

The Secrets of Pentecost

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THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST

#1 – THE RETURN OF THE WAR HERO

Man's Double Whammy

The Law of God requires absolute sinless perfection. If we don't offer the Law what it requires pronounces upon us the sentence of death.

No one on the planet could offer the Law what it requires because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Therefore, all were on death row.

The Only Solution

There was only one solution to man's predicament. Jesus, who created every single person on earth offered to come to this earth and take human nature and as a man would live and die in place of His creatures.

Three times Jesus entered before His Father to solicit permission to come. Finally the Father consented and Jesus announced the plan to the heavenly beings. The angels offered to come instead but Jesus informed them that none less than the Son of God could come.

Finally the time for the incarnation arrived. We can imagine Jesus saying to the heavenly beings: *"I am going to the battlefield to fight the enemy in man's place, I will defeat him and gain the victory in man's place and in 33 years I'll be back."*

And then, by a miracle we will never be able to understand, the heavenly divine nature of Christ was blended with a human nature and He was transplanted to the earth.

The Two fold Mission of Jesus

The mission of Jesus on earth consisted of two main tasks:

- Live a perfect life to offer the Law in our place
- Suffer the death that we should die as transgressors of the Law

Satan's Mission

Satan's mission was to prevent Jesus from fulfilling His mission by:

- Infecting Jesus with the virus of sin
- Keeping Jesus from offering His life

Four Methods

Satan would use four methods to attempt to defeat Jesus:

- He would do his utmost to infect Him with the sin virus.
- He would attempt to kill Him before His hour had come.
- He would do his best to lead Him down a different road than the way of the cross.
- He would constantly attempt to discourage and frustrate Him to the point that He would leave before He completed His mission.

The Victory

Jesus gained the final victory when, immediately before His death, he cried out to His Father: "It is finished!" Satan knew that His kingdom was doomed:

"Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, "It is finished." John 19:30. The battle had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Savior's victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost." DA, p. 758

The Resurrection

Satan did his utmost to keep Jesus in the tomb: A massive stone was rolled across the entrance to the tomb and it was sealed with the Roman seal. A Roman guard and a host of his evil angels were stationed outside.

But early on the first day of the week two angels descended from heaven. One removed the stone and the other stood in front of the tomb and cried out with a voice that shook the earth: "Oh, thou Son of God, Thy Father calls Thee". The Victor came forth from the tomb and cried out with a loud voice: "I am the resurrection and the life."

Jesus then spent forty days giving indubitable repeated proof that He had resurrected from the dead and instructing His disciples about the things concerning the kingdom of God.

The Ascension

At the end of the forty days Jesus gathered with His disciples on the Mount of Olives and ascended to heaven. Luke describes it this way:

Acts 1:9-11:

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

Have you ever wondered what happened when Jesus arrived in heaven? Does the Bible have anything to say about His arrival?

Chapter 4

The Heavenly Throne Room Prepares for the Return of the War Hero.

Revelation 4:1: It is not the door of heaven but an open door in heaven:

“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

Only One on the Throne

Revelation 4:2: God the Father was alone on His throne:

“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.”

Revelation 3:21: When Jesus ascended He sat with His Father on His throne so Jesus must not have yet arrived:

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Physical Appearance of Person on the Throne

Revelation 4:3: Red is the predominant color because God’s glory is like fire and the rainbow indicates that the door of mercy is open:

“And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.”

Twenty Four Elders were Present

Revelation 4:4: Twenty-four elders were there:

“Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.”

Skip Verse 5

Revelation 4:5: We will skip this verse for the time being.

Four Living Creatures were there: The Seraphim

Revelation 4:6, 8:

“Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.” The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty Who was and is and is to come!”

Isaiah 6:1-3:

“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”

The Holy Spirit was there

Revelation 4:5:

“And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne [a change will take place in chapter 5], which are the seven Spirits of God.”

Location of the Scene: The Holy Place

Revelation 4:5:

“And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire [symbol of the Holy Spirit] were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”

Revelation 4:8: Bowls of incense in the Holy Place

“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”

The Song in Honor of the Father as Creator

Revelation 4:9-11:

"Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, Who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will [Hebrews 1:1, 2] they exist and were created."

Beings Absent in Chapter 4

Notoriously absent in the scene of chapter 4 are the angelic hosts and Jesus. Where was Jesus and where were the angelic hosts? We shall see that Jesus is on His way to heaven with the angels and another group of angels is at the gates of the city to welcome the War Hero home!!

Chapter 5

The Scroll: Who is Worthy?

Revelation 5:1, 2:

"And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice: "Who is worthy [qualified] to open the scroll and to loose its seals?"

A Universal Crisis

Revelation 5:3:

"And no one in heaven [not even the Father who was seated on the throne] or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it."

Revelation 5:4:

"So I wept [klaio] much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it."

Comment: At this point Jesus was not in heaven because when He arrived because Jesus was the only one worthy to open the scroll! The word 'wept' is a very intense word. It does not mean simply to cry, it would be better translated 'wail' or 'mourn'. The word expresses deep grief! The contents of the scroll are a matter of life and death!

- The word is used of Peter who wept bitterly after denying Jesus.
- When the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue died we are told that the people 'wept and wailed greatly'.
- The disciples mourned and wept when Jesus died.

- Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

What did the Scroll contain?

What we know from Roman history:

*Kenneth Strand, Interpreting the Book of Revelation, p. 55: “The central item, the seven-sealed scroll, portrays a **will or testament**, for that is precisely what such a seven-sealed document was in **Roman law** in John’s day. We find, then, that the picture we have in the subdivision of Revelation from 4:1 to 8:1 is a **court scene** in which a **will or testament** is to be opened. In the context of Revelation, this will or testament would be a **title-deed**, as it were, to man’s **lost inheritance**—an inheritance which has been **repurchased** by Christ, the Lamb. Thus the scroll is a **book of destiny**. The **opening** of it means inheritance in God’s kingdom; its **remaining closed** means forfeiture. No wonder John wept when he thought no one could open the scroll.”*

Ellen White has some helpful information on the contents of the scroll:

Manuscript Releases, volume 9, p. 7:

*“There in His open hand lay the book, the roll of the **history of God’s providences**, the **prophetic history of nations** and the **church**. Herein was contained the divine utterances, His authority, His commandments, His laws, the whole symbolic counsel of the Eternal, and **the history of all ruling powers in the nations**. In symbolic language was contained in that roll the **influence of every nation, tongue, and people from the beginning of earth’s history to its close**.”*

It seems clear that the scroll contains a record of the entire history of the human race including the decisions that each individual has made within the historical flow.

Ellen White described one specific historical event that was recorded in that scroll:

Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 294:

*“Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their **decision was registered [when they made the choice]** in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision **will appear before them** in the day **when this book is unsealed** by the Lion of the tribe of Judah.”*

Ellen White wrote this statement around the year 1900. Several important details emerge from this last statement:

- When the Jews cried out in AD 31: “His blood be on us, and on our children,” their decision was written in the scroll.
- The scroll had not yet been opened when Ellen White wrote in 1900, because she stated in that year, that this decision “will appear before them . . . when this book is unsealed”. The opening of the book was still in the future in the year 1900.

- Those who cried out: *“His blood be on us and on our children”* were all **dead in 1900**. In order for them to **see the consequences** of the decision they made, they would have to be alive. This means that they **must resurrect!**
- And **when** will they resurrect? The answer is that they will rise to life in the **second resurrection** after the millennium. This means that the scroll will **not be opened** until after the millennium.

An Elder Consoles John

Verse 5:

*“But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, **has [past]** prevailed [**the word is also translated ‘overcome’ or ‘conquered’ and is used for victory in battle**] to open [**future**] the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”*

Comment: This verse tell us **what qualifies Jesus** to open the scroll. When Jesus **arrived** in heaven he was described as **a slain Lamb**. Because He is the **Lamb slain** He is qualified break the seals and open the scroll. But when He finally **opens** the scroll at the end of the millennium he is symbolized by the **Lion of the Tribe of Judah** because then He will be **crowned** and **enthroned** inside the Holy City:

*“The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the **rejecters of His grace**, will be the Lamb of God to the **obedient and faithful**.” AA, p. 589*

The Lamb Arrives

Verse 6: The Lamb, the War Hero, arrives from the **earthly battlefield** to the **Holy Place** with His **fresh wounds** but He is **alive!**

*“And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a **Lamb** as though it **had been slain**, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the **seven Spirits** of God **sent out [when was the Holy Spirit sent out?]** into all the earth.”*

Verse 7:

*“Then He **came** [**so He must not have been there before**] and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”*

Hymn of Praise to the War Hero: A Song of Redemption

Verses 8-10: When **the Lamb takes** the scroll, a song is sung by the **living creatures** and the **24 elders** in honor of the **redeemer**. Briefly mention the **translation problem**.

*“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down **before the Lamb**, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the*

prayers of the saints." "And they sang a new song, saying: "**You are worthy** to take the scroll, and to open its seals; **for [because]** You **were slain**, and **have redeemed [paid the price to recover the lost possession]** us **[people]** to God **by Your blood** out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us **[them]** kings and priests to our God; and we **[they]** shall **reign on the earth.**"

The Angelic Join the Scene

Verses 11, 12: Now the **angelic hosts** are present with Jesus as well:

"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of **many angels** around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was **ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands**, saying with a loud voice: "**Worthy** is the Lamb who **was slain** to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

Verse 13: The **entire universe** sings praises to **both** the **Father and the Son** (we don't have time to go into it now but this song will be **sung once again** at the end of the millennium by the entire universe and also after sin has been eradicated [**AA 601, 602; GC 678**]):

"And **every creature** which is in **heaven** and on the **earth** and **under the earth** and such as are **in the sea**, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

Verse 14:

"Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever."

The Desire of Ages, pp. 833-835

In the last three pages of **The Desire of Ages 833-835**, Ellen White describes the **expectancy** of the heavenly beings as they **anticipate** the ascension of Jesus and the **exuberant joy** they experience as He **enters the gates** of the New Jerusalem. I have added some of my own comments in **brackets** to help identify the various beings that are present:

"All heaven was waiting to welcome the Savior to the celestial courts. **As He ascended**, He **led** the way, and the **multitude of captives [the 24 elders were already there before Jesus arrived with the captives]** set free at His resurrection **followed**. The **heavenly host**, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, attended the joyous train.

As they **drew near** to the city of God, the challenge is given by the escorting angels:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in."

Joyfully the waiting sentinels respond:

"Who is this King of glory?"

This they say, not because they know not who He is, but because they would hear the answer of exalted praise:

"The Lord **strong and mighty**,
The Lord **mighty in battle!**
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in."

Again is heard the challenge, "Who is this King of glory?" for the angels never weary of hearing His name exalted. The escorting angels make reply:

"The Lord of hosts;
He is the King of glory." Ps. 24:7-10.

Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the **angelic throng** sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music.

There is the **throne [Revelation 4:2]**, and around it the **rainbow** of promise **[Revelation 4:3]**. There are **cherubim and seraphim [Revelation 4:6-8]**. The **commanders** of the angel hosts, **the sons of God**, the **representatives of the unfallen worlds [the 24 elders: Revelation 4:4]** are assembled. The **heavenly council** before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the **representatives** of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to **welcome** the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate **His triumph** and to glorify their King.

But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He **enters [Revelation 5:7]** into the presence of His **Father [the one seated on the throne]**. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails **[the lamb as though it had been slain]**. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the **wave sheaf**, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming **[the 24 elders were already there when He presented the wave sheaf]**. He approaches the **Father [the one seated on the throne]**, with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, **"It is finished,"** He addressed the Father. The compact **had been fully carried out**. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." **[The sealed book is the testament that will reveal the right of His people to inherit all things]** John 19:30; 17:24

The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are "accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds [notice how the two groups are distinguished], they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. 85:10. The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Heb. 1:6.

With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.' Rev. 5:12.

Songs of triumph mingle with the music from angel harps, till heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise. Love has conquered. The lost is found. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming: 'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.' Rev. 5:13."

Three Separate Groups?

Some have wondered whether Ellen White is referring to three separate groups when she wrote about the [1] 'the commanders of the angel hosts, [2] the sons of God and [3] the representatives of the unfallen worlds'. I found that Ellen White used this type of sentence construction in other places to describe the same thing in three synonymous ways. Notice the following three examples:

"Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickenings of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death." Christian Service, p. 42

It is obvious that in this quotation Ellen White expresses the same idea three times with the words renewal, quickening and resurrection being synonymous.

In another example Ellen White describes the union of the hosts of wickedness at the end of time:

"There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces." Selected Messages, volume 3, p. 392

Here Ellen White employs three synonymous expressions to describe the final union of the world against the remnant. 'Bond of union,' 'great harmony' and 'confederacy of Satan's forces' describe the same reality in three different ways.

A third example will suffice. In describing the life that resides in Jesus, Ellen White uses three synonymous words in succession:

*"In Christ is life, **original, unborrowed, underived.**"* The Desire of Ages, p. 530 It is quite obvious that each of the three words 'original, unborrowed, underived' are synonymous and refer to the same reality.

Final Unfurling of the Scroll

Revelation 20:13, 14: At the end of the millennium the scroll will be **unfurled before the wicked:**

*"The sea **gave up** the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades **delivered up** the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works."*

Ellen White describes this event in **spectacular fashion:**

*"Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a **panoramic view [in ultra-high definition]** appear the scenes of **Adam's temptation and fall**, and the **successive steps in the great plan of redemption**. The Savior's lowly birth; His early life of simplicity and obedience; His baptism in Jordan; the fast and temptation in the wilderness; His public ministry, unfolding to men heaven's most precious blessings; the days crowded with deeds of love and mercy, the nights of prayer and watching in the solitude of the mountains; the plottings of envy, hate, and malice which repaid His benefits; the awful, mysterious agony in Gethsemane beneath the crushing weight of the sins of the whole world; His betrayal into the hands of the murderous mob; the fearful events of that night of horror--the unresisting prisoner, forsaken by His best-loved disciples, rudely hurried through the streets of Jerusalem; the Son of God exultingly displayed before **Annas**, arraigned in the high priest's palace, in the judgment hall of **Pilate**, before the cowardly and cruel **Herod**, mocked, insulted, tortured, and condemned to die--all are **vividly portrayed**.*

And now before the swaying multitude are revealed the final scenes--the patient Sufferer treading the path to Calvary; the Prince of heaven hanging upon the cross; the haughty priests and the jeering rabble deriding His expiring agony; the supernatural darkness; the heaving earth, the rent rocks, the open graves, marking the moment when the world's Redeemer yielded up His life.

*The awful spectacle appears **just as it was**. Satan, his angels, and his subjects have no power to turn from the picture of their own work. **Each actor recalls** the part which he performed. **Herod**, who slew the innocent children of Bethlehem that he might destroy the King of Israel; the base **Herodias**, upon whose guilty soul rests the blood of John the Baptist; the weak, timeserving **Pilate**; the **mocking soldiers**; the **priests and rulers** and the maddened throng who cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children!"--all behold the enormity of their guilt. They vainly seek to hide from the divine majesty of His countenance, outshining the glory of the sun, while the redeemed cast their crowns at the Savior's feet, exclaiming: "He died for me!" [**He died also for the wicked but they rejected His provision for salvation**]*

*Amid the ransomed throng are the apostles of Christ, the heroic **Paul**, the ardent **Peter**, the loved and loving **John**, and their truehearted brethren, and with them the vast **host of martyrs**; while outside the walls, with every vile and abominable thing, are those by whom they were persecuted, imprisoned, and slain. There is **Nero**, that monster of cruelty and vice, beholding the*

joy and exaltation of those whom he once tortured, and in whose extremest anguish he found satanic delight. **His mother** is there to witness the result of her own work; to see how the evil stamp of character transmitted to her son, the passions encouraged and developed by her influence and example, have borne fruit in crimes that caused the world to shudder.

There are **papist priests and prelates**, who claimed to be Christ's ambassadors, yet employed the rack, the dungeon, and the stake to control the consciences of His people. There are the **proud pontiffs** who exalted themselves above God and presumed to change the law of the Most High. Those **pretended fathers** of the church have an account to render to God from which they would fain be excused. Too late they are made to see that the Omniscient One is jealous of His law and that He will in no wise clear the guilty. They learn now that Christ identifies His interest with that of His suffering people; and they feel the force of His own words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Matthew 25:40.

The whole **wicked world stand arraigned** at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them." GC, pp. 666-669



THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST #2 – THE FIRST FRUITS

One Death, One Resurrection, much Fruit

John 12:20-22: During the very week of the crucifixion some Greeks **approached Philip** with the purpose of getting an **interview** with Jesus:

*“Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at **the feast**. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, **we wish to see Jesus**.” Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.*

The answer of Jesus appeared to be disjointed and unrelated to the request:

John 12:23, 24:

*But Jesus answered them, saying, “The **hour has come** that the Son of Man **should be glorified**. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and **dies**, it remains **alone**; but if it dies, it produces **much grain**.”*

The Greeks wanted extend an **invitation** to Jesus to come **to their country**. But Jesus would not be distracted from the path to the cross. If He **did not die** it would do no good to preach in Greece.

The grain of wheat is a **symbol of Jesus**. Like a grain of wheat, He died and was buried in the tomb and on the third day He **sprouted forth** to new life. As a result of his death and resurrection **there** would be **a great harvest of souls**. But if He **did not die and resurrect**, He would remained a **singular grain** and there would not have been a harvest.

The Chronology of the First Three Hebrew Feasts

Friday: 6th day at 3 pm (14th of Nissan): Type: Passover **Lamb slain. Antitype:** The **death of Jesus** as the Lamb of God.

Sabbath: 7th day (15th of Nissan): Type: Ceremonial Sabbath of **Unleavened Bread Antitype:** Jesus **rested in the tomb** and His body saw to corruption because He had **no leaven** of sin.

Sunday: 1st day (16th of Nissan): Type: A sheaf of first fruits was waved before the Lord.
Antitype: Jesus resurrected as the First-fruits of the harvest to come.

50 days later (16 of Sivan): Type: Two first-fruit loaves were presented before the Lord.
Antitype: Jesus presented those who resurrected with Him and 3000 first-fruits of the gospel were baptized.

The First-fruit Ceremony

Leviticus 23:9-12: Let's read about the wave sheaf ceremony:

*"The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁰ "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. ¹¹ He [the priest] 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**."*

Each feast pointed forward punctually to some important event in Christ's ministry of salvation so the first-fruits must be typological.

The first fruit ceremony consisted of the following elements:

- The first-fruits of the barley harvest were cut in the field.
- Several stocks of grain were formed into a sheaf.
- The sheaf was then waved before the Lord.
- Each individual Israelite waved their own sheaf but the priest officiating priest waved a sheaf at the entrance to the tabernacle of meeting on behalf of the congregation.
- The waving of the sheaf took place at 9:00 am. We know this because the Feast of Pentecost occurred precisely 50 days after the first-fruits had been waved before the Lord. According to Peter, the Holy Spirit was poured out at the third hour which would be 9:00 am (Acts 2:15).
- Jewish scholars are divided about when the wave sheaf was presented before the Lord. The text in Leviticus states that it was to be waved before the Lord on the day after the Sabbath. The question is: Was it to be waved before the Lord the day after the ceremonial Sabbath of Unleavened Bread or was it to be waved the day after the weekly Sabbath?
- As it applies to Christ, it actually makes no difference, because God made sure that the yearly ceremonial Sabbath of Unleavened bread and the weekly Seventh day Sabbath coincided while Jesus rested in the tomb. Thus Jesus fulfilled the Feast of Unleavened Bread and also the Manna episode of Exodus 16.

