

The Feasts of Israel

The Command to Israel, The illustration of Christ, The Application for the Christian

Scripture reading Deut. 16:9-12

Part 5

IV. WEEKS (HARVEST OR PENTECOST)

Well it has been awhile since we have last looked at the feasts of Israel, and so far in this series we have covered the first three of these seven Jewish feasts. the first one we looked at was... Passover, which commemorates the sacrificial lamb that was slain, when the death angel passed over the children of Israel during the tenth plague of Egypt.

The second, which is the feast of Unleavened bread which symbolizes the night Israel left Egypt in hast after the Passover, plundering the Egyptians as they went.

And the thirdly, the feast of Firstfruits which came to represent the crossing of the Red Sea, symbolizing Israel's freedom from the bondage and slavery they suffered in Egypt, being the people whom God redeemed for Himself.

For the Jews, these 3 feasts look back to what God did for Israel when He delivered them out of the Hand of Egypt.

But these Feasts also looked forward to how the Messiah would by Himself fulfill the prophecies of these first feasts, they depict in His death, burial and resurrection. And all of these are primary in God's great plan for salvation for mankind. These feasts also show us the salvation process of each true believer in his own death, burial and resurrection with Jesus Christ as his savior.

This next feast will take us past the halfway point of this series with a feast called the feast of Weeks

Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31; Deut. 16:9-12

A. the time of year 50 Days after firstfruits

This feast of Weeks can also be called the feast of Harvest or as Pentecost, they all refer to the same feast. This feast is always held on the 6th day of the third month of Sivan of the Jewish calendar. In our calendar it will be the 5th of June, it is a feast that always comes 50 days after the feast of Firstfruits.

If you remember in the message of the feast of Firstfruits, I mentioned that the feast of Firstfruits which was held after the feast of Passover and Unleavened bread was also observed and celebrated at this feast of Weeks.

Quoting from the notes in my study bible it said this about the feast;

Firstfruits was an expression of gratitude to God for His provision in the harvest. As described here, the celebration included two parts. The first occurred on the day following the Sabbath at the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, sometime between the 16th and 22nd days of Abib. The second occurred 50 days later during the feast of Weeks. The first would fall during the barley harvest; the second, at the wheat harvest.

'In connection with the wheat harvest, this one-day celebration of *Pentecost* also involved the firstfruits observation as well as other sacrifices.'

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According to scripture the feast of Firstfruits was held after the feast of Passover and Unleavened bread but was also observed and celebrated at the feast of Weeks. Leviticus 23:15 and 16 says

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.

And that brings us to the question, what did this feast mean for Israel/ Or what important event happened 50 days after the feast of Firstfruits. *Maybe I should ask, the congregation, what important event happened 50 days after the crossing the Red Sea?

B. The Command to Israel;

Well the command to Israel regarding this feast in a nutshell is the receiving of the law or (torah) given on Mount Sinai and to start us off we need to turn to Exodus chapter 19

So far each one of these feasts has had a historical event linked with a prophetic future prophecy. Passover was the feast when the lambs were slain. This pictured the death of Jesus dying on the cross in becoming our Passover lamb for our sins. The Feast of Unleavened bread was the feast of Israel leaving Egypt in hast and then for the future represented the burial of Jesus in the tomb.

The feast of firstfruits was Israel coming through the red sea and it pictured Jesus resurrection from the dead.

All of these, as I mentioned in the first message, all of these feasts are part of Gods plan for mankind, and in Exodus chapter 19 we come to the feast of Weeks.

In Exodus chapter 19 verses 1 and 2 we read

1 ¶ In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai.

2 For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

Now most commentaries note that there is no date given for this journey, it simply stats that in the third month after the children of Israel came out of Egypt they came to the wilderness of Sinai ‘on the same day’, most commentaries note that the wording ‘on the same day’ refers simply to the day that they departed from Rephidim and arrived at Sinai. Implying that the journey only took one day to from Rephidim to Mount Siani.

Well three times in this chapter Moses goes up the mountain to talk to God and then come back down to talk to the people. At the second time he goes up the Lord speaks to Moses in verse 10 and 11 saying;

~~10 Then the LORD said to Moses,~~ "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.

11 "And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

And if we skip down to verse 16 we read:

16¹¹ Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled.

17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

18 Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.

19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.

