

Feast of Weeks or Pentecost

We are in a series called appointed times. We have been studying the seven feasts of the Lord. The word feast means appointed time. We have been clearly seeing that across time, God has used the people of Israel, blessed them and bless others through them. God has used Israel to usher His plan of redemption to the whole world.

The seven feasts would point to the Messiah to come, each one specifically pointing to a different aspect of the Messiah and His ministry. As they went through these feasts each year, they were looking foreword to the moment when the Messiah would come.

PHOTO 1 Four in the spring, three in the fall tell a complete story of the Messiah. It's so clear. The spring feasts (Passover, Unleavened, firstfruits and weeks) were all fulfilled at Jesus the Messiah's first coming. The next three, the fall feasts will be fulfilled at Jesus' second coming (Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles). Each one pointing to Jesus so we would see and know.

We looked at Passover we saw how Passover so perfectly and beautifully pointed to Jesus as the Sacrificial Lamb of God who would be the ultimate Passover Lamb once and for all.

We looked at Unleavened Bread, which foretold of Jesus' burial and we were challenged to get rid of all the leaven (sin) in our lives.

Last week we studied the feast of firstfruits, which so clearly points to the Resurrection of Jesus. We saw how important it was to give God the first of everything in our lives.

This week, we will look at the feast of weeks

This feast is called a couple different things; Feast of Weeks, Pentecost, Day of First fruits or the Hebrew word Shavuot. This feast is the last of the spring feasts and has already been fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost in Acts.

But let's first take a look at what this feast is; what happens during the feast. Then we will look at what it means; what's the significance. At the end we will ask my favorite question when approaching Scripture: So What?! How does this apply to my life?

What is it?

Leviticus 23:15–22 (ESV) 15 "You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. 16 You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the Lord. 17 You shall bring from your dwelling places two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour, and they shall be baked with leaven, as firstfruits to the Lord. 18 And you shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, and one bull from the herd and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. 19 And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings. 20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. 21 And you shall make a proclamation on the same day. You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations. 22 "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God."

If you remember, The Feast of Firstfruits was for the Barley Harvest. This feast is for the Wheat Harvest. **PHOTO 2**

It occurs exactly fifty days after the feast of firstfruits that we looked at last week. (That is what Pentecost means....50...the day after 7 perfect 7's)

This was one of the **three pilgrimage feasts** where all able-bodied men would go to the Temple in Jerusalem to participate in the feast. They go to the temple for Passover and Unleavened bread...they return home and then just 6 weeks later they make the pilgrimage again. Some had to walk for 2-3 days each direction.

It occurs in the sixth day of the Jewish month called Sivan. It occurs during the third new moon after Passover. Two loaves of bread were baked and brought to be waved as offerings to God. The bread was baked with leaven this time – the only time God instructs leavened bread be made during an appointed feast. We will look at the significance of that later on.

This feast also included as we saw in Leviticus, a burnt offering of 7 male lambs, one young bull and two rams. We also see grain and drink offerings, a sin offering of one male goat and a fellowship offering of two lambs.

Again, on this feast day, it was a holy day; a Sabbath. No work was done. God also declared that when the people harvested their wheat, they couldn't harvest right up to the edge, they had to leave that for the poor and sojourner. A reminder that God was their provider and they were to be generous to the poor and needy. Even in the Harvest some was given to God and some set aside for others. We are to do the same with our financial harvest.

In the Book of Ruth, She relied on the crops in the periphery of fields to survive. For that reason, they read the entire book of Ruth the night before the Feast of Weeks.

Do you remember when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments on Mt Sinai? **PHOTO 3** Did you know that He did so on the Day of Pentecost? The Law of God was given on the very First Pentecost and the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost 1500 or so years later.

Israel left Egypt on the 15th day of the first month [Exodus 12]. The fifteenth day of the second month would be 30 days after leaving Egypt. From the 15th of the second month to the end of the month would be another 15 days making a total of 45 days. The first day of the third month would be the 46th day. This timeline is important because God came down on Mount Sinai on the 50th day, as we will see in a moment.

God commanded Israel to keep a feast every year on the 50th day after Passover. It is called the Feast of Pentecost. The experience of Israel at Mount Sinai is a prophetic picture, a type or shadow. Understanding this helps us understand the importance of Pentecost in Acts 2.

On the 47th day after leaving Egypt, Moses went up Mount Sinai to meet with God. God revealed His plan for Israel, which was to make Israel a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and a people for His own possession [Exodus 19:1-11]. To receive these benefits, God's requirements are simple: obey His voice and keep His covenant.

Moses went back down the mountain and told the people what God had said and they said, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do." Moses went back up the mountain and told God that the people agreed with God's purpose on the 48th day since leaving Egypt.

