

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

Dr. George O. Wood

Setting aside the time to look at the ministry of the Spirit in our lives, the presence of the Spirit, the power of the Spirit. The last couple of Sunday nights I have dealt along the theme of giving an apologetic, a defense of why we say what we say from the scripture on the ministry of the Spirit and Pentecostal empowerment. My line of approach this evening will not be so much on an apologetic but I'm going to try to focus in on just one phrase out of Acts 2:1. It is the phrase in the New International Version, which is translated "When the day of Pentecost came."

It reads very straight. One of the things you have when a translation tries to become very clear and readable to all is that sometimes you may lose the distinctive flavor of a verb in the original which is uniquely employed in a particular text. There are a number of words that could be used in Greek for the word "come". The most common would be a word that Luke does not use here. He uses instead a very unique term, which literally translated goes something like this "And in the filling up of the day of Pentecost." The King James translation puts it "When the day of Pentecost had fully come."

In "the filling up of the day of Pentecost" seems to indicate some sort of process. There are three times in the New Testament where this specific verb is used. All three times by the gospel of Luke. Used and translated here in 2:1 as the word "came." "Filling up" is the more precise meaning for it.

It is used in Luke 8:23 when the disciples were in a storm at sea. The text of our Bible says the boat was being swamped. Actually the boat was *filling up*. What was it filling up with? Water from the lake of Galilee. It was getting so full it was in danger of sinking.

The word is used by Luke in 9:51 when he notes that Jesus' time of public ministry was now going to undergo a transition and Jesus was going to set his face to go to Jerusalem. Luke says "It came to pass in the days of the receiving him up." I'm translating it very woodenly and very literally. What Luke is saying in this passage is that the day of Jesus being received up into heaven, that is his earthly ministry being completed, those days were filling up. And in the filling up of those days Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem. Again Luke in 2:1 employs the term. "In the filling up of the day of Pentecost there came..." then the action of Acts 2 follows.

There's something here about the day of Pentecost is marked in terms of its fulfilling quality. It is something, which is being filled up. I would submit that there's something about Pentecost which only began to be filled up on the day of Pentecost and as long as there are Christians on earth prior to the return of the Lord, Pentecost will continue to be filled up until it is full at the coming of the Lord.

That's the kind of thesis I set before you and I want to illustrate it for just a moment.

If you could imagine this pitcher as containing all of what is in God's heart for what Pentecost as a festival meant. This is all the truth that Pentecost means. A much smaller container represents the Old Testament festival of Pentecost. God gave the Feast of Pentecost in the Old Testament to the community of Israel but within the life of Israel it could only when the meaning of

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

Pentecost was poured into it, in the Old Testament era, it could only contain *so much* of Pentecost. That is Pentecost, the truth that God has for it could not be fulfilled within the Old Testament because the container simply wasn't large enough to take it. What you have in the New Testament though is this statement by Luke. "In the filling up of the day of Pentecost," imagine another container, this time a container that was big enough to receive all the truth and meaning that God had originally intended in the day of Pentecost in the giving of it. It's in that filling up of the day of Pentecost that we are to really begin looking at what a Pentecostal experience means.

The word "Pentecost" was around long before Acts 2. It was given almost a millenium and a half before. In that 1400 years from Moses and the giving of the Feast of Pentecost until the day of Pentecost the Pentecost had never been fulfilled. It begins to be fulfilled though on the Day of Pentecost.

I want to ask the question, What is the meaning of Pentecost? What is it from the scripture? How do we encounter it before we ever come to the book of Acts?

For an examination of what Pentecost is you have to go back to the Old Testament and Leviticus 23. There Pentecost is set before us as a festival originally of the people of Israel as a celebration. It was not a festival that was just kept by itself without association of other things. But in Leviticus 23 we have detailed for us the keeping of seven different holidays – holy days or festivals – that the Lord wanted his people to have.

In America we have basically ten holidays. We kind of disperse them throughout the year. Leviticus 23 God ordained a system whereby the children of Israel were to have periodic times of festivity. Every week there was to be a day off out of every seven. That's how the chapter begins. Then the Lord indicates after that a period of seven feasts which someone has called God's calendar of time. They are feasts, which while in their intent were employed as festivals within the history of the children of Israel and still today are kept by Jewish people. At the same time while they were first for that purpose they were to have a later and deeper and spiritual and symbolic significance in the life of the body of Christ. You read a number of times in Leviticus 23 that the feasts were kept as a perpetual remembrance before the Lord. I understand perpetual remembrance not to end with Christ's ministry but we keep the feast in a perpetual way through the means by which the New Testament has provided for us to keep these feasts.

