

## The Pivotal Day in the Plan of God

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 6/1/2019

Pentecost is on Sunday, June 9, 2019

Pentecost shows that with God's Holy Spirit, we will be like God (1John 3:2). This is an incredible truth – lost on so many – that we are privileged to know that truth. Let us understand that when God gave His holy days, He gave us a layout of how His Plan for mankind is going to be worked out, over the course of history. Each of the Holy Days that we find in Leviticus 23, have an actual fulfillment on a special day. For example, even though Passover was kept by Old Testament Israel, it was not fulfilled until Jesus died on that Passover day. That was when Passover was fully come. All of the Old Testament Passovers only looked forward, in type, to the fulfillment of Passover. In the same way, Pentecost was given to Old Testament Israel. They had various names for it; they called it the Feast of weeks, Firstfruits, Feast of Harvest, and so forth.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was *fully come*, [the fulfillment of the day according to God's purposes] they were all with one accord in one place.

Pentecost pictures the harvest of spiritual sons and daughters into the Family of God, thus fulfilling the Plan of God. What was God's Plan in the very first place?

Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Pentecost is the central day in the three seasons of God's Holy Days, and it is **the pivotal day in the Plan of God**. It is of the utmost importance. The first major step in making man in His image was on that day, when God poured out His Holy Spirit on mankind.

The fall Holy days only give us the final details of how God's Plan is going to be accomplished. The Feast of Trumpets shows Christ returning, and it pictures the battles that there will be. Atonement has to do with our reconciliation with God. The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the thousand-year millennial reign of Christ. But all of this (the thousand-year millennial reign of Christ) is after sons and daughters of God have been established on this earth. Even the Last Great Day pictures all those who have never yet been brought in to the Plan of God. The Last Great Day pictures the New Heavens and the New Earth. God sent His Spirit (at Pentecost), and raised up the first of the New Testament Church of God brethren. So for the first time, in a great and magnificent way, God poured out His Spirit on many people. It was not just the 120, but on the 3,000, and on the 5,000. Then down through the centuries many others have been called.

Notice at the end of Acts 2:1, "*....they were all with one accord in one place.*"

These brethren had been preparing themselves for this day. Jesus Christ had given them many hints and clues as to the fact that something big was going to take place. Let me interject something here that the scriptures do not say, but we know that it is true. All of those who received God's Holy Spirit, on that first Pentecost day, were repentant. Before that they were called of God, and they had accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Without those steps of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, no one can receive the Spirit of God. God does not bestow His Spirit on the unwilling, but only on those who are willing to be righteous.

Acts 1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

This gives us a general idea of how many people were there. There were not 3,000 or 5,000 there. Of the many, many that Jesus healed the majority of them were not there. Jesus Christ certainly healed way more than 120 people. But they were not followers of Jesus Christ, and they did not believe in living their lives as He taught.

Acts 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, [tornado sound] and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Up until this time, man, without God's Holy Spirit, did not have an understanding of the spiritual workings of God, and the way that He works in an invisible way through His Spirit. So this day is going to have the manifestations of physical things that will help the disciples, and those who are in the New Testament church, to understand that this is not just a regular Feast day, something really big is taking place. When this was being written, and it was probably penned by Luke, there was probably a very good general understanding of what that sound sounded like. It was not just a little breeze blowing, and it was not just like someone dropping a utensil on the floor, but it was *a mighty rushing wind*. Just like the place was going to come apart at the seams.

So there is this sound and light spectacle, that is associated with this great miracle, that is taking place.

Act 2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

The words fail greatly to describe what appeared to them. I have tried for years to understand what is meant by this "*cloven tongues like as of fire*." It wasn't fire, because if it was, it would say cloven tongues of fire, but it says it was "like" fire. So it was something that was different and it was somehow split, and it was not solid. But we do not know if it was vertical, horizontal or if it was spread out broadly. This word tongues carries the connotation of different languages, and this is the exact same word that we will see, in a little while, when we find out that they received the gift of foreign languages.

