

The Hidden Meaning of Pentecost

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Tom touched on the subject about Pentecost and that has let me ask the question by way of introduction: What do we think of when we approach Pentecost? As Tom mentioned, one of the focal points is counting fifty from wave sheaf Sunday during the days of Unleavened Bread. Sometimes we think of giving the law at Mount Sinai. Other times we might think of the miracles in Acts 2. But today, we are going to look at an aspect of Pentecost which frankly, I have just read right over and thus ignored. I never paid any attention to it. By way of introduction we will go back to Leviticus 23 and look at our Father's instruction for this day. Verse 5-8 talks about Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread. You might want to put a marker here because we might come back to it a time or two. Leviticus 23:9.

Leviticus 23:9 *And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
10) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, [this is yet future, notice what he is saying] When ye be come into the land which I give unto you [that hasn't happened yet], and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest:
11) And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it. (KJV)*

Historically, wheat and barley were the two primary field crops of Ancient Israel. Both were planted in the fall. Barley matures more quickly and so it is harvested in the spring. Wheat takes longer to mature and longer to develop and it is harvested at the beginning of the summer; two different crops. Let me read from the commentary by Jamieson, Faucet and Brown regarding Leviticus 23:10—the wave sheaf.

A sheaf, literally an omar of the first fruits of the barley harvest. The barley being sooner ripe than the other grains, the reaping of it formed the commencement of the general harvest season.

Then from Gills Commentary regarding verse 10.

They were in the wilderness where there was no sowing nor reaping nor any harvest so that the following law, though now given, could not take place until they came into the land of Canaan and shall reap the harvest thereof, the barley harvest. Which was about this time, the month of Nissan which had the name Abib from the barley being then in the ear. For the wheat harvest was not until seven weeks afterward, on Pentecost.

Now Verse 15 out of the New King James.

15) And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed.

16) Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. (NKJV)

Of course, we call it Pentecost because of the counting of fifty days. Notice that this day is called something else; it's called by a couple of different names. Go to Exodus 34:22 and see what some of the other names for this very day are.

Exodus 34:22 *And you shall observe [what's the title?] the Feast of Weeks, [notice what it is] of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year s end. (KJV)*

In the fall Holy Days this is called "today", the Feast of Weeks and it's the firstfruits of the wheat harvest. Notice Numbers 28:26.in the New King James.

Numbers 28:26 *Also on the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your Feast of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. (NKJV)*

So, we clearly see here, that Pentecost is also called the Feast of Weeks or the Day of Firstfruits. As we read in Exodus, today marks the beginning of the wheat harvest, just like the wave sheaf fifty days earlier marked the beginning of the barley harvest. With that in mind, go back to Leviticus 23:17 and this time, look for our instructions for this day.

Leviticus 23:17 *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. (KJV)*

We see that Israel was commanded to make two flour cakes; they were made from the first fruits of the wheat harvest and they were to have leaven in the baking oven. What do these cakes represent? It seems logical to me that they have to represent people because they are leavened, otherwise why put leaven in the cakes? We could speculate that it could be the firstfruits. In the Old Testament, one loaf and in the New Testament another loaf, or one loaf could represent Jews—Israelites—and another one representing Gentiles. Some have said one could represent males and one could represent females. The fact is, they could be all of the above; we don't know. Some of that is applicable. Verse 18 from the NKJV.

18) And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. (NKJV)

Back to the King James Version in verse 19.

19) Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering [think about that], and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. (KJV)

A sin offering seems logical to me; it is necessary to offset the leaven. We know that there was no sin offering in the wave sheaf ceremony because obviously Christ had no sin. So, if this represents people then that sin offering would be appropriate.

20) The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD [symbolically], with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. (KJV)

The Hebrew word for *wave* can also mean “to lift up”. That is exactly what happened to Jesus Christ fifty days earlier on wave sheaf Sunday, when He was lifted up and presented to His Father. Going on in verse 21.

21) And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations. (KJV)

What has happened to me, is that I stopped right there when reading about Pentecost, because it seems like the logical place for Yehovah to send His commands concerning Pentecost and then moved right onto verse 23 which talks about Trumpets. But that isn't the way the Bible is written. Our Father's instructions are not complete if we skip verse 22. We know that all scripture is God-breathed, so look at verse 22 inserted at the end of the commandments—we think of it as the end of the commandments for Pentecost and the beginning of the commandment for Trumpets. But there is this little verse that just seems entirely out of place. Verse 22 is out of the New Living Translation.

