

A New Covenant Feast Day – Lev 23:15-16, Acts 2:1-12

Introduction – We are working on reestablishing and reforming the church’s celebration of Pentecost, the fifth of the five evangelical feast days. This is not an attempt to drag an old covenant administration into the church. In the OT, the day was called the “Feast of Weeks” and the “Feast of the Harvest” (Ex 23:16) and because of what happened as recorded in Acts 2, we see that there is so much fulfillment of what God was promising and the work that was beginning that this day is often referred to as the birthday, or baptism, of the church.

Pentecost (Lev 23:15-16) – Referred to as the “Feast of Weeks,” the day was determined by counting 50 days after the Sabbath following Passover, hence the name that the first century believers would use, “Pentecost” (Acts 2:1, 20:16, 1 Cor 16:18).

A Leavened Feast (Lev 23:17-21) – Pentecost is connected to Passover by a number of days (50). The bread at Passover is “*the bread of affliction, for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste*” (Deut 16:3), but the bread at Pentecost was leavened (Lev 23:17) and instead of one, now two loaves would be waved before the Lord along with a drink offering of wine. New grain from the spring harvest would be brought by sheaves before the Lord. Loaves were made of the finest flour with leaven, and all three sacrifices, the ascension, the sin, and finally, the peace offering were made on that day. Only Yahweh ate the ascension (whole burnt) offering, and only the priests partook of the sin offering. But everyone partook of the peace offering (Lev 7:11-34). And so, Pentecost included a feast of a sacrificial animal, bread and wine, and was a picture of the communal meal with God and His people. Pentecost was not a remembrance of the affliction of Egypt, but of the spread of the blessing of God upon the land for His people.

The Giving of the Law and the 3,000 - The Feast of Weeks was understood to take place fifty days after Passover in remembrance of God establishing His covenant with His people after bringing them out of Egypt. At Mt. Sinai, God gave the people His law, written on tablets of stone, and on that day, 3,000 people died (Ex 32:28). We see Joshua establishing what looks like the Feast of Weeks and another giving of the law in Josh 8:30-35 and Pentecost became a time when the law was regularly read to the people. Later, God promised the people that the Spirit would come and write the law of God on their hearts in the New Covenant (Jer 31:33). At Pentecost, around 30AD, amidst wind and fire again (signs of the Shekinah glory), the Holy Spirit filled the house where the apostles and disciples of Jesus were gathered, “...and that day, about 3,000 souls were added to them” (Acts 2:41).

The Power and Authority of the Ruach – The words which we translate “*Spirit*” in both Greek and Hebrew are also the words for “*breath*” and “*wind*.” The Spirit has the power and authority to blow where He wishes (John 3:5-8). The Spirit is the breath behind the Word of God in the work of Creation and in the empowered preaching of the Gospel in the work of re-creation (John 16:8, Acts 2:37).

A New Covenant Harvest-Feast - But that is not the only reversal that took place on that day. In Gen 10 we have the “*table of nations*” and in Gen 11 we have the story of the tower of Babel, where God divided the people with diverse languages so that they would not understand one another. In Gen 12, Abraham is promised that through Him, all of these nations would one day be blessed. Now, on Pentecost, around AD 30, the Seed of Abraham sends the Holy Spirit to be a blessing to all the nations. The New Covenant will have no bounds of territory or tongue. And the sign of this blessing was the gift of the Gospel clearly declared in every tongue represented at the Pentecost gathering. The spread of the good news of Jesus Christ had begun. The firstfruits were brought in by the preaching of Peter and offered to the Lord in baptism. The nations are reunited in the church, and the enemies of Christ are made into a footstool (Acts 2:33-36 referencing Psalm 110).

The Gift of the Holy Spirit – We are “*Pentecostals*” in the sense that we believe in the person and power of the Holy Spirit, granted to each believer in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit brings repentance and soft hearts as promised in Ezek 36:26-27 and seen in Acts 2:37-41, and we see that He does this in the preaching of the Word. We believe that the Spirit is and acts as a seal upon men for their promised redemption in Christ (Eph 1:13-14).

The Work of the Spirit upon the Believer – We are to be filled with the Spirit, manifested in the speaking to one another in psalms (Eph 5:18-21). We are not to grieve the Holy Spirit, but instead let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from us (Eph 4:30-31). As we do so, we are simply working out what God is working in. That is why the fruit of the Spirit corresponds to the commands of God. God gives what He commands and commands what He gives.

The Work of the Spirit upon the World – The Feast of Weeks was a feast of the firstfruits, but the whole harvest was the Lord’s. The Spirit was poured out at Pentecost and three-thousand were saved, but all the nations were promised and the harvest had just begun (Acts 2:47 and the whole book of Acts). We are to pray that the Lord would raise up harvesters for this great, ongoing harvest (John 4:35-38, Luke 10:2).