

# Adult Sunday School Class

## “Our Christian Heritage” - Lesson 15

### Return to Pentecost

Following His crucifixion, resurrection, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the “*promise of the Father.*”

**Luke 24:46 (NKJV)** Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, **47** and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** And you are witnesses of these things. **49** Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Scripture says 120 believers, including the eleven remaining disciples and Mary, Jesus’ mother, were all together in the upper room, waiting for the promise. The Holy Spirit filled the house:

**Acts 2:1 (NKJV)** When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Scripture tells us that devout Jews from all over the Mediterranean world were in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks, and they heard the 120 newly filled believers speaking in many languages that they understood. Then Peter got up and preached a message - the first sermon of the Christian church.

**Acts 2:14** But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. <sup>15</sup> For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day. <sup>16</sup> But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup> “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,  
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
Your young men shall see visions,  
Your old men shall dream dreams.

<sup>18</sup> And on My menservants and on My maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;  
And they shall prophesy . . .

<sup>22</sup> “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— <sup>23</sup> Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; <sup>24</sup> whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it . . . <sup>32</sup> This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. <sup>33</sup> Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear . . . <sup>36</sup> “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

<sup>38</sup> Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." <sup>39</sup> For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

<sup>40</sup> And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." <sup>41</sup> Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

For the Christian, Pentecost means *spiritual resurrection* through the Spirit of Christ - and a spiritual harvest for God (in the Old Testament, the feast of Pentecost was a feast of the wheat harvest). We are new creatures in Christ through His Spirit. We are *made alive through the Spirit of God*.

**Ephesians 1:7** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace . . .

<sup>13</sup> In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

**Ephesians 2:1** And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins

The doctrine of the infilling of the Spirit (evidenced by speaking in other tongues) was lost after the first several centuries of Christianity. Christianity became cold and dark, as teachings arose that were not biblical. Church leaders were not led by the Spirit, so the church was unspiritual. There were pockets of revival and truth in the Dark Ages, but for the most part, the church was unspiritual.

## **Pentecost Revived in 20th Century**

Our study of Christian history has taken us into the 20th century. We have studied the remarkable revival at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California, which lasted from 1906-1909 (with daily services!). This revival was known for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Attendees of all denominations received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, expecting to speak in other tongues - and they did. Along with Holy Spirit baptisms came healings and miracles. The revival became known all over North America - and around the world. People came from everywhere to receive the Holy Ghost. Newsletters about the revival were sent out and people received the Holy Ghost just *reading* about what God was doing at Azusa Street.

Azusa Street was the beginning of the world-wide modern Pentecostal movement. Because most denominations did not welcome members who had received the Holy Ghost (and preached the evidence of speaking in tongues), Pentecostal groups were formed. Some of the better known groups from the early days of Pentecost are the Assemblies of God, the Church of God (Cleveland), the Church of God in Christ, and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. There were many other smaller organizations as well.

In 1916, Pentecostals who, over the past decade or so, received a revelation of Jesus Christ as the Mighty God and baptized in the name of Jesus Christ were no

longer welcome in the trinitarian Pentecostal groups. These believers of the One God in Christ then formed their own organizations and were commonly known as Oneness Pentecostals or Jesus Name Pentecostals. The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ were both larger Oneness organizations in the early days. There were many smaller groups as well. Eventually, some of these smaller groups joined together to form larger ones.

### **The Changes Brought about in the 20's**

Three things happened that brought about great changes in the 1920's. These things were:

- World War I (The United States was involved from 1917 to 1919)
- Prohibition (an amendment was added to the US Constitution stating that it was no longer legal to sell, make, or transport liquor. This amendment was in place from 1920-1933)
- Women received the right to vote (the Nineteenth Amendment was added to the United States Constitution in 1920)

The 1920's are often called "The Roaring Twenties" because of all the changes that came to society in the United States and Europe during this decade. Many of these changes were focused on women.

Before the start of World War I, the *Gibson Girl* was the rage. Inspired by Charles Dana Gibson's drawings, the Gibson Girl wore her long hair loosely on top of her head and wore a long straight skirt and a shirt with a high collar. She was feminine but also broke through several gender barriers, for her attire allowed her to participate in sports, including golf, roller skating, and bicycling.



