



Fulfillment of  
The Feasts  
in  
Discipleship

J.K. Kelly



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Revelation 2.0: A New Approach to the Coming Tribulation  
Fulfillment of the Feasts in Discipleship  
Worship in Spirit and Truth

Scripture references taken from the NIV except where noted

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To the Holy Spirit  
for his leading, encouragement,  
gentle admonishments  
and treasures.



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## Chapter 1

### Fulfillment of The Feasts

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets;  
I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them”

Old Testament: “The People of Israel... Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory; the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.” (Rom. 9:4)

New Testament: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (Jn. 4:24 KJV)

The nascent church in Jerusalem believed that the Gospel was only for the Jews. With the vision received by Peter (Acts 11), the apostles began accepting the idea of Gentiles in the New Covenant church. However, the prevalent belief was that the Jews were still God's chosen people, the bearers of light to the world. Lacking any knowledge of worship, of Scripture or the covenants, the Gentiles were considered to be God's underprivileged children.

Some, like Paul, understood that the Gentiles were to be actively recruited into the household of faith, and so determined to take the Gospel to the Gentile world. However, his knowledge and understanding of the Jews as God's chosen people directed an evangelistic strategy of reaching out to the Jews first. On entering a city to preach the good news, he went first to the local synagogue. When opposition by non-believing Jews rose, he left the Jewish community, taking his new believers with him, and then preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. These Jewish believers formed the nucleus of the new Christian church in each community. Although numerous letters and Gospel accounts of Jesus' life were in circulation, for the first three hundred years of church history there was no New Testament to guide Sunday services. Converts were educated in Jesus' teachings about the kingdom of God and his fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture.

Because early Christian churches learned about Christ not only from stories of his life and parables, but through his fulfillment of the Old Testament Law and the prophets, they understood the Gospel in a fuller sense than we do today. With its core of Jewish believers, the early church concept of worship proceeded from a knowledge of temple worship under the Law and its fulfillment in Christ. They therefore had a more profound understanding of spiritual worship and covenant relationship with God, because these were integral aspects of Jewish culture and religion. Paul's epistles make numerous references to the feasts, furnishings, and sacrifices of the Law with no explanation of them, indicating a commonly held knowledge of Old Covenant temple worship in the early church. Unfortunately, the understanding of the fulfillment of covenant worship was lost in later centuries when the Church began to draw solely on the canon of the New Testament to define and defend itself.

## Foundations

Prior to the adoption of the Bible as we know it in the fourth century, the study of Scripture followed a two-pronged approach of examining the Old Covenant of law (the first five books of the Old Testament) and the prophets (the rest of the OT books), in order to understand their fulfillment by Jesus. Christ's fulfillment of over 300 prophecies proved his claim to be the Messiah, while his fulfillment of the Old Covenant of Law was the foundation on which New Covenant worship was based. This approach was validated by Jesus' own words: that he had not "come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Mt. 5:17) This fulfillment opened the gates to the kingdom of God, long awaited by the Jews. The coming of the kingdom and its basic principles was in fact the heart of Jesus' message: In his own words, "The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached..." (Lk. 16:16) Rather than the physical kingdom the Jews had expected, however, it was a spiritual kingdom that dwelt in the heart of the believer. (Lk. 17:21)

The word "Gospel" means "Good News." The Good News was that Christ had redeemed mankind, opening the gates of the kingdom of God to all who would believe. In fact, the focus of Jesus' teaching was not on his own sacrifice, but on the kingdom of God. Most of his parables expounded on the operating principles of the kingdom, with an emphasis on faith and discipleship. The same focus is found in the apostles' teachings as well. The book of Acts records the substance of their message: Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God. (Acts: 1, 8,14,19, 20, 28) As late as Paul's imprisonment in Rome, he was still preaching the Good News of the kingdom: "From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets." (Acts 28:23)

## Faith and Discipleship

The cornerstone of living in the kingdom of God is discipleship, a way of life that operates by faith. It is a walk of trust and obedience that leads to maturity and results in a crop of kingdom fruit that lasts for eternity. Discipleship is not an easy path, but God has provided us with the spiritual gifts and blessings necessary to walk it. (Eph 1:3) The operative principle of discipleship is that we need to exercise faith in order to make these blessings and gifts functional in our life. This is in fact true of all spiritual gifts, starting with redemption.

When we exercise faith, we are doing two things. First, we believe in the truth of what we hear because we trust the source. Second, we respond by accepting *and acting on* what we are told. Our actions enable us to walk in the blessings of our salvation. ***It is these faith-in-action responses to the blessings of God that enable our walk of discipleship and our spiritual worship in the New Covenant.***

A good example of faith in action is Peter walking on water at Christ's command. First he received a word from Jesus. Peter trusted Jesus' word, believing that he could walk on water. Then he obeyed the word he had been given: he took the action of getting out of the boat. Although we tend to think the story ended with Peter sinking rather than walking, that is not what happened. The lesson is twofold: First, because he trusted Jesus and took the step of faith, Peter actually walked on water. Second, when he got into trouble, he trusted Jesus to help him persevere. Peter did not sink. He only had a crisis of faith that caused him to momentarily doubt and begin to sink. *Peter not only walked toward Jesus, he walked on water back to the boat with*

*him!* The combined principles of trust, obedient action, and perseverance ensure that we are able to appropriate and walk in every heavenly blessing that Christ purchased for us on the cross.

There are numerous spiritual blessings available to us by virtue of Christ's sacrifice and our position in him. Rather than operating in them all at once, we appropriate them as we grow in our relationship with Jesus and the Father. Much of the teaching found in the New Testament epistles explains not only these blessings, but also the faith-actions expected of us in response.

As we respond in faith to the blessings of our salvation, they are *worked into* our relationship with Christ, and *worked out* in our relationships with others. As we are faithful to persevere in our walk, the character of Christ grows in us. It is perfected as we do our part in the body of Christ, walking in the Spirit through the trial of our faith and ministering the blessings and gifts of salvation to others. This simple dynamic brings us over time into spiritual maturity that produces a crop of kingdom fruit. Peter charts the course of spiritual growth that brings us into the completeness of our faith. "For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from becoming ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2Pet. 1:5-8)

### **The Way of Discipleship**

Because we are born first in the natural and then in the spiritual realm, walking in faith toward maturity does not come easily to us. We tend to revert to a natural rather than a spiritual perspective on life. We therefore need the guidance and transforming power of the Spirit if we are to make much progress. However, even this spiritual guidance is not enough if we do not listen and respond to it. It is essential that we are wholly committed to walking in obedience, actively seeking God's will in our daily circumstances and walking by the spirit rather than following our natural tendencies. This requires that we submit to the regime of a spiritual life, i.e., that we submit to Christ's discipleship program. (Note the root of discipleship is discipline!)

The concept of discipleship is more familiar in the East than it is in western culture. Discipleship can be defined as giving up one's former way of life and accepting another as Master in all things, sitting at his feet to learn from him and following him on his journeys. After a time of learning, the Master sends his disciples out to practice what they have been taught. The cost of discipleship is total commitment to another: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Mt. 16:24)

We learn from Jesus by studying his life and teaching in the Gospels, by seeing him modeled in others (1Cor. 11:1), and by becoming sensitive to the guidance of his Holy Spirit. Everyone's walk of faith is different. Not everyone will walk the same road or bear the same fruit. One thing that is the same though is that God calls us all to a deeper walk with him so we can bear kingdom fruit. However, not everyone responds to his call the same way. Like the children of Israel, many children of the kingdom are content to know and praise God for his acts: what he has done in their lives. Others have a desire to go deeper, to experience the Lord as Moses did and learn God's ways. "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel." (Ps. 103:7)

## **God's Ways**

Although the Gospels provide us with a personal revelation of the Father through the life and teachings of Jesus, a systematic revelation of God's ways is only found in the Old Testament. Since the Law presents the detailed inner workings of covenant relationship between God and man, it reveals God's ways of doing things. Because God does not change, his ways have not been altered; only the nature of the covenant between God and man.

