

Seeing the course of the church in

**THE FEASTS
OF ISRAEL**

Sergio Valori

INTRODUCTION

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come..." (Col.2:16-17)

It is the purpose of this study to show that the three major Old Testament feasts of Israel were both symbolic and prophetic of New Testament truth and experience. They represent beacons of light to guide the believer from his initial experience of salvation to the final objectives of God's purpose.

In an hour when darkness is rapidly covering the earth and gross darkness the people, we need to open our hearts to the illuminating power of the prophetic message. Spiritual experience is often followed by shallowness and lack of growth. Movements, once pulsating with the Spirit's power, have been seen to degenerate and lose their vitality. If we are to grow in the knowledge of Christ and make strides toward spiritual maturity, the spirit of wisdom and revelation must become operative in our lives. The eyes of our understanding must become enlightened. (Eph. 1:16-18)

Both individually and corporately, a very common reality is that of stopping short of the mark and of God's full purpose. It is easy to confuse the means with the end, and to mistake the part for the whole. The prize of the high calling can be missed, either by sin and unbelief, or by settling for partial truth and experience.

In our consideration of the Old Testament Feasts of Israel,

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it is our desire to establish that (1) they are *prophetic*, and (2) they are related to *progressive spiritual experience*, i.e., the continual appropriation of the life of Christ.

As a starting point, may the reader consider several New Testament scriptures which represent a foundation or basis for our study. In He.10:1 we find, "*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming...*" (NIV) Our initial text (Col.2:16-17), above, indicates that the *entirety of the law* was a shadow of things to come. Every item of meat or drink and every special day ordained under the law are included in the foreshadowing of spiritual things. Note the plural word *things* is used, speaking to us of a plurality of spiritual realities or experiences. Thus, it is not sufficient for us to summarize the entire law as '*pointing to salvation*' or '*pointing to Jesus.*' I believe those who hunger for more will be anxious to know what God has for us beyond our initial salvation.

Our study will show that the Feasts are indeed symbolic and prophetic, and have a time, manner and avenue of fulfillment. Their fulfillment occurs (1) *in Jesus Christ*, (2) *in the believer's experience* and (3) *in the Church corporately*. Fulfillment in the life of our Lord Jesus was perfect and complete. However, individual believers and the Church as a whole have only partially appropriated the substance and reality of the prophetic message. Thus, for the majority of believers there remains much to be appropriated and for the Church corporate much to be fulfilled. It is my hope that these studies will arouse the believer to "*go on unto perfection*" (He.6:1) and cause every church movement to open their hearts to greater things.

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CHAPTER 1

PASSOVER: THE LAMB AND THE BLOOD

"Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed in the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God." (Exodus 23:14-17)

According to the above text, all the sons of Israel were to hold a feast unto the Lord three times a year. These were:

- (1) the Feast of Unleavened Bread (also called Passover),
- (2) the Feast of Harvest, or Weeks (called Pentecost in the New Testament),
- (3) the Feast of Ingathering, also called Tabernacles.

The Passover Feast, instituted in Exodus 12 in conjunction with the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt, was to be held in the first month of the year. For Israel, it was a NEW BEGINNING. (Ex.12:2) It was a time of *birthing*, when as a nation they were thrust forth from the Egyptian womb of bondage and captivity. After 430 years of servitude, they were released at last onto a pathway of freedom and fulfillment.

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On the tenth day of that month, they were to select a lamb from the flock and keep it until the evening of the fourteenth day for inspection and observation. If the lamb proved to be without defect or blemish, it was then to be killed and its flesh eaten. Its

blood was to be applied to the lintel and the side posts of each doorway in all their houses. This would become the means of their salvation in view of the coming judgment that night. The Lord's promise to them was, "*...when I see the blood I will pass over you.*" (Exodus 12:13)

THE PROPHETIC SYMBOLISM IN EXODUS 12

Exodus chapter 12 abounds with prophetic symbolism which finds fulfillment in those of faith who believe the gospel. Let us list and briefly refer to some of the many terms which foreshadow our salvation through Christ:

v.2 - '*the beginning of months*' - our experience of salvation in Christ brings us new life and a brand new beginning. (2 Co.5:17)

v. 3-5 - '*a lamb...without blemish*' - Jesus was the lamb of God, slain for us to save us from death. (I Pe.1:19)

v.6-7 - '*...kill it...and take of the blood*' - salvation from sin's penalty and power is founded in the death of Christ and the application of His blood to our lives. (Ro.5:8,9)

v.8 - '*...shall eat the flesh...*' - eating the flesh was symbolical of our partaking of His word, our source of life. (Jo.6:53-57)

v.11 - '*...ye shall eat it with loins girded, ...shoes on your feet...and staff in your hand...*' - this is descriptive of their state of preparation for the journey ahead of them. Likewise for the believer, salvation is but a beginning which launches us onto a

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journey of faith leading to a goal or conclusion. Paul likens our spiritual journey to a runner running a race. (He.12:1)

v.11 - '*...it is the Lord's passover.*' - just as judgment and death would 'pass over' the houses where the blood had been

applied, so applying the blood of Jesus to our lives causes the wrath and judgment of God to pass over us. (Ro.5:9)

FULFILLMENT OF PASSOVER

I cannot envision any true believer reading these things without rejoicing in the clear spiritual truths portrayed by this prophetic symbolism. Enlightened eyes can readily see Jesus, the Son of God, without sin or blemish, being selected by the Father to become our sacrificial Lamb. We see Him wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, the application of His blood setting us free from sin's bondage and sparing us from eternal death. How blessed it is to be among the redeemed (Eph.1:7), to be justified (Ro.5:9), to be at peace with God (Col.1:20), and to experience restored fellowship with our Heavenly Father (Eph.2:13).

How very real to the genuinely saved is their deliverance from the world and from a life of sin. Their passover experience is a new birth, a new beginning. The old lifestyle of serving the lusts of the flesh and of the mind is left behind. We live unto Him, seeking His will and purpose for our lives. A new song wells up from deep within, a song extolling the glories of His grace!

At this point, we can clearly see that the Old Testament Passover was prophetic of something experiential in the life of the believer in this age of grace. We should agree also that the church, historically, fulfills the Passover by proclaiming and participating

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in the message of 'salvation'. When Christ and His atoning death are proclaimed and the blood is applied to the lives of those who repent and believe, then the Church is fulfilling the Passover. When justification by faith is preached, and when grace apart from

works is offered the believer, then the Passover is fulfilled. Every genuine evangelistic effort that brings souls to Christ represents a spiritual fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover feast.

A LAUNCHING POINT

Since the contents of Exodus 12:11 are very important to our present consideration, let us examine them more closely: "*And thus shall ye eat it, with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand...*" The Israelites were to be prepared to travel. A long journey lay ahead of them. It would first take them into the wilderness unto a place called Sinai. There, they were to have God's law applied to their lives that they might become a separated people. After a period of training and chastening in the wilderness, they were to reach Canaan to enter into their full inheritance. What a destiny lay before them! They were to become a mighty kingdom, set on high above all other nations. God would ultimately come to dwell among them in fullness, and His glory in their midst would impact the entire civilized world. Thus, the Passover was to be *a means* and not *an end*. Wonderful and powerful as it was, it was but a launching point to a pathway of glorious fulfillment.

So it is with the passover in the life of believers. It represents the *beginning* of the journey. Just as Israel was delivered out of Egypt, so we, in conversion, are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. (Col.1:13) It is a glorious launching into a journey. What is to

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follow in our lives is steady growth and development unto maturity until the entirety of God's purpose is fulfilled. May the Christian not use salvation as an escape from the wrath of God or as a ticket to heaven. And may the Church not erect denominational walls around the truth of justification by faith.

It is of interest to notice that the Passover time in the Old Testament was associated with the *beginning of harvest*, quite possibly the barley harvest. (De.16:9) With respect to harvest, much more would follow - wheat and other grains, figs, pomegranates, olives and grapes. Paralleling this to our appropriation of the life of Christ, we see that our initial salvation represents the beginning and not the end. After salvation, much is to follow. Christ's life is to become '*fully formed*' within us through growth, chastening and the various processes of maturity. (Gal.4:19) May we not settle for good beginnings, but may we place them in proper perspective: ***they are launching points to carry us to the realization of God's full purpose!***

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CHAPTER 2

PASSOVER: THE UNLEAVENED BREAD

"Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first

*day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel...and ye shall observe **the feast of unleavened bread**...In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even ye shall eat unleavened bread until the one and twentieth day of the month at even."* (Exodus 12:15-18)

A second event in the Passover season was the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. It would last from the evening of the 14th day to the evening of the 21st day. Only unleavened bread was to be eaten. Anyone who violated this commandment was punished severely. He would be cut off from the congregation of Israel!

Is the Feast of Unleavened Bread symbolic and prophetic? Is it referred to in the New Testament? We shall find that it is. The number 7 speaks of *completion* or *perfection*, and the unleavened bread speaks to us of *sanctification*. Therefore, this seven-day feast speaks to us prophetically of the **complete sanctification** of the believer.

Sanctification has to do with being '*set apart*'. After the Israelite's deliverance from Egypt (their passover), they were brought to Sinai to receive the law. The basic purpose of the law was to set them apart unto God from all other nations. They were to be a unique and special treasure unto Him. (Ex.19:5) His desire was that He might delight in them and fulfill His purposes through

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them. In Isaiah 43:21, God says, "*This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.*"

Jesus' prayer for His disciples was, "*Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.*" (Jo.17:17) [He also applied this truth

to himself when he said, "*And for their sakes I sanctify myself...*" (Jo.17:19)] A strong word on sanctification also comes to us from 1Th.4:3,4: '*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.*' Following our conversion, we as believers are to be *set apart from* the world, the flesh and man-made religion and also *set apart unto God* and His purposes. Many churches today abound with programs and much activity enjoyed by all, but God's work in the earth can only be done by a separated people.

