

The Feast of Pentecost

Exodus 5:1; 10:9

The Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Pentecost, as the New Testament calls it, is a Feast which the Lord seemed to have in mind when he told Moses that Pharaoh was to let the people go, so that they could “hold a Feast to Me in the wilderness” (**Exodus 5:1; 10:9**). The major scriptures dealing with the things pertaining to this Feast are found in Exodus 19-20, 24; Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Leviticus 23:15-21 and Numbers 28:16-31.

The New Testament scriptures showing the fulfillment of this Feast are found in Acts 2: II Corinthians 3, and Hebrews 8. A study of this Feast shows that it pointed to the coming of the Holy Spirit to form the church of Jesus Christ, and write upon the hearts and minds of the believers the New Covenant commandments.

I. THE FACTS OF THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

The Exodus of Israel from Egypt took place under Passover Feast in the first month, the month of Abib or Nisan. After crossing the Red Sea and being led by the pillar of fire, they were brought to the foot of Mt. Sinai. Here at Sinai they experienced the Feast of Pentecost, in the third month, which was Sivan. At Sinai the Law of Ten Commandments was written and given to the nation. Here the Tabernacle of the Lord, the Aaronic priesthood and the sacrificial system was given. Here the nation was established as “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38).

A. Names of the Feast

This particular Feast day is known by different names

1. The Feast of Harvest – Exodus 23:16
2. The Feast of Weeks – Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:10, 16
3. The Day of Firstfruits – Numbers 28:26; Exodus 34:22
4. The Feast of Weeks of the Firstfruits of Wheat Harvest – Exodus 34:22
5. The Feast of Harvest, the Firstfruits of Israel’s labors – Exodus 23:16
6. The Feast of Pentecost, in the New Testament; Pentecost is the transliteration of the Greek word for “fifty” – Acts 2:1; 20:16; I Cor. 16:8

B. The Date of the Feast

The Greek name for this Feast Day is known as “Pentecost,” simply meaning “fiftieth.” This word is not used in the Old Testament, but it is used three times in the New Testament. This Feast took place on the fiftieth day after the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15-16). This brought Israel into the third month after their exodus from Egypt’s bondage.

Hence the Jews today look upon the Feast of Pentecost as the celebration or the commemoration of the giving of the Law (Exodus 16:1; 19:1).

They were to count from the day of the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits forty-nine days, or seven Sabbaths complete. Then they were to count the day following, which was the 50th day, the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, and this was the day of Pentecost.

Thus we have: 7 x 7 Sabbaths or forty-nine days. The morrow after the seventh Sabbath was the 50th day. On this day they were to offer specified offerings.

II. THE FULFILLMENT OF THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

The Lord Jesus came to fulfill all the intricate details of the Law (**Matthew 5:17-18; 11:13**). The book of Acts shows the fulfillment of this time period of 50 days unto the Feast Day of Pentecost.

After Christ's resurrection at the close of his three days and three nights in the tomb, he was seen of his disciples for forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. At the close of this period of forty days he ascended back to the Father.

The disciples tarried in Jerusalem in the upper room for ten days and then **"when the Day of Pentecost was fully come"** the Holy Spirit was outpoured on the believing and waiting disciples. Thus we have:

40 days post-resurrection ministry of Jesus
10 days tarrying of the disciples
50 days to Pentecost

As Israel experienced the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai fifty days after leaving Egypt under Passover, so the disciples experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit to write his laws fifty days after the completion of Passover by the resurrection of Christ.

And again, as the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the waving of the sheaf of firstfruits, so the Holy Spirit was poured out on the fiftieth day after Christ's resurrection.

The number fifty is used symbolically to represent liberty, freedom or deliverance. This is seen in the fact that every fiftieth year (or, $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$) in Israel was called the year of Jubilee. It was a year of release, or liberty and freedom. Slaves were set free, debts were cancelled, families were reunited, and liberty was proclaimed throughout the land by the sound of the Jubilee trumpets (Leviticus 25:8-17). Priests also served the Tabernacle of the Lord from 25 or 30 years until the age of 50 years; then they were at liberty to cease from such service (Numbers 4:1-3; 8:23-26).

The Old Testament and New Testament Pentecosts can be beautifully compared and contrasted as to Pentecost:

Old Testament Pentecost The Fiftieth Day

1. Writing of Ten Commandments
2. By the Finger of God
3. 3,000 people slain
4. A ministration of death
5. The letter
6. Glory on the face of Moses
7. Face veiled so people could not behold the glory
8. Glory to be done away
9. Ministers of Old Covenant
10. Mt. Sinai

New Testament Pentecost The Fiftieth Day

1. Writing of Commandments of love on Tables of Heart and Mind (Matt. 22:34-40; Rom. 13:8-10; Matt. 5,6,7)
2. The Spirit of God (Luke 11:20; Matt. 12:28)
3. 3,000 people live (Acts 2:41)
4. A ministration of life
5. The Spirit
6. Glory on the face of Jesus
7. Unveiled face so we can be changed into same Glory
8. Glory that remains
9. Minister of New Covenant
10. Mt. Zion (Hebrews 12:22-24)

For the New Testament believers, the Day of Pentecost meant liberty and freedom from Old Covenant bondages of ceremonialism of the Law. It meant freedom in the liberty wherewith Christ had set them free. It meant that they were at liberty to serve the Lord, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit (Romans 7:1-6).

III. THE FRUITS OF THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

As seen earlier this Feast Day was called the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of Harvest, or the Feast of the First Fruits and was both a literal 24 hour day and a period of time.

There can be no harvest without the rains to cause it to grow and mature. The Lord promised Israel that He would bless their land, that He would give the “first rain and the latter rain” in order that they would be able to gather in the corn, wine and oil in the appointed seasons. Under Passover and Pentecost, there was the “latter rain” or “spring rain,” according to the reckoning of the sacred year of Israel. Rain in scripture is symbolic of revival and refreshing. Spiritually speaking it pointed to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the “early and latter rain.” The Lord promised to pour out Himself as the rain (Hosea 6:1-3). The Jews always understood that the outpouring of rain or water was symbolic and prophetic of the coming outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and onward was indeed “the first rain” or “the spring rain.” With rain comes harvest time. The rains were necessary for both sowing and harvest periods. As in any agricultural year two harvests take place, so in the land of Canaan there were two periods of harvest: corn harvest and fruit harvest (corn refers to barley and wheat).

- a. Passover and Pentecost – Passover/barley; Pentecost/wheat
- b. Tabernacles – Fruit harvest (refers to grapes and other fruits)

This Feast is called the Feast of Weeks, or the Feast of the Harvest of First Fruits because of the corn harvest brought during these weeks. Pentecost was a “Harvest Festival.”