Firstborn from the Dead

Before we address the **meaning** of the first-fruits which were waved before the Lord, let's dedicate a few moments to **another matter**. The **apostle Paul** explained that Jesus was not only the first-fruits but also the **firstborn** from the dead:

Colossians 1:18:

*“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the **firstborn from the dead**, that in all things He may have the **preeminence**.”*

The expression ‘*firstborn from the dead*’ **cannot mean** that Jesus was the **first to come** forth from the grave. **At least four were resurrected** in the Old Testament and **three** in the New Testament before the resurrection of Jesus:

- **Moses**
- **The son of the widow of Zareptah**
- **The man who touched Elisha's bones**
- **The daughter of Jairus**
- **The son of the widow of Nain**
- **Lazarus**

The expression, ‘*firstborn from the dead*’, means that the resurrection of Jesus makes all other resurrections **possible**. The apostle Paul assures us that if Jesus did not resurrect from the dead, our **faith is vain** and we are **still in our sins** and those who have died **have perished**.

Jesus was not the first to resurrect but His resurrection **makes our possible**. After all, He said: *“Because I live, you will live also.”* (**John 14:19**).

In order to serve as our **Mediator**, Advocate and Intercessor, Jesus would have to live a perfect life, die for sin and live again. Without a **living priest** it would be impossible for Jesus to pour out the **benefits** of His life and death to believers (Hebrews 7:25, 26; 1 John 2:1; 1 Timothy 2:5).

Romans 4:24-25:

*“But for us also, to whom it shall be **imputed, if we believe** on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was **raised again** for our **justification [forgiveness]**.”*

1 Corinthians 15:16-18: The death of Jesus would have had **no value to save us** from our sins if He had not resurrected because He has to **apply personally** His life and death to those who trust in Him!

*“For if the dead do not rise then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are **still in your sins!** Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ **have perished**.”*

The First-fruits from the Dead

Now let's turn to what happened on **resurrection morning**. A short while after His resurrection **Mary Magdalene** had an **encounter** with Jesus in the Garden. She immediately wanted to embrace Jesus but Jesus said to her:

John 20:17, NKJV:

*""Do not **cling** to Me, for I have **not yet ascended** to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I **am ascending** to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"*

Most Bible versions contend that the expression 'don't touch me' really means 'don't cling to me'. For example, the **NIV** translates the Greek word *haptoo* with the word 'touch' in **every single appearance** except in this one.

- Jesus touched **a leper** and he was healed (Matthew 8:3). Did Jesus cling to the leper?
- The woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment (Mark 5:31). **If she was clinging** to Jesus, the Lord would not have asked who touched the hem of His garment!
- The **multitude** wanted to touch Jesus in order to be healed (Luke 6:19).
- **Parents** brought their children to Jesus so that He would touch them (Luke 18:15).
- Jesus touched the **eyes of the blind** and they could see (Matthew 20:34). Did Jesus cling to the eyes of the blind?

It bears noting that even though the word *haptoo* is almost always translated with the word 'touch', the **lexical meaning** of the word is 'to fasten to, to adhere to, to cling to'.

The question is: Why would Jesus say to Mary 'don't cling to me because I have not yet ascended to my Father' if He was to ascend to His Father forty days later? Clinging to him in the Garden for a few minutes would certainly not have detained Him from ascending to His Father forty days later!!

Even **more important** than the lexical meaning of the word *haptoo* is the tense of the verb '**ascending**' that is used in this verse ('I am **ascending** to my Father and your Father') The verb is a **first person, indicative, active tense**. Jesus was not referring to his ascension forty days after His resurrection because in that case He would have used the **future tense**, 'I will ascend' rather than the present 'I am ascending' (ESV) 'I am returning' (NIV) or 'I ascend'(NASB).

What Jesus was saying to Mary was: "Don't cling to me **right now** because **I must now** ascend to the Father." You see, at precisely **9:00 am** when the **wave sheaf** of first-fruits was being waved before the Lord at the entrance to the earthly temple, Jesus was presenting Himself before the Father **at the entrance** of the heavenly sanctuary thus fulfilling to the **very hour**, the feast of the **wave sheaf ceremony**!!

The **evening** of the **very day** that Jesus told Mary not to detain Him, He **encouraged His disciples** to "touch me and see".

Ellen White's Assessment

Ellen White, as usual, has some enlightening information on the encounter of Jesus with Mary Magdalene in the Garden of Gethsemane on resurrection morning:

Early Writings, pp. 187, 188:

"Jesus spoke to her with His own heavenly voice, saying, "Mary!" She was acquainted with the tones of that dear voice, and quickly answered, "Master!" and in her joy was about to embrace Him; but Jesus said, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." Joyfully she hastened to the disciples with the good news. Jesus quickly ascended to His Father to hear from His lips that He accepted the sacrifice, and to receive all power in heaven and upon earth [a clear reference to Matthew 28:19]."

What virtually all commentators have missed, Ellen grasped. Her analysis is in full harmony with Scripture.

In Matthew 28:19, before His final ascension to heaven, Jesus told His disciples that He had already received power from His Father:

"All power has been given [indicative passive aorist] to me in heaven and on earth".

Let's continue reading Ellen White's comment about what happened after Jesus told Mary not to touch Him:

Early Writings, pp. 187, 188:

"Angels like a cloud surrounded the Son of God and bade the everlasting gates be lifted up, that the King of glory might come in. I saw that while Jesus was with that bright heavenly host, in the presence of God, and surrounded by His glory, He did not forget His disciples upon the earth, but received power from His Father, that He might return and impart power to them [He did in the Upper Room when He breathed upon them the Holy Spirit]. The same day He returned and showed Himself to His disciples. He suffered them then to touch Him; for He had ascended to His Father and had received power."

In the classic book, The Desire of Ages, Ellen White further amplifies how Jesus fulfilled the Wave Sheaf ceremony when He made this quick journey to heaven on the morning of the resurrection:

The Desire of Ages, pp. 785, 786:

"Christ arose from the dead as the first fruits of those that slept. He was the antitype of the wave sheaf, and His resurrection took place on the very day when the wave sheaf was to be presented before the Lord. For more than a thousand years this symbolic ceremony had been performed. From the harvest fields the first heads of ripened grain were gathered, and when the

people went up to Jerusalem to the Passover, the sheaf of first fruits was waved as a **thank offering** before the Lord. Not until this was presented could the sickle be put to the grain and it be gathered into sheaves. The sheaf dedicated to God represented the harvest. So Christ the first fruits represented the **great spiritual harvest** to be gathered for the kingdom of God."

1 Corinthians 15:20: Paul referred to the **wave sheaf** ceremony when he wrote:

"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the **first-fruits** of those who have fallen asleep."

Ellen White was in **perfect harmony** with Paul on the **profound meaning** of the waving of the sheaf ceremony:

1 Corinthians 15:22-23:

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ **all shall be made alive**.²³ But each one in **his own order**: **Christ the first-fruits**, afterward those who are Christ's **at His coming**."

The First-Fruits at Pentecost

Leviticus 23:15-18: There were also first-fruits offered on the **day of Pentecost**, precisely **fifty days** to the **very hour** after the wave sheaf ceremony. The Feast of Pentecost was around the time when the **wheat harvest** was gathered in, so the first-fruits were those of the wheat harvest:

'And you shall count for yourselves from the **day after the Sabbath [the day of the resurrection]**, from the day that you **brought the sheaf** of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be **completed**.¹⁶ Count fifty days **to the day** after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a **new grain offering** to the Lord.¹⁷ You shall bring from your dwellings **two wave loaves** of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of **fine flour**; they shall be baked **with leaven**. They are the **first-fruits** to the Lord."

The Symbols

In order to understand this ceremony we need to interpret what is symbolized by the **new grain loaves** and the **leaven**.

The **loaves** represent the **church** and the leaven represents the **growth** of God's people:

Matthew 13:33

"Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is **like leaven**, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was **all leavened**."

1 Corinthians 5:6-8: Here the apostle Paul refers to the **Corinthian church** as a lump of unleavened dough:

*'Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the **whole lump**?⁷ Therefore **purge out** the **old leaven**, that **you** may be a **new lump**, since **you** truly are **unleavened**. For indeed Christ, our **Passover** was sacrificed for us.⁸ Therefore let us keep **the feast [of Passover and Unleavened Bread]**, not with **old leaven**, nor with the leaven of **malice and wickedness**, but with the **unleavened** bread of sincerity and truth.'*

But you might say: Doesn't leaven **represent sin** and wickedness? Yes it does. Paul is telling the Corinthian church: *"Don't allow the leaven of **wickedness** to be put into the **church** (the dough)!"* So you might object: If leaven represents sin and the dough represents the church, why are we told that on Pentecost the two loaves had to be **leavened**?

The answer to this question we must take into account the all-important context. The leaven in **1 Corinthians 5:6-8** is mentioned in the context of the **Passover** when the bread had no leaven because it represented Jesus who had no sin. But the context of Matthew 13:33 is **not the Passover** but rather the **Feast of Pentecost**. The leaven in the context of Pentecost represents something totally different than the leaven at the Passover.

Ellen White provides some **enlightening information** the parable of the leaven in the parable of **Matthew 13:33**. After agreeing that leaven **does indeed** represent sin, she goes on to explain:

*"But in the Savior's parable, leaven is used to represent **the kingdom of heaven**. It illustrates the **quickenings**, assimilating **power of the grace of God**.*

*None are so vile, none have fallen so low, as to be beyond the working of this power. In all who will submit themselves to the **Holy Spirit** a new principle of life is to be **implanted**; the lost image of God is to be restored in humanity.*

*But man cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. He possesses no power by which this change can be effected. The leaven--something **wholly from without**--must be put **into the meal** before the desired change can be wrought in it. So the grace of God must be received by the sinner before he can be fitted for the kingdom of glory. All the culture and education which the world can give will fail of making a degraded child of sin a child of heaven. The renewing energy must come from God. The change can be made only **by the Holy Spirit**. All who would be saved, high or low, rich or poor, must submit to the **working of this power**." *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 96, 97*

Two Groups at Pentecost

So we know that the lump represents the church and the leaven represents the Holy Spirit. But the question that still needs to be answered is this one: Why two loaves of leavened bread? Are there two churches? The answer of course is no. But there were two groups of first fruits on the Day of Pentecost:

One group consisted in those who **resurrected** with Jesus:

Matthew 27:51-53:

*“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and **coming out of the graves after His resurrection**, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.”*

This group of resurrected saints was presented **before the Father at Pentecost**. In the following quotation we are reminded of the subject of our first study, **The Return of the War Hero**:

The Desire of Ages, p. 829:

*“The time had come for Christ to ascend to His Father's throne. As a **divine conqueror** He was about to return **with the trophies of victory** to the heavenly courts.”*

Selected Messages, volume 1, p. 304:

*“They were the **multitude of captives** that ascended with Him as **trophies** [this is the terminology of a conquering general who is bringing back with him the trophies of His victory] of **His victory** over death and the grave.’*

Who were these persons **more specifically**?

The Desire of Ages, p. 786: It is more than **ironic** that those who Satan tortured and killed because of their faithfulness to the truth should now rise to proclaim **Christ's victory**:

*“They were those who had been co-laborers with God, and who at **the cost of their lives** had borne testimony to the truth. Now they were to be witnesses for Him who had raised them from the dead.”*

And what was the **purpose** of the **wave sheaf** ceremony of the first-fruits?

The Desire of Ages, pp. 833, 834

When Jesus **ascended to heaven** we are told that all heaven was **ready to celebrate** with an **explosion of praise**. But Ellen White explains:

*“But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He **enters into the presence of His Father**. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails. He points to the **tokens of His triumph**; He presents to God the **wave sheaf**, those raised with Him as **representatives** of that **great multitude** who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming.”*

*“So those who had been raised were to be presented to the universe **as a pledge [or down payment]** of the resurrection **of all** who believe in Christ as their personal Savior. The same power that raised Christ from the dead **will raise His church**, and glorify it with Christ, as His bride, above all principalities, above all powers, above every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in the heavenly courts, the world above. The victory of the sleeping saints will be glorious on the morning of the resurrection. **Satan's triumph will end**, while **Christ will triumph** in glory and honor. The Life-giver will crown with immortality all who come forth from the grave.”*

The apostle **Paul** clearly explained the meaning of the **first-fruit ceremony** when Jesus ascended to heaven:

Ephesians 4:7-13:

*“But to **each one** of us **grace** [the Greek word is *xaris* where we get the word *charismata* from] **was given** according to the measure of Christ's **gift** [the gift is no doubt the Holy Spirit because the identical word is used in **Luke 11:13**]. Therefore He says: “When He [Jesus] **ascended on high**, He led **captivity captive** [the wave sheaf], and **gave gifts** to men [the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost].” (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who **ascended far above all the heavens**, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself [Jesus] **gave** [connect with the word ‘gave’ in verse 8] some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the **equipping** of the saints for the work of ministry, for the **edifying** of the body of Christ, till we all come to the **unity** of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”*

There can be no doubt that the event here described is the **victorious ascension** of Christ to heaven, the presentation of the **first-fruits** before the Father, **followed by Pentecost** when **the gift** of the Holy Spirit was poured out and with Him **the gifts** upon the **nascent church**:

- An clear allusion to His **death and burial** by the expression, ‘he **descended** into the **lower parts** of the earth’.
- A clear reference to the occasion of **His ascension** as seen in the expression ‘**when** he ascended on high’ (mentioned twice in the passage).
- A clear allusion to taking **captivity captive** when he ascended.
- He gave the **gift**.
- Along with the gift came the **gifts**.

What is meant by the expression: ‘He led captivity captive’? We must go back to the original source which is found in **Psalm 68**.

Verse 1: Psalm 68 is a **Psalm of victory** of the Lord over **His enemies** and the **procession** that follows **to Mt. Zion** where the **sanctuary** is:

*“Let God arise, let His **enemies be scattered**; let those also who hate Him **flee** before Him.”*

Verse 4: He is coming **on the clouds** to the **Holy Place** in the midst of a **joyful celebration** with singing:

*“Sing to God, **sing praises** to His **name**; extol Him who **rides on the clouds**, by His **name Yah**, and **rejoice** before Him.”*

This verse must be connected with **Psalm 24:8, 9** where the **Lord is ascending** to His **Holy Hill** and the order is given to **open up the gates** for the King of Glory **come in**:

*“Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall **come in**. Who is this King of glory? The **LORD [YHWH]** strong and mighty, The **LORD [YHWH]** **mighty in battle**.”*

The Desire of Ages, p. 833

*“All heaven was waiting **to welcome** the Savior to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection followed. The heavenly host, with **shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song**, attended the joyous train.”*

Psalm 68:11:

*“The Lord **gave the word**; great was the **company** of those who **proclaimed it**.”*

One is reminded of Ellen White’s remark that after the Father accepted Christ’s sacrifice, He gave the order for all the heavenly hosts to acclaim and worship His Son.

Contrary to what **Dwight Nelson** has affirmed, **Psalm 68:11** is not referring to **the women** who proclaimed the good news of the **resurrection** of Jesus but rather the **acclaim** of the heavenly beings **forty days later** when Christ ascended victoriously to the holy place of the **heavenly sanctuary**:

Psalm 68:17 (New International Reader’s Version) is the verse that comes immediately before the one that Paul quoted in Ephesians 4:

*“God has come **with** tens of thousands of his chariots. He **has come** with thousands and thousands of them. The Lord has come from Mount Sinai. He has **entered his holy place**.”*

Notice **verse 24, NIV**:

*“Your **procession** has come into view, O God, the **procession** of my God and **King into the sanctuary** [Psalm 24 the order is given for the gates to open so that the King of glory could come in].”*

Notice **verse 35**:

*“O God, You are more awesome than Your **holy places**. The God of Israel is He who gives **strength** and **power** to His people [Jesus had prophesied that His people would receive power at Pentecost].”*

Remember that there were **two loaves** of first-fruits at Pentecost. The first loaf represents those who resurrected with Jesus and the second represents the first fruits from **among the living** that were **filled** with the Holy Spirit and **added to the church** on the Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:37-39:

*“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Then Peter said to them: “Repent, and let every one of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

Acts 2:41:

*“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about **three thousand souls** were added [verse 47 affirms that they were added to the church] to them.”*

These were the first-fruits who would **spread out all over** the Roman Empire to bring in an **abundant harvest** of souls into the church.

The Final Harvest

1 Thessalonians 4 describes the final harvest of the **last fruits** from among the living and the dead:

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”



THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST

#3 – THE LORD IS OUR ROCK

The Cross and Pentecost

As we begin our study I want to underline that there is an intimate connection between what Jesus did on the cross and the fire that fell from heaven on the day of Pentecost. In fact, without the death and resurrection of Jesus there would have been no fire on the Day of Pentecost.

Most Christians are keenly aware of what happened on earth on the day of Pentecost. They know all about the mighty rushing wind, the tongues of fire and the gift of tongues. But most Christians are unaware that the important event on the Day of Pentecost took place in heaven, not on earth!

There is a certain recurring pattern in the Old Testament that will help us comprehend what occurred in heaven on the Day of Pentecost. Repeatedly in the Old Testament an animal is sacrificed and placed on the altar and this is followed by fire from heaven showing God's approval and acceptance of the sacrifice. Let's take a look at several examples in the Old Testament.

Abel's Sacrifice

In Genesis 4 we are told that God accepted the sacrifice of Abel and rejected the offering of Cain. The question is: How did God show that He approved of Abel's sacrifice but not of Cain's? Genesis does not provide a direct answer but Ellen White does:

Signs of the Times, February 6, 1879: "God had respect unto this sacrifice and fire came down from Heaven and consumed it."

Is Ellen White's assessment in harmony with the Biblical pattern? Absolutely! We shall see that this was God's chosen method in the entire Old Testament period.

Inauguration of the Wilderness Tabernacle

Leviticus 9:22-24:

*“Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them and came down from offering the **sin offering**, the **burnt offering**, and **peace offerings**. And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and **blessed the people**. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people, and **fire came out from before the Lord** and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.”*

The Period of the Hebrew Monarchy

1 Chronicles 21:26: In the early period of the **Hebrew monarchy**, **David offered** a sacrifice to the LORD on **Ornan’s threshing floor** and God gave His sign of **approval** by sending fire from heaven.

*“And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered **burnt offerings and peace offerings**, and called on the Lord; and He answered him **from heaven by fire** on the altar of burnt offering.”*

Inauguration of the Temple Service in the Days of Solomon

2 Chronicles 7:1: When the Old Testament **Temple service** was inaugurated, animals were slain and placed **on the altar** and then **fire fell from heaven** upon the sacrifices to show God’s acceptance of them.

*“When Solomon had finished praying, **fire came down from heaven** and consumed the **burnt offering** and the **sacrifices**; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.”*

The Period of the Prophets

1 Kings 18:38: In the days of **Elijah** God showed His acceptance of Elijah’s offering by sending fire from heaven to consume the victims on the altar.

