

Unqualified Fulfillment in Christ

John R Gavazzoni

Several years ago, as of the date of this writing, brother J. Preston Eby, during a conference in which he delivered a message on the Word of God, spoke of his awareness that God was "fine-tuning" His Word in our day. I found that to be-- typical of our brother's ministry-- wonderfully expressive of a central feature of the Spirit's intense obsession with the purity and clarity of the Word of God. For years I have experienced the mighty, yet delicately skillful hand of God adjusting the knob on my own receiver.

Of course, though we are now becoming highly sensitized to this activity of God, it has been going on from the immediate moment after Eve heard the serpent say, "Hath God said...." For four thousand years God wrote, through the lives of men and women, an introduction to the Book of Life, the Book which is the multiplication and unfolding of the Word of God, both being Christ Himself, and in that introduction, among other things, He highlighted the three feasts that Israel had been commanded to observe as types or shadows of the substantive work of God in Christ on our behalf.

As many who read this message know, it became standard teaching in most of the evangelical world that the feasts of Passover and Pentecost had been historically fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ, with the immediate confirmation of that fulfillment in the transformed lives of the Lord's disciples as they passed from death to life, from cowardly inconsistency to faithfully testifying to the Truth, their Lord Jesus.

But after centuries of the corrupting of the Word of God, it came to be held that the Feast of Tabernacles awaited fulfillment some day up in heaven. That was, of course, part and parcel, of the perversion of the gospel, a perversion that claimed that missing hell and gaining heaven were central to the intention of God's saving grace in Christ. The "hell" of that scenario was a religious invention, and the "heaven," a fanciful product of the imagination of men.

God set about to correct such nonsense and brought about, among other things, the beginning of seeing Tabernacles in a different and

better light. Ministers of the Word began to proclaim that Tabernacles was to be fulfilled on earth relative to the manifestation of the sons of God through whom God would deliver creation from its bondage to decay. This was now more clearly seen, as a matter of heaven coming to earth, rather than escaping earth to get to heaven. But this was the beginning of a correction that would reach the point of fine-tuning that brother Eby spoke of.

It was conceded that there was a sense in which the Reality of what Tabernacles pictured was already in process, but, by and large, the fulfillment was considered to be something in the future. My understanding of the writings of dear men of God who were used in that phase of correction, is that they considered there to be a perfect provision by Christ for the fulfillment whose consummation was yet to come, but they would not say, unequivocally, that Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles had all been fulfilled in Christ. This somewhat skewed perspective of the relationship of provision and fulfillment really affected the understanding of all three feasts.

The thought seemed to be that Christ had made provision for fulfillment, but not effected fulfillment itself. Provision for fulfillment and fulfillment itself took on a certain separateness. Please note this principle: Provision proceeds out from fulfillment, not visa versa. I must repeat: Fulfillment does not proceed out from provision, rather our provision in Christ grows out of God's already accomplished and continuing fulfillment in Him.

The feasts of Israel are included in the law; in fact the content of the first five books of the old testament is what is meant by "the law" by the writers of the new testament, and any properly instructed person, especially any Israelite understood that to be so. The law consisted of the record of actual historical incidents.

It's very nature belongs to the dimension of that which is "about" God and His people, while all the time pointing back into the heart of God and forward to the Person and mission of Christ, which are the Substance, Reality and Actuality of that about which the law speaks. I could, for instance, write a book "about" our marriage of forty six years (almost fifty years as of this re-editing), but the marriage itself is the thing, not the book.

Consider this, if you will, that the fulfillment of the types in the Old Testament, including all three of Israel's feasts, were completely fulfilled in the birth, life, suffering, death, resurrection and glorification of our Lord Jesus, with us in Him. Oh, Lord, fine-tune this to our hearts for there is still much essential confusion. Either He fulfilled the law, all of it, or He didn't, and of course, by fulfilled, I mean that His Person and accomplishments were the Reality of all that had previously simply been shadow and type. In short, and to rephrase, His human experience was the substance of all that had been foreshadowed.

