

## The Giving of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1—4

There is so much confusion over the meaning of the events on the day of Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) when the Holy Spirit was given. The only way to really understand what was happening is to view the events through a dispensational filter. Many who claim to be dispensational still have problems in properly interpreting these events because they are not truly separating Israel's Prophetic program from the church's Mystery program. They use 2 Timothy 2:15 to claim they are rightly dividing Scripture but then dip back into the Prophetic program to claim things for themselves those things that really belong to Israel. This, unfortunately, leads to much confusion and division among Christian churches.

Chapter 2 of Acts is where most dispensationalists begin to travel down the wrong path. This seemingly simple deviation actually leads one further and further from the truth of the Gospel of the Grace of God, the Mystery, as revealed to us by the Apostle Paul. Although Prophecy and Mystery are both truths revealed by God, they were never meant to be combined. When brought together, it weakens and contaminates the true meaning of both programs, making them both indigestible. This confusion can only be eliminated by completely separating these two dispensations, realizing God deals with Israel as a nation in a completely different manner than He does with the Church, the Body of Christ. It is theologically sloppy, and dangerous, to confer the national blessings and promises of Israel on individuals within the Body of Christ.

### Day of Pentecost

The Day of Pentecost (Feast of Weeks or Shavuot) was one of seven major feast days that Israel was required to observe according to the Mosaic Law. It was one of three feasts that required a trip to Jerusalem to observe. The other two were the Passover (Pesach) and the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) (Exodus 34:18—24). The first feast on the Jewish calendar is Passover. Pentecost is so called because it is celebrated 50 days after Passover (Leviticus 23:15—16). Note that Christendom's definition of this day is different than how it was to be biblically celebrated. Christendom counts 49 days (seven weeks) after Easter to determine the date for Pentecost. God mandated that Israel was to use the day after Passover (Nissan 14) to begin counting 49 days until Pentecost. Since the word Pentecost (literally the 50<sup>th</sup> Day in Greek) is not used in the Old Testament, I will use the original term, the Feast of Weeks.

The Feast of Weeks is often connected to the giving of the Mosaic Law. The Jews celebrate Shavuot on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sivan (sunset June 11, 2016) by remembering the giving of the Law. It is claimed, by some Christians, that Pentecost is the new Sinai and that the Holy Spirit is the new covenant (Law). This idea was bolstered by such men as Augustine, a church father who embraced and promoted the allegory method of Bible interpretation. There are many churches that hold high his teaching and often interpret Scripture through his teaching. However, there is absolutely no biblical evidence that the Law was given on the Feast of Weeks and it appears to be nothing more than a rabbinical tradition.

Biblically, the Feast of Weeks is a harvest celebration, and offerings were to be given to the Lord from the first fruits of the harvest. The Bible calls this day the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22; Numbers 28:26), Feast of Firstfruits (Numbers 28:26) and Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16). Each of the seven feasts God commanded Israel to observe represented a future prophetic event. Passover looked to Christ's death; Unleavened Bread looked to Christ's burial; Firstfruits looked to Christ's resurrection; Feast of Weeks looks to a great harvest of believers; Feast of Trumpets looks to the Tribulation; Day of Atonement looks to the Second Coming; and Feast of Tabernacles looks to the Millennial Kingdom.

Those who are astute will notice that there is a Firstfruits during the Feast of Unleavened Bread and a Feast of Firstfruits (also called the Feast of Weeks) 50 days later. This seems confusing, but makes much more sense when realizing that there are two grain harvest periods in Israel, one in spring and the other in early summer. The first harvest would have been right around Passover, which is also called

the feast of Unleavened Bread. The later harvest would begin approximately two months later, on the Feast of Weeks. So, these two feasts would cover the early barley harvest and the later wheat harvest (Exodus 34:22). The counting of the 49 days between the two feasts is known today as the Counting of the Omer (Leviticus 23:15—16). This celebration was all about being thankful for how abundantly the Lord provides and acknowledging that He would supply an abundant harvest.

A picture of the abundance that would be supplied to Israel is found in John 6. The Passover was very near and Israel was getting ready to celebrate Firstfruits (of the barley harvest). A boy, with five loaves of barley and two fish, came to hear Jesus preach. Jesus took the boy's lunch and made enough to feed the whole crowd of 5,000 men plus women and children with 12 baskets of food left over. This "firstfruits" of barley was turned into great abundance, a picture of God's great supply promised to Israel. Although the Feast of Weeks is not in view here, Firstfruits (of barley, part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread) is connected to the Feast of Firstfruits (of wheat) or Feast of weeks through the biblical mandate to count 49 days from Passover until the Feast of Weeks. This kept them focused on the two main grain harvests each year and upon the true source of their increase.

The promise of abundant crops is given in Leviticus 26:3—4. As long as Israel kept the commandments, God would provide for her. However, if they turned from Him, worshiped false Gods or didn't keep the commandments, God would cause the crops to fail (Leviticus 26:20).

### **Spiritual abundance**

The giving of the Holy Spirit is tied into this superabundance promised to Israel through the harvest feasts. Israel is reminded of how wonderfully God supplies their physical needs by connecting the days between the two firstfruit feasts. Just like all the feasts, there is not only a physical significance to the seven feasts, there is also a prophetic and spiritual significance. In this case, this Feast of Weeks looks ahead to the superabundant spiritual blessing that were to be given to Israel through the giving of the Holy Spirit. This event was prophesied as an event that Israel could look forward to before entering into the Millennial Kingdom (Is. 32:15; 44:3; Ez. 11:19; 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28—29; Zech. 12:10).

The believing remnant of Israel will be looking forward to the spiritual blessings of knowing the Law and being able to perfectly keep the Law (Ezekiel 36:27). They will be a perfect witness to unbelievers during the Millennial Kingdom. God will take a hold of the remnant of Israel and give them His Spirit (Ezekiel 11:19). This will all happen before the marriage supper of the Lamb, before believing Israel is permanently joined to Jesus Christ as His Bride. This is how the bride is made pure, ready to be wedded. Revelation 19:7—10 says that the bride made herself ready, but a careful reading shows she made herself ready by putting on the clothes that were supplied to her by God. In other words, those who believe are the ones who will be saved and will be the ones going into the Kingdom to be married.

How does this compare to us in this dispensation of Grace? The biggest difference is that we don't need to wait until the end of the age to receive the Holy Spirit. We are given the Spirit at the point of our salvation who then seals us unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30). Believing Israel, under the Dispensation of the Kingdom, is not given the Spirit and is not secured until the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on believing Israel on that Feast of Weeks, Peter declared it was in fulfillment of Joel 2:28. This pouring out of the Spirit will come upon all mankind at the end of the Tribulation, unlike the giving of the Holy Spirit in this Dispensation of Grace. However, 2,000 years ago, on the day of the Feast of Weeks, the Holy Spirit was only given to a very few, the firstfruits of a promised great harvest of Israel at the end of the Tribulation (Mathew 24:31).

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