22) When you harvest the crops of your land, do not harvest the grain along the edges of your fields, and do not pick up what the harvesters drop [leave it alone]. Leave it for the poor and the foreigners living among you. I am the Lord your God.” (NLT)

That seems like an odd place to have this verse. The end of Pentecost, the beginning of Trumpets—but it's there. For decades I've just blown right past it. The Hebrew word for *poor* can mean “depressed in mind or circumstances”. It's not just “monetarily poor”. It can be “depressed in mind”. It can also mean “afflicted, either mentally or physically or needy—afflicted, needy, depressed”. The Hebrew word for *foreigner* can mean “alien or a stranger in the land”. So here we see Yehovah expressing concern, right in the middle of the Holy Days, for the foreigner and for those who are downtrodden; it's very interesting.

The next verse just goes straight into the fall Holy Days. So, as I said, on the first look this verse seems out of place; it's just kind of stuck in there. But frankly it has to be very important; all of God's Word is very important. The reason it's inserted, still while talking about Pentecost, must mean it is critical to the meaning of this Day, otherwise why is it there? The next verse goes into the fall Holy Days so this has to apply to this very Day. It's not something we normally associate with Pentecost. So, to me, I have to ask myself, why did the Father place this verse here? What was the point? Why did the Almighty choose to insert this instruction on this particular Day and not some other Holy Day? Those questions lead us to our subject today and the title of the sermon.

A Hidden Meaning of Pentecost

A hidden meaning, not because our Father wanted it hidden, but hidden because of our slowness of mind. We just blow right over it and don't think about it. We have to set the stage.

1. Israel's life in the Promised Land revolved around crop cycles.

Harvesting and planting were the crop cycles. After forty years in the wilderness when this command was given, they had wandered for forty years. Then, at the end of the forty years Israel's life changed. In Joshua 5:10 we see how it changed. We are breaking into the time frame, where Israel has already entered the Promised Land. They had crossed the Jordan River.

Joshua 5:10 *And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal ... (KJV)*

Now Gilgal is somewhere between two and three miles west of the Jordan River, so they were just barely into the Promised Land.

10) ... and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho.

11) And they did eat of the old corn of the land [it was already there, it was planted and grown in the Promised Land] on the morrow after the passover, unleavened cakes, and parched corn in the selfsame day. (KJV)

That's what they ate after they crossed the river.

12) And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna anymore; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year. (KJV)

They broke into the middle, so to speak, of the crop cycle, between planting and harvesting. From that point forward, every year Israel's life revolved around planting and then harvesting and then planting and then harvesting. Tom was talking about the chains—there was a very similar chain every year, a pattern of planting and harvesting. The problem today is that the concept of planting and harvesting is foreign to most people in the developed world. If you grew up in downtown New York City, you would have had no concept of where food came from. There are children who grow up thinking that somehow food just miraculously appears in grocery stores, with no idea of how it got there or what went on before, to have the food ready as we walk in the door of a grocery store. Sadly, that's just the life we live, where there is little, if any, concept of digging in the dirt and planting and all the nurturing that goes on and then at some point, reaping the harvest. That is totally foreign to many, many in the world today. Moses, as we know, was not allowed to go into the Promised Land, but he talked to Israel about the Promised Land before his death.

Deuteronomy 8:7 *For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; (KJV)*

Notice in verse 8.

8) A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; (KJV)

Moses was saying to them that when they go into the Promised Land their lives were going to be revolving around planting, growing and harvesting. That was done so that families could be fed, livings could be made and almost everyone in Ancient Israel was tied to the land in some form or fashion. This is totally untrue today.

Notice Israel's dependence on crops in Judges 6. We know the familiar pattern of Judges. Israel would be doing alright for a period of time, then they would fall into a pattern of sin and the Father would remove His blessings. They would then be cursed in some form or fashion and after getting beat up for some period of time, they would get on their knees and wail to God. God would come and rescue them and they would then do well for a while but the cycle would be repeated again. We are starting the cycle here.

Judges 6:1 *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. (KJV)*

Notice how bad it became.

2) And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. (KJV)

It got so bad that when the Midianites came, they had to retreat to the mountains and the hills and hide in caves or hide out somewhere where they couldn't be found and killed or persecuted or put into slavery or something like that.

