

Why Pentecost? Day of Pentecost Rick Railston

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Back in 1957, Mr. Armstrong said, and I'll quote him now, "God's purpose in giving His church His annual holy days was to keep His children constantly in the true understanding of God's great plan." I've got the book that states that. It's dated 1957, titled God's Holy Days. What he said then holds every bit as true today.

As we are all here, we understand why we are here, and that is to celebrate Pentecost. It's variously called Feast of First Fruits or Feast of Weeks, but you can't find those terms in the Bible. That's a common term for this day. This day is unique because it has several meanings, not just one meaning. What we want to do is look into those meanings today. The title of the sermon is,

Why Pentecost?

We're going to look into why God wants us to keep Pentecost and what lessons we can learn, what God is trying to teach us by our keeping this day and by looking back into the past and finding out what happened on this day. We can gain lessons from that.

Let's look at Pentecost in the Old Testament. Let's turn to Exodus, chapter 40 to set the stage. We'll begin in the last half of verse 33.

Exodus 40:33b. *So Moses finished the work. (KJV)*

That is the work of building the tabernacle. You can go back in the previous chapters and see that. Once that was done,

34) Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (KJV)

Lord is capitalized. It's YHVH, Yahweh, Jehovah. The glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

35) And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36) And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys:

37) But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.

38) For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (KJV)

We also know that the holy of holies was in the tabernacle. It was the last third of the tabernacle, and it was a cube. That, we know, symbolizes God's throne in heaven. The mercy seat was there, the engravings of the two cherubim over the mercy seat was there and it symbolized God's throne in heaven.

With that in mind, let's go back briefly to 1 Samuel 4:4. This tells us more of this symbolism.

1 Samuel 4:4. *So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwells between the cherubim ... (KJV)*

So, we see that the mercy seat with the cherubim over it symbolized God's throne in heaven. The Lord of hosts dwelt there. His presence was known by the cloud that was there. The glory was so bright, it was just phenomenal. Once the tabernacle was finished, God came down to the tabernacle, He resided in the holy of holies between the cherubim just as He does in heaven.

So, with that background, the tabernacle being in place, now let's turn to Leviticus 23 and see a very special offering that occurred during the Days of Unleavened Bread. You know where we're going.

Leviticus 23:9. *And the LORD [God, the Father] spoke unto Moses, saying ... (KJV)*

God is speaking from the tabernacle. You can check that in chapter 1, verse 1. God was speaking from where He was residing in the holy of holies in the tabernacle.

10) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When you be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof [once you reap the harvest], then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: (KJV)

The Hebrew word for "firstfruits" means *the first either in place or time or order of rank, especially a first fruit*. After they reaped the harvest, then they bring a sheaf to the priest of the firstfruits. The Hebrew word for "sheaf" is a word we're all familiar with; it's omer. It literally means *a heap, or a sheaf, or an omer in the sense of being a dry measure*. It could have several meanings. Webster's 1829 Dictionary regarding a sheaf says, *a quantity of stalks, any bundle or collection*. So, we don't know with any certainty whether the priest brought the sheaf containing the grain or whether the grain was separated from the sheaf and they just brought the raw grain. Then in verse 11, notice what he was to do with it.

11) And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD ... (KJV)

He shall wave the sheaf before His throne symbolically where God was in the holy of holies.

11b) ... to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (KJV)

It's interesting, the Hebrew word for "wave" literally means, *to vibrate up and down, or rock back and forth*. It's used in a great variety of applications including sprinkling, rubbing, sawing or waving. It has various meanings. It can mean *to lift up*. The priest certainly could have done that. Or *to move*; he could have lifted up and moved it. It could mean *to shake or to wave*. I think we get the understanding that whether it was a sheaf or a handful of grain, he pulled it up and lifted it up to God and waved it back and forth. That is what the priest did. We don't know specifically, but he waved it before God.

In verses 12 and 13, there were specific offerings that were made and in verse 14, we are told,

14) And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

So, they couldn't eat of the fruit of the harvest until this offering was made, until the priest held it up before God. Then after that ceremony was over, they could begin to eat the firstfruits. This occurred during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

Now let's go to the day known as Pentecost.

15) And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath ... (KJV)

This is the Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread.