THE LEAVEN OF RELIGION

The separation from leaven so strongly stipulated by the Lord for this feast was referred to by the Lord Jesus and given a different meaning for us in the church age. One reference is Matthew 16:6: "*Then Jesus said unto them, take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*" At first, the disciples thought He spoke of natural bread, but eventually they understood that He spoke of the *doctrines* of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (v.12)

From a reading of Matthew 23 and other passages, the religion of the Pharisees is seen to consist of much outward show, but little inward spiritual reality. The original revelation of Moses had been perverted and corrupted in a multitude of ways. The 'tradition of the elders' was given preeminence over the

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commandments of God. Religious practice among the Pharisees was permeated with hypocrisy, legalism, form and ceremony, dead works, greed, self-indulgence, and proselyting. Imagine a religion that produced spiritual blindness and hardness of heart! When exposed to the ministry of Jesus, God's very own Son, this religion rejected Him, hated Him, and persecuted Him unto death! Man-

made religion is always characterized by the above-mentioned elements and very much abounds in the earth today. In fact, one of the most vehement persecutors of God's on-going revelation of Himself is always man-made religion.

With Jesus, we strongly admonish, "***BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES!***"

The religion of the Sadducees corresponds to the liberal and modern segment of today's religion, for they believed not in the resurrection, angels, or the power of the supernatural. Subtle streams of erroneous teaching are even today being released into the river of eternal truth by modern theologians. Not only is there a trend away from the supernatural, but we are bombarded with blatant denunciations of such fundamental truths as the virgin birth, the efficacy of the blood of Christ, the divine inspiration of the scripture, and many others.

Some of the greatest deceptions ever perpetrated by the devil are now in the earth in the form of religion. Satan no longer presents himself as some hideous monstrosity, but approaches as an 'angel of light'. He uses the familiar terms 'God', 'Jesus' and 'Spirit' to deceive many. The New Age movement and the cults have become masters at alluring and deceiving through the use of a great mixture of terms and practices.

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One of the most appealing and deceptive movements of all, is the ecumenical plea for religious unity. This would ultimately unite all Christians, Catholics and Jews and pave the way for the emergence of a 'One-World-Religion'. Have you noticed the increased and popular use today of the term '*global*'? Anything that's labeled '*global*' comes across as being the most

far-reaching, most advanced and most sophisticated. But may we not be deceived, for the anti-christ system emerging in the earth will have '*global corporations*', '*global currency* ', '*global government*' and even '*global religion* '. This will become the counterfeit of God's kingdom in the earth and will stand in opposition to it.

Never before has it been so vital that believers test every doctrine, spirit and movement and not become deceived.

***MAY WE PURGE OURSELVES FROM THE
LEAVEN OF RELIGION AND THUS KEEP THE FEAST OF
UNLEAVENED BREAD !***

THE LEAVEN OF SIN

Let us consider the following verse of scripture:
"Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." At first, this may sound to us like an Old Testament scripture, for we rarely find commandments concerning the keeping of feasts in the New Testament. But this verse from 1Corinthians 5:8 is without doubt a reference to a spiritual, experiential fulfillment of the O.T. Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the seventh verse is a strong command: *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us."*

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The leaven referred to in these scriptures is the *leaven of sin*. In this writing, the Apostle Paul was deeply concerned over the sin that had surfaced in the Corinthian congregation in the form of incest. In strong terms, the apostle is demanding a deep purging of the church, a removal of those involved in such a horrible sin.

The parallel between the O.T. Feast and the practice of the N.T. Church is clear. If anyone ate leavened bread during the seven day feast of Unleavened Bread, he was cut off from Israel. (Ex.12:15) Likewise, if anyone persisted in the practice of sin in the church, he should be cut off from the congregation. (1Co.5:2,11)

We are again seeing a strong and clear prophetic message coming to us from the Old Testament Feasts. God will not tolerate the on-going practice of sin. The consequences of doing so are severe. Yes, there's forgiveness when we sin, but repeated offenses leading to the 'habitual practice of sin' will not be accepted.

We, as believing Christians, tend to feel that preaching against sin is for the unsaved. Many Bible passages which exhort gaining victory over sin are automatically applied to the sinner. But, in all reality, in the majority of these passages, the Spirit is addressing God's own people, the Church! Note the following examples among many:

"...henceforth, we (believers) should not serve sin."
(Ro.6:6)

"...reckon...yourselves (believers) to be dead unto sin..."
(Ro.6:11)

"...(believers) let not sin...reign in your mortal body..."
(Ro.6:12)

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?..."
(1Co.6:9)

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[The context reveals that believers are being addressed.]

"...lest any of you (believers) be hardened though the deceitfulness of sin."
(He.3:13)

"...no one born of God habitually practices sin.."
(1Jo.3:9) (Amplified)

How very timely are all these admonitions for us today!
It is a day when both pastors and church leaders are becoming soft on sin. The preaching of repentance and holiness is looked upon as being 'old-fashioned'. Many church leaders are more interested in numerical growth than genuine spiritual growth. Saints and sinners alike are allowed to fill church pews and participate in the programs of the church. Beloved, we need an awakening! Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!

***OH, CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, LET US
PURGE OURSELVES FROM THE LEAVEN OF SIN AND
KEEP THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD !***

THE LEAVEN OF THE WORLD

A third reference to leaven made by Jesus occurs in Mark 8:15:

"And He charged them, saying, Take heed, ...beware of the leaven of Herod."

Herod was a heathen ruler in the realm of the darkness and wickedness of this world. He represented the embodiment of all the world's evil. Lust for power and wealth, unscrupulous morals,

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evil politics and the pride of life are all summed up in Herod. And Jesus told us to beware lest we ingest the '*leaven of Herod*'.

Too often, the church has walked carelessly in its relationship with the world. Unconsciously, we have allowed the world to influence our standards, our methods, our mentality and our objectives. In a very subtle way, the spirit of the world is today filtering in to the lives of many believers and to the operation of the church. Like Lot, we have pitched our tent '*toward Sodom*'. We have become addicted to the world's entertainment and drawn by its appeal toward material prosperity.

Yet, the scriptures are very clear as to the nature of the world and our relationship to it:

"Who gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world..." (Gal.1:4)

Because of modern inventions, advanced technology and super-abounding religious activity, the world to some may appear to be evolving into a better state. Be not deceived. In reality, the cup of iniquity is full to the brim, crying out for a release of God's judgments in the earth!

There is a very real danger that God's people remain enamored with the world and what it offers. The 'world' is not just cheating, killing and fornicating. It is also a lifestyle of affections bent toward earthly things and pleasures. Are our affections focused on earthly goods and objects or are they focused on '*the things which are above*'? (Col.3:2)

In a parable concerning a certain rich man (Lu.12:16-21),

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Jesus pointed out the utter folly of one dedicated to the enrichment of his soul life. With shocking suddenness, the soul can be stripped of its temporal earthly enhancements and awakened to the vain and worthless nature of its life-long pursuits. The way of the

world enriches the soul, but most surely brings death to the spirit.

May every sincere believer pay earnest heed to the following command from God's word:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

LET US THEREFORE PURGE OURSELVES FROM THE LEAVEN OF HEROD AND KEEP THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD !

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CHAPTER 3

PASSOVER: THE SHEAF OF FIRSTFRUITS

“...then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he lamb without blemish in the first year for a burnt offering before the Lord.” (Leviticus 23:10b-12)

The third event in the Passover Feast offers us some very exciting and confirming evidence that the Feasts of Israel are prophetic in nature. As described in the passage above, it was called the *‘waving of the sheaf of firstfruits’*.

In this event, a single sheaf of ripened grain was cut from the fields and brought unto the priest, who would then wave it before the Lord as an offering. Considering the three-day time period from the 14th to the 16th day of the first month, we see that the Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day (the 1st of the three day period) and the sheaf was waved on the 16th day (the third of the three-day period).

We marvel at how perfectly the above sequence symbolizes the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus!

A study of Luke 22:7-16, 23:54-56 and 24:1 reveals that Jesus was crucified *exactly* at Passover (when the Passover lamb was slain) and He was raised from the dead *precisely* ON THE THIRD DAY! (See also Luke 24:7,21,46)

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The only possible and evident conclusion is that the *‘waving of the sheaf of firstfruits’* was symbolic and was fulfilled by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead!

When we see how beautifully the truths of Jesus’ death and

resurrection are prophetically incorporated in the Old Testament Feast of Passover, we reflect on the truthfulness and accuracy of our previous text:

*“Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day [feast day, RSV.], or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, **WHICH ARE A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME...!**” (Col.2:16,17)*

And likewise from Hebrews 10:1, we read,

“...the law has merely a (foreshadowing) of good things to come...” (Amplified)

As we proceed in our study, there grows an inward conviction that ***all three of the Feasts of Israel must be symbolic and prophetic*** and we proceed with fervent anticipation of what the Holy Spirit will further reveal to us!

EXPERIENTIAL PARTICIPATION

We are showing in this study that the Feasts of Israel point not only to events in the life of Christ, but also to aspects of Christian experience. Jesus, Himself, indicated that the Passover events would also be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. (Luke 22:16) Because of Jesus' complete identification with us, all

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believers can participate experientially in both His death and resurrection. Legally, the whole Adamic race died with Him and rose with Him. Let us note from Ephesians 2:4-6, the full extent of His identification with us:

“For God who is rich in mercy, for His great love

*wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us **together** with Christ, (by grace are ye saved), and hath raised us up **together**; and made us sit **together** in heavenly places in Christ Jesus...*

At the very core of the working of redemption in our lives is a two-fold principle. It is that Christ gave His life both **for us** and **to us**. In dying *for us*, he paid the penalty for sin so that we need not pay it. We are set free. In giving His life *to us*, we now have a new source of life. The old was crucified with Him and we need no longer struggle to overcome sin. We can now live victoriously because we live by '*the life of another*', even the resurrected life of our Lord. He who died for us has come to live *in us* by means of His Holy Spirit! Thus, the resurrection of Christ is both an historical event and the basis of new life for the Christian.

May we allow the scriptures to further describe our **experiential participation** in Jesus' death and resurrection. We quote from Romans 6:4,5:

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection."

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Indeed, the power of His resurrection is an experiential reality! Having died with Him, we go on to live with Him. Having experienced the death of the old life of sin, we also experience an endowment of new life, His resurrected life which He freely gives us! Believers who have been genuinely born anew can give the same testimony as Paul the Apostle:

“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live. Yet, not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

WE CAN KNOW HIM IN THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION!

