

PENTECOST

The Time of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

With all of its mysterious rituals, what does it mean for us? It's called by many names, such as: Feast of Harvest - Feast of Weeks - Feast of Harvest of the First Fruits - and of course, Pentecost.

The many names give us a clue to the significance and meaning of this day. We can surmise that it has to do with a harvest of some type, and that it involves a series of weeks connected to a Feast. Also, it speaks of First Fruits, which tells us that there must, therefore, be at least one other fruit to come. Who would that be? Also mentioned is Israel's labor, could that have a double meaning? Pentecost simply means Count Fifty, referring to the number of days, which would herald the coming of a specific event.

We can look in places like Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:15-21; Deuteronomy 16:10 & 16 and be further enlightened. With a brief study of those scriptures we can learn, among other things, that Pentecost is determined by counting fifty days from the Wave Sheaf offering. (On the day of the Wave Sheaf offering Christ's works were accepted by the Father, therefore Christ was the fulfillment of the Wave Sheaf offering, or the *First of First Fruits* harvest of the earth, John 20:17).

We learn that from the start of the harvest at the Wave Sheaf offering to the day of Pentecost are seven Sabbaths complete. This is the time of the barley and wheat harvest, which represents Israel's labor, those of the First fruits.

The Significance of Leavening

They were given specific instructions for offerings and sacrifices to be performed on this day. Oddly, one was to bake two loaves of bread made of fine flour *with leavening*. Leavening symbolizes contamination, evil or sin. Therefore, it is forbidden to be used on threat of excommunication, as an offering to God, when the offering represents God. (Christ) (Ex. 12:15 & 23:18). Knowing this, why would anyone use leavened bread for the Lord's Supper? Remember, Christ never sinned.

Other than the peace offering in Leviticus 7:13 (representing the one making the offer), Pentecost is the only time leavening is allowed in an offering to God. In this offering the loaves represent the Church in the wilderness, (Israel) and the New Testament Church, neither of which has yet attained sinless perfection.

The Significance of the Number Fifty

Every *fiftieth* year was a year of Jubilee, a time of release. All debts were cancelled, slaves were set free and liberty was proclaimed through out the land. Land was returned to its rightful owner, an opportunity for a *new beginning* for all. Read Leviticus 25.

Priests were typically retired at *age 50*, their work completed, a kind of *new beginning* for them.

The first Pentecost observed by Israel was at Mt. Sinai, which was *fifty days* after they left Egypt (Ex. 19:16). They were given a *new beginning* and were no longer the slaves of Egypt. Pentecost is a precursor and promise of the ultimate Jubilee for all mankind.

The *fiftieth day* was when the nation of Israel agreed to the torah and a conditional (bilateral) Covenant of material blessings was ratified in blood (Ex. 24:6-8).

Israel did not fully understand this festival and many times during their history they forgot it, but God didn't. They may have considered this Feast to be merely a memorial of the covenant between them and God, not realizing that it was a rehearsal of a much more important and triumphal event to come. This future event was spoken of in Joel 2, alluded to in John 16:7, Acts 1:8 and many other places.

A Permanent Commemoration

Pentecost is a statute forever and it was to be observed in all their dwellings and throughout all their generations.

Fifty days after the Wave Sheaf Offering (Lev. 23:15) we read in Acts 2:1 that the Apostles were gathered together in observance of Pentecost. The power and might displayed at the first Pentecost was similarly displayed again, but this time the power from on high became available to all mankind.

The Coming of the Promise

We are reminded of Christ's words in Luke 24:49. "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but *tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*" The next step in future events that Pentecost pointed to was about to happen, and Jesus knew it. And it happened *exactly 50 days* from the Wave Sheaf offering.

Power From on High

From then on everything was different. No longer would the Apostles run and hide, but would stand firm, speaking out for the truth of the word of God, even in the face of death. The power from on high had come and a *new beginning* had been given to mankind. The regenerated man was no longer a slave to sin and now had the ever-present power of the Holy Spirit as his source of strength. A worthy prayer might be to ask God to help us fully comprehend the great power we have available to us because Pentecost came!

Paul reminds us in II Timothy 1:6-7, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou *stir up* the gift of God, which is in thee by the *putting on of my hands* (as in laying on of hands at baptism). For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of *power*, and of *love*, and of a *sound mind.*"

Who Are the First Fruits?

In I Corinthians 15:20 Paul tells us: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept," Christ was the first of God's harvest of the earth. James

tells us that we also, "...are a kind of *firstfruits*--" (James 1:18).

From Exodus to Revelation we read that the *firstfruits* of all things belong to God. Then in Romans 8:9, we read: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." If all *firstfruits* belong to God, and those who have the Spirit of Christ belong to God, then wouldn't the *First Fruits* and those with the Spirit be the same? Then who are the fruits that come after the First Fruits? Without going into too much detail in this study, it can be said that they are those of the fall harvest who are resurrected after the 1000 years mentioned in Revelation 20:5. God has not forgotten them, the dry bones of Ezekiel 37 aptly describe a physical resurrection and there will be others as well.

