

## I. GROWING IN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PENTECOST SEASON

### a. Times and seasons:

As we are approaching the season of Pentecost (Feast of Weeks or Shavuot) I would like to stir our hearts with a fuller picture of what was occurring in Acts chapter 2. My prayer is that we move into Pentecost as a spiritual family with greater revelation of *both remembering* and *bringing what God desires* of us in this upcoming season.

Pentecost marked the fiftieth day from the celebration of the Passover. It was on this day fifty that *God shared His presence and His word* with Israel marking it as the day of Pentecost. So even now on Pentecost Jews all around the world stay up all night for prayer and the reading of the Torah (the first five books of the Bible).

### b. Laboring to be in one accord for Pentecost:

One of the key markers of the community in Acts is that they were together and in one accord. I believe this speaks of a unity built around an understanding of the time and season they were in and obedience to what Jesus had commissioned them to do.

*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were **all with one accord** in one place. (Acts 2:1)*

**This points us to the context of Psalm 133.** There is a specific unity that commands a blessing from the Lord. This unity is pointing to the sanctification of Aaron and the mercy and forgiveness of Moses towards Aaron all in the season of Pentecost. This is the main point of today's session. We must labor to be in one accord for the release of the commanded blessing of a specific type of unity before the Lord.

*<sup>1</sup> Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! <sup>2</sup> It is **like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments.** <sup>3</sup> It is **like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion;** for there the LORD commanded the blessing— Life forevermore. (Ps. 133:1-3)*

*<sup>12</sup> "Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. <sup>13</sup> You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. <sup>14</sup> And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. <sup>15</sup> You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations." <sup>16</sup> Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did. (Ex. 40:12-16)*

c. **On Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) God longs for gathering and burnt sacrifice:**

God's people were called to come together in Jerusalem to (1) celebrate the harvest season of wheat and barley and to (2) bring a *burnt offering* to the Lord.

- **The early and later harvest of Pentecost moved from grain and wheat to men and women.**

By observing the 120 and then the addition of 3,000 saved that day we grasp that *the Lord was celebrating the Feast of Weeks* by showing us the end of the first harvest 120 people in an upper room obeying Him and the beginning of the next harvest of 3,000 souls saved who would receive His word and obey Him.

- **The burnt offering of Pentecost moved from an animal fully consumed to people fully consumed by God and His presence.**

The burnt offering was a fresh call to abandonment and full commitment to the Lord. The fire of the Lord would consume the offering totally as a sweet-smelling aroma before the Lord. When reading Acts chapter 2 we observe the fire resting upon God's people in the upper room that the Lord has shown us that *people became the burnt offering* and that their offering of giving all of themselves was pleasing to Him.

d. **The counting of the Omer:**

<sup>15</sup> *'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. <sup>16</sup> Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. (Lev. 23:15-16)*

The omer refers to the 49-day period between the second night of Passover (Pesach) and the holiday of Shavuot. This period marks the *beginning of the barley harvest* when, in ancient times, *Jews would bring the first sheaves to the Temple as a means of thanking God for the harvest*. The word omer literally means "sheaf" and refers to these early offerings.

In its biblical context, this counting appears only to connect the first grain offering to the offering made at the peak of the harvest. As the holiday of Shavuot became associated with the giving of the Torah, and not only with a celebration of agricultural bounty, the omer period began to symbolize the link between Passover and Shavuot.

