

CHAPTER 5

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

The Feast of Pentecost was the second of Israel's three annual Feasts. As the Scriptures reveal, the Feast is also called the Feast of Harvest, of Firstfruits, or of Weeks. Pentecost is the New Testament name, and is so called because Pentecost means "fiftieth." An examination of Lev. 23:15,16 will reveal why the Feast is called Fiftieth. It was because the Feast began on the fiftieth day after the Passover sabbath, or "the morrow after the seventh sabbath." This, of course, parallels exactly with the fulfillment of the type in the New Testament. When Christ arose from the dead. He continued with the disciples for the space of forty days, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3). Then He departed into Heaven, and after ten days (at the time of Israel's Feast of Pentecost), He sent forth the Holy Ghost upon the waiting disciples.

THIS IS THE AGE OF PENTECOST

Pentecost! What a vast subject looms before us as we contemplate the tremendous implications of the word! Many books have been written on the power and glory of this Feast, and men who have appropriated in some measure the experience of Pentecost have proved by the Word and by experience its reality, and the Word has been confirmed with signs following. We could not begin to adequately explain the meaning of the Feast in this study, nor is it our intention to do so. Our prime concern is to prepare the ground for truth concerning the Feast of Tabernacles, which surpasses the glory of Pentecost even as the noon-day surpasses the glory of early dawn. How strange, it seems, that good men of God who have discerned by the Spirit the fulfillment of Passover and Pentecost in the Church, should now close the door to further revelation and deny that the last Feast has any application to our day and age! At the turn of this century, when God began to restore pentecost -and right up to the present time, many evangelical circles have gone to considerable trouble in an attempt to prove that Pentecost was an event of ancient history, and that its power and glory were not for present-day experience. But a large group of hungry souls have proved by the Word and by experience that Pentecost was and is for personal appropriation by faith, just as the Passover was. Therefore let us not stop at the Passover; but let us go on to enjoy the fruits for which Christ died, even the glories of Pentecost. And let us not stop at this partial restoration of Pentecost, but let us go on to enjoy the fulness of the Pentecostal experience as recorded in the Book of Acts. And even then, let us not stop at the fulness of Pentecost, but let us go on to appropriate and experience the glories of the Feast of Tabernacles - for which Pentecost has paved the way.

Even among the saints who are hungering and thirsting for more of God there is a tendency to believe that a restoration of early apostolic Pentecost is the hope of the Church, and many will be satisfied with a return of apostolic power and blessing. True, we have a long way to go yet to equal the power and glory of the early

Church; but that power and glory is by no means the sum and substance of genuine Christianity. That was Pentecost in the early hours of dawn; the Church must go on to the Pentecost of the noon-day sun; and then on, and on, and on to the Feast of Tabernacles, which will utterly eclipse the glory of any people in any past dispensation. Of course, we must enter into this glorious experience one step at a time. And we will certainly have to enter fully into the glory of Pentecost before we can hope to enter the glory of Tabernacles. Our generation has had a foretaste of Pentecost, that is true. But we have by no means seen the fulness of the Pentecostal experience, as recorded in the Book of Acts, when tongues like as of fire came down and sat upon each of the disciples, and they were given the ability to speak the languages of all nations.

But thank God, He is continuing the great work of restoration which He began in the days of Luther. The former foundations must be relaid, the gates re-established, and the walls of the Temple re-erected. "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept: line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said. This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: **yet they would not hear.**" (Isa. 28:10-12).

An examination of the passages concerning the typical Pentecost are most enlightening, especially in view of the real spiritual Pentecost in the New Testament. Having a historical record of the actual fulfillment of the Feast, it is comparatively easy for us to look back into the type, and see exactly what it was intended to signify.

