



The Living God Ministries

revealing THE UNKNOWN GOD – Acts 17:22-31

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OUR PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD . . .

P E N T E C O S T

By: Bill Glover

The word *Pentecost* means different things to different people. If you were to tell people you are observing the “Feast of Pentecost,” many would not know what you are talking about - - even among the avid churchgoer. Some might think you are referring to a popular church movement. Still others would possibly think you are talking about an event that is recorded in Acts, chapter 2. In reality, the “literal” meaning of the word “Pentecost” is “count fifty - - from the two Greek words of *pente* (fifty) and *cost* (count). But that alone does not tell you anything about a “festival of Pentecost.” We must go to the book of Leviticus to begin to understand this subject. Leviticus 23 clearly shows that God has set certain days on which He is to be specifically worshipped. The first of these specific days is that of the weekly Sabbath (Leviticus 23:11-3). The weekly Sabbath is that specific day which GOD MADE HOLY at creation - - the day over which Jesus Christ is LORD (Mark 2:27-28)!

Though this article deals specifically with Pentecost, we first need to recognize that God has set specific HOLY times when His true people are to honor and respect Him and His purpose on this earth (Leviticus 23). As noted in the previous paragraph, the first of these special holy days is that of the weekly Sabbath (verses 1-3). Note that it is “a day for SACRED ASSEMBLY, a day of REST, a SABBATH OF THE LORD.” As we find in Mark 2:27-28, the seventh day Sabbath was MADE FOR MAN AND THAT Jesus Christ is LORD OF THE SABBATH DAY. Genesis 2:1-3 shows that it was made WHEN MAN WAS MADE. When we study the Bible we readily see that God created the weekly Sabbath as a weekly memorial of creation and that it is a memorial of HIM AS OUR CREATOR. It also reminds us that, as His created beings, WE BELONG TO HIM - - created in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27) with the *potential* of becoming *literal spirit being* Sons of God, heirs of God and JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST (Romans 8:16-17). The reason He set a WEEKLY Sabbath is so that we can have constant *weekly* contact with Him as our Creator and never lose sight of the purpose for which we were created. He also set the weekly Sabbath as a type of the coming millennium (one thousand years) during which Christ will rule this earth through His chosen and trained

sons (Revelation 20:4-6; 5:8-12, 1 Corinthians 6:2 and Matthew 5:5) - - a time of rest from sin (Hebrews 4). The correct translation of Hebrews 4:9 is "There remains therefore a KEEPING OF THE SABBATH FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD!" [The Greek word translated "rest" is *sabbatismos* which means SABBATH KEEPING.]

PENTECOST

The next special days God demands that we keep holy are the Passover and the days of Unleavened bread (verses 4-8). On the weekly Sabbath during the days of unleavened bread we are told to COUNT seven full weeks plus one day to arrive at the date for a holy festival called "The Feast of FIRSTFRUITS!" Therefore, this feast of "first fruits" is in reality the festival that comes fifty days after the weekly Sabbath during the feast of Unleavened Bread. Subsequently, the name was shortened to the one word "Pentecost" - - or, "count fifty." (See Leviticus 23:15-21). Keep in mind that the animal sacrifices were eliminated BY THE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH - - Jesus the Christ. Notice especially verses 17 and 20 where we find that the *first fruits* represent "A SACRED OFFERING TO THE LORD!"

We need to realize that God set His annual festivals around the two harvest times - - spring and fall. The springtime harvest was the FIRST HARVEST which was smaller and the fall harvest was the second yet largest harvest. We will see in this article that God's plan for the salvation of humans into His family is pictured by the two harvest "seasons." We need to fully understand this in order to grasp the true significance of the "Feast of first fruits" as it should be called.

The Apostle Paul gives unique insight into this subject by what he wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:26-27 where he said "For you see your calling, brethren, how that NOT MANY WISE MEN AFTER THE FLESH, NOT MANY MIGHTY, NOT MANY NOBLE ARE CALLED but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things (persons) who are (regarded as) mighty." Do you realize what these words are saying? Clearly it is saying two important things. One is that GOD IS SPECIFICALLY CALLING CERTAIN ONES. The second point is that He is calling those WHO ARE NOT READILY RECOGNIZED OR HONORED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD so that no flesh can glory in His presence for any accomplishment (vs. 29).

Paul also explained further in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 that when a person is specifically called by God the Father he can then become a follower of Christ (see John 6:44) and be joined with Christ as GOD'S FIRST FRUITS.

Please allow Jesus Christ to explain further as found in John 12:37-40. Here we find that God has blinded the eyes of the majority of humans so that they CANNOT understand with their hearts and turn to God in repentance. If they did this then Jesus said that He would be required to heal (forgive) them, (vs. 40). Compare this with 1 John 2:8-10. You should also study Romans 11:7-13, 2 Corinthians 3:3:14, 4:4, Romans 11:25-32, Luke

10:23-24 and Ephesians 1:9-14. These are all very important scriptures that we must understand to know what God is doing in the lives of human beings on this earth.

