

FIRSTFRUITS

By: Phillip Hayes

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures [James 1:18].

James is acknowledging that the early church were the first people born again. They were the firstfruits of God's new creation.

Jesus is described as being the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29); the firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15); and the firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18).

Adam was the first man created in the image of God. But Adam was a son by creation, not by birth. Jesus was the *first born* or firstfruit of God. He was begotten of the Holy Ghost; He did not have an earthly father. He was the *first born* of many brethren (Rom. 8:29). For us to be a brother of Jesus we must be begotten by the same Father that begot Him; which was God the Holy Ghost! This is why Jesus said, "*You must be born again*". On the day of Pentecost about 120 men and women became the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit. The firstfruits of the New Creation of God!

Please understand this very important principle. Within the fruit is the seed that will reproduce itself. They became part of the Vine which is Christ. *Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" [St. John 15:1-2].*

When one is truly "born again" they are grafted into the Vine of God. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

We are translated into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13). The Body of Christ, the Kingdom of God and the True Vine are all the same. Jesus said we are expected to bear fruit!

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father [Romans 8:14-15].

The word Abba is an affectionate term that would mean Daddy or Papa in our English language. We have received the Spirit that has adopted us into the family of God. When this occurs by the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we become sons of God.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God [Romans 8:16].

We can see by these scriptures that the children of God, are the fruits of God. Jesus said; *"I come from God."* And the children of God, also come from God, because they are begotten of Him. We come from God, we are the fruit of God, and we are going to go back to God. We are an heir of God and a joint or equal-heir with Jesus; therefore, whatever Jesus has inherited, we shall inherit the same. Remember, Jesus is the *firstfruit* of *many brethren*. One of the great promises of Jesus to the overcomer is, *"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son"* [Revelation 21:7]. God has freely given us all things through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Although we have been given all things freely, there is a struggle and warfare we must fight.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together [Romans 8:17].

If we suffer with Him, we will be glorified together! We are going to be glorified with Jesus! However, the glorification we are to expect from God is not without

sufferings. I realize the words suffer and sufferings sound strange to modern Charismatic ears.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us [Romans 8:18].

Second Timothy 2:12 tells us, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us". Therefore, there is a condition for us to be able to reign with Christ. We must all face and endure sufferings!

Most folks lose their inheritance because they don't want to suffer the reproach of being a child of God. They don't want to walk the way Jesus walked. They want to go their own way. They want the things the world offers and they are not willing to wait for Jesus. But you have got to suffer with Christ if you are going to rule and reign with Him. The Bible clearly teaches, if we live godly in this present world, we will suffer persecution..

Folks today are too wrapped up in self. Motivational speakers today are extremely popular because their message is all about you and your welfare. You never hear the words sacrifice, dedication, fasting, consecration and self-denial! Followers of these teachers are becoming takers, not givers. Even when they give, it is for the sole purpose of receiving.

I'll tell you when you're on the right track. When you find yourself always praying for someone else, and being acutely aware of the needs of others around you. When you find yourself continually looking out for others first, and you become last, then my friends I believe God will make you first!

The Apostle Paul said there was a treasure hidden in *earthen vessels*. That Treasure is the Holy Ghost of God. If we suffer in this present world, the scripture tells us there is coming a glory that will be manifested *in us*, that is not comparable to our present life experiences. In other words,

the value of the glory far exceeds the price of humiliation and suffering of being a real Christian.

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body [Romans 8:19-23].

Look at that, *"But ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit."* They were the firstfruits of the Spirit of God. They were the first to taste of the Life that is Jesus. I believe from the beginning of time, the whole creation has been groaning and travailing, waiting for the manifestation (or the revealing) of the sons of God. The Old Testament saints and all the Christians that have come before us could not be made perfect without us. They are groaning and travailing and they are looking to us in this generation to bring it to pass. They are looking to this last church age to walk in perfection that they also might obtain unto the manifestation of the sons of God. We will all be made perfect together, in one. My friends, *"We are compassed about by a great cloud of witnesses!"*

When Jesus walked out of that tomb, He was fully manifested to be the Son of God. The souls under the altar do not have their glorified bodies yet. They are groaning desiring to see a generation of believers that have enough faith to be translated!

"By faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death." Because Enoch did it, we know we can do it! It is going to take faith to be translated. God took him

because he walked with God. You can only walk with God by faith! Those clouds of witnesses are groaning, looking to this last church to have the faith necessary to be changed from a corruptible body to an incorruptible body. Faith to be translated! Faith to be changed from a mortal to one that is immortal! Faith to be glorified with Jesus. Praise God, from Earth to Glory by faith!

The Bible clearly teaches that we have been translated spiritually into the kingdom of God, but we do not yet see the completion of the plan of God in us. And my friends, that is to bring us into the exact likeness of what Jesus is now! They were the firstfruits, yet they were not physically changed, they did not obtain complete salvation. They, as well as we, dwell only in the realm of newness of life, or a resurrected lifestyle, typifying the resurrection that is to come. Our inner man has been resurrected, our outer man has not. They were the firstfruits of the salvation of the Spirit. But God is going to have firstfruit sons of God that will walk in the realm of completed perfection; Spirit, Soul and Body just as Jesus did.

