

THE FEAST OF WEEKS

BIBLE TEXT : Exodus 23:14-17; Leviticus 23 :15-22; Deuteronomy 16:9-12; Acts 2 :1-18, 37-41

LESSON 87 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse" (Malachi 3:10).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Exodus 23:14-17 (KJV)

¹⁴ Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.

¹⁵ Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)

¹⁶ And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, *which is* in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

¹⁷ Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

Leviticus 23:15-22 (KJV)

¹⁵ And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

¹⁶ Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

¹⁷ Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; *they are* the firstfruits unto the LORD.

¹⁸ And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be *for* a burnt offering unto the LORD, with their meat offering,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Feasts

The Lord told the Children of Israel that they should keep three feasts during the year, at which time all the men were required to appear before the Lord. The attendance of the women was voluntary, but many of them must have kept these feasts along with the men. No doubt they looked forward to the time when they could gather with God's people in fellowship and worship at these feasts to receive His blessing.

The first one was called the feast of the Passover, commemorating their deliverance from Egypt. The second, the feast of weeks, was an acknowledgment of gratitude to the Giver of the harvest. It is believed it was also in remembrance of giving the Law, the spiritual food by which the soul is fed. "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live" (Deuteronomy 8:3). The feast of tabernacles, or the ingathering, was the third one.

Pentecost

Since we have already studied about the feast of the Passover and will later study the feast of tabernacles, we will consider the second feast, the feast of weeks, or week of weeks, because they were to count seven weeks from the beginning of the harvest to determine its date. It is sometimes called the feast of harvest. It has still another name: the feast of Pentecost, since it was fifty days after the Passover. The word Pentecost is taken from the Greek word meaning fifty.

We have learned that on the day following the passover Sabbath, the Children of Israel were to bring an offering of the grain — a sheaf offering — because it was the beginning of the harvest. This was called the offering of the firstfruits since it was offered unto the Lord first, and it was no doubt barley, as barley ripened before wheat. In Leviticus 23:14, we read that the people were not to eat any of the harvest — green ears, parched corn, nor bread — until this offering was given unto the Lord. The sheaf offering not only sanctified the harvest but made it certain. "For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy" (Romans 11:16).

Seven weeks after the offering of the sheaf of firstfruits, the Children of Israel were to bring unto the Lord, with the burnt offerings to consecrate themselves, two loaves of wheat bread, also as firstfruits. At the feast of the Passover they could use only unleavened bread to symbolize the putting away of their sin and also to commemorate the bread they so hastily prepared as they left Egypt; but this time they were to use leavened bread in gratitude for their daily bread, which was leavened or made with yeast. This was called the feast of weeks.

Freewill Offerings

Not only were they to take the offerings that God required of them but He left a part of the offerings to the generosity of the individual. They were to give a freewill offering as God blessed them. Just as one rejoices today when he gives freely unto the Lord, whether it be time, talent, or substance, so this

and their drink offerings, *even* an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD.

¹⁹ Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings.

²⁰ And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits *for* a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

²¹ And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, *that* it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work *therein: it shall be* a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

²² And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 16:9-12 (KJV)

⁹ Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as* thou beginnest *to put* the sickle to the corn.

¹⁰ And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a freewill offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the LORD thy God*, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

¹¹ And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to

was a time of great rejoicing — praising and thanking God for the harvest He had given them. They also rejoiced in their freedom as they looked back to the time when they were slaves of the Egyptians. In the same manner we praise God when we think of the life we once lived, and how God has delivered us from being slaves of Satan. We rejoice in the freedom we now have.

They were also given a law (recorded in Leviticus 19:9 - **Leviticus 19:9 (KJV)** ⁹ And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest) to leave the corners of the fields and the forgotten sheaves (**Deuteronomy 24:19 (KJV)** ¹⁹ When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands) for the poor, the widows, and the strangers. We remember that through this very law the Lord took care of Ruth. She was a Moabite woman, a stranger in the land, the daughter-in-law of Naomi. She chose to serve God rather than be with her own people, and the Lord provided for her through the gleanings that she gathered in the field of Boaz. God's people are still mindful of those in need physically, but especially in need spiritually. It was necessary to obey even in a small matter, lest their offering would not be accepted. God still requires obedience and we read in I Samuel 15:22, "To obey is better than sacrifice."