20 Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Now this time that Moses goes up to the mountain he is sent back down with the instruction to warn the people that they should not break through to gaze at the Lord verse 21, and then when he comes back down to the people, God speaks to the people in verse 1 of chapter 20 it says

And God spoke all these words, saying:

and then He goes on to give them the 10 commandments. It is this day of giving of the law that is significant for Israel. It is the children of Israel meeting God and coming as close as they could get to God without being killed. In Egypt they saw His signs and wonders through the 10 plagues, in the exodus they followed the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud to lead and guide them. In the red sea they saw the waters parted for them, in the wilderness they were provided food and water, but now standing at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses brought out the people, out of the camp, to meet with God, and God was with them and God spoke to them.

This is the day that would later come to be commemorated as the Feast of Weeks. In Leviticus chapter 15 verses 15-21 and in Deuteronomy chapter 16 verses 9-12 both speak of counting 50 days from the time of Firstfruits to this Feast of Weeks. It is the day which Israel meet their God and received the law.

It is the day, that He came down to Mount Sinai and spoke to the people the Ten Commandments. God came as close to man as He could without man perishing, and it says in verses 18 and 19 of chapter 20;

18 ¶ Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off.

19 Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

But Moses reassures them by telling them in verse 20;

~~20 And Moses said to the people,~~ "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

I think if humans, including Christians, if we would all have a bit more fear of God in us, we would all be a lot less prone to sin.

Because sin is the one thing that separates man from God.

This is what this whole plan of God is all about, the process of dealing with sin and the redemption of man, Because once sin is dealt with it is then that God can receive glory from man.

This is why Jesus came in the flesh, to save us from our sins, this is why He died, this is was buried and why He arose again apart from sin, so that mankind could be saved from his sins and give glory to God. This is the glory that God is seeking; this is the glory He deserves, because without the atonement of our sin with the blood of Christ we can never please God.

One of the most amazing things connected with this feast, is one that was never seen from the Old Testament point of view, even though the feast commemorated the giving of the law, there came another great work in this world on the very same day and that is the creation of the church. And not only the creation of the church but the giving of the Holy Spirit who would dwell within believers.

And in point C. it is not so much the illustration of Christ but rather the fulfillment of His promise, which is the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell within believers.

C. The Illustration of Christ;

Turn with me to the book of John chapter 14.

In the Apostle Paul's words the church was a mystery. It was something that was not seen from the Old Testament, it was hidden from all people living before the time of Christ. And even before Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the first three feasts He said something very important to the apostles who would later on make up the early church,

In John chapter 14 starting in verse 15 Jesus said this to His disciples;

15 ¶ "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

Just pause here for a second, think of this verse for a moment, if you are a born again Christian, The Holy Spirit will be with you for how long?... Forever. Not until the rapture, not until the end of the tribulation, not until the end of the millennium but... that He may abide with you... forever. But back to the text, it says;

17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

18 ¶ "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

19 "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

20 "At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

And then in verses 25-27 of the same chapter

25 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

It was going to be exactly 50 days after He was raised from the dead that this prophecy would be fulfilled.

Turn now to Acts chapter 1

The book of Acts is the second of a two-volume set written by Luke one of Paul's associates, or as Paul calls him 'the beloved physician'. Luke is responsible for writing the largest portion of the New Testament including the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

In Acts chapter 1 starting in verse 1 he writes;

1 ¶ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,

3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

4 And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me;

5 "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6 ¶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

And you can continue to read the rest of the chapter as to their return to Jerusalem with joy and how in the next week they cast lots to replace Judas in the ministry.

But in chapter 2 we read in the first 4 verse the fulfillment of Jesus promises to the disciples and it says;

1 ¶ When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Here we have the birth of the church and the filling of the Holy Spirit within the believers.

It is so interesting that when God came down on Mount Sinai to meet His people, they had to stand far off else they would die, now God the Holy Spirit comes down to earth not to meet His people, but to live inside of them.

Think of it, God who had to fence off an entire mountain, had to put up boundaries lest, if the people would break through and touch the mountain and gaze at the Lord they would perish.

Now in the New Testament, God, The Holy Spirit now comes down and enters the believer as He came to dwell inside of man.

In the Old Testament it looked like the whole mountain would burn up from the mere presence of God and now in the Feast of weeks, the presence of GOD comes inside of the believers and the church is born.

Jesus said;

15 ¶ "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

16 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

God came and dwelt not only with His people, but as Jesus said dwell in His people. Inside of you, inside of me, inside of all those who are true believer in Jesus Christ.