Now we are going to go into some deep things that are hidden in the scriptures. This glorious book men call the Bible, is being revealed in these last days. The scriptures are opening up like never before to those that God has given an ear to hear. I believe what God is revealing is far different from what the church world as a whole has taught.

The religious Jews of Jesus' time was looking for the Messiah to come in a particular way, but He didn't come the way they thought He would. Today, we see the church world looking for the coming of Jesus by the rapture. Most Christians are looking at the Mid East for the Antichrist and signs of the end and Christ's return. A few years ago many were writing books portraying Saddam Hussein as the Antichrist. This just goes to show you how out of touch most people are with the revelation of Jesus. Now it's

Jewish fables, blood moons and other nonsense that people are consumed with. Obviously, our modern day prophesy teachers keep missing it.

Jesus said, "*When you see wars and rumors of wars, be not troubled for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.*" Jesus told us to lift up our heads when we see these things come to pass. We are supposed to *come up hither*, in the spirit. Praise God, we are supposed to know what's going on but we cannot, unless we *get in the spirit!*

I can assure you, there is a battle going on right now in the heavens. If you are God's child, you are part of this great battle. Remember, our warfare is not carnal, *it is spiritual*. The things that are transpiring in the world are merely a token of what is happening in the spirit realm. We are in a struggle, a war; we are wrestling with demonic powers within the kingdom of God. There is a travail going on. I know that may be difficult for some of you to understand. However, I would encourage you to do a study in Matthew chapter thirteen. There is good and evil, tares and wheat in the kingdom! Something is to break through, something is about to be revealed. There is a change coming! We see the peoples of the world demanding a change, and we can see this happening in the spirit realm. However, most folks are never going to know what's happening. Most will be just like those in Noah's time: "*Which knew not until the flood took them all away.*"

The majority of the people today are going to actually miss the greatest visitation of God ever. It is going to come and go, and they won't even know it. Just as in Jesus' time, He walked the shores of Galilee, He performed miracle after miracle in their midst, and sadly they missed their time of visitation. I believe the same will be repeated in our time. People are going to miss this last and greatest visitation of God because they have their eyes on something else. They

are looking for Jesus in the wrong direction.

When Jesus first came, they could not receive Him. Look at His disciples, they had swords, they were ready for a political take over. They thought Jesus had come to take over the natural governments of the world; they were looking for Jesus to become the King. They were ready to fight in the natural. They actually walked with Jesus carrying their swords! They were ready to fight! Remember Peter cut off one man's ear when they tried to take Jesus. But Jesus put it back on!

The people of that generation were afraid that Jesus and His followers were going to overthrow the Roman government with a natural insurrection. The Jews no doubt had told Pilate that Jesus was trying to overthrow the Roman government. Pilate asked Him, are you a king? And Jesus told Pilate, for this reason was I born, to be a king. But Jesus told Pilate a remarkable thing that the multitudes today still don't perceive. Jesus told Pilate, *"My kingdom is not of this world"*! Jesus said, *"If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight."* Pilate told Him, *"Don't you know that I have power to take your life or set you free?"* Jesus answered, *"You don't have any power at all, except it were given you from above."* It was God's plan for Jesus to die! It was God's will, and it had to come to pass. God was the Author of the crucifixion and of the resurrection.

We must always remember that the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom not a natural one. Jesus said, *"The kingdom of God cometh not by observation (you can't see it), the kingdom of God is within you."*

The lesson here is the Jews were looking for the Messiah to come but He came in a way they did not expect. They missed the very One they were looking for.

His message and Kingdom was spiritual. He walked in total obedience to the Father and was the first man that

lived without committing sin. He was the firstfruit of God and the Living Pattern or example for every Christian.

Now, are we willing and able to do as He did? There are many that would love to have the power that Jesus had, but few are willing to die for it. If we are going to be like Jesus, we will have to die! Remember, a seed must first die, in order to bring forth fruit.

Jesus was the *firstfruit!* He was the first to obtain eternal life thereby becoming the Author of eternal life.

Almost two thousand years have passed since Christ came, died and was resurrected. His seed has been sown in the earth, and now that seed has become a vine and the fruit of that vine will come to full maturity in the last age. It never matured in Paul's time. Sure they had fruit, they were Christ-like, for it was at Antioch that they were first called *Christians*, which means Christ-like. They displayed the love of Christ and many died for Him, but they never came to the fullness. The full mature fruit is the exact likeness and image of the Son of God.

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty [Matthew 13:19-23].

In our Lord's parable of the sower we learn that not

all which hear the Gospel will be saved. Jesus gave three separate examples of what might happen after one hears the Word. (1) Some fail to completely understand the message and Satan is able to take away what was sown in their heart. (2) Those in this example understood the message and received the Word with joy, but when tribulations and persecutions came they could not stand. (3) This group failed because of the cares of this life (problems and cares all humans face); and the deception that money brings happiness, and these things turned them from faith in God.

