

Feasts of the LORD

Today is known as Pentecost. That's the Greek word for "fiftieth day". It's one of the Feasts of the LORD.

The Feasts of the LORD (the Feasts **to** the LORD) are defined in several places in Scripture with different levels of details. There are, as you know, 7 Feasts. There are two groups of three: The Spring Feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread and Firstfruits. The Fall Feasts of Trumpets, Atonement and Booths. Then there's this odd-ball feast, the Feast of Weeks.

The first three Feasts were fulfilled by Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection at His 1st Coming. The last three have yet to be fulfilled by Jesus. Most believe that these are "End Time" feasts and will be fulfilled by Him during the time of His Second Coming.

There are 3 "pilgrim" feasts that required all Jewish men to appear before the LORD at the tabernacle and then later at the Temple. These are Passover, Weeks, and Booths.

In between the spring and fall feasts sits the Feast of Weeks. Let's first read the Scriptures concerning this appointed time and then we can try to understand its significance to us, as believers in Christ Jesus.

Exodus 34:22 NKJV "And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of **wheat harvest**, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end. (the feast of ingathering is better known as Booths).

In Leviticus 23, there's a bit more information:

Leviticus 23:15-22 NKJV (15) 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. **(16)** Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. **(17)** You shall bring from your dwellings two wave *loaves* of two-tenths *of an ephah*. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with **leaven**. *They are* the firstfruits to the LORD.

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(22) 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.' "

The first thing to note is that the bread was made with leaven. There's no other time in Scripture that leaven is used as part of a ritual or feast.

Verse 22 is sometimes not included in the teaching of the Feast by teachers.

Verse 22 is a lesson in generosity and grace. The poor and the foreigners were not to be excluded from the harvest. They could eat freely from the 4 corners of the fields and from what was left on the ground while gleaning. Note that God does NOT tell the farmers how big the corners were to be – it was, in my mind, a test of their hearts. Of course, the Rabbis could not deal with this heart matter so they came up with rules and guidelines for measuring the corners. The “*the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life*” (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Like other feast days, this feast was an agricultural feast. But, is it a prophetic picture of Messiah? Rabbis made much of this Feast day that almost totally neglected the wheat harvest. They taught that the Feast was first celebrated at Mount Sinai after the children of Israel were freed from Egyptian bondage. It was at this time that God gave the Law to Israel and when they accepted the Law, Israel became betrothed to the LORD. In addition, this is considered by some to be the birth of the Jewish Nation. The Law became their identity.

Given these ideas, many have constructed comparisons to the Giving of the Law to the Giving of the Spirit on the Feast of Pentecost 2000 years ago after the LORD ascended to the Father.

Giving of the Law	Giving of the Spirit
Mt. Sinai	Mt. Zion
Fire, Smoke, earthquakes, thunder and deafening sounds of a Shofar	A rushing wind and tongues of fire
A fence was put around the base of the mountain to keep people away from God	The veil was torn at the crucifixion of Christ Jesus who made a way into the Holy of Holies by His own blood
Tablets of Stone written by God containing the Law	The Law was written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit
The late Spring Wheat Harvest	The Harvest of Souls saved by grace through faith in the Messiah’s atoning work.
Two loaves of bread made with leaven were waved before the LORD	Two peoples were united into the Body of Christ – Jews and Gentiles. The leaven remains in the flesh of mankind
The Law was given through Moses who was the people’s mediator between God and Man,	Jesus, the Son of God is our mediator, a better mediator, between those who believe and God.
Many believe that when God gave the Law at this time, it was a betrothal between Himself and the Jewish people.	We are the Bride of Christ waiting for our Bridegroom’s return!
The Book of Ruth is read in the synagogues to show how a gentile woman converted to Judaism.	Gentiles do not have to convert to Judaism to be saved. All Christians,

	Jews or Gentiles, are saved by the Blood of the Lamb.
It was celebrated fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits.	Jesus was on earth for forty days after His resurrection; it was ten days after, on Pentecost, that the Holy Spirit came as promised.
In the OT, the Feast is known as “Weeks” and its Hebrew name is Shavuot.	The name of the Feast is Pentecost.

This all looks great on paper and appears to make sense. But the problem is, the entire analysis falls flat because it is not based on the Word of God but the fancies of men. Years after the “first” NT Pentecost, the Rabbi’s worked out all these ideas in response to the growing church of Christ who celebrated its birth on this Feast Day. Fear and envy caused them to reinforce the idea that it was only strict adherence to the Law, statutes, and precepts could save a person. In other words, you had to be Jewish to be saved. Gentiles could be saved but only after conversion to Judaism. So, the Feast day lost its Biblical context in favor of a cultural one.

BTW: Many Christian teachers like to talk about the mysteries of the Bible that come from the Jewish sages. For example, Chuck Missler tells us that Enoch, who is a picture of the rapture, was born on Shavuot and that God took him home on Shavuot. From this Jewish legend, Chuck proposes that the miracle birth of the Church was on this Feast day, is it possible that the LORD come take His bride home on this Feast day sometime in the coming years? We don’t know. (the Rabbis fixed this current Feast day

What exactly is the significance of this Feast Day? One thing is for sure: The Feast of Weeks celebrated the wheat harvest by **praising the LORD** for His abundant rains and other provisions which led to the bountiful crops that season.

Deuteronomy 16:10-11 NKJV (10) Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks **to** the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. **(11)** You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who *is* within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.