*“Then the **fire of the Lord fell** and consumed the **burnt sacrifice**, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said: ‘The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!’”*

The Rock Episodes in the Old Testament

The **same connection** between the **sacrifice** and the descending **fire** as a **signal** of God’s acceptance of the sacrifice is found in **two rock episodes** that are recorded in Exodus and Numbers. The **symbols are different** but the lesson is the same.

Exodus 17:1-6

*“Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; but there was **no water** for the people to drink. Therefore the people **contended with Moses**, and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” So Moses said to them, “Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?” And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, “Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!” And the Lord said to Moses: “Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand **your rod** with which you **struck** the river and go. Behold, **I will stand before you** there **on the rock** in Horeb; and you shall **strike the rock**, and **water will come out of it** that the people may drink.”*

In order to understand the meaning of this episode we must **decipher the symbols**. The story contains **three** main symbols: The **rock**, the **rod** and the **water**. Let’s interpret the symbols **one by one**:

The Rock

Deuteronomy 32:4 (**nine times** in this chapter the Rock is identified as a **symbol** of the LORD):

*“**He is the Rock**, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He.”*

I Corinthians 10:1-4: The apostle Paul, reminiscing about this episode in the history of Israel identified the **LORD as Christ**:

*“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and **that Rock was Christ**.”*

The Rod

Every time that Moses **raised His rod** upon Egypt a **judgment from God afflicted** the Egyptians. Thus the rod represents **God’s judgment**. (cf. Isaiah 10:26)

The Act of Smiting

The meaning of the Hebrew word **nakah** is defined in the lexicons as “*strike, beat, smite, hit, slay, kill, receive a blow or to be wounded.*”

The same word is used to describe **Moses smiting** with his rod which brought the various plague **judgments** upon Egypt. Moses smote the **waters** and they turned to blood (Exodus 7:17, 10, 20), he **smote** the **dust** and the plague of lice fell (Exodus 8:16, 17), hail **smote** the land, and God **smote** all the **first-born** in Egypt and they perished.

Israel, God’s people, was **sinning** by murmuring against God and they **deserved to be smitten**

by the **rod of God's judgment**. I can imagine the fear they felt when Moses raised his rod. But instead of the rod smiting them, it smote the Rock. Notably, the Rock and the reality were together because the Lord was standing on the rock.

Isaiah 53:4: The striking of the rock by the rod of Moses represents the fact that Jesus was **smitten and stricken** of God for our sins—He was smitten in our place.

*"Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him **stricken [nakah]**, smitten by God, and afflicted."*

The Water

When the rock was smitten by the rod it **gave its water**. The water that came forth from the rock represented the **outpouring of the Holy Spirit** as an **earthly sign** to the **disciples** that the sacrifice of Jesus **had been accepted** by **His Father** in heaven.

John 7:37-39:

*"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him **come to Me [the rock] and drink**. He who **believes in Me [to drink means to believe]**, as the Scripture has said, **out of his heart will flow rivers of living water**." But this He spoke concerning **the Spirit**, whom those **believing in Him would receive**; for the **Holy Spirit** was not yet given, because Jesus **was not yet glorified**."*

When we drink of the water **we become fountains** of living water **to others**.

Sun and Moon

Like the **moon receives** light from the sun and **reflects it** to the earth, so God's people are to receive the light from Jesus and reflect it to the world. This is why Jesus said in **John 9:5**: "I am the light of the world" but He also said in **Matthew 5:14-16**: "you are the light of the world."

I Corinthians 12:13: The water we drink represents the **Holy Spirit**.

*"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to **drink into one Spirit**."*

The Second Rock Episode

If the Holy Spirit was **already poured out** at Pentecost, how do we **get the water** today? To answer this question we must study the second rock episode.

Numbers 20:7-11:

*"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Take the **rod**; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. **Speak to the rock** before their eyes, and **it will yield its water**; thus you shall bring **water** for them **out of the rock**, and give drink to the congregation and their*

animals." So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them: "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted his hand and **struck the rock twice** with his **rod**; and water came out **abundantly**, and the congregation and their animals drank."

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 418:

"By his rash act Moses took away the force of the lesson that God purposed to teach. The rock, being **a symbol of Christ**, had been **once smitten**, as Christ was to be once offered. The second time it was needful **only to speak** to the rock, as we have **only to ask** for blessings in the name of Jesus. By the second smiting of the rock the significance of this **beautiful figure of Christ was destroyed**."

Luke 11:13 says that God will give His Holy Spirit to whoever **asks in prayer**.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give** the Holy Spirit to **those who ask** Him!"

God wanted to teach us that Jesus does not need to **fall under the judgment of God again** in order for us to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The **once for all death** of Jesus and the **acceptance** of the sacrifice by the Father, means that the Holy Spirit is **available** to us. If **we meet the conditions, all we must do is speak** to Jesus in prayer and **ask** for the Holy Spirit.

In Heavenly Places, p. 113:

"There is one blessing that all may have who **seek for it** in the right way. It is the Holy Spirit of God, and this is a blessing that brings **all other blessings** in its train."

The Temple Geography and Pentecost

In the **geography** of the Hebrew Sanctuary, **the camp** was followed by the **altar of sacrifice** and the altar of sacrifice by the **laver**. After the laver came the **ministration** of the high priest in the **holy place**.

The meaning of this geography was fulfilled in Christ:

- Jesus lived a **perfect life** in the **camp**.
- He offered His **life in sacrifice** upon the **altar**.
- He **resurrected** from the dead at the **laver**.
- The next thing we would expect would be **the ministration in the holy place**.

Where did Jesus Enter?

Revelation 4:5: Before Jesus returned to heaven, the **seven spirits** were present in the holy place where the Father was sitting. The **number seven** indicates that the fullness of the Holy Spirit was present in the Holy Place **before** Jesus ascended to heaven.

*“And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. **Seven lamps of fire** were **burning** before the throne, which are the **seven Spirits** of God.”*

Revelation 5:6: After Jesus arrived in heaven and **His Father accepted** His sacrifice, and the Seven Spirits were then **sent out** to the earth:

*“And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a **Lamb as though it had been slain**, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God **sent out** into **all** the earth.”*

In **chapter 5:6 the Lamb** that was slain approaches the Father and **immediately afterwards** the **seven spirits of fire were sent** out to all the earth.

The pattern is clear: First the **sacrificial** Lamb presents Himself **alive** before the Father, and then the Holy Spirit, symbolized as the seven Spirits of fire, is **sent to the earth** thus indicating that God had accepted the sacrifice!

The Day of Pentecost

On the **day of Pentecost**, after Jesus presented Himself before His Father, God **sent fire** from heaven to announce that the sacrifice of Jesus had been **accepted**—the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary was now **open for business**.

Ellen White, in the **last three pages** of her classic book, **The Desire of Ages**, vividly describes how Jesus approached His Father at His ascension to hear from His **Father’s own lips** that His sacrifice had been accepted and that He would **now receive** the gift of the Spirit to **pour out upon His disciples**.

Pentecost came **50 days after** the resurrection. Ellen White clarifies what happened at Pentecost:

The Story of Redemption, p. 386:

*“The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been **offered** and had been **accepted**, and the Holy Spirit which **descended** on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus **had entered by His own blood**, to shed upon **His disciples [not the whole world]** the **benefits [his perfect life and death]** of His atonement.”*

Jesus **could not** pour out upon His disciples the **benefits** of His atonement until He **had gained** those benefits. He gained the **benefits** for the human race **corporately** in the **camp** (where He lived His perfect life) and in the **court** (where He died on the cross) on earth and then entered the **holy place** to **apply these benefits to individuals** who **personally** claim them (cf. Acts 2:38).

Acts 10:43:

*"To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever **believes in Him will receive remission of sins.**"*

Mission of the Disciples

Of what use would it be for Jesus to begin His intercessory work for individuals in the holy place if **no one on earth knew about it?** The **mission of the disciples** was to preach that Jesus had lived a perfect life and had purchased salvation by His death. The world needed to know that the benefits of Christ's work were now available to anyone who **personally** met the conditions and claimed them. In other words, the message of the disciples was to announce what Jesus had done on earth and what He had gone to do in heaven.

Because Jesus had lived a perfect life and died in our place, the **Holy Spirit** was given to **enable** the disciples to preach the message to others. The disciples repented, confessed their sins and placed their faith in Jesus and then **asked** for the Spirit in prayer and they were the **first ones to personally receive the benefits** of Christ's earthly work.

What did the **disciples do** when they asked for and received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? They immediately **witnessed**. In this way, they **drank** the water and then became **fountains** of water!

Acts 1:7-8:

*"And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But **you shall receive** power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

Notice that the expression "you shall" is used **twice** in these verses. The purpose of the power they received was **to witness!** Unless we are **willing to give**, we will **not receive** because the purpose of **receiving** is **to give!** Jesus said: "Give and it shall be given unto you."

The Woman of Samaria

John 4:13, 14:

*"Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but **whoever drinks** of the water that **I** shall give **him** will never thirst. But the water that I shall give **him** will become **in him a fountain** of water springing up into everlasting life."*

The **context** of these verses is found in the story of the Samaritan woman: **She drank** from the fountain of water that **Jesus gave her** and then she became **a tributary** of the fountain. She brought the entire town of **Sychar** to hear the words of Jesus.

The Ministry of Healing, p. 102: “She proved herself a **more effective missionary** than His own disciples. The disciples **saw nothing in Samaria** to indicate that it was an encouraging field. Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work **to be done in the future [are we thinking the same about the latter rain?]**. They did not see that **right around them** was a harvest to be gathered. But through the woman whom they despised a **whole cityful** were brought to hear Jesus. She carried the light **at once** to her countrymen. This woman represents the working of a **practical faith** in Christ.”

"This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ. **Every true disciple** is born into the kingdom of God as **a missionary**. No sooner does he come to know the Savior than he desires to make others acquainted with Him. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be **shut up in his heart**. He who **drinks** of the living water **becomes a fountain** of life. The **receiver becomes a giver**. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life. In doing this work a greater blessing is received than if we work merely to benefit ourselves. It is in working to **spread the good news** of salvation that we are brought **near to the Savior**." *The Ministry of Healing, p. 102, 103*



THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST #4 – MATTHIAS: WRONG OR RIGHT CHOICE?

Work of Jesus in the Camp (3.5 years)

The Law demands absolute sinless perfection and no one can offer what the Law requires, so Jesus came to live a perfect life in our place. The sanctuary begins in the camp where sinners live. Jesus came and camped with us (John 1:14) and lived a life without sin. In this way He wove a spotless robe of righteousness by His perfect life in the camp.

Work of Jesus in the Court (Thursday in the Garden, Friday on the cross)

Because we cannot offer the Law the perfection it requires, it demands our death because the 'wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23) and 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). In the court of the sanctuary Jesus suffered the death that we should all suffer.

Work of Jesus at the Laver: (Resurrection: Sunday morning)

Forty Days (on earth between the Resurrection and the Ascension).

After His resurrection Jesus spent forty days on earth:

Acts 1:3:

“. . . to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”

This verse underlines two reasons why Jesus stayed on earth for forty days:

- First, to provide irrefutable proof of His resurrection.

- Second, to **explain to His disciples the prophecies** that had been fulfilled in His life, death and resurrection and also the prophecies that would be fulfilled on the Day of **Pentecost**.

The Ascension

After the 40 days Jesus **ascended** to heaven to **prepare a place** for us:

John 14:1-3:

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house **are** many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you**. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."*

Jesus went to heaven to **prepare a place** for His people. His work of preparation does not primarily consist of **heavenly contracting**. He prepares a place for us by **the work that He performs** in the holy and most holy places of the **heavenly sanctuary**. The books of **Acts**, **Hebrews** and **Revelation** describe His work in heaven.

Acts 1:9-11: The **ascension**

*"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This **same Jesus**, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come **in like manner** as you saw Him go into heaven."*

The Ten Days between the Ascension and Pentecost

After the ascension the apostles **returned** from the **Mount of Olives** to the **Upper Room** in Jerusalem to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

During the **ten days** the disciples **prayed**, **studied**, **ironed out** their differences, **emptied** themselves of selfishness and **prepared for the outpouring** of the Holy Spirit.

The crucial question is this: What was **Jesus doing** during those ten days?

This is the question that we will attempt to answer in the rest of this study.

Those Present in the Upper Room

We are given the **specific names** of those who were **present** in the Upper Room:

Acts 1:13:

"And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: [1] Peter, [2] James, [3] John, and [4] Andrew; [5] Philip and [6] Thomas; [7] Bartholomew and [8] Matthew; [9] James the son of Alphaeus and [10] Simon the Zealot; and [11] Judas the son of James."

Only **eleven** apostles are mentioned in this list. **One was missing**—Judas, whose **story** is synthesized in **verses 18 and 19**:

“(Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and **falling headlong**, he burst open in the middle and all **his entrails gushed out**.¹⁹ And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood).”

This **appears to contradict** what the Gospels say about the end of Judas. There we are told that Judas went and committed suicide by hanging himself. How do we reconcile the two stories? Ellen White provides the perfect explanation:

“Later that same day, on the road from Pilate's hall to Calvary, there came an interruption to the shouts and jeers of the wicked throng who were leading Jesus to the place of crucifixion. As they passed a retired spot, they saw at the foot of a lifeless tree, the body of Judas. It was a most revolting sight. His weight **had broken the cord** by which he had hanged himself to the tree. **In falling**, his body had been horribly mangled, and dogs were now devouring it.” **DA**, p. 722

Electing a Successor

During the ten days between the ascension and Pentecost, the disciples **were impelled** to do something the **timing** of which, until recently, had **always puzzled me**. As they gathered together, their **first item** of business was to name a **successor** to replace Judas.

Why Name a Successor?

Where did the disciples get the idea that they were required to name a **successor to replace Judas**? After all, weren't there more important things to do during those ten days than electing apostle number twelve?

Prophecy's Mandate

The task of naming a successor was mandated by **Bible prophecy**. As we have seen before, for **forty days** Jesus had taught the apostles the things concerning the **kingdom of God**.

There can be little doubt that Jesus had taught them **two prophecies** in the **Old Testament** that predicted the apostasy of Judas and the **imperative need** to elect a successor. Notice verses 16 and 20:

Acts 1:16, 20:

*"Men and brethren, this Scripture **had to be fulfilled**, which the **Holy Spirit spoke** before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; [skip verses 17-19 which we already studied]²⁰ "For **it is written in the Book of Psalms**: 'Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it' [**Psalm 69:25**] and, 'Let another take his office.' [**Psalm 109:7, 8**].*

The Myth of Saul of Tarsus

Ok, you might say, Old Testament **prophecy predicted** the **apostasy of Judas** and the need to **name a successor**. But **why the urgency** to do it **before** the day of Pentecost had **fully come**?

There is **this myth** that the disciples **rushed** to name a successor of Judas and chose **Matthias** when it was God's plan to make **Paul** apostle #12. But this is an **unwarranted assumption** based on **pure speculation**. This myth is disqualified by **four salient facts** (and a **fifth** that we will deal with **later**):

Reason #1: Peter made it clear that the successor was required to be an **eyewitness** of events from the times of **John the Baptist** till the **resurrection** of Jesus. Clearly, Saul of Tarsus does not meet this qualification.

Acts 1:21, 22:

*"Therefore, of these men who have **accompanied us all the time** that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the **baptism of John** to that day when He was **taken up from us**, one of these **must** become a witness with us of His resurrection."*

Reason #2: Acts 1 explicitly tells us that the disciples **sought guidance** from the Lord and the **Holy Spirit chose** Matthias.

Acts 1:24-26:

*"And they **prayed** and said, "You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two **You have chosen** to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles."*

Reason #3: Ellen White adds the following incisive comment:

Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3, p. 264:

*"Two men were selected, who, in the **careful judgment** of the believers, were best qualified for the place. But the disciples, **distrusting their ability to decide** the question farther, referred it to One that knew all hearts. They **sought the Lord in prayer** to ascertain which of the two men was more suitable for the important position of trust, as an apostle of Christ. The **Spirit of God selected** Matthias for the office."*

Reason #4: Ellen White further explains that Saul was to take **the place of Stephen:**
Acts of the Apostles, p. 102:

*"A **Mightier** than Satan **had chosen** Saul **to take the place of** the martyred Stephen, to preach and suffer for His name, and to spread far and wide the tidings of salvation through His blood."*

Why the Urgency?

Alright, now we know that the apostles **had to** name a successor for Judas because they understood the prophecy of **Psalm 109:7, 8**. But which prophecy would give them such a **sense of urgency** as to elect the successor **before** the Day of Pentecost? Why couldn't they **wait until a later time** after the Holy Spirit had been poured out?

The Importance of the Number 12

The answer to these questions is found in the significance of the number twelve. This number is significant in the story of **Acts 1**. The story tells us in **verse 17** that Judas was **numbered** with

the apostles before he apostatized and we are also informed in **verse 26** that when Matthias was elected, he was **numbered** with the 12. Is it clear that the number twelve is important!

The Number Twelve in Revelation 12:1:

*“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a **woman** clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of **twelve stars**.”*

The Woman

What does the **woman symbolize** in Revelation 12:1? It is common knowledge that she represents God’s **faithful church**. And how do we know this? The answer is found in comparing two verses, one from Daniel and the other from Revelation.

Daniel 7:25:

*“He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute **the saints of the Most High**, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for **a time and times and half a time**.”*

This verse informs us that:

- The **little horn**
- Persecuted the **saints**
- For **time, times and the dividing of time**

Revelation 12:14:

*“Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he **persecuted the woman** who gave birth to the male Child. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a **time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent.”*

In this parallel prophecy we are told that:

- The **dragon**
- Persecuted the **Woman**
- For **time, times and the dividing of time**

A **comparison** of the two texts proves beyond any doubt that the **woman** represents the **saints** of the Most High.

At What Stage?

Which stage of Church history does the woman of Revelation **12:1** represent? Is she a symbol of the **Old Testament** Church or of the **New Testament** Church?

Even a cursory reading of the text indicates that the woman of Revelation 12:1 symbolizes the **Old Testament** Church. This is made crystal clear by the fact that when John saw her, the child had not yet been born. There can be no New Testament church before the birth of Jesus.

But Revelation 12:6, 13-15 clearly indicates that the woman, **later in her career**, is a symbol of the **New Testament church**. We know this because after the child was born and ascended to God's throne, she fled to the wilderness and was persecuted by the serpent for 1260 years during the Christian era. It is to be noted that during **both stages** the woman had the crown with twelve stars upon her head.

Sun and Moon

What is represented by the sun and the moon?

- The sun is the **greater** light and the moon is the **lesser** light (Genesis 1:16)
- **The sun is a symbol** of Jesus Christ who is the **greater light** (Psalm 84:11; Matthew 17:3; Revelation 1:16; Malachi 4:1; John 8:12; 9:5). This would represent the church during the New Testament period when Jesus, the light of the world walked among men.
- **The moon**: is the lesser light is the Bible which gives witness to Jesus (John 5:35, 39, 46, 47)

Twelve Stars

What is symbolized by the **twelve stars** on the **woman's crown**? In the **first instance** they represent the **twelve sons** of Jacob who were the **founders** of God's Old Testament church. These twelve later multiplied and became the **twelve tribes** of Israel. In other words, the twelve stars represent the twelve founders of the Old Testament church and the great nation that came from them. There is a prophecy which is in the foreground of Revelation 12:1:

Genesis 37:9, 10: The **eleven** stars represent the brothers of Joseph and Joseph would be star #12.