God told Moses to tell the people to consecrate themselves today and tomorrow because He would come down on the mountain on the third day. The LORD also said to Moses, "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. (Exodus 19:10-11)

So, our timeline is complete: today = 48th day; tomorrow = 49th day; and the third day = the 50th day. God would come down on Mount Sinai on the 50th day since the children of Israel left Egypt.

This is one reason that I believe that we should study and be aware of the Feasts. It seems throughout History that God does unique and special things on these Feast Days. They foreshadow events in Jesus' life, but they also we days when unique things happen.....God things....Like giving the Ten Commandments....

They believe it was on this day, the 6th day of Sivan that God gave Moses the 10 commandments and the Law. Their belief is supported in Scripture...

It was the day God wrote down his Law on Tablets for the people to follow. Which is why other traditions include eating foods like milk and honey, which symbolize God's Word.

Fast foreword to Jesus' disciples in the Upper Room; 50 days after Jesus resurrected (firstfruits).

Luke 24:48-49 (ESV) 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

They waited and prayed in the upper room and we see in Acts 2 the display of God's power again, much like His display of power in Exodus 19 when He gave the Law. On the Day of Pentecost....7 perfect 7's of waiting...they went to the Temple as required (Pilgrimage Feast) and there in the temple the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

Now you may be thinking, I have always been told that the Holy Spirit fell upon the Disciples while they were in the Upper Room. Perhaps, but what you were told is not in Scripture.

The Word says that they were all together...in One Place On the Day of Pentecost.... Where do Jewish people go on the Feast Days? Where would they be where people of all nations would be nearby? Where would this moment cause the most commotion? In Exodus...God descended on Mt Sinai...and then a bit later Descended upon the Tabernacle (the Temple)

So it would make sense that the arrival of the Holy Spirit would come to the Temple On Mt Zion This time, He gave His Spirit to reside in hearts. On the day of the feast of weeks, the day that God gave His people His law, God sends power from on high and with His Holy Spirit, writes His Law, not on tablets, but the hearts of His people.

What is the Significance of this Feast?

Jeremiah 31:31-34 – "31 'Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Ezekiel 36:27 – "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules."

The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost is the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the new covenant.

God decided that during the feast of the wheat harvest, He would harvest hearts. God wanted us to not just have His law written on tablets, or in a Bible, but in our hearts.

Romans 7:6 – "But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

2 Corinthians 3:6 – "...For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

This feast of weeks that began with God's law written on stone was fulfilled with God's empowering Spirit writing the Law on hearts. Jesus told His disciples about this and He made the connection of the Law and the Spirit...

John 14:15-17 – "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

This feast was God's appointed time that pointed to the day when He would pour out His Spirit to enable His people to obey His law and be on mission for Him Imperfect people empowered by a perfect God to go out into the harvest of souls.

God harvested the hearts of His people so that they could harvest the souls of the world.

Jews celebrated a joyous harvest on the feast of weeks, and the church celebrated a harvest of newborn souls on Pentecost.

Did you remember that they waved two loafs of bread...Loaves that contained Leaven?

The two loaves that are waved represent something huge...Jews and Gentiles. This feast had been pointing the Jews to a day that God would bring salvation to the whole world.

God would not begin to extend salvation to all until He had poured out His Spirit. God saying to us..don't you dare go out in your own power to represent me. A God sized message requires God sized power" This is huge!

Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 12:13 – "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit."

As the priest waves these two loaves of leavened bread before the Lord, they are screaming out the fact that God has offered salvation to the whole world, this sinful world, and He gave His Spirit to empower people to see this happen.

Much of the significance of the leavened bread was also thankfulness for God providing their daily food; no longer did they have to eat their bread in haste like they did when leaving Egypt. But more than that, as always, God was pointing them to Jesus and how He would save the whole world, Jew and Gentile alike, even though they are stained with leaven (sin).

Ok...Fascinating...But So What? What does this Feast have to do with me?

At the Feast of Weeks in the Spring of 33AD a group of men experienced the overwhelming presence of the Holy Spirit falling on them. It was a flashpoint for them- they could not stay the same. They immediately changed from being passive and hidden to bold and fearless. The presence of the Holy Spirit drove them to go into the Harvest to tell the Good News. The promised power from on high had now come to them and they could remain silent. The Spirit drove them to tell others..that same Spirit is driving us today...

The Feast of Weeks is a reminder to us....that we too share in the Spirit and we too are empowered from on High to go out into the Harvest with the message of Jesus.....

Why does this all matter to me? Why do we have to learn about a feast that's already been fulfilled? Can't we move on?

Listen to Jesus' words in Luke 10:2 – "And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

John 4:35-38 – "5 Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. 36 Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. 37 For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

The Jews held to the feast of Weeks to celebrate and thank the Lord at the beginning of the wheat harvest. Pentecost was the beginning of the harvest of the souls of men for the church.