*3) And so, it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them;
4) And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.
5) For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. (KJV)*

They came to wipe out their way of life, to wipe out their way of feeding themselves and to kill the people.

6) And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD. (KJV)

Finally. If you have enough pain, you will cry to God Almighty for help. The point I am making is that Israel could not exist as a nation or as individual Israelites at all, without crops and without food. This is how dependent Israel was on the land and to the cycle of planting and harvesting. We plainly see, summing up this first point, that Israel's national life revolved around planting and harvesting. Obviously, the Holy Days, also revolve around planting and harvesting.

That leads to the second point.

2. Ancient Israel read a certain story on Pentecost every year.

This story that was read took place during harvest time. It was a story about a foreigner. So, we see our Father's command in Leviticus 23:22—this verse that was inserted right after the description of Pentecost—was put into practice. This account was read by the Jews on Pentecost and tradition links the book of Judges with the book of Ruth. The Jews put those two books together and the book of Ruth was read on this very day. The account occurs approximately in the 1100's B.C. Turn back to the book of Ruth and rather than read the whole account I will summarize what happened up to the point we want to investigate.

Naomi and her husband and her two sons moved from Bethlehem to Moab. The Moabites were obviously descendants of an individual named Moab. Who was he? Moab was the son of Lot, born to Lot's firstborn daughter during the drunken incident that is described in Genesis 19. Because of this famine, Naomi and her husband together with their sons, moved to Moab. Once arriving in Moab, it is not clear on how long they were there before her husband died. Then her two sons took Moabite wives. They probably took them because the father was gone and they felt freer, being out from under their father's nose so to speak, to take Moabite wives. For whatever reason, they did so. Then both sons died.

This left Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, both Moabites. At that point, the famine that was in Israel dissipated, so Naomi decided to return to Judah. She sat down with her daughters-in-law and said,

You are Moabites so you just stay here. I will go back to Israel. The two of you stay here because this is the land of your birth, these are your countrymen and you would feel more comfortable staying here rather than moving back with me to a totally strange land and totally strange culture."

One of the daughters agreed—it seemed the logical thing to do. Pick up the story now in Ruth chapter 1:16 in the NKJV.

Ruth 1:16 *But Ruth said: Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.
17) Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. [notice this] The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."* (NKJV)

It's obvious that Ruth over time had come to know Who Yehovah was. She had an understanding of God Almighty, the Most-High God.

22) *So, Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. (NKJV)*

After wave sheaf Sunday. Ruth 2:1

Ruth 2:1 *There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. [Naomi's husband so this was a relative of Naomi's dead husband]; His name was Boaz.*

2) *So, Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, Go, my daughter."* (NKJV)

The point is, here they came back and Naomi had nothing—no land, no possessions, no money in the bank, no CD's, nothing like that to help her out and they were hungry and thirsty and who knows where they were staying—we don't know, it's not revealed, but they are destitute. They were pretty much out of options. It was some risk to Ruth to go and mix in with the harvesters in the fields. Just because it was Judah, it doesn't mean everybody was righteous, doesn't mean everybody was loyal to Yehovah, doesn't mean that everybody kept the law. There was some danger to a foreigner going into a field where there were a lot of male workers. This wasn't without risk.

3) *Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, [she didn't know who Boaz was at this point] who was of the family of Elimelech.*

4) *Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, [everything God says is for a reason, but this tells you about his character] The LORD be with you!" [the first thing he says] And they answered him, The LORD bless you!"* (NKJV)

So, you can tell what's on his mind; he puts God first in his life. It's important to him.

5) *Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, Whose young woman is this?"*

6) *So, the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. (NKJV)*

Verse 7 out of the NIV.

7) *She said, Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters. She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter."* (NIV)

This was the report from his field hand. We see that this woman, who was a foreigner had worked from the morning through the heat of the day with barely any rest and had stopped for a short period of time to take a rest. It's like the situation with the Yakima Valley. We have one of the most abundant valleys in the country.