Then World War I started in 1914. America didn't get involved until 1917. This brought about the biggest changes in the lives of American women. The war presented women fresh opportunities to employ their talents and abilities. In reality, they were left with no choice but to help support their men who were overseas.

Women had to leave their homes to work, while the men went off to a foreign land to fight in the war.

Formerly male-dominated America was now confronted with the spectacle of women auto mechanics, telegraph messengers, elevator operators, bomb assemblers, and streetcar conductors. Many women toiled in factories, carried ice, plowed fields, and became traffic cops. Eleven thousand women enlisted in the navy for shore duty. Over 200 women became clerks and secretaries in the Marine Corps.

When the war was over, the survivors went home, and the world tried to return to normalcy. Unfortunately, settling down in peacetime proved more difficult than expected. During the war, the men had fought against both the enemy and death in far away lands; the women had bought into the patriotic fervor and aggressively entered the workforce. During the war, both the young men and the young women of this generation had broken out of society's structure - and they found it very difficult to return.

Young people were expected to settle down into the humdrum routine of American life as if nothing had happened - to accept the old morality which had been taken from them during the war. They couldn't do it, and they very disrespectfully said so.

Women especially did not desire to return to society's rules and roles after the war. In the age of the Gibson Girl, young women did not date; they waited until a proper young man formally paid interest in her with suitable intentions (marriage). However, nearly a whole generation of young men had died in the war, leaving nearly a whole generation of young women without possible suitors. Women decided that they were not willing to waste away their young lives waiting idly for spinsterhood; they were going to enjoy life. The younger generation was breaking away from the old set of values and prepared for the "First Youth Rebellion."

### **The "New Woman"**

In the 1920s, a new woman was born. She smoked, drank, danced, and voted. She cut her hair, wore make-up, and went to petting parties. She was giddy and took risks.

The most familiar symbol of the "Roaring Twenties" is probably the "flapper": a young woman with bobbed hair and short skirts who drank, smoked and said what might be termed "unladylike" things, in addition to being more sexually "free" than previous generations.

In reality, most young women in the 1920s did none of these things (though many did adopt a fashionable flapper wardrobe and did bob their hair), but even those women who were not flappers gained some unprecedented freedoms. At last, they could vote: the 19th Amendment to the Constitution had guaranteed that right in 1920.



Flapper influence in the 1920's



Bobbed hair of the 1920's

However, along with the right to vote came a movement of women invading strongholds that formerly belonged to men. Millions of women entered the work force and could afford to participate in the burgeoning consumer economy. The increased availability of birth-control devices made it possible for women to have fewer children. New machines and technologies like the washing

machine and the vacuum cleaner eliminated some of the drudgery of household work.

### The Birth of Mass Culture

During the 1920s, many Americans had extra money to spend, and they spent it on consumer goods such as ready-to-wear clothes and home appliances like electric refrigerators. In particular, they bought radios. The first commercial radio station in the U.S. - Pittsburgh's KDKA - hit the airwaves in 1920. Three years later there were more than 500 stations in the nation. By the end of the 1920s, there were radios in more than 12 million households. People also went to the movies: Historians estimate that, by the end of the decade, three-quarters of the American population visited a movie theater every week.



Theda Bara (The Vamp)

Hollywood especially helped to change the morality of the 1920's. Silent film actresses such as Theda Bara ("The Vamp", short for vampire, meaning a seductive woman) and Pola Negri, were the new sex symbols and examples for young women. From the 1920's to this present day, Hollywood would be a major influence in the lives of Americans as it attempted (and succeeded) to shape and mold American culture and morality.



Pola Negri

In the Roaring Twenties, the occult would come to popular culture with the increased popularity of the Ouija Board which was often used by the folks back home during World War I to inquire about the welfare of the men fighting the war. In the 1920's seances became popular activities as people tried to contact the dead. People traded religion for psychology. Sigmund Freud's sex theories became common dinner table topics.