**While Passover celebrates the initial liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, Shavuot marks the culmination of the process of liberation, when God's people became His kingdom of priests. Counting up to Shavuot reminds us of this process of moving from**

*being a slave spiritually, mentally, and emotionally to a liberated people set apart to worship God.*

## II. APPROACHING PENTECOST AND REMEMBERING HIS PRESENCE AND HIS WORD

### a. A time to remember uncharted territory:

I view the fifty days after Passover as a remembrance of God's people **going into uncharted territory with God**. Have you ever been in uncharted territory? Leaving what we know and going to places of uncharted territory with God can be unnerving especially when it includes those we love. Not knowing what is next as we journey with God can cause many things in us to manifest. **The unknown and uncharted territory is a key in understanding the season of Pentecost as we look at the story of Israel in Exodus chapters 24 through 32.**

### b. A brief overview of the Pentecost season in Exodus and Acts:

The nation of Israel is camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. God's presence is undeniable on the mountain as they and their children are placed in the desert after a great salvation. God's people had been invited to be a kingdom of priests before God and they accepted this invitation. As a nation and a special treasure of God they were now positioned to move forward to learn God's ways as kingdom of priests.

Moses, Israel's leader, was walking intimately with God. Moses was actively operating as an intercessor in-between God and His people. Moses was interceding for God's will for the people and sharing God's heart with them. Israel looked to Moses to hear God's voice.

God invited Moses up the mountain to receive instruction for the nation to function in priesthood before Him. Moses' stent on the mountain would be 40 days. Moses empowered Aaron (his brother) and other leaders to tend to Israel while he was receiving instructions on the mountain.

This time period presents the glory of the season of Pentecost. God's people were positioned by God in **a God ordained delay**.

*<sup>12</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."<sup>13</sup> So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.<sup>14</sup> And he said to the elders, "**Wait here for us until we come back to you.** Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them."*

*<sup>15</sup> Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. (Ex. 24:12-14)*

Israel was parked next to the mountain that God was on but it was a time that they were on their own apart from God speaking to them through Moses. **This is the exact position that the disciples of Jesus had found themselves at in Acts 1 and in the very same time of year as Israel at the foot of the mountain centuries later.**

Jesus was the greater Moses (intercessory messenger) for the disciples and He ascended into heaven and commissioned them to wait just like Moses ascended Mount Sinai and commissioned Israel to wait. Let's recount Acts chapter 1.

*<sup>4</sup> 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; <sup>5</sup> for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now...<sup>8</sup> 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." <sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up...(Acts 1:4-9)*

Imagine the emotions going through the disciples as Jesus ascended. If it were me, I would have probably thought or even said, "What are we going to do now! He's leaving!" This is the emotions and thoughts of Israel when Moses ascended the mountain.

*"Now when the people saw that **Moses delayed coming down** from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." (Ex. 32:1)*

- c. **Israel's statement to Aaron is significant to understand where their heart was during the delay.** Lets take a look beyond the surface level of the statement Israel made to Aaron during the delay season before Pentecost.

*"Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, **the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man** [the man represented their ability to hear God] **who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.**" (Ex. 32:1)*

**Through this statement, "Make us a god(s) that shall go before us" we come to know Israel longed for direction, provision, and hope of security from what they knew from their days in Egypt.** We know they longed for these things based on what false god from Egypt Aaron made in the "calf".

*<sup>2</sup> And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." <sup>3</sup> So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their*

ears, and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup>And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf... (Ex. 32:2-4)

Egypt had over 2,000 gods. Each god provided something different for the worshipers benefit. Aaron selected the highest of the all 2,000 gods by choosing the calf (bull). The name of this god was Apis. This was a homerun in the eyes of Aaron's peers!

*...Then they said, "THIS is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"* (Ex. 32:4)

### III. WHY DID AARON CHOOSE THE CALF?

#### a. Why Aaron made the calf instead of the 2,000 other gods of Egypt:

The people of ancient Egypt worshiped the calf god Apis because of several reasons. Here are some that give us insight of why Aaron made the calf instead of any other false god of Egypt.

1. **Apis was a gift by the god of heaven (hope):** Egypt believed that a black cow with a white diamond on it's forehead was a deliverer. When a calf of this kind was birthed, then one knew they had themselves a powerful god anointed of heaven to help the people.
2. **Apis caused fertility (provision and power):** If one worshiped the calf it would cause a blessing upon the whom. This was important for *family life* for work and productivity and *national life* for the strength of an army. If the women were producing offspring the nation had the opportunity to be wealthy and powerful against other nations.
3. **Apis provided oracles (navigation):** It was legend that if one walked by the calf god Apis at the right time they could receive an oracle about their future. This provided navigation for the nation and individuals. This speaks of guidance by divination, false counsel, and manipulation.