Pentecost as a celebration, as a festival cannot be separated from the context of God's calendar of time. I think when you look at how the Israelites move through the year and they have these seven festivals God put them in the scriptures sort of as a prophetic reminder that all of human history is moving through these feasts in the same sequence there in the book of Leviticus. Ultimately as we begin with the feast of the Passover human history will end with the feast of the ingathering or the Feast of Tabernacles.

Let me try to go through that. Rabbi Hirsh talks about how important festivals are as a way of getting hold of God as compared to other means we have of getting in touch with the Lord. He says, "The priests can visit only a few. Priests and monuments, temples and altars must wait until you come to them. You are most in need of them precisely when you do not come to them. When you do not feel yourself drawn to the sanctuary, when misery dooms you to consolation you do not feel like coming. Not so these festivals of time [referring to Leviticus 23]. They do

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

not wait until you come to them. They come to you. You cannot refuse them. They are able to find you when immersed in the full career of enjoyment or the lonely stillness of the prison or the painful bed of sickness. Everywhere they hand you the word of God admonishing, warning, inspiring and comforting. Ever present like the God who sends them.

Time approaches all of us contemporaneously. In one moment in the east and in the west in the south and north it fills millions of all ages and all stations with the same feeling and thought.” Just like Christmas does. We don’t come to Christmas. It comes to us and catches us wherever we are at and speaks to us of God’s great love for us.

These festivals of Leviticus 23 were set by God to always come to God’s people and to remind them even perhaps at times when they didn’t want to be reminded or times when they didn’t feel like they could come to the Lord. Nevertheless to come to them and say, Here’s God’s grace and here’s God’s love.

The first fast that was required for celebration is in Leviticus 23:5, the Feast of Passover. This occurred in March or April of every year. It was to be celebrated on the fourteenth day. It commemorates the time when the Lord found Israel in bondage in Egypt and where a lamb was provided. Whereby a substitute was given so that the eldest son did not need to die. It was the classic illustration of atonement. Death was averted because of the death of a sacrificial lamb. The first Passover was celebrated when God’s people were in bondage in Egypt.

That is a classic description in the Christian sense of our Passover – Christ comes to us. When does Christ come to us? He comes to us when we are in Egypt. Christ comes to us not when we are in Canaan land. Not when we have found the promised Christian faith. But when we are captive. Christ comes to us when we are sinners. Christ comes to us with the offer of pardon. He says “Whoever applies the blood of the sacrifice that I have made upon the door posts of their life, the angel of death will pass over and furthermore I will lead them out of the bondage of Egypt into the joy of My Promised Land. I will lead you out of the night into the light. I will lead you out of sin into righteousness. I will lead you out of captivity into freedom.” This is the meaning of Passover.

The early Christians understood that the cup of their religious experience never exhausted what was in Passover. What did exhaust the meaning of Passover? Jesus Christ. Only then was the full content and meaning of the Passover fulfilled. That’s why Paul says to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 5:7 “Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed.”

Therefore we keep the feast of Passover as believers. We keep it not so much once a year. But we keep it every day in our hearts. It is a perpetual observance for us. Of course every time we take communion as well we are remembering. We’re taking an Old Testament festival and we’re translating it into our experience and saying, Christ found us in captivity and bondage and brought us out. And I am now bringing us into the Promised Land.

The second feast described in Leviticus 23 is the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It started on the evening of the Passover Sabbath and then continued for a whole week. It was very closely connected with the Sabbath. At that time there was to be no leaven at all in the house. All the leaven was to be purged. Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 talks about the significance of this for believers as a type of sanctification or holiness in life. He tells these Corinthians that they are to

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

purge out the old leaven and not to have that leaven of malice. But instead have the peace of God. Purge out the leaven – leaven being a type of sin in life.

When the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened bread are put together they stand something like this: the Feast of Passover represents what God does for us in redemption. The Feast of Unleavened bread then represents the activity that we begin to engage in as a result of what God has done for us. God has redeemed us and saved our life from death. Therefore as a next step we begin to look in a willful manner at what is in our life that doesn't belong there and we put it out. In the Old Testament this was represented as sin that was being pushed out. Paul understands it so in 1 Corinthians 7.