What I'm getting to is that we are not looking forward personally or corporately to the promises of God inherent in the types and shadows of the law becoming fulfilled. We are proceeding from a complete fulfillment of the entirety of the law in the Christ event from incarnation to glorification. That's what the three feasts pointed forward to. But, I'll grant you, this creates what I've called an almost intolerable intellectual tension, for just where does our experience as the historic people of God, or lack of the same, individually and corporately. with all the accompanying apparent contradictions fit in?

While participating in an Internet forum along these lines, I underwent a flashback to wrestling with this years ago. I'd been disciplined by the Lord to always keep foremost in my thinking the perfecting of our Lord by the things which He experienced and the things that our Father accomplished through Him as my ultimate reference point regarding truth, and to stake out that high ground of perspective, so to speak, of an already, fully accomplished aeonian purpose in Him, and from there to extrapolate to the true meaning of our earthly experiences.

I had seen God's perfect Son from eternity, confirm His completeness in space-time, and had seen that we all have been, and continue to be included in that perfected Personhood. I saw that what Paul meant by His beloved expression, "in Christ," was that all that Christ is, all that the Father accomplished through Him, and His relationship to the Father all accrued to us in union with Him. We are indeed heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

During the course of the aforementioned Internet discussion greater clarity came to me from the Spirit as I realized that Christ had eternalized every moment of His aeonian experience so that the Christ event belongs to eternity now. Let me explain: Eternity invaded time in the Person of our Lord, and time was raised up into eternity in/by Him.

He totally sanctified and eternalized the human experience in Himself, so that when we experience any or all of the elements of His human experience which are now in the Spirit, though it is consciously experienced on a linear time-line, it is not really a matter of some elements having been fulfilled and others requiring further experience on our part before we can say that they're fulfilled (whether we're talking about events or growth), but that all of our experiences of Christ through the filling of the Spirit belong to the eternal moment, that moment in which all things have been made new.

We are having our eyes opened, not to what still awaits fulfillment, but to the presence of the already completed New Man in the eternal Day of the Lord, which is Christ, Himself, and us in Him. Does that mean that we must deal with the contradictions that plague us forever? Does that mean that there is no experiential consummation? Absolutely not.

What is happening is not the substance of the feasts still coming into being linearly, but a demonstration linearly of what already is in the eternal moment, that moment of the fullness of the times when eternity and time were made one in our Lord, when God sent forth His Son, born of a woman. And when I say, "eternity," I mean God, Himself, for He is Eternity. That's why Paul could say that God causes us always to triumph in Christ.

Wow, no hedging there, no qualifying compromise. No chipping away at the edges of Reality in order to make room for present appearances. Always caused to triumph. The swallowing up of death, an accomplished fact in the death and resurrection of Christ is always being demonstrated in us and death's lie will be accorded a place as long as the Lord wants to extend the linear demonstration.

With whatever is involved, the manifold (multi-faceted, variegated) wisdom of God is being played out before an audience of principalities and powers, a symphony, as it were, building to an awesome crescendo.

The Reality is appearing over and over again in history, but what is appearing is not something that has not yet been, but what IS in I AM. The lie of unfulfillment is daily being exposed by the fire of God in us. I hope I don't sound like I'm floating around in esoteric space, but it really has resonated with me when I've heard brethren say that there's a sense in which our someday expectations are a kingdom/sonship equivalent of rapture in the bye and bye.

Recently after ministering this truth at a conference, a dear mother in the faith came to me with an enthusiasm that belied her eighty plus years and she said to me that here is where she had taken her stand, here is the only place where she had found the rest that belongs to the people of God. There was a awesome fierceness about her demeanor, behind that face lit with the glory of God. The devil and his demons wanted nothing to do with the fire in her eyes as she made her magnificent confession of faith. So be it.

Much Love,
John