

Deuteronomy 16 Lecture at Rochdale

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon explores the significance of the three great feasts in Deuteronomy 16, highlighting the importance of Christ's sacrifice, the Holy Ghost, and our future glory in heaven.

Scripture: John 14:16, Acts 2:1, 1 Corinthians 5:7

Topics: "Feasts of Israel", "Holy Spirit and New Life"

Description

John Nelson Darby discusses the significance of the three great feasts in Israel--Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles--emphasizing their unique characteristics and prophetic meanings. He explains how the Passover represents Christ's sacrifice, Pentecost signifies the Church's new state in resurrection, and the Feast of Tabernacles points to a future gathering of believers. Darby highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit in connecting believers to Christ and the new life they have in Him, urging Christians to recognize their heavenly citizenship and the blessings that come from it. He concludes by encouraging believers to live in the reality of their relationship with God, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

There were three great feasts when all Israel had to go up to Jerusalem.

Other feasts there were, such as the Sabbath constantly, the new moons, and the great day of atonement; but these three, the Passover, Pentecost or Feast of Weeks, and the Tabernacles, were solemn feasts in this way, that they were the gathering times of the people who all had to go up to keep them.

We shall see that whilst, in the bringing of the people thus together before God, there is a thought common to all, each of them has a different character.

As is well known, we have a distinct antitype to two of these feasts: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," and, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come"; but of the Feast of Tabernacles we have had no antitype, i.e., there has been no fulfilment of it. The true Passover has been sacrificed, but the great gathering of the Feast of "Tabernacles" has yet to come; people will then own Christ to be their Passover, who will not have done so hitherto. That is, however, still future.

But there are important features for us in these three feasts. Notice that Pentecost is in immediate connection with the unleavened bread rather than with the Passover. It was then that they offered the first of the first-fruits, type of Christ risen from the dead; and from the time of putting the sickle to the corn, they

counted seven weeks, i.e., typically, to the Church at Pentecost. On the day of the first-fruits they offered ears of corn without leaven; but seven weeks later, when the first-fruits were offered, leaven was put in the two cakes, because there the Church was, in type, offered to God.

But they could not be burnt at all. Our bodies are offered to God, but they are not like Christ - a sinless, unleavened victim.

Leviticus 2 gives us this more fully; there, they were to take fine flour, mingled with oil, and anointed with oil, and so on. That is Christ without leaven or honey; no sinful nature and no sweetness of nature could be allowed in sacrifice. In Christ, there was no leaven and no honey, nothing but the perfectness set forth in the oil and frankincense. "Mingled with oil" - "that holy thing which shall be born of thee"; then, "anointed with oil" - Jesus of Nazareth anointed "with the Holy Ghost and with power." In the end of the chapter, we find the oblation of the first-fruits offered to the Lord. Salt was to be offered with all their offerings, that is the separative power of holiness as consecrated to God. The Lord refers to it in Mark 9 - the separative power of holiness by the Spirit of God.

159 Then there was a meat-offering of green ears dried by the fire; this typified Christ offered up in His perfectness, and with only sweet savour coming out of the sacrifice.

But in the case of the two cakes of the first-fruits, a sin-offering was offered with them, which met the question of the presence of the leaven. The two cakes were first offered with seven lambs for a burnt-offering, i.e., Christ in pure perfectness; then came the sin-offering as meeting the leaven, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves."

But let us turn to the character of the Passover. This was first held when Israel was coming out of Egypt, and for seven days they were to eat unleavened bread.

It is also one of the feasts in Leviticus 23; and in verse 10, you have the time of the first offering of the wave-sheaf - "When ye be come into the land," etc.; and it was to be waved on the morrow after the Sabbath. That was, in type, when Christ was raised from the dead. Seven weeks later on, the wave-loaves were offered. The coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost connects itself entirely with this new place of man, and the church is viewed in the wave-loaves. In Christ is seen the new place of man in resurrection. After He had been "made sin" for us; after death; after the judgment of God had been passed upon Him, God raised Him from the dead. Having perfectly glorified God as to the wickedness of man, Christ is then raised from the dead; and now, consequently upon what Christ has done, man is in a wholly new place before God. It is a new state and place altogether. Lazarus came back into this world; but this is, in Christ, a totally new state; The responsible man having failed, God has met that failure in the death of Christ; He then raises Christ from the dead, and thus puts man into a totally new condition altogether; death hath no more dominion over Him, for He is in a place which is the result of having perfectly glorified God.