The book of Romans gives us a further description of the First Fruits:

5 "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Continuing in verses 9-14:

9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwells in you.

12 “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

Just as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil brought death, the Holy Spirit has brought life.

Now the Question Is

How does one obtain this Holy Spirit that gives eternal life? Christ tells us in Luke 11:13, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that *ask him?*”

But is it really that simple? Is there more to it? Well, yes, Peter tells us to repent and be baptized to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). So, one must be sincere and willing to change.

Also, in Acts 5:32 AMP we read: “And we are witnesses of these things, and the Holy Spirit is also, Whom God has

bestowed on those who *obey* Him.” So obedience is also a key factor.

The New Covenant Prophesied and Explained

Do not think that you can obtain the Holy Spirit and remain unchanged. Read Ezekiel 36:26-27. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

27 “And I will put *my spirit* within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

Jeremiah backs up Ezekiel in Jeremiah 31:31-33.

31 “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 “Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant *they* brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

33 “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the LORD, I will put *my law* (same law, why change perfection? Ps. 19:7) in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

And it is confirmed in Hebrews 8:10. “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put *my laws* into their *mind*, (understanding) and write them in their *hearts*: (desire to obey) and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.”

Did You Notice the New Covenant Did Not Change or Cancel God’s law?

If someone tells you that the New Covenant did away with God’s law, remember the words of Isaiah:

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20).

But some may ask, wasn’t He speaking specifically to Israel (and Jews) only? Perhaps we should let the word of God answer that.

As Christians, are we the sons of Abraham and a part of his generations (Gal. 3:7)?

As Christians are we Abraham’s descendants and heir to the promise (Gal. 3:27-29)?

As Christians are we children of the promise the same as Isaac (Gal. 4:28)?

As Christians are we guaranteed the promise given to all descendants of Abraham whether they are by faith or by the law (Rom. 4:16)?

As Christians is there neither Jew nor Greek---but all are one in Christ (Gal. 3:28)?

As Christians are we admonished to worship in spirit and in truth (John 3:23-24)?

As Christians, are we to live by every word of the Lord (Deut. 8:3)?

Is there coming a time when all mankind will be required to keep His Appointed Times (Isa. 66:23; Zech. 14:16)?

Considering these verses, how could we not know that we, as Christians, are the first fruits of spiritual Israel, the chosen of God, with His laws written in our hearts?

We are told that: “by their fruits ye shall know them.” What fruit should we as firstfruits bear? Shouldn’t we look to the word for direction?

Galatians 5:22-26 describes the fruit we expect to see manifested in us as well as others:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering (forgiveness), gentleness, goodness (decency), faith (let’s not skip over those words, think on them).

23 “Meekness (submissiveness), temperance (self-control): against such there is no law.

24 “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.

25 “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (not in the flesh).

26 “Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

And in Ephesians 5:9-11,

“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;

10 “Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. (We are given a love for the truth [II Thess. 2:10]).

11 “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” (Choose your company carefully; speak out when it’s appropriate).

Now let’s ponder Philippians 1:9-11.

“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; (ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free).

10 “That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

Don’t be discouraged, it doesn’t come all at once; it’s a learning process. We will fall, but we only fail when we don’t get up. Let’s meditate on the good advice from the letter to the Philippians found in chapter four.

A Recipe for Mental Health

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever

things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Phil. 4:8-9).

What we are being told here is to guard our minds. Crowd out the evil darts sent by Satan with good positive thoughts, the key to health, happiness and success. It has been said, “We become what we think.”

Remember, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13). And certainly we would not think to do things that Christ would not do.

Pentecost Is:

The coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Power from on High, our guide into all truth, and the start of the New Covenant. It is the fulfillment of the mystery that has been hidden from ages past (Col. 2:5-7); hidden even from the very beginning of the world (Eph. 3:3-6). The mystery the prophets desired to understand, and even hidden from the angels (I Pet. 1:10-12). The mystery of Pentecost is revealed by Paul in Colossians 2:9-10 which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” It is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the beginning of the metamorphosis from flesh to spirit as explained by Jesus to Nicodemus John 3. Pentecost is the *new beginning* offered to all mankind.

Pentecost came precisely on schedule. Just exactly as the Passover, and the Wave Sheaf offering came. Since all of the Spring festivals have occurred precisely on the day God revealed by His appointed times (Lev. 23), would it not be

foolish to think that the fall festivals would not come about also as revealed?

I once heard a high-ranking minister say, “All Holy Days were fulfilled at the cross.” How foolish, why then did Pentecost come more than fifty days after the cross? Would Isaiah 8:20 apply to his statement?

A good follow-up study could be Ephesians 4:17 through 5:21 as a pattern for Christian living.

So, What Does Pentecost Mean to You?

Along with being imbued with the Holy Spirit; it means liberation; forgiveness; redemption; power to overcome; a *new beginning* and inclusion in the harvest of the First Fruits.

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