Worship under the Law is fulfilled in the New Covenant in spirit and truth, through personal relationship with the Father through Christ. Because Jesus fulfilled the Law in himself, the blessings foreshadowed in the Old have become spiritual reality in the New. Studying the elements of Old Covenant worship therefore reveals the underlying pattern of our walk and worship in the New Covenant. Christ's fulfillment of the three main aspects of Old Covenant worship – the feasts, furnishings and sacrifices, – provides us with a greater understanding not only of our salvation, but also our faith responses of discipleship (section 1) and worship (section 2) in the New Covenant.

As much as any prophecy, worship under the Old Covenant was a revelation of the coming Christ: "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (Jn. 14:6) Christ's fulfillment of the feasts reveals the Way of salvation: our seasonal walk of discipleship from conversion through consecration, and on to completeness in him. His fulfillment of the tabernacle furnishings reveals the spiritual Life of following Christ, the practice of our 'temple ministry' in our relationship with God and our fellow man. Finally, Jesus' fulfillment of the physical sacrifices reveals the Truth of spiritual worship, our service of spiritual sacrifice in spirit and in truth under the terms of the New Covenant.

## Chapter 2

### The Feasts and the Way of Discipleship

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”

Old Covenant: “Three times a year all your men must (journey to) appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles.” (Deut. 16:16)

New Covenant: “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’ Jesus answered, ‘*I am the way.*’” (John 14:3-6)

The Lord instituted the Covenant of Law with the children of Israel shortly after delivering them from their slavery in Egypt. As God's covenant people they pledged themselves to observe his commands and walk in his ways in the land he had promised their forefathers. This covenant forged a new national identity that was founded on a culture of faith and justice: to walk by faith with God and act justly and compassionately towards one's neighbor.

Their new life in the Promised Land would revolve around a system of worship that dictated much of their behavior and lifestyle. Seven annual religious feasts were to be celebrated at the tabernacle, later the temple, during which different types of sacrifices were offered for the people by a consecrated priesthood. The feasts and their sacrifices were designed around various themes: remembrance of Israel's deliverance from slavery to a new life, acknowledgement of God's annual provision for their needs, the practice of prayer and repentance, forgiveness of sin through judgment, communal fellowship, etc. These themes are also found in the seven salvation covenants God made with man, from Adam to Jesus. (See: [The Covenants](#)) They are so important that the Lord initiated a new religious calendar that incorporated the feasts into an annual cycle of worship. This religious calendar ran concurrently with the existing secular one, combining spiritual and secular aspects of daily life in Israel.

Whereas the secular New Year started in the fall, the religious calendar started in the spring, because it was based on the seasonal harvest cycle of the land. The organization of the new calendar around the harvest cycle was important because it conveyed essential truths about spiritual growth, such as the need to cleanse one's house from things that lead to sin; that living for God is based on whole-hearted consecration; that growth as well as forgiveness comes through repentance; that discipline and judgment leads to a deeper walk with God. These and other lessons of worship were taught and celebrated during the spring, summer, and fall festivals. The seven feasts, apportioned among these three seasons, expressed a progressive walk with God. The feasts therefore not only defined the yearly worship calendar, they thematically revealed “the way” that God's people came into spiritual maturity through worship.

Since the themes of the feasts contain essential truths about redemption and salvation, their importance cannot be overemphasized. They are spiritual ‘types,’ that prefigure the work of

Christ – in his life and ministry, his death and resurrection, and in his return to judge and reign at the end of the age. Not only did Jesus fulfill the spiritual types of the festivals and their feasts, he did so on the exact calendar day of each feast. As the Lamb of God, for example, he was crucified on the feast of Passover and raised as the first fruits of the Resurrection on the morning of Firstfruits. Because we are in Christ, we also fulfill the themes of the feasts as we follow him.

Rather than celebrate the physical festivals themselves, we fulfill them spiritually, as we grow in the knowledge, power and love of God. There is no set timeline or “seven step” program for this. If any metaphor could be made, the closest one would be to understand our growth in Christ as a seasonal harvest, with the feasts thematically defining a progressively deeper and more responsible spiritual walk. As we follow Jesus, the feasts act as guideposts, illuminating the way of discipleship. From Conversion, through Consecration, and on to Completeness, we are called to journey as spiritual pilgrims toward maturity in Christ.

## Conversion: Our spring harvest of Faith

The first 'season' of our salvation walk is conversion, when we are delivered from the power of the kingdom of darkness and "translated" (Col. 1:13 *methistano*, an instantaneous transfer) us into the kingdom of light. Several things occur in the spiritual realm at conversion. We are forgiven; we are born again of water (through baptism), and the Spirit: we are consecrated, or set apart to God, and we are justified, declared righteous in God's sight. Conversion is always characterized by study and learning to walk by faith; it is a time of growing in the knowledge of God and reordering our thought patterns, breaking old habits and forming new relationships in God's family.

During this stage we learn about our new life in the kingdom of God and who we are in Christ. The Lord is present in his word and by his Spirit living in us. As the word takes root in our heart, we become more attuned to the Holy Spirit and develop a living relationship with the Lord, coming into the *relational* knowledge of God. Since the blessings of God can only be grasped by the spirit of man, during this season of our new life we learn to "walk by the spirit," seeing our circumstances with new eyes of faith.

During conversion, we appropriate by faith the blessings that fulfill the themes of the first three feasts – Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits.

## THE FEASTS

FEAST	FURNISHING	THEME	LIFE OF CHRIST
PASSOVER 14 NISAN (EXODUS)	ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING	DELIVERANCE, REDEMPTION, JUSTIFICATION THROUGH BLOOD OF LAMB	CRUCIFIXION
FIRSTFRUITS 16 NISAN	WASHBASIN	FIRSTFRUITS SANCTIFICATION OF WHOLE CROP	RESURRECTION
UNLEAVENED BREAD 15-21 TISHRI	TABLE OF SHOWBREAD	CLEANSING AND SEPARATION FROM WORLD	EXPLAINED SCRIPTURES
(WEEKS) PENTECOST 5 SIVAN (LAW GIVEN)	LAMPSTAND	SANCTIFICATION OF DOUBLE PORTION IN POWER	SENT HOLY SPIRIT TO BAPTIZE IN FIRE
TRUMPETS 1 TISHRI	GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE	NEW BEGINNING THROUGH REPENTANCE	RESURRECTION RAPTURE
ATONEMENT 10 TISHRI	ARK OF COVENANT	REMOVAL OF SIN & PURIFICATION THROUGH JUDGMENT	JUDGMENT DAY
TABERNACLES 15-21 TISHRI	MERCY SEAT (ATONEMENT COVER)	REST AND REJOICING IN PRESENCE OF GOD	MILLENNIUM OF REST, REJOICING

## Chapter 3

# PASSOVER

Old Covenant Feast: “Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household... Take care of them until the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, when all the people of Israel must slaughter them at twilight. Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the lambs... The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.” (Exod.12:3,6,7,13)

New Covenant Fulfillment: “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And they sang a new song,: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God...’” (Rev. 5:6-9)

Theme: *Deliverance to a new life*

On the tenth of Nisan, every Hebrew household in Egypt selected a year-old ram for a sacrifice. It was checked for the next few days to ensure it was perfect, since it represented a sinless offering. On the afternoon of the fourteenth, they killed the lamb, smeared its blood around their doors, and feasted into the night. During that time, the destroying angel flew over Egypt. He killed every first-born male in the land because the Pharaoh had refused to set God’s people free, despite nine previous warnings and judgments. If the angel saw blood over the door of a house, he would “pass over” that house, which is how the first feast came to be called “Passover.”