So there is this split language, split tongues, and what was it? It was something that was the cause of great excitement, and it sat upon each of them. God was indicating that this was not some kind of broad based thing, or that it was a general kind of thing where you could tap into it, or not tap into it. It individually came to each one of the people there. Just like when you and I were baptized, and hands were laid on us. God's Spirit comes to us individually.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This we understand, but the world is confused about it. They just spoke in other (foreign) languages. They spoke perfectly so that people that knew those languages could understand them. God's Spirit worked differently in the different people. It says in I Corinthians 12, that we are all given individual gifts. They are different, and they vary greatly, and they are for the profit of everybody. We are not supposed to say, "Wow, I have this great gift that is going to put me head and shoulders above everyone else." No, the spiritual gifts are for the profit of everyone. For anyone to hoard their spiritual gift is blasphemy. That is misusing the thing that God intends for us to use for the benefit of all of the church.

Acts 2:5-6 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language (dialect).

This is talking about outsiders hearing these 120 disciples and mixed brethren, speaking in foreign languages that they heretofore did not know. So people were at Jerusalem from all over the Mediterranean, and distant lands, keeping the Feast of Pentecost.

Let us go back to Leviticus 23, brethren, and look at what God said about the Feast of Pentecost. This is a verse that we know, but having meat in due season tells us that we should go back and establish, on this day, the directions and the meaning of this Feast day.

Leviticus 23:15-16 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; [Pentecost] and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

Leviticus 23:17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; [sin] *they are* the firstfruits unto the LORD.

So here is part of the offering in the Old Testament days of Pentecost. What are those offerings going to do? They are going to point, eventually, to the church. You and I have one major difference from Jesus Christ. If we look at the offering that represented Jesus Christ, we will see that it was this fine flour mixed with *oil*. Jesus Christ had God's Holy Spirit (oil) without measure. But we come from a different source, we have sin (leaven).

Notice that it says, "*they (the loaves) shall be baked with leaven.*" Leaven represents sin, and yet because of the cleansing power of Jesus Christ, of His blood, and His Spirit, they (the people that these loaves represent) are the firstfruits to the LORD. Jesus Christ is the firstfruit to the LORD, and we then are put into that same category. The people of the Old Testament could not grasp these things. Brethren, we are rich to understand these concepts.

Leviticus 23:21 And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, *that* it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work *therein: it shall be* a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

That means that we come together, and we keep this day holy. We do not go to work, like a regular day.

As we read along here, brethren, we will see that there are some very interesting instructions from God. God has a concern for others. We have had, all too often in God's church, a concept that we have been called into God's church and that makes us very special, and we are better than the people in the world. That is dangerous quicksand, brethren.

In this next verse, look at the heart of God, and look at the mind of God. We are going to cover verse 22, because God says that **we shall be like Him**. We find here that God is concerned for the weak, and He is concerned for the needy. It is strange to me that right here, in these instructions for keeping the Holy days; we are going to throw in a little agricultural definition.

Leviticus 23:22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

True, the Feast of Pentecost is a harvest, and ultimately it means the harvest of those who have God's Holy Spirit. The harvest that we are looking for is having your incredible human potential fulfilled, being in the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ, as the God of the Old Testament, is talking about a real physical harvest. Today, when you see a big tractor pulling a big implement sometimes twenty eight feet wide or wider, when he gets to the corner of a field and makes the turn, he automatically leaves that little corner untouched as he cannot get over there. That is what I think of when God says, "*thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field.*" He is saying that there are places where the grain is going to fall over there between a couple of trees, or close to the ditch, and he is instructing them to leave it. Right there we are given a clear picture of how God thinks, and how God acts. He cares about the poor, and He cares about the stranger. Jesus Christ is not so far off that He cannot be touched with our feelings. He does feel our infirmities – the scripture says so.

Exodus 19:17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether [base] part of the mount.