AN ABUNDANT HARVEST

We have seen that the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits speaks to us of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, the clear designation of firstfruits is given Him in 1 Corinthians 15:23. Now let us look at another aspect of truth foreshadowed by the *‘waving of the sheaf of firstfruits.’*

Where you have firstfruits, (by simple definition) a further harvest normally follows. Indeed, our Father’s plan for raising up a spiritual family of sons follows this pattern. In Romans 8:29, Christ is called the *‘firstborn among many brethren’*. In this verse, we gain an insight into the Father’s desire and intention to have, not just one lovely Son in His image, but a whole family of sons just like Him! His mission in coming to earth was far greater than delivering us from eternal torment and bringing us to heaven. He came to *‘bring many sons unto glory’!* (Hebrews 2:10)

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Jesus said, *“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”* (John 12:24) He was here referring to himself, for in the previous verse (23) he spoke of his glorification or death. What was the fruit he was speaking about?

Acknowledging the principle that every seed bears after its

own kind - we expect peas from peas, corn from corn, etc.- we gain the insight that when the Father allowed His lovely, only begotten Son to fall to the ground in death, He was expecting a harvest of *many sons*, just like Him! The seed that fell into the ground was the perfected, matured life of the Son of God and it is exactly this that God expects to harvest in His church!

While the Father waits for this precious fruit of the earth (James 5:7), the childish mentality of '*getting saved and going to heaven*' pervades the church scene today. Instead of being instructed, corrected and chastened unto maturity, carnal spiritual babes are being catered to by a spirit of entertainment. Many church leaders, careful to avoid the meat of the word or '*coming on too strong*', seem content with mere numbers. A great variety of programs and activity are designed to keep people happy and coming through the doors. Holiness and righteousness, so heavily emphasized in scripture, have become meaningless, seldom-heard terms in contemporary preaching.

Yet, while the church at large is stuck in an infantile state, all creation continues to groan and wait for '*the manifestation of the sons of God*'! (Romans 8:19) Beloved, it is time to return to God's ordained pathway for His people!

Thank God for the unfailing words of the Lord Jesus. He

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declared that if the corn of wheat (Himself) fell into the ground and died, it would assuredly bear much fruit. God *will* have a family of sons in the same likeness and spiritual stature as His firstborn!

These sons will be pure as He (Jesus) is pure (1John 3:3); they will walk in the same relationship with the Father as He walked (John 17:23); they will be led of the Spirit as He was led

by the Spirit (Romans 8:14); they will be perfected in obedience as He was (He.5:8; 2 Co. 10:6); and the same works will follow them that followed Jesus (John 14:12). *I know this sounds impossible*, but may we lay down our limited theology and rise in faith to believe and walk in that which the Scripture teaches!

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CHAPTER 4

PENTECOST: THE SECOND FEAST

“And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow

*after the seventh sabbath shall ye number **fifty days**; and ye shall offer a **new meat** (meal) offering unto the Lord.” (Leviticus 23:15,16)*

Surely the honest seeker after truth and experience cannot ignore the clear symbolic and prophetic nature of the Passover Feast. All that we have studied relative to the Feast of Passover points to something we can experience as believers. The truth we have thus far observed cannot be labeled ‘abstract knowledge’, for it is something we can walk out on terra-firma. Applying the blood, eating the passover lamb, keeping the feast of unleavened bread and waving the sheaf of first-fruits - all point to something experiential in the Christian walk.

Having studied the three events of the first feast (Passover) and seeing their experiential value, it would seem to be fair and honest to expect that the remaining two Old Testament Feasts will also shed light on the pathway of *Christian experience*. For many years, my own heart has cried out, “*Lord, is this all there is? Do you have more for me?*”

What shall we do? Shall we settle in what we have seen and experienced, build a wall around it and label it the whole truth?

Shall we remain loyal to the (*possibly limited*) doctrine of our denomination or staunchly uphold the (*man-made*) tradition of the

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elders? There is an alternative. With an open heart, we can continue our study of scripture and allow the Spirit to lead us deeper into Him who is truth.

PENTECOST: ANOTHER HARVEST

The second major feast in the Hebrew religious calendar

was the Feast of Weeks, also called the Feast of Harvest. In the New Testament, this feast was called Pentecost.

This occurred at a separate point in time from the Passover and was different and distinct from it. For the second time, all males were to appear before the Lord in the place of His choosing. (De.16:16) This feast, like the first, was associated with the harvest of grains. Whereas Passover was held at the time of barley harvest, the Feast of Weeks was celebrated at the time of wheat harvest. (Exodus 34:22)

It is interesting and significant that all three of the Feasts were connected with *harvest*. A successful harvest means *food* and food is a basic requirement for sustaining *life*. From late Spring to the Autumn of the year, one could witness a progressive and increasing harvest in the land. First, the barley, then wheat, followed by other grains, fruits and olives. Only a series of plentiful harvests would insure '*fullness of life*' with its accompanying sense of blessedness and joy.

What an exciting prophetic message! The Feasts speak clearly of the on-going, progressive appropriation and sustaining of Spiritual life leading to a state of '*fullness*'. (Eph.4:13)

We do not receive the life of our Lord in full measure upon

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conversion, but we continually '*put on the Lord Jesus Christ*' by a series of experiences and a careful nurturing of His precious gift of life. (Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:24) Even the Lord's disciples, who, for a period of over three years were taught by the Master Teacher, were instructed to prepare for *something more*, even the promise of the Father. Jesus said unto them,

“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)

Something more! Yes, God had something more for His disciples. After Phillip was used of the Lord to harvest many souls in Samaria (Acts 8), the Apostles John and Peter were then sent to the converts to bring them into *something more*. The Lord used Aquila and Priscilla to show Apollos that there was *something more*. (Acts 18:26) The saints at Ephesus who knew only the baptism of John were led by Paul into *something more*. (Acts 19:2)

Let us now examine the Old Testament Feast of Weeks or Harvest to see how beautifully it symbolizes this New Testament experience of *something more* for the believer.

PENTECOST: THE FIFTIETH DAY

As with all the feasts, the Lord set a precise time for keeping the Feast of Harvest. According to Leviticus 23:15-21, the Israelites were to count carefully from the day of the waving of the sheaf offering unto seven complete sabbaths, or 49 days. Then, *exactly* on the day after the seventh sabbath (or **50th day**), they

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were to observe this Feast.

As we pursue the theme of the symbolic and prophetic nature of the Feasts, we marvel at how precisely this Second Feast becomes fulfilled in New Testament history!

We find in Acts 1:3 that after the resurrection, Jesus

appeared periodically to His disciples for a period of 40 days. Commanding them to wait for the Father's promise, He told them they would be baptized in the Holy Ghost 'not many days hence'. (v.4,5). According to Acts 2:1, this time interval proved to be exactly 10 days, for when the day of Pentecost - or 50th day - (the term Pentecost means 50th) was fully come, "...*they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...!*" (v. 4)

The same disciples who had been apprehended three and one-half years earlier and instructed at the Master's feet were now partakers of *another experience*. The God of Israel was commemorating the Feast of Weeks in a fashion never before seen or imagined! *Exactly 50 days* after Jesus' resurrection - in a perfect fulfillment of the Old Testament Feast - these unlearned and ignorant men were endued with power from on high and further equipped for service. This small band of anointed and empowered witnesses spoke with great boldness, wrought signs and wonders, and gave potent witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

IS THE PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE FOR TODAY?

I marvel, not only at the great controversy over the Pentecostal experience, but at the widespread rejection of it. As is typical of denominations, walls of limitation are built around

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partial truth and experience, depriving believers of *something more* God may have for them. Some religious leaders teach that the Pentecostal experience was only for the early church, only a sign for the Jews. Oh, yes, religious leaders do err! Church history shows that, although God moved to restore truth and experience, leaders and movements repeatedly formulated a fixed theology built upon something partial.

But we must indeed declare that the Pentecostal experience was not a one-time event; it was not to be exclusively for the early church, and it was not just a sign for the Jews. *It was and still is a spiritually empowering experience available to all who yearn for it!*

Scripture as found in the book of Acts not only outlines the *pathway of experience* for the early church, but clearly states that such is to be the course of experience for all believers! Let us look at some passages in a synoptic way, showing that being filled with the Spirit is *an experience beyond salvation*:

(1) Acts 2:4 - “*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues...*” Without argument, these 120 people were committed disciples of the Lord. This was not their ‘*salvation experience*’, but something beyond!

(2) Acts 8:17 - “*Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.*” Upon reading the context, we learn these were people who were saved under Philip’s preaching and had been baptized in water. Peter and John were sent unto them that they might be blessed by a *further experience*, receiving the Holy Ghost!

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(3) Acts 19:6 “*And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them and they spake with tongues and prophesied.*” Again, the context shows that these were believers who had ‘*not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*’.

Now upon the presentation of this evidence that believers in the early church indeed had a *second experience*, we get the argument from certain segments of the Christian community that

this was the Book of Acts and that all these things were happening as signs for Jewish believers. Some erroneously tell us that it was not until Acts 28:28 that God turned to the Gentiles!

The following facts found in scripture show us that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit extended to *both Jew and Gentile* and to *both the early church and its descendants*:

(1) Acts 2:39 “*For the promise is unto you (Jews) and to your children, and to all that are afar off (this includes the Gentiles), and AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL (this includes both Jews and Gentiles from every time period throughout the church age!)*”! Reading the previous verse tells us that the promise is ‘the gift of the Holy Ghost’, poured out on the day of Pentecost.

(2) Acts 10:45 “*...on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.*”

Acts 11:15 “*And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.*”

In reading Acts 10 and 11, we find that God chose the house of Cornelius as the place for the first outpouring of the Spirit on the Gentiles.

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(3) Acts 13:46 ‘*...lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*’ A statement made by Paul in Antioch of Pisidia as the Jews adamantly rejected the gospel. In this account, a group of Gentiles gladly received the word of God and became believers. (See verse 48.)

The statement that the Book of Acts is *exclusively* the story of the early Jewish church is erroneous. It is quite clear from

the contents of chapters 11-13 that Antioch of Syria became another center of the Church’s activity and from there Paul, the

Apostle to the Gentiles, was launched into his ministry. (Acts 13)
For the remainder of the book, the same gospel originally offered to the Jews, was now offered to both Jews and Gentiles.

Although we cannot condone excessive emotionalism, fleshly demonstrations and that which is born of the soul, nonetheless, being true to the Scriptures and honest witnesses of what we have seen and experienced over a course of 50 plus years, we must declare the Pentecostal outpouring to still be an *empowering, enlightening and life-changing experience!* It brings the second person of the trinity and His work into our lives!

PENTECOST: A FIRST-FRUITS FEAST

Now may all who have partaken of the Pentecostal experience continue with us as we release further challenges!