If you are one of the very few to whom this understanding has been given then YOU are among God's FIRST FRUITS. You are one of those God has called and chosen to be FIRST to enter the very family of God. If God the Father has granted you understanding of this subject then you are here and now being given your chance for salvation - - a very special calling. This knowledge and understanding establishes you as a very special person to the Almighty Creator God. You are being given the opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God at Christ's return.

Are you beginning to grasp what is being said here? You are being given the opportunity to be "on the ground floor" of salvation - - to be one of the few people God has chosen throughout the ages to represent Him on this earth. Did you catch what was just said? You have been given the chance to represent the TRUE CREATOR GOD OF THE UNIVERSE! You are very special to God. He is giving you access to the VERY POWER OF GOD! Jesus Christ promised that **WHATSOEVER YOU REQUEST IN HIS NAME WOULD BE GRANTED IF YOU TRULY APPROACH GOD IN BELIEVING FAITH** - - as Abraham did! Did you know that your personal calling is just as important to God as the calling of Abraham, David and all the others mentioned in the Bible?

YOU AS GOD'S FIRST FRUIT

God has now exposed you to the fact that He is RE-CREATING HIMSELF through human beings. You personally are right now being trained to be a member of the very family of God. You are being given the opportunity to receive a position of rulership in the coming kingdom of God to be set up on this earth. You are so important for the plan of God that Jesus the Christ had to die for you personally and individually. Jesus Christ (our Savior) regards you as His friend, brother and JOINT HEIR to the father's kingdom. You are being given the chance to be GLORIFIED WITH CHRIST WHEN HE RETURNS TO THIS EARTH.

Too many of us are like Job who became frustrated that God was *refining his* character so that he also could enter the family of God. We can easily lose sight of the plan God is working out through us. We allow the human problems we encounter to crowd out OUR ULTIMATE GOAL OF BEING A LITERAL SON OF GOD! Nowhere in the Bible is there the slightest indication that we enter the family of God THROUGH HUMAN EFFORT (see Mark 10:23-27)! Once we have been called and chosen it becomes our responsibility to RESPOND TO OUR CALLING. The word "responsibility" means RESPONDING TO ABILITY. In this case, it should mean RESPONDING TO GOD'S ABILITY. It is God who is working in us both to WILL and to DO His will or purpose for our lives (Philippians 2:13). It does not and must not depend on **OUR OWN PERSONAL TALENTS AND ABILITIES**. Of and by ourselves we will always fail - - but God will not fail! But we can allow our human weaknesses

and defeatist attitude to crowd out the power of God. Our part is to be willing to trust Him completely but that is so hard to do especially when our physical life and well being are at stake.

God chose the Feast of first fruits (Pentecost) as the time to grant His Spirit to humans AS AN INDWELLING POWER TO BE CALLED ON WHEN NEEDED (see Acts 2). That power is available to all who have the Spirit so as to handle any and all problems. Why then do we find ourselves lacking in the power to deal with the day to day trials? Is it God's fault? Did God lie to us when He made the promises found in the Bible? Can God break His promises and refuse to help us when we need help? These are some of the questions we need to ask ourselves regularly and go to God for the correct answers.

DO WE REALLY BELIEVE?

We all profess to know Christ as our Savior. But we all have many problems that get us down. Yet we claim we are actually trusting God for our ultimate salvation. But look at the problems we face in life and the fact that God is NOT answering our prayers for our daily needs. Why? We have convinced ourselves that we trust God for salvation and yet find it too hard to trust Him for *our daily needs* and even *healing* when we are sick. How do we know that we can trust Him for salvation when we cannot seem to trust Him for our daily physical needs? Which is harder for God to do - - heal our physical bodies or CHANGE OUR PHYSICAL BODIES TO IMMORTALITY? Think about that for as long as it takes to digest its meaning. I am not trying to discourage anyone. Rather, I am hoping to get all to realize that God is NOT limited and that He will grant our petitions IF WE WILL ONLY BELIEVE AND TRUST HIM! Please remember that the battles we face are ACTUALLY GOD'S - - provided we have placed our lives completely in His hands! Keep in mind that there is no way Abraham could have envisioned WHY God commanded him to sacrifice his only true son. He was NOT weak in faith but set out to do what God had said without question or complaint.

Have any of us received such a test? True, some of us have faced death personally. But which one of us has been asked to sacrifice one of our children - - especially the heir of the family name? God was very REAL to Abraham. Just how real is God to us? Do we see Him as the Almighty God who has the power to KEEP HIS PROMISES?

