to energize us.

(d) ITS CONDITION:

For here is something most interesting. We read concerning the two loaves, “ *they shall be baked with leaven.* ” (23:17) Now do you recall we discovered that the Jews were not to bring their offerings with leaven, indeed we noticed that leaven is a picture of sin, and yet these two loaves were to be baked with leaven. Why ? Because these loaves picture the church and there is sin in the church. Not until the church arrives in heaven will it be sinless. You see, though the Early Church was so fresh and beautiful it soon became evident that there was leaven in it. There was leaven in the Early Church at Jerusalem as seen in the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1) What about the leaven in Corinth ? For there in the Corinthians assembly incest had raised its head. What about Galatia ? As some tried to bring in false doctrine. What about Philippi ? Where there was an undercurrent of division. My why are we so surprised when we find leaven in the churches today ?

The church is not perfect. God recognizes this fact and encourages us to purify our lives (2 Cor 7:1) Some professing Christians stay away from the church because its not perfect. You have heard the old saying, “ *Well I am not going to church, there are hypocrites in the church.* ” The answer of course is, that there is room for one more. No one is perfect. The church is made up of imperfect people on their way to glory. There is still leaven in the church. How then can God accept a sinful people ? On the

basis of the sacrifice of Christ, illustrated in the many sacrifices named in (Lev Ch 23:18-19) But there is another thing that is revealed in type about the church here. Notice,

(e) ITS CONTRIBUTION:

Look if you will at (Deut 16:10) Do you see what God is saying ? “ *Celebrate this feast by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you.* ” Does that not remind you of Paul’s words ? “ *On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.* ”

(1 Cor 16:2) How are we to give to God ?

Systematically: “ *the first day,* ” some believers must be disobeying this command because they are never out to give. Personally: “ *every one of you.* ”

Proportionally: “ *as God hath prospered him.* ” Joyfully: (Deut 16:11) My do we really give as the Lord has prospered us ? At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came and the church was formed. (1) (2) Finally, at Pentecost,

(3) THE CHRISTIANS WERE FILLED:

Look if you will at (Acts 2:4) Now its here that some find difficulty. You see in (1:5) the Risen Lord says “ *Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,* ” yet in (Ch 2) we have no mention of this baptism but rather we have the statement “ *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* ” Because of this many tell us that the baptism and the filling are synonymous, one and the same thing. We have people who say “ *Its make no difference what you*

call it as long as you have the experience. ” I don’t believe that for a moment. If you go to your Doctor do you want him to use the right terminology ? If there is something wrong with your heart, do you want him talking about your lungs ? My Bible terminology is important and we do not have the right to change the words that God has written. Now in (Acts 1:5) Christ said, “ *Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.* ” I think Peter clears up the matter for us. Look at (10:44) Now in (Acts Ch 11) he is recounting what happened in the household at Cornelius and he says in (11:15-17). Look at (10:44) Now in (Acts Ch 11) he is recounting what happened in the household at Cornelius and he says in (11:15-17) You see, Peter identifies Pentecost and the experience in Cornelius household with the fulfillment of the Savior’s promise of the baptism of the Spirit.

Now the Baptism of the Spirit is a Single Experience: The Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost and baptized the Jews into the body of Christ, and later baptized the Gentiles into the body of Christ. And when you were saved the same Spirit baptized you into the body of Christ. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a Single Experience, but the Filling of the Holy Spirit is a Repeated Experience. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a Corporate Experience, it puts me into the body of Christ, but the Filling of the Holy Spirit is a Personal Experience, giving me power for living. You see, at Pentecost (3) Now think of,

(a) THE MEANING OF IT:

What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit ? For Paul

says in (Eph 5:18) “ *Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.* ” I think there is a clue there, is there not ? For while there is a striking difference between drunkenness and the Spirit filled life, there is also a similarity and the similarity is in the matter of control. As a drunk is controlled by the liquor he has consumed, so a Christian who is filled with the Holy Spirit is controlled by that Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. Now how do you know if you are filled or controlled by the Spirit ? Well, look with me in closing at these Christians in the Book of Acts, for surely they displayed,

(b) THE MARKS OF IT:

I think its Dr. Stephen Olford who names these marks so well. There was a

- *A Fearlessness to Speak for Christ:*

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“ *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spake the Word of God with boldness.* ” (4:31) There are believers who go around gossiping and castigating their family and church, and their tongues are set on fire of hell, but the apostles had their tongues set on fire of heaven.

- *A Joyfulness to Sing for Christ:*

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“ *And they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,* ” (2:42) Do you remember Paul and Silas ? In the jail, suffering physically yet singing praises to the Lord.

- *A Holiness to Shine for Christ:*

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Peter and John so controlled by the Spirit that even their critics took “ *knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.* ” (4:13)

- *A Willingness to Sacrifice for Christ:*

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“ *As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles feet.* ” (4:34) You see, when you are filled with the Holy Spirit it touches your pocket.

- *A Readiness to Serve for Christ:*

For the apostles said, “ *look ye out among you seven men of honest report full of the Holy Ghost.* ” (6:3) Do you realize that you need to be controlled by the Spirit if you are going to serve effectively ?

- *A Steadfastness to Stand for Christ:*

For Peter filled with the Holy Ghost said, “ *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* ” (4:20)

- *A Yieldedness to Suffer for Christ:*

Stephen being “ *full of the Holy Ghost Kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* ” (7:60) **The Feast of Pentecost.** At Pentecost (1) (2) (3) Are you filled with the Spirit ? Are these marks evident in your life ? “ *Have thine own way Lord ?* ”