15b) ... from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

16) Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat [NKJV says meal or grain offering] offering unto the Lord [in front of the tabernacle].

17) Ye shall bring out of your habitations ... (KJV)

The Hebrew word means *assembly*, meaning the whole group.

17b) ... two wave loaves ... (KJV)

The previous offering, fifty days prior to that were sheaves.

17 continued) ... of two tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven ... (KJV)

We'll come back to that later.

17 continued) ... they are the first fruits unto the Eternal.

So, there's much symbolism today. We have two leavened loaves that we'll discuss later. Some speculate that they mean the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Others speculate that it means the Israelites and the Gentiles. Some day God will tell us. We don't know for sure.

Then in verses 18 and 19, more offerings were to be made. Then in verse 20,

20) And the priest shall wave them [these offerings plus the loaves] with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

21) And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be a holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. (KJV)

Before we leave this, just as an aside, to show God's mercy to the poor, look at verse 22. This is something we should take to heart.

22) And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reap, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God. (KJV)

The Hebrew word for "stranger" means *an alien or a foreigner*. God is saying, "Don't take it all for yourself. Leave some for the poor and the stranger." Remember, Christ called the Samaritan woman a stranger. We talked about that last time. So, for the foreigners in our land, we need to provide, to help out. God is setting this precedent because there were foreigners during their journey and once they went into the Promised Land, there were foreigners there.

Okay, this is the Old Testament account of Pentecost. Now let's go to the New Testament and look at Pentecost. One of the things God wants us to do on these holy days is to rehearse why we are here, what happened on the day. That's exactly what we're doing. We're not talking about anything new here, but God wants us to have in mind why we are here today.

Acts 2:1. *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. (NKJV)*

So, they would have not been able to see or hear or participate in what happened if they had not been there. The Greek word for Pentecost is pentekoste and it means *fiftieth*. It's very simple. That ties in with what we just read in the Old Testament.

2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven ... (NKJV)

This had to be something so unique that it couldn't be construed as a normal wind or even a tornado as we would say today. It was totally unique.

2b) ... as of a rushing mighty wind ... (NKJV)

That's the best way they could describe it.

2 continued) ... and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. (NKJV)

We see that they were gathered together in this one home. If you understand the architecture of the time, there were no separate rooms in those days. There was no separate bathroom, no kitchen. It was all one big room. There wasn't a lot of privacy in those days as we are used to today. They were all sitting in this one house and there was a sound that was supernatural.

3) Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. (NKJV)

They hear the noise and then they see this fire on top of everybody else's head and realize there's one on top of their head. That can be a little disconcerting. What on earth is going on here?

4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues ... (NKJV)

The Greek word for "tongue" is glossa and it means *languages*, not babbling. They spoke in various languages

4b) ... as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5) And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. (NKJV)

Jerusalem was a great crossroads. As we're going to see, there were Jews and proselytes, those who had converted to Judaism, in Jerusalem.

8) And when this sound occurred ... (NKJV)

Meaning these people heard this sound coming from this house and it was loud enough that it probably covered a great part of Jerusalem and created quite a stir with people

wondering where the sound is coming from. They wandered around and finally figured out that it's coming from this house.

8b) ... the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. (NKJV)

My guess is the scene now shifts outside the house because you couldn't take this giant congregation of people and cram them into one small home. The homes back then were probably, if it was a two-story, three hundred square feet on the bottom and three hundred square feet on the top. The animals were down on the first floor in another three hundred square feet. They did some calculations and found that generally about nine people lived in one home. There wasn't a lot of room. So, how are you going to get all of these people that are hearing this noise? So, the scene probably shifted to outside.

7) Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? (NKJV)

They had a dialect, much as we have a southern dialect or a New England dialect.

8) And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?

9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

10) Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

11) Cretans [from the island of Crete] and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

12) So, they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

13) Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine [they're drunk]."

14) But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

15) For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day [about 9 a.m.].

16) But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: (NKJV)

Now Peter starts to quote Joel, chapter 2. He's quoting in verse 17.

17) 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.

18) And on My menservants and on My maidservants ... (NKJV)

Referring to those God would call out down through the last two thousand years of His plan. They are called menservants and maidservants because they are called to serve God and to do His will, just as we are today.

