

January 19, 2019

Fulfiller of The Feasts

I have to begin this sermon by saying I'm going off on one big old tangent. You see, about a year ago, the Elders and I talked about starting up the seminar series that we had done before. The first one that I put back together and re-did was the seminar on Creation/Evolution. They had also asked for one on Eschatology. You know if it were a class, in college it would be called Eschatology 101. Eschatology is a study of the end times.

I began working on that and I have done it before, but I thought you know, I am going to do some research on and see if there is more that I can find. I ordered a book that was highly recommended. The title is "Kingdom Come" by Sam Storm. I was a little worried as I began reading the book because he began the book by saying we first need to study the 5 foundational principles of the hermeneutics of eschatology. Now if that makes a lot of sense to you, then maybe you should be up in the pulpit. When I heard hermeneutics, it took me back to college and to be very honest, I couldn't remember what it meant. So, I had to look it up. Hermeneutics is the interpretation of scripture. What he is saying is to understand the end times, you have to first understand how to interpret scripture. To be able to interpret scripture, there are 5 foundational principals that must be followed.

The first principal is Jesus Christ and His church are the focal and terminating point of all prophecy. To put it another way, the Old Testament finds all of its fulfillment in Christ and His Church. Let me tell you, there is a big old tangent. What in the world does he mean when he says, "all of the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in Christ and in His Church?" And so, we begin a little journey, a tangent journey, and epiphany journey. Epiphany means to make known or to make manifest. Over the next couple of weeks, what will be made known is how Christ and His Church, you and me; how we are the fulfillment of all of the Old Testament.

Let's begin with the Feasts of Israel or the Feasts of Judaism. They can be found in Leviticus 23. It all begins with the Lord setting apart the Sabbath. It was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai that there should be a sabbath

day. It comes in the Commandments; Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy. It finds its way in to all the feasts and into this whole fulfillment.

As you know the day of Sabbath was a weekly day of rest. Because on the seventh day the Lord rested, we are to rest and give that day to the Lord. Right after the introduction to the Sabbath is given in Leviticus 23, the Lord then goes into; Moses goes into the seven feasts. The first is the Passover. The Passover Feast is on the 14th day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. That puts it in very early spring, late fall. We have talked about the Passover before. It's that meal, it's a festival that they would go to the Temple for. A feast that reminded the people of how the Lord delivered them from out of Egypt, how the Hebrew people in Egypt would take the blood of a lamb and put it over the top of their door, down both sides of their door and when the 10th plague came, the angel of death, he would see that blood covering the entrance to that home and the angel of death would pass over. That is exactly what happened, and the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt. With Christ we see that it is His blood that covers the door to our heart and that through the blood of the Lamb, God delivers us from sin. We are reminded of that every time that we celebrate communion.

What most of us forget are the other feasts. The very next feast is on the very next day. While the Passover feast is on the 14th day, the feast of the unleavened bread begins on the 15th day of the first month. This is that time, where for seven days, the Hebrew people would remove all yeast from their house, and they would only make unleavened bread. No yeast in it means no in it, that is what they ate for seven days and it reminded them of their responsibility as people of the covenant to walk with God and to walk away from sin. What did it really symbolize? Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." We see Jesus fulfilling the feast of unleavened bread not in that we walk with God, we never do that sufficiently. He fulfills it by God walking with us.

On the day after the Sabbath, we have the First Fruits. So, in that time frame of the unleavened bread, there would be a Sabbath. On the day after that Sabbath, would be the feast of the First Fruits. This was a wave offering where the first harvest was brought in to the Temple and they waved it before the Lord and they thanked the Lord for this harvest, the early harvest. Christ is the resurrection and through Him, we have the resurrection and now Christ

is the feast of the First Fruit and we celebrate that resurrection and our future resurrection. More on that in just a moment.

