

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Eight and Fifty

New Manner of Worship

In the Old Testament the manner of worship was predicated on observing the ordinances and the feasts that God gave to the children of Israel according to the pattern that God had shown Moses. These ordinances and feasts required perfection. For instance, the High Priest and his sons the priests had to wear clothes that were particularly fashioned and were particularly colored and with particular ornaments. They had to be washed and then they had to wash before they went into the holy place.

The priests had to be without blemish to enter the holy place: Lev. 21:17 "Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. 18 For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, 19 Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded,

20 Or crookbacked, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; 21 No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. 22 He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. 23 Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them."

The offerings were also to be without blemish: Lev. 22:21 "And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. 22 Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD. 23 Either a bullock or a lamb that hath any thing superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted. 24 Ye shall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruised, or crushed, or broken, or cut; neither shall ye make any offering thereof in your land. 25 Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God of

any of these; because their corruption is in them, and blemishes be in them: they shall not be accepted for you."

Leaven is a symbol of sin and as such, the meat offerings with one exception were to be of unleavened bread as they pointed to the perfect sinless body of Christ.

Furthermore, the manner in which the ordinances, feasts, and offerings were to be made were specifically spelled out in the Old Testament and all of them pointed to perfection.

The one exception to the offering of unleavened bread is set forth for us in the ordinance of the feast of weeks, otherwise known as Pentecost. In the feast of weeks, the children of Israel at the beginning of their harvest were to bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of their harvest and the priest was to offer it as a wave offering on the morrow after the Sabbath. Then the children of Israel were to number seven weeks unto the fiftieth day which is the 1st day of the eighth week and then offer among other things a new meat offering consisting of leavened bread.

The feast of weeks or Pentecost observed in the 2nd chapter of Acts was exactly fifty days after the resurrection of Christ from the grave. Christ arose early the first day of the week and fifty days later, many of the Jews were gathered to observe the feast of weeks. On that day, the Holy Spirit filled all the house where the church was gathered and this brought to pass the promise that Jesus had made that he would send another Holy Comforter for the disciples. Manifesting his coming the Holy Spirit showed forth great sign gifts on the day of Pentecost and for several years after that.

The church did not start on the day of Pentecost, but the Holy Comforter manifest his presence on the day of Pentecost and the disciples began to offer the new meat offering in leaven or sinful bodies. The blood bought children of God have been made a spiritual priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices unto God. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, which is holy and acceptable unto God.

One of the spiritual sacrifices set forth for us in the book of Psalms is: Ps. 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." When the multitude on the day of Pentecost had heard the preaching of Peter "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" By all evidence, they had a broken spirit and a broken contrite heart.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as

many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

In this new form of worship, the people, though they be sinners are to offer spiritual sacrifices unto God. The days of the animal sacrifices are fulfilled as the perfect Lamb of God has come and satisfied God's just demands under the law and become the perfect sacrifice for us. We no longer offer animal sacrifices and observe the temple service, but we offer spiritual sacrifices in sinful bodies and worship God in Spirit and in truth and this pleases God.