That is where Christianity begins.

The offering of the first-fruits introduces this, and the Feast of Pentecost is connected with the first-fruits, i.e., seven weeks from that day; and the coming of the Holy Ghost likewise connects us with Christ in that new condition. This is what I would press upon you.

160 You may turn to what was in the Passover, where man as man is a judged and condemned race. But the pride of man is such that he refuses this, and seeks to restore himself as he is. They make Christ

coming into the condition of the children of Adam, as if it were to raise up men as men.

This is all false. On the contrary, it is a totally new place altogether into which Christ has entered. It is all over with the world, and God has proved His righteousness in setting Christ at His own right hand.

The righteousness of the Father has come out. As the Lord says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee." The righteousness of God has been proved, not only in resurrection, but in setting Christ at His right hand. The world had cast Him out and slain Him. There where we find the fruit of righteousness, is in a Man sitting at the right hand of God.

God does not wait until the future when His Son shall come in the glory of the kingdom, but now already, in virtue of Christ having glorified God in the place of sin, there is a Man at the right hand of God. Man's malice, Satan's power, God's judgment, and God's love were all made manifest at the cross.

God has thus been perfectly glorified as to everything. He has been glorified in infinite love. Resurrection, now, is the first grand thing. Christ has been raised again for our justification. But God's answer to His work was not complete until He had set Him at His right hand in glory. There is now man in a new state altogether, consequent upon death and judgment having taken place.

All was settled at the cross.

I was one of the poor sinners who brought Christ there; but now I am not in the flesh at all; I am in Christ where He now is. My place and state is no longer that of a child of Adam.

For the old thing there was no remedy. It was tried without law, and under law, and by prophets. Stephen sums it up when he says: "You have broken the law, killed the prophets, crucified Christ, and resisted the Holy Ghost." That drew out their enmity; they stoned him; he went to heaven. That is the historical beginning of the new thing.

What I still press is, that it is man in a totally new state as to his place with God. But we have not yet got this as regards our bodies.

161 Now let us turn and look at the state of soul connected with this. In the Passover you will see this state of soul. There was to be no leavened bread, nor were they to eat any for seven days. Bread of affliction was connected with it. If you look at holiness, which you must have, is it not the bread of affliction for you? Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord, but alas! I am not holy. The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth is connected with affliction.

Then mark another thing connected with the Passover in Deuteronomy 16:7: "And thou shalt cook and eat it at the place which Jehovah thy God will choose; and in the morning shalt thou turn and go unto thy tents." No communion, no joy, no fellowship - not a bit. Unleavened bread is the bread of affliction. They were saved, but that is all, taking it as a present thing. They were a people in bondage and slavery, and God was going by as Judge; but the passover-blood shut God out from them, I mean, the blood on the doorposts. How can I escape judgment, for God must have holiness, and I have none? Well, there is the blood, and God will not come near me, and so it is the bread of affliction.

Conscience is always individual.

Many a true soul finds his happiness in the contrast between what he has got out of, and where he has got to. And what has he got into? Into the wilderness.

This is constantly the case; the blood saved them from God's judgment, and that was all. Are there not many in that state? He sees he is ruined in Egypt, and that God is here as a Judge; that is the way he thinks of God, and the bloodshedding has met him in that state, and he is safe. I am glad he is. Look at the hymns that are sung, and where do you find anything more than the simple fact that I have got out from the ruin?

But conscience and justification must be individual; so they had to go to their tents and remain there.

The condition of many a soul is that of merely looking to get safe out of Egypt when God is acting as a Judge in respect of sin. Many true believers, alas! are not clear that God as a Judge does not now reach them in their sins. They certainly have no Pentecost, and still less have they any Tabernacles.

They go to their tents, so to speak, where God is to them only a Judge. They see love in Christ in doing that which was needed to meet the judgment of God; and since it is met, they are therefore safe. Of course, that is perfectly true, and it is the foundation of everything. But we have not that only, but we have also the Holy Ghost, and that in our new place in the risen Man. That which characterises the Christian position is the presence of the Holy Ghost and the waiting for Christ to come again.

162 Having drunk that dreadful cup, and having glorified God as to sin on my behalf, Christ has entered heaven as my Forerunner; and the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, indwelling me, is what associates me with Christ where He now is at the right hand of God, and unites me to Him also. So that if death itself come, it is gain to me.