18b) ... I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. (NKJV)

They will speak, and that's exactly what was happening that day.

19) I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

20) The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

21) And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.' (NKJV)

Now this is referring to the last two thousand years of man's history, from the time Jesus Christ walked this earth until these days are over. Those who God calls and they answer that call, they will receive God's holy spirit. If they continue to follow God, they will be saved. Now Peter speaks in verse 22. He stopped quoting scripture.

22) "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

23) Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God ... (NKJV)

It was God the Father's plan.

23b) ... you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

24) whom God raised up ... (NKJV)

He's saying that Christ is God and He became a human and He died and He was dead and then God raised Him up. The Father raised Him up from the dead.

24b) ... having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

25) For David says concerning Him ... (NKJV)

Now Peter quotes Psalms 16. I might just stop here. As we go through this, you see how these Galilean fishermen knew their Bible. They are quoting scripture. They studied and they knew their Bible. Now Peter quotes Psalms 16.

25b) ... 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

26) Therefore, my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

27) *For You [referring to God] will not leave my [Christ] soul in Hades [NIV says grave, as it should be], Nor will You [Father] allow Your Holy One [Christ] to see corruption. (NKJV)*

We know Christ was raised before His body deteriorated. That's what that refers to.

28) *You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' (NKJV)*

Now Peter stops quoting and he continues.

29) *"Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. (NKJV)*

He's not talking about David. He's talking about Christ when he was quoting here obviously.

30) *Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, (NKJV)*

Now in verse 31, Peter refers to Psalm 16:10.

31) *he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades [grave], nor did His flesh see corruption. (NKJV)*

Peter is saying what David was talking about. He's telling them, "We all know the scriptures. You're devout men and understand the scriptures. It's talking about Christ." He's going to nail them here.

32) *This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.*

33) *Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. (NKJV)*

He's referring to the noise, the people speaking in languages. He says, "you're witness to this miracle right here and now."

Now Peter quotes Psalm 110.

34) *"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD [Father, YHVH] said to my Lord [Christ], "Sit at My right hand,*

35) *Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"*

36) *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus ... (NKJV)*

Now he's starting to nail them.

36b) ... whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37) Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (NKJV)

Peter is saying, "You were responsible for the crucifixion of God who walked in the flesh on this earth." When they realized that, they said, "What are we going to do?"

38) Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NKJV)

The holy spirit had come, symbolized by the flames on their head. Now Peter is saying, "If you want that, then you need to repent and be baptized."

What we read in verse 4, that they were sitting in the room and the noise came and the flames came on their heads and they were filled with the holy spirit; that was a one-time event. What Peter is telling them now is, "You've got to repent and be baptized for the remission of your sins if you want to do likewise and have the holy spirit come to you."

39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

40) And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (NKJV)

Don't go the way of the world. Follow God.

41) Then those who gladly received his word ... (NKJV)

And there were probably some that did not.

41b) ... were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. (NKJV)

What an event. What a day. If we look at what happened in the Old Testament and what happened in the New Testament, there's a lot of stuff going on. A lot of things happened.

So, let's ask the question: What does God want us to learn from the keeping of Pentecost? We're going to talk about five lessons that we can learn from this day. I will list them in order of fulfillment, how they came to pass and are coming to pass.

1. Pentecost teaches us that Christ is the first of the firstfruits.

Let's go back to Leviticus 23:9. We are told,

Leviticus 23:9. *And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
10) "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.
11) He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD [before his throne], to be accepted on your behalf ... (NKJV)*

The wave sheaf, you see, pictures the resurrected Christ being accepted by the Father in heaven before His very throne. Christ was the very first human to be resurrected to spirit, and obviously there are going to be many, many more to follow.

With that in mind, let's go to John 20. Christ has been crucified. He has been in the grave three days and three nights. He is now resurrected and Mary comes.

John 20:16. *Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher [Master]).
17) Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father ... (KJV)*

In that moment in time, the wave sheaf had not been fulfilled.

17b) ... but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (KJV)

He said, "you go tell them and while you're going to tell them, I am going to ascend to my Father." Where is His Father? His Father is in heaven. Where is His Father sitting? He is on His throne between the cherubim. So, Christ went up at that time to be accepted of the Father. He came back down and He allowed the disciples to touch Him, which means He had been accepted. That was now complete.