During the Old Testament times the first born received A DOUBLE PORTION - - a double inheritance so as to carry on the family name and fortune. We are God's first born and our inheritance is to be A BETTER RESURRECTION since we will be the first to enter the family of God. That is how God is honoring us - - how important we are to God and Jesus Christ! God and Jesus the Christ already have millions of years INVESTED IN THIS PLAN OF SALVATION FOR HUMANS. Do we think they are going to allow it to fail? God may find it necessary to allow severe trials to come on us [AS HE DID JOB] before we are willing to completely trust Him. Frankly, the primary purpose for the GREAT TRIBULATION is to bring people to true and complete repentance and surrender. But God promises that those who are truly faithful to Him by keeping His

commands and remaining FAITHFUL will be spared this time of trouble that is coming on the entire earth to test those who dwell on this earth (Revelation 3:10).

Think for a moment how God tried and tested His called out ones throughout history. Abraham had to get up and move from the country of his birth not knowing where God was leading him (do we sometimes wonder where God is leading us?) Moses was reared in Pharaoh's palace and was given the best education available. Yet, God wanted more from Moses than he got from his Egyptian upbringing. God made Moses care for dumb sheep for forty long years to prepare him for tending to a stubborn bunch of Israelites. Then Moses had to lead the rebellious Israelites back through some of the very country he had lived in for forty years. And look at all the trials he had to endure from those Israelites for those forty years.

What about Joseph? His own brothers sold him into slavery where he had to serve others for a while. Then he was falsely accused and thrown into prison for YEARS. Then God brought about his release and established him as the second in command in Egypt. He had no way of knowing all these years WHY all these trials were coming on him - - BUT HE KEPT ON GOING FORWARD and making the best of his circumstances!

Then there was Stephen, the first New Testament martyr. He was a young man in the very prime of life and just a beginner in his quest for salvation. Was God unfair in choosing him to be the first martyr? Did Stephen whine and complain with his dying breath? Do we find ourselves whining and complaining about our trials which obviously are much less severe than many recorded in the Bible? Do we realize what we are doing when we complain and whine over the trials we face? We are actually telling God [like Job did] that God is not fair - - that we do not deserve such testing! The very fact that we are whining and complaining is clear proof as to WHY God finds it necessary to test us from time to time! Which one of us is willing to follow David's example and ACTUALLY ASK GOD TO TRY AND TEST US (see Psalm 26:2, 139:23, 1 Corinthians 3:11-17 and 1 Peter 4:12-19). Please study these passages carefully and apply them to yourself!

WHAT PENTECOST MEANS *TO GOD*

Have you ever considered what Pentecost means to God? Think about that question for a moment and digest its significance! When the day comes that Pentecost represents, Jesus Christ will proclaim to all those who have faithfully served Him "Come you who are blessed by my Father - - TAKE (INHERIT) THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD!" (Matthew 25:34). When we human parents had children born into our family, did we not experience great joy and pleasure? How much more joy and true pleasure do you think God the Father and Jesus Christ will experience WHEN THOSE THEY HAVE TRAINED AND QUALIFIED ENTER THEIR FAMILY AS SPIRIT BEINGS? If there is great rejoicing in heaven over ONE SINNER WHO REPENTS (Luke 15:7 and 10), HOW MUCH MORE JOY AND REJOICING DO YOU THINK THERE WILL BE WHEN LITERALLY THOUSANDS

OF HUMANS ARE LITERALLY BORN INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD? Do you see and understand that we are speaking of **YOU AND ME** and **OUR** personal salvation - - personal entry into the very family of God as a spirit being? Are we going to make God happy and pleased or is He going to be disappointed?

Do you realize that your personal calling is every bit as important to God as was Abraham's, David's and all the others who went before us? Study the eleventh chapter of Hebrews to see how God allowed some of His people to suffer and die WHILE TRUSTING HIM! Note verse 39: "These were all commended *for their faith*, yet none of them received what had been promised. GOD HAD PLANNED SOMETHING BETTER FOR US SO THAT **ONLY TOGETHER WITH US WOULD THEY BE MADE PERFECT**" (enter the family of God). That is our joint purpose in life!

God is teaching us that THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS PHYSICAL LIFE - - INCLUDING THE PHYSICAL LIFE ITSELF - - THAT IS WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED IN US (Romans 8:18). You are strongly urged to carefully study all of Romans 8 and ask God to enable you to grasp what He is saying to you. When you face a trial, go to this chapter and specifically read verses 23-39. Keep in mind that you have been PREDESTINED to become a SON OF GOD, AN HEIR OF GOD AND A JOINT HEIR WITH JESUS CHRIST IN THE VERY FAMILY OF GOD (verses 16-17 and Galatians 4:3-7). Do you not realize that YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD AND THAT GOD'S TEMPLE (YOU) IS SACRED SINCE YOU ARE THAT TEMPLE PROVIDED GOD'S SPIRIT IS DWELLING IN AND MOTIVATING YOU? (see 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

We have been washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11). "In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we, WHO WERE **THE FIRST TO HOPE IN CHRIST**, might be to the praise of His glory" (Ephesians 1:12-14). "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us THROW OFF EVERYTHING THAT HINDERS and THE SIN THAT SO EASILY ENTANGLES, and let us RUN THE RACE marked out for us (by God). Let us FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS, the author and finisher of faith. . ." (Hebrews 11:1-8).

