

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

Text: Leviticus 23:15-22

Introduction:

1. The feasts commanded by God were physical observances that had mental and emotional benefits.
2. Of course, they also taught important spiritual lessons.
3. The Passover was instituted to remind the Israelites of the price paid for their deliverance from Egyptian slavery – and the bondage of sin.
4. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was to remind Israel of God's deliverance and the danger of corruption.
5. The Feast of Firstfruits was to remind them of God's promises and to express gratitude for His faithfulness.
6. These were followed by the Feast of Pentecost...

I. The Details of the Feast

- A. Like the Feast of Firstfruits, this feast was to be kept when the children of Israel came into the land of Canaan.
- B. It celebrated the beginning of the harvest of wheat.
 1. The Feast of Firstfruits celebrated the barley harvest.
 2. Barley and wheat were planted at the same time but matured at different rates.
 3. Thus, the Feast of Pentecost was held about seven weeks after the Feast of Firstfruits.
- C. The Feast of Pentecost was held on the 50th day after the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
 1. Beginning on the day after the Sabbath, seven Sabbaths were counted – thus, 7 weeks or 49 days. {*Note that this was always a Sunday (the first day of the week).*}
 2. The next day – the 50th – was the Feast of Pentecost.
 3. The Greek word “Pentecost” means “fiftieth” or “the fiftieth day.”
 4. Because of the counting of weeks, the feast was also called the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22).
 5. It has also been called by the Jewish people Shavuot, the Feast of Harvest, and the Latter Firstfruits.
- D. Pentecost included a meal offering – the waving of two leavened loaves of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest.
- E. Also, seven lambs, one bullock, and two rams were to be sacrificed.
- F. There was to be a sin-offering of one kid (goat) and a peace-offering of two lambs.
- G. This was a holy day in which there was to be no work.

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- H. It also required a journey to the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:9-11, 16).
- II. The Lessons from the Feast
- A. The Feast of Firstfruits celebrated the beginning of the harvest; Pentecost celebrated its end.
 - B. Throughout it all, God had remained faithful; thus, He was to be thanked.
 - C. When giving the instructions for this feast, God included the command to leave the corners of the fields for the poor (Leviticus 23:22).
 - 1. The entire nation was to be able to celebrate this feast, no matter their economic condition.
 - 2. Furthermore, God expected His people to use His blessing to help their neighbors who were less fortunate.
 - 3. Note: The firstfruits were for God; the leftovers were for the poor.
 - a. Today, we give the leftovers to God and nothing to the poor!
 - b. God is concerned for the poor and demands that His children care for them (cf. Psalm 41:1; 106:3; Isaiah 56).
 - c. We still must love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8).
 - D. When the children of Israel were taken into captivity, the Feast of Pentecost became associated with the giving of the Law of Moses at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19 – 20).
 - E. Of course, in the New Testament, it was on the Day of Pentecost that the Lord Jesus established His church (Acts 2).
 - 1. This demonstrated God's faithfulness to His promise to bring salvation to all (cf. Joel 2).
 - 2. It began the harvest of souls by the preaching of the Gospel.
 - 3. It motivated those who had been blessed to strive to bless others with the knowledge of salvation.

Conclusion: *May we strive to thank God for His many blessings!*