

The Feasts of Jehovah (4)

The Feast of Weeks or the Day of Pentecost:

Reading: Lev 23 v 15 -21 (further details in Num 28 and Deut 16) - Historical
Acts 2 v 1 - 4 – Fulfillment

Pentecost is the New Testament equivalent of the Feast of Weeks. Pentecost is from the Greek word meaning 'fiftieth' (see Lev 23 v 16 "*..shall ye number fifty days;*"). The Feast of Weeks is mentioned in Num 28 and Deut 16 (see Deut 16 v 9 "*Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee.*"). Two other descriptions found in the Old Testament are Ex 23 v 16 "*the feast of harvest*" and Num 28 v 26 "*the day of the firstfruits*".

Historical points:

- 1) Timing – The Feast of Pentecost was held on the fiftieth day after the Feast of Firstfruits – Leviticus 23 describes it "*Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath*". It was held in the third month of the year, Sivan, the exact date is not given (it would depend on Feast of Firstfruits).
- 2) Meaning for the Jews – This was a festival of joy and thanksgiving, a time for offering to God of the firstfruits of the harvest. This was one of the Feasts where God had instructed Ex 23 v 17 "*all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God.*" i.e. at Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks and Tabernacles all had to journey to Jerusalem. On these occasions Deut 16 says "*..they shall not appear before the Lord empty: Every man shall give as he is able*". In connection with the Feast of Weeks we read that there was to be a "*freewill offering*". A lesson, a challenge to us as we come together. Paul instructs in 11 Cor 9 v 7 "*Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give.*"

Jewish tradition is that Moses received the law of God on this day – the Feast of Weeks – and remembered this as they observed the festival. In Deut 16 v 12 "*And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.*"

- 3) The manner how the Feast was observed – The main point to note is that a 'new meat' offering had to be presented to the Lord. The 'new meat' offering consisted of 'two wave loaves'. The meal offering described in Lev 2 was "*..of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon.*" It was an offering that spoke of the perfection of the life of the Lord Jesus, a life that was a sweet savour unto God. The 'new meat' offering had to be made of fine flour, but Lev 23 v 17 "*..they shall be baked with leaven;*". Leaven speaks of sin, so this 'new meat' offering can not speak of the Lord Jesus.

Along with a 'new meat' offering the people were instructed to offer other sacrifices on the Feast of Weeks. The same 3 offerings offered at the Feast of Firstfruits are repeated – burnt, meat and drink – although the quantities are different. However, Lev 23 v 19 mentions a further 2 offerings, a sin offering and peace offerings.

Prophetic Truth and Lessons for Us:

What does this all mean, what does it point forward to? Acts 2 v 1 "*And when the day of Pentecost was fully come*". This literally reads, 'And when the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled'. A suggestion that this day was more than the annual 'Feast of Weeks', 50 days after

'Feast of Firstfruits'. In a previous study we learned that 'Feast of Firstfruits' was fulfilled at the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Seven weeks later, on the fiftieth day after resurrection 'the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled'. On that day the Spirit descended and the Church was formed – the fulfilment of Pentecost.

In Lev 23 v 16, 17 we read some details of the 'Feast of Weeks.

- 1) A new meat offering – In Lev 23 the 'Feast of Pentecost' was associated with a new meat offering. The main ingredient, like in the meal offering, was *'fine flour'*. As we have already seen the fine flour speaks of the perfection in the life and character of the Lord Jesus. This teaches us that in the Church and in the life of the individual believer the character of the Lord Jesus should be seen e.g. Rom 8 v 29 *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son"*. In our lives is the character of the Lord Jesus seen. The poet has said, 'Oh thou Spirit divine, All my nature refine, Till the beauty of Jesus be seen in me'. If the fine flour was found in the meal offering, leaven was not. In a previous study (Feast of Unleavened Bread) we learned that leaven in the Bible is a picture of sin. In the description of the new meat offering we find Lev 23 v 17 *"they shall be baken with leaven"*. The new meat offering speaks of the Church and so leaven is included. It is important to note that the leaven was baken; that is, it was present, but no longer active. This should be the same for the Christian, sin is still present, the old man or the flesh, but should not be active or dominant. That sinful nature is still within the Christian, it is not removed at conversion Rom 7 v 18 *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing"*. The exhortation is that sin should not be active Rom 6 *"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.....Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.....but yield yourselves unto God."*
- 2) Two wave loaves – the new meat offering consisted of two wave loaves. The two loaves were pointing forward to the mystery revealed by Paul in the Ephesian epistle Eph 3 v 6 *"the mystery....that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel"* and Eph 2 v 15 *"for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace."* At the Feast of Weeks two loaves were brought together and waved before the Lord. This was fulfilled in the formation of the Church, Jew and Gentile brought together, united, something for the Lord.
- 3) The firstfruits unto the Lord – This connects this feast with the Feast of Firstfruits, although there are some differences. 1) At the Feast of Firstfruits *"ye shall bring a sheaf (or handful) of the firstfruit of your harvest"*. This would be from the first cut of the barley harvest, the first ripened grain. In the Feast of Weeks the firstfruit would be from the wheat harvest (Ex 34 v 22). The two wave offerings were from the same harvest, but one barley the other wheat. 2) There is also a difference in the meaning of the word 'firstfruits'. In the Feast of Firstfruits which speaks of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus the word has the meaning first in time, place, order or rank. The word for firstfruits in the Feast of Weeks, speaking of the formation of the Church, simply means the firstfruit of the crops. In Acts 2 where *"there were added unto them about three thousand souls"*, these were the firstfruits of a great multitude who form the Church. The Lord Jesus is linked with the Church, but distinct, unique Rom 8 v 29 *"..His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren"*.

A sin offering and peace offering were offered, in addition to the offerings offered at the Feast of Firstfruits. Stephen Grant explains this "The wave loaves have an application to us hence the need for a sin offering and a peace offering which speaks of the renewal of broken communion. Therefore the sin offering was the answer to the presence of the baken leaven and the basis of communion laid by the peace offering."