We have all manner of crops. But in the spring of the year, asparagus is harvested and in the fall of the year, apples are harvested. You go out in the fields and if you look very carefully you see foreigners who have a long sack behind them and they have a sharp knife in one hand. They are bent over, grabbing asparagus, slicing it, throwing it in the sack and then taking a step to the next patch of asparagus. They repeat the process over and over, from dawn until dark. The truth of the matter is, there is no natural born citizen here that is willing to do that any longer. It's easier to stay home and get paid by the government for not working than going to the fields to work. The same thing happens in the fall. These folks are on long three-legged ladders that go up a story and a half and their hands are moving so fast you can hardly see them. They know what work is. Ruth was in this situation and her hard work caught the attention of Boaz. Going on in verse 8.

8) So, Boaz said to Ruth, My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. (NIV)

In other words, for safety, I want you to do that; he was concerned for her safety.

9) Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn." (NV)

So, we see a principle; why Yehovah clearly led Ruth to Boaz's field, Boaz just didn't give her a basket of grain. He didn't do that, she had to go out and work for it. Boaz's gift had to be earned. The gift was, she could use the field to take of his crops but she actually had to do the work. She had to put forth the necessary effort to receive the benefit of the gift. Isn't that identical to what our Father wants us to do when He offers us salvation? There is no way we can ever earn it. She didn't earn this gift in that sense, but we have to work in order to be given the blessing. Perpetually overcoming our human nature, perpetually overcoming the provocations of Satan; it takes work. We don't earn it, but it takes work to be given the gift.

10) So, she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

[We can say exactly the same thing. "Why Father, have you taken notice of us and called us and given us these incredible blessings?"]

11) And Boaz answered and said to her, It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. (NiV)

We have done the same thing.

12) The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." (NIV)

Haven't we come for refuge under God Almighty's wings when we leave the society that we find ourselves in and we totally change our lives to be in conformity with His will and His law? In verse 19. Ruth is home now after a full day's work—we don't know where home is, it could be a tent for all we know.

19) And her mother-in-law said to her, Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you." So, she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."

20) Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives." (NKJV)

Naomi, at this point, is overjoyed because she realizes that Boaz, who is a close relative of her dead husband Elimelech could redeem the family name and could redeem the land that they had left. Going on in verse 21.

21) Ruth the Moabitess said, He also said to me, You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.

22) And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field." (NIV)

Once you have been called, stay in this field.

23) So, she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest [She worked all the way through Pentecost and after Pentecost.] and she dwelt with her mother-in-law. (NIV)

We know the rest of the story. As a result of what we just read, Boaz and Ruth were married and they had a son named Obed. Obed had a son named Jesse and Jesse had a son named David and Christ was a result of that. So, we see that this Pentecost command—verse 23 which is just stuck in there—was obeyed by Boaz. To leave some of the crops in the field for the widow and the poor and the stranger. Ruth was all three—widow, poor and a stranger. Boaz did so in command of God the Father because, as I said earlier, Yehovah is concerned about the poor and the widow and the stranger. He inserted this verse on this day, for this day.

That ends point number two but leads to another question. Why read this story on Pentecost? Why not some other Holy Day? That leads to our last point, which is a question.

3. Why stress by taking care of the poor and the stranger on Pentecost?

Go now and look at our Father's general command regarding the harvest in Deuteronomy 24:19. This is a general command referring to all of the harvest. The Father gave Moses the instruction and Moses is passing it on to the Israelites and to us today.

Deuteronomy 24:19 When you reap your harvest in your field, [this is of the field so it has to be the barley harvest or the wheat harvest] and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

20) When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

21) When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. (NKJV)

We see the Almighty commands that during the time of the harvest, do not be selfish. Don't take your crew and go back over the vineyards or the trees or the fields—don't go over them a second time and get every last little grape and every last little apple and every last little olive. Do not do that; do not be selfish. He commands during the time of harvest, whether it's wheat or barley or any other crops, that some are to be left behind. The reason they were left behind is because of His concern of the poor, the fatherless, the widow and the foreigner—the stranger.

Why does God our Father want us to remember the stranger and the fatherless and the widow at this time, as opposed to some other time? Verse 22 gives us the answer. I'm going to read this out of the Amplified; here's the answer.

22) You shall [thoughtfully] remember [the fact] that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; (AMP)

Think about that, this is why the crops are left.

22 continued) ... therefore I am commanding you to do this thing. (AMP)

That is the reason.

Yehovah says "Do not forget what it was like to be poor."