What, then, about my sins? They are put away.

What about righteousness? Christ is it.

And the Holy Ghost has come down with this blessed testimony, to bring me into the full sense of the effect of what Christ has done, and of the place He has now taken as Man. Christ is my life, and the Holy Ghost identifies me with Him; "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit."

The sufferings of Christ are over, and He has entered into the glory as Man in consequence; and now what? The Holy Ghost is given to us, and we know our relationship; as the Lord Himself declared it, saying, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." The babes in Christ know the Father; they cry, "Abba, Father"; but it is not until they have received the Holy Ghost. "Ye are all God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus," and, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

Again, in John 14, the Lord says that, "in that day" i.e., when the Holy Ghost is come, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." We shall know it, that is what He says.

All springs out of the love of God. What is the proof? He gave His Son. How do you know it? By the Holy Ghost. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

So the day of Pentecost is brought to us.

163 And then, what about the inheritance? The Holy Ghost in us is the earnest of it.

He throws back all the light of divine knowledge upon what Christ has done, and makes known to us perfect, present, divine favour and that we are loved as Jesus is loved. We understand thus our place, and we live in it day by day.

If I believe that the blessed Son of God became a Man and died, was made sin for me, and suffered in my stead, then I can say there is nothing too great for me; He will freely give me all things; I am become part of Christ's glory. Supposing Christ were in His glory without His redeemed! Where would be the glory of the Redeemer?

"Seven weeks shalt thou count: from the beginning of putting the sickle into the corn shalt thou begin to count seven weeks. And thou shalt hold the feast of weeks unto Jehovah thy God with a tribute of a voluntary offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee."

Now then, it is that I come with a freewill offering.

There was no freewill offering at the Passover.

But the Holy Ghost having given us the knowledge of what is ours in Christ, He enables us now to carry up a freewill offering from the heart, just as Israel did when put into possession of Canaan. It is not merely what we are saved from, but what we are saved to; that which fills up the affections and the heart. I know I am in the favour of God, that is the present grace wherein we stand. Christ dwells in me, and I in Him, and I come with these first-fruits to God. The heart comes to God and the Father with the things it has got from God and the Father.

The Feast of Tabernacles is not fulfilled at all, because it gives us the actual result in full. But Pentecost produces grace in power in the heart. Still, I am to bring "according as Jehovah thy God hath blessed thee." I may be in a cold state - the crop may be a bad one, and I have not much to bring. But even so, "Thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God"; you do not get that at the Passover. Not that I have forgotten that I was brought out of Egypt. Far from it. The spirit of grace in the power of the Holy Ghost makes the soul rejoice in it: "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt." I remember that I was once a captive, and that I have been set free in the power of the Holy Ghost.

164 As to the Feast of Tabernacles, if you look at John 7 you will see how the Lord acts there. His brethren say to Him, "Go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest"; "shew thyself to the world." But He answers, "I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." In the last day, however, that great day of the feast, i.e., the eighth day, which the other feasts did not have, "Jesus stood and cried, saying If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" There we see that, pending the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles, those who came to Christ should receive the Holy Ghost. The Feast of Tabernacles came after the harvest and after the vintage, i.e., after the judgment at harvest, discriminating between wheat and chaff; and after the vintage, which is simply pure vengeance - the indignation and wrath of the Lord God Almighty. But at the Feast of Tabernacles all that was over; and so they dwelt in booths, etc., etc. It prefigured in an earthly sense just the rest of God for the Jews. The time for its celebration had come in the seventh chapter of John. But we have a much better rest, and therefore there was an eighth day; and that is for us. It belongs

to that which is new and heavenly, after judgment and vengeance are past. We were strangers, and pilgrims, and wanderers, but now we are such no more. Judgment is past, and here we are to enjoy the land. For us, of course, this is the heavenly thing.

The risen and glorified saints are the centre of heavenly blessing; just as the Jews will be the centre of the earth in the millennium. In verse 14, we read, "Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord (Jehovah) thy God in the place which the Lord (Jehovah) shall choose: because the Lord (Jehovah) thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase" - not according to thine increase now, but "in" - "and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice."

God's rest and everlasting joy, that is the Feast of Tabernacles.