*"Then he [Joseph] dreamed still another dream and told it to his **brothers**, and said, 'Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the **eleven stars** bowed down to me.'¹⁰ So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your **brothers** indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?'"*

Genesis 49:28: The twelve sons of Jacob **multiplied** and became the great **nation of Israel**:
*"All **these are the twelve tribes of Israel**, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing."*

Twelve Apostles

But as we have already noted, the number twelve also represents Christ's **New Testament church**. Notice the constant emphasis in the Gospels upon the number twelve as it applies to the apostles:

Mark 3:14-19 (see also Matthew 10:1, 2, 5; 11:1; 20:17; 26:20)

*"Then **He appointed twelve**, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,¹⁵ and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:¹⁶ **Simon**, to whom He gave the name Peter;¹⁷ **James** the son of Zebedee and **John** the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder";¹⁸ **Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite;**¹⁹ and **Judas Iscariot**, who also betrayed Him."*

The Meaning of the Number 12

Thus we find clearly that the number 12 is symbolic of both the Old and the New Testament Church.

Ellen White was very specific about the meaning of the number 12:

Acts of the Apostles, p. 19:

“As in the Old Testament the twelve patriarchs stood as representatives of Israel, so the twelve apostles stood as representatives of the gospel church.”

By choosing twelve apostles Jesus was indicating that they were continuing the legacy of Old Testament Israel. The twelve sons of Jacob inaugurated the Old Testament Church and the twelve apostles inaugurated the New Testament Church.

The Old Testament church began with a nucleus of twelve individuals who in the course of time multiplied into a large nation. Likewise, the Christian church began with a nucleus of twelve individuals who multiplied and in the course of time became a great nation.

Only One Woman

It is important to remember that there is only one woman before Jesus was born, when Jesus was born, when the Church was persecuted for 1260 years and when the final remnant is persecuted. God has only one true Church. There is no such thing as one plan for literal Israel and another for the Christian church. They form an indivisible unity!

Dispensationalists are totally wrong when they say that God has two mutually separable peoples—literal Israel and the Christian Church. In Revelation 12 there is only one Messiah and only one people of the Messiah. And there is one dragon who is also active in all of the stages.

Why the Sense of Urgency?

Now let's return to our original question: Why was there a sense of urgency to elect the twelfth apostle before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? We are now prepared to answer that question.

The Inauguration of Christ's Priesthood

During the ten days that the disciples spent in the Upper Room before the Day of Pentecost, an impressive ceremony was taking place in heaven. Jesus was being anointed and invested by His Father as High Priest in favor of His people.

This ceremony was prefigured by what Moses did to Aaron before he began to serve as High Priest in the earthly sanctuary. The ceremony is described in Leviticus 8:6-12 and consisted of three main steps: [1] he clothing of Aaron with the garments of the High Priest, [2] anointing the sanctuary where Aaron would serve and [3] anointing Aaron with oil:

“Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. And he put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied the ephod on him. Then he put the breastplate on him, and he put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastplate. And he put the turban on his head. Also on the turban, on its front, he put the golden plate, the holy crown, as the Lord had commanded Moses. Also Moses took the anointing oil, and

anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to consecrate them. And he poured some of the **anointing oil on Aaron's head** and anointed him, to consecrate him.”

Moses clothed Aaron with the various parts of the high priestly garments **piece by piece**. Moses then anointed or consecrated the sanctuary where Aaron was going to serve. Finally, after clothing Aaron and anointing the sanctuary, Moses anointed Aaron with oil. According to **Psalm 133** the oil was so abundant that it **dripped down** Aaron’s beard, down his robe and even unto the hills of Mt. Zion:

*“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in **unity!** It is like the **precious oil upon [1] the head, [2] running down** on the beard, the beard of Aaron, **[3] running down** on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, **[4] descending** upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded **the blessing**—life forevermore.”*

After **dedicating** the sanctuary, and **clothing** and **anointing** Aaron, he **began his work** as High Priest in favor of Israel.

Likewise, on the Day of Pentecost, the **[1] Father clothed** Jesus with His high priestly garments and **[2] next He anointed** Him with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33) which was so abundant that it **spilled all the way down** to the Upper Room. Jesus **[3]** then began his work as **high priest** in the **holy place** to apply to **repentant individuals** the **benefits** of His atonement.

Hebrews 8:1, 2: The apostle Paul described this new function of Jesus in the holy place of the sanctuary:

*“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: **We have** such a **High Priest**, who **is** seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.”*

The Garments of the High Priest

One of the **pieces** of Aaron’s garments was the **breastplate** which contained **twelve** precious stones in four rows of three stones. In the Old Testament period the **twelve stones** represented the twelve **tribes of Israel** and in the New Testament period the **twelve apostles** of the Lamb.

Exodus 28:21, 29, 30:

*“And the stones shall have the **names** of the **sons of Israel**, twelve according to their **names**, like the engravings of a signet, **each one with its own name**; they shall be according to the **twelve tribes**. . . . “So Aaron shall **bear the names** of the sons of Israel on the **breastplate of judgment** over his **heart**, when he goes into the holy place, as a **memorial** before the Lord **continually**. And you shall put in the **breastplate of judgment** the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's **heart** when he goes in before the Lord. So Aaron shall **bear the judgment** of the children of Israel **over his heart** before the Lord **continually**”*

Bearing Israel upon the Heart

What does the Bible mean when it says that Aaron **bore the judgment** of the children of Israel over his heart? Notice the answer:

Isaiah 53:4-6:

*"Surely He has **borne our** griefs and **carried our** sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for **our** transgressions, He was bruised for **our** iniquities; the chastisement for **our** peace was upon Him, and by His stripes **we** are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity **of us** all."*

Twelve Stones but only Eleven Apostles

Now we are prepared to know **why** apostle number 12 had to be elected before the Day of Pentecost. How could Jesus be clothed with the breastplate that had **twelve stones** representing the **twelve apostles** when there were **only eleven apostles** on earth? The **twelfth apostle** needed to be elected before Jesus could wear the breastplate with **twelve stones**!

Christ's Yearning Desire

John 14:1-3: In the **Upper Room** before His passion Jesus expressed His **deepest desire**:

*"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place **for you**. And if I go and prepare a place **for you**, I will come again and **receive you** to Myself; that where I am, there **you** may be also."*

John 17:24-25: In the climax of His **prayer in the Garden** Jesus again expressed His supreme desire:

*"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be **with Me where I am**, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."*

When Jesus **ascended to His Father** He once again expressed His deepest passion:

The Desire of Ages, p. 834:

*"When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I **have completed** the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, **be with Me where I am**." John 19:30; 17:24."*

Gospel Workers, p. 34:

*"Of Aaron, the high priest of Israel, it is written, He "shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." [Exodus 28:29.] What a beautiful and expressive figure this is of the **unchanging love of Christ for His church!** Our great High Priest, of whom Aaron was a type, bears **His people upon His heart**. And should not His earthly ministers share His love and sympathy and solicitude?"*

One Future People

In the future there will be only one City with all of the redeemed from all ages inside represented by the twelve stones on the breastplate of Jesus. The yearning of Jesus for His people will be satisfied.

Acts of the Apostles, p. 601:

“What sustained the Son of God during His life of toil and sacrifice? He saw the results of the travail of His soul and was satisfied. Looking into eternity, He beheld the happiness of those who through His humiliation had received pardon and everlasting life. His ear caught the shout of the redeemed. He heard the ransomed ones singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.”

There is only one city with the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles:

Revelation 21:12:

“Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.”

Revelation 21:14:

“Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.”



THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST #5 – CHAIN OF COMMAND

Holy Spirit is a Person

It is difficult for many individuals to conceive of the Holy Spirit as a person because of the metaphors that are used to describe His work. He is described as a dove, rain, oil, fire and wind. Such metaphors give the impression that the Holy Spirit is a substance or force that is infused or poured into us rather than a person who speaks, loves, reasons, helps, guides, reproves, and can be lied to.

Ellen White: The Holy Spirit is a Person

Ellen White entertained no doubts that the Holy Spirit is a person. In a talk that she gave to the students at Avondale she clearly stated:

Evangelism, p. 616:

“We need to realize that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds.”

The book Evangelism also has a series of statements about the personality of the Holy Spirit:

Evangelism, pp. 616, 617:

“The Holy Spirit is a person, for He beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. When this witness is borne, it carries with it its own evidence. At such times we believe and are sure that we are the children of God. . . . The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, or else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

Evangelism, p. 617:

“The prince of the power of evil can only be held in check by the power of God in the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.”

Evangelism, p. 617:

*“We are to co-operate with the **three highest powers** in heaven,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—and these powers will work through us, making us workers together with God.”*

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 7, p. 908:

*“Our sanctification is the work of the **Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit**. It is the fulfillment of the covenant God has made with those who bind themselves up with Him, to stand with **Him, His Son,** and **His Spirit** in holy fellowship. Have you been born again? Have you become a new being in Christ Jesus? Then cooperate with the **three great powers** of heaven who are working in your behalf.”*

Acts of the Apostles, pp. 51, 52:

*“It is not essential for us to be able to define just **what the Holy Spirit is**. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, ‘the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father.’ It is plainly declared regarding the Holy Spirit that, in **His work** of guiding men into all truth, “He shall not speak of Himself.” John 15:26; 16:13*

*The **nature** of the Holy Spirit is a **mystery**. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has **not revealed it to them**. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, **silence is golden**.”*

Adam’s Original Dominion

Psalm 8:3-8: God gave Adam **dominion** over the **territory** of planet earth. The **expression** ‘beasts of the field, birds of the air and fish of the sea’ means that **all things** on planet earth were under the **dominion** of Adam:

*“When I consider your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him and the son of man that You visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have **crowned him** with glory and honor. You have made him **to have dominion** over the works of your hands; You have **put all things under his feet**, all sheep and oxen— even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.”*

Adam Lost Dominion over the Earth

Romans 6:16: The Bible expresses a very **important principle**: We are **servants** or **slaves** of whoever we **choose to obey**. **Adam** chose to obey Satan and in doing so he became Satan’s **servant** or **slave**:

*“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves **whom you obey**, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”*

Ellen White makes this perceptive comment Adam’s loss of his **position as king** and the **realm** of his authority:

Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 67:

*"At his creation Adam was placed **in dominion over the earth**. But by yielding to temptation, he was brought under the **power of Satan**. "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." 2 Peter 2:19. When man became Satan's captive, the **dominion which he held, passed to his conqueror**. Thus Satan became "the god of this world." 2 Corinthians 4:4. He had **usurped that dominion** over the earth which had been **originally given to Adam**. But Christ, by His sacrifice paying the penalty of sin, would not only redeem man, but **recover the dominion** which he had forfeited. All that was lost by the first Adam will be restored by the second.'*

Satan Claimed Dominion

Luke 4:5-7: Because Satan conquered Adam, **he laid claim** to what originally belonged to Adam. Basically Satan boasted to God:

*"Adam chose to obey me rather than you and therefore he is **my subject**, not yours."*

*"Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "All this authority **I will give You**, and their glory; for this **has been delivered to me**, and I **give it to whomever I wish**. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."*

The Mission and Victory of Jesus

In order to defeat Satan and recover what Adam lost, Jesus would have to live the **perfect life** that Adam and his descendants failed to live and **die the death** that he and his descendants deserved to die.

John 12:31-33: At the cross Satan was **cast out** as **ruler of this world** and **Jesus became the new King** and **Representative** of the planet. Shortly before His death Jesus said:

*"Now is the judgment of this world; now the **ruler** of this world will be **cast out**. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what **death he would die**."*

Ellen White has an enlightening comment about what Jesus **accomplished at the cross**:

The Desire of Ages, p. 758:

*"Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, "It is finished." John 19:30. **The battle had been won**. His right hand and His holy arm had **gotten Him the victory**. As a **Conqueror** He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Savior's victory. **Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost**."*

Revelation 12:10-12: About **sixty years after** the crucifixion, the apostle John described the **heavenly jubilation** after Christ's victory on the cross and announced Satan's resulting **anger** against God's people as a result:

"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore, rejoice O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

Link between the Cross and Pentecost

There is a close link between Christ's victory on the cross and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. On the cross Jesus legally won the position and territory that Adam had lost. But Satan was not about to give up the territory without a fierce fight. Jesus would now use His earthly army of believers to win back the territory that Satan refused to give up.

What really happened on the Day of Pentecost?

Acts 2:1-4: At Pentecost, there was a mighty rushing [1] wind, tongues of [2] fire and the [3] Holy Spirit imparted the gift of [4] tongues:

"Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a [1] rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided [2] tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with [3] other tongues, as the [4] Spirit gave them utterance."

Who gave the Languages at Babel?

Genesis 11:8, 9:

"So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth."

The passage in Genesis states that God came down and confused their tongues. But, did God descend personally to do this? Notice this telling statement from Ellen White:

"They had built their tower to a lofty height when the Lord sent two angels to confound them in their work. Men had been appointed for the purpose of receiving word from the workmen at the top of the tower, calling for material for their work, which the first would communicate to the second, and he to the third, until the word reached those on the ground. As the word was passing from one to another in its descent, the angels confounded their language, and when the word reached the workmen upon the ground, material was called for which had not been required. . . Lightning from heaven, as a token of God's wrath, broke off the top of their tower, casting it to the ground." The Story of Redemption, p. 73

Clouds, Wind and Fire

Is it just possible that the gift of **tongues at Pentecost** was imparted by God to the apostles through the ministration of **the angels**?

Psalm 104:1-4: Notice the mention of **clouds, wind and fire**. All three of these symbols are used symbolically in Scripture to describe **angels**.

NKJV: *“He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, who makes the **clouds** His chariot, who walks on the **wings** of the **wind [ruach]**, who makes His **angels spirits [ruach]**, His **ministers** a flame of **fire**.”*

On the other hand, the NIV Version translates the word ruach with ‘wind’:

NIV: *“[He] lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the **clouds** his chariot and **rides** on the **wings** of the **wind**. He makes **winds [ruach]** his messengers [**angels**], **flames of fire** his servants.”*

It will be noticed that the **NKJV** says that God makes the ‘angels spirits’ but the NIV states that God ‘makes winds his messengers’. How are we to understand this variation? In Hebrew the word **ruach** can be legitimately translated ‘spirit’ or ‘wind’ and in Greek the word **pneuma** can also correctly be translated both ‘spirit’ and ‘wind’.

Hebrews 1:7, NIV: That Psalm 104 is referring to angels is made clear by this verse:

*“In speaking of the angels he says, ‘He makes his **angels winds**, his servants **flames of fire**.”*

Angels and the Day of Pentecost

Ellen White, ever in harmony with Scripture, perceived the connection between the **Holy Spirit**, the work of **angels** and **Pentecost**:

My Life Today, p. 58:

*“When the truth in its simplicity is lived in every place, then God will work **through His angels** as He worked on the **day of Pentecost**, and hearts will be changed so decidedly that there will be a manifestation of the influence of genuine truth, as is represented in the descent of the Holy Spirit.”*

Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 57:

*“**When** the **angels of heaven** come among us and work through human agents, there will be solid, substantial conversions, after the order of the conversions after the day of **Pentecost**.”*

Manuscript Releases, volume 10, p. 112:

*“All heaven is interested in your salvation, and **angels of God** are **waiting to do for you** what they did for the early disciples on the day of **Pentecost**.”*

That I May Know Him, p. 57:

*“Through the ministry of the **angels**, the **Holy Spirit is enabled** to work upon the **mind and heart** of the human agent, and **draw him** to Christ, who has paid the ransom money for his soul, that the sinner may be rescued from the slavery of sin and Satan.”*

The Chariots of God

Psalms 68:17: The book of **Psalms** describes the angels with the **metaphor of chariots:**

*“The **chariots of God** are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the Holy Place.”*

2 Kings 6:17-18: Elisha described the angels as **chariots of fire:**

*“And Elisha prayed, and said, “LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was **full of horses** and **chariots of fire** all around Elisha. So when the Syrians came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, “Strike this people, I pray, with blindness.” And He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.”*

Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 475:

*“Urged on by Satan, the rulers of this world are seeking to destroy them; but could their eyes be opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant at Dothan, they would see the **angels of God** encamped about them, by their brightness and glory holding in check the hosts of darkness.”*

The Great Controversy, p. 645:

*“On each side of the cloudy **chariot are wings**, and beneath it are living wheels; and as the chariot rolls upward, the **wheels cry**, “Holy,” and the **wings**, as they move, cry, “Holy,” and the retinue of angels cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.” And the redeemed shout, “Alleluia!” as the **chariot** moves onward toward the New Jerusalem.”*

Ezekiel 1:12-14:

*“And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went. As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning **coals of fire**, and like the appearance of **torches**. Fire was going back and forth among the living creatures; the fire was bright, and out of the **fire** went **lightning**. And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a **flash of lightning**.”*

Who was impelling these wheels?

Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 751:

*“There were wheels within wheels in an arrangement so complicated that at first sight they appeared to Ezekiel to be all in confusion. But when they moved, it was with beautiful exactness and in perfect harmony. **Heavenly beings were impelling these wheels**, and, above all, upon the glorious sapphire throne, was the Eternal One; while round about the throne was the encircling rainbow, emblem of grace and love.”*

Testimonies for the Church, volume 5, p. 752:

*“The wheellike complications that appeared to the prophet to be involved in such confusion were under the guidance of an **infinite hand**. The **Spirit of God**, revealed to him as **moving and directing these wheels**, brought harmony out of confusion; so the whole world was under **His [the Holy Spirit’s]** control. **Myriads of glorified beings** were ready at His **[the Holy Spirit’s]** word to overrule the power and policy of evil men, and bring good to His faithful ones.”*

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 4, p. 1161:

*“The tireless vigilance of the **heavenly messengers**, their unceasing employment in their ministry in connection with the beings of earth, shows us **how** God's hand is guiding the wheel within a wheel.”*

God’s Modus Operandi

Revelation 1:1-5: There is a **certain order** that God follows in the **administration** of the universe, what I call the **chain of command**. The order is as follows:

- Father
- Jesus
- Spirit
- Angel
- John
- Church
- World

*“The Revelation of **[2] Jesus Christ**, which **[1] God** gave Him to show His servants — things which must shortly take place. **(2:7):** “He who has an ear, let him hear what the **[3] Spirit** says to the churches. And He sent and signified it by His **[4] angel** to His servant **[5] John** who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near. **John**, to the **[6] seven churches** which are in Asia.”*

The Centurion

Matthew 8:5-10: An example of how God's word accomplishes the work:

*"Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But **only speak a word**, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, **having soldiers under me**. And **I say to this one**, 'Go,' and he goes; **and to another**, 'Come,' and he comes; **and to my servant**, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"*

Ellen White's **incisive remark** about what the centurion meant:

The Desire of Ages, p. 316:

*"As I represent the power of Rome, and **my soldiers** recognize **my authority as supreme**, so dost Thou represent the power of the **Infinite God**, and all created things obey Thy word. Thou canst command the disease to depart, and it shall obey Thee. Thou canst summon **Thy heavenly messengers**, and **they shall impart healing virtue**. Speak but the word, and my servant shall be healed."*

The Miracles of Jesus

The Desire of Ages, p. 143:

*"The **angels of God** are ever passing from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth. The [‘all’ 2SP 67, 68] miracles of Christ for the afflicted and suffering were wrought by the **power of God through the ministration of the angels**. And it is through Christ, by the ministration of His **heavenly messengers**, that **every blessing** comes from God to us."*

In Heavenly Places, p. 113:

*"There is one blessing that all may have who seek for it in the right way. It is the **Holy Spirit of God**, and this is a blessing that brings **all other blessings in its train**."*

Our High Calling, p. 129:

*"I have been shown **angels of God** all ready to impart grace and power to those who feel their need of **divine strength**. But these **heavenly messengers** will not bestow **blessings** unless **solicited**. They **have waited** for the cry from souls hungering and thirsting for the blessing of God."*

Christ's Victory and Pentecost

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is very seldom mentioned. The reason is that **Jesus Himself** carried on the work **personally** as the **Angel of the Lord**. But every time that Jesus intervened, Satan bitterly complained that He was illegally invading his territory.

