

POURING, PASSOVER AND PENTECOST

In my own recent personal Bible study, I have been trying to prepare and to look *forward* to this Feast of Pentecost; but I kept feeling that I was repeatedly being dragged *back*—that my thoughts, my mind and my studies kept getting pulled *back* to the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and to their strong, inseparable links with the Feast of Pentecost.

Each Christian might think of different relationships between the early-spring feasts and this late-spring feast of Pentecost; but the links that kept coming to me concerned these two words: "Pouring Out"

The purpose of this sermon is to serve as a Bible study to go through this subject of pouring as it applies to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Passover and, more specifically, how they both link to the Feast of Pentecost.

The pouring out of Jesus' life

Going back to the Passover, the first thing we notice is that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, willingly allowed His precious human life and His physically essential bodily fluids to be poured out:

Luke 22:20:

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed [*Greek: ekcheo: poured out*] for you.

It cannot be a mere coincidence that this pouring out of Jesus' life, tears, blood, gall, etc. was repeatedly prophesied hundreds of years before it actually happened:

Job 3:24:

For my sighing comes before I eat, and my roarings [*Hebrew: sheagah: cries of distress*] are poured out like the waters.

Jesus did, of course, pour out cries of distress during His last night and day as a human being.

Job 10:10:

Have you not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?

Many of Jesus' essential bodily fluids were drained out of His body during His torture and murderous execution.

Job 16:20:

My friends scorn me; my eyes *pour out* tears to God.

Of course, this was Job speaking here in these verses; but in the books of Job, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, and others, we read the authors' prophetic words as though it was actually Jesus Christ speaking.

Earlier in this same sixteenth chapter of Job, we read of some of the things that God the Father, in His own agony, found it necessary to have inflicted upon His perfect Son:

Job 16:11, 13:

God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked... His archers compass me round about, He cleaves my reins asunder, and does not spare; He *pours out* my gall upon the ground.

As Jesus hung helplessly on the stake, a soldier came up to Him and, with his spear, cruelly thrust it into His side. As a result, Jesus' blood and other essential bodily fluids poured out:

John 19:34:

But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith *came there out* blood and water.

This verse contains what are possibly two of the greatest understatements in all of the history of the world. Just as the word "pierced" (Greek: *nusso*) is an understatement when describing the large wound that was inflicted upon Jesus, so the term "came out" (Greek: *exerchomai*) is probably an understatement when referring to the flow of water, blood and gall from His side. Even the words "poured out" are insufficient to get the actual meaning across. The Message translation of the Bible uses the term "gushed out" and the Phillips translation uses the word "outrush." It is not my purpose to compete with Mel Gibson (director of the motion picture, "The Passion of the Christ") with this observation, but those who have witnessed the blood flow resulting from a cut in even a small artery can attest to the fact that the Message and Phillips translations of this verse are much more accurate.

As well as Jesus' gall, the prophet Jeremiah even indicates that Jesus' liver—the organ which produces the body's gall and other types of bile—may have been expelled through this awful gash:

Lamentations 2:11:

My eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is *poured* upon the earth...

It is not too much of a stretch of our reasoning to allow that Jesus' liver may have been disgorged when we remember that the spear wound was large enough to admit Thomas' hand:

John 20:27:

Then said He to Thomas, reach hither your finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither your hand, and thrust it into my side...

So the wound must have been enormous. It was a huge gash! And the blood, gall and water did surge out!

Back again to the Old Testament pouring prophecies:

Job 30:16:

And now my soul [*Jesus' physical life*] is *poured out* because of my plight; the days of affliction take hold of me.

Psalms 22:14:

I am *poured out* like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

This appears to be an amazingly accurate description. The human heart is enveloped and supported by a membrane called the Pericardium which contains lymph or serous fluid, the volume of which increases under stressful conditions. When punctured by the soldier's spear, this membrane in Jesus' body released its liquid contents and the heart lost its support and firmness.

Isaiah 53:12:

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he has *poured out* his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Symbolic pourings in the Old Testament era

Centuries before the time arrived for Jesus to pour out His life and His life blood; He had pre-arranged associated, symbolic events to occur.

If we search all the way back into the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, we will find that there were symbolic pourings at every feast, including Pentecost and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. I will give just one example of each:

I. BLOOD:

Leviticus 4:7:

And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the Lord, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall *pour* all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

The blood of the sacrificial animals was to be poured out at the base of the burnt offering altar, perhaps symbolizing the pouring out of Jesus' blood into the soil of Golgotha.