I always find this almost humorous, but we would be in the same category. The people were scared to go near Mount Sinai, because they had heard the rumblings of God, and saw the lightening and everything. They were fearful, as it was quite a spectacle. Again, God was driving it home that there is something extraordinary that is going on here.

Exodus 19:18-20 And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, [volcano?] because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

This must have been quite a sight. There was something big, and something new that was going on.

God is punctuating the day, and He was emphasizing that He was doing something very special. He wanted to accentuate, or draw attention to what He was doing. He could have called Moses off to a quiet place and given him the Ten Commandments. But then Moses would have had to get their attention. This had everybody's attention.

God gave the children of Israel His Law, on the day of Pentecost. If you count the days, you will see that this took place on the Feast of Pentecost. Some people will say that you cannot exactly prove that by the Bible. All that you can tell is that it is really close. Maybe He did it the day before, or the day after, Pentecost. That is not the way that we find God working.

When Jesus Christ was baptized by John, he did not need to be, because He had no sin. He did it so that all righteousness would be fulfilled. That is how God works. He always does the right thing, at the right time. So He gave them His Law. Let's understand that there is a very close connection between God's Law and God's Spirit. You cannot keep God's Law without God's Spirit. God's Law shows how God is. We shall be like Him. We need to understand God's Law. We are told, in the New Testament, that God is going to write His Law in our hearts. It is going to be a natural part of us; we will naturally not kill, or steal. Our nature then will be a spiritual nature, and it is now, for those of us who are led by God's Holy Spirit.

Brethren this world does not know, or believe, the Ten Commandments of God. The intent of the commandments of God is to help us to become like Him. **We are to become like God.**

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

Let's get this straight. This is not some other God, but this is the God who if he had not acted there would be no Israelite nation that is on their way to the Promised Land.

Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

This world does not know Jesus Christ, and they have put everything in front of Jesus Christ. That would be the things that they decide to do on Monday morning, all the way through the week.

Exodus 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

So what did mankind come along and do? They made images of Dagon the fish gods, and they carved images of all of the so-called saints, Jesus Christ, and everything else. They did exactly what God said not to do. Brethren, we are to have the mind of God, the spiritual nature of God, and that cannot be depicted by wood or stone, or anything that is graven.

Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God...

God made us, He is our Creator, and we are to look to Him and Him alone.

Exodus 20:5 ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

This bothered me, to some extent, when I first came into the church of God. I thought that seemed unfair. When somebody does something wrong God is going to be spiteful and hateful for four generations? That is not what this is talking about at all. It is talking about how long it takes to get an ingrained sin out of a people, out of a family. You might use the example of alcoholism. If the parents are alcoholics, it hurts that generation, and then it hurts this current generation, and then the grandchildren are hurt. They do not get to go to college if there is no money, or direction, in the home. It takes the third and the fourth generation of trying to get that hurt and that pain out.

That is how bad sin is. God wants us to be like Him. We are not to sin in the first place, and we are to prosper and have peace.

Exodus 20:6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Things go good when we do things God's way. If we put on the mind of God, if we have the heart of God, if we have His commandments written in our hearts, and we want God's way, things will go good.

Exodus 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

A lot of people think that this commandment means, "do not cuss." Yes, it has that connotation of not using God's name in cursing. But this commandment is violated by people who say that they speak for God, that they represent God, and that they are the only one who has the mantle of authority from God. That is taking God's name in vain too. God reaches to places that we do not know. Any time and anywhere on the face of this earth that anyone follows the Law of God, if they are generous and take care of the poor, there is a blessing that follows. Somebody could be in Timbuktu and tithe, and there is going to be a blessing that follows that. They do not have to know our group, or some other group. Blessings come directly from God, and they accrue to whoever keeps the name of God.

Exodus 20:8 ...Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

That should be so straightforward, but the world will do anything to get out of keeping the Sabbath day. The "Christian" world moved everything to Sunday, and to pagan worship. The Muslim world moved their day of worship to Friday. They will not keep the Sabbath, nor keep it holy.