In many Pentecostal and Charismatic circles today, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is taught as being *'the ultimate experience'*, the top rung on the ladder. Many so-called 'Spirit-filled' churches, teaching both salvation and Spirit-baptism, claim now to have the 'Full Gospel'. They have become 'two-

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experience' churches. The main testimony of their members is that they are *'saved and filled with the Spirit'*. The mentality formed in these circles is that the baptism of the Spirit is the ultimate in spiritual experience. Once you are saved and filled with the Spirit, you now spend your time and efforts to draw others into the same experiences.

But, let us beware! Teachings that focus only on partial and limited Christian experience will inevitably be characterized

by shallowness and ultimately produce stagnation and death.

In our study of the second major feast as a type of Christian experience, we observe that it was often referred to as a Firstfruits Feast:

“...*the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labors...*”
(Exodus 23:16)

“...the feast of weeks, of the *firstfruits* of wheat harvest...”
(Exodus 34:22)

Relatively speaking, Israel was still in the beginning of harvest. The land had much more to yield. Still to follow was the harvesting of other grains, fruit, olives and grapes. It would be at least another four months before the harvest was complete.

Likewise, in the New Testament fulfillment of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), the impartation of the Holy Spirit is referred to as the ‘*earnest*’ of our inheritance. (See Eph. 1:14; 2 Co. 1:22; 5:5) The term ‘*earnest*’ means a down payment, or pledge of more to come. Contrary to the teaching and belief of many, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is NOT a fullness of spiritual life and does not

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represent a climax of experience available to the church!

By the very description of the Holy Spirit’s work, we should be alerted to great and glorious possibilities. Rather than stopping with the experience of His coming, we should now expect Him to lead us into the fullness of our inheritance in Christ. Even as we admonish the Fundamentalists not to settle for initial salvation, so we now admonish Charismatics and Pentecostals not to settle for the initial infilling of the Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Ghost is far from being a final experience, but it represents a gracious endowment for appropriating all that God has for His people!

What do the scriptures say of Him? As a *Comforter*, He keeps us in God's abiding presence. As *guide*, He will take us into all truth. (Jo.16:13). As a *teacher*, He will search the deep things of God. (1Co.2:10). As an indwelling *person*, He affords us communion with the Father and the Son. (Jo.14:20). As a *revealer*, He will keep Christ in focus and ***shew us things to come!*** (Jo.16:13,14)

May we now inwardly position ourselves to catch at least a glimpse of some things to come.

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CHAPTER 5

THE THIRD FEAST: TABERNACLES

*“Thou shalt observe the **feast of tabernacles** seven days...because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase and in all the works of thine hands...”* (De.16:13-15)

Who is to say what man and church can experience in their

pursuit of God? Shall experience be dictated by the guidelines of other men, be they pagan or religious? Shall we revere the revelation and religious practice of denominational systems to the point of allowing them to suppress our hearts' hunger pangs?

What about those who, like Caleb, have believed promises about an inheritance and live a whole lifetime to one day actually enter in? What is to be done with a person, like Elisha, who dares speak of a 'double portion' of the Spirit in the face of the most powerful anointing ever seen on earth? And what about a Martin Luther, tormented daily by a deep inward sense that 'something is wrong' and convinced there must be another way?

I believe God pays attention to this '*deep calling unto deep*' and proves Himself willing to reveal His provision and guide us into it. *Revelation*. Yes, that is the important key.

*"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath **revealed** them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God."*
(1 Corinthians 2:9,10)

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"Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will.....guide you into all truth, and He will.....show you things to come." (John 16:13,14)

*"...when ye come together, every one of you hath a **revelation**..."* (1Corinthians 14:26)

"(I) cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the

spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.”
(Ephesians 1:16,17)

. The church, a living organism, is comprised of members who have been made alive by the revelation of Christ. Both the initial gift of life and the progressive development of life are based on the revelation of Christ.

When Jesus' disciples were asked, “...*but whom say ye that I am?*”, Peter, enlightened by the spirit of revelation, cried out, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!*” The Lord's reply was, “...*upon this rock I will build my church...*” Peter, by virtue of revelation life had become a living stone and upon such living stones the church is built.

A word of caution - not everything that is presented as ‘*revelation*’ is pure and authentic. (In fact, *very little*; for the majority of what is offered as revelation today is either intellectual speculation or error.) We must ever try the spirits and check on the scriptural accuracy of what is presented. Anything extra-biblical, that is, outside the context of holy scripture, must be immediately rejected. (*O, Lord, help us to walk softly and humbly*

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in this area!)

However, there is the genuineness of revelation - ‘**God, by His Holy Spirit, shedding light on truth!**’ There is the reality of progressive revelation!

“But the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”
(Proverbs 4:18)

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts!”

(2 Peter 1:19)

Thus, in spite of all the necessary caution, we cry out, *“Let there be light!”* Let the spirit of wisdom and revelation be released in the Church! May the fullness of our inheritance in Christ begin to be appropriated by God’s people!

PROCEEDING TO TABERNACLES

We proceed with a deep conviction that if the first two major Old Testament Feasts were prophetic of New Testament experience, the third one is also. Sensing we have only a small measure of insight and revelation, we move ahead in fear and trembling. Yet, we offer what the Lord gives to the hand of the Master that it may feed, challenge and inspire. Greater enlightenment and understanding will surely follow the sincere seeker of truth.

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First, let us be clear that I shall use the term “Feast of Tabernacles” to include all three events held in the seventh month of the Hebrew religious calendar. They are:

(1) The Blowing of Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month. (Numbers 29:1-6; Leviticus 23:24)

(2) The Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month. (Leviticus 16; Leviticus 23:26-32)

(3) The Feast of Booths, held for seven days from the 15th day to the 21st day of the seventh month. (Leviticus 23:33-44)

If the Feast of Passover pointed to our initial salvation by the blood of the Lamb and if the Feast of Pentecost spoke to us about the infilling of the Holy Spirit, what could this third Feast possibly refer to in the realm of Christian experience? (Let us remember, according to Colossians 2:17, *all* holy days and feast days were a '*shadow of things to come*'.)

As we reach toward God's heart, I strongly desire to avoid speculation and presumption. It is also my sincere hope to avert a merely intellectual presentation which would only beget pride. Rather, may the Holy Spirit grant us insights into those things which will address our areas of need and enable us to appropriate all that God has for us. *O, Lord, our heart's cry is that you meet us and direct us toward our appointed destination!*

CRITICAL AREAS

There are critical areas of need today in the church to which the Feast of Tabernacles may be pointing. For years we

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have been hearing that '*judgment must begin at the house of God*'. What does God see in His church that must first be addressed before the fullness of Tabernacles can be realized? The following represents only a partial list:

- (1) Worldliness: spirit of entertainment, merchandising the gospel, projection of men's personalities, implementing the world's methods.
- (2) A man-centered gospel focusing on how to be blessed.
- (3) Shallowness and immaturity.
- (4) Lack of holiness and righteousness (Godly character)

- (5) Strong individualism; lack of corporate vision.
- (6) Improper vision for the end time.
- (7) Unpreparedness for the coming literal kingdom.

As we examine some details regarding the Feast of Tabernacles, we pray that God will indeed address conditions in a way that will mean an advancement of His purposes and a progression in *spiritual experience!*

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CHAPTER 6

TABERNACLES: THE END OF HARVEST

*“Thou shalt keep...the feast of ingathering (tabernacles), which is at the **end** of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.” (Exodus 23:16)*

The music of the masters stands in sharp contrast with the majority of contemporary music. Today’s popular music, reflective of the general trend of social degeneration, could be

termed '*circular*' in nature, offering in repetitive fashion much the same tempo and theme ad nauseum. The listener is caught up in an 'avalanche of noise' that seems to make him feel good. However, upon conclusion, he lands with a thump and faces the same emptiness and craving. Such is the pursuit of religion.

On the other hand, one could almost say the great composers were divinely inspired. Their masterpieces have a '*linear*' quality, taking the listener from a carefully designed beginning, through a variety of meaningful movements, unto a crowning finish. In a truly euphoric experience, the soul is lifted, and carried in majestic fashion to a satisfying emotional climax.

I believe our God is like that in the outworking of His glorious purposes. He initiates beginnings and leads us step by step to clear goals and objectives.

TABERNACLES POINTS TO GOD'S ENDS

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath

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begun a good work in you will perform it (bring it to completion, RSV) until the day of Christ." (Philippians 1:6)

**THERE'S A FINAL DESTINATION FOR YOU
AND ME AS INDIVIDUALS!**

God will not leave us incomplete, a cake half-baked, but will keep us on the potter's wheel until the work is finished!

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect (full-grown) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:13)

GOD HAS CLEAR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR
THE CHURCH CORPORATE!

May we not allow man to take us into side eddies and cause us to fall short of the mark. We need to search the scriptures and allow the Spirit to clearly define God's spiritual destination for His Church.

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.” (Matthew 24:14)

THANK GOD HE HAS PURPOSED AN END TO THIS PRESENT EVIL AND CORRUPT WORLD ORDER! We speak not here in the fashion of religious fanatics who have set dates for the 'end of the world'. Yet, according to scripture, all creation awaits the climax of the ages, at which time the bondage of corruption will be broken and a new order of righteousness

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established! No, planet earth will not be annihilated, but the present ungodly lifestyle of men will surely be judged. (Jude 15)

Thus, it seems clear that, whereas Passover speaks to us of a *beginning*, the Feast of Tabernacles speaks to us of an *ending*. If the Feasts indeed point to spiritual experience, then the Feast of Tabernacles points to experiences which follow salvation and the infilling of the Spirit. May we pursue the concept of being led step by step all the way from a proper beginning to God's designed ends.

Throughout church history we have seen man take some initial steps in God's purpose and then build denominational walls

and fail to appropriate God's full intention. Even as Israel encompassed the wilderness 'mount' in circular fashion, the Church, throughout much of her history has moved from Passover to Pentecost to wilderness wanderings. She has deviated much from the linear path of God's purposes. Beloved, may we be gripped by the challenge of this hour:

*"Therefore, leaving the principles (beginnings) of the doctrine of Christ, **let us go on to perfection** (the consummation of God's purpose), not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."* (Hebrews 6:1,2)

It is clear from this passage that repentance, baptisms and basic doctrines are but initial or intermediate steps toward God's objective of *perfection*, that is, spiritual maturity and fulfillment of His overall purpose. Oh, beloved, can we get as committed and enthused about 'going on' as we are about saving souls and

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getting people 'filled with the Spirit'? I ask, What will it take to get us to incorporate the full gospel in our ministries? Why do we strive to save souls and heal bodies without much regard as to how they end up spiritually? Why is the teacher in the body of Christ not esteemed as highly as the evangelist? Why do we accept the erroneous notion that we no longer need apostles and prophets?