II. DRINK OFFERINGS OF WINE:

Numbers 28:7:

And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shall you cause the strong wine to be *poured* unto the Lord for a drink offering.

This drink offering of 1.5 litres of fortified wine—probably quite valuable like the highest quality brandy, port, sherry or Muscatel wine – was to be poured out unto God. It is likely that, along with the wine of Jesus' 31AD Passover service, these drink offerings symbolized the precious blood of Jesus Christ:

Matthew 26:27-29:

And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink you all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed [*poured out*] for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

III. OIL:

Leviticus 2:1, 6:

And when any will offer a meat offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall *pour* oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon... You shall part it in pieces, and *pour* oil thereon: it is a meat offering.

Oil was poured out upon these meat offerings (more accurately termed “meal offerings” or “grain offerings”), likely symbolizing the pouring of an unlimited supply of God’s Holy Spirit upon Jesus. Perhaps the addition of the precious, high quality and fragrant frankincense (anciently used for embalming) pre-figured Jesus’ pre-crucifixion anointings, the discussion of which we will come to later.

IV. ASHES:

Leviticus 4:12:

Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth outside the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are *poured out*, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are *poured out* shall he be burnt.

Included in His details for the sacrificial offerings, God even gave specific instructions as to where the offerings were to be burnt and where the *ashes* of the burnt offerings were to be poured, outside the camp. This prefigured the locations for Jesus’ crucifixion and burial—the pouring out of His life and the disposal of His physical human remains:

Hebrews 13:11-12:

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

V. WATER:

I Samuel 7:6:

And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and *poured it out* before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, “We have sinned against the Lord.” And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

In this later event which appears to have been a voluntary fast, these Israelites drew water (assumedly from a well), then poured it out before God. Perhaps the purpose of this little ritual was to declare to God that they would not even drink any water on that day—that it was a fast day totally dedicated to Him. On this verse, Adam Clark comments:

It is not easy to know what is meant by this; it is true that pouring out water in the way of libation was a religious ordinance among the Hebrews...

Some examples of water libations (pouring offerings and rituals) were:

- The water of separation: for the healing and cleansing of lepers,
- The water of purification: for the setting apart of the Levites,
- Various washings: including that of the sacrifices and of the priests.

Pouring vessels

Because of the precious symbolism of the pouring out of wine, oil, blood and water during the offering and other temple ceremonies, God had skilled artisans craft special pouring vessels from the purest gold:

Exodus 25:29:

And you shall make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: of pure gold shall you make them.

Exodus 37:16:

And he made the vessels which were upon the table, his dishes, and his spoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, of pure gold.

Even earlier symbolic pourings

Even before these temple sacrifices and symbols—hundreds of years before God gave the Israelites these sacrifices and symbols—liquid offerings were being poured out. We read of specific, symbolic pourings of oil of and drink offerings as early as the time of Jacob:

Genesis 28:18:

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and *poured oil* upon the top of it.

Genesis 35:14:

And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he *poured a drink offering* thereon, and he *poured oil* thereon.

Perhaps such pourings were common at an even earlier date. Where did Jacob learn about them?

In a later, well-known event, God caused the Egyptian water to be turned into blood when it was poured out:

Exodus 4:9:

...and it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto your voice, that you shall take of the water of the river, and *pour* it upon the dry land: and the water which you take out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.

As well as being the first plague upon Egypt, perhaps this miracle looked forward to the time when Jesus would change the water into wine at the Cana wedding feast (John 2:1-11). In turn, this water and wine of the Cana wedding—along with the water and wine used in Jesus' last Passover service—may have been symbolic of the blood and water that poured from the dying body of our Saviour.

Pre-crucifixion pourings

Returning to 31AD, shortly before the Passover, we read of another symbolic example of pouring:

Matthew 26:6-7, 10, 12:

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and *poured* it on his head, as he sat at meat... When Jesus understood it, He said unto them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has wrought a good work upon me... For in that she has *poured* this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

In his parallel account, Mark writes that the expensive ointment was made from the fragrant, aromatic Himalayan spikenard plant.

Some time before this, a similar—but different—anointing had taken place:

Luke 7:36-38:

And one of the Pharisees desired him that He would eat with him. And He went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Why were there two similar anointings? We know that Jesus said that the Bethany anointing was for His burial. But was there more symbolism to them than that?