Some of us have been really poor in our lives, physically, monetarily, but we have all been poor in our lives of Godly inspiration, Godly guidance, Godly understanding. He says not to forget what it is like to be poor or what it is like to be a slave. Remember Israel came out of Egypt. "Don't you forget what it was like back there". But they did forget of course. They always wanted to go back to the leeks and olives, to this and to that. He says,

"Don't you forget what it's like when somebody beats you or kills one of your family because you weren't moving fast enough? Don't you forget that. Don't you forget what it's like to be poor and a stranger. Do not forget what it's like to be a slave and a stranger and especially a stranger in a strange land."

Once we are called, we become strangers in a strange land because of how our land is becoming by the day. Almost unrecognizable to us, given the direction it is going in and frankly the way the world is going. The point is, it's not that the rest of our Father's instructions on Pentecost in Leviticus 23 are not important—I'm not saying that at all, but God specifically set aside verse 22 for extra emphasis at this time of

year. We are commanded to make sure that the poor and the stranger are taken care of. Of course, that command continues in the New Testament. Go to James 1:27. This is a very familiar scripture—memory scripture if you will. The same concern, the same theme, carries throughout the New Testament. We will just go to this one verse for now.

James 1:27 Pure religion [and we all want to obey pure religion and have pure religion] and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction ... (KJV)

The implication is, why do you go and visit? Just to check a box off and say you've done it? No, you go to get to know them, to find out what their needs might be and then do what you can to help take care of those needs. In taking care of those in affliction, those who are poor, fatherless and strangers, we are reminded this day, to first look beyond ourselves. Don't be selfish, don't be like the world. Look beyond ourselves to take care of others. That's one thing we can do. The second one is to remember always, what it was like to be poor, to be a stranger. In one way you could look at it as being fatherless, because before we knew God, we were fatherless—we didn't know who the Father was.

Today we see that taking care of the vulnerable—the poor, the widow, the stranger—is a theme of Pentecost. There was a reason the book of Ruth was read on this day. Let's ask another question. Why would God command an annual reminder of something that should be so obvious to a Christian? Taking care of others should be obvious. There are charities all over the world that are "Christian", charities taking care of the poor, the fatherless and the stranger. So why would God command an annual reminder of something that should be so obvious and ask us to remember what it was like to be a slave? Why would He do this and for it to be emphasized annually? What is His point? What does He want from us? Why is He doing this?

Go to Matthew 24; Christ is prophesying about this very day that we find ourselves in. Matthew 24:9. Christ is prophesying about the end time of our very day.

Matthew 24:9 *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (KJV)*

Verse 10 out of the NIV.

10) At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other ... (NIV)

They will turn away from the faith, and because of that, they will betray and hate one another. The Greek word for *betray* is really interesting. It's Strong's #3460, but notice what it means; "to deliver over with a sense of close, personal involvement." Isn't that something? Meaning they will betray people they associate with, people they know by name, who have been in their homes. So, while they are being friendly to the face, the knife is going between the ribs in the back. That's *betray*. The Greek word for *hate* is Strong's #3404—it's not many numbers away—and it means "to detest" or especially "to persecute". We see that they detest and that leads to persecution. Going on in verse 11.

- 11) *and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.*
12) *Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold ...*
(NIV)

The Greek word for *love* is *agape* and we know it means “the Father’s love through the Holy Spirit”. That will grow cold; the Holy Spirit will be quenched. They will not exercise the Holy Spirit; they are listening to and being provoked by a different spirit.

The point is, our Father knew in advance, that given Satan’s influence over thousands of years—at the end, in these last days, that influence was going to take its toll. Therefore, a warning had to be given annually. During the time of Laodicea, and we are undoubtedly in that time, people in and out of the church would tend to be selfish. Our Father knew this. Laodicea, Laodiceans in the world, in the church, there is a tendency, a provocation, an influence, to be selfish and unloving. Go to Revelation 3—a very familiar scripture—verse 14 in the letter to the church in Laodicea.

Revelation 3:14 *Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen—the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God’s new creation: (NLT)*

Notice verse 15.

15) *I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! (NLT)*

Some people think they can hide from God or somehow God winks or doesn’t notice or He’s out of the office today or something like that.

16) *But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! (NLT)*

Notice what they say in verse 17.

17) *You say, I am rich. I have everything I want. I don’t need a thing! (NLT)*

“I’ll be a religious up to a point but if it gets to be a burden, I’m out of here. Or I’ll just focus my efforts somewhere else.” This is Laodicea.