Here it describes the concept of Christ being the very first of the firstfruits.

1 Corinthians 15:20. *But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept [died].
...
23) But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. (KJV)*

We get the time sequence here.

Here in Colossians, it's referring to Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:15. *Who [Christ] is the image of the invisible God ... (KJV),*

The invisible God is the Father, because you can't see God and live.

15b) ... the firstborn of every creature: (KJV)

Christ is the first of the firstfruits, the first born to be resurrected as spirit of all the human beings that will be resurrected when Christ returns.

18) And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning [the very first], the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. (KJV)

Christ is the first of the firstfruits, and there are many, many scriptures. It would be redundant to go over them, but there are many scriptures that talk about this very subject that confirm that Christ is the very first of the firstfruits.

So, the first lesson is that Pentecost teaches us that Christ is the first of the firstfruits.

2. Pentecost marks the coming of the holy spirit.

Prior to Pentecost, God chose very, very few people and David was one of them. Remember, David said, "Take not your spirit from me." God gave His spirit to very few human beings, relatively speaking, for four thousand years. So, Pentecost marks a change in that.

Here Christ is being crucified, and notice what He says. He is dying.

Matthew 27:50. *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost [spirit].*

51) And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom ... (KJV)

This wasn't a piece of cloth. It wasn't a bed sheet. It was enormous, and it was torn top to bottom as a symbol of something. It goes on to say,

51b) ... and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent [torn apart]; (KJV)

Luke 23:45 adds that the sun was darkened when Christ died. So, this was a momentous event that people couldn't just say that He was some reprobate or criminal or something like that. When He died, a lot of things happened to tell people that this was something special. When the curtain was rent, can you imagine what the priests thought, and the high priest when he got dragged over there and somebody said, "Look what happened." That curtain going into the holy of holies is just ripped from top to bottom. Can you imagine what they thought? There were probably knots in the stomach and they're wondering what's going on. Obviously, this is symbolic of the fact that when Christ died and by His death and His resurrection and by what we're celebrating today, God's holy spirit was made available so that we can have direct access to the Father. You don't have to go through a priest or minister or another

human being to get to God. All we have to do is have the common bond. God is spirit. We have some of that with us and that is the link between us and God, and we can talk to Him and hopefully we can listen when He talks to us. That is what this symbolized.

Christ was telling them something on the last night He was with them, and at that moment, they didn't understand it. They didn't have a clue, but on Pentecost, they had a clue.

John 14:23. *Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, [here's the key] and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (KJV)*

The Greek word for "with" can also mean *in* which, which is the way it should be translated. *We will come to him and make our abode in him.* Remember, Christ said to the disciples, "My spirit is with you and shall soon be in you." That's what this is referring to. But the apostles didn't understand how this would happen. He said, "We're going to live in you," and they probably nodded and maybe they were full of food and a little sleepy and all of that, but they didn't understand. However, Pentecost would teach them.

10) *Believe thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? ... (KJV)*

We share the same spirit. We have the same character and mind."

10b) *... the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself ... (KJV)*

Christ said, "I'm not a cowboy just doing my own thing." He came to do the will of the Father. That will be the subject for another sermon down the road.

10 continued) *... but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. (KJV)*

How is that possible? It is through the power of the holy spirit.

What is the purpose of the coming of the holy spirit to each one of us individually? Why does God give us His holy spirit? What does He want us to do with it? It's not just a gift that just sits there inside us. He wants us to do something with it.

First, we have to understand that the holy spirit is primarily a spirit of power. It is one of its main attributes. It is obviously the nature of God, the character of God, the mind of God, but it is a spirit of power.

Romans 15:13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing ... (KJV)*

If we believe, we will have joy and peace. Remember, Christ said, "I'm going to give you peace, not as the world gives you, but I will give you peace. That's what this is referring to; peace and joy in believing,

13b) ... that ye may abound in hope, [what?] through the power of the holy spirit. (KJV)

By having the holy spirit come inside us as it came on this day, it gives us the power to be like God and Christ, to have the same nature, the same character, the same mind, the same intuition, the same discernment as the Father and the Son have.