The sacrifice of the lifeblood of the lamb ‘covered’ everyone in the house, sparing those inside from God’s wrath. Because of the great loss suffered by the Egyptians, the Pharaoh let the Hebrews leave the next morning to go on the pilgrimage requested by Moses. The blood of a sinless sacrifice had delivered the children of Israel not only from God’s wrath, but also from their slavery in a foreign land. They headed out into the desert en masse, to start their new life, having been delivered from their former servitude. They were headed to a land of their own, a land of freedom and plenty. The deliverance of Passover is still celebrated every year, passing on the knowledge of God as Israel's mighty Deliverer to each generation.

### **The Altar of Burnt Offering**

The feast of Passover is thematically associated with the altar of burnt offering, the first furnishing in the Temple courtyard. Just as Passover brought Israel into the cycle of holy feast

days, the altar provided entrance to temple worship. The common theme between the two was the admission of the nation and the individual to the worship of God under the Old Covenant.

As the mediator between God and man, Jesus provides admission into worship in the New Covenant. He fulfilled both the sacrifice (Passover Lamb) and the altar on which it was offered. He is the altar of the New Covenant by which men can approach God.

“We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.” (Heb. 13:10)

### **Fulfillment in Christ**

Some 1,300 years after the Exodus, Jesus fulfilled the Passover feast when he offered himself as the unblemished Lamb of God. Like the Passover lamb, he was observed throughout his three-and-a-half-year ministry and no fault could be found in him: “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” Since he was innocent of sin himself, he was able to redeem mankind by paying our penalty of death for sin. He allowed himself to be crucified as the Lamb of God on Passover afternoon, shedding his own blood so we could be delivered from the kingdom of darkness.

Since the New Covenant is a spiritual fulfillment of the physical types and practices of the Old Covenant, the same operative principle of being ‘covered’ by the blood applies to us as it did to the Israelites on Passover. As they were protected and delivered by the blood of the lamb on their doors, we are spiritually protected and delivered from God’s wrath against sin by the blood of Christ. Through his lifeblood, Christ paid for our debt of sin, ‘buying us back’ from death. This operates on the Old Testament principle of “a life for a life.” This payment, or purchase, is known as Redemption, and it results in our forgiveness, or *Remission*, of past sins. Because we are delivered from death, we are ‘born again,’ this time of the Holy Spirit.

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1:13, 14) “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” (1Pet. 1:23)

The gift of redemption by the blood of Jesus includes numerous blessings. Among the initial salvation blessings that fulfill the deliverance theme of Passover are:

- Deliverance from the kingdom of darkness and admission into the kingdom of God;
- Deliverance from God’s wrath on the disobedient and acceptance into his household of faith;
- Deliverance from spiritual death into a new spiritual life (being born again) of freedom in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit;
- Deliverance from slavery to the power of sin through forgiveness (*Remission*).

### **Our Faith Response**

The blessings of redemption through Jesus’ fulfillment of Passover are ours by virtue of being “in Christ.” However, like all spiritual gifts, these blessings must be appropriated by faith before they can become operative in our lives. If, for example, we do not believe Jesus sacrificed himself out of his great love for each one us, we will not come to him to accept the gift of Redemption. If we do not believe that we have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness, then we will continue in our sinful ways. (This is why the devil tries to get new believers to doubt whether they are really saved.) Since both the blessings and the faith to accept them are

gifts from God, our part is to exercise the faith we have been given. In its most basic form, faith is believing that the Bible is God's word and basing our actions on this reality.

The amount of faith we have is not as important as how we use what we have. We have all been given enough faith to follow Christ. Following Christ is an action; therefore faith involves action (obedience) as well as belief (trust). To appropriate the blessings of our salvation, we must *act* on our belief in order to receive them. For example, we appropriate redemption by first believing that the Father loves us so much that he sent his only Son to die in our place so we could be delivered from sin and death. (Jn. 3:15) Second, Faith requires not only that we believe the truth of Scripture, but also that we act on it, in this case, confirming our belief verbally. The action of faith is like extending our hand to accept a gift. It allows us to stand later against spiritual attack and positively state: "This gift is mine."

That *if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Rom. 10:9,10)

***All the blessings of salvation have an appropriate faith response involving belief and action.*** Because we are in relationship with God as well as our fellow man, our response to God's gifts and blessings is twofold; i.e., it has both a vertical and horizontal component. We are called to respond "vertically," because the gifts God has given us out of his great love call for a return of that love. Since we are part of the body of Christ with other believers, our "horizontal" response-ability is to share the blessings of our salvation with others.

*Vertical response:* With Adam's sin, mankind lost its place in the kingdom of God, and had to face the harsh realities of living independently on the earth. The most grievous aspect of this was the pain of separation, the loss of the close relationship Adam and Eve had enjoyed with the Father. When Christ bridged the separation between God and man, he opened the gates to the kingdom, restoring the broken Father-child relationship. Our response to the gift of deliverance from the kingdom of darkness and entry into the kingdom of light is to come back to the Father through Christ. We have Jesus in Scripture so we may learn from him, and the inner leading of his Holy Spirit to guide us in the way. As the loss of man's relationship with the Father was caused by doubting his word and disobedience, its restoration is marked by trusting his word and obedience to his revealed will.

"No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done (by us), on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt. 6:9-10)

*Horizontal response:* Salvation in Christ is both an accomplished event through the cross (God's part) and a spiritual journey to which we are called (our part, led by God's Spirit). Our journey is not one that we undertake alone, for we are called to travel together with the household of faith, just as the children of Israel left Egypt together as a group. Because we have all been delivered by the blood of Christ, we are called to commit ourselves not only to Christ, but to our brothers and sisters in the body. Because we have been made acceptable to the Father through Christ, we are called to accept our brothers and sisters in Christ in the same spirit. The Lord cleans his fish after he catches them, not before. How can we, who still need to grow and

mature, reject others who are in the same state? We must accept others before we can fulfill God's command to love them.

“He hath made us accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” (Eph. 1:6,7 KJV) “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” (Rom. 15:7) “Accept him whose faith is weak.” (Rom. 14:1)

## Chapter 4

# UNLEAVENED BREAD

Old Covenant Feast: “On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.” (Lev. 23:6)

New Covenant Fulfillment: “Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed (for us).” (1Cor. 5:7)

Theme: *Cleansing from sin: Justification and Expiation*

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was so closely aligned with Passover that the two names were used interchangeably to describe the first festival grouping of three feasts. This feast was a reminder of the fact that the Israelites left Egypt in such a hurry that there had been no time for yeast to rise in the dough before baking it. The Lord commanded the Israelites to remove all leaven from their houses during the entire week of this feast to commemorate more than just the start of the journey. Since leaven is actually a bacterium that corrupts flour and causes it to rise, it is a type of sin. Removal of the leaven was therefore symbolic of their rejection of Egyptian society. For us, it represents turning away from the values of the world to follow Christ. The theme of this weeklong feast is separation and cleansing from the influences of one's past life in order to begin a new one devoted to the Lord. It connotes a time of giving up worldly desires to adopt the harsh realities of being a pilgrim on a spiritual journey.

### **The Washbasin**

The feast of Unleavened Bread is thematically associated with the huge bronze washbasin that was placed just outside the entrance to the Sanctuary. The priest had to wash his hands and feet with water from the basin before offering a sacrifice, and again before entering the temple. This was to remove any external impurity so he could minister in faith before a Holy God. The outward cleansing in water was symbolic of the inward righteousness necessary to serve in God's house. The washbasin shared the theme of cleansing with the feast of Unleavened Bread. In the believer's walk of discipleship, baptism fulfills the symbolism of washing in the basin. The baptismal water washes our bodies in an outward sign of the inward cleansing of our conscience.