"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!" (Ephesians 5:14)

MOVING INTO THE 'THIRD DAY'

The blessings of redemption are available to us today

because Jesus so faithfully pursued the course His Father ordained for Him. As a faithful Son, he left not one aspect of the Father's purpose unfulfilled.

*“Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the **third day** I shall be perfected.”* (Luke 13:32)

Jesus was not here referring to 24-hour days, but to phases of His ministry. Doing signs and wonders was necessary to give the Jews opportunity to believe, for He was sent first unto the house of Israel. But there came a point in time when their rejection of Him became final and Jesus had to progress to the Father's higher and climactic purpose.

The third day here represents the completion of all the Father had sent Him to do, culminating with His death on the cross. As the time approached for Him to die, He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. In a final act of obedience, He carried His cross outside the city gates and from Calvary's hill cried out,

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“It is finished!”

The challenge of moving into the *third day* of God's purposes is now before the Church. As Paul wrote to the Philippians (2:12), so I believe the Spirit is speaking today to the Church, *‘...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.’* Both the Amplified and Phillips' translations render this to mean, *‘carry your salvation to its goal’*. This same meaning is carried by the word *‘perfection’* throughout the New Testament. That which has been perfected has gone through all the steps and arrived at the goal. Or, we could say it has *fulfilled its destiny!*

As a young man basking in the glory of the ‘Latter Rain’

visitation 50 years ago, I heard the prophets proclaim the coming of another day. It would be a time of the **double portion**. (See Joel 2:23). God was promising to mold and equip His Church to minister in fullness in the final days of this age.

One of the scriptures made alive in those days was Hosea 6:1-3. Praise God, it is still alive in my heart today and is once again being proclaimed in the land.

*“Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the **third day** he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, his going forth is prepared as the morning: and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the **latter and former rain** unto the earth!”*

I find great reluctance in my spirit to attempt to predict or describe the **third-day** scenario, for God always moves in ways

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man does not expect. Will we see a greater anointing on His ministry? *The prophet Joel saw a double-portion outpouring.* (Joel 2:23,28,29) Will the Church function with greater power and authority in a corporate sense? *The prophet Haggai spoke of the exceeding glory of the latter house.* (Haggai 2:6-9) Will the heathen be converted in mass into the Kingdom? *Isaiah 60 seems to indicate such.* Will healings and miracles be restored? *Perhaps this is included in the context of Joel 2:25,32.*

But there must and will be spiritual maturity! A full-grown, corporate man standing in the stature of Christ must come on the scene! (Ephesians 4:13) We cannot stop with salvation, baptisms, healing and the milk of the word. Worse yet, we must not allow the spirit of the world to mold us! Is the church's final

destiny to become an entertainment center? Is it to be a spiritual kindergarten? Is it to be a place for dispensing material blessings?

Will its final form be that of the world's corporations? *It is sad to note much evidence that we are headed in all these directions!*

One of the scriptures most quickened to my spirit for many years is James 5:7.

“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 (it) receive the early and the latter rain.”

What is the *precious fruit*?

Like those promoting a simplistic rapture theory, there is a danger we can envision a totally man-centered end-time scenario. ***But what will God get?*** The above text reveals something of what

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the Father yearns for and will surely have in the consummation of His purposes. It represents the crux of what Jesus died for.

Let me explain. Agriculturally, the ‘former rains’ were necessary for the initial processes of plowing the soil, planting and the sprouting of the seed. The ‘latter rains’ would then be needed at a critical point in the plants’ growth to bring forth the mature fruit in the stalk. As much as the farmer delights in seeing the green of sprouting grain and the continual healthy growth of his crop, his greatest joy lies in reaping an abundant harvest! If the latter rains do not come, the whole process can end up with terrible loss and fall short of its designed objective.

Therefore, the above passage from James gives us a clear picture of the Father's purpose in redemption. The '*precious fruit*' his heart yearns for is ***not saved souls, but sons that have been brought to spiritual maturity!***

Man gets souls saved and baptized and then is content to have church auditoriums full of people. There they are entertained and blessed but seldom challenged or developed unto maturity. Quantity, not quality seems to be the popular and accepted measure of success. *But will the Heavenly Father be satisfied with millions of babies in heaven? Will the heavenly Bridegroom be pleased to receive a carnal, immature and worldly church as his bride?* May we engage in honest heart-searching, take a long look at what we are doing and then ask the question: ***Are we really moving toward God's intended ends?***

Now, in some circles it is being declared that the 'third day' has already arrived. Let us beware, for there's a difference between seeing what is coming and partaking of its reality. Some

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are falling into the familiar practice of creating something in their own strength and calling it the fulfillment of prophecy. God help us if we are celebrating the arrival of another Ishmael!

I believe only a deep individual and corporate repentance can usher in the next move of God and take us to the culmination of His purpose.

In my observations of the church scene today, I see crowds, innovative programs, great building projects, much hype and levity, but very little evidence of fruit that comes out of repentance - *righteousness, holiness and Godly character!*

Personally, I am in a posture of travail, heart-searching

and crying out to God. The greater glory has not yet come. Men are deceiving us in saying it is already here. If we accept the man-made counterfeit, the travail will stop. O, yes, the temptation is great. Just hop on the bandwagon and celebrate! But, I say, thank God for those who cannot accept it and who will continue to pray and intercede!

O, Lord, bring us to repentance! Deliver us from our wretched state! May your awesome presence return to your temple! Whatever it takes, bring us to the place where you can release all you have for us! Lord, make us into something that will delight your heart and fulfill your purpose!

Let us now consider the possible meaning of the Blowing of Trumpets.

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CHAPTER 7

THE BLOWING OF TRUMPETS AND DAY OF ATONEMENT

In preparation for the third major feast, the Feast of Tabernacles, the first day of the seventh month marked an event called the Blowing of Trumpets. (Leviticus 23:24)

This served a two-fold purpose. First, the people were alerted to the fact that the most important and somber day of the year was at hand - the Day of Atonement. (Lev. 23:27) Secondly, it was designed to set the proper 'tone' in the camp, one of sobriety and of the fear of the Lord. *It was a call to*

repentance.

On the Day of Atonement - the tenth day of the seventh month- the High Priest would enter in beyond the veil of the Holy of Holies to make atonement for *the whole nation*. The implications were most serious. The individual who would not properly respond to the message of the trumpets *would be cut off from among the people*. (Leviticus 23:29) And, *potentially*, if all were not in order, the whole nation could lose God's favor. Thus, the *future* and *destiny* of the entire nation was at stake!

The questions raised at this somber time were these: *Would God's people continue in His favor? Would His corporate instrument remain on the pathway of His purpose for them?*

At this juncture, our reader may encounter a crisis, for traditional teaching has told us that all the feasts simply point to the atoning death of Jesus that brings us salvation. But, I ask, is

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the Day of Atonement a repetition of Passover? Are not *all* Holy Days and feasts in Israel prophetic of things to come? (Colossians 2:17) Have we not seen that the Feasts contain a prophetic message for the church? Will we stop now and conclude that only the first two Feasts were prophetic but the third is not?? I trust not.

THE CONDITION: UNCLEANNES

At this point in our study, I ask the reader to make a careful reading of Leviticus 16, the chapter which deals most with our subject at hand. The rather lengthy passages below must be included here as a basis of reference and discussion. We shall make special reference to the words in bold type.

“Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for

*the people, and bring his blood within the vail...and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat...and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the **uncleanness** of the children of Israel...and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their **uncleanness.**"*
(v.15,16)

*"...an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel...and he shall go out unto the altar ...and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger **seven times** and **cleanse it**, and **hallow it** from the **uncleanness** of the children of Israel." (v. 17-19)*

*"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you **to cleanse you that ye may be clean** from all your sins before*

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the Lord." (v. 31)

Upon reading the above verses carefully and with an open heart, we cannot but conclude that the Lord's chief objective for the Day of Atonement was to deal with a *condition*. And this condition was that of the *uncleanness* of His people. In the sequence of the Feasts, never before had God dealt with their sinful condition to this degree. His purpose was to cleanse the entire camp from *all* its uncleanness and make of them a *holy* people. This is exactly God's purpose in the finality of His dealings with His people today, to make them (experientially) a holy people.

We could say that from the time of Passover to this time of Tabernacles, either an unclean condition had developed or an original unclean condition had never been dealt with. One of the

two scenarios must be true. The same can be said about the walk of the Christian and the history of the Church. Thus, if God's objective of presenting to Christ a Church *holy and without blemish* is to be a reality, the condition of her uncleanness must be dealt with. (Ephesians 5:27) This, then, is the very real - yet, painful and unappealing - spiritual experience we must accept and incorporate into our walk if, indeed, we are to continue in a proper progression towards God's full purpose.

HOLINESS COMES AFTER SALVATION

Whereas Passover points us to Jesus the sin bearer and the bestowal upon us of *forgiveness of sins*, the Day of Atonement - in type - includes this but takes us much further. It also deals with *cleansing from sin*.

In the language surrounding the Day of Atonement, the

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terms *cleanse and hallow* are used. Both of these words have the meaning of 'to purify or make holy'. In God's desire to rid the camp of all uncleanness, not only was the blood sprinkled on behalf of the people, but it was sprinkled on *everything*. The priests, their household, the people, the altar, all articles of service, the holy place, the tabernacle - all were to receive the sprinkling of the blood. (See Leviticus 16:14-20; Hebrews 9:19-23)

It is evident that God's objective here was far greater than 'forgiveness of sins'. *His purpose was to remove all uncleanness and establish a completely holy camp!* [Note: The sprinkling of the blood *seven* times - (*the number of completeness*) further speaks of God's intention to have total and thorough cleansing.]