However, there is another group Jesus spoke of and it is this last group we want to more closely examine in this message. This last group He spoke of heard and received the Word in good ground. These are the saved, the church of the Living God and they bare fruit! Jesus said some would bring forth thirty, some sixty, and some *an hundredfold*. Again, let me emphasize that all of these are saved, but not all bore the same amount of fruit. I believe the hundredfold are those that attain unto full maturity. Let me explain further.

The early church bore much fruit unto God. I believe many in that era attained sixty fold, but I do not believe they attained one-hundred fold, (perfection). How can I say it? Well, Paul said in one place, *"Oh, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in my mortal flesh,"* and again, *"That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection,"* and again, *"not as though I had already attained, (the resurrection) either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."* Paul continued with these glorious words, *"I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high*

calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul clearly said he had not apprehended the prize, (*One-hundred fold, perfection*) that was revealed to him. Paul had this revelation of perfection, and he taught it vigorously to the church.

I have often wondered; why didn't they attain? With all the power they manifested, and their suffering, with many being killed for their witness of Jesus. Look at Paul; he healed the sick, raised the dead, wrought many wonders and miracles, but he never attained unto perfection. Why couldn't they bring forth the perfect church that God had ordained, for clearly they had much fruit?!

And then the answer came. They could not attain an hundred fold because it was not for their generation. God had a timetable when He would allow such a thing to happen. They would have to wait on the last church age to be born!

Look how the writer of Hebrews dealt with this subject of perfection.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit [Hebrews 6:1-3].

The writer of Hebrews clearly placed attaining perfection in the will and ordinance of God! The writer was encouraging the church of his day to leave the foundational teachings and "*go on unto perfection*". However, he let them understand that it would only be possible if God permitted it. God never permitted that generation or any other to "*go on unto perfection*." It was not for them.

Jesus comes back at the end for a perfect church. A glorious church, without spot, wrinkle, or blemish (Ephesians 5:27). Therefore the last church will be permitted "*to go on unto perfection*." It is a work of God, not flesh. I have said

for years that if God left a seed in the earth at Pentecost, that seed would one day come to full maturity. You plant Jesus, you are going to reap Jesus. It is God's unchangeable Law: "*You reap what you sow.*"

Now we can see that the Vine of God, which is the Body of Christ, has been in the earth since the day of Pentecost. This vine has brought forth many Christians. That first crop was a beautiful crop, a great harvest. A great; but sparse crop came forth throughout the dark ages, through the inquisition, with many being persecuted and killed for the name of Jesus. Now here we are at the end of the ages, and we look at the Vine, and it seems there is little or no fruit at all. But there has got to come forth in this last age, a perfect one-hundred fold church.

Because of the apostasy in the church world and because of the slothfulness of many Christians and preachers, the Vine is laid waste. Oh, Life is still in the Vine, the branches are still there, the Christians are still there, but there is little fruit on the branches! They are asleep, and they are not bringing forth any fruit. Now I don't know how many years the Vine has existed without the branches bringing forth fruit. But I have made up my mind not to look behind me, but to keep my eyes on the mark of the high calling.

All I know is that the Vine which was planted remains unto this day. I know that I am one of the many branches of this Vine, and now I must begin to bring forth fruit, hopefully to one-hundred fold. As a matter of fact, I can see by the eye of the Spirit that there are many branches that are now blooming. Praise God, everyone knows that the fruit comes after the bloom!

If you plant an apple tree you can expect to eventually get apples. First the seed, then the stalk, then the branches, then the bloom of the flower, and then thank God, when the fullness of time comes, the fruit will appear.

Thank God that in the beginning Christ was sown in the earth. You can mark it down, that seed which was Christ has been going through the same stages of that apple tree and in the last day we will witness the matured (perfect) fruit of God. There is a chosen generation, a royal priesthood that will attain unto the fulness of God!

I urge you to be a doer of the Word! Act on this revelation. We all have the same opportunity! It's up to you! Why settle for thirty fold or sixty fold when God will allow you to obtain one-hundred fold? You can be perfect: Spirit, Soul and Body! You will be like Jesus, if you faint not.

We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son (Romans 8:29)! That is exactly like Him! We have been grafted into the Vine of God. God cut off the natural branches (Israel) to graft us in, and He did this because the Jews did not bring forth fruit. Beware, my friends! Be determined not be like them! We must all strive to bring forth the fruit of Jesus. We are at the end, and God is looking at His Vine in the earth. I believe He is reaching forth His Hand, and He is cutting this one off, and that one off. He is going to have fruit! Beware lest He cut you off His Vine! He is digging, He's watering, and He is going to have the increase of the Seed He planted in the beginning. This pruning God is performing in your life are the tribulations, persecutions and hardships you endure. God is pruning your branch. Thank God for the rain that He will soon send on His Vine!

If we are indeed living in the very end of the last days we will soon experience what I have written in this message. Mature sons of God will soon be revealed in the earth.

We're blossoming right now and the coming rain will bring forth the fruit! "Send down the rain Lord, send down the rain! Send down the latter rain! We need the rain Lord, We need the rain! We need the latter rain!" He said, "*Ask of me rain in the times of the latter rain.*" Are you asking?