“...And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.” (1Pet. 3:21)

### **Fulfillment in Christ**

Having set us free from slavery in the kingdom of darkness through forgiveness, God does not leave us outside its gates to fend for ourselves. If he did, we would soon fall back into our old ways. Christ therefore not only forgives our sins, he clothes us with his righteousness so

he can bring us into his kingdom, and even his own house. He accomplished this through God's exchange program; taking our sins on himself and giving us his righteousness in return. This is known as *Justification*. Not only do we receive Christ's righteousness when we are justified, his blood also cleanses our conscience from the guilt of sin. This is called *Expiation*. When guilt is removed, sin loses its former power over us.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (Rom. 5:21) "The (Old Covenant) sacrifices were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper... How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God!" (Heb. 9:9,14)

### **Our Faith Response**

*Vertical Response:* Having been brought into the kingdom and delivered from the power of sin, we are called to submit to water baptism. This is the outward sign that we are choosing to live by the terms of the New Covenant, fulfilling the type of cleansing in the temple washbasin. In dying with Christ through baptism we become dead to the power of sin, because sin has no power over a corpse. Because we are in Christ, the Holy Spirit continues to provide ongoing cleansing from the effects of past sin and the influence of the world.

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin." (Rom. 6:3-4,6-7)

It is important to understand that the power of sin has been broken through the completed work of the cross. Yet the sin nature still lives within us, inciting us to act against the will of God, as Paul explains in his letter to the Romans. Turning away from the works of the sin nature and walking in the Spirit is part of learning to walk as a disciple of Christ. It is a cooperative work involving God's grace and our willingness, operating through faith. Because we are dead to sin's power and alive in Christ, we have the "response-ability" to maintain a clean conscience towards God. The first step in doing this is to remove all of the leaven – those things that are spiritually unclean or offensive to God – from our spiritual house.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. The death he (Christ) died he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires." (Rom. 6:4,10-12) "So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man." (Acts 24:16)

*Horizontal Response:* Having been placed in God's own family, we must be careful to base our relationships on Godly values rather than worldly ones. To ensure that we maintain a clear conscience, we may have to alter or even give up those things that draw us back to the

world. This includes relationships. However, the Father is faithful to provide us with new friends from the household of faith.

“Therefore let us keep the feast (of Unleavened Bread), not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1Cor. 5:8 KJV) “Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)

The Work of Conversion: We are brought into God's kingdom and even his family through what can be likened to an adoption, returned to our former estate as children of the Father. We are therefore expected to behave as God's children, growing up to be like Christ. This takes place through transformation, the process of sanctification by the Holy Spirit through which we become more like Jesus. This is a joint work between the Holy Spirit and us. This means we have some work to do, because when we come into the kingdom of God, we bring our worldly ways, values and responses with us. Conversion is a period of turning from the world's values and learning to walk in God's ways. This involves a period of reorientation in our relationship with God and our fellow man, adopting a kingdom view of life. That is why conversion is not just an event, but also a season in our discipleship walk. We fulfill the feast of Unleavened Bread as we remove those things revealed as leaven by the Holy Spirit. This requires active participation on our part so the Holy Spirit can do his work of changing us.

“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be *transformed* by the renewing of your mind.” (Ro. 12:1-2)

There are three worldly strongholds that we need to deal with during the process of conversion: sin, self-righteousness, and judgment. The Holy Spirit is faithful to bring conviction in each of these areas so we can clean house: “When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to: (A) sin, and (B) righteousness, and (C) judgment...” (John 16:8) It is our responsibility to respond to his conviction.

(A) Cleansing our House of Sin: Even though we have been freed from sin's power, no one is without sin. While the Holy Spirit can and sometimes does immediately free us from some bondages, God's plan calls for us to learn how to overcome sin, for this is how our faith is strengthened. It can take some time to get rid of sinful habits, since our transformation by the Holy Spirit is a gradual one. Although our transformation is the Holy Spirit's work, cleansing our house of things that lead to sin is our responsibility. We need to turn away from the world, removing those things that lead to temptation as they are revealed to us. Jesus explained the issue in the colloquial language of the day:

“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.” (Matt. 5:29)

(B) Cleansing our House of Self Righteousness: We are to turn away from walking in our own righteousness – regardless of whether this is based on heritage, wealth, status, religious

conviction, or works – and seek the righteousness that comes from God. When we compare ourselves to others, this is a clue that we are still using a world-based system of righteousness rather than a Godly one. When we stop competing for success and the approval of others and seek the approval that comes from God, this is a sign that we are putting the kingdom first in our lives.

“That I may be... found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from (keeping) the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.” (Phil. 3:9) “Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them.” (Rom. 6:1) “But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” (Matt. 6:33 KJV)

(C) Cleansing our House of Judgment: We are baptized as a sign of our Conversion, sharing in the death of Christ so we might live with him, born anew of water and the Holy Spirit. We are set free from the claims and guilt of sin, though we are not free from the struggle against the draw of sin. We are therefore dependent on God for the grace to help us withstand temptation and keep us from spiritual harm. Because our brothers and sisters in Christ have the same struggles, as well as the same forgiveness and justification as we do, we are to refrain from judging them.

“Lead *us* not into temptation, but deliver *us* from the evil one.” (Mt. 6:13) “Why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.” (Rom. 14:10) “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.” (Rom. 2:1)

## Chapter 5

# FIRSTFRUITS

Old Covenant Feast: “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath (of Unleavened Bread).’” (Lev. 23:10-11)

New Covenant Fulfillment: “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1Cor. 15:20) “...and by that will we have been made holy (consecrated) through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Heb 10:10)

*Theme: Initial Consecration to new life in Christ*

The day after the start of Unleavened Bread (unless there was an intervening Sabbath), the priest waved the first sheaf of the barley crop high above the altar, consecrating it to the Lord. This first fruits consecration made the whole crop holy. Once the crop had been blessed and sanctified, the harvest could begin.

The feast of Firstfruits was an acknowledgment that the Lord of heaven was also Lord of all the earth. Since the earth belonged to God, the Israelites were his special tenants on the land he had given them. The wave offering was an acknowledgment of his provision of sun and rain for the harvest. The first fruits offering was a reminder that since everything rightfully belonged to God, the first fruits were to be consecrated back to him.

“All the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether man or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD.” (Num. 3:13)

### **Table of Showbread**

The feast of Firstfruits is thematically associated with The Table of Showbread. This small table was placed against the north wall of the Sanctuary, directly opposite the Lampstand. These two furnishings carry through the consecrating themes of Firstfruits and Pentecost, the dedication of the first fruits of the grain harvests to God.

Twelve large loaves of the “Bread of the Presence” were placed on this small gold-covered table with rows of incense between them. This was consecrated bread, set apart for the priests to eat as they ministered in God's tabernacle. This bread ministered physical life to them so they could minister spiritual life to God's people. Although the showbread was symbolic of God's presence, it was understood that the actual Presence of God dwelt in unapproachable light in the inner room above the atonement cover. Rabbis have therefore held that the bread of the Presence was a type of the Messiah. The incense represented prayer and intercession, the primary

work of Christ as mediator of the New Covenant, while bread is a type of both the word of God and of the body.

### **Fulfillment in Christ**

As the Word of God ‘incarnate,’ or made flesh. Jesus fulfilled the consecrated bread of the Presence as well as the feast of Firstfruits.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:1,2,14) “For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life. He who eats this bread will never go hungry...’” (John 6: 33,35)

As the firstborn child of Joseph and Mary, Jesus set the example of a consecrated life. At his death he was lifted up on a cross, becoming the first fruits wave offering for the entire harvest of mankind. Rising on the feast of Firstfruits, he became the first fruits of the Resurrection from the dead. He consecrated (declared holy) the rest of the harvest, those who would follow him into the kingdom and the Resurrection to eternal life. When we come to Christ we are set apart as holy children of the Father, fit for his purposes in this life and for eternal life in the next.