Notice the divine order. It's not you deal with sin first and then God will redeem you. It's, You are redeemed, now deal with what is wrong in your life.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 is saying to believers, You also keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. When do you keep it? One specific week a year? No. He's saying you keep it all the time.

I'm saying that the Feast of Passover understood in the New Testament sense for Christian is not a once a year observance. It is a perpetual observance every time we think about what Christ has done for us. We remember what he has done. It's commemorated physically when we take communion.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread we don't find Paul saying once a year go through and purge out malice in your life. Once a year have a kind of Holy Week and the rest of the year you can be as mean as you please. No. The Feast of Unleavened Bread is a perpetual sort of observance. Continually deal with this leaven that wants to invade your life.

The third feast from Leviticus 23 is the Feast of First fruits, Leviticus 23:9-14. What was this? This to me is one of the most intriguing feasts. I never knew what first fruits was. I always thought when I think of fruits – bananas, apples, oranges... those are fruits to me. The Feast of First Fruits. They waved them before the Lord. When you read the Old Testament you realize that First Fruits what really was offered was grain. It wasn't fruit at all. It's fruit used in the broad way meaning the product of the increase of the soil, the product of seed. Waving before God symbolically presented it to God and was a symbolic way of giving thanks to God for what he had given.

It was the practice that the first day after Passover Sabbath the priests would go into a standing barley crop and take his knife and tie a sheaf together [we know this to be the custom during the time of Jesus as well.] A standing sheaf of barley and he cut it down. Then present that to God. In fact it was the law in the Old Testament that no one could eat of any product of that spring harvest until that first standing stalk of barley grain had been cut down and offered to God. That was the Old Testament way of saying the first always belongs to God. When the first has been given to God then you can eat of the rest of it. Furthermore in Joshua 5:11-12 when this feast of first fruits was kept, the first year that Israel was in the Promised Land the manna stopped. The day they celebrated the Feast of First Fruits the old way of eating ended. Now the soil was producing and giving grain.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

What significance does that have? Christ again from the dead on the morning of Feast of the First Fruit. There are two events happening in Jerusalem the morning Jesus raised from the dead. One event was this: the high priest with his assistants goes out and comes to a pre-selected field established ceremonially, ritually for this purpose. At the break of the day as the sun is rising, cuts down that first standing stalk of grain in order to bring it back to the temple and with ceremony, offer it as a wave offering to God indicating that the rest of the harvest belongs to him. It's his product. Now that that first sheaf of grain has been offered now it's the privilege of everyone else to enter in on the product of what has been reaped and themselves personally taste and enjoy.

While the high priest is doing that, Jesus is rising from the dead.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, specifically makes reference to this feast when he says in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruit of those that have fallen asleep. What does this mean? It means that no one can taste of life until Jesus had tasted of it. Once Jesus is offered unto God and is raised again from the dead what is then possible for us? It is possible for us to enter a whole new realm of harvest and rejoicing. Because we then taste the benefits which we have never been able to taste before until the first fruit had been given to God. When the first fruit is given to God then we all come in and we follow after the first fruit of the Lord. This is the Feast of First Fruits.

Now on the first day of the week is the great phrase in John 20:1. The Feast of First Fruits.

Do we keep the resurrection of the Lord Jesus as a festival only one day out of every year? No. It's kept perpetually in our heart. That Old Testament observance that was meant to be celebrated once a year is in the believing age transformed again into a moment by moment experience. Just like Passover. Just like unleavened bread. So also the Feast of First Fruits. Christ is raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who sleep.

Now we come to the fourth festival, Leviticus 23:15-21. The Festival of Pentecost. Or the Festival of Weeks. This festival has two names. Pentecost coming from the Greek word meaning fiftieth. Because the Feast of Pentecost occurred fifty days after Passover Sabbath. It is also called the Feast of Weeks because there was a period of seven weeks from the day after Passover Sabbath until the day of Pentecost.

What was the significance in the Old Testament of the Feast of Pentecost? Here is the divine truth that God intends forever in the Feast of Pentecost. Just like the Lord God from the beginning of creation knew that the feast of Passover that in that picture of the Feast of Passover was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In the picture of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was the cleansing out of sin of his people of all ages. In that picture, the Feast of First Fruits, is not only just the offering of grain to God but the resurrection of his Son from the dead on the Day of the Feast of First Fruits.