Here it tells us what our job is. People say that we should be building buildings or colleges or printing this or that or other things. This is what our job is individually.

Ephesians 4:22. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation [conduct] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*
23) And be renewed [made new] in the spirit of your mind;
24) And that ye put on the new man [or woman], which after [Greek means after the manner of] God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)

We have to change from the old person to the new person, and the holy spirit is the power by which that change happens. In addition to this, one of the attributes of the holy spirit is it gives us the power to understand God's word. I think we all know that. Maybe before God threw the switch, so to speak, and we started getting interested in the church, the word, God, Christ, and the Bible. If you had ever read the Bible in years past, it made no sense. It was just a bunch of gobbledygook. It didn't make any sense at all. Then all of a sudden God threw the switch. Then as Mr. Armstrong used to say, "Don't believe me. Dust off your Bible and prove it for yourself." So, we did and, "Wow! I can understand this." That was God's spirit with us, getting us to the point where it could be in us through repentance and baptism.

Again, on that same night that Christ was trying to get across this critical information to the disciples that they would remember later. They didn't understand it at the time.

John 14:16. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter [Christ being the first], that it may abide with you [in you] forever;*
26) But the Comforter, which is the holy spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, it ... (KJV)

The word should be "it." The word "he" in some translations can be translated "it." They stated "he" because of Trinitarian beliefs.

26b) ... shall teach you all things ... (KJV)

You look into it and God's spirit suddenly opens up the words and the understanding that we didn't have before.

Referring to the disciples who didn't understand it as it was being spoken,

26 continued) ... and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (KJV)

This is why these quotes occurred because the disciples now, after Pentecost, could look back and the holy spirit would cause them to remember every word Christ said, and that is another miracle, the coming of the holy spirit.

John 15:26. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, it shall testify of me: (KJV)*

That's exactly what happened. The holy spirit gave them the power to remember, the power to understand the Old Testament and relate it to Christ's coming and that is a theme throughout the New Testament, and as we just read where Peter was talking, he was quoting scripture after scripture after scripture. He was quoting from scrolls, this fisherman, and that was a miracle from God. He knew his Bible as a young Jew, but the holy spirit brought all of that to his remembrance.

So, the second point is that Pentecost marks the coming of the holy spirit.

3. Pentecost teaches us that the firstfruits are leavened.

Think about this. Christ was perfect. Christ was unleavened when He was on this earth. He didn't allow one speck of leaven or sin or evil thoughts.

2 Corinthians 5:21. *For he [the Father] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us [as a substitute], who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (KJV)*

The point is that Christ knew no sin. He did not sin. We are told that the holy spirit came by measure. God did not limit the holy spirit given to Jesus Christ. You can check that in John 3:34, where it said that God did not give the spirit by measure unto Him, Jesus Christ. So, He was filled with God's spirit as a human being and He was able, through the power of the holy spirit, not to have one sin, not one.

But you see what we read earlier in the Old Testament, the two loaves were baked with leaven. Why is that? What is the lesson? What is God trying to teach us? It indicates with those loaves which represent the firstfruits whether it's Old Covenant or New Covenant. Regardless of the symbolism, it represents the firstfruits and those loaves had leaven in them. That tells us that the firstfruits are leavened, unlike Jesus Christ. Remember what Paul said in Romans 7. Paul was lamenting that, "I'm not perfect like Jesus Christ." He said, "The thing I want to do is the thing I don't do, and the thing I don't want to do is the thing I wind up doing." He said, "Woe is me." We've all been

there. We've all experienced that. We know we shouldn't have those words come blasting out of our mouth or we know we shouldn't have these thoughts that come into our head or pictures that come into our mind. We know that we shouldn't do this thing. We fight that every day of our life because we have leaven in us. That is why those loaves are leavened. But, these leavened loaves, these firstfruits can be made acceptable to God by Christ's sacrifice.

Let's turn to Jude 24. Jude was a half-brother of Jesus Christ. He says that despite our leavening, despite our struggles, despite doing things that we know are wrong, we can ultimately be made acceptable to God.