17 continued) *... And you don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. (NLT)*

Then the advice comes in verse 18.

18) *So, I advise you to buy gold from me—gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. [You think you’re rich but you are not] Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. (NLT)*

Laodiceans in the main are blind. Blind to their condition, their spiritual condition, blind to the world, blind to their surroundings. They see what they want to see.

19) I correct and discipline everyone I love. [Notice this last phrase in the NIV] So be diligent and turn from your indifference. (NLT)

Isn't that interesting? Turn from your indifference. Indifference to what? In great part, indifference to the sufferings of the poor and the fatherless and the widows and the stranger. Isn't that a sign of the times in this country?

"Just give me what I want and, in fact, give me some things I don't have to work for and then to blankety blank with everybody else; I don't care about them."

You drive by these fields and you see these people with their backs bent and they are working all they can for hours and hours that we couldn't stand for probably fifteen minutes—thirty minutes—and they are working just to carve a life. Just to get the next meal. Or make something better of themselves. Or to have something better for their children. Christ says "Turn from your indifference."

James also has something to say about this very point in James 2:14. Here's where the rubber meets the road.

*James 2:14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?
15) If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food ... (KJV)*

Can words save them or make their lives better?

16) And one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (KJV)

It's like the French queen who said— "Let them eat cake"—She was talking about the people who were starving.

17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (KJV)

We must do more than just say that we care about each other. It's not enough 'to say'; we have 'to do'. We have to take action and we have to demonstrate our faith and demonstrate our belief and demonstrate our words. So why stress taking care of the poor and stranger on Pentecost of all Holy Days? We read it earlier. Go back to Deuteronomy 24:22 again; just for emphasis. This is why you don't harvest every last stalk in the field. Why you don't shake every apple out of every tree.

Deuteronomy 24:22 *And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore, I command thee to do this thing. (KJV)*

We are to remember that we were slaves to sin and Satan's world and it's through our Father's love and through our Father's mercy that we have been taken out of

slavery, out of Satan's world and we best not forget it. This day is a day of not forgetting; of remembering the fact that we were called out of the worst slavery possible—slavery of the mind, slavery of the heart, slavery of the will. Out of absolute ignorance. It's only through our Father's mercy that we are here today.

Let's summarize and look at this as a whole. When we study our Father's Word, as I said in the beginning, it's so easy to just read right over scriptures. As we have come to know our Father and His Son in ways that we never dreamed possible, ten, twenty years ago. Because we read over so many scriptures and just had a paradigm set in our minds we just blew right past those scriptures. All of us have done that. We've seen an example of that today. How many times have I read Leviticus 23:22 and have just never given it a second thought? Just went right on into Trumpets and the rest of the Holy Days. We see here though, that there is a verse in the instructions for keeping Pentecost that was inserted to tell us not to ignore the widows and the fatherless and the poor and the stranger.

So, let's go back to where we began, Leviticus 23:22, this infamous scripture that we have all ignored. This time I'm going to read it out of the New Living Translation.

Leviticus 23:22 *When you harvest the crops of your land, [remember they were in the wilderness, so when you come to this beautiful land I'm going to give you] do not harvest the grain along the edges of your fields, and do not pick up what the harvesters drop. Leave it for the poor and the foreigners living among you. I am the Lord your God.*" (NLT)

I set the standard. I tell you what My will is and here it is. So why did the Father insert that verse? Let's go to Exodus 20; we are very familiar with Exodus 20, the giving of the Ten Commandments. We are going to start in verse 1 and this is the very first verse before Yehovah gave Moses the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:1 *And God spake all these words, saying,
2) I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* (KJV)

This verse, which we just read in Leviticus 23:22, we are told here in Exodus 20, not forget where you came from. And don't forget Who brought you out of where you came from. It's inserted to remind us that we used to be in slavery and to remind us of Who called us out of the slavery. Our Father knew, that as these end days would approach, Satan's influence would predominate and permeate the entire world. Love would grow cold; selfishness would abound and that is the very world we live in.

I saw a picture this past week, during this gas crisis on the East coast. There were people who can't get gas lined up for miles and people are bringing every container imaginable to horde. In fact, one woman had a large garbage bag that she was filling with gasoline at the gas station—this is after a few cans. This garbage bag was big and high and filled with gasoline. Gasoline weighs 8 pounds per gallon and she was somehow going to hoist this into the trunk of her car or inside her car and find out a way not to have it spill and hope to get home before she was incinerated to death. That just shows you how selfish people can be.