Just as God sent His Spirit to write His law on our hearts and to harvest our hearts, He is using us to send us into the harvest of hearts that He has set before us. We carry on the legacy of Peter, John, Matthew and all those over the last 2000 years who have been driven by the Spirit to spread the good news. Including the person who brought the Good News to you! Have you ever thought how different your life would be...if they had chosen not to share the truth with you? We all need to share what has been entrusted to us.

He wants us to go out in the power of His Spirit into the harvest. See it's not enough to know the Law and obey God's commandments; they must be written on our hearts because then we will go out as His witnesses, with His power.

As we offer up to God, our lives, leaven and all,As we wave them...Sin and All....Not in defiance but in surrender. God if you can do anything with this sinful life of mine....it is yours....please take it from me. ...write your law on our hearts and send us out as your witnesses.

Let's tie our first four feasts together for a moment:

During Passover we apply the blood of the Lamb to our hearts to receive salvation. We left our old self with Him on the cross...our sins were on Him. We died with Him.

During The Feast of Unleavened bread we are pointed to the burial of Jesus and challenged to let Him search our lives for leaven and remove it. We are buried with Him

During the feast of firstfruits we celebrate Jesus' resurrection as a firstfruit to God and are led to give him the first of everything in our lives once we are free from sin. We resurrect with Him

Now at the feast of weeks we allow Him to write His law on our hearts and send us out on mission with His power, not our own. We are empowered by Him and sent out by Him

Conclusion

This is the last of the spring feasts. Next week we are going to start looking at the fall feasts and God's plan through the Messiah for the future. This would be a cool time to invite someone who wants to know what is going on in the world. Be prepared for that. Please be here to learn and worship with us during this time.

Maybe you don't feel ready to go into the harvest; like you're not prepared. Do you know what Jesus said about giving us the Spirit?

John 16:7 – "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you."

Having the Spirit is so much better than having the Law because the Spirit gives life! The Spirit empowers.

God obviously wanted the Jews to be thankful for the harvest during the feast of weeks, but even more than that, He wanted to prepare them for an even bigger harvest of the hearts of the whole world, Jew and Gentile alike.

This is a big mission, which is why this feast is a big deal; we celebrate the fact that God did not ask us to do it alone. In fact, He gave us more than just the law, more than guidelines on how to live, He put the giver of life inside of us to write His law on our hearts and give us what we need to harvest the fields of the world.

Maybe you're in here and you don't know Jesus and you've tuned out because none of this makes sense. I'm glad you're here.

Verse 22 of Leviticus 23 is for you. "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God."

The blessings that God has poured on us through Jesus and His Holy Spirit are not just for us, we want to share them with you. We want you to take part in the harvest with us.

If you don't know what it's like to know Jesus and have a relationship with him, we would invite you to come talk to us during the reflection time or after the service.

I would be crazy to declare that God wants us to harvest souls for Him and not invite you to be a part of this.

I'm not inviting you into a religion full of rules; I'm inviting you to a relationship full of life in God's Spirit with God's power.

If you're a believer in here, let me share my heart with you. In preparing this sermon, I realized how little I actually participate in the harvest. I realized that I don't tell people about Jesus like I should. I get scared; I don't act like I have been sent on God's mission with God's power. Do you?

Are you afraid to offer yourself to God because of the leaven in your life? You have to know that God uses sinful people to accomplish his mission. The feast of weeks tells us that because of the blood of Jesus, God accepts the offering of our lives to Him for His mission, no matter how messed up we think we are.

The question is, do you trust Him enough with your life to participate in His mission; His harvest? The band is coming back to lead us in a closing time of worship. As we worship I want you to be thinking about these things.

God displayed His power in amazing ways on the day He gave the Law and the day He poured out His Spirit. He wants to write His law on your heart so that you can offer yourself to Him and go out with His power to reap His harvest. Let me point you to the last six words of our Leviticus passage:

God said **"I AM the Lord."**

He says focus on Me! Not yourself, not your sin, but Me. Go in My authority and power! If you don't know Jesus tonight, as we sing would you come to the Giver of life? Come to the Lord of the harvest Who wants your heart to write his law on. Would you come talk with one of the pastors, and let us do what these feasts are supposed to do; point you to Jesus!

If you know Jesus, would you offer Him your heart to write on? Would you trust the Holy Spirit enough to give you the truth, strength and power you need to go into the harvest? As we sing, whatever God is doing in your heart, don't ignore it.

Maybe you just need to praise God for his power in your life, for doing more than just writing his Word on stone, but on your heart as well. Maybe you need to just worship the God who put His power on display at Pentecost. Whatever it is, would you offer Jesus your heart tonight? Let Him send all of us out into the harvest with empowered and thankful hearts!

Lets Pray