What about the Old Testament feast of Pentecost? Did the Old Testament experience of Pentecost drain what was in the picture? Not at all. Here was what was in the Old Testament picture of the Feast of Pentecost. It basically was associated with harvest. Later in the 1st century after Christ many within the Jewish realm of observance began to connect the Feast of Pentecost with the date of the giving of the law at Sinai. But this is a development after Christ

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

not before Christ. So we'll just deal with how Pentecost was understood before Christ. It had to do with the harvest. Specifically it had to do with the spring harvest. Specifically in association with the spring harvest it had to do with two products. The Feast of Pentecost involved bringing in an offering on the day of Pentecost of loaves that are baked with leaven. A finished product. Remember the Feast of First Fruits only involved grain, which hadn't been cooked at all. It was raw. But the feast of Pentecost involved a baked loaf with leaven.

You know from the Old Testament that it's very strange to offer an offering to God with leaven. In fact this is the only offering I can think of in the Old Testament that has leaven in it and was approved. I think there's prophetic symbolism there. This represents the offering of our lives to God. We have some leaven in us.

It marked the completion of the harvest, the barley harvest. And also something else happened at the Feast of the Pentecost. There was a giving to God at Pentecost in addition to the baked loaves, which represented the finished product. There was a giving to God of the first fruit of the wheat product. From Pentecost on the rest of the mopping up operation for the spring harvest wheat harvest was taking place. Pentecost was intended as a great celebration of rejoicing because the spring harvest crops were in. That's what Pentecost was. It was an agricultural festival, which celebrated the fact that God had given to the soil of the earth fruitfulness. And the people were blessed because there was something to eat and because for the next number of months in their life they would have life and the famine would be held at bay. Day to day existence people had at times because of drought or plague not have enough to eat when the Feast of Pentecost was a fruitful harvest then it was a time of great celebration because existence was guaranteed. Fruitfulness and life was assured. God had given the grain.

There were some things that could dim the joy of Pentecost. We find those things in the book of Joel. Joel is probably referring to the Feast of Tabernacles it's striking to see what can ruin a festival of thanksgiving.

Drought can ruin. If you have drought you don't have crops. It's not a very joyous Feast of Pentecost if the drought has come along and dried up all the grain crops. That's why you need the first and the later rain in Joel. The first rain is the rain that gets the seed started. The later rain is just enough rain before the crop matures to bring it sufficiently to maturity.

Not only drought, but bugs – locusts chomping away at the product.

Plant disease, mildew could ruin the Feast of Pentecost. Hot winds could also ruin the feast of Pentecost by destroying the crops. And war could mess up the feast of Pentecost because in war what would people do? They took the dried grain that was laying on the threshing floor and set it on fire. Samson had a great ability to do this in Judges 15. He messed up the Philistine harvest real bad when he set it all on fire and set those foxes loose going through the harvest.

I see spiritual significance in this by the way. Why is it that sometimes God's people do not experience the richness of the Pentecost for them? Spiritual drought? Times of great dryness in your own life. You've not come to the Lord and you feel like the reign of his presence is just a million miles away.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

Or how about bugs – parasitic forms of life that chomp on us from the world and want to grab out attention and so infiltrate our life that it messes up our meditative life and actions.

How about hot winds? Adversity.

How about war? Strife between another person and you drying up the celebration of Pentecost.

That's what Pentecost meant in the Old Testament. It was giving to God thanks for the harvest, the spring harvest.

These four festivals from Passover to Pentecost embraced a period of seven weeks. They occurred in the spring. What is true for the Christian if the Christian perpetually celebrates Passover, if the Christian perpetually celebrates the Feast of Unleavened Bread, if he perpetually celebrates the Feast of First Fruits, does he not also perpetually celebrate the Feast of Pentecost?

I've read those who have said the Feast of Pentecost, the day of Pentecost was for the apostolic age and more specifically it was for the New Testament apostles experience. But wait: The text of Acts says "In the filling up of the day of Pentecost." As I understand it the Passover work of Christ is still going on in the redemption of God's people, still coming in. And we're still keeping the Passover. Did not the early church keep the Passover? Yes. Do not we? Yes. Did not the early church keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Yes. Do not we? Yes. Did they not keep the Feast of Fruit fruits? Yes. Do not we? Yes. Do they not keep the Feast of Pentecost? Yes. Do not we?