PENTECOST WAS A NEW FEAST

"Ye shall offer a new meat (meal) offering unto the LORD." (Lev. 23:17). The Passover was wonderful - and an experimental appropriation of the Passover produces pardon and justification from all our sins. But that is really a negative experience: the old is taken away, sins are forgiven, the past life is forgotten, and the sinner is left with a clean record before God and ready to start a new life. In conformity with this happy state, therefore, the God of grace and glory invites the justified man to receive a new experience in the Holy Spirit, whereby he can offer a "**new** .. offering unto the LORD" He is invited to drink into God's Spirit, and be baptized with the Holy Ghost. In justification he is pardoned; in this new experience he is empowered for service. The early disciples were cleansed by the Word which Jesus had spoken unto them during His earthly ministry. (Jn. 15:3). Furthermore, on resurrection day "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost." (Jn. 20:22). The original Greek of the word "receive ye" proves conclusively that right there and then the Spirit of God entered into the disciples - and that imparted life brought them into the experience which we call regeneration or new birth. Just as truly as God in the beginning breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life and man "became a living soul," - so now the Last Adam (who had now become, by virtue of His death and resurrection, a 'life-giving Spirit' - 1 Cor. 15:45) - so now the Last Adam breathed into the disciples the breath of spiritual

life, and they passed experimentally from death unto life.

This experience, however, was not sufficient by way of equipping them for the great and mighty tasks which lay just ahead of them; and so the Lord "commanded that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts 1:4,5). And so they tarried in Jerusalem for the "promise of the Father," and after ten days the Holy Ghost came down upon them, and literally revolutionized their whole concept of life and service by transforming weak and humble vessels into the mighty apostles of truth and power and authority.

PENTECOST WAS A HARVEST FEAST

In one instance it is called "the feast of harvest." (Ex. 23:16). It was so called because they had just completed the harvesting of their grain. The sheaf had already been waved before the Lord fifty days before, heralding the coming of the harvest; and now the harvest time had come. And what a tremendous harvest there was! Peter preached his dynamic sermon under the "dunamis," the "power" of the Holy Ghost, and some three thousand souls were added to the disciples. A few days later there was another harvest, and we are told "the number of the men was about five thousand." (Acts 4:4) - to say nothing of the hundreds or thousands of women and children who also must have believed at the same time. The revival continued with ever-increasing power from day to day, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." (Acts 5:14). Great and mighty signs and miracles were wrought amongst the people, until - in very short order - Jerusalem, and then Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the earth literally rocked under the mighty impact of the Holy Ghost through His anointed ministers. Truly the Day of Pentecost was a great Day ... but the Day is not finished yet... that was but the dawning of the Day. We have yet to witness the noonday splendour of the Feast of Pentecost.

PENTECOST SIGNIFIES THE FORMATION OF THE BODY

"Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the **firstfruits** unto the LORD" (Lev. 23:17). The loaves of bread would speak to us of God's people in union with Christ. "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. 10:17). The number "two" is quite significant in that it refers to Christ in the fulness of His Body. It would be interesting to follow the meaning of the number "two" through the Scriptures. There is Adam and Eve, two and yet, one, - Eve being the complement, the likeness, the counterpart of Adam. Then there is the sun and moon - the latter being the glory of the former, having no light of its own. Then there were two rows of bread on the table of shewbread in the holy place of the tabernacle; and the two tables of stone in the ark of the covenant - the law written first on the heart and mind of the only begotten Son, and finally on the heart and mind of His people. Then there were the two trumpets that were used for the calling of

the assembly and for the journeying of the camps. And so we read concerning Christ and His Body, that He died and rose again that He might "make in Himself of twain one new man." (Eph. 2:15).

Hence in the "two" loaves of this new meal-offering we have the completion of this new Body of believers known as the Church, wherein all the believers - Jew and Gentile alike - are "made... one" by the grace and Spirit of Christ. (Eph. 2:14). The grain had been harvested, and now instead of a sheaf we have two loaves, a body of believers. The loaves were "baked with leaven" because from the time of Pentecost right until now, the Church of Christ has never been really free from division, sectarianism, and carnality. How wonderful it is to know that God knew exactly what the Church would be like throughout her long history, and made the type to fit accordingly!