God Almighty knew this would be the condition that we would find ourselves in. Whether it's toilet paper or gasoline, people are selfish. The fact is, Pentecost has been celebrated for years, centuries, and here we are in 2021, about 3500 years after this day of firstfruits. No, we are not physical Israel—we are not. But we are as Paul says of the church, the Israel of God. In Galatians 6:15 Paul is reminding the church in Galatia and us today.

Galatians 6:15 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

16) And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. (KJV)

This is the church of God.

Going back to verse 7, notice the reference to crop cycles.

7) Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

8) For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (KJV)

Let's not be weary in well doing in this day. Look after the widow, the fatherless, the foreigner.

9) And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10) As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. (KJV)

The widows, the poor and the strangers that are among us. Paul tells us here, to the church in Galatia and us by extension today, to the degree we can, to the degree we are able, to the degree we own spiritual crops that we harvest, to do good to all, especially to take care of the household of faith.

Let's pose a question in closing. Think about this, just ask yourself the question. If you knew you had twenty-four hours to live, how would you spend those twenty-four hours? Who would you talk to? What would you say? What would be on your mind? Christ experienced just that, didn't he? He knew when that twenty-four period would occur. With that in mind go to John 13:31 out of the New King James Version; Christ is with the eleven disciples. This is after dinner.

John 13:31 *So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. (NKJV)*

Verse 34.

34) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35) By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (NKJV)

This command to love one another and to take care of one another would be the defining characteristic of a Christian. It would be the sign of a Christian, of those who walked in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. This command went to the eleven who were there at that moment and who would form the core of the New Testament church, founded on this very day.

We are members of that same church; we have that same Holy Spirit and we observe that same day of Pentecost which has been observed for all of these centuries. When there is so much turmoil about us as there is today, in and out of the church and in the greater church, we would do well to remember the following scripture in 1 Corinthians 13:1—you know where we are going. With all that we have read today and we've read our Father's commands about this Day and His commands about how we should look after the stranger, the foreigner, the fatherless, the widow, the poor—those physically and mentally poor.

1 Corinthians 13:1 *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, [if I had this tremendous gift that I could impress people all over the place with] but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
2) And though I have the gift of prophecy ... (NKJV)*

So many people just want the gift of prophecy and they are looking to find somebody who has the gift of prophecy. They are looking to kneel at the feet of somebody who has the gift of prophecy.

2 continued) ... and understand all mysteries and all knowledge... (NKJV)

There are people who worship other people who have this knowledge, or knowledge about this subject or that subject in scripture, and they are ready again to kneel at their feet and worship them.

2 continued) ... and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. (NKJV)

Knowledge devoid of love is worth nothing; we need to realize that. The gift of prophecy is worth nothing if we "have not love". When the chips are down, love supersedes knowledge, supersedes the gift of prophecy or this gift or that gift.

3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. (NKJV)

Then love is described. It "suffers long and is kind" — it's kind—what a concept 'to be kind'.

4) ... love does not envy; love does not parade itself ... (NKJV)

How many in the greater church have strutted back and forth, parading themselves. Titles, ranks, strutting up on a stage and the list goes on.

4 continued) ... is not puffed up;

5) *does not behave rudely, does not seek its own* [that is one of the meanings of this day; look after somebody other than yourself], *is not provoked, thinks no evil;*
6) *does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;*
7) *bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
(NKJV)

Of course, enduring to the end is something very much in our face right now. We must endure to the end.

8) *Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.* (NKJV)

We need to think about that. The Greek word for *vanish away* means “to render utterly useless”. If you don’t have love, your knowledge will be utterly useless. Knowledge devoid of love is worth nothing. So the Pentecost command that we read in Leviticus 23:22 is taking care of the poor and taking care of the strangers and it gets to the heart of Christ’s command on His last night to love one another—and this is how people are going to know that you are part of Me. It is if you love one another. So, in going forward from today, let’s ensure that we keep that same command to not cut the corners of our field, to not selfishly gather the gleanings of our lives and to keep them to ourselves. But rather let’s look out for one another, love one another to show all—the whole world, those inside the church, the family—that we are disciples of Jesus Christ. We meet on this day to learn where we came from and by Whose Power we are delivered.