Exodus 20:8-10 ...Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

If someone in the Church of God has a business, they should not take the Sabbath off, and then have their non-believing employee open up the store for him. God wants all flesh to rest, even the cattle. Why is it this way? It is because God gave us an example, even from creation.

Exodus 20:11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

What it means here, is that God made a spiritual creation. The Sabbath is the beginning of the spiritual creation. The first six days are physical, and they are work days. But the seventh day has spiritual meaning to it.

Exodus 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

In the New Testament we read that that is the first commandment with promise. It says, "*that your days will be long upon the land.*" This has to do with society and with peaceful relationships. Not just amongst family members, that is not what this is limited to. This has to do with honoring the elderly, honoring your society and following the laws, and building not just your little sub-division, but your town and your nation. This is the foundational commandment for society itself.

Exodus 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.

That is another short one. Look at the killing that goes on in the world. Almost every President that comes along thinks that it is good to kill, and that includes mass killings. What about fighting among us? What about arguments among us? Jesus Christ came and expanded that commandment. It is not enough to just not beat someone to within an inch of their life, but you do not have strife with people and you strive to be, with all of your heart, a peacemaker. Bring peace, do not always dig up the dirt, and start a war. James has more to say about that. What causes all of these wars? It is us being greedy and lustful for things that are inordinate.

Exodus 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Again, this is between a husband and a wife, but it has to do with relationships, and it has to do with covenants. It has to do with covenants between God and man. Indeed, when God explains this commandment being broken, He is speaking about the nation of Israel going after other gods, and leaving Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament. That was a major violation of this commandment.

Exodus 20:15 Thou shalt not steal.

Do things orderly, and do not take things that are not yours. Work for your bread and eat your bread, and God will provide all of your needs.

Exodus 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

What is truth today? This world does not know truth.

Exodus 20:17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbor's.

This is one that is violated all of the time. A company hires a young man, and spends a lot of money training and teaching him, and then the competition hires him out from under that company. Those things are ungodly, and you do not do that. You don't say, "Well everybody else is doing it, so I can do it". We keep the Law of God, and it should be written on our hearts. We shall be like Him. This is what God says not to do, so we do not find reasons to go and do what God says not to do.

Exodus 20:18-19 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

You speak to us, because it is just too powerful coming from God.

Exodus 20:20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces that ye sin not.

He is just trying to get your attention, so that you start to live according to the Law of God.

We will now look at a time that is about three and a half years after the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has died, He has been buried, and He has been resurrected, after three days and three nights in the grave.

We would think that the apostles would be fairly knowledgeable at this point, having been instructed by Jesus Christ, day and night for all of that time.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled...

"*All things must be fulfilled.*" You see God has a plan, and He is not doing things haphazardly. The Feast days show us what is fulfilled, very clearly.

Luke 24:44 ...which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

So Jesus Christ said that 'every last detail that you find in those three areas of the Bible, concerning me, will come to pass, they will be fulfilled'. These three divisions of the Bible all work together. We are taught a little here, and a little there. All three of these areas told of Jesus Christ, and what He would do.

Luke 24:45 Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, [tied together with the coming of the Holy Spirit]

This is all tied together with the coming of God's Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

When you and I were called, the same thing happened. God's way began to "make sense," because before that, it was strange and it was unheard of. We started to think and reason as God does. It is the working of God's Holy Spirit that makes us start to think and reason, and be like He is.

Luke 24:46-51 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, [it was not a breakdown in God's Plan – it was supposed to happen that way] and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

That gives me goose bumps just to think of it. Today we are calloused, because we have watched Star Trek. Can you imagine what it was like for them, standing there with Jesus Christ? Remember how they felt when Jesus Christ died; they grabbed Him by the feet and held on to Him, and didn't want to let Him go. To see Jesus Christ departing like this must have been emotionally devastating.

Luke 24:52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

You worship only God. They knew that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and that He was God.

