



Deuteronomy 16:9-12 Pentecost

9 " You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the grain.

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.

12 "And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

This was the third of the feasts at which every Jewish male was to Feast of the Harvest or Pentecost. It came to be known as "Pentecost" from the Greek Word for 50 days from the Septuagint translation.

The dating of the feast is seven weeks from the beginning of the harvest of grain or more precisely 50 days after the offering of a sheaf at the beginning of the Passover. It was to be a yearly celebration of God's gracious provision in the harvest, and ongoing reminder that that it was God who was Israel's provider.

This feast was also kept in remembrance of the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, fifty days after they came out of Egypt. Matthew Henry believes this is the reason why they are called upon to be careful to observe these statutes in verse 12.

The Lord's commandments were also something they were to be thankful for as Deuteronomy 8:3 reminds us "***man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD***" and therefore rightly understood, the word of the Lord is more necessary to our well-being even than bread. A fact that should inform our charity.

Interestingly enough the word translated *feast* in verse 10 is actually *chag* a word meaning pilgrimage. It's Arabic cognate is *hajj* which has come to refer to the pilgrimage that every Muslim is required to make to Mecca at least once in his lifetime.

At this harvest festival, they gave a love, or free-will offering to be determined by the giver as the Lord had increased them and that from these offerings the nations would celebrate a feast to the Lord.

Once again also we see this command that marks out true heart religion to *rejoice before the Lord*. The service of the Lord is something that should fill us with holy joy. True religious services will always be a drudgery to those who neither know or love the Lord. It has always been something that has made me sad when I watch those who do not know the Lord in His Worship and see what an empty and onerous

toil it is. They go through the motions joylessly. The sad thing is that are in the midst of holy feast to quote Isaiah 25:6 *“A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees.”* And yet they are blind to the banquet. They come in a hungry and starving condition, but will not put forth their hands to take and eat.

The Lord says to them *“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance.”* (Is. 55:1-3) And yet they cannot wait to be away from the abundance so they can get back to wasting their lives with “what is not bread” and “what does not satisfy.” Let me go from all this food, I have a big pile of sawdust and a spoon I just can’t wait to get back to, and I plan to wash it all down with heaping glass of sand.

What a tragedy, but the understanding of the unbeliever remains veiled, he cannot see any value to serving the Lord. He thinks, I’m not going to be a sucker like all these “sheep” I’m going to serve myself! And he doesn’t see that his attempt to serve himself leaves him empty and unsatisfied, and that the man who dedicates himself to serving God comes full having received the blessing. We see that principle illustrated here in this feast because, although they were going to the Lord’s sanctuary on the day in which he had appointed to offer up sacrifices to Him, they were the ones who received the blessing. The Lord did not eat their offering, rather the offering they gave to Him became a **feast** for *“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”* All Israel was blessed by and benefited from it.

Three Applications, two minor, one major

1) In Pentecost There was to be on this day a remembrance of the Lord’s provision for His people as well as His freeing them from bondage in Egypt. In that sense the festival resembles the Sabbath. We too remember this day that we were once slaves and that the Lord freed us from our bondage by the work of His own hand.

2) The principle in verse 10 “the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you” is essentially the same one that should order our giving on the Sabbath. The principle in all the things of redemption is that the Lord gives and we respond and where God sows plentifully he expects to reap accordingly. The Apostle Paul speaks of this relationship when he says in 1 Cor. 6:19 ***Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?***

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

3) How appropriate that centuries later after its institution this harvest festival should be the day when the Lord’s Harvest of the nations would begin. Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection occurred during the feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, there we had the sacrifice of the LAMB who takes the Sins of the world. After his resurrection as he was about to ascend into Heaven, we read in Acts 1 Jesus commanded the disciples ***“not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me”;*** and telling them ***“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.”*** That promised coming of the Holy Spirit to

empower the church to carry the gospel into the world came 50 days later at Pentecost. “That is, when the fiftieth day arrives, the period of waiting is completed. For the apostles a new era dawns.”

Truly 50 days after the Lord had made the Passover offering he follows it with the great harvest of the nations, and that harvest continues as the good news of the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world and the invitation to come to His feast is spread. I hope you have heard and accepted that invitation to the feast, if not, I pray that you will for it then and only then will you find food and drink for your soul. The best of parties here on earth eventually ends, the revelers depart, and then all that is left is the debris that we must clean up, but the invitation that God extends is to and enter in with Him to a feast of fat things and wine upon the lees that never ends.