We find in this a clear and precise foreshadowing of what

God is after today. What we see in this aspect of Tabernacles in type is now becoming real experience for those who are hearing the trumpet sound and humbling themselves in repentance! ***This, beloved saints, constitutes the next genuine move of God!***

It is both interesting and significant that in the description of Passover, nothing was ever spoken to Israel about *holiness*. In fact, the first time the words *sanctify* or *holy* are spoken to His people occur at Sinai in Exodus 19. The purpose of the original Passover was to save them from the wrath of God and subsequent commemorations of Passover were but a reminder of His mercy towards them in saving them out of Egypt. Likewise, our initial experience of salvation is also for the purpose of escaping His wrath and granting us eternal life. (Romans 5:9)

But as we move beyond Passover (Exodus 12) unto Exodus 19, we have the following exhortation from God to His people:

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“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation...” (Exodus 19:4-6)

Notice, an ‘holy nation’ is *something they could become* in the future if they obeyed His voice.

Our beloved Brother Watchman Nee, in his masterpiece, “***The Normal Christian Life***”, teaches us the difference between *sins* and *sin*. *Sins* is a term referring to wrongful acts committed, whereas *sin* refers to a principle or inward condition. *Sins* have to do with *doing*, but *sin* has to do with *being*. Wrongful acts of *sin* (*sins*) must be confessed in order to receive forgiveness. But

receiving forgiveness does not deal with the *condition of sin*. It can only be dealt with by the cross of Christ and a process of *purification*. God wants to bring us into a state of being called ***holiness!***

Now, some may argue that on the basis of Christ's finished work we are '*complete in Him*' and already holy. Those who pose this argument are reminded that there is a difference between our *judicial position* in Christ and our *experiential position*. Judicially, or legally, we are counted as saved, sanctified and perfected. But, experientially, we may not be. For, in every aspect of Christ's work there must be an appropriation on the part of the Christian on the basis of *faith* and *obedience*. Although judicially, all men are saved, we know that experientially they are not. Although Christ paid the price for a perfected man, all men have not been perfected. These two seemingly conflicting positions are

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seen in two passages of scripture, Colossians 3:9,10 and Ephesians 4:22,24. In the former, we read,

*"...ye **have put off** the old man (sinful nature) with his deeds; and **have put on** the new man..."*

But in the latter, we find,

*"...**put off** concerning the former conversation (life-style) the old man, which is corrupt...and that ye **put on** the new man..."*

The former is in the past tense and refers to the finished work of Christ. But the latter is a command and points to the experiential aspect of a work which is ongoing and future.

PERFECTING HOLINESS

*“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**” (2 Corinthians 7:1)*

In many circles today, an environment of hype and entertainment has replaced the awesome presence of God. Few are aware that the glory has departed because of the intoxicating mixture of flesh and soul which pervades many gatherings. In the language of Ezekiel (44:7-9), ‘*uncircumcised strangers*’ have been allowed to enter the Lord’s sanctuary to defile it. Today’s ‘*strangers*’ are not only unrighteous and prideful men, but the world’s methods and philosophy, the Babylonish mentality of ‘greatness’, and the contaminating ‘arm of the flesh’. The church scene is rampant with human programs and inventions. Yes, there is abundant filthiness of both flesh and spirit in the house of God!

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It is time for the Blowing of Trumpets once again!

“Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” (Isaiah 58:1)

In my judgment, 2 Corinthians 7:1 is perhaps the most necessary and vital message for today. Our condition of *filthiness* needs to be addressed so that God’s *promises* can be fulfilled. May God shed light on both these terms.

In the time of Zechariah, a remnant of God’s people had returned from Babylonian captivity and had taken some vital steps in restoration. They had laid the foundations of a new temple, restored worship and were learning some of God’s ways. But soon there came a cessation of the work and a spiritual deterioration. In Zechariah’s 2nd chapter, these people

(symbolized by Joshua, the High Priest) were found clothed with *filthy garments!* (V. 3)

The record in Nehemiah reveals the nature of these ‘filthy garments.’ God’s people had departed from many of the Lord’s ways and defiled themselves by inter-marrying with the heathen! Great compromises had been made with the very heathen who had bitterly withstood the Lord’s work. (Tobiah, the Ammonite, forbidden by the law to come into the congregation of the Lord, had been given a chamber in the courts of the very house of God! See Ne.13:7) God’s people were violating God’s standard of holiness. ***They had reached a certain point in the process of restoration but had fallen short of establishing holiness!***

Without holiness, He could never really dwell among them in fullness. And without God dwelling among them, they could

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never fulfill their destiny of becoming a praise in the earth.

Repeating myself, I say, God’s ultimate intention for His people is to give expression of His glory and nature to all the rest of creation. In order to bring this about, God must be dwelling among them in fullness. And, to make that a reality, they must first become a holy people. Thus, without the establishment of holiness, God’s ultimate purpose becomes frustrated. You can have all the campaigns, seminars, concerts, etc... you wish to have, but ***if holiness is not developed and God’s awesome presence restored, God’s ultimate purpose can never be realized.***

Today, we have mega-churches, soul-saving campaigns, beautiful praise and worship services and many types of ‘how-to’ seminars. Yes, we have all of that and it is hailed as ‘success’. *But, we are not moving on a course of establishing holiness.* Why

do I say that? BECAUSE OUR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WAYS OF THE WORLD AND THE STRENGTH OF MAN HAS PRODUCED FILTHINESS IN THE CHURCH !

What does God do under such circumstances? He initiates what we could call ‘*an operation of the Spirit.*’ It is a work of cleansing designed to remove all iniquity from His people. He declares, “*Take away the filthy garments from him! Behold, I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.*” (Zech. 2:4) This is exactly God’s present intention and it is being resisted by satan today as it was then. Certainly, the enemy hates to see conversions and deliverances from the power of satan, but what he will resist most

vehemently is the establishment of the church into a holy and spotless Bride! It is the Bride who will unite with Christ in the ultimate overthrow of the present evil order! And she *must* be

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‘*without spot, or wrinkle...holy and without blemish*’ ! (Eph. 5:27)

In coming back to 2 Corinthians 7:1, let us recall the initial words: “*Having therefore these promises...*” What are the ***promises*** and to whom do they apply? To find the answers, we must refer to the last 5 verses of the previous chapter.

It is quite evident from reading the text that the promises apply to *believers*. Every use of the word ‘*you*’ and ‘*ye*’ (KJV) addresses christian believers, not the unsaved. Thus if the reference to ‘*promises*’ in 2 Corinthians 7:1 is to make any sense, it follows that the verses immediately preceding it must contain some promises for believers. *What are they?*

First, let us look at verses 14 and 15 of 2 Corinthians 6. Here are verses often used to warn believers against marrying an

unsaved person. And this is right. But, let us not miss the general and serious warning to all believers about any form of worldly interaction or affinity. We believers are the temple (Gr: 'naos') of the living God to whom has been given ***the promise of having God dwell among us!*** And 2 Corinthians 7:1 tells us that this promise was not fulfilled at the time of our salvation nor at the time we were filled with the Spirit, but a promise dependent on our perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord!

Some may reason with these things and say, "*I know that when I got saved, Jesus came into my heart.*" This is true. Others, may say, "*When I got baptized by the Holy Spirit, I felt a powerful anointing and I felt Him (the Holy Spirit) coming into me.*" Very true. Yet, neither of these genuine experiences fulfills what God is speaking about in 2 Corinthians 6:16. Why do we say this? There are two reasons.

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(1) The fulfillment of this promise is dependent on 'perfecting holiness', which is not a requirement for either initial salvation or the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

(2) The 'tone' of the context of 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 has to do more with corporate experience than individual experience. In fact, verse 16 is almost an exact quotation of Leviticus 26:11,12, which has to do with the Lord dwelling among His people corporately.

Let us notice from yet another passage of scripture how vital holiness is to God's indwelling a people:

*"For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee **and turn away from thee**" (De.23:14)*

Beloved, my heart yearns for an increase of His presence and glory. Yea, also for an increase in deliverances, healings, miracles and victories over our enemies. When Old Testament Zion was fully indwelt by God, her enemies sensed the awesomeness of His power and were afraid to draw near. (Ps.48:4-6) In our day, the manifestation of God's power has thus far been restricted to a few gifted individuals while an anemic church is still plagued by sickness, bondage and enemy harassment. Something must happen in the church corporate. She must be sanctified and cleansed to become the habitation of God in His fullness!

May Zion hear the blowing of trumpets, afflict her soul and become an accepted people.

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CHAPTER 8

TABERNACLES: THE FEAST OF FULLNESS

*“Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God...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.**” (De.16:15)*

It has been noted that, from the standpoint of the harvest, Passover was associated with the barley harvest and Pentecost with the wheat harvest. It is symbolically significant and enlightening that the Feast of Tabernacles was to be commemorated at the *completion of harvest*. All grains, all manner of fruit, olives, grapes, and pomegranates had been gathered. Not only were the granaries full, but the vats were

overflowing with wine and oil! The picture is one of full and complete provision! What an encouraging vision for all believers who hunger and search for *'something more'*!

Whereas the Passover realities represent our initial experiences as babes in Christ and the Pentecostal experience adds a measure of His Spirit, the Feast of Tabernacles speaks to us of the fullness of Christ, spiritual maturity, even the status of a full-grown man! It gives us hope of going on to perfection and becoming fully like Him!

FULLNESS AHEAD

In Ephesians 1:23 we have a statement indicating what God has purposed the Church to be: *'...his body, the fulness of him that*

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fillet all in all.' This is God's design and intention for this masterpiece called the *church*. May we not settle for anything less than this.

This means that all that was in Christ, the fullness of moral virtue, glory, power and all divine attributes, will be developed in the Church by the work of the Holy Spirit. The fullness of Christ is the one and only standard for the Church. Nothing short of that should be acceptable. His Church is meant to be a continuation of the life of Christ in the earth.

Of Christ it was said,

"...for God giveth not the Spirit by measure (a limited portion) unto Him..." (John 3:34)

"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness

dwell. ” (Col.1:19)

*“For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead
bodily” (Col.2:9)*

Think of it, beloved. Jesus was the container and expression of all that God is! All divine virtue, power and glory were resident in Him and manifest through Him! Because of this He could say, “...*he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...*” He was nothing short of God manifest in the flesh!

And this is the destiny and high calling of the Church!

This is what lies ahead for the Church! She is not now in such a state, no, not by far, but praise God He is not finished with her. He continues the work in lives that are embracing the vision and

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yielding themselves to His working.

Although many do not see anything more for the church beyond initial salvation and ‘going to heaven’, the scriptures indicate otherwise. Others who claim that the baptism in the Spirit represents the ‘Full Gospel’ are also settling merely for an ‘earnest’ or ‘initial deposit’ of what God really has for His people.