Luke 24:53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

They did stay at Jerusalem, and they were fasting, praying and repenting. How do we know that? Because they had received the Holy Spirit, and they had repented.

Back up to Luke 24:44, where we talked about those three divisions in verse 44, "*which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*"

Theologians came up with the term "tripartite" – it is supposed to make you shiver with amazement when you hear theologians use phrases like that.

Brethren, that is of no profit to us at all, and that is not what our faith is about, using those kinds of strange words.

Jesus told us that the Old Testament is broken up into these three basic parts.

A little child can count to three, there is nothing mysterious about that. Jesus said, "*And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*"

Jesus Christ told us not to be uppity, uppity in that kind of thing, but to be down to earth.

The Word of God, described in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, presents to us insight into the mind of God, the actions of God, the character of God. We even see the personality of God, when we have these things that God says. It is like when He says, don't go out there and just pick every last grain out of the field.

We see that God is generous, caring and compassionate, and it gives us good insight into the thoughts and the depth of God.

When He mentions the Law of Moses, that tells us how to relate with God, how to relate with each other, and how to relate with society.

God's Laws are not harsh. That is the first thing that the Protestant world wants to teach people. They say that God's Law is so harsh and so burdensome. The God of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ, was not harsh.

The entire universe operates under perfect law. More than anything, the Law defines what God has established, and what works, and what does not work.

You can just take a simple physical law like gravity. If you didn't have gravity then you wouldn't stick to the earth, everything would fly away. Brethren, without spiritual law, terrible consequences will definitely take place.

Matthew 11:30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

What is it that makes us like God? Some people misquote Genesis 1:26 and they say that we are in the image of God already. We don't need changing, because Jesus Christ did it all for us. We do not need to do anything, except be true to our human nature, and true to our carnality. That is a false gospel, brethren. It says that we '*shall*' be like Him, but not yet.

Hebrews 8:10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

He is making that covenant already with the Church of God. We are the sons and daughters of God. My words do not need to be out there on the doorposts, carved in the stone, because it is going to be ingrained in each person.

1John 5:2-3 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

That defines how we love each other, not stealing or killing, or bearing false witness, or committing adultery. That is how we know that we love the children of God. It is different from the love of this world. It is not too hard not to kill, it is not too hard to worship the true God, and it is not too hard not to bear false witness, if we have God's Spirit. But without God's Spirit it is too hard.

He said that the Prophets speak of Him. That is how we know about the plan of God, as this too, tells us about what God was thinking at the time. The Prophets told us of things that were going to take place, and how they were going to take place.

And then, Jesus Christ mentions the Psalms telling us about the tenderness of Him. They show us the humanity of Jesus Christ, and His feelings for us. Brethren, "***we shall be like Him.***" We need to know what **He is like** if we are going to become like Him. Our natural body tells us to do things that Satan would have us do. Naturally and carnally, we do not do the things that are of Jesus Christ. In Psalms we see that He understands our emotions. We even see God pictured as having emotions, and He shares His emotions and His feelings with us. In Psalms, we read about God's approachability so that we can know God.

So, when Jesus was speaking to the disciples, He told them about those three parts. But now, we have also the New Testament. How much more blessed can we be? We have the Word of God in the actions of Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

To know God's wisdom is going to help us to know God. God is leading us into all of this knowledge by His Spirit, and that is what this day pictures.

Romans 11:34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?

We don't tell God what to do, but God is showing us what He is like, so that we can be like Him.

They went up on the Mount of Olives. Luke is writing about it after Jesus Christ had died.

Acts 1:2-3 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

In those forty days, Jesus taught them a lot about God, how He thinks, and how He operates. He was explaining over and over about the Kingdom of God, and trying to get their mind straight. Brethren, "*we shall be like Him.*" But let us watch how difficult and how hard it is, even for the apostles who were talking to Jesus Christ first hand, face to face. There was so much of it that was going over their heads, and they were not getting it.