Fifty days after the whole Passover, they would have the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. This was the late spring, early summer harvest. With this feast, two loaves of bread would be brought to the Temple, thanking the Lord for the harvest that made this available to them so that they could make these loaves of bread. Through Christ, we see that both Jew and Gentile are saved. Both Jew and Gentile are part of that harvest. The harvest of salvation, the harvest of the resurrection.

Here is something that really blew me away and its why I went on the tangent. I'd never seen this before. When you look at it, lets recap those first 4 in the first century. Christ was crucified on the Passover. Remember for the Hebrew people, the new day begins at sunset. Christ was crucified on the Passover, but He was buried on the next day. The sun was going down on the day that He was crucified. The day after Passover is the day of unleavened bread. Christ was crucified on the Passover, buried on the day of the feast of unleavened bread and rose on the First Fruits festival day, because it's the day after the Sabbath, or Sunday. Fifty days later, He sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, to bring faith, to bring the Gospel to both Jew and Gentile. It's kind of cool, isn't it? Christ really is the fulfillment and the purpose of those first four feasts.

It continues. The fifth feast is the Feast of Trumpets. It's in the seventh month on the first day, which is made a Sabbath regardless of what day of the week it is. It is a day to stop work. It is "a memorial blowing of trumpets." It was a reminder of Exodus 19, when the Lord used a loud and mighty trumpet blast to call the children of Israel to come to the foot of Mount Sinai. With this memorial blowing of the trumpets, the people were called to stop their work, whatever they were doing; stop the harvesting, whatever they were doing and to go to the Temple where they would be reminded and they would remember that when they heard that first trumpet blast, the children of Israel went to the foot of Mount Sinai and the Lord spoke and gave them the Ten Commandments. They entered in to a covenant with the Lord. They remembered that gave them the Law and established that covenant with them, loved them and cared for them as they were going through the wilderness and as they entered the Promised Land. And yet, they are also to remember that

they are the people, the Hebrews who broke the covenant, turned away from that God who loved and cared for them. They fell into sin, and so they remembered because of their sin, they needed to prepare for atonement. They needed it! They needed some way to make them one with God again. So, at this feast of trumpets, the trumpet sounded, they stopped their harvesting, they stopped their work to go to the Temple to worship, to remember, to prepare and to offer a food offering because of the harvest that they were in the middle of. We are reminded that just as God called the people at the trumpet blast there at Mount Sinai, called the people with the trumpet at the feast of the trumpets, on the last day the trumpet will sound, Christ will return, and we will be called for the great harvest. We will participate in the resurrection, that assembly with our Lord in the sky and the beginning of all eternity with Him.

Nine days later, on the 10th day of the 7th month, is the Feast of Atonement. It begins with this instruction. “Afflict yourselves;” that sounds like a fun feast, doesn’t it? What does it mean to afflict themselves? Go on a fast. No eating for 24 hours. It’s a reminder there is a payment for sin, there is affliction because of sin. We deserve judgment. At the end of that 24 hour fast, would be the atoning sacrifice. Or, I should say, the atoning sacrifices. Sacrifices for both the priests and the people because they were all sinners. So, after afflicting themselves, they would then see a bull afflicted, killed, its blood shed, to pay the price for the sins of the priests. Then they would see a goat killed, afflicted, its blood shed to pay the price of their sin. That blood was then taken and sprinkled on the people and it would be taken into the holy of holies and sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant, showing that blood has been shed, that blood covers sin. There was one more animal. The bull was killed, the goat was killed, there was a second goat who was a scape goat. The priests laid his hands on it and put all the sin of the people on it and it was chased out of the camp. It was symbolic of sending the sin out, we are turning away from our sin. We are going to follow God. They had to put the sin on the scape goat because the blood of the bull and the blood of the goat could never really pay the price of the sins of a human. Of course, I am sure you already see that Christ the Lamb of God, when He said, it is finished; Christ fulfilled His job of being both the scape goat, the one who took the sin on Himself and the atoning sacrifice, who shed His blood for us.