It is my speculation that perhaps one of the anointings was for Jesus’ position as High Priest over His New Covenant priesthood, and that the other was for His position as King of kings. Let us briefly examine these possibilities.

A. Jesus anointed as the New Covenant High Priest:

Was one of these outpourings of precious ointment an anti-type of the extra-special anointing oil reserved for the Aaronic priesthood? What was this special anointing oil?

Exodus 30:32:

Upon man's flesh shall it not be *poured*, neither shall you make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.

This special, holy anointing oil was not to be poured on man's flesh.

Exodus 29:1, 7:

And this is the thing that you shall do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish... Then shall you take the anointing oil, and *pour* it upon his head, and anoint him.

It was specially prepared and reserved for the anointing of the high priest and other priests, and of the temple furnishings and vessels:

Leviticus 8:12:

And he *poured* of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.

Leviticus 21:10:

And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was *poured*, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;

Here we see that the special anointing oil was poured out on the head of the high priest. Once again, this appears to be symbolic of the unlimited supply of the Holy Spirit poured out upon our New Covenant High Priest, Jesus Christ. Also, that it is to be poured out on us: we lower-ranked priests of Jesus' New Covenant priesthood. He is the High Priest and we, his brethren, are the lower-ranked "regular" priests under His leadership.

B. Jesus anointed as the King of kings

This was foreshadowed by the anointing of the Israelite kings, the first one being Saul:

I Samuel 10:1:

Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and *poured* it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, is it not because the Lord has anointed you to be captain over his inheritance?

Here we see more rich symbolism. Is not Jesus the Captain of our salvation and of our inheritance (Hebrews 2:10; Colossians 3:24)? Another royal pouring and anointing—that of Jehu—is described in:

II Kings 9:3, 6:

Then take the box of oil, and *pour* it on his head, and say, thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king over Israel... And he arose, and went into the house; and he *poured* the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel.

Back again to 31AD. On the last evening of Jesus' physical life, at the Passover service itself, we see that Jesus had pre-arranged for yet another symbolic pouring to take place:

John 13:5:

After that, He *poured* water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Here we see Jesus pouring out water—both clean and cleansing—and we know that water is symbolic of God's Holy Spirit. All through that Passover service there occurred symbol after symbol, each one related to:

- So many of the Old Testament prophecies and symbols that we have detailed today,
- The anti-types that would be poured out upon Jesus Christ over subsequent days and weeks.

As we have seen, one of these anti-types was that He would pour out His essential bodily fluids and His human life. Another was that seven weeks after His reunification with His Father, He would begin to liberally pour out His Holy Spirit.

Pentecost pourings

So now, at long last, we have arrived at the Feast of Pentecost.

In 31AD, on that first Pentecost of the New Testament era, God began to pour out His Holy Spirit upon His chosen people.

God would not have been able to pour out His Holy Spirit upon His people—it would not have been possible—if Jesus Christ would not first have been willing, on the Passover day of that year, to pour out His human life. Jesus repeatedly stressed this fact to His disciples:

John 16:4-7:

But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go my way to Him that sent me; and none of you asks me, where are you going? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send it unto you.

Here is the big link between the two spring feast seasons. In order for His Holy Spirit to be poured out, Jesus first had to pour out his blood on Passover day. He then briefly returned to His Father's throne room in heaven on the Wave Sheaf Offering day and there He presented the offering of His blood to His Father.

Let me repeat this important fact once more. Jesus had to pour out His blood before we could receive and enjoy the benefits of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon us.

It is true that God gave His Spirit to a few people in Old Testament times. But, on this Feast of Pentecost in 31AD, He began to more liberally pour out His Spirit upon the members of His brand-new, fledgling church. He began on this day by converting devout Israelites to Christianity through the gift of His Spirit. But, within a very short time, He also began to call and convert Gentiles:

Acts 10:45:

And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Spirit.

But, even these great events—these great first pourings out of His Spirit—foreshadowed an even greater event which is still yet to occur:

Acts 2:16-18:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will *pour out* of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will *pour out* in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

Here we see that, in the end times, there will be a great pouring out of God's Holy Spirit. This does not mean that God's Holy Spirit had not been poured out upon the early church, or on later eras, or that it is not being poured out on the church today. But, the implication here is that there is to be a remarkable increase in the flow of God's Spirit in those last days.