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep... For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.” (1Cor. 15:20-23)

### **Our Faith Response**

*Vertical response:* As the priests ate the showbread every day, we are called to feed on God's word to maintain our spiritual health. Having responded to the salvation message, we may no more consider our nourishment complete than we can discontinue eating because we once had a good steak dinner. It is in eating the bread of the word on a daily basis and letting it go to work inside us, and not just looking at it lying on the table that we receive nourishment. Since the Bible is God's instruction book for life, doing what it says keeps our mind set on a kingdom perspective, enabling us to live by the Spirit.

“Do not merely listen to the word,... Do what it says ... the man who... continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.” (Jas. 1:22,25) “Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.” (Rom. 8:5) “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (Acts 20:32)

*Horizontal response:* Just as the priests ministered spiritual life to others through their intercession in the temple, we are called to minister the word of God to those around us. This opportunity can be found on numerous occasions in order to accomplish God's will in people's lives. As we share with others a word of truth that has ministered life to us, it continues to bring forth the Life of God.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...” (Tim. 3:16) “Instead, *speaking the truth in love*, we will in all things grow up into the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Eph 4:15-16)

## Consecration in Power: Our Summer Harvest of Hope

As we grow in faith and the knowledge of God during the conversion process, we begin to view life and ourselves from a more spiritual perspective. We see our own sin for what it is and gain a desire for real change as we continue our quest to become more like Jesus. Even though we have received the imputed righteousness of Christ through justification, we are aware that this righteousness is not always evidenced in our actions. Because we have been given the hope of salvation – the inheritance of reigning with Christ in the Resurrection – we become motivated less by achieving worldly goals and more by the hope of attaining heavenly ones. We desire, like Paul, to “... win Christ, and be found in him, that I may know him, *and the power of his resurrection*, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil. 3:10-11)

The second season in the way of discipleship is Consecration, actually Sanctification, in power. In fulfillment of the feast of Pentecost, we complete the initial consecration we received at conversion by virtue of our position in Christ, pursuing holiness through a deeper walk with God. When we seek to live a sanctified life, we are empowered by the Spirit to overcome. We receive the armor of God to overcome the draw of the world and the power of the enemy, and the gifts of the Spirit to minister to our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. These are two principal instruments of our transformation into the likeness of Christ. We are no longer just forgiven babes in Christ, but young men and women, so to speak, capable of functioning in power in the spiritual realm, able to minister to others as we grow together toward maturity.

## Chapter 6

# PENTECOST

Old Covenant Feast: “From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and present an offering of new grain to the Lord. From wherever you live, bring two loaves ... as a wave offering of firstfruits to the Lord.” (Lev. 23:15-17)

New Covenant Fulfillment: “Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever *those who are being made holy*. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. ‘This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.’” (Heb. 10:14-16)

Theme: *Consecration in power through Sanctification*

Pentecost, known as the Feast of Weeks when it was established, was the second of the three annual festivals. It was celebrated seven weeks after Firstfruits. Although it stood on its own, separate from the other two festivals, it was thematically related to Firstfruits. It was actually a completion of the Firstfruits consecration, with the intervening time between the two feasts devoted to fasting and looking forward to the joy of completion. (One can see a similar period of anticipation in the church season of Lent.) Since the seventh day was holy to the Lord, seven times seven days reflected the completion of a consecrated period of time. Because the Jews in the Diaspora emphasized the occurrence of Pentecost on the fiftieth day after Firstfruits, rather than the seven weeks between the two feasts, the feast of Weeks became known as Pentecost in the early church. (*Pentekonte*, Gr: “fifty”)

The ceremonies of Pentecost were similar to those of the feast of Firstfruits. Both festivals were characterized by waving the first fruits of the harvest. The consecrating wave offering of Firstfruits was of the unprocessed sheaves of barley, while that of Pentecost was of two huge loaves of bread baked with leaven, the first fruits of the wheat crop. The two loaves symbolized a double portion, representing consecration in power.

There is a question as to why the loaves were baked with leaven, since leaven represents sin. The answer is that this offering symbolized our fulfillment of Pentecost. Although we are consecrated (declared holy) by virtue of our position in Christ at conversion, we still need to deal with the sin problem in our lives; we are not yet walking in holiness. This is why our initial consecration by Christ needs to be completed, or fulfilled, through the process of sanctification.

Having already received the ‘positional’ consecration and righteousness of being in Christ at conversion, we need to learn to walk in actual holiness and righteousness. The two loaves symbolize God’s work and our condition. The leaven symbolizes the fact that sin still resides in our natural nature, while the doubling and great size of the loaves represents the power of the Spirit that enables us to lead a sanctified life as a spiritual man or woman of God.

## **The Lampstand**

The feast of Pentecost is thematically associated with the lampstand, or menorah. It stood against the south wall of the Sanctuary across from the table of showbread. Hand made of solid gold, it was designed to look like a blossoming almond tree, symbolizing new life. The oil that kept the lamps burning was also used to ordain the priests, consecrating them to God. The seven-branched lamp stand is a type of the Holy Spirit (Revelation 1:4, Zechariah 4:10). The lampstand and the table of showbread, situated directly across from each other, foreshadowed the concurrent work of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant. The bread of the Word of God is illuminated by the quickening light of understanding and revelation given by the Holy Spirit.

## **Fulfillment in Christ**

Like all the temple furnishings, the lampstand as well as the feast of Pentecost was fulfilled in Jesus. He is the Light that shines in the darkness, exposing darkness in the heart. As the light of the sun gives life to the earth, Jesus is the spiritual light that gives life to men through his word and the ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit. God's word, quickened (brought to life) by the light of the Holy Spirit and put into practice in our lives, frees us over time from the acts of the sin nature so we can walk in holiness.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word Was God. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.... And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.... That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (John 1:1,4,5,9 KJV) “Jesus ... said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’” (John 8:12) “Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you,” (Jas 1:21)

This light shone at its brightest in the works of power that Jesus did during his three-year ministry. The miracles he performed proved his claim that he was the Messiah, testifying to the truth of his words and the power of living a consecrated life. These works were possible because the light of God shining in his soul was focused by a will that was one with the will of the Father.

“As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:4,5)

On Pentecost morning, Christ sent the Holy Spirit to the 120 disciples who had presented themselves in the upper room as a consecrated wave offering, the first fruits of all who would be born of the Holy Spirit, filling them with power to be his witnesses in both word and deed. Fulfillment of this feast is so important that Jesus had told them not to start ministry until they had received this power. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was manifested by extraordinary natural phenomena and spiritual gifts, notably speaking in tongues. Since those who had walked daily with Jesus for three years needed this power to minister to others, how much more might we need the same power, who have not yet even seen him?

## **Our Faith Response**

*Vertical response:* Because Jesus has declared us holy by virtue of our position in him, he wants us to *be* holy. Having consecrated us to God in fulfillment of the feast of Firstfruits at conversion, Christ calls us to pursue a consecrated walk of holiness through the power of the Spirit in fulfillment of Pentecost. It is only as we walk in the power of the Spirit that we can effectively witness to the truth of the transforming power of the Gospel. As disciples, the primary manifestation of being a ‘witness’ is in our actions, not just our words. When our spoken witness of the Gospel is confirmed by Christ-centered actions, then our words will have the inner witness of the Holy Spirit, and the power to germinate spiritual life in the hearts of others.

“As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” (1Pet. 1:14-16) “Make every effort to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14) “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8)

When we pursue a walk of holiness Christ responds by filling us with the power of the Spirit to live a sanctified life. There is some controversy regarding how and when we receive the Holy Spirit, with some holding that this occurs when we confess Christ and are baptized. Others believe it is a separate event, the Baptism of the Spirit that is often manifested by speaking in tongues. God is not limited, in the time or manner by which he conveys the power through which every believer can live a sanctified life. Even in the early church, there was no set form for receiving the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts records that sometimes he came on believers through the laying on of hands after baptism, and other times he filled believers on first hearing the Gospel, before they were baptized.