As Jesus said

Joh 14:17 "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

It started by the Holy Spirit working through the holy men that the New Testament was written, it is the Holy Spirit inside of us that gives us understanding of the Bible. It is a feast, in which we celebrate the birth of the church, but it is also a feast, that in practice, we live out in the everyday of our Christian lives.

D. The Application for the Christian; is that we walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit,

If you recall from the previous message, the message of Firstfruits, in the point for the Application for the Christian, I talked about separation. How the Christian is to be separated from the world, separated from sin, separated from doing the will of the devil and the will of the flesh.

In the illustration I showed you how Israel left Egypt, how they left the land of Egypt the night they crossed the Red Sea and how they physically separated themselves from the 'land of Egypt' but they never separated them from Egypt, if you know what I mean.

I used the phrase we often hear about Israel's downfall in the wilderness as saying it 'was easy for God to get Israel out of Egypt, the hard part was getting Egypt out of Israel'.

The same problem can hinder the Christian, it may be easy to get the Christian out of sin, out of committing sins, the hard part may be getting the desire to sin out of the Christian, if this does not happen he will go back just like Israel did in the wilderness.

I have seen this, I saw a young man come out of doing hard drugs and vowed never to return to them, he got himself out of doing drugs, he got out of that lifestyle, out of those tempting situations, he even says he became a Christian! He got his life out of drugs but he never got the desire of drugs out of his life. And it was only a matter of time before he fell back into doing drugs again.

In one article I used as references for this series puts it like this in regards to Pentecost for the Christian it said it is; Walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and following the law of the Spirit of life

For the Christian, as I said in the last message, the Christian and the church need to be separated from the world, separated from sin, and separated from all unrighteousness and are to be separated to God as a new creation, and to help us with that we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that gives us victory over sin.

It is this process of sanctification that we are made Holy, whenever we gain victory over sin or remove some sin or bad habit from our life we need to fill that emptiness or that void with the Holy Spirit.

when something is removed from your life it leaves an empty space, a void, an emptiness that creates a vacuum wanting to be filled, and what we fill it with all depends on who or what we are willing to serve. Filling the void can include things like people in relationships, to activates in our lives, to habits and all forms substance and drug abuse.

I have seen smokers quit smoking and then have an almost insatiable appetite for bubblegum to keep them busy to fill that void of smoking, I have seen people in broken or lost relationships and replace it irrationally with someone else, creating a very unhealthy or even sinful relationship, I have seen a young man get free of drugs only to return back to them because the void was not filled with something good.

If people create a void in leaving something and that void is not filled with the right thing it will be filled with something or someone else.

Now if you think that this is some secular psychology teaching I assure you it is not, it is a biblical one. Turn to Matthew chapter 12.

In the middle of chapter 12 we come onto the scene of Jesus casting out a blind and mute spirit from a man. The Pharisees then charge Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub the ruler of the demons, then from verse 25 to 30 Jesus talks to them about the spirit world and its operations, then from verse 31 to 37 Jesus teaches about the forgiveness of God and living right, in verse 38 the Pharisees wanted to see a sign from Jesus and He rebukes them by saying ‘an evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign and no sign will be give to it the sign of the prophet Jonah’ and then goes on to talk about judgment of their nation.

And then in verse 43 He brings them back to thought of evil spirits and demons and says this;

43 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

44 "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order.

45 "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

This parable is directed towards the religious nation of Israel but it can also carry a very direct personal application as well.

The verse speaks of evil spirits leaving a man saying ‘when an unclean spirit goes out of a man’, if we would liken or compare this spirit reference to any sinful thing that a person gets himself out of and leaves it behind, be it drugs, sinful lifestyles or bad relationships they **are** temporarily freed from it, and I say in this case temporary because the verse goes on to says when that ‘spirit returns’ to the house or the old habit returns to the mind of that person what is the first description given of it? The house or mind that is? It is empty!

He finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. Jesus then concludes with verse 45 saying; "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first... the void had not been filled with good things when the spirit left and therefore when it returned it reoccupied the original space and its condition was worse than before.

If the Christian Creates a void in leaving some sin and that void is not filled with the guidance of the Holy Spirit it will be filled with something or someone else.

Warren Wiersbe also writes about this verse as applying to the nation of Israel but also adds this personal aspect, by saying and I quote;

There is a personal application. It is not enough to clean house; we must also invite in the right tenant.