We’ve been taught that the other 6 Feasts were prophetic pictures of Jesus but how is Jesus pictured on this day? Well, Jesus Himself alluded to it:

Matthew 9:35-38 NKJV Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. **(36)** But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. **(37)** Then He said to His disciples, **"The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few.** **(38)** **Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."**

The Great Commission was given with this harvest in mind:

Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

Now we come to our First Feast of Shavuot/Pentecost 2000 years ago. Much happened that day. But, first, let's see the direct fulfillment of the Feast as a "harvest" day:

Many see Peter's first sermon on that Pentecost day in Jerusalem as a fulfillment of this Feast. His proclamation of Jesus as the Christ and Savior resulted in 3000 souls coming to the LORD in faith. That was the first of many "bountiful harvests" that began on this day.

But that's not the only thing that's critical to this Day. Peter's sermon would have fallen on deaf ears had it not been preceded by the fulfillment of a promise made by Jesus: the coming of the Holy Spirit:

Luke 24:49 NKJV 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."

That word "endued" means to "sink" into a garment. It's used by Paul to tell us to "Put on Christ" or "Put on the Armor". Or, when we are Raptured, our corruption will **put on** incorruption and our mortal bodies will **put on** immortality. It is much more than putting on a shirt. **This is transformative act of the Holy Spirit.**

On Pentecost, ten days after Jesus' ascension, something strange and miraculous happened:

Acts 2:1-13 Williams When the day of Pentecost had now come, they were all meeting in one mind, (2) when suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a terrific blast of wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, (3) And they saw tongues like flames of fire separating and resting on their heads, one to each of them, (4) and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in foreign languages as the Spirit granted them to utter divine things. (5) Now there were devout Jews from every part of the world living in Jerusalem. (6) And when this sound was heard, the crowd rushed together in great excitement, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. (7) They were perfectly **astounded**, and in **bewilderment** they continued to say, "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?"

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(12) And thus they all continued to be astounded and bewildered, and continued to say to each other, "What can this mean?" (13) But others in derision were saying, "They are running over with new wine."

This experience was not a one-time experience. It occurred many times from that day on. But it is wholly different than the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in a believer's heart. That happens the moment you believe. This, as I have taught before, is an experience of being "baptized" in the Spirit, wholly immersed in Him and He in you.

Why was the Spirit given in such a manner? The Holy Spirit lives in us to do many things for us. We know from Scripture that:

1. The Spirit gives life!
2. The Spirit Teaches us and leads us to Truth
3. The Spirit Comforts and Helps us by being an intercessor and advocate to the Father
4. The Spirit will help us to Remember what Jesus has taught and will bring to mind things written on our Hearts
5. The Spirit will cause His Fruit of Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness, self-control
6. The Spirit also gives gifts for the edification of the body of Christ: Wisdom, Words of Knowledge, Faith, Healings, Miracles, Prophecies, Discernment and Tongues.
7. The Spirit is in us to conform us and transform us from the inside out; not like the Law which only worked on the outside. It could make us “look good”, but the inside was never changed because of the weakness of our flesh. White-washed tombs is what Jesus called those who adhere to the letter of the Law.

These things can be manifested in every born-again believer. And thank God because the New Covenant would be just a renewed Old Covenant where the emphasis would be on works and not faith and certainly not grace. Many Messianic congregations keep trying to do what the OT demanded of the Jewish Nation. Many more Gentile churches do the same: they declare faith and grace but only in the context of behavior not relationship! The Holy Spirit was given for us to have a deep and abiding relationship with our Savior and LORD!

However, there is one more purpose of the Giving of the Holy Spirit that is a direct fulfillment of the Feast of Pentecost: the harvesting of souls is impossible without the power, the overflowing river of living waters that come when we are baptized into the Holy Spirit. Have you ever noticed just how difficult it is to witness to a person who hates God, is resentful, bitter and rebellious? Have you ever noticed that this was you before you came to Christ?

When the Holy Spirit came and baptized the disciples of Christ, it was only then that someone the likes of Peter could preach a sermon that brought 3000 people to their knees. Without the Holy Spirit, that same sermon would have fell flat. There would have been endless arguments about the Scriptures he used. And, just hearing the Name of Jesus would have sent the hearers running away.

No, it was the Holy Spirit working in and through Peter to harvest the souls who stood before him. It was Paul who later wrote to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 NKJV (4) And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, (5) that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

If it was critical then, how much more is the Holy Spirit's power needed for today! If there ever was a time for wisdom, for discernment, for self-control, for Christ's love in us and flowing out of us it is TODAY! If there ever was a time when the HOPE of Christ and the Covenant of Grace is needed, it is TODAY. We have gotten to the point in this world where we spend more time debating and

arguing over solutions to our problems than we do solving them. ALL of the world's solutions are simply various sizes of band-aids. ALL of our world's solutions will cover up the scars, warts, and other disfigurements but will never solve the root causes. Only Jesus can provide the solution because the problem isn't politics, economics, social norms or any other man-made devices. The problem as always been sin. We have spent many centuries trying to fix this issue with man-made solutions (laws, ordinances, therapies, self-help books etc) but they cannot do anything. All it takes is one-small drop of the Blood of the Lamb that will take away the sin (and not just cover it up). That one-drop of blood lives in us as the Spirit of Christ (not literally, but spiritually).

The Jewish Rabbi's teach that those who celebrate Shavuot should stay up all night studying Torah because it was on Shavuot that it was given to the Jewish Nation. But the Word never penetrates because it is veiled. And it is only Messiah Yeshua who removes the veil. That removal starts with the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ: The sin of man is no match for the Blood of the Lamb.

This Pentecost, this Feast of Shavuot, should never focus on anything except Jesus. All the Feasts of the LORD are to be celebrated by **praising and worshipping God** for His infinite mercy and grace towards us, the proof of which is in the Person of Christ Jesus, the Son of God. All the Feasts should be a reminder of how much the world needs spiritual laborers who are willing to share the Solution, not with persuasive words of human wisdom but in the power of the Spirit.