No? That was for them and not us? Why? If the other three feasts were for them and us why is not the fourth feast for them and us?

I'll leave Pentecost for a moment. I'll come back to it. I want to set the context though how Pentecost in God's calendar of time in Leviticus 23 presents to us a prophetic picture of the whole course of human existence and the human race. The human race from God's point of view is regeneration. It starts, it occurs with the Passover, with the offering of a lamb for our sins.

There is though three more feasts coming in Leviticus 23.

The next feast is the Feast of Trumpets. Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year. Leviticus 23:25. This was followed by the Feast of Atonement and then followed shortly by the Feast of Booths or the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Trumpets was a time for the assembly of Israel. It was recognition that harvest time was at hand. It was recognition that the summer was past. Jeremiah 8 in a pathetic chapter laments over the fact that the harvest is past. "The summer is ended and we are not saved."

What was the significance of the Feast of Trumpets for Israel? Isaiah 27:12-13. The Lord looks down the road to the future and says "In that day the Lord will thresh from the flowing of Euphrates to the wadi of Egypt [a tremendous swath of land, embracing Iraq, Syria, Israel, Egypt] and the Israelites will be gathered up one by one and in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who are perishing in Assyria and those who are being exiled in Egypt will come

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

and worship the Lord on the holy mountain of Jerusalem.” This appears to be a reference to the feast of trumpets which is a call for God’s people to gather.

Matthew 32:21 Jesus talks about his church and the trumpet will sound. Again “trumpet” is associated with gathering. In biblical times when a trumpet is sounded it’s either cause for alarm or it’s a gathering of people. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 talks but the last trumpet. I would submit to you that from the New Testament point of view the Feast of Trumpets, the gathering of God’s people for his old covenant people, the people of Israel means their re-gathering into a place where the Day of Atonement can be poured forth. And for his body, his church, it means the gathering up to himself.

Atonement follows, Yom Kippur, Leviticus 23:26-32. Israel had never kept the Feast of Yom Kippur in celebration of the atonement of Jesus Christ. Israel has kept Yom Kippur from an Old Testament point of view. The high priest could go into the Holy of Holies one day out of year. That was on Yom Kippur. But Israel has never kept Yom Kippur in celebration of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. When will Yom Kippur be kept? Zachariah tells us 10:10-13 “I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a Spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced and mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a first born son. On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great ... they will mourn each clan by itself with their wives by themselves.” A time of mourning, a time of cleansing. They will look up on him whom they have pierced.

Paul in Romans 11 says that even all Israel will be saved. Somehow there has yet to be a fulfillment of these verses in Romans 11 and Zachariah 12 which look forward to a time when Israel keeps the true significance of Yom Kippur which relates to the atonement of Christ.

The final feast is the Feast of Booth or Tabernacles. So called because the people got out and for one solid week lived in overnight shelters commemorating the wondering of the people of God in the wilderness and the fellowship with God in that time. The Feast of Tabernacles was the most joyous celebration of all the seven because the fall harvest was in. It commemorated the removal of the sin of Israel. Zachariah 14:16 talks about the fact that in that day after the cleansing, this fountain of cleansing has been opened for the house of David, from that time on the Feast of Tabernacles will be kept every year.

Revelation 21:3 says that “The tabernacle of God is with men and they shall be his people.”

What I’m trying to submit to you is that the first four feasts from a New Testament – Passover through Pentecost – have been already fulfilled. But the last three feasts – Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Booths or Tabernacles are yet to come. The first four feasts are grouped in a cluster of seven weeks around springtime. The last three feasts are grouped in a cluster in the September, October period, which marked the fall time before the approaching winter. I think therefore they represent for us God’s calendar of time. They’re meant to be perpetually kept feasts according to Leviticus 23:14 and 21.