Jude 24. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, [notice this] and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25) To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (KJV)*

You see, the key is that through Christ's sacrifice, through His blood, it wipes away our sins. When we came out of the water of baptism, we were as white as snow. We were sinless. Then from that point on, we're still human beings and we sin, but if we repent and go to God on our knees and bitterly repent and we're absolutely sorry for what we've done and we admit what we've done as David did in the situation with Bathsheba before the whole court. He obviously bitterly repented, and if we do the same thing, then God says, "It's gone. It's wiped away." You're white as snow again. That makes us faultless as we just read here in verse 24. We're faultless before the presence of His glory.

Every time we sin and we repent, it is a process over time. What God wants of us is that, over time, we begin to be more like Jesus Christ. We begin to have more of His mind, more of His character and we sin less. We sin less frequently and less badly. I'm not categorizing sin. I don't mean to do that, but some are more egregious than others as far as their effect on other human beings. So, over time we get more and more like Jesus Christ. Every time we sin, we repent and God says once again, "You're as white as snow." Just as when you came out of the water, you are as white as snow. Over time, you see, through that sacrifice, as Jude tells us, we can be presented faultless before God.

So, Pentecost teaches us that, yes, the firstfruits are leavened, but it also teaches us that we can be faultless before God at the end when our lives are over.

4. Pentecost teaches us that God is not calling everyone at this time.

When we came into the church, that was one of the biggest lessons we had to learn. It was one that made the most sense to me because now you don't have to deal with why there is all of this evil in the world. The missionary didn't get to this village in Africa and the missionary died and these people are going to go to the lake of fire or whatever because the missionary didn't get to them. Well, the answer to all of that and why

there's so much evil in the world is that God is not calling everybody right now. The very term "firstfruits" means there are other fruits that are going to follow the firstfruits. There are other people that are going to be called in their order and according to God's plan. So, the fact that we are the firstfruits means there are other fruits to come. We're just the little bitty tip of the spear, so to speak, of the harvest. We're a tiny amount. The rest of the harvest is coming later.

Let's turn to Acts 2:39. We read this earlier. Peter is saying and emphasizes this.

Acts 2:39. *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our God shall call. (KJV)*

God does the calling. We don't have any control over that. The only control we have is once God calls us, then we must respond.

Here in Acts 15, James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ is talking. He is recounting what happened to Peter.

Acts 15:14. *Simeon has declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, [notice] to take out of them [the Gentiles] a people for his name. (KJV)*

He's calling a few Gentiles.

15) *And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,*
16) *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:*
17) *That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who doeth all these things. (KJV)*

James is paraphrasing Hosea 3:5 and Amos 9:11. Again, James knew his Bible and understood those prophecies of the Old Testament and how they relate to what was revealed by Jesus Christ when He walked the earth. So, he's saying here that yes, the Gentiles are called, but not all of them right now, just a few, just like the rest of the world.

Finally, under this point, let's turn to Romans 8:28. We are told here that the calling is not just to say, "Hey, I've been called. I'm one of the few," and put a badge on our chest or something like that. Notice the calling and the purpose behind it.

Romans 8:28. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his [God's] purpose. (KJV)*

There is a purpose to our calling. So, we need to remember that God does the calling, but He is not calling everyone at this time, and Pentecost teaches us that. We learn that from Pentecost.

Now the fifth and the last. This is something that modern Christianity rejects. They ignore the very plain scriptures about keeping holy days versus holidays, God's holy days versus abominable things like Halloween and Easter and sunrise services and Christmas and all of that.

1 Corinthians 16:8. *In the meantime, I will be staying here at Ephesus until the Festival of Pentecost. (NLT)*

These scriptures are there, but they just get ignored. They get wiped away somehow.

5. The New Testament Church kept Pentecost.

We're just following in that tradition. Why would Paul want to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost? The answer is obvious. He wants to stay in Ephesus so he could keep Pentecost with the Ephesian church. There's no other reason. You can't read anything into it here. It's just plain and simple.

Here's another account. Another year had passed.

Acts 20:16. *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted [hurried], if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. (KJV)*

Why does he want to be in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost? Because he obviously wants to keep Pentecost with the church at Jerusalem and be with the brethren and keep the holy day.

Then, look at this principle that applies to all of the holy days. Now it's specifically referring to the days of Unleavened Bread, but notice 1 Corinthians 5:8. This applies in principle to every one of the holy days. I don't see how somebody who keeps pagan holidays can ignore this scripture.

