

The Tabernacle

Feast of Pentecost

Lesson Overview

- References: Leviticus 23:15-22, Numbers 28:26-31
- This feast takes place on the fiftieth day after the wave offering on the Feast of Firstfruits – Leviticus 23:15-16
 - In today's Jewish calendar, this is the 6th of Sivan. In 2023 this will be May 25-26 and in 2024 this will be June 11-12
- Names for this feast include:
 - *Pentecost* – from Greek meaning “fifty”
 - *Shavuot* – from Hebrew meaning “weeks”
 - Also called the “feast of weeks” (Exodus 34:22), the “feast of harvest” (Exodus 23:16), and the “day of firstfruits” (Numbers 28:26)
- This is the second of the three Pilgrimage Feasts (with Passover and Tabernacles)
- The mood of the feast was joyous, perhaps comparable to our Thanksgiving.
- Is associated with the wheat harvest which would be finished in the coming weeks.
- The Jews associated this feast with the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai
 - This is not explicitly stated in Scripture but is plausible given the information we have – Exodus 19:1, etc.

The Feast of Pentecost

- Was a sabbath day – Numbers 28:26
- Preparing the wave-loaves
 - This was done on the day/evening before it was offered, two if it fell on the weekly Sabbath.
 - A portion of a wheat field had been specially designated and marked by priests.
 - One ephah (about 20 quarts) total was harvested.
 - The wheat is beaten into fine flour and two separate one *omer* (~5 pints) were formed by adding water and leaven (Leviticus 23:17).
 - “In shape they were long and flat, and turned up, either at the edges or at the corners. According to the *Mishnah*, each loaf was four handbreadths wide, seven long, and four fingers high, and as it contained one omer of flour (5.1 pints, or rather less than four pounds' weight), the dough would weigh about five pounds and three-quarters, yielding, say, five pounds and a quarter of bread, or ten and a half for the two 'wave-loaves.’” – Edersheim
- Special offerings after the mornings sacrifice:
 - A burnt offering was made of two bulls, one ram, and seven lambs with their corresponding meal and drink offerings – Numbers 28:27-29
 - A sin offering was made with one goat – Numbers 28:30

- The ceremony of the wave-loaves
 - A burnt offering was made of seven lambs, one bull, and two rams with their corresponding meal and drink offerings – Leviticus 23:18
 - A sin offering of one ram was offered – Leviticus 23:19
 - A peace offering of two lambs was offered – Leviticus 23:19
 - The priest stood on the eastern side of the Brazen Altar and “waved” both the loaves and the lambs (before they were slain).
 - After the lambs were slain, the priest again waved the loaves with the lambs’ breasts and shoulders.
 - One lamb and loaf were given the high priest and the other lamb and loaf to the other priests. These were eaten before midnight in the Tabernacle/Temple.
- People would then bring their own freewill offerings over the next few days.

Later Developments

- Today the Jews do not emphasize this feast as it was in ancient times and the traditions are not as well-developed compared to other celebrations.
- There are some emphases on Ruth (whose story takes place during harvest), David (some believe he died on this day), eating foods with milk and honey (the bounty of the land), and the reading of the Torah (commemorating the giving of the Law).

Truths from the Tabernacle

- Note the links between Passover, Firstfruits, and Pentecost.
 - The Passover sacrifice and meal starts the process, so does the one-time-only sacrifice of Christ as redemption for mankind.
 - Firstfruits followed to celebrate the beginning of harvest, so does Christ’s one-time-only resurrection promise the forthcoming blessings upon believers.
 - Pentecost then celebrates the completion of the harvest, so does the one-time-only coming of the Spirit complete the blessings given to believers.
 - Just as these three feasts are intrinsically linked, so we must see the effects from Christ’s death to the Spirit’s coming as a single program.
- You cannot have Pentecost without a Passover; that is, you cannot have the blessings of Christ’s sacrifice without His death and resurrection.
- On the connection between Pentecost and the giving of the Law:
 - 3,000 men died at Sinai because of disobedience to the Law – Exodus 32:28
 - 3,000 souls were saved at Pentecost because of the Gospel – Acts 2:41
 - The Law reveals our sin and its death penalty, while the Spirit gives life and overcoming power – Romans 8:1-4