Then we hit the 7th Feast, its five days later, it's the Feast of booths, or Tabernacles. It's the most popular and joyful. There was 7 days in this feast, 7 days of living in booths or tabernacles made of leaves and branches. On the 7th day they celebrate by going to the Temple. To go to the Temple, they had to carry in their right hand, a lulahba, which if I understand correctly is where we get the word lullaby. This lulahba was a branch from a myrtle tree, a branch of a willow, the branch of a palm, or a palm frond all three tied together. Representing of course, the trinity. In the left hand they carried an ethrog, which were several citrus branches tied together as one. They would to the Temple with these and the priest would come out carrying a golden pitcher and he would lead the crowd in procession. As they processed there were flutists and trumpeters with them playing music the whole way as the priest led them to the pool of Siloam where he would fill that pitcher with water. Then he would turn around and head back to the Temple with again, flutes playing, the trumpets playing and the people waving their lulahba's and their ethrogs. Once they got to the Temple, the priest immediately went through each one of the courts and directly to the altar which stood right in front of the Holy Place. He would take the water and he would pour it into a funnel shaped opening on the altar which would allow the water to flow through the altar and down to the base. It was a reminder that God had provided them water in the wilderness and that through the course of the year, He provided them with rain, that brought the harvest that they were presently in the process of harvesting. Then, with just the flutes playing and the people waving their lulahbas in t heir right hand, the ethrogs in their left hand, the people chanter. That means they sang. They sang antiphonally. That means there was a back and forth. The priest would chant the first part of a song and the second part, the people would sing back. They do this verse by verse. They did Psalm 113, 114, 115, 116, 117. They did this by memory. They did not have hymnals. They did not have big screen TV's set up for them. They memorized these. When they got to Psalm 118, they continued that process where the priest would sing the first half of a verse, they would sing the second half of the verse. For instance, Psalm 118 begins; "O give thanks to the Lord for He is good." That's what the priest would sing. The people would respond back, "For His steadfast love endures forever." The priest would sing, "Let Israel say," the people would respond; "His steadfast love endures forever." They did this for the first 23 verses. When they got to verse 24, they stopped and then everybody; the priest and everyone there from memory recited the rest of psalm 118. They would start with, "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us

rejoice and be glad in it.” This day, the day of the feast of Tabernacles, it is the day that the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. It continues, “Save us, we pray O Lord. O Lord give us success.” Then they say, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.” That is a reference to the coming Messiah. They say, we bless you from the house of the Lord.” It ends with, “O give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His steadfast love endures forever.”

No, I am going to shift gears super-fast and jump to our Gospel that we read this morning. If you listened carefully, you heard in John 7, John records, “On the last day of the feast.” This is the feast of booths or the feast of tabernacles. The people have just finished saying, “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.” “Save us, we pray O Lord. O Lord give us success.” “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.” When Jesus stands up and cries out, “If anyone thirsts and cries out, let him come to me and drink.” This is what the whole feasts of booths and tabernacles is about. This is why they went to the pool of Siloam and got the water, this is why it was poured on the altar down to the base of the altar. This is the very base, without water we have no life and Jesus now says, I am that water. If anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink. Christ is the living water who can satisfy our eternal thirst just as God had satisfied their physical thirst in the wilderness.

This is what those feasts were all about and this is what Jesus is. I am the fulfiller of the feasts. Come to me if you are thirsty. You talked about bread, I am the bread of life. I’m the atoning sacrifice. I am the One who is your eternal Passover. I am Feast.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, I think it would do us well to remember those feasts, to like the children of Israel, whenever we see the sound of a trumpet to not think of anything else other than the Lord used a trumpet to call the people to Mount Sinai. He used the people to the feast of trumpets that they were a covenant people. That trumpet will sound again and when it does, Christ will come and take us home.

In our Savior’s Name, Amen