In Paul’s glorious revelation of the Church as addressed to the Ephesians, twice we see this truth of ‘fullness’ referred to as something which lies ahead for a saved and baptized people.

First, in Eph.3:19, in Paul’s prayer for them, he concludes with this request, “...*that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*” He did not indicate they were already filled with the fullness of God, but prayed that they would appropriate it or enter

into it.

These saints had experienced Passover and Pentecost but now Paul was praying for something more!

Secondly, in the 4th chapter, as he envisions the Church's development, he refers to an ultimate condition, a goal God had for them. In verse 11-12, he sees that God has given a five-fold ministry to the church that she might be equipped, built up and function in ministry. Then in verse 13 are set forth three tremendous goals:

- (1) *the unity of the faith*
- (2) *the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God*
- (3) *a perfect man, the measure (or standard) of the stature of the FULLNESS OF CHRIST.*

Thus we see that a state or condition of FULLNESS lies

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ahead for His Church! This is why many who live in Fundamental or Pentecostal circles are dissatisfied. They are searching, praying, and asking, '*..is this all there is?*' How can others be content and settled while their spirit cries out for more of God? It is their 'deep' calling unto the 'deep' in God for greater spiritual substance and reality! Thank God for the knowledge that there's a third Feast to be fulfilled!

PAUL'S SECOND TRAVAIL

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be (GR: 'fully') formed in you." (Gal.4:19)

The nature of babes in Christ is to be 'tossed about' by various winds of doctrine. (Eph.4:14) This was characteristic of the Galatians, who began to waiver between law and grace. Paul,

in describing his burden for them, called it a *'travail'*, referring to the prolonged and painful process of birthing. This travail had to do with seeing them delivered from their carnal, childish traits and become established as mature believers. The goal of his travail would be "*Christ fully formed in you*" in a corporate sense. Surely this was the goal this apostle saw for all the churches and is a valid objective for the Church today.

Christ fully formed! We have yet to see the reality of it but O, let the vision of it speak to our hearts and spirits. It will indeed be the fulfillment of all glorious things ever spoken about the Church! Yes, Jesus will build His Church without fail! Let us continue to hope and believe. Let us not allow any present carnal condition or limited vision rob us of faith to enter in. The Church will indeed end up containing and expressing the fullness of Christ!

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CHAPTER 9

FULLNESS IN TYPE: DAYS OF SOLOMON

The prevailing, yet very limited, understanding of 'types and shadows' is that Jesus was the fulfillment of everything. Most Christians have heard of the animal sacrifices, the shedding of blood, the offerings, the strictness of the law, etc. and conclude that Christ has either fulfilled or done away with it all.

But, do types and shadows speak to us only of Jesus and initial salvation? Is there more for us than simply being saved and bound for heaven? What about the Church and the Kingdom and all that is related to these vital themes? As we have already noted in this study, the entire realm of prophetic words and symbolism hold much to help enlighten the pathway of the seeking believer.

In the New Testament, we are repeatedly referred to the full gamut of the prophetic for the shedding of light on our path. In 2 Peter 1:19, the apostle does not advocate our forgetting about the prophetic, but rather taking heed to its message:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts.”

I am reminded of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian church that the ‘eyes of their understanding would be enlightened’. Further light beyond what they had already seen and experienced? Yes! Light beyond the ABC’s of the gospel, the baptism in the spirit, the gifts of the Spirit? Yes, indeed! The path of the just is as a shining light which shines more and more unto the perfect day, a day when

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the fullness of Christ’s glory is revealed. Indeed, the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us!

Our proper relationship to all type, shadow and symbolism is to acknowledge and respect its prophetic character and to seek the Lord for insight and understanding. As noted earlier in this study, **every item** of food and drink plus **every special day** in Israel were shadows (*a sketch or outline*) of things to come. (Col.2:16,17) Also, Israel, itself, was a type of the Church which would follow. (1 Corinthians 10:6,11) Jesus indicated that an important ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives is ‘to show us things to come’. Are we interested?

THE COURSE OF NATURAL ISRAEL

Much enlightenment awaits those who enter into a Spirit-led study of the history of natural Israel. God's ordained pathway for natural Israel - as seen in the Old Testament - is a clear blueprint for the course of the Church. If we wish to know what God has in store for the Church, we can be greatly helped by considering Israel's history as a prophetic indicator.

What happened to Israel may be condensed into three time periods or sequence of events. These may be identified as follows:

1. DELIVERANCE
2. DEVELOPMENT
3. DESTINY FULFILLED

After 400 plus years of bondage in Egypt, Israel's hour of deliverance finally came. As death was taking all of Egypt's first-

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born, the blood of a lamb applied to their houses was bringing deliverance to God's people Israel. O, thank God for the Blood of the Lamb, Christ Jesus! The proclamation made in Egypt long, long ago is still efficacious today, "*...when I see the blood, I will pass over you....!*" Deliverance from sin and every form of bondage is a real experience today to all who will call upon the name of the Lord Jesus!

Following their deliverance, God's people were thrust into a wilderness to be tried and tested. This wilderness was designed as their arena for *development*, for upon leaving Egypt, Israel was still but a child. Although we are often in a hurry and, like the prodigal, demand a quick inheritance, God's way is that of growth and development from infancy to full manhood. In a summary of their wilderness experience in Deuteronomy 8:5, the Lord said, "*...as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God (was chastening) thee.*"

The sad story of failure in the wilderness - well known to most of us - has, nonetheless been oft repeated. The older generation, blessed by miraculous deliverance, turned to murmuring, idolatry and disobedience and perished in the wilderness, far short of their God-ordained DESTINY. It is with this scenario in view that we are admonished in Hebrews 4:1:

“Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

What was that DESTINY?

CANAAN - FULLNESS OF INHERITANCE

Upon leaving Egypt, Israel embarked on a long journey.

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Their destination was Canaan, not a type of heaven, but a type of the fullness of our inheritance in Christ. O, no, they were not to establish a permanent home on the other side of the Red Sea, nor were they to wander endlessly in the wilderness. They were to follow the cloud of His presence all the way to their final objective, the land of inheritance. And, even in Canaan, there were stages of development.

First, there was warfare under Joshua to drive out the Canaanites. Yet, some 350 years later - because of their departure from the Lord - Israel had still not fully reached its final goal. Deliverers had to be raised up periodically to keep them from losing the territory they had previously acquired. At the end of the book of Judges, they had not yet become a kingdom, neither had they entered into a place of dominion promised earlier.

Then came a king of their choosing, Saul, whom they wanted to bless them and fight their battles. After his quick

disqualification, David - the man after God's own heart - was brought on the scene. It was then that Israel's ultimate *destiny* was brought into view.

David, unlike his selfish predecessor, was a true servant of both God and the people. God chose him because He knew that David would fulfill 'all the will of God' and serve his generation by the will of God. (Acts 13:22,36) It was in the reigns of David and Solomon that Israel became fully aligned to God's purposes and fulfilled God's ultimate designs.

After being used of the Lord to subdue all Israel's enemies, David sought the Lord for the next step in His divine purpose. He began to sense in his spirit that God desired a permanent habitation

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in which He could find rest and full expression. He wholeheartedly set his affections toward building God a house. Listen to his heart:

'...I will not give sleep to mine eyes or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob...Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou, and the ark of thy strength.' (Ps.132:4,5,8)

The Lord, highly pleased with David's heart, confirms His desire for a house and chooses Zion - a prefigure of the church - as his habitation. In addition, He promises that this house would contain an abundance of blessing, provision, glory and power, even the *fullness of all that God is!* (See Psalm 132:13-18)

Though David's heart was perfectly in line with God's will, He would not allow David to actually build the house because he had been a man of war. It would be Solomon, David's

son and a man of peace, who would actually carry out the building of the house.

During the reign of Solomon, Israel at last enjoyed the fullness of their inheritance. All enemies were subdued and the land was fully theirs. God's habitation was in their midst and out of it - so to speak - flowed all manner of provision for His people.

The following is a synopsis of Israel's glorious state during this climactic period of her history. As we briefly describe this natural picture, may we see beyond the type and envision the realities God has for His Church!

** Fullness of God's presence: "...the glory of the Lord*

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had filled the house of God." (2Ch.5:14)

Can you envision the church becoming His habitation and God filling it with Himself without measure? Individually we are the temple of the Holy Ghost - a portion, an 'earnest', a foretaste of something more - but corporately we can become the 'habitation of God', something different and greater. (See Eph.2:21,22) As yet we do not see such a reality but God is not finished building His church!

** Fullness of provision: "...they lacked nothing."* (1Ki. 4:27b)

Can you envision, not just a few streams or trickles of life, but a river - such as Ezekiel saw - becoming the source of all manner of blessings, healings, miracles and deliverances? O, yes, all that was seen and recorded in Jesus' ministry will also be seen in His Body, the Church, the fullness of Him!

** Fullness of wisdom: (knowledge of God's ways): "...he*

was wiser than all men...” (1Ki.4:31)

Solomon spoke 3000 proverbs and wrote 1005 songs, which covered every subject under the sun. He also ministered from a porch of judgment and rendered verdicts on many matters. Can we envision a church that will develop in wisdom and knowledge so that God’s ways and judgments are available for all types of problems and controversies? Yes, my friends, maturity is coming!

** Fullness of power and authority: “...he had dominion ...over all the kings...”* (1Ki.4:24)

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Can we envision a Church whose ministry will shake the heavens and the earth so that both wicked principalities and evil earthly nations will be brought into subjection? Think it not strange nor too lofty, for such is indeed the calling and destiny of the Body of Christ. *“And the God of peace shall bruise (Amp: ‘crush’) satan under your feet shortly....”* (Romans 16:20) *“And the Gentiles [nations] shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”* (Isaiah 60:3)

** Fullness of joy: “...and he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart...”* (2Ch.7:10)

The context for the verse above is both the dedication of Solomon’s temple and the conclusion of the Feast of Tabernacles. The last seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Booths) were characterized by great joy, for a nation had been redeemed from her condition of uncleanness and was once again fully acceptable to the Lord. The Lord had said,

“...and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.” (Lev.23:40) [Seven is the number of perfection or

completion, thus the verse signifies a condition of complete joy.]

Although there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, a greater joy will exist when the Church reaches God's desired end.