In the early Orthodox Church in the East, the Holy Spirit came on believers at baptism, symbolized by anointing with oil (Crismation) *and prayer*. In the Catholic Church in the West, the same rite occurred *through prayer* and the laying on of hands (Confirmation). The later practice of infant baptism required that Confirmation occur at a later date, after the age of reason had been attained. However, if we can learn anything about life in the New Covenant, it is that God is not limited by outward signs. It is not the outward anointing or laying on of hands by which the Spirit comes on believers in power, but through prayer. Because we are consecrated to God at Baptism, we have already been given the Holy Spirit. In order to be able to walk a sanctified life, all we need to do is pray to the Father for the power to walk in holiness. This power has two principal manifestations: spiritual gifts and the armor of God.

“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Lk. 11:13)

*Horizontal response:* Having been given the armor of God, we are called to ‘put it on,’ i.e., to stand by faith and do battle against the spiritual forces that oppose us. (Eph. 6) We are also called to seek God for the spiritual gifts that will edify the church to build up the body of Christ.

“So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.” (Rom. 13:12) “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” (1Pet. 4:10) “Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.” (1Cor. 14:12)

## Completeness: Our Autumn Harvest of Love

As we live a sanctified life, we gain experience and ‘seasoning’ by fighting spiritual battles and ministering to others in the body of Christ. We develop the power of self-control and learn to persevere through the trial of our faith. We become more like Christ as we learn to bear with others, ministering to their spiritual and physical needs. However, there is more to our journey. We must continue in the way of discipleship so our faith might be perfected in love. As we grow in the knowledge and likeness of Christ, we are able to do more than just witness to the truth of Christ’s saving grace at work in us. In this season of our walk, we take on a greater share in the sufferings of Christ. Through self-denial, we become ‘less’ while he becomes ‘more’ in us. Motivated by the love of Christ growing in our heart, we share the deeper knowledge of God with others, becoming mentors to those walking the road we have traveled.

The autumn season of discipleship is a time of continuing to increase in Godliness, perfecting faith, knowledge and self-control. We develop brotherly kindness that results in service to others, and we grow in the love that extends beyond our immediate church family members, wanting everyone to be saved and blessed in the knowledge and love of God. Completeness, the third season of discipleship, marks a time of coming into maturity in Christ. This season sees us persevere to become more like the Master, producing not only the character of Christ, but also a harvest of kingdom works motivated by the compassion of Christ at work in us. There is no set time in which we grow into this phase of our walk. Some zealously pursue the things of God and mature quickly, while others struggle with their attraction to the world and with submission to God’s will, delaying their spiritual growth.

This stage of coming into Completeness starts with the theme of repentance. At first glance, one might wonder why this season rather than Conversion should begin with this theme, since repentance is a prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom of God. The answer is simple. When we come to Christ, we do in fact repent. However, we do not confess individual sins to repent from them; we confess Christ and repent from our former way of life. The focus is therefore on the great gift of spiritual life that we receive when we are delivered from the kingdom of darkness and instantaneously translated into the kingdom of light. Thus, the initial theme of Conversion is deliverance to new life.

In contrast, coming into Completeness requires the deeper work of repentance from the works of our old nature so we can live more fully for Christ and his kingdom. It takes time to discover the truth and come into the freedom of wholeness, or maturity in Christ. As we come into a deeper knowledge of the truth in Christ, we gain freedom from those things that hinder a deeper walk with God. In this season of our walk, we perfect the work of *transformation* that began when we were baptized. The leaven of the kingdom continues to replace the leaven of sin and selfishness. Through taking up the cross and dying to self, we increasingly conform to the will of the Father. The zeal and joy with which we approach this season of our walk has a direct influence on our kingdom harvest: the character of Christ in us that results in the works God has prepared for us to do.

## Chapter 7

# TRUMPETS

Old Covenant Feast: “Speak unto the children of Israel saying, in the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a Sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.” (Lev. 23:24 KJV)

New Covenant Fulfillment: “Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.” (Rev 3:3)

Theme: *Repentance*

The feast of trumpets was observed about three and-a-half months after Pentecost, on the first day of Tishri, the seventh month of the religious calendar. Trumpets was the first feast of the last harvest festival. Signaling the final harvest season of the year, it announced that it was time to pick the grapes and olives. The first of Tishri was also the first day of the secular, or civil year. It therefore has a dual fulfillment.

This feast was similar to our secular New Year's Day, a time of new beginnings. Unlike our celebration of the New Year, however, Israel's started with repentance and judgment. On the Day of Trumpets a variety of trumpets and horns were sounded continuously from morning till evening. One special horn characterized this day, the *shofar*, or ram's horn, which called the people to repentance. Trumpet answered trumpet, echoing across the valley of Kidron, calling the people to prepare for the solemn Day of Atonement, when the sin of Israel would be judged and forgiven. Before one could be forgiven and begin anew, one had to repent from past misdeeds. The new year was therefore marked by a time of accounting for one's misdeeds over the previous year.

According to the Talmud, Trumpets is the day reserved to the Lord for judgment. Those who had walked in righteousness would be rewarded during the coming year. The wicked, however, would be judged and punished, perhaps even cut off from the people. It was believed that those who had a 'mixed walk' would have their fate decided during the ten days between Trumpets and Atonement. This was therefore a time of preparation for the coming judgment on the Day of Atonement. It was characterized by fasting and repentance, since everyone knew that they had failed to keep the law in some respects. This period was known as the 'Days of Awe,' since a holy respect for the coming Day of Atonement prevailed among the people.

### **The Golden Altar of Incense**

The Day of Trumpets is associated with the Golden Altar of Incense through the theme of repentance. While the incense from this altar is always a type of prayer, the means by which repentance is expressed, its underlying thematic symbolism is best grasped by examining the role

it played on the Day of Atonement. Once a year, at the conclusion of the ten-day period of contrition that started on Trumpets, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies. His task was to sprinkle the blood of the sin offering for the nation on the atonement cover, purifying the temple of sin. However, the atoning blood that he had just sacrificed for his own sin was not enough to allow him to enter behind the curtain. Because no one was allowed to look on the Presence of God and live, the high priest was required to pour two handfuls of incense from the golden altar into a censer full of burning coals. When he went behind the curtain, he held the censer in front of him. The burning incense created a thick cloud of smoke that ‘covered’ his vision of the ark.

This incense ‘covering’ was a type of the heart attitude with which the high priest came into the Lord’s Presence. Even though the required covering of righteousness was provided by the blood of the sin offering, the priest had to enter into the Presence of God with great care. One did not come into God’s Presence with arrogance or even casualness and expect to live. The death of Aaron’s two sons Nadab and Abihu was reminder enough of this fact. One could only approach the awesome holiness of God with an attitude of reverence and awe. The incense from the golden altar symbolizes the heart attitude of contrition and humility with which we enter into God’s Presence to confess our sin. True repentance is evidenced by Godly sorrow and heartfelt contrition.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Ps. 51:17)

### **Fulfillment in Christ**

To repent is to turn away from one direction and walk in another. Because he was without sin himself, Jesus did not personally model repentance. He did however fulfill the feast of Trumpets and the altar of incense at his death, making a new spiritual beginning through the forgiveness of sins available to every believer *after* we are saved. This allows us to make mistakes without fear of failing or ‘losing our salvation.’ As the Son of Man, Jesus demonstrated the manner in which we are to approach God, with a ‘covering’ of reverence and humility, foreshadowed by the cloud of incense from the golden altar.