PENTECOST SIGNIFIES THE GATHERING OF THE FIRSTFRUITS

Pentecost signifies a great harvest, that is true. But compared to the coming glory, it is really but a harvest of firstfruits. "The feast of harvest, the **firstfruits** of thy labours ..." (Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:17). And so Christ as the Sheaf that was waved, was the "firstfruits" of a great harvest to follow. Pentecost is that harvest. But even the harvest of Pentecost is the firstfruits of the coming harvest of the Feast of Tabernacles! Pentecost is wonderful, as we shall discover - when the real fulness of this experience is restored to the Church. But wonderful as it is, Pentecost is but the firstfruits of great and mighty things awaiting the Church of Jesus Christ in the Feast of Tabernacles.

PENTECOSTAL POWER

If there was to be a great ingathering of souls at Pentecost then truly it would require the power of the Holy Ghost to accomplish so great a task. Therefore God imparted not only great miracle-working power, but a new language to the people - that men of all nations might hear the wonderful works of God proclaimed in their own tongue, and be won to Christ. This was a day when a "**new** meal-offering" was to be presented to the Lord; hence God imparted a **new** language. See what a great secret remained locked up in the counsels of God until the Day of Pentecost was revealed! For if it was God's plan that the nations should at first be scattered abroad over the face of the earth by means of the confusion of languages - why should it be thought incredible that God should now restore the gift of languages to His disciples, that they might preach the Gospel in the tongues of many nations, and reverse the order (or shall we say the disorder) of Babel? And that is exactly what the all-wise God did. In the beginning He confused the languages of the disobedient, to scatter them over the face of the earth and make many nations out of one. (Gen. 11:1-9). But now in the time of the harvest, God in grace and wisdom imparts to His own disciples the gift of languages (languages which came into being because of Babel), that He might gather together a people for His name, and **create one holy nation** out of the midst of many nations - a nation that would serve Him in obedience and love and unity, even the holy nation and the holy priesthood of the Church. (Some would object to the statement that God gave His disciples

the gift of languages to preach the Gospel to the nations. They insist that the disciples declared "the wonderful works of God," and not the Gospel! (As if there was a more "wonderful" work of God than the story of redeeming Grace!)

And so the pattern of Pentecost takes on real meaning. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come (was being fulfilled), they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind (a violent impetuous blowing), and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." (Acts 2:1-6).

THE DISORDER OF BABEL REVERSED

Notice the contrast between Pentecost and Babel. There the Lord did "**confound** the language of all the earth," but here at Pentecost harmony is restored by the gift of languages, and the people are "**confounded**." At Babel the people were "**confounded**" because they could not understand the language of their own fellow-workmen and fellow-citizens; here at Pentecost the people are "**confounded**" because they can actually hear and understand the tongue of foreigners! O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! Shall a God of wisdom and power bring judgment upon the nations, and shall He not bring grace? Shall He curse and not bless? Shall He slay and not make alive? And shall He not bring grace out of the midst of judgment, and blessing out of cursing, and life out of death? Should we deem it an incredible thing therefore, that in the fulness of the Pentecostal experience the saints of God shall receive a gift of languages so perfect and so real and so genuine, that just as the people of Babel were "**confounded**" by hearing strange languages they could not understand, - so now in the day of restoration the people of Babel shall be "**confounded**," but this time even unto repentance, by hearing their own language from the lips of foreigners?

Thank God for the truth of Pentecost, and for the hope and confidence that the Lord has implanted in the hearts of His people, that we are yet to receive and experience a real Pentecostal experience, when the saints of God shall go forth into the world preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ in all the languages of the heathen. Praise His Name!

But even then we must go on, and on, and on ... on from Pentecost to the greatest Feast of the Church, the Feast of Tabernacles.