Bible Exposition Commentary - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Loyal (Matthew).

Listen to J. Vernon McGee’s commentary on these verses as well, he explains it further by saying;

Next Jesus gives one of the most profound and startling parables, a man has an unclean spirit, and the unclean spirit leaves him. The man thinks he is all cleaned up. Then what Happens?

Then he quotes verse 44

In other words, reformation is no good. My friend, you can quit doing many things, but that won’t make you a Christian. If everyone in the world would quit sinning right now, there wouldn’t be any more Christians in the next minute or in the next day, because quitting sin doesn't make Christians. Reformation is not what we need.

This same situation is with us today. The hardest people in the world are unsaved church members because they think they are all right. They have undergone self-reformation-empty, swept, and garnished. They are like a vacant house, and all the evil spirits have to do is move in.

The devil owns them, and they don't recognize this fact. Reformation means death and destruction. Regeneration means life and liberty.

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In a side note regarding evil spirits, some of the misconceptions of evil spirits is somewhat similar to that of lice. Most people think lice like to live on filthy or dirty heads but in truth they will actually live on anyone's head, clean or filthy they will live with who ever will let them. The same myth goes for evil spirits, many think they only reside with people who live filthy lives but in reality they will live with anyone who lets them in.

When we leave sin, when we leave sinful habits behind we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, this is the application of this feast for you. In a nut shell it is walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit of God.

If you look to yourself and profess that the Holy Spirit has really, REALLY entered you how are you walking, how are you living, how are you acting, is the Holy Spirit living and working inside of you in everything you do? Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to fill all the voids in your life? Or are you just trying to make it look like it on the outside, and in all reality your just and empty house waiting to be filled by something else.

God came to the early church, to dwell in the apostles and believers in the upper room and now throughout the whole church age He has come to each one of us in the day of our salvation to dwell in each one of us who call on the name of the Lord

In the last message in the application of Firstfruits we talked about living as a new creation, living in newness of life and giving ourselves back to God, that we are to be Firstfruits to God, in becoming the bride for Jesus Christ? Meaning that we are to be separated from sin, separated from unrighteousness, separated from this world, we are to get rid of all the things that are of Satan. I said that this is the most important step for the Christian, and the next most important step is this Pentecost feast where we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We are to flee sin, we are to rid ourselves of unrighteousness and we fill that void with the Spirit of God. Every time we overcome something in our lives we are to let the Holy Spirit fill that void and not leave it in a vacuum. Because a vacuum will always be filled with something.

This is why Paul says in Philippians 4 verse 8 and 9;

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

He says the God of peace will be with you.

If I fill my mind with things that are true, are noble, are just, are pure, are lovely, of good report and they are virtuous and praiseworthy Gods word says the God of peace will be with me. Listen carefully it doesn't say the peace of God will be with you, no it says the God of peace will be with you.

Remember Jesus said;

43 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

44 "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order.

45 "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; **and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."**

Because even if you leave some of your bad sins behind, begin to attend a church and sit in the pews every Sunday, sing the songs and pray the prayers and do not allow yourself to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and are not being regenerated in the Gospel of Jesus Christ you are just an empty vessel just waiting to be filled by someone else. As McGee said 'they are like a vacant house, and all the evil spirits have to do is move in.' and my fear is that many churches are filled with these kind of people.

Pentecost, for Israel it is the day that God came down and visited His people. With thunderings and lightnings, and thick clouds as from a furnace on the mountain top, the Lord came to His people, spoke to His people and gave them the law, 50 days after they left Egypt

For Christ it is His fulfilled promise of sending the Helper, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. This happens at the time of your salvation and every time afterwards that you give Him access to your life to fill a void when you overcome some sin. If you get rid of something bad, then let the Spirit of God fill that vacant space it leaves behind. If you got rid of bad music, replace it with hymns. If you got rid of reading junk books, replace them with reading the bible.

Anytime you rid yourself of any unrighteousness allow that void to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and it will be as Paul says the God of peace will be with you.

Pentecost, for the Jews, it was meeting God on the mountain. For Christ it is the fulfilled promise of sending the Holy Spirit. For the Christian, it is allowing Him to live inside of us, fill us, that our bodies may be worthy to be called the temple of God. And may it give us a new look and a new insight to what God was planning with the feasts of Israel, and the plan for your life in how you should walk.