Day of Pentecost

The most wonderful of all the feasts of Pentecost ever held is known as the Day of Pentecost, recorded in The Acts, the second chapter. It was just fifty days the selfsame hour ("the third hour of the day"), after Christ was nailed to the cross at the Crucifixion.

Jesus, our Paschal Lamb, was slain at the time of the killing of the Passover. He was buried and arose again the third day to "become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Corinthians 15:20).

Just before He ascended into Heaven, He told the disciples that they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days later (**Acts 1:5 (KJV)** ⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.) They did not know just when it would be, but they tarried in an upper room in Jerusalem as Jesus told them to do. The Acts, chapter 1, verse 14, tells us that they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." They were eager to spread the Gospel, but Jesus had told them to wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4).

As the day of the feast drew nigh, no doubt they were filled with praises not only for what God had already done for them but also for the gift of the Holy Ghost that was promised them. They were in an upper room in one accord, and suddenly there came a sound from Heaven like a mighty wind that filled the house. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

In the multitudes that gathered in the city for the feast were men of many different countries. These men heard, each in his own language, the disciples speak the wonderful works of God. Naturally they were amazed and wondered about it; but Peter, being filled with the power of the Holy-Ghost, began to preach to them. He told them that it was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. As he preached Jesus to them, they were convicted of their sins, and three thousand were saved that day: What a different Peter from the one who denied his Lord a few weeks before!

place his name there.

¹² And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

Acts 2:1-18 (KJV)

¹ And when the day of Pentecost was 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 all the house where they were sitting.

³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

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

⁵ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

⁶ Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

⁷ And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

⁸ And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

⁹ Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

¹⁰ Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

¹¹ Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

¹² And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

¹³ Others mocking said, These men

Promised to Us

Peter included the saints of today when he said that the gift of the Holy Ghost is promised to "all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). It is just as important today for God's people to receive the power of the Holy Ghost as it was for the disciples to receive it.

Like all the promises of God, one must meet His conditions in order to receive the power. His disciples were saved and walked with Jesus more than three years. Later He prayed to the Father for them. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). After that they were told to tarry for the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

In like manner today, one must be prepared to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. A person must not only be saved but also sanctified, a second definite work of grace. When one is saved his sins are washed away. The heart is cleansed by the Blood through sanctification. Then, when he seeks with all earnestness one can expect the Third Person of the Trinity to come in and dwell in his heart.

It is the most wonderful experience a person can have. It is worth every effort and every consecration, for it not only gives one power for service but also makes him ready for Jesus' coming if he continues to walk in the light of God's Word. It is given with the same evidence today as it was on the Day of Pentecost — that of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance — and without that evidence one cannot claim to have the baptism.

In salvation one receives some of the Spirit of God, in sanctification a little more, and in the baptism of the Holy Ghost he is filled to overflowing. A blessing more than he can contain is poured out. It has been said, "In sanctification you have the witness of the Spirit, the breathing of the Holy Ghost upon you; but in the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the power comes down into your inmost being in floods of Living Water."

Our Lesson

God's children today do not wait until a feast day, nor just three times a year to present themselves to Him. They make their consecrations daily unto the Lord. They give their firstfruits, not only tithes — the one-tenth that belongs to God — but tributes of freewill offerings, as God prospers them. They not only give of that which they earn but they give of time, of talent, of material, that like the sheaf offering, it will sanctify the whole of their lives. "Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase" (Proverbs 3:9).

QUESTIONS

- 1 How many times 'a year were they to present themselves to the Lord?
- 2 Give two other names for the feast of Pentecost.
- 3 What did it commemorate?
- 4 How was the Day of Pentecost different from the other feasts of Pentecost?
- 5 What did the disciples receive that day, that is also promised to us?
- 6 Who was the firstfruits of them that slept?
- 7 How can we give our firstfruits?

are full of new wine.

¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

¹⁵ For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day.

¹⁶ But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

¹⁸ And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

Acts 2:37-41 (KJV)

³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

³⁹ For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

⁴⁰ And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

⁴¹ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.