1 Corinthians 5:8. *Therefore let us keep the feast ... (KJV)*

Part of it? Some of it? No.

8b) *... not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ... (KJV)*

Which we are supposed to get rid of, and the holy spirit gives us the power to do that.

8 continued) *... but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (KJV)*

This is talking about the days of Unleavened Bread, but why would you just keep one? So, we can keep the Days of Unleavened Bread and then keep Easter? Just do one and then go on to Halloween and then this and that and the other thing? Obviously not.

Why would we just keep one and not all of them? The understanding with anybody with an open mind would say, "Yes, we've got to keep the Feast, not just the Days of Unleavened Bread, but all of the feasts.

We're going to look at Pentecost, Old and New Testament now and try to get the big picture. Pentecost is the first part of a spiritual harvest. It is the firstfruits. The firstfruits, whether it be a sheaf or handful of grain, you compare that with the harvest of Israel. This is just miniscule. It's probably one thousandth of one percent of the harvest, or even less than that. So, today pictures just that tiny little first part of the harvest. Pentecost pictures a future harvest of the firstfruits. You see, for us, this harvest hasn't happened yet, but when it does happen, it's just a tiny number of people compared to all the people who have ever lived.

Let's go to James 1:17. James understood this and the relationship of the firstfruits to a greater spiritual harvest to come. Pentecost is just the very first part.

James 1:17. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights [God the Father], with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

18) Of his [God's] own will begat he us with the word of truth, that ... (KJV)

He gave us the word of truth, the understanding of the word of truth through His holy spirit. But here's the point.

18b) ... we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. (KJV)

That we should be the very first of the whole spiritual harvest.

Now let's go to Romans 8:22. We want our harvest to come, don't we? This world is so messed up. You don't even want to read the newspaper or watch the national news. You just think, "How could we have come to this?" The United States and the world is deteriorating faster and faster, and we just want Christ to come. We want the Father to say, "Go. Now is the time. Do it."

Romans 8:22. *For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. (KJV)*

That was two thousand years ago, and it is so much worse now.

23) And not only they [the whole creation], but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit ... (KJV)

What is the adoption?

23b) ... the redemption of our body.

The change from the physical to the spiritual, the change from temporary to permanent, to eternal. When will that redemption occur? What are we waiting for? Let's go to 1 Thessalonians 4:16 for a final scripture. This is what we as the firstfruits long for, cannot wait for, hope that will happen soon.

1 Thessalonians 4:16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (KJV)*

Yes, they died, some of them a horrible death for Christ.

17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (KJV)

You see, if we're ever going to be with the Lord, it must mean we're eternal.

18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words. (KJV)

These words are indeed comforting in these very troubled times. The times we are going through right now, every day seems to get a little worse than the day before, and we think, how can it get any worse? Oh, it can get a lot worse, and it is, day by day by day. God is showing us and the world that nobody is safe. You can walk the London Bridge and get mowed down. You can be walking down a boulevard in Paris and some box truck will come and roll over you. You can go to some event and a bomb will go off. You see, God is showing the world that, apart from Him, there is no safety, no security. We know this is a fact and we know that it's only through God that we have any safety, any protection, any security, because His angelic host is with each one of us and we can take comfort in that and comfort in the fact that if we do our part, if we exercise God's holy spirit, we will be there in what we just read in 1 Thessalonians.

Sometimes we have to put ourselves in perspective. Today we are following a four-thousand-year heritage of keeping Pentecost. Pentecost has been kept for four thousand years, and we are privileged to be part of this long trail of people, God's people that kept it. The apostles kept it and those God has called out have kept it down through the millennia.

Now the first two holy days have been fulfilled, and part of this third holy day has been fulfilled. Christ, the first of the firstfruits, has already been accepted by the Father. That's been fulfilled. The holy spirit came to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. That's already happened. But, you see, the spiritual harvest of the firstfruits has yet to happen. That's what we just read about. So, part of this day has yet to be fulfilled and that's why we groan and we wait for that fulfillment, for the spiritual harvest of the firstfruits, all of us. So, let's remain faithful to God and faithful to Jesus Christ and faithful to their word until this fulfillment comes.