165 We have the Holy Ghost, which brings us into the present enjoyment of our relationship to God; and, what is yet more, He shews us things to come.

Because the Lord has blessed us in everything, we can keep the feast; besides which, coming things are shewn to us.

How can I understand what He says, "Set your affections on things above, and not on things on earth," if I do not know what the things are?

Now, instead of the Feast of Tabernacles, Christ gives the Holy Ghost; but when the Feast of Tabernacles is come, Christ will shew Himself to the world; He could not do so then, as He told His brethren; but everything will yet be fulfilled.

And now arises this question as regards what we have been speaking of: How far do our souls realise, not only present grace and favour, but also our portion in that which belongs to us, so that our conversation is in heaven? It is only this that will take our hearts out of earth.

It is part of the very condition in which a Christian stands, that he should know the things that are freely given him of God. They are revealed unto us by the Holy Ghost. People think them so great, and wonderful, and blessed, that they cannot be known, but the Apostle shews that is not true. They are not revealed in the Old Testament, but they are to us Christians. No doubt one Christian may see and enjoy more of them than another; we may differ as to spirituality; still, we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." It is expressly for this that we have received the Spirit. Many are the things thus revealed to us in this way. Christ, and Moses, and Elias were seen talking together on the mount; and therein was revealed something that which is yet going to take place. Moses and Elias go in to there from whence came the Father's voice.

We get a multitude of things in that way.

The Lord says, "The world seeth me no more, but ye see not with natural eyes, of course.

Again, I shall see every one of you as perfect as Christ's heart would have you be; is not that a joy revealed and known now - that we shall be like Him absolutely? Fully glorified; and it is only by the Holy Ghost that my heart gets hold of this.

Down here, I have to watch every step of the way, lest my feet get into the mud; but there is no mud in heaven; I shall be walking there upon the street of gold, where all is holiness, and there I cannot pick up anything else. Is that not something newly revealed to us?

166 I see that Christ is going to give me a white stone and a name written on it that nobody knows but the one who gets it; there is a special interest between me and Christ, just as I call my child by a pet name.

And we shall sit upon His throne. But that is a lower thing. The Holy Ghost brings all this with living reality to our souls. Only, remember that now we walk by faith, and not by sight.

Never to lose the Lord, never; for ever to be with Himself, with the One who has drawn my heart to Himself, with the One who loved me and gave Himself for me!

But up there, I shall not want to think of myself, because sovereign grace will have made me like Christ.

For ever with the Lord; no longer to wish for Him, or to hope for Him, but to be there, and, in the highest sense of it, to sit down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit to be sweet to my taste!

The Lord could not keep the Feast of Tabernacles, but nevertheless the Holy Ghost was to be sent down, so that there should be acquaintance with divine and heavenly things, and also that we should know the things that are freely given to us of God. Abounding in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost; having our affections set on things above, and not on things on the earth.

Mark the character that this will give, even to our worship. So often it is, "I was once a poor lost sinner, and here I am washed and saved." But is that all? Suppose there was a storm destroying everybody, and that I found shelter in a house, am I only to say, I am saved from the storm? Have you found nothing in the house into which you have got? Yet how many are in that state!

What is the level of our intercourse with God? There is divine favour and present grace, but if we are really walking with God, He will lead our souls into acquaintance with these things, which as yet are matters of hope, and He will shew them to us.

In this feast, which the Lord could not keep, the Holy Ghost is given to us that our hearts might live in the power of what He reveals; and when the Lord comes, it will be to put us in full possession of that which our hearts have been in meanwhile, for now is our conversation in heaven.

167 Thus even the holiness of our walk here is identified with our hope there.

Can our hearts, and how far can our hearts, look up above and outside of this world?

We have to plod through the world, of course; I know it. Christ had to go through it, and He did so for us; and now we follow Him through it, so that at least the character of our passage through it should be the manifest effect of our citizenship being in heaven. There is such a thing as having, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, so that we should be living where Christ sitteth, the One who has gone to prepare a place for us. We have to pass through this world; but where are our hearts, beloved friends? Can we say that our associations of life are all up there? Is that where our hearts are living? Does our worship bear the stamp of our conversation being in heaven? The stamp of the happiness and blessedness which is the expression of our association with Him there? "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Let us, then, remember that the blessed Lord has spent Himself for us that we might have the unseen; and also that He has Himself entered there as our Forerunner.

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