“Christ... did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And... he humbled himself... (Phil. 2:5-8) “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart...” (Mt. 11:29)

As the Son of God, Jesus continues to intercede for us in heaven, forgiving our sins and giving us the grace to follow him in the Way. He is always ready to forgive us when we fall; always ready to help us continue to walk by faith when we doubt ourselves in our trials or circumstances.

“Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” (Heb. 7:25)

Jesus also fulfilled the feast of Trumpets in a historical sense just as he did the first four feasts. Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits were fulfilled at his death, burial, and resurrection. Pentecost was fulfilled with the baptism of the Holy Spirit seven weeks later. More than a generation passed without further temporal fulfillment of the feasts. Then, sometime around the end of the first century, Jesus appeared to John on Patmos Island. (John’s description

of that event supports the conclusion that it occurred on the Day of Trumpets. (See: [Revelation 2.0](#)) Christ's message to the churches was in essence a trumpet call to repent and prepare for the coming day of judgment, the final harvest of the earth.

“On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...” (Rev. 1:10)

The book of Revelation is probably one of the best-known works both in and outside Christendom. Virtually all believers as well as multitudes of unbelievers have heard Christ's call to prepare for his return. This call has sounded down through the centuries, warning Christians to turn their hearts fully towards him and prepare for his coming. Although Christ's admonishments to the seven churches differed according to their spiritual state, the final exhortation at the end of each message was for individual believers to walk in a manner worthy of him. Through the message of Revelation and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, Christ continues to call the church to repent and walk in holiness.

“Remember your first love and do the things you did at first... be zealous and repent... be faithful... remember what you have heard and obey it... hold on to what you have... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Rev. 2-3 selected verses)

### **Our Faith Response**

*Vertical response:* Under the Old Covenant, one had the opportunity to begin again every year in his or her walk with the Lord. Through an examination of conscience and physical sacrifice for sin, every child of Israel started anew each year through repentance. The Lord gives everyone a conscience, allowing us to feel Godly sorrow for our trespasses. The decision to act on the warnings of conscience and repent is ours to make or decline. However, the natural and spiritual consequences for failing to do so can range from the uncomfortable to the severe, including spiritual correction and even judgment. When we stray from the spiritual protection offered by Christ, we are spiritually vulnerable to attack. We become like the wounded soldier who throws away his armor in the middle of the battlefield and tries to walk away from his calling. Our response to the gift of Godly sorrow is to act on the voice of conscience and turn away from sin. We have the opportunity of humbly approaching God in prayer to make a new beginning through confession and repentance at any time, not just once a year.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1Jn. 1:9 KJV)

*Horizontal response:* During the Israelites' journey to the promised land, trumpets were sounded for three reasons: 1. To call the people to assemble together in the wilderness, 2. To depart from an encampment together and follow the Presence of the Lord, and 3. To fight together against their enemies in order to take the Promised Land. These trumpet calls form an allegory of producing the fruit of repentance within the body of Christ. We are all called to assemble together in the fellowship of Christ, following him together daily and engaging in spiritual battles, interceding for our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. Every move of Revival has started with wholesale repentance by a group of believers, its powerful spiritual effects flowing far beyond the doors of the local church.

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25)  
“And pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” (Eph. 6:18)

It should be noted that the forces of darkness do not give up the fight when a person comes to Christ; rather they intensify it. The more responsibility we have been given in the kingdom, the greater the enemy’s efforts at subversion. God has given us the spiritual protection of the Holy Spirit and the body of Christ to help us get back up when we are wounded in battle, enabling us to begin each day in the courage and conviction of the Holy Spirit.

“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one.” (Jn. 17:11)

## Chapter 8

# ATONEMENT

Old Covenant Feast: “The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God.” (Lev. 23:27,28)

New Covenant Fulfillment: “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.” (Heb. 10:26-27) “But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.” (1Cor. 11:31)

Theme: *Judgment*

From the time of Adam's disobedience, the world was under the curse of sin and death. Sin could not be atoned for without the judgment of death, because death was the result of, and the required penalty for sin. Since the life was in the blood, atonement could only be made through shedding blood; in other words, “a life for a life.” For man to be in covenant relationship with God, an innocent life had to be offered for the life of the guilty, since only one who is free can release those being held captive.

“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.” (Lev. 17:11)

The Day of Atonement marked the culmination of fasting and prayer that began on the Feast of Trumpets. In Jesus' day it was known simply as ‘The Fast.’ It was a solemn day of judgment, when two innocent animals were condemned to die for the sin of Israel in order to reconcile the nation to God. The first one, the Lord's goat purified God's temple, and the other, the scapegoat, removed the sin of the people. The goal of this feast was twofold: to make the temple worthy of the Lord's continued Presence, and to renew Israel to a walk of righteousness through forgiveness of sin. The righteousness that God required was a renewed commitment to love and obey the Lord and to treat one's neighbor with justice and compassion.

“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’” (Mt. 22:37-40) “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger (accusation), and speaking vanity (selfishness); And if thou draw out thy soul to the

hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day.” (Isa. 58:6,9-10 KJV)

### **The Ark of the Covenant**

The Day of Atonement is associated with the sixth furnishing, the Ark of the Covenant, through the theme of judgment. The ark was the repository of the Ten Commandments that defined sin and set the benchmark for God’s blessings as well as judgment on his covenant people.

### **Fulfillment in Christ**

The Father sent his Son to fulfill the Ten Commandments in the Ark of the Covenant and the Day of Atonement, eliminating the need for repeated blood sacrifice. In the greatest act of righteousness and love the world will ever see, Christ suffered the required penalty of death to atone for the sins of all mankind. Christ’s fulfillment of righteousness under the Law enables us to walk in actual righteousness by the Spirit.

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:6-8) “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” (Rom. 8:3A KJV)

At his first coming, Jesus fulfilled the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement. He became the scapegoat by taking our judgment on himself, removing our sin from the earth. He also fulfilled the Lord’s goat by taking his own blood into the Holy of Holies in the temple in heaven (Heb 9). Having suffered judgment for the sins of mankind, Jesus earned the right to judge mankind and purify the earth of sin. At his second coming, he will exercise that right, cleansing the earth and judging its inhabitants, making it a worthy dwelling for the coming kingdom of God.

“But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.” (2Pet. 3:10) “God will render to every man according to his deeds: Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God.” (Rom. 2:6,9-11 KJV)

### **Our Faith Response**

*Vertical response:* As we continue to walk the road of discipleship, we gain more responsibility for ‘working out’ our salvation. At Conversion, we were required to learn, to turn from the world and cleanse our house from those things that lead to sin. At Consecration, we had to learn to use the armor and the gifts of the Spirit to function as contributing members of the

body of Christ. Coming into the Completeness of our walk, we are called to deny the sin nature so we might be like Christ, bringing glory to God.

Since the Holy Spirit resides in us, we are temples of God. Because Christ has removed our sin and cleansed us, we have a responsibility to keep our temple pure. We do this by overcoming the world and mastering 'the flesh,' the corrupted sin nature that resides in us. We received the righteousness of Christ at conversion; as we come into completeness we are called to walk in actual righteousness. This occurs as we become less and Christ becomes more in us.

"Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." (2Cor. 6:17 -7:1) "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, who you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor (glorify) God with your body." (1Cor. 3:19-20)

We fulfill the Day of Atonement as we obey Jesus' command to "take up our cross daily and follow him." The cross is an instrument of death. Carrying our cross means dying daily to the draw of the world and the demands of the flesh. We cannot please the self, the 'old man,' and God at the same time. We are called to deny the sin nature the food that nourishes it, spiritually fulfilling 'The Fast' of Atonement.