Earlier in this article I referred to the two harvest seasons - - the first (spring) harvest and the latter (larger fall) harvest. The "first fruits" God has been selecting through the ages (the smaller spring harvest) are those whom God intends to bring into His family at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth. These join Jesus Christ as the nucleus needed to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

The fall (larger) harvest is represented by the fall festivals - - i.e., Trumpets, Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles and The Last Great Day. When this fall harvest of souls occurs, God will be offering salvation to literally billions of human beings. He will need a literal army of SONS who have lived this human life and learned how to control their human

nature and thus be equipped to help the humans alive on earth at that time. Did you know and do you remind yourself at all times that billions of human beings are ANXIOUSLY WAITING ON YOU AND ME TO ENTER THE FAMILY OF GOD AS SPIRIT BEINGS SO THEY CAN HAVE THEIR CHANCE FOR SALVATION? Carefully study Romans 8:19-22. God's plan for literally BILLIONS of human beings is waiting on you and me to be equipped for the task ahead so others can be given their chance for salvation. That is how important each one of us is and how important this day of Pentecost is to God. The entire plan of God is WAITING ON US! Should this fact not give us the incentive we need to overcome our human nature and let God train us for His family? Do we really see WHO AND WHAT WE ARE TO GOD? How important are our "problems" when viewed in the light of what God is doing in and through us?

Please allow me to ask a very pointed question of all of you reading this. Stop and do a deep evaluation of yourself at this very moment. Exactly where do you stand? Do you truly see yourself as A SON OF GOD? AN HEIR OF GOD AND A JOINT HEIR WITH JESUS CHRIST? Can and do you actually ENVISION yourself as a spirit being in the very family of God? Do you really see Jesus Christ on the right hand of the Father interceding for you with your weaknesses? Are you actually trusting God for your salvation as well as for your human needs?

Please do not allow these questions to discourage you. Rather, treat them as a refresher study before an exam. Keep in mind that we are all still in this flesh - - we do not yet have salvation. But that salvation is clearly available to us for the claiming. But we must claim it personally and individually in FAITH AND TRUST.

I would like to close with encouraging words from the Apostle Paul. Remember that he was the apostle who said "Oh wretched man that I am - - who will rescue me from this body of death" (Romans 7:24). Verse 25 gives the answer - - it is Jesus Christ who will rescue him - - and us too!

Though Paul had a heavy dose of human nature, let us consider some of his final words. I always take great courage from what he said in 2 Timothy 4:6-8. He said, "For I am poured out like a drink offering (an offering on weak watery legs), and the time has come for my departure (death). I have fought the good fight (despite his weaknesses). I have finished the race (set before him). I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, which the Lord, the righteous judge, WILL AWARD ME on that day." But please note that he does not stop there. He continues: "AND NOT TO ME ONLY, **BUT ALSO TO ALL WHO HAVE LONGED FOR HIS APPEARING!**" This means you and me!

We are all in this same struggle. But God is faithful never to allow us to face more than we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:9-13). Our high priest, Jesus the Christ, lived this fleshly life. He fully understands our human frailties and is willing to help us in time of need. I ask that all of us resolve to go to God for the insight and the help we need to face and overcome our trials. We should keep in mind a constant VISION OF OURSELVES AS

SPIRIT BEINGS IN THE VERY FAMILY OF GOD! When sorely tried then we should go to God, through Christ, and receive that help we need. Let us remember our responsibility toward God and His plan to take us into His family. We should never forget that IT IS GOD THAT WORKS IN US TO BOTH WILL AND DO HIS PURPOSE. God is on our side - - and God cannot and will not fail! Pentecost is OUR day of salvation - - it represents OUR STATUS as God's first fruits along with our Savior Jesus the Christ. Christ considers us HIS FRIENDS AND HIS BROTHERS - - HIS FELLOW HEIRS! And we must remember WHY we are God's first fruits - - WE ARE THE HOPE OF BILLIONS OF SOULS God intends to bring into His family. Christ is the Savior BUT GOD WORKS THROUGH HUMANS TO HELP HUMANS. If we fail then God the Father must choose others to replace us because those positions must be filled.

God be with you as you study this article and use it to draw near to God. God be with you!

- Bill Glover

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