But at the cross Jesus **legally recovered** Adam's **position** as king and his **territory**. Thus Jesus now has the perfect legal right to intervene **how and whenever** He wishes in His realm.

Satan was **defeated at the cross**—it was **D-day** for him, the **decisive battle** in the war. Ellen White puts it this way: "*Satan **was** defeated and **knew** that his kingdom **was** lost.*"

The Desire of Ages, p. 758

But Satan was not going to simply give up **without a fight**. He was not going to simply accept the victory of Christ and **give up and surrender**. After the cross Satan will still fight to **hang on to every inch** of territory that **Jesus legally won**. But Jesus could now unleash **all of the heavenly hosts** upon His territory without any **legal complaint** on the part of Satan. And this is exactly what Jesus did. On the Day of Pentecost, he unleashed the **heavenly hosts** upon the earth to **help the apostles** in the preaching of the gospel. As Ellen White well expresses it:

The Desire of Ages, p. 352:

*"They [the apostles] are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of **supernatural help**. All the **intelligences of heaven** are in this army. And **more than angels** are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the **representative of the Captain** of the Lord's host [**Jesus is the Captain**], comes down to **direct** the battle."*

The role of God's people is to **tell the world** that Satan lost at the cross and that the world **now legally belongs to Jesus**. Those who **choose to stay with Satan's army** will lose with him. We are to call **souls to desert** from the army of Satan and **join the army of Jesus**. This is our **evangelistic task**.

Because Jesus is now encumbered by humanity, the **Holy Spirit** is Christ's **representative** and **commands the heavenly hosts**. And Christ's heavenly army helps the earthly army recover the territory that was lost. An example of how the angels help in the preaching of the gospel can be seen in the experience of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch:

Acts 8:26, 29:

*"Now **an angel of the Lord** spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.'" ²⁹ Then **the Spirit said** to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."*

Preparation of Christ's Army

In order for the Lord's heavenly army to help His earthly army it was necessary for the human army to go through **basic training**. They had been received this basic **training** during Christ's **earthly ministry**. They were now about to enter **hand to hand combat** with the enemy. They needed to learn to give **unquestioning obedience** to their commander. They **prayed, studied, invested and laid all their personal agendas aside**. They were now **ready to follow** the **unquestioning** orders of their commander. They were **ready to face** the enemy with the aid of the heavenly hosts.

The disciples became the **earthly soldiers** of Jesus. A soldier must make a **total and unquestioning surrender of his will** to his **commanding officer** and or else he **cannot be useful**. As long as the soldier is **looking out for his own skin** or is willing to **act independently** of his commander's orders, he is **totally useless** to his commanding officer. The apostles were now covered with the **whole armor** of God (Ephesians 6:10-17; Romans 13:11-14) and they could be **used powerfully**.

Regarding the relationship between Christ's earthly and heavenly army Ellen White has explained:

A Call to Stand Apart, p. 66

*"There is no line of work in which it is possible **for the youth** to receive greater benefit. All who engage in ministry are **God's helping hand**. They are co-workers **with the angels**; rather, they are the human agencies through whom **the angels accomplish** their mission. **Angels speak** through their voices, and work by their hands. And the human workers, **co-operating with heavenly agencies**, have the benefit of their [**the angels**'] education and experience. As a means of education, what 'university course' can equal this? With such an **army of workers** as our youth, **rightly trained**, might furnish, **how soon** the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world! **How soon** might the end come—the end of suffering and sorrow and sin! **How soon**, in place of a possession here, with its blight of sin and pain, our children might receive their inheritance where "the righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever;" where "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick," and "the voice of weeping shall be no more heard." Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 33:24; 65:19. 100"*

Clearly, the chain of command **breaks down** when it comes to us! **Jesus** is willing to render unquestioning obedience to His Father, the **Holy Spirit** is willing to render unquestioning obedience to Jesus, the **angels** are willing to render unquestioning obedience to the Holy Spirit but we insist on doing **our own thing**!

The Final Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

On the Day of Pentecost, **Jesus unleashed** upon the earth the host of heavenly angels under the leadership of the Holy Spirit to help His followers in the proclamation of the good news that the enemy had been defeated. The territory had legally been restored to its rightful owner, Jesus and people were invited to desert the army of the loser to join the army of the winner. In one generation the gospel was carried to the whole world.

This has not changed; Jesus is **still the legal owner**. There was another factor involved in the unleashing of the heavenly hosts. The apostles **met the conditions** and asked for the **Holy Spirit**.

At the end the same will happen. There will be a new Pentecost for the finishing of the work of God on earth. The final battle in the drama will take place, the **Battle of Armageddon**.

*“Before the work is closed up and the sealing of God's people is finished, we shall receive the outpouring of the **Spirit of God**. **Angels** from heaven will be in our midst.” Maranatha, p. 212*

*“After the **outpouring of the Holy Spirit**, thousands were converted. **Angels of God** that excel in strength, clothed with the brightness of heaven, came to the **help of the church**, and swept back the forces of Satan. The work of the **Holy Spirit** was not limited to apostolic days; it is not confined to any church, large or small: the field of his ministration is the world. “He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” But the **instrumentalities through which the Holy Spirit works** are the members of Christ's body, those who believe in his name. It is through these light-bearers that the gospel is to be carried to all the nations of the earth.” Review and Herald, January 20, 1891*

The Candlestick Illustration

The candlestick in the sanctuary illustrates the relationship between the **Holy Spirit**, the **angels** and **us**:

*“From the two olive trees, the **golden oil** was emptied through golden pipes into the bowl of the candlestick and thence into the golden lamps that gave light to the sanctuary. **So from the holy ones** that stand in God's presence, **His Spirit is imparted** to **human instrumentalities** that are **consecrated** to His service. The mission of the two anointed ones is to communicate light and power **to God's people**. It is to **receive blessing for us** that they stand in **God's presence**. As the olive trees empty themselves into the golden pipes, so the **heavenly messengers seek to communicate all that they receive from God**. The whole heavenly treasure **awaits** our demand and reception; and as we receive the blessing, we in **our turn are to impart it**. Thus it is that the holy lamps are fed, and the **church becomes a light bearer** in the world.” TM, p. 510*

*“The **golden oil** is not manufactured by any human skill. It is the unseen power of the **heavenly messengers** who **wait** before the throne of God to communicate to all who are in darkness, that they may **diffuse heaven's light**. **Into the hearts** of those united to God by faith, his golden oil of love flows freely, to flow **forth again** in good works, in real, heartfelt **service for God**. These souls become a blessing **to their fellow men**, and thus are enabled to shine.” Review and Herald, September 21, 1897*

When we are in connection with the Sun we reflect His light. When we drink the water from the Rock we become fountains of blessing! The only reason the war is not over is because the chain of command has broken down when it arrives at us. But all this will soon change!

The Restrainer

Notice in the following quotation that the Holy Spirit of God restrains the wicked but it is through the angels:

*“The **restraining Spirit of God [the Spirit restrains]** is even now being **withdrawn** from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the **sentinel angels restraining [the angels restrain]** the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid **His angels loose the winds [when the angels no longer restrain]**, there shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.” Testimonies for the Church, volume 6, p. 408*

*“When unconsciously we are in danger of exerting a wrong influence, the angels will be by our side, **prompting us** to a better course, **choosing our words** for us, and **influencing our actions**. Thus our influence may be a silent, unconscious, but **mighty power** is drawing others to Christ and the heavenly world.” Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 341, 342*

*“The Lord **is in active communication** with every part of His vast dominions. He is represented as bending toward the earth and its inhabitants. **He is listening** to every word that is uttered. **He hears** every groan; **He listens** to every prayer; **He observes** the movements of every one; He approves or condemns every action. The hand of Christ draws aside the veil which conceals from our eyes the glory of heaven; and we behold Him **in His high and holy place**, not in a state of silence and indifference to His subjects in a fallen world, but **surrounded by all the heavenly host**,--ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, **all waiting to go at His bidding on errands** of mercy and love.” Signs of the Times, November 17, 1898*

*“The Bible shows us God in **His high and holy place**, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but **surrounded** by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all **waiting to do His will**. **Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion**. By **His Spirit** He is everywhere present. Through the agency of **His Spirit and His angels** He ministers to the children of men.*

***Above** the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are **open to His divine survey**; and from His **great and calm eternity** He **orders** that which His providence sees best.” The Ministry of Healing, p. 417*

Another Example of how it Works

John 4:46-53:

*“So Jesus came again to **Cana of Galilee** where He had made the water wine, and there was a certain nobleman whose **son was sick at Capernaum**. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to **come down** and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, **come down** before my child*

dies!" Jesus said to him, "Go your way; **your son lives.**" So the man believed **the word** that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, "Your son lives!" Then he inquired of them **the hour** when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the **seventh hour** the fever left him." So the father knew that it was at the **same hour** in which Jesus **said** to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household."

Ellen White makes a perceptive remark about the manner in which the son of the nobleman was healed:

*"Instead of going to Capernaum, Jesus, by a **flash of divine telegraphy, sends the message** of healing to the bedside of the suffering son." 2SP, p. 155*

*"And the power of the **words** of the Redeemer **flashes like lightning** from Cana to Capernaum, and the child is healed. The nobleman shows his faith by **not insisting on the presence of Jesus**, and immediately the power of Satan is rebuked. The dying boy feels the joy of restoration." The Youth's Instructor, December 4, 1902*

An Interesting Editor's Comment

*"In the second epistle of Peter 1:21 it is said that 'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The books of Revelation and Daniel reveal the fact that angels have revealed truth to the prophets. From these facts some have concluded that the Holy Ghost was an angel or angels; and that any other view makes the Bible contradict itself. That this is not so, one simple principle will show, and borne in mind will enable our readers to solve similar problems. It is this, that because **a principal is responsible for all the acts of his agents or subordinates**, the acts or work of his agents may properly be said **to be his acts**. For instance, we say, 'That house was built by Mr. Jones,' or 'That printing press was made by Mr. Hoe,' although Mr. Jones **never did any work** on the house nor Mr. Hoe on the press. But they **caused the work to be done**; therefore it was **their work**. Thus the Father created the world through the Son. God spake unto the fathers, but he did it by the prophets. Hebrews 1:1*

*So God has revealed his will to men. Sometimes through **angels** and sometimes through men. But in both cases the **Spirit of God** fitted the messenger for his work, gave power to his message, and prepared the heart of the individual to whom it was sent to receive the truth spoken. The Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit, or rather the perfect **oneness of all three**, was **the principal**; the **angel or the man** was the agent. Now to say that the Spirit was an angel would prove by the same rule that the Spirit was a human being. But neither is true. The angel **was only the messenger of God**, the power—the all—was furnished by the Spirit of God, who is **above and before all angels** and all creatures." Signs of the Times, September 23, 1889*



THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST #6 – TONGUES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Creation Plan

Genesis 1:26-28: God commanded man to multiply and spread out over the entire earth:

“Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God instructed men to multiply and fill the earth, not aggregate in one place. The idea was to fill the world with a righteous race.

Sin Marred the Plan

Genesis 3:6: Sin marred God’s plan. The earth did fill but with a wicked race.

Promise of Salvation

Genesis 3:15: But there was good news: What was lost would be recovered when the Seed born of a woman would crush the serpent’s head:

“And I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

A little later God revealed how He would cover the shame of man’s nakedness:

Genesis 3:21: An Immaculate lamb would be chosen and slain and the nakedness caused by sin would be covered with garments made from the lamb’s skins:

“Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.”

Satan was Watching

There can be no doubt that Satan was watching this ceremony and attempting to understand its meaning. It soon began to dawn on him that the ceremony pointed forward to an interruption of his power. He made up his mind that he would prevent the Seed from coming.

Genesis 3:15 and Plan A

Satan's first strategy to prevent the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15, was to try **[1] to kill** the Seed. This method is illustrated by the story of Cain and Abel where we find the same elements of Genesis 3:15:

- A woman: Eve
- A serpent: The wicked one (1 John 3:12)
- A righteous seed: Abel
- A wicked seed: Cain
- Enmity between the two seeds: Cain hated Abel

Genesis 4:25:

"And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed."

Genesis 3:15 and Plan B

Satan soon learned that these preliminary seeds were not THE promised SEED. He realized that God was preserving a righteous genealogy from which the promised SEED would eventually come.

In Genesis 4 and 5 we find two genealogies. Genesis 4 contains the genealogy of wicked Cain (including three women, the daughters of men). Genesis 5 contains the genealogy of righteous Seth (the sons of God).

Satan amalgamated the sons of God with the daughters of men and as a result the righteous diminished in number and only Noah and his family remained faithful. It was Satan's intent to wipe out the entire holy line to frustrate God's plan to introduce the SEED into the world. The antediluvians all spoke one language which made the consolidation of evil easier.

Genesis 6:1, 2, 5:

"Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Genesis 6:11-12:

*“The earth also was corrupt before God, and **the earth** was filled with violence. So God looked upon **the earth**, and indeed it was corrupt; for **all flesh** had corrupted their way on **the earth**.”*

Cleansing the Earth

The flood came **1656** years after creation or **2400 years** before Christ was born. It cleansed the earth and made it possible to begin afresh. God continued His plan once again with **only eight persons**. After coming out of the ark, God **once again commanded** man to **multiply** and populate the **entire** earth:

Genesis 9:1:

*“So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and **fill the earth**.”*

Consolidation of Evil

Just **200 years** after the flood the earth was once **again corrupt**. It was Satan’s plan to **demoralize the race** and lead it into a **united worldwide** rebellion against God.

But God would not allow the **consolidation** of evil. At Babel He **confused** the languages in order force humanity to **disperse over all the earth**. In this way, it would be difficult for wickedness to **not centralize and consolidate** on a global level.

Genesis 11:6-8:

*“And the Lord said, “Indeed the people **are one** and they all have **one language**, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their **language [glossa]**, that they may not **understand [akouo]** one another’s **speech [phone]**.” So the Lord **scattered them abroad** from there over the face of **all the earth**, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called **Babel**, because there the Lord **confused the language** of all the earth; and from there the Lord **scattered them abroad** over the face of all the earth.”*

Ellen White remarks about the confusion of the languages at Babel:

*“Angry with one another, and unable to account for the misunderstanding and **strange words [some versions translate ‘strange tongues’ in 1 Corinthians 14:2]** among them, they left the work and separated from each other and **scattered abroad** in tile earth. Up to this time men had spoken but **one language**.” *SR, pp. 73, 74**

A Potential Problem

The confusion of the languages at Babel made it very difficult for evil to consolidate on a global level because nations were established, each with their own language and cultural customs. But, as we shall see, Babel also created a potential problem. How could the message of salvation be proclaimed to the world when there were so many nations, languages and cultures?

Preserving the Holy Line

It was God's plan to preserve the holy line and share the gospel with the world and thus He established Israel in the Promised Land, the crossroads of three continents. It was God's plan that as the nations passed through Israel they would see her material and spiritual prosperity and ask what the secret of her prosperity was. Israel would then teach them the secrets of their prosperity and the promise of the coming Messiah:

Deuteronomy 4:6-8:

"Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?"

2 Chronicles 9:6, 8: The Queen of Sheba

The experience of the Queen of Sheba is a living example of what God had planned for Israel. She had heard from afar about the prosperity of Solomon's kingdom and wished to know the secret so she made a personal visit to Jerusalem to speak with Solomon in person. At first she seemed to be extolling the greatness of Solomon:

2 Chronicles 9:6: "However I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You exceed the fame of which I heard."

But then the Queen shared with Solomon the true secret of his prosperity:

2 Chronicles 9:8: "Blessed be the Lord your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne to be king for the Lord your God! Because your God has loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness."

Regarding verse 8 Ellen White comments:

"This is the impression that God designed should be made upon all peoples. And when 'all the kings of the earth' sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his

heart' (2 Chronicles 9:23), Solomon for a time honored God by reverently pointing them to the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the Ruler of the universe, the All-wise." PK 67, 68

Zechariah 8:20-23:

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, "Let us continue to go and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hosts. I myself will go also." Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.' "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.'""

Isaiah 49:6:

"Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

Isaiah 60:3:

"The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."

Israel's Failure

Before the Babylonian captivity, Israel amalgamated with the nations and lost its identity. After the Babylonian captivity Israel isolated herself from the nations and when Jesus came, His own received Him not. But there was a faithful remnant.

Jesus Fulfilled Genesis 3:15

But God's plan would not be frustrated. Jesus came and did what was promised in Genesis 3:15. He lived a perfect life as the spotless lamb and died for sin.

The benefits of salvation were now available to every person. But these benefits must be personally claimed by repentance, confession and faith. What good would it do for these benefits to be available if no one knew about it?

Taking the Gospel to the World

In the Old Testament it was God's plan that the nations come to Israel to learn the secrets of her prosperity. But when the Jewish nation was rejected as God's vessel to take the gospel to the world, God established a plan where the gospel would be taken to the world by God's people:

Matthew 28:18-20:

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the

Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."

Acts 1:7, 8:

*"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you **shall be witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

But how could the gospel go to all the nations of the world if God's people **in Jerusalem did not speak** those languages? The good news needed to be **announced** to every nation, kindred, tongue and people but **language was a barrier**. It appeared that the confusion of the languages at **Babel** was a **hindrance** rather than a help. It was **divisive** rather than **uniting**!

Pentecost

The **proliferation** of languages became an **obstacle** to communication on the Day of Pentecost. The disciples needed to **proclaim the gospel** to those who had come from various nations but they **could not speak** their languages.

At Pentecost God **bridged the gap** that had been created at Babel. God said: *"languages will no longer be an **obstacle to communication**."* The gift of tongues was given to make it **possible to communicate** the gospel on the languages of the nations.

The Purpose of the Gift of Tongues

As far as we know, the disciples of Jesus **spoke only Aramaic** and the message needed to go to the **ends of the earth**. There were people from **many nations** gathered together on the Day of Pentecost—many of the **same nations** that are mentioned in the table of nations in **Genesis 10**.