"For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." (Rom. 8:13)

In addition to this 'spiritual fast,' physical fasting can be effective in breaking spiritual strongholds of the flesh because it teaches us to deny the cravings of the natural man. If we are to crucify the flesh, we must first recognize the areas that need to be brought under the dominion of the Holy Spirit. Second, we must judge them, and be willing to suffer denial of what the self wants. Taking up our cross daily and following Jesus, we put the sin nature to death one day at a time. We come into the Completeness or perfection of our faith as we "share in the sufferings of Christ, being made conformable unto his death." (Phil. 3:10 KJV)

"Though he was a son, he learned obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5:8 NKJV) "Now if we are children, then we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory." (Rom. 8:17)

When we judge ourselves in response to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, we are able to put the old man to death so the new man might live for God. If we do not judge ourselves in order to repent from sinful habits, we will come under the Holy Spirit's discipline. Like the Israelites, there are times when we may have to spend time in the desert so the Lord can deal with our complaining and disobedience. However, submission to spiritual discipline and hardship is the means by which we come into the perfection of our faith. Because pure gold is only brought forth from spending time in the refiner's fire, the perfection of our faith requires that it be tried so we can be found faithful.

"When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world." 1Cor. 11:31-32) "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be

like God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:22-24) “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...” (Col. 3:9)

*Horizontal response:* The work of the cross denies our old nature of the indulgent love of self, so we no longer live for self but for Christ and the kingdom of God. As the Ark of the Covenant bore testimony, or witness, to the requirements of the Law, in the New Covenant we become living witnesses that the demands of the New Covenant can indeed be fulfilled by walking in the Spirit. When we live to please God rather than ourselves, our behavior and our deeds reflect the light of God’s glory through the darkness of our generation.

“You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” (2Cor. 3:3) “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Mt. 5:16) “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Eph. 2:10)

## Chapter 9

# TABERNACLES

Old Covenant Feast: “So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.” (Lev. 23:39,42,43)

New Covenant Fulfillment: “... You are to give him the name Jesus (‘salvation’), because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ – which means, ‘God with us.’” (Matt. 1:21-23)

*Theme: Rejoicing and rest in the Presence of God.*

The Feast of Tabernacles was an eight-day long festival that began and ended with a Sabbath day of rest. It was a time of thanksgiving for all of God's blessings on his people and on the land he had given them. The Lord had provided the sacrifices to cover his people spiritually and had given the entire year's harvest to meet their physical necessities. Since Tabernacles marked the completion of the harvest season, it was a time of rest from one's labors and of enjoying the fruit of the land. It was above all else a time of rejoicing in the Presence of God dwelling in the temple in the midst of his people.

This feast called to mind the Lord's presence with his people in the wilderness as he guided them in the cloud by day and the pillar of fire at night. The Israelites were directed to live in temporary handmade booths of willow branches in remembrance of their journey to the Promised Land. Since everyone came out of their houses to live together for a week in the balmy autumn weather, Tabernacles was a festive occasion, bringing together the people of God in communal celebration and worship.

“Be joyful at your Feast – you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns. For seven days celebrate the Feast to the LORD your God at the place the LORD will choose. For the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete.” (Deut. 16:14,15)

### **Atonement Cover**

The atonement cover, also called the mercy seat, shared the theme of rest, joy and peace in the Presence of God that infused the Feast of tabernacles. The cover was hand made of pure gold and form fitted to the top of the ark. Two cherubim rose from either end, their wings spreading over the ark. The shining glory of God's Presence ‘tabernacled’ or dwelt above the

Cherubim and reflected off the gold covered walls of the Holy of Holies. Entry into this room would have been an awesome and fearful experience, the gold walls and furnishings reflecting the Shechinah glory of God, the air filled with the dark intoxicating smoke of sweet, pungent incense. As the high priest approached the ark with the blood of the sin offering, he saw the covering of dried blood on the atonement cover that had dripped down the sides of the ark, the splattering of blood on the floor, a solemn reminder of the price of sin. While the ark with its Ten Commandments was the continuing testimony of God's covenant with the Israelites, the Spirit of God over the atonement cover was its seal, the promise of the Lord's continuing Presence and participation in the covenant.

### **Fulfillment in Christ**

There is some apocryphal evidence that suggests Jesus may have been born on the first day of Tabernacles and circumcised on the eighth day of the feast. As the incarnate presence of God among men, Jesus would have fulfilled Tabernacles not only at his birth, but also during his life and ministry. He divested himself of the eternal glory that he had with the Father as the Son of God to become the Son of Man. Taking on the nature and form of man, he glorified God in all he did, walking in God's Ways and teaching the word of Truth. Since he lived to please the Father, the glory of God was visible in the works that confirmed the truth of his words.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14 KJV)

Through his death and resurrection, Jesus made it possible for the Presence of God to reside in every believer, the Holy Spirit guiding the elect in a much more personal way than he did under the Old Covenant. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus and the Father are present with us, just as the Lord was present above the atonement cover. The Holy Spirit guides us to completeness in this life as surely as the Lord led the Israelites to the Promised Land. He provides for our daily spiritual and physical needs, giving us a spirit of joy and peace even in the midst of trial.

“Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’” (Jn. 14:23) “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (John 15:9-11)

Christ's temporal fulfillment of Tabernacles will occur when he returns to set up the kingdom of God on earth. The Presence Glory of God will fill the earth ‘like the waters cover the sea.’ The earth will be made new and the righteous will be free from the corruption of sin and the pain of death. It will be a time of liberty, of praise and abundant rejoicing for the redeemed.

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them; they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’” (Rev. 21:3-4)

## Our Faith Response

*Vertical response:* Coming into the completeness of our salvation is not so much a response as it is a result of abiding in Christ and seeking to walk in the Presence of the Lord. Through judging and crucifying the flesh, we become more aware of the Lord's Presence and more responsive to his will through the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is the glory of God that changes our desires and transforms us into the image of Christ.

“Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2Cor. 3:17-18)

Abiding in Christ and the Father through faith is a relationship that grows as we devote ourselves to God. As with any relationship, the more time we spend with people, the more we become like them. To abide in Christ is to persevere in trial and circumstance, seeking to give the kingdom first place in our actions – yielding up our own will and seeking to please the Father in all we do. This discipline produces kingdom fruit, the harvest of God's word come to fruition in our heart.

“This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” (John 15:8) “So I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control... Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:16-17, 22-24)

We have the sure knowledge that the Lord will finish the work of salvation he has begun in us. The gifts and blessings that we received when we were brought into the kingdom find deeper fulfillment as we walk through the trial of our faith, grow in the hope of our inheritance, and perfecting the love of Christ for others in our words and actions.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your *faith* develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4 “And we rejoice in the *hope* of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his *love* into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” (Rom. 5:2-5)

Because we always have the sin nature against which we contend, we can never be ‘perfect’ in the way that Christ is perfect, i.e., without sin. When Scripture talks about us being perfect or complete, it is talking about reaching “unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and become(ing) mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13) The Father makes allowances for our humanity and the circumstances and struggles of each of his children. He only asks that we walk the road he has laid out for us, seeking to

come to maturity through faith and obedience. He is always present with us, his Spirit guiding us in the way of discipleship.

“In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1:6) “That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” (Col. 4:12)

*Horizontal response:* As members of the body of Christ we are all walking the same salvation road. The three million Israelites trekking through the wilderness were quite spread out on their journey, yet they traveled together as one people. In the same way, we are called to share the love of God with our brothers and sisters in Christ regardless of where they are on their journey. This means sharing sorrows as well as joys, bearing each other’s burdens as if they were our own, for empathy is the better part of compassion. We fulfill the season of coming to Completeness in him when we become witnesses (doers) of the love of Christ in all our relationships. We need to remember that through the witness of our words, actions, and our works, the unbeliever we serve today may become our brother rejoicing with us tomorrow.

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. (Jn. 15: 9-12) “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” (1 Jn. 3:16 KJV) “Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” (Gal. 5:13)

This book as well as *Revelation 2.0*, and *Worship in Spirit and Truth* are available at no charge in electronic form through Kindle and other book readers. May God bless you richly as you seek a deeper walk with him!