Acts 1:4 And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

The promise of the Father was the Holy Spirit, which came on Pentecost. Jesus was giving them a big clue as to what was going to be taking place. But Jesus Christ was also leaving each of them a choice. He didn't say, 'By all means be at church, be at the synagogue'. There was a separation going on, even then, as to whether they were going to obey Christ. He left them a choice. Five thousand did not show up, just 120 were there.

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

He didn't nail it down, and he left it a little bit non-specific. But the apostles were still very confused.

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

That was what they were still looking for. They were thinking physically. They wanted Him to make a great and powerful nation, so that they could walk all over everybody else, and collect the taxes as they did in the days of Solomon.

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Jesus did not even explain, at that point, how different life as a Christian was going to be, compared to what they had been living all of their lives. This was still very much a time of survival of the fittest. But Jesus Christ was bringing a new way of life to His followers. Life as a Christian was going to be so different from worldly kingdoms that powered over other people. He did not explain it to the apostles, because without God's Holy Spirit to open their mind, they could not have understood it.

Do not take for granted all of the information that we have been given about the Kingdom of God on earth for a thousand years.

These people would not have the Book of Revelation for another seventy years!

Acts 1:8-11 But ye shall receive power, [*'dunamis'*] after that the Holy

Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men [*angels*] stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

It is going to be visible and spectacular when Jesus Christ comes back.

It is only with the help, and the working of God's Holy Spirit, that we shall be like Him. That is the only way that we can attain to our incredible human potential.

This day, Pentecost, pictures us becoming like God. Let us understand that this was God's total purpose in creating mankind in the first place.

1John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

We are not horses, cows, or puppies, but we are the sons of God.

1John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

Even with all of the understanding, all of the removal of fear, and all of the blessings and good things that God has given us, putting His mind and His laws into our hearts now, a great change is going to come, and **we shall be fully like Him**. We will see Him as He is. We do not yet think as God does. Brethren, we still have way too much of our carnality in us.

Isaiah 55:8 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Psalms 51:10-11 Create in me a clean heart, [not "as I am"] O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

This is not a religion "as I am," that is what the Laodicean church says: 'I am rich and increased with goods, just the way I am Lord, that's the way I am coming'. That is a Protestant concept.

That is why we need God's Holy Spirit. Paul puts it so clearly:

Romans 8:6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

We have to be like Jesus Christ, giving, loving, sharing, forgiving, kind, attentive, relating to God, and relating to our fellow man. We should not be using our power and influence over others. We should not take advantage, but be living like Christ lived.

Romans 8:7-8 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Brethren, we have a lot to overcome. But Paul gives us some hope and tells us in Romans:

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* [notice that is future tense] conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

This is a picture of this day of firstfruits. Jesus Christ the first of the firstfruits, and we, a part of that same resurrection with Jesus Christ. We are not there yet!

God has given us the scriptures, writings and teachings. He has given us the New Testament apostles; and He has even given us evangelists, pastors and teachers. It tells us in Ephesians why He did that.

Ephesians 4:12-13 For the perfecting of the saints [that is us, if we are baptized – but we only have a measure of God’s Holy Spirit], for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith [yes – that is still God’s desire], and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

But, brethren we are not like God yet. With God’s Spirit, we can become more like Jesus Christ. Each day, each month, and each year we should be becoming more like Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:9-10 For the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness and righteousness and truth; Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

We are not there yet, by a long shot.

Colossians 1:8-12, 5 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: [all creation]

We are to be like the invisible God.

2Peter 1:1, 4 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

This is what we are to be while we are on the face of this earth, among our peers. We must love one another, be patient with one another, faithful to one another.

We read here in II Peter, about how we are to act toward each other.

2Peter 1:7-10 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

You and I have to have a permit, we have to have a pass, if we are going to be in the Kingdom of God.

2Peter 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Brethren, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. We have an earnest of our inheritance with God. We are given this time and the power of God's Holy Spirit so that we shall be like Him. That is the promise of the Father.

End: The Pivotal Day in the Plan of God