Acts 2:5, 9-11:

*"And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from **every nation** under heaven . . . **Parthians** and **Medes** and **Elamites**, those dwelling in **Mesopotamia**, **Judea** and **Cappadocia**, **Pontus** and **Asia**, **Phrygia** and **Pamphylia**, **Egypt** and the parts of **Libya** adjoining Cyrene, visitors from **Rome**, both Jews and proselytes, **Cretans** and **Arabs**. . ." [read also Genesis Chapter 10]*

As we shall see, the **Feast of Pentecost** was one of the three where men **twelve years and older** were required to **personally travel** to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. This means that there were people from **every nation** in the world present there.

So God gave the **gift of tongues** to the **apostles** so that they could preach the gospel in the **languages** of those who were gathered there. These in turn when they returned from the feast, would **take the message** back **to their countries** and in this way the gospel would **go to the world!!**

Thus at Pentecost God undid what was done at Babel. What had been divided at Babel was **united at Pentecost**. The purpose of the gift of tongues was not for **self-edification** or to give the apostles a **spiritual high**. The purpose was purely **evangelistic**.

The Gift in the End Time

Jesus announced that the gospel must go **to all the world** before He comes:

Matthew 24:14:

*“And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in **all the world** as a witness to **all the nations**, and then the **end will come**.”*

The book of Revelation repeats the same idea:

Revelation 14:6:

*“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth — to **every nation, tribe, tongue, and people**.”*

The question is: Is the gift of tongues **as needed today** as it was on the Day of Pentecost? The answer is, **probably not**, because there are believers in Christ in practically **all the nations** of the world.

The gift of tongues was necessary in the early church because of the **special circumstances**. But in the course of Christian history the gospel **has gone to all the world** and there are Christians of **every language** group who live in practically **every nation**. Furthermore, **technology** has made it possible to preach the gospel with **translation** to the entire world.

Does this mean that God will not use the gift of tongues in the end time? Of course not! If special circumstances require it, God will not hesitate to give the gift again but for practical purposes.

Babylon once again

The book of Revelation tells us that a spiritual **Babylon** will **once again** want to establish a **global empire** in rebellion against God. This time the Babylon builders will do it **in spite of all** the cultures, languages, religions, etc.

Revelation 17:1-2, 15:

*“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the **great harlot** who sits on **many waters**, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made **drunk with the wine** of her fornication. . . Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are **peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues**.”*

In contrast to **God's people** who share the gospel with every nation, kindred, tongue and people, the **harlot** whose **name is Babylon**, gives **her wine** to nations, multitudes, tongues and peoples.

Do you think that Satan would want to **counterfeit** the gift of tongues and make it **selfish** instead of evangelistic? Do you think that Satan would want the gift to impede communication rather than enhance it?

It was the intention of the original Babel builders to establish a global civilization, a **new world order**, if you please, in **rebellion against God**. This is very similar to the scenario of **Revelation 17**.

*"Accordingly they journeyed to the plain of Shinar, on the banks of the river **Euphrates** [in **Revelation 16 the Euphrates is dried up thus tearing Babylon apart as at the Tower of Babel. Notice also that the harlot whose name is Babylon is seated on the many waters of the Euphrates**]. They were attracted by the beauty of the situation and the fertility of the soil, and upon this plain they determined to make their home.*

*Here they decided to build **a city** [in **Revelation 18:24 Babylon is called the Great City and it will suffer an economic and religious collapse as at Babel**], and in it **a tower** of such stupendous height as should render it the **wonder of the world**. These enterprises were designed to **prevent** the people **from scattering** abroad in colonies. God had directed men **to disperse** throughout the earth, to replenish and subdue it; but these Babel builders determined to keep their community **united in one body**, and to found **a monarchy** that should eventually embrace **the whole earth** [globalism]. Thus their city would become the metropolis of a **universal empire** [once again globalism]; its glory would command the admiration and **homage** of the world and render **the founders illustrious**. The magnificent tower, reaching to the heavens, was intended to stand as **a monument of the power and wisdom of its builders**, perpetuating **their fame** to the latest generations." PP, p. 118, 119*

The builder of Babel was a man called **Nimrod** whose name means **rebellion**.

*"The whole undertaking was designed to exalt still further the **pride of its projectors** and to turn the minds of future generations **away from God** and lead them into idolatry." PP, p. 119*

*"The men of Babel had determined to establish a government that should be **independent of God**." PP, p. 123*

*"Had they gone on unchecked, they would have **demoralized the world** in its infancy. Their **confederacy** [she uses this word at the end as well] was founded in rebellion; a kingdom established for **self-exaltation**, but in which God was to have no rule or honor. Had this **confederacy** been permitted, a mighty power would have borne sway to **banish righteousness**--and with it **peace, happiness, and security**--from the earth. For the divine statutes, which are "holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12), men were endeavoring to **substitute laws** to suit the purpose of their **own selfish and cruel hearts**." PP, p. 123*

“The people rejoiced in their success, and praised the gods of silver and gold, and set themselves against the Ruler of heaven and earth.” PP, p. 119 [the god of Babylon at the end of time will also be silver and gold—money! This is why Revelation 18 predicts that Babylon will have an economic meltdown that will cause a universal crying out!]

The End of Babylon

*There are tower builders in our time. **Infidels** [scholars who have no faith] construct their theories from the supposed **deductions of sciences**, and **reject the revealed word of God**. They presume to **pass sentence** upon God's moral government; they **despise His law** and boast of the sufficiency of **human reason**. Then, “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Ecclesiastes 8:11.*

*In the **professedly Christian world** many turn away from the **plain teachings** of the Bible and build up a creed from human **speculations and pleasing fables**, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the **lips of eloquence** while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured without obedience to the law of God. If the **professed followers** of Christ would accept God's standard, it would **bring them into unity**; but so long as human wisdom is exalted above His Holy Word, there will be **divisions and dissension**. The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term “Babylon,” which prophecy (Revelation 14:8; 18:2) applies to the **world-loving churches** of the last days.*

*Many seek to make a heaven for themselves by obtaining **riches and power**. They “speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily” (Psalm 73:8), trampling upon human rights and disregarding divine authority. The proud may be for a time in great power, and may see success in all that they undertake; but in the end they will find only disappointment and wretchedness.*

*The time of God's investigation is at hand. The Most High **will come down to see** that which the children of men have built. His sovereign power will be revealed; the works of human pride will be laid low.” PP, pp. 123, 124*



THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST

#7 – THE TONGUES OF PENTECOST

John the Baptist and the Gift

Six months before Jesus began His public ministry God raised up John the Baptist to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. As he preached in the wilderness he trumpeted to the Jews:

Matthew 3:11:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will [1] baptize you with the [2] Holy Spirit and [3] fire.”

Several important items in this verse:

- There are Three important words that we need to remember in this verse: *“He will [1] baptize you with [2] Holy Spirit and [3] fire.”*
- We will meet the identical three concepts (baptize, Holy Spirit, fire) again when we take a look at Acts 1 and 2.
- There can be no doubt that John was predicting the events that took place on the Day of Pentecost.

Words of Jesus on Resurrection evening in the Upper Room

Luke 24:44-49:

“Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached [notice the preaching theme] in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Notice the key elements:

- Preaching repentance and remission of sins
- Beginning at Jerusalem
- Then to all nations
- They were to be witnesses
- They were to wait for the power

Forty Days Later, right before His Ascension, Jesus Spoke Similar Words to His Disciples on the Mount of Olives

Acts 1:4, 5: The gift referred to in this verse was the same one spoken of by John the Baptist. It was not a different gift.

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

- Don’t depart from Jerusalem
- Wait for the Promise of the Father
- A specific reference to John the Baptist
- Two of the key words John used: Baptism and Holy Spirit
- The fire John mentioned by John will be seen on the Day of Pentecost

Purpose of the Power on Pentecost: Witness

Acts 1:8: The purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was to give the apostles power to witness. The text is clear: The task is evangelism and the Holy Spirit is the power to accomplish the task. Notice that the expression ‘you shall’ is used twice:

“But [1] you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and [2] you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Jesus could not pour out the Holy Spirit before he lived, died and resurrected. The purpose of giving the Holy Spirit was to announce that Jesus has [1] lived a perfect life, [2] died for sin and [3] resurrected and ascended to the right hand of God to [4] make intercession for those who come to Him in repentance, confession and faith.

The purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not self-edification or receiving a spiritual high but rather power to preach all that Jesus had accomplished and what He had gone to heaven to do.

The Purpose Previously Announced

John 7:37-39: Jesus had already announced that the purpose of receiving the Holy Spirit was to share the message:

"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

John 4:13, 14: The Samaritan woman drank the water and then became a witness:

"Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

Geographical Extension of Evangelism in the Book of Acts

Acts 1:8: Notice that the sequence of the evangelistic task. The apostles were to witness in ever broadening concentric circles. The structure of the book of Acts is patterned after this verse:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in [1] Jerusalem, and in all [2] Judea and [3] Samaria, and to the [4] end of the earth."

- Jerusalem
- All Judea
- Samaria
- Uttermost ends of the earth

We shall find that initially the gift of tongues was imparted in Jerusalem because of all the language groups that were gathered there. But after the Day of Pentecost had passed, the gift was no longer needed in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria because the population all understood the local language.

The Number Present on the Day of Pentecost

Acts 1:15: There were about 120 disciples gathered in the Upper Room before the Day of Pentecost:

"And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty). . ."

The Power was imparted

Acts 2:1-4: On the Day of Pentecost, what John and Jesus had predicted came to pass:

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come [precisely 50 days after the resurrection], they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire [what John had predicted], and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit [what John had predicted] and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Why was the Gift of Tongues Imparted?

Was the gift of tongues meant to give the apostles a spiritual high? Was it given for self-edification? Let's allow the text itself to provide the answer:

Acts 2:5-8: There were people from many nations present there and they were all bewildered, amazed and confused because the 120 were speaking in their native languages:

“And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred the multitude came together and was confused, because everyone heard them speak [it was the gift of speaking tongues, not the gift of hearing tongues] in his own language [dialektoo]. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear [them speak], each in our own language [dialektoo] in which we were born?”

Acts 2:9-11: The many nations are now mentioned by name:

“Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs — we hear them speaking [it is the gift of speaking, not hearing] in our own tongues [glossais] the wonderful works [not gibberish] of God.”

Ellen White Explains the Gift of Tongues

“The Holy Spirit, assuming the form of tongues of fire, rested upon those assembled. This was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with fluency languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. The appearance of fire signified the fervent zeal with which the apostles would labor and the power that would attend their work.” AA. p. 39

Still Bewildered

Acts 2:12-13: Once again they are bewildered and ask the questions: What can this mean? Others who are present mock and say that they are drunk:

*"So they were all **amazed and perplexed**, saying to one another, "Whatever could **this mean?**" Others mocking said, "They are **full of new wine.**"*

Peter's Message of Clarification

Acts 2:14-15: These men are **not drunk** because it is just the **third hour** of the day:

*"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For **these are not drunk**, as you suppose, since it is only the **third hour [nine in the morning]** of the day."*

Joel's Prophecy Fulfilled

Acts 2:16-21: Peter explains that these phenomena that were happening on earth had already been predicted by the **prophet Joel** and he quoted **Joel 2:28-32** to prove it.

Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Acts 2:22-24: Peter explains that Jesus **lived** a life of service [camp], was **killed** [altar of sacrifice], was **buried** and **resurrected** [at the laver]:

*"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by **miracles, wonders, and signs** which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—²³ Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, **have crucified, and put to death;** ²⁴ whom **God raised up**, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it."*

Acts 2:25-28: Peter quotes **Psalm 16:8-10** to prove that the tomb would not be able to hold Jesus:

"For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of joy in Your presence.'"

Exalted to the Right Hand

Acts 2:29-33: Jesus was exalted to the **right hand of God**.

*"Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the **patriarch David** that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day [**David was not speaking about himself**]. Therefore, being **a prophet**, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of **the fruit of his body, according to the flesh**, He would raise up the Christ to **sit on his throne**, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore*

being [1] exalted to the right hand of God, and having [2] received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, [3] He poured out this which you now see and hear."

Acts 2:34, 35: Peter in verse 30 refers to Psalm 132:11 and in verses 34, 35 quotes Psalm 110:1 to prove his point that Jesus would resurrect to sit at the right hand of the Father.

"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand,³⁵ Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'"

Acts 2:36: Peter's concluding remark: Jesus has been installed as Lord and Christ (anointed) as was Aaron when he began his office of high priest in Israel:

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ [anointed]."

Acts 5:31: A little later, Peter would explain why Jesus was exalted to the Father's right hand:

"Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

Response of those Present

Acts 2:37: Those present asked Peter what they needed to do:

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

Peter's Counsel

Acts 2:38: Peter called upon those present to repent and be baptized so that they could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. In baptism they went symbolically through the same experience as Jesus did: They died, were buried and resurrected.

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

Baptized, Received the Spirit and added to the Church

Acts 2:41, 46, 47: Three thousand souls were baptized that day and added to the church but there is no evidence that these people received the gift of tongues. Why not? The answer to this question is found in the purpose of the gift of tongues. The gift was not for self-edification or to experience a spiritual high! These people would go back to their native lands and share the message in their own languages.

"Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,⁴⁷ praising

God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

Why was the Gift of tongues the only Gift in Acts 2?

Why is the gift of tongues mentioned as the primary and only gift in Acts 2? Was it because everyone who is saved must have this gift as a sign of salvation?

No. It was given because it was the one most urgently needed at that particular moment as it was later in Caesarea, Ephesus and Corinth.

The Feast of Pentecost was one of the three where all men ages 12 and older had to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. This means that Jews from the Diaspora would have come from all over the world for the Feast. The problem is that those Jews from other nations did not speak Aramaic. It was urgent to explain what Jesus had just done in a comprehensible way so that those people could go back to their nations and share the gospel message.

“During the dispersion the Jews had been scattered to almost every part of the inhabited world, and in their exile they had learned to speak various languages. Many of these Jews were on this occasion in Jerusalem, attending the religious festivals then in progress. Every known tongue was represented by those assembled. This diversity of languages [the problem created at Babel] would have been a great hindrance to the proclamation of the gospel; God therefore in a miraculous manner supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in a lifetime. They could now proclaim the truths of the gospel abroad, speaking with accuracy the languages of those for whom they were laboring. This miraculous gift was a strong evidence to the world that their commission bore the signet of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language.” AA, pp. 39, 40

The gift of tongues is not a learned phenomenon. It is a miraculous and instantaneous ability imparted by the Holy Spirit through the angels that allows people to speak accurately and correctly a language that they never knew before.

The Gift in Jerusalem

Sometime later in Jerusalem, the gift of the Holy Spirit filled another group of believers and they did not receive the gift of tongues. Why not? The gift of tongues was not necessary in Jerusalem because the Jews spoke Aramaic:

Acts 4:31:

“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness [because they had received the Holy Spirit].”

The Gift in Samaria

Acts 8:14-17: The gift of tongues was unnecessary in Samaria because the Samaritans spoke the same language as the Jews as can be seen by the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman:

“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

The Gift at Caesarea

Acts 10:44-47: The gift of tongues was given in Caesarea:

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

The City of Caesarea:

- This was the most important seaport on the Mediterranean between Tyre and Egypt.
- People from all nations, languages and walks of life came through Caesarea.
- God gave the gift of tongues to meet the necessity of witnessing to those language groups.

Emphasize that in verse 47 this was the same gift as the apostles had received. In other words, this was the same gift that John the Baptist spoke about. There is only one gift of tongues in the Bible. And it begins in the teaching of John the Baptist.

Acts 10:44-47: It was the same gift that the apostles received at Pentecost.

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

Acts 11:15, 16: Cornelius receive the same gift that John the Baptist spoke about:

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

Ellen White comments about the Cornelius experience:

*“Thus was the gospel brought to those who had been strangers and foreigners, making them fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God. The conversion of Cornelius and his household was but the first fruits of a harvest to be gathered in. **From this household** a wide-spread work of grace was carried on in **that heathen city.**” AA, p. 139*

The Gift at Ephesus

Acts 19:1-6: Ephesus: Gift of tongues given.

*“And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to **Ephesus**. And finding some disciples he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him: “We have not so much as heard **whether there is a Holy Spirit.**” And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said: “Into **John's baptism.**” Then Paul said: “John indeed baptized with a **baptism of repentance**, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they **spoke with tongues** and prophesied.”*

The City of Ephesus:

This was one of the **most important trade centers** on the continent of **Asia**. Once again, people from **every nation under heaven** came through this busy seaport. God, knowing this, gave the church members of Ephesus the gift of tongues so that they could proclaim the gospel to all these language groups.

Notice once again the reference to **John the Baptist**. They were baptized in the baptism of repentance and preparation for the Messiah but they did not receive the **Holy Spirit for witnessing**. They were then baptized into Jesus and received the **Holy Spirit** and the **gift of tongues** to witness to others.

Ellen White explains:

*“With deep interest and grateful, wondering joy the brethren listened to Paul's words. By faith they grasped the wonderful truth of Christ's atoning sacrifice and received Him as their Redeemer. They were then baptized in the name of Jesus, and as Paul “laid his hands upon them,” they received also the baptism of the Holy Spirit, by which they were enabled **to speak the languages of other nations** and to prophesy. Thus they were **qualified to labor as missionaries in Ephesus and its vicinity** and also to go forth to proclaim the gospel in **Asia Minor.**” AA, p.283*

The Gift in Corinth

I Corinthians 12-14:

The gift of tongues is mentioned many times in the context of the church of Corinth. Corinth was one of the **busiest seaports** on the continent of **Europe**. People from all **language groups** and cultures passed through this busy metropolis. Once again, God, knowing the need, gave the gift of tongues so that the gospel could go to all these language groups. But we shall see that the church of Corinth was **abusing** the gift of tongues and **misusing** it to bring glory to themselves!

Thus the gift of tongues was given in the great **metropolitan** and **cosmopolitan** centers of the world for the purpose of sharing the gospel message that Jesus had **died, been buried, resurrected** and was receiving clients in the heavenly sanctuary.

The Latter Rain

*"It is with an earnest longing that I look forward to the time when the events of the day of Pentecost shall be **repeated** with **even greater power** than on that occasion. John says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Then, as at the Pentecostal season, the people will hear the truth spoken to them, **every man in his own tongue**. . . Thousands of voices will be **imbued with the power** to speak forth the wonderful truths of God's word. The **stammering tongue** will be unloosed, and the **timid** will be made strong to bear courageous testimony to the truth.*

And what is **the condition** for receiving the gift?

*"May the Lord help his people to cleanse the soul temple from every defilement and to maintain such a close connection with him that they may be partakers of the **latter rain** when it shall be poured out" RH, July 20, 1886*



THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST #8 – THE TONGUES OF MEN AND ANGELS

The Great Commission

Matthew 28:19-20: Immediately before His ascension Jesus commanded His disciples to preach the gospel in all nations:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Mark 16:15-17

Mark 16:15-18: Mark 16 adds some important details to the great commission:

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

In summary:

- Preaching the gospel in all the world
- The purpose is for people to believe and be baptized
- Those who believe then receive the gift of tongues

New Tongues

What are the new tongues? The New Century Version and several others capture the meaning by translating ‘new languages’. A slim minority of modern versions translate the word *glossa* with the expression ‘strange tongues’ (Good News, Today’s English Version) but there is absolutely no warrant in the text for this.