Pouring out of God's Spirit prophesied in the Old Testament

When Peter spoke the above words, he was quoting directly from Joel 2:28-29. But, this was not the only Old Testament prophecy of the pouring out of God's Spirit. Let us look at a few more:

Proverbs 1:23:

Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will *pour out* my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

There are two things we can learn here:

First, the pouring out of God's Spirit on us is conditional upon us "turning at His reproof." Is this turning – this repentance – not exactly what Peter was inspired to announce on that first New Testament Pentecost?

Acts 2:38:

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 you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Second, through the gift of His Spirit, God will help us to know and understand His words. Continuing with another Old Testament prophecy of God sending His Holy Spirit:

Isaiah 32:15:

Until the Spirit be *poured* upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

A reading of the context of this verse reveals that this is another prophecy of God's Spirit being richly poured out upon mankind in the last days and in the World Tomorrow. Here are some more:

Isaiah 44:3:

For I will *pour* water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will *pour* my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring.

This is not to be a mere trickle. Not just a gentle pouring like a person pouring milk out of a jug into a cup of tea. This will be a great outpouring. A great gushing. Comparatively, this will be more like the blast of a powerful fire hose!

Ezekiel 39:29:

Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I shall have *poured out* my Spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord Eternal.

With regards to God's Holy Spirit, do you think that what you see is what you get? Do you think that the level of the Holy Spirit evident today is all there is? And all there will be? Brethren, I sincerely believe that, when it comes to the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit, *You ain't seen nothing yet!*

Zechariah 12:10:

And I will *pour* upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

We have come full circle. Here we see a link back the other way, from the "Pentecost pouring"—from the pouring out of God's Holy Spirit—back to the "Passover pouring." Here is a reminder of that super-important event which is never, ever to be forgotten—even after the coming of the Holy Spirit: the piercing of the body of Jesus Christ and the pouring out of His life.

Pouring out our lives

Why did Jesus Christ pour out His life for us? And why does He continue to pour out His Spirit upon us? There are quite a few reasons; but one of the main ones is because He loves us. And He loves us with two different kinds of love. One is His love for us as His affianced Bride, and the other is His love for us as His brothers and sisters.

God's Holy Spirit is like that special anointing oil mixture we looked at earlier, the recipe, ingredients and other details of which we can find in Exodus 30:22-33. Like that oil and its ingredients, God's Spirit contains all of the ingredients (or seeds) of its fruits (Galatians 5:22-23), the first listed of which is love. Yes, God's special love is mixed into the Spirit which He continually pours onto and into us:

Romans 5:5:

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been *poured out* in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which was given to us.

One natural result of this love that we possess through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit is this: Because Jesus was willing to pour out His life and His blood for you and me, we know that we too must be willing to pour out our lives. We all hope, of course, that we will not be called upon to die violently in God's service. But, on a regular, daily basis we need to be pouring out our lives in loving service to God and to His people. One of the best known verses in the whole of God's Word is this one:

John 15:13:

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

Jesus did just this for you and me and, as we are His siblings who are trying to emulate Him, we are to do the same for each other:

I John 3:16:

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

Paul did:

Philippians 2:17:

Yes, and if I am being *poured out* as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.

Like Jesus, Paul was also called upon to die a violent death in God's service. To lay down his life. To pour out his life. He lived and died for God and for his service to God's people. His whole life was poured out—like the drink offerings mentioned earlier—in dedication to God's service.

We too need to strive to do the same thing. We too must emulate Paul as he emulated Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). We too must be willing—as God tells us in I John 3:16—to pour out our lives as offerings to God and his people.

There is so much more to this subject of pouring than I have had the time to cover today. I have only been able to scratch the surface of this topic. But, the main point I wanted to get across to you is that there is much rich symbolism on this subject of pouring when examined in the light of Passover and the Feast of Pentecost; also that the links between the two are undeniable.

The requirement for the temple rituals and their associated pourings has been suspended for our era, but they apparently will be reintroduced during the Millennium for the benefit of the humans of that age (Zechariah 14:20-21).

Although God poured out His Spirit mightily upon each of His Old Testament servants individually, when combined, it was a mere trickle in comparison with that which He has poured out, is pouring out, and will pour out upon His New Testament people.

So as we remember the words of the prophet Joel as repeated by the apostle Peter:

Joel 2:28-29:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will *pour out* my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I *pour out* my Spirit.

These words prophesy of the surety of the huge out-pouring of God's Holy Spirit that is still ahead of us... hopefully in the near future...

When it comes to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit... comparatively, brethren...

We ain't seen nothing yet!

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