The most important consumer product of the 1920s was the automobile. Low prices (the Ford Model T cost just \$260 in 1924) and generous credit made cars affordable luxuries at the beginning of the decade; by the end, they were practically necessities. In 1929 there was one car on the road for every five Americans. Meanwhile, an economy of automobiles was born: Businesses like service stations and motels sprang up to meet drivers' needs. More and more boys were owning automobiles - and parking them on dark roads to neck with their dates. The call for gaiety and fun was louder than the call for decency.

Cars also gave young people the freedom to go where they pleased and do what they wanted. What many young people wanted to do was dance: the Charleston, the cake walk, the Turkey Trot, and the Bunny Hug. Jazz bands played at dance halls; and radio stations and phonograph records (100 million of which were sold in 1927 alone) carried their tunes to listeners across the nation. Some older people objected to jazz music's "vulgarity" and "depravity", but many in the younger generation loved the freedom they felt on the dance floor.

## **Prohibition**

During the 1920s, some freedoms were expanded while others were curtailed. The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1919, had banned the manufacture and sale of "intoxicating liquors," and at 12 A.M. on January 16, 1920, the federal Volstead Act closed every tavern, bar and saloon in the United States. From then on, it was illegal to sell any "intoxication beverages" with more than 0.5% alcohol. This drove the liquor trade underground. Now, people simply went to illegal speakeasies instead of ordinary bars. Liquor was now controlled by bootleggers, racketeers and other organized-crime figures such as Chicago gangster Al Capone.

## **Contradicting the Word of God**

While some advances for women were the natural course of history (women voting, for example), other changes contradicted the Word of God. For instance, Paul taught in 1 Corinthians that a man should wear his hair short and a woman should wear her hair long. In the 1920's - for the first time in American and European history - women began cutting their hair *en masse*. Up to this time, it was normal for women to never cut their hair. This movement of "bobbing the hair" started (as most movements do) with one or two well-known people who shaped history. Irene Castle was a dancer who, with her husband, helped popularize the Fox Trot dance, as well as ragtime and jazz music. She was a fashion icon.

*Wikipedia* says of her: “Irene Castle became a major fashion trendsetter, initiating the vogue for shorter skirts. She is also credited with introducing American women to the bob – the short hairstyle favored by flappers in the 1920s.”

The bobbed hair craze of the 1920’s was so radical that there were daily articles in newspapers and magazines about it for two years. Hairdressers, whose training was mainly in arranging and curling long hair, were slow to realize that bobbed hair was here to stay. Therefore, women who wanted their hair cut went to a men’s barbershop (the only ones who cut hair). Some barbers charged \$5 for a bobbed hair-cut (a lot of money back then), but still there were lines out the door and down the street in many shops as women collectively went to bob their hair. Bobbed hair was a sign of the emancipation of women. It was a sign of the modern era. Once women bobbed their hair, they didn’t want to grow it back. Not only was it easy to take care of, it felt free - and women couldn’t stand that “in-between” stage when hair was growing out to be long again. In 1925, one article stated, “It certainly begins to look as if a ‘woman’s crowning glory’ is soon going to be a relic of the past.” Another article reads, “And now short hair is considered chic. It is also the symbol of freedom of women. But bobbing the hair won’t make you free. It isn’t so simple as that.”

Nothing could be more true. It is amazing that so many women were unaware of the Scriptural truth regarding hair given by the Apostle Paul:

**1 Corinthians 11:2 (NLT)** I am so glad that you always keep me in your thoughts, and that you are following the teachings I passed on to you. **3** But there is one thing I want you to know: The head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. **4** A man dishonors his head if he covers his head while praying or prophesying. **5** But a woman dishonors her head if she prays or prophesies without a covering on her head, for this is the same as shaving her head. **6** Yes, if she refuses to wear a head covering, she should cut off all her hair! But since it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut or her head shaved, she should wear a covering.

**7** A man should not wear anything on his head when worshiping, for man is made in God’s image and reflects God’s glory. And woman reflects man’s glory . . . **10** For this reason, and because the angels are watching, a woman should wear a covering on her head to show she is under authority . . .

**14** Isn’t it obvious that it’s disgraceful for a man to have long hair? **15** And isn’t long hair a woman’s pride and joy? [KJV: it is a glory to her] For it has been given to her as a covering. **16** But if anyone wants to argue about this, I simply say that we have no other custom than this, and neither do God’s other churches.