### IV. AARON'S ALTAR AND BOLD PROCLAMATION

<sup>5</sup>So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD." (Ex. 32:4-5)

- a. **Right but wrong:** How many times have you felt like you did the right thing, but you were wrong? This was the case with Aaron's altar. Aaron built a real altar for the use of sacrifice, intercession, and worship – but to the wrong thing and with the wrong motive.

Remember the gods of Egypt were worshiped so they could do something for the people. The more they worshiped the more the god would do for you.

- b. **False confidence:** Aaron proclaimed a feast to the Lord! This reveals to us that he thought God provided the Apis calf. Aaron was walking in a false confidence in what he thought God had provided for the nation.

## V. FULLY DISCONNECTED WITH GOD'S HEART AND HAPPY

*<sup>6</sup> Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. (Ex. 32:6)*

- a. **A domino effect of false confidence:** Aaron's false confidence in what he thought God provided had a major effect on the nation's false confidence. **It was in their false confidence they provided extravagant offerings of worship.**
- b. **A sense of relief:** By the response of feasting and playing we catch where the heart of the nation is. In their once place of panic because Moses was gone and their future uncertain, they are now at ease because "God provided for them the calf"! **The calf became their source of peace.**

## VI. THE DRAMA UNFOLDS

*<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. <sup>8</sup> **They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'**" <sup>9</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! <sup>10</sup> Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. **And I will make of you a great nation.**"*

*<sup>11</sup> Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. <sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" <sup>14</sup> So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.*

*<sup>15</sup> And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other they were written. <sup>16</sup> **Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets.***

## VII. SIN HAS CONSEQUENCES

*<sup>17</sup> And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp." <sup>18</sup> But he said: "It is not the noise of the shout of victory, Nor the noise of the cry of defeat, But the sound of singing I hear." <sup>19</sup> So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and **broke them at the foot of the mountain.** <sup>20</sup> Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he scattered it on the water and made the children of Israel drink it. (Ex. 32:17-20)*

- a. **Mercy:** The first time Moses came down the mountain with God's tablets (word) he became hot with anger towards the sin of the people. In this we see the revelation of how God feels about sin through the tablets being broken. I see this as a prophetic picture of Jesus' first coming. At the sight of sin God broke his Son.
- b. **Burned in the fire:** Moses wanted the people to know that it was not the calf that saved them and would provide direction and protection for them. So there was a corrective judgment to take the calf away in order for the people to be free from the entanglements of the calf way of life.
- c. **Made to drink:** Sin does have consequences. When we partake of sin as God's people we then have to process that sin until it is eliminated from our walk with God.

## VIII. THE SWORD OF THE LORD

*<sup>25</sup> Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies), <sup>26</sup> then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever is on the LORD's side—come to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. <sup>27</sup> And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.'" <sup>28</sup> So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. (Ex. 32:25-28)*

- a. **Pentecost was a day of the sword:** It was on the day of Pentecost that God called those who were on His side to use the sword. It was this day that the Levites chose God thus initiating their calling of ministry to God forever. This speaks to us today.
- b. **The word of the Lord through Peter:** The word spoken through Peter in Acts 2: It was the word of the Lord that came through Peter to the children of Israel on Pentecost and 3,000 were saved. Let us recount Peter's word again in the context of celebrating "a complete deliverance and salvation" from all that Egypt represented.

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

*<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. <sup>16</sup> But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...*

*<sup>36</sup> “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” <sup>37</sup> 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? <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”*

*<sup>40</sup> And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “**Be saved from this perverse generation.**” <sup>41</sup> Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*

- Question #1: Have you been saved from Egypt?
- Question #2: Have you been saved from the calf of Egypt?