The question is: For whom were the tongues new? The tongues were not new in the sense that they were **never spoken anywhere** in the world before but rather they were **new for the believers** who speak them because they did not know them before.

The sequence of events in **Acts 2:4, 41, 44** is identical to Mark 16: On Pentecost the apostles:

- [1] Received the **Holy Spirit**
- [2] They spoke in new **tongues** (for them) as a **sign** to **unbelievers**
- [3] The **unbelievers believed**
- [4] Those who believed were then **baptized**

Notice that the **tense of the verbs** that Jesus used in Mark 16 is in **future**. The gift of tongues was imparted **ten days later** on the **Day of Pentecost** and also subsequently in Caesarea, Ephesus and Corinth.

Purpose of Tongues

Acts 1:8: This text is in the **same historical** context as **Matthew 28:18-20** and **Mark 16:15-17**. Jesus spoke these words immediately before His ascension. Notice that the purpose of the gift of the Holy Spirit is for **witnessing or evangelism**:

*"But you shall **receive power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you **shall be witnesses** to Me in **Jerusalem**, and in all **Judea** and **Samaria**, and to the **end of the earth**."*

Structure of the Book of Acts

Acts 1:8 provides the basic **structure or order** of events of the entire **book of Acts**.

- **Mark 16:15-17:** Jesus made the announcement in the **Upper Room** ten days before the ascension.
- **Acts 2-7:** From Pentecost to the stoning of Stephen events transpire in **Jerusalem**.
- **Acts 8:1, 2:** Persecution in Jerusalem dispersed the believers to **Judea**.
- **Acts 8:4-25:** The gospel was then preached in **Samaria**. **Two of the signs** that were mentioned in Mark 16 are mentioned also in Acts 8 (in verses 6 and 7): The casting out of **demons** and **healing**. The emphasis in Acts 7 is constantly on **preaching** Christ, not signs and wonders.
- **Acts 9:** The conversion of the **apostle to the Gentiles** who would take the gospel to the **uttermost parts** of the earth.
- **Acts 10-11:** The message then extends to **Caesarea**.
- **Acts 18:** The message is preached in **Corinth**.
- **Acts 19:** The message goes to **Ephesus**.

Ellen White on the Purpose of Tongues in Acts 2

We have this clear explanation of the purpose of the gift of tongues as it was imparted to the apostles at Pentecost:

*“And a **new** endowment was now promised. The disciples were to preach among **other nations**, and they would receive power to speak **other tongues**. The apostles and their associates were **unlettered** men, yet through the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, their speech, whether in their own or a **foreign language** became pure, simple, and accurate, both in **word and in accent**.” DA, p. 821*

*“This was an emblem of the gift then bestowed on the disciples, which enabled them to speak with **fluency** languages with which they had heretofore been unacquainted. . . This **diversity of languages [at Pentecost]** would have been a great hindrance to the **proclamation of the gospel**; God therefore in a **miraculous manner** supplied the deficiency of the apostles. The Holy Spirit did for them that which they could not have accomplished for themselves in **a lifetime**. They could now proclaim the **truths of the gospel** abroad, speaking with **accuracy** the languages of those for whom they were laboring. This **miraculous gift** was a strong evidence [a sign if you please] **to the world** that their commission bore the **signet** of Heaven. From this time forth the language of the disciples was **pure, simple, and accurate**, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a **foreign language**.” AA, p. 39, 40*

Corinth: A Genuine or Counterfeit Gift?

There are **three main views** concerning the gift of tongues at Corinth:

- **First**, the gift was a **genuine gift** of the Holy Spirit **unrelated** to the gift that was given at Pentecost. The Corinthians were speaking in an **angelic tongue** or **ecstatic utterance** that is **spoken nowhere** on planet earth.
- **Second**, the Corinthians were speaking in a language that was spoken nowhere on the planet but it was a **counterfeit** of the true gift in Acts 2.
- **Third**, the gift at Corinth was the **same as in Acts 2** but it was being **misused and abused** by the members of Corinth who had received it.

Was the gift in Acts 2 **different than the one in 1 Corinthians 14**? Was the gift in Acts the ability to speak languages of the world while in 1 Corinthians 14 the congregation was speaking an **ecstatic utterance** that is spoken **nowhere on the planet**?

The evidence clearly suggests that the gift at Corinth was the same as in Acts 2:

- The word ‘**tongues**’ in 1 Corinthians 14 **is identical** to the one in Mark 16:17; Acts 2, 10, 19.
- The expression ‘**speaking in tongues**’ is used in **only five places** in the New Testament: In Mark 16:17, Acts 2, 10, 19 and I Corinthians 12-14. The expression **links** these five passages together.

If Paul was referring to a **counterfeit gift** in 1 Corinthians 14 then it would be strange that he would state in 1 Corinthians 12-14 that the gift of tongues:

- Is a gift imparted by the **Holy Spirit**
- That it should be **desired** by everyone
- That he **himself had it**

Only Two Places

There are **only two verses** in the Bible that use the same **three combinations of words** so they must be related. The first is found in the **LXX version** of the Tower of Babel episode. No one would dispute that the tongues that were spoken at Babel were **real languages** that are spoken **all over the world**:

Genesis 11:7, LXX:

*“Come, let Us go down and there confuse their **language (glossa)**, that they may not **understand (akouo)** one another’s **speech (phone)**.”*

- “tongue”
- “understand”
- “speech”

1 Corinthians 14:2: Here is the other verse where the **three words** are used in the **Greek New Testament** suggesting that the gift at Corinth was **similar to the one at Babel**, that is, real languages of the nations:

*“For he who **speaks [phone]** in a **tongue [glossa]** does not speak to men but to God, for no one **understands [akouo]** him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”*

The Babel builders were speaking real languages of the world but they could not understand one another. One can imagine one Babel builder speaking French to another who spoke English. They were real languages but on group could not understand another.

The members at **Corinth were returning** to what had happened at Babel. Instead of using the gift of tongues to **communicate**, they were using the gift as it had been used at Babel—they could **not understand** one another’s speech. And whenever tongues are used to **prevent communication** rather than enhancing it you have **Babylon or confusion**.

Refer here to **Kenneth Copland’s** rant in tongues at a recent convention. No one understood him and there was no interpretation.

Characteristics of Corinth

- Corinth became a Roman colony in the year **44 BC**.
- It was a major **trading junction** between the **eastern and western** Mediterranean.
- It was a **bridge** of trade between **northern and southern Greece**.
- It had population of about **200,000** composed of Romans, Greeks, Jews and people from many other nations.
- Paul spent a **year and a half** in Corinth while on his **second missionary journey** (Acts 18).
- Corinth was one of the **most immoral cities** in Europe. It was a **metropolitan and cosmopolitan** center. The gift of tongues was necessary in order to reach **all the language groups** that passed through the city.

Serious Problems in Corinth

- Factions or cliques
- Jealousies and quarreling
- Incest
- Prostitution
- Lawsuits
- Meat offered to idols
- Orgies
- Abuse of the Lord's Supper
- Denial of the resurrection
- The **genuine gift** of tongues was being **misused** and **abused** in Corinth.

Questions from 1 Corinthians 12-14

In order to understand Paul's view of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 it is necessary to take into account his comments in **1 Corinthians 12 and 13**. Let's first ask some **questions** and then attempt to find answers:

- Must **everyone** speak in tongues?
- Is the gift of tongues the **most important gift**?
- Is the gift of tongues for **personal edification** or a **sign of spirituality**?
- Is the gift of tongues the ability to speak the languages of the nations of the world or is it an **unknown language** that is not spoken anywhere in the world?
- **What conditions** must exist in order to receive the gift of tongues?

Four Lists of Gifts

In Scripture there are **four lists** of spiritual gifts. Only **one gift** is mentioned in **all four lists**: Prophecy. The gift of tongues is **only mentioned in two** and in both lists is **mentioned last**.

List #1

I Corinthians 12:8-11:

*“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the **profit of all**:⁸ for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another **different kinds of tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues**.¹¹ But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually **as He wills**.”*

- The **last two** gifts that are mentioned in this list are **tongues** and the **interpretation** of tongues.
- The gifts are given by the Holy Spirit for the **benefit of all** and not for **self-edification**.
- **Verse 11** explains that the **Holy Spirit decides** who gets which gift. A person does not **seek** the gift of tongues, the Holy Spirit gives if He sees that **it is necessary**.

List #2

I Corinthians 12:28-31:

*“And **God has appointed** these in the church: **first** apostles, **second** prophets, **third** teachers, **after** that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, **varieties of tongues**.²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?³⁰ Do all have gifts of healings? **Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?**³¹ But earnestly desire the **best gifts**. And yet I show you a more excellent way.”*

- There is a **hierarchy** of gifts denoted by the words **first**, second, third and ‘**after that**. . .’
- **Last on the list** is the gift of tongues. Paul does **not say**: “First, the gift of tongues”.
- **Verses 29, 30** make it very clear that **all do not receive** the gift of tongues. The apostle asks:
*“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? **Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?**” The obvious answer is no!*
- The entire argument of I Corinthians 12 is that there is **one body** with **many members** and each member has a **different gift** for the **benefit of the entire body**.
- **I Corinthians 13:8**: The gifts of prophecy and tongues **will cease**:

*“Love never fails. But whether there are **prophecies**, they will fail; whether there are **tongues**, they will cease; whether there is **knowledge**, it will vanish away.”*

List #3

Ephesians 4:11-13:

*“And **He Himself gave** some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the **work of ministry**, for the edifying of the **body of Christ**, till we all come to the **unity of the faith** and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. . .”*

- The gift of tongues is **not mentioned** in this list
- The gift is for the **good of the body**. It is for **equipping** the saints **for ministry** and not merely for **personal edification**

List #4

Romans 12:4-8:

*“For as we have many members in **one body**, but all the members **do not have the same function**, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually **members of one another**. Having then **gifts differing** according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or **ministry**, let us use it in our ministering; he who **teaches**, in teaching; he who **exhorts**, in exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who shows **mercy**, with cheerfulness.”*

- The **gifts differ** from one another and are for the **good of the body**. Not everyone is expected to have the gift of tongues.
- The gift of tongues is **not even mentioned**.

An Important Fact

Every single time that the word ‘tongues’ or the expression ‘speaking in tongues’ is used in in **1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14** it is always the **identical word and expression** that are used in **Mark 16:17** and the book of **Acts**.

Tongues and Angels

1 Corinthians 13:1, 2: Some have affirmed that the gift at Corinth was not a human but rather an **angelic language**:

*“**Though** I speak with the tongues of men **and of angels**, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And **though** I have the gift of prophecy, and understand **all mysteries and all knowledge**, and **though** I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”*

Verse 1 says: “**though**” which means “**even if**”. This is a **hypothetical** statement. Is it really possible for **finite** human beings to know **all mysteries and knowledge**? Paul’s statement is hypothetical.

The Language of the Angels

What is the language of angels?

- Every time the angels speak to human beings in the Bible, they speak in the **language of the time**.
- Did the angels speak a strange tongue when they announced the **birth of Jesus**?
- Did they speak in a strange tongue when they spoke to **Zacharias** to announce the birth of John the Baptist?
- Did **Gabriel speak to Daniel** in some unknown tongue?
- **Revelation 5:11-13**: The praise of heaven is given in the **language of the prophet**.
- Why would God give people a language that **no one can understand**? It would be impractical to give someone an unknown tongue that **requires an interpreter**. Why not give them the ability to speak the language in the first place?

The **angels** have the **gift of tongues**. They spoke to **Peter** in Greek, to **Daniel** in Hebrew and Aramaic and to **Ellen White** in English.

What is the **purpose of the gift** of tongues that the **angels have**? It was given for **practical purposes**—to communicate God’s Will in a language that the prophet could understand!

It is undoubtedly true that the **language the angels speak** is **different** than the language that we speak on earth. Like everything else on planet earth, **language has degenerated** as it is passed along from generation to generation. Ellen White says that human languages have become corrupted and have degenerated in the course of time.

*“The Lord speaks to human beings in **imperfect** speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may **comprehend His words**. Thus is shown **God’s condescension**. He meets fallen human beings **where they are**.” FLB, p. 10*

*“God has been pleased to communicate His truth to the world by human agencies, and He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, qualified men and enabled them to do this work. He guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write. The treasure was entrusted to **earthen vessels**, yet it is, none the less, from Heaven. The testimony is conveyed through the **imperfect expression of human language**, yet it is the testimony of God.” AG, p. 198*

*“The Bible is not given to us in **grand superhuman language**. Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the **language of men**. Everything that is **human is imperfect**. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each **distinct idea**. The Bible was given for **practical purposes**.” 1SM, p. 20*

“The wonderful things I there saw I cannot describe. Oh, that I could talk in the language of Canaan, then could I tell a little of the glory of the better world.” EW, p. 19

God’s language is pure and perfect which has not been corrupted in the course of time. If God spoke to us in the language that the angels use in heaven we would not be able to understand so God condescends to speak our language in order to fulfill the mission of Revelation 14:6. But God has never commanded us to speak in a language that is spoken nowhere on the planet!

Back to the Questions

- Must everyone speak in tongues? NO
- Is the gift of tongues the most important gift? NO
- Is the gift of tongues for personal edification or a sign of spirituality? NO
- Is the gift of tongues the ability to speak the languages of the nations of the world or is it an unknown language that is not spoken anywhere in the world? Languages!
- What conditions must exist in order to receive the gift of tongues?

THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST #9 – ARE TONGUES ECSTATIC UTTERANCES?

I Corinthians 14

Structure of the Chapter:

- Verses 1-25: The relationship between the gift of tongues and prophecy.
- Verses 26-40: Proper order in Christian worship

14:1:

“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.”

We are to desire spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, not tongues!

14:2:

There is no verse in chapter 14 that is more misunderstood than this one.

“For he who speaks in a tongue [glossa] does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”

How do we understand this strange verse? Is it not proof that the gift of tongues in Corinth was different than the gift that is mentioned in the book of Acts?

First of all, for the purpose of understanding these verses it is vital to remember that the gift of tongues, once given (as at Babel), remained with the person for life; it was not temporary but rather permanent.

Secondly, the word “unknown” in the KJV is not part of the text (also used in verses 2, 13, 14, 19, 27). The text simply states: “He who speaks in a tongue. . .” The addition of the word ‘unknown’ denotes the art of interpretation rather than translation!

- The **Good News Bible** has “*strange*”
- The **NEB** has “*ecstatic utterance*”
- The **NIV** as well as most other modern versions simply uses the word “*tongue*” in verse 2
- The word ‘tongues’ is used **27 times** in I Corinthians 12, 13, 14 and in each case it is **the identical word** that we find in Mark 16:17, Acts 2 (Jerusalem), Acts 10 (Caesarea) and Acts 19 (Ephesus). It is **unwarranted** to translate the word as ‘ecstatic’ or ‘unknown’ or ‘strange’

A Practical Example

Let’s use an example that will help us understand the meaning of verse 2. Let’s suppose that I only **speak English** and I travel down to **Curacao** in the Netherlands Antilles and need to share the gospel in their language, Papiamentu. But because I am only able to speak in only English I would not be able to communicate the gospel. So the **Holy Spirit gives me** the **instantaneous and miraculous** ability to speak the dialect of **Papiamentu**. That would be the gift of tongues.

But suppose that just to **show off** my gift, I stand up at **Fresno Central** the following Sabbath and begin rattling off my sermon in Papiamentu. **Who would understand me?** No one, although I am speaking a known human dialect!

“In the Spirit”

What does Paul mean by speaking **in the Spirit**? The answer is not hard to find. The gift of tongues is a **gift of the Holy Spirit** and when one speaks in tongues he is **speaking in the Spirit**.

God would understand

If I was speaking to **Fresno Central** in Papiamentu, would **God understand me**? Of course He would because He gave me the ability to speak Papiamentu in the first place! But the **church would not benefit** from this.

Mysteries in the Spirit

But what is meant by speaking **mysteries** ‘in the Spirit’? The word mystery in the writings of Paul does **not have the same connotation** as it does for us today. By ‘mystery’ we understand some **secret, esoteric** information that unknown to the common person; but this is not what Paul meant.

We must allow **Paul to explain Paul**. In the writings of Paul the word mystery is linked with the **preaching of the gospel**. The gospel is the mystery **hidden from ages** past but now **revealed** by the preaching of the gospel to those who listen (I Corinthians 2:1-10)

Ephesians 6:18- 20:

“. . . praying always with all prayer and supplication **in the Spirit**, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints and for me, that **utterance** may be **given to me**, that I may **open my mouth** boldly to make known the **mystery** of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may **speak boldly**, as I ought to speak.”

14:3:

“**But** [in contrast to the one who speaks in a tongue that the audience does not understand] he who prophesies speaks **edification** and **exhortation** and **comfort** to men.”

Prophecy is of **benefit to the church** because the church can understand what is being taught.

14:4:

“He who speaks in a tongue **edifies himself**, but he who prophesies **edifies the church**.”

If I were speaking in **Papiamento** at Fresno Central Church would I be **edifying myself**? Of course I would because our faith is strengthened **by our own words**. But would I be benefiting the church? Of course not!

Ellen White explains that when we speak we are **persuaded by our own words**:

“But the words are more than an indication of character; they have **power to react** on the character. Men are **influenced by their own words**.” DA, p. 323

How about most of you? Would I be **edifying** any of you? Of course not because none of **you understand Papiamento**! None of the gifts of the Spirit are given for mere self-edification. They are all given for the benefit of the **entire church body**.

14:5:

“I **wish** you all spoke with tongues, but **even more** that you prophesied; for he who prophesies **is greater** than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he **interprets**, that the church may **receive edification**.”

Prophecy is **more important** than the gift of tongues. Paul wished that all could speak in tongues but he himself knew that not all were called to prophesy. Tongues must be **intelligible** in order to edify the church.

14:6:

In order to **benefit the church**, my speech **must be understood**:

*“But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, **what shall I profit** you unless I speak to you either by **revelation**, by **knowledge**, by **prophesying**, or by **teaching**?”*

14:7:

In verses 7-11 the apostle is going to provide **three illustrations** from the world of communication to get the point across **that when I make sounds** with my mouth, their **meaning** must be **intelligible** or **comprehensible** to the **listener**:

Example #1: The **Harp or flute**

*“Even things without life, whether **flute or harp**, when they make a sound, unless they **make a distinction** in the sounds, how will it be known **what is piped or played**?”*

The tune that is played on the harp or flute **must be intelligible** to the listener.

14:8:

*“For if **the trumpet** makes an **uncertain sound**, who will prepare for battle?”*

Example #2: The **Trumpet**: Illustrate with **taps**, **reverie** and **charge**

14:9:

*“So likewise you, unless you utter by **the tongue** words **easy to understand**, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.”*

14:10, 11:

Example #3: Communication among **nations**. **These are real languages of the world but if I speak in English at a Japanese convention no one will understand me!!**

*“There are, it may be, so many **kinds of languages** in the world and none of them is without **significance [meaning]**.¹¹ Therefore, if I do not know **the meaning** of the language **[that a person is speaking]**, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.”*

Verse 12:

*“Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the **edification of the church** that you seek to excel.”*

Paul once again emphasizes that the purpose of the gift is the **edification of the church** and not personal **self-edification**!

14:13-17: Paul is writing about the effect that praying in tongues has upon others. His focus is not on the effect of tongues upon himself but upon others.

“Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue [given by the Holy Spirit] pray that he may interpret [you might be able to give the interpretation].¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue [language unknown by the congregation], my spirit prays [because the Holy Spirit has given the gift], but my understanding is unfruitful.¹⁵ What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit [that is in tongues which is a gift of the Holy Spirit], and I will also pray with the understanding [by interpreting what the prayer says]. I will sing with the spirit [in a tongue which the Holy Spirit has given me], and I will also sing with the understanding [interpreting the tongue that the Spirit has given me].¹⁶ Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit [in a tongue given by the Holy Spirit without interpretation], how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? [because you are speaking in a foreign language]¹⁷ For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.”

14:18:

“I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all. . .”

The Apostle Paul spoke in tongues more than all the Corinthians. And why would Paul need to speak in tongues more than all of the believers? Simply because he was the apostle sent to the uttermost parts of the earth.

14:19:

“. . . yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.”

14:20: Grow up!

“Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.”

14:21, NKJV: Clearly Paul is speaking about languages spoken somewhere on planet earth

“In the law it is written: ‘With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,’ says the Lord.”

14:21, NIV:

“Through men of strange [eteroglossois] tongues [strange for whom?], and through the lips of foreigners [the Assyrians] I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me,” says the Lord.

Isaiah was speaking about the invasion of the Assyrians into Judah and they would speak a language that the Hebrews did not understand.

Isaiah 28:11 is quoted in **1 Corinthians 14:21**:

“For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people.”

14:22-25:

“Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you [he is converted as at Pentecost].”

1 Corinthians 14:20-22: tongues are a sign for unbelievers. In what sense is this true? If I was an unbeliever who speaks English and I go into a church and 200 people are simultaneously speaking each in a different language this would be a sign of mass confusion and the unbeliever would be turned off to the message. But if an unbeliever heard me speak Chinese in an English speaking church he would be impressed!

The problem in Corinth is that everyone was using the gift of tongues to show off and not for reaching unbelievers.

In 1 Corinthians 14:22-25 the purpose of the gift is described as evangelistic, not for self-edification. The purpose is to get the unbeliever to worship God, not to exhibit or enhance your own spirituality.

Both Mark 16:17 and **1 Corinthians 14:22** state that tongues are a sign: Tongues were a sign at Pentecost. What was the purpose of the sign? It was to persuade people that what was spoken by the sign maker was true. The sign of tongues along with Peter’s message led to the conversion of 3000 unbelievers on the Day of Pentecost!

Interpretation of Tongues

- Paul covers this subject in **1 Corinthians 14:5, 13, 26, 27, 28**
- Interpretation of tongues is also a spiritual gift (12:10, 30)
- In Acts 9:36 the word ‘interpret’ is explained as the art of translation:

“At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha [Hebrew] which is translated [Greek] Dorcas.”

- **Genesis 42:23:**

*“But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an **interpreter.**”*

- **Daniel 5:26-28:**

*“This is the **interpretation** of each word. Mene: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; Tekel: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; Peres: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”*

- In **Acts 2 no translation was needed** because the apostles were speaking the languages of the nations that were present.

Regulating Principles in the Worship Service

In the interest of **not turning away** the unbelievers who might come to church Paul lays down some **ground rules** for those who speak in tongues:

1 Corinthians 14:26-29, 33, 39, 40:

*“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for **edification**. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be **two or at the most three**, each **in turn**, and let **one interpret**. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him **speak to himself and to God.**”*

*“For God is not the author of **confusion** but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly **to prophesy**, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done **decently and in order.**”*

- For the **edification** of the church (14:26)
- Only **two or three** speak (14:27)
- By course, that is, **one at a time** (14:27)
- With **translation** (14:27)
- Keep **silent** if no translation (14:28)
- Everything must be done **decently and in order** (14:40, 33).
- This is a command for **all of the churches**

If the gift of tongues is the ability to speak in a heavenly language that is spoken nowhere on earth, how do we test it to make sure that it is genuine? If the message is interpreted, how do we know that the interpretation is true? How do you know that the interpreter is not simply inventing some message? There has to be an external test. Take for example Kenneth Copland.

At a recent convention he blessed the pope in a language that no one understood. How do you test this? Do you simply trust that what he said is a heaven imparted tongue?

Test of Spirituality: Fruit not Gift

Many charismatic groups believe that having the gift of tongues is a test of spirituality. Members are even made to feel guilty because they do not speak in tongues. They are told that if they do not speak in tongues, they do not have the Holy Spirit.

According to Jesus the test of your spirituality is not in having the gifts of the Spirit but in having the fruit of the Spirit in your life.

The gift and the fruit are related because they both come from the same source but they are different.

In Matthew 7:21-23 we find a group that wanted to be accepted on the basis of their gifts instead of their fruit. Their problem was anomias.

"Not everyone who says to Me: 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Luke 6:46-49 links 7:21-23 with 7:24ff:

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Galatians 5:19-23: Law breakers and law keepers are contrasted. Beware of desiring the power instead of the character.

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Ezekiel 36:25-27: Having the Holy Spirit **leads to obedience**

*“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a **new heart** and put a **new spirit** within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put **My Spirit within you** and cause you to **walk** in My statutes, and you will **keep** My judgments and do them.”*

Romans 6:22: The fruit is holiness

*“But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your **fruit to holiness**, and the end, everlasting life.”*

Matthew 3:10: John spoke about the **Holy Spirit and fruit**

*“And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear **good fruit** is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

Acts 5:32: The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey him

“And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

John 14:15, 16: Love, commandments, Holy Spirit together. It is not the Holy Spirit or the law. It is both.

*“If you love Me, keep My commandments. **And** I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.”*

John 15:2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16:

*“Every branch in Me that does not **bear fruit** He takes away; and every branch that **bears fruit** He prunes, that it may bear **more fruit**. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot **bear fruit** of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, **bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing. By this My Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit**; so you will be My disciples. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and **bear fruit**, and that **your fruit** should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.”*

If you are **connected with Jesus** you will bear fruit. You can say that you are connected to the vine but if you have **no fruit it is a false pretense**. So in the end it is all about a **relationship**. If you have one with Jesus, **you will live like He did**.

Matthew 21:19: Fig tree made great pretensions to piety but had no fruit.

“And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, “Let no fruit grow on you ever again.” Immediately the fig tree withered away.”



THE SECRETS OF PENTECOST

#10 – ARE YOU PERSECUTABLE?

Introduction

The title of our study today is: “*Are you Persecutable?*” You might think: “What a strange title for a sermon!” In fact, spell-check on my computer alerted me with red underlining that such a word does not even exist in the dictionary!

I could have called my sermon today: Chain reaction because we are going to study seven inseparable sequential events in Acts 1-5, each event impacting and leading to the next.

Seven steps in our Study

- The condition of the Apostles before Christ’s passion
- The active wait of the apostles for the outpouring of the power
- The reception of the power
- Speaking boldly with the power
- Incredible church growth as a result of the preaching with power
- Satan’s loss of his subjects by the thousands because of the preaching with power
- Persecution and joy for the privilege of suffering for the name

Step #1: A Group of Misfits

Let’s examine the agendas and attitudes of the disciples before Jesus’ death:

Violent: James and John (sons of thunder) suggested that the Samaritan villages be destroyed for not allowing Jesus to pass through them. This is how they would have ruled if they had been installed on the right and on the left of Jesus.

Luke 9:53-54:

“But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?””

Serving for reward: The disciples were constantly concerned about the **reward they would receive** for leaving all to serve Jesus. Their attitude was: "We have left it all, what's in it for us?"

Matthew 19:27:

*"Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore **what shall we have?**"*

Concerned about their own dignity and status:

John 13:6, 8:

"Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" "You shall never wash my feet."

Struggle over position and power: They were concerned about who would be the **greatest** and occupy the highest position in the kingdom

Mark 9:33, 34:

*"Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves **who would be the greatest.**"*

Desire for the highest position: The **mother of James and John** was put up to it by her sons because Jesus then asked them if they were able to drink the cup and be able to be baptized with the baptism to which they replied 'yes'

Matthew 20:20-28:

"And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

Self-preservation: The disciples were concerned about **saving their own lives** when they forsook Jesus in the Garden

Mark 14:50:

"And they all forsook him, and fled."

Embarrassment: Peter was embarrassed **to be identified** with Jesus

Mark 14:71:

*"Then he began to **curse** and **swear**, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"*

Summary: Each disciple was looking out for number one. Each had their own personal agenda. They were looking out for their own lives, their own reputation, their own self-interest, their own position and their own financial security.

The disciples were radically different from one another:

- **Simon the Zealot:** A terrorist
- **Judas:** a shrewd administrator who had a high opinion of himself and thought of the others as ignoramuses
- **Matthew:** A hated tax collector
- **James and John:** Sons of Thunder with a short fuse
- **Peter:** Outspoken. A violent and foul mouthed fisherman who put his tongue in fourth gear before putting his brain in first gear.
- **Thomas:** the philosopher who doubted what he could not see

What a combination of misfits! Could all of these be united into one body? Impossible, you might say!

Jesus Prayed for Unity

Yet Jesus on Thursday evening prayed in Gethsemane that they would become one in mind, heart and action.

John 17:20-23:

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

Step #2: Active Wait for the Power

The key to success is not found in working first but in actively waiting. The disciples in the ten days before Pentecost were not merely sitting around and waiting. They were doing something while they waited!!

Matthew 28:19-20: All power had been given to Jesus by His Father but the disciples needed to wait to receive the power from Jesus to be witnesses:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."

Acts 1:4, 8: Jesus told His disciples to wait for the power.

*"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, **but to wait** for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

John 20:21-23: Jesus gave the disciples the emptying Spirit on the day of His resurrection before Pentecost. It is impossible to fill what is already full:

*"So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He **breathed on them**, and said to them, "Receive **the Holy Spirit**. If you forgive the sins of any, they are [**have been**] forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are [**have been**] retained."*

Ten Days before Pentecost

Something highly unusual happened among the disciples during those ten days between the ascension and Pentecost. What happened?

Acts 1:14: Active in prayer and supplication

*"These all **continued** with **one accord** in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers."*

*"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were **all** with **one accord** in one place."*

Acts 2:42: Persevered in doctrine, communion, breaking bread and prayer.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Acts 2:45: Got rid of their property when they saw a need.

Their focus had entirely shifted from self to Christ. Their time, talents, money, strength was now invested to save souls.

Acts 2:46, 47: Persevered as one and went to the temple each day and celebrated meetings in homes with simplicity of heart.

*"So continuing **daily** with **one accord** in the **temple**, and **breaking bread** from house to house, they ate their food with **gladness and simplicity of heart**,⁴⁷ **praising God** and **having favor** with all the people. **And** the Lord **added to the church daily** those who were being saved."*

Center of focus changed from self to Jesus: They all had one Lord, one heartbeat, one focus. Their center of attention had shifted from self to Jesus and others.

10 days before Pentecost they were praying, studying, ironing out their differences and coming into unity. They were one body with many members coming together in unity

Step #3: Receiving the Power

Holy Spirit was poured out without measure (Acts 2:1-4) and they were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. They received the gift of tongues to share the gospel:

Acts 2:1-4:

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Step #4: The Preaching Jesus with Power

Peter preached one sermon on the Day of Pentecost and this one sermon led to the conversion and baptism of 3000 souls. This was not the thousand days of reaping but the day of reaping thousands.

They apostles were now fearless:

Acts 4:13:

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated [agrammatos] and untrained [idiotes] men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”

Acts 4:19-20:

“But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

Acts 4:29, 31:

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Step #5: The Results: Thousands were Converted

Acts 1:15: 120

*“And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about **a hundred and twenty**).”*

Acts 2:41, 42: 3000

*“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about **three thousand souls** were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

Acts 4:4: 5000

*“However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about **five thousand**.”*

Acts 4:32: Multitude

*“Now the **multitude** of those who **believed** were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.”*

Acts 5:14: Multitudes

*“And believers were **increasingly added** to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.”*

Acts 6:7: Number of priests and people

*“Then the word of God spread, and the **number** of the disciples **multiplied greatly** in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”*

Acts 9:31: Churches multiply

*“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were **multiplied**.”*

Acts 14:1: Great multitude in Iconium

*“Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a **great multitude** both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.”*

Acts 21:20: Many myriads

*“And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how **many myriads** of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law.”*

They **no longer cared** for money, power, reputation, dignity, position or life itself. Their center of focus was upon proclaiming Jesus!

Acts of the Apostles, p. 48:

*“What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost? The **glad tidings** of a risen Savior were carried to the **uttermost parts** of the inhabited world. As the disciples proclaimed the message of redeeming grace, hearts yielded to the power of this message. The church beheld **converts flocking to her from all directions**. **Backsliders** were **reconverted**. Sinners united with believers in seeking the pearl of great price. Some who had been the **bitterest opponents** of the gospel became its champions.”*

And they had no **mimes, concerts, dramas, magic shows, contemporary Christian music to attract the crowds** but they had **Jesus** the **Word and the Spirit!**

Step #6: Satan was losing his Subjects

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings, p. 29:

*“His **unlikeness to the world** provoked the bitterest hostility. Because He would give no license for the **exercise of the evil passions of our nature**, He aroused the **fiercest opposition and enmity**. So it is with **all who will live godly** in Christ Jesus. Between righteousness and sin, love and hatred, truth and falsehood, there is an irrepressible conflict. When one presents the love of Christ and the beauty of holiness, he is **drawing away the subjects** of Satan's kingdom, and the prince of evil is **aroused to resist it**. Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ. The character of the persecution changes with the times, **but the principle**--the spirit that underlies it--is the same that has slain the chosen of the Lord ever since the days of Abel.”*

Step #7: Persecution followed

The Great Controversy, p. 46:

*“The early Christians were indeed a **peculiar people**. Their **blameless deportment** and **unswerving faith** were a continual reproof that disturbed the sinner's peace. Though **few in numbers, without wealth, position, or honorary titles**, they were a **terror to evildoers** wherever their **character and doctrines** were known. **Therefore** they were hated by the wicked, even as Abel was hated by the ungodly Cain. For the same reason that Cain slew Abel, did those who sought to throw off the restraint of the Holy Spirit, put to death God's people. It was for the same reason that the Jews rejected and crucified the Savior--because the **purity and holiness of His character** was a constant rebuke to their selfishness and corruption. From the days of Christ until now His faithful disciples have excited the hatred and opposition of those who love and follow the ways of sin.”*

Sequence of events in Acts 3-5

Acts 3: A paralytic was healed by Peter and John

Acts 4:3: Peter and John were arrested and held in custody overnight

Acts 4:8-13: Peter and John were taken before the Sanhedrin and Peter spoke these words:

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Acts 4:13: They had been with Jesus

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated [agrammatoi] and untrained [idiotai] men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus."

Acts 4:20: The leaders deliberated among themselves and then commanded Peter and John not to speak in the name of Jesus. Peter answered:

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Acts 4:21-30: The religious leaders threatened and released Peter and John and they went to their own and rendered a report

Acts 4:31: The believers then prayed:

"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness."

Chapter 5: The disciples are preaching and healing again and are arrested and put in jail but the angel let them out and commanded them to preach in the temple court. Talk about adding insult to injury!!

Peter and John were arrested once again and taken before the Sanhedrin and the high priest said: *"Did we not command you not to preach in the name of Jesus?"* to which Peter answered: *"We ought to obey God rather than men."*

Acts 5:33:

"When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them."

Gamaliel then gave his wise advice

Acts 5:41, 42:

*“So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were **counted worthy to suffer shame** for His name. And **daily in the temple**, and in **every house**, they **did not cease teaching and preaching** Jesus as the Christ.”*

*“The history of the early church testified to the fulfillment of the Savior's words. The powers of **earth and hell** arrayed themselves against Christ in the person of His followers. **Paganism foresaw** that should the gospel triumph, her temples and altars **would be swept away**; therefore she summoned her forces **to destroy Christianity**. The **fires of persecution** were kindled. Christians were stripped of their possessions and driven from their homes. They “endured a great fight of afflictions.” Hebrews 10:32. They “had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment.” Hebrews 11:36. Great numbers sealed their testimony **with their blood**. Noble and slave, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, were alike **slain without mercy**. These persecutions, beginning under Nero about the time of the martyrdom of Paul, continued with greater or less fury for centuries. Christians were **falsely accused** of the most dreadful crimes and declared to be the cause of great calamities--**famine, pestilence, and earthquake**. As they became the **objects of popular hatred** and suspicion, informers stood ready, for the sake of gain, to betray the innocent. They were condemned as **rebels against the empire**, as **foes of religion**, and **pests to society**. Great numbers were thrown to wild beasts or burned alive in the amphitheaters. Some were crucified; others were covered with the skins of wild animals and thrust into the arena to be torn by dogs. Their punishment was often made the chief entertainment at public fetes. Vast multitudes assembled to **enjoy the sight** and greeted their dying agonies with laughter and applause.” GC, pp. 39, 40*

Paul was beheaded

Peter was crucified head down

Polycarp bishop of Smyrna:

“For 86 years I have been His slave, and He has done me no wrong; how can I blaspheme my king who has saved me?”

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch:

“Let me be eaten by the wild beasts through whom I can reach the presence of God. I am God's wheat and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts so that I may be found pure bread of Christ. Instead, coax the wild beasts to be my grave, and to leave none of my body, so that when I have fallen asleep I may not be burdensome to anyone.”

Tertullian:

“The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed.”

Step #7: Application to us

II Timothy 3:12: All who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution

“**Yes [indeed]**, and all **[no exceptions]** who **desire [choose to]** to **live godly** in **Christ Jesus** **[how it can be done]** **will [not might]** suffer persecution.”

John 17:14:

“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”

James 4:4:

*“Adulterers and adulteresses! **[spiritual adultery]** Do you not know that **friendship with the world** is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”*

1 John 2:15-17:

***Do not love the world or the things in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”*

Worldliness means that you are more concerned with the **here and now** than with the **sweet by and by**. It means that you are **earth-focused**. The **clothes** we wear, the **houses** we live, the **cars** we drive, the **entertainment** we choose, how we **spend our time [do we have time for work, play, television, shopping, etc., but little or none for Bible study, prayer, coming to church on time, coming to prayer meeting, witnessing]**, how we use our **money**, how we use **our strength** reveals where **our heart is**.

GC 48:

*“There is another and more important question that should engage the attention of the churches of today. The apostle Paul declares that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” **2 Timothy 3:12**. **Why** is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The **only reason** is that the church has **conformed to the world's standard** and therefore **awakens no opposition**. The religion which is current in our day is not of the **pure and holy character** that marked the Christian faith in the days of **Christ and His apostles**. It is only because of the spirit of **compromise with sin**, because the **great truths** of the word of God are so **indifferently regarded**, because there is so little **vital godliness** in the church, that Christianity is apparently so popular with the world. Let there be a **revival** of the faith and power of the **early church**, and the spirit of persecution will be **revived**, and the fires of persecution will be **rekindled**.” **GC**, p. 48*

Satan must know that this revival is **right around the corner** because he is **tearing the world apart** and causing a **counterfeit revival** even in Adventist churches to eventually **blame a revived and reformed** people. Why can't this revival and reformation begin **here** and **now**?



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