Paul teaches that not only is a woman’s hair her crowning glory, but it is shameful for her to cut it. Yet, most Christians today would be surprised to hear this! We should take note that long hair on a woman shows that she is under the authority of her husband (and also under the authority of Jesus Christ). Even the angels take note of this. Therefore, it is no surprise that in the 1920’s, when women wanted to be free, independent, and no longer under the authority of husbands or fathers, they removed the symbol that was given by God showing that they no longer accepted the authority of men or God. The women’s liberation movement was in full swing.

What did the Christian churches say about it? In fact, many ministers of several denominations spoke out against bobbing the hair, citing Paul's admonition. Here is a tract entitled: *Bobbed Hair: Is It Well-Pleasing to the Lord?*

*"Will our sisters in Christ - the younger ones especially - suffer a few words of exhortation and entreaty? A new fashion has come into the world that knows not God, and many who do know Him are following it. The new fashion is called 'bobbing' the hair . . . No Christian would willingly grieve the Lord, and assuredly none would knowingly disobey His Word. But 'evil is wrought by the want of thought as well as want of heart . . . The human family, having thrown off God, is a seething mass of restlessness and discontent (Isaiah 7:20-21). No satisfaction can be found. Nothing pleases the mind long, so that those who cater for the world's amusements and fashions have to keep their brains continually on the rack in order to provide something fresh. But why should Christian women fall victims to all this? . . . Has God's Word nothing to say concerning these things? Let us turn to 1 Corinthians 11: 3-16. In verse 15 we read, 'If a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given to her for a covering.' This one passage should suffice for all who wish to please God . . . In verse 6 we are told that it is 'a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven.' The new word 'bobbed' is only another way of saying shorn.*

*A bobbed woman is a disgraced woman! Surely a very serious consideration for all who fear God! What will the Lord say to our sisters about this when we all stand at His judgment seat? Where would our present-day defaced sisters have been at the scene of the two women who wiped the feet of Jesus? What services could they have rendered the Lord in their unnatural condition? How strangely ill at ease our poor shorn sisters would have been had they been present in the Bethany home that day! . . .*

*The refusal to utter the word 'obey' in the Marriage Service, the wearing of men's apparel when cycling, the smoking of cigarettes and the 'bobbing' of the hair are all indicative of one thing . . . God's order is everywhere flouted. Divine forbearance tolerates the growing evil for the present, but the hour of Divine intervention in judgment approaches fast."*

It may be hard for 21st century people to understand how radical the bobbed hair craze was. One man, John Baer, in Peoria, Illinois, feared that his temper would get away from him because his wife just bobbed her hair. He called the county jail begging to be locked up so he could "cool off."

A large department store manager fired all bobbed haired employees and a hospital discharged all bobbed haired nurses. Though men fought the bobbed hair craze, it was here to stay. Eventually, they learned to accept it. There was no going back.

One Episcopal Bishop expressed his concern because of a definite anti-Christian drift in America. He found the acceleration of the drift alarming since the war, and called on the church to stem the rising tide toward a pagan America. The Bishop cited worldly amusements, immodesty in dress, and an unbridled license



toward immorality as the chief reasons for the slide: “Fighting stopped and reconstruction is supposed to have begun eighteen months ago. We won the war, but seemingly we lost all that we were fighting for.”

## **Conclusion**

While the world was busy becoming more worldly during the 1920's, the church continued to have revival. Pentecostal preachers preached against the new strongholds of Satan - particularly the movies, dancing, smoking, drinking, and immodest dress and hair bobbing. The call went out for holiness in the church - and to stay holy, one needed to be prayed up and full of the Holy Ghost. There was a great contrast between spiritual and unspiritual - holy and unholy. What the world needed was Holy Ghost revival! In Jesus Christ was true joy and fulfillment.

World War I precipitated changes that have rocked our world. Wars will often do that. We saw a great rebellion of youth during the Vietnam War. This rebellion brought about more changes in society - that we are living with today. In the book of Revelation, the Bible speaks about a great war that is coming that will change society forever (Revelation 9:13-21). This war will change things so much that the Anti-christ will come on the scene and be accepted (Revelation 13). Let us be forewarned by the lessons we learn from history and Christian history.