Today, the various aspects of the Feast of Tabernacles are being fulfilled in the true Church and a people are moving steadily toward their ordained destiny. Trumpets have sounded (call to repentance), the Day of Atonement is upon us (cleansing process in a corporate sense) and days of fullness are approaching. This progression of events will climax with the presentation of the Bride to her coming King. At that time it will be declared,

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“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor unto Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready.” (Rev.19:7)

O, beloved people of God, may the eyes of our understanding be further enlightened in this hour to see what a glorious future awaits the church!

CHAPTER 10

PROPHECIES CONCERNING FULLNESS

I remember the days of Spirit visitation in my early twenties which profoundly affected my life. It was labeled ‘the Latter Rain.’

The gatherings were characterized by an awesome presence of God in which anything could happen. *‘The presence’* produced spontaneous worship, brought sinners to the altar in the middle of a meeting and released virtue for miracles of healing and deliverance without the touch of human hands. It was not a one-man show, but the Church, the Lord’s Body, was transformed from a dead formal institution to a living organism functioning in the power of His Spirit.

Those were days of intense hunger. A personal meeting with the Lord only whetted the appetite for more. Most of the churches touched by the visitation met daily. Those who were able gathered for prayer in the mornings and all came to meetings

at night. No one wanted to miss being in the awesome presence and partaking of what the Lord would say and do. The gatherings were creative and spontaneous, each one different, yet glorious. All programs, forms and rituals totally disappeared and gave way to waiting on the Holy Spirit's working.

I, myself, would read and study into the middle of the night, energized by a spiritual quickening that lingered hours after a meeting's end. There seemed to be no end to the fresh manna that was being poured out!

Of all the glorious things I saw and heard in those days, the

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most remarkable word from the prophets was this (I paraphrase):

“There shall yet be another visitation of my Spirit before the end of this age, saith the Lord, and it shall be a double portion of what you are seeing now!”

The abiding reality of that prophetic message is the paramount reason why I am involved in a study like this. Though 52 years have passed since I first heard it, the promise is still alive deep in my soul. As Peter noted concerning the Mount of Transfiguration experience, so I say in regard to God's promises for His Church: *‘...we have not followed cunningly devised fables...’!* A greater glory is coming! Whether I will live to see it or simply be used to sow a seed of promise, only the Lord knows. In all things we bow to His sovereignty.

What has followed the above promise in the last 52 years has been nothing close to a double portion of that mid-twentieth century visitation. Those few of us - still alive - who tasted of that ‘Latter Rain’ outpouring will testify that the church has been on a

downward spiral ever since. That which has been called 'revival' and 'visitation' have, at best, been just a few refreshing showers. Thus, it is with deep hunger and yearning that we search the prophetic word, believing that a greater glory awaits the church.

REFERENCES TO A DOUBLE PORTION

The term 'double portion' in the Old Testament corresponds to the term 'fullness' in the New Testament. Several interesting references to the double portion are found in the Old Testament.

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**Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac; only gifts to others. (Gen.25:5,6)*

**Jacob gave a double portion to Joseph (Gen.39:22)*

**In Israel, the first-born son received a double portion as his inheritance. (De.21:17)*

**Elisha asked for a double portion of Elijah's spirit to rest on him. (2Kings 2:9)*

An interesting and powerful thread of scripture links this truth with the glorious overcoming church. It is found in Hebrews 12:23. In this context is described the church that dwells and functions in heavenly places - Mt.Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem. This church is referred to as '***the church of the first-born***', which are written ('enrolled' - Rev.) *in heaven*'. This is none other than the church Christ purchased with His blood, a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, functioning in the fullness of the power of the Spirit!

Of the many prophecies which point to the emergence of such a church before the time of the end, let us consider for this study five of the clearest and most powerful.

A HOUSE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY

(1) ***“I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts...The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord...”*** (Haggai 2:7b,9a)

Although Haggai was speaking to those returned from Babylon’s captivity, he was carried in the Spirit to another day, the day of the Church. In the natural, no earthly edifice, not Herod’s temple or any other, could fulfill Haggai’s prophecy. The Spirit of

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the Lord took Haggai beyond the present conditions and beyond natural Israel. No, the glory referred to was not the glory of natural gold, silver or precious stones. It was the fullness of the glory of Christ!

Why can we say this?

In looking at the fuller context of Haggai’s prophecy we note that, linked with the coming glory, is the *‘shaking of the nations’* (Hag.2:7) and the *‘shaking of the heavens and the earth’* (Hag.2:6,21) As for ‘shaking the nations’, Israel would never again rise with a natural might to impact the nations as she had done in the days of Solomon. And, as for *‘shaking the heavens and the earth’*, Hebrews 12:26, a direct reference to Haggai 2:6, indicates that this would be a ministry emerging out of Zion, the church of the heavenlies! Israel, only a type of the glorious church, was never designed to address principalities and powers. But when Paul caught the vision of the church, the Spirit added, *“To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”* (Eph.3:10)

[It is of interest for our study to observe that Haggai's prophecy - quoted above - was given on the 21st day of the seventh month, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles! (Hag.2:1)]

BOTH RAINS IN THE FIRST MONTH

(2) *“Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God...and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat and the vats shall overflow with*

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wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years the locust has eaten...” (Joel 2:23,24)

The former rain and the latter rain in the same month? This surely speaks of a double portion, a time of fullness!

Many times we have prayed for ‘revival’, meaning a move of the Spirit that would bring many souls into God’s Kingdom. In church history we find that such revivals have indeed taken place,

only to fizzle out or stop short of the mark. If the church is to attain unto her God ordained destiny, we must see more than revivals that bring in souls and leave them in a state of immaturity.

The great need, even in this hour, is for the church’s new converts to grow up to become mature spiritual men. Thus the matter of the two rains coming in the same month may well speak to us of God doing a quick work in the end time, both the birthing of children (*former rain*) and their rapid maturing unto spiritual adulthood (*latter rain*).

SOMETHING PREPARED

(3) *“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the*

Lord, his going forth is prepared as the morning: and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” (Hosea 6:3)

Think of it, what we are speaking about in this study is something God has already prepared! The coming of this double portion is as sure as the coming of the morning. In His design of the church, He has purposed and ordained her to become the container of God’s fullness. Nothing can prevent this from becoming a reality; at worst, it can only be postponed. We say this

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because this promise is not based on human conjecture or any formulated theology, but on God’s *‘sure word of prophecy’*. God’s words will never pass away but abide forever. Not one word will remain unfulfilled! Let us again hear the promise and embrace it in the depths of our hearts:

“He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain...”

As we meditate further on Hosea 6:1-3, we note also the element of human responsibility. It is true that what we are speaking about must be God’s doing, yet, as always, certain conditions have to be met. We could call this the principle of *‘human cooperation with God’*. The extension of Moses’ rod preceded the opening of the Red Sea and a sequence of obediences was involved in the fall of Jericho’s walls. There are many other similar examples. Faith and obedience are *always* involved in the appropriation of God’s blessings.

What is God requiring of us concerning this prophecy?
Two things:

(1) *“Come, let us return unto the Lord...”* (verse 1)

(2) “Then shall we know, **if** we follow on to know the Lord” (verse 3)

Though easily overlooked, the little word ‘**if**’ is one of the weightiest words in the Bible. May we not ignore it.

THE NATIONS IMPACTED

(4) “**Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of**

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the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” (Isaiah 60:1-3)

There are nearly 60 quotations from Isaiah’s prophecies in the New Testament. Called the ‘Evangelical and Messianic Prophet’, this prophet speaks the language of Redemption more than any other. This is especially true in his last 27 chapters. In the triplet, 60-62, the focus is almost totally on Christ and the Church. In this portion is seen the development and arising of the Church to reach her God appointed destiny. Scanning these three chapters, we can see the glorious future God has for His Church:

* ‘...his glory shall be seen on thee...’ (60:2)

* ‘...Gentiles (nations) shall come to thy light...’ (60:3)

* ‘...the abundance of the sea (peoples) shall be converted unto thee...’ (60:5)

* ‘...they shall call thee, The city of the Lord...’ (60:14)

* ‘...thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise...’ (60:18)

* ‘...he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation

he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness...'
(61:10)

* *'And the Gentiles (nations) shall see thy righteousness
and all kings thy glory...'* (62:2)

* *'...give him no rest till He make Jerusalem a praise
in the earth.'* (62:7)

These, along with many other passages, give us a picture of
a Church marching forward in full victory to impact all the nations

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of the earth. It was Isaiah - and also Micah - who saw the House
of the Lord established in the top of the mountains in the last days
and all nations flowing unto it, ready to learn His ways and walk
in His paths ! (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1,2) At the time of this
writing, we have already received reports from our missionary
friends in East Africa that entire tribes have been saved and made
Jesus Christ the source of their wisdom and direction!

THE ULTIMATE MEASURE: FULLNESS OF CHRIST

(5) *"Till we all come...unto the measure of the stature of
the fullness of Christ."* (Eph.4:13)

Although this passage from Paul's writing might not be
considered a prophecy, we must consider it prophetic in that it
points to the church's ultimate state. Paul, by the Spirit, is
showing us what will be in the future, how things will end up. It
was not then, nor is it now an existing reality, but it will be one to
come.

Consider the phrase, *'till we all come...unto...'*. It involves
progression unto a goal. It tells us that - like Israel of old, who
journeyed from Egypt to Canaan - we, too, are on a progressive
course that leads us to a clearly defined goal. If we embrace this

prophetic vision, we will not remain in a fixed camp - in partial truth or experience - nor will we walk in circles - attempting to recapture the past - but we will move forward in linear fashion unto God's ordained objectives.

The goal as stated here is *'the fullness of Christ'*. The word *fullness*, coming from the Greek word *'pleroma'*, means *'complete, lacking nothing'*! In the days of Solomon it was said they lacked nothing. The same was true of the church in the

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book of Acts.

Can we believe that the church can be restored to such a state?

Can we believe that God by His Holy Spirit can so constitute Christ in us corporately that all manner of provision will become available to meet every possible need?

Can we believe that the church moving in the fullness of Christ will impact the nations?

Can we believe God for such an awesome work?

It is recorded that an angel once spoke to a young virgin and told her that the Son of God would be formed in her womb.

Though puzzled and overwhelmed, she responded,

"...be it unto me according to thy word..."

Once again, God is speaking to a virgin church.

Study booklets by the same author:

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