

Thou Shalt Surely rejoice.' Deut. 16:1 - 15

by John Nelson Darby

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the three feasts in the Old Testament and their connection to our relationship with God, highlighting the importance of holiness, obedience, and eternal praise.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 16:1

Topics: "Spiritual Fulfillment", "Rejoicing in God"

Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the significance of the three great feasts in Deuteronomy, which symbolize the journey of God's people from deliverance to spiritual fulfillment. He explains that the Passover represents Christ's death, the Feast of Pentecost signifies the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the joy of thanksgiving, while the Feast of Tabernacles points to the future millennial rest and glory. Darby encourages believers to rejoice in their spiritual blessings and to remember their past bondage in Egypt, which fosters gratitude and obedience. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper understanding of the blessings God has prepared for His people, urging them to live in the light of their new identity in Christ.

Transcript

These three great feasts of which we read here were the feasts of gathering "in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in." All the males were to go up there; all the people were to be gathered up round the Lord. There was the Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, these three; and connected with the Passover, though not exactly the same thing, was the Feast of unleavened bread.

In Acts 2 we read: "When the day of Pentecost was fully come;" and then follows the fulfilment - that of which this feast was the type; but of the Feast of Tabernacles there is no present accomplishment. It is after the harvest and after the vintage; it is the millennial time of rest after the discriminating judgment of God has taken place, and after the treading of the wine-press, His complete vengeance on the adversaries. Then this feast comes in; it is the rest remaining for God's people. They dwelt in booths as a sign that they had been strangers and pilgrims - that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt. I just say this that we may see the bearing of these feasts. With the first of them we are all familiar - the Passover, the death of Christ. And the unleavened bread we get the apostle applying himself in Corinthians: "Let us keep the feast; not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." One other point I would notice as to the Feast of Pentecost, that we may apprehend it better, and that is, that it was connected with "the morrow after the sabbath." It is outside the

old creation and all that has to do with it; it has to do with Adam innocent no more than with Adam guilty; Satan's power, and sin, and death, and judgment, all that is past and gone; man, in the person of Christ, has got beyond it - is identified with Him before God in the new creation. That is Pentecost.

"Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, even the bread of affliction." Sometimes, I do not say always, we are apt to remain in this feast of unleavened bread, and not get on sufficiently to the others. It is all right, of course, that we should have to do with it; we must have holiness: "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Thou camest forth from the land of Egypt in haste;" Pharaoh, that is the devil, was behind them, and they were just escaping from the judgment. It is just deliverance. You get out of Egypt in haste; you are obliged to put the dough on your shoulder as fast as you can, that you may not be caught by the judgment; and so you have the seven days of unleavened bread. It is deliverance, but it is occupation with the state in which you were when you were delivered, so it is "the bread of affliction." There must be holiness, or we cannot have to say to God; but we do not get fulness of communion and blessing in it, and therefore we read that as soon as they had eaten the Passover they were to turn in the morning and go to their tents.

But when you come to the day of Pentecost you get this: "Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God, with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee." There is not a bit of that in the Feast of unleavened bread. There they had to escape, and that was all; but here I get the heart satisfied with the Holy Ghost. They had the fruits of the land now; they had that which they were brought into, and not only that which they were brought out of. Of course, that which they were brought out of is not to be forgotten; we shall not forget it in heaven; it is the Lamb slain that is the foundation of everything; but I have more than that here: I have the free-will offering of thanksgiving and praise. But even that is according to the measure in which the Lord our God has blessed us; and in that "thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God." And then we find the fulness of grace: it is "with thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are among you." So I get here these two things with joy: the freewill offering to God, and thanksgiving and praise; and, having these things in our hearts, we have everything except the glory. We have life, we have righteousness, we have Christ Himself; we have all that the Father's love and the Son's love can give us by the Holy Ghost. I do not say we enjoy it all, but everything in that sense we have got into - we have actual possession of it all in heaven: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." So the strangers, and the widows, and everything can rejoice.

And then "thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and thou shalt observe and do these statutes." That is, there must be present obedience, and the remembrance that we were bondmen, and then the heart free for the things that are God's; there is the enjoyment through the Holy Ghost of the things that are freely given us of God: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit"; and "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." God's righteousness is settled, the conscience is perfect, and we are in that place in spirit where we can be occupied with God Himself, and not merely with what He has given us.

After this comes the Feast of Tabernacles, "after thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine" - after the judgment, as we have seen. That is the reason that, where it is spoken of in John 7, the Lord says He could not go up to that feast; it will be the millennial glory, and He would not go to that. But afterwards He goes up, "as it were in secret," and on the eighth day, "that great day of the feast," He cries, "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." He lets us into the new week of heavenly glory, and in the Holy Ghost we do realize it, though we are not in it yet.

Another characteristic is that it is not "according as" now, as it was in the Feast of Pentecost, but it is "because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice." It was all right to come out and eat the Passover, and go to your tents in the morning, saying what poor wretched sinners you were; it is all right to remember that all the days of your life - we shall remember the Lamb slain in the glory. I have the sense that holiness must be, and I go with a personal, individual sense of it, and sit in my tent to keep the feast of unleavened bread, and bless God for having delivered me from that in which I was. And besides this I find that I have got into an entirely new place - a place in which God has made a habitation for Himself. I am risen; I am in the new creation; it is a new thing altogether, and the old is all done with; and so I come with a free-will offering, and I worship as I realize the coming down from God of all the blessings that He has given us in the Holy Ghost. Thus, in Pentecost, it is according to my spirituality that I rejoice. It is not merely that I have been delivered, but that God's heart is to give to me, and God sees flowing out from me praise and thanksgiving according to the spiritual state of my soul.

But in heavenly places I go a little farther and discover what I have in Christ; in Him I find that "all things" are mine, both "things present" and "things to come," and there I can rejoice always - there I can "surely rejoice." How could a person, if he had not spiritual power, think of eternal praise? Now it is according to the measure of our spirituality, but then it will be because He hath blessed us in all things. God's heart satisfied with seeing us in the full blessing of all He has brought us into; Christ's heart satisfied with seeing of the travail of His soul; the saint's heart satisfied with being fully like Him and with Him, and He fully glorified.

This is where God has set us; and how far, beloved friends, do your hearts go with it? It will be surely the Lamb that was slain there; but in what measure does my soul get hold of the second feast, and say, "According as the Lord my God has blessed me"? And then how far can my soul, even now, enter into all the blessing which God has prepared for them that love Him, having no present but what is future. We are strangers and pilgrims here, but if we are right our conversation will be up there "where Christ sitteth." God grant that it may be so in our hearts.

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