Put that all in context to the Day of Pentecost being fulfilled. What is Pentecost? It is the celebration of the spring harvest. In contrast to the Feast of Booths or Tabernacles which is the celebration of the harvest of fall after which time the dwelling of God is with his people and we shall be with him forever. Pentecost is meant as a perpetual feast simply to be kept in our

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

Christian experience simply because of the fact that we are still in that time of Pentecost prophetically. We have not yet come to the feast of trumpets. We have not yet come to the feast of atonement in the sense of Israel keeping atonement in remembrance of Christ. We've not yet come to dwelling eternally with God. But we have come from Passover on the prophetic calendar through Pentecost. Pentecost is meant for us to be kept.

It seems to me this is what Peter is saying when in Acts 2 he gets up and, in explaining what has happened on the day of Pentecost, quotes the prophet Joel, verse 16 "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. In the last days God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.' Then he goes on to say 'Your sons and your daughters will prophecy. Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants both men and women I will pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophecy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below. Blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.'"

Has the Spirit of God beginning with Pentecost begun to be poured out on all people? Yes. Have there no been cataclysmic wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, have people seen in the heavens blood and fires and billows of smoke? Has the sun been turned to darkness and the moon into blood? No. These signs which attend the coming of the Lord prophesied in Matthew 24 have not yet occurred.

What is Peter doing here in quoting Joel 2? He's saying the whole era of the Spirit is marked by two movements. On the one hand, verse 17-18, the a.m. these are the a.m. of the last days. The morning of the last days. The last days begin when? On the day of Pentecost with the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh. When does the last days end? The p.m. with cataclysmic signs that will accompany the return of the Lord.

If I take p.m. for verses 19-20 what I have when I look at these 7 feasts of Leviticus 23 is the first four feasts are in the a.m. from Passover through Pentecost. The last three feasts are in the p.m. they're associated with cataclysmic signs and the ending of the earth itself and the coming of the Son of man.

Putting all this in context we come back to the Day of Pentecost. At Pentecost there was offered to God, two agricultural products – the baked loaf and the first fruits of the new wheat harvest. What happens at Pentecost? In a sense I think the 120 on the Day of Pentecost represented if you will, the three years of labor that Jesus had with his disciples had reached its maturing moment. They now become the core around which his church is built. Basically Jesus' ministry with them has had its power and effect and now the way Jesus has been present to them, the Spirit will be present to them. They represent the product already of Christ's work.

Yet while they are in one sense the product of his harvest in another very real sense there is a harvest that is going on all around about them. That harvest begins on the Day of Pentecost with three thousand persons that are brought into the faith. The first fruits of all the harvest that is yet to come before the return of the Lord. Pentecost in a spiritual significance is still a feast of harvest. It is a feast in a spiritual sense which marks the product of Christ's own harvest in his flesh where he ministered and labored with people one on one and with that small group which became the 120. It also marks the beginning of a fantastically new dimension to the harvest. A

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit

harvest which in that day 3000 are added to the church. Pentecost is somehow affiliated with the harvest. Because it is affiliated with the harvest it is occasion of tremendous joy. The harvest has been gathered in. God has granted the increase.

I would like all of this with Acts 1:8 which again explains the significance of the Pentecost experience and the dimension of being baptized in the Spirit. “You will receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” What is the power for? The power has to do with the harvest. It has to do with the deepest significance of Pentecost, of presenting the harvest to God. Those who are the products of the harvest and who will be the workers in the harvest receive the blessing of the Spirit of God in order to participate in bringing that harvest to God. And celebrating in God’s presence what he has done in causing that life to come. In a very real way the workers have only reaped the harvest which God has sown. Christ has sown the harvest with his blood on the cross. And the workers have simply announced what the Lord has done and the church reaps the fruit of Christ’s work – the feast of Pentecost.

When we understand that Pentecost has to do with witness and with power to speak to the world. Then we can begin to look to other dimensions of Pentecost such as interior spiritual experience. Ecstatic utterance in tongues and the like revelations of the Spirit which are brought with that experience. But until we provide that basic foundational doctrinal base from the scripture that Pentecost is associated with witness and the harvest all of our speaking in tongues and the like is simply going through ecstatic religious utterance which may not have any other impact but on us. The Lord wants us to be impacted but he wants more than us to be impacted. He wants somehow to transform us into an impact in the world. We all need that. Coming from a Pentecost sense we have made a theological error in associating the baptism as a once for all kind of experience. Whereas the feast of Pentecost is something we are to keep perpetually. Not that we keep being re-baptized in the Spirit every time but it’s that we remain full of the Spirit participating in the work of the harvest.

[end of tape]