

Pentecost / Feast of Weeks



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: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. 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. 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, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD. Leviticus 23:15-18.

Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God: thou shalt do no work therein. 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. 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: 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 place his name there. Deuteronomy 16:8-11

The name *Pentecost* for this festival comes from a Greek word meaning “fiftieth.” The Hebrew name *Shavuot* means “weeks” or “sevens.” It was celebrated 7 weeks after the presentation of the Wave Sheaf. It is a special summer wheat harvest celebration. It was a special time of joy and thankfulness to God for His bountiful blessing on the harvest. Also, according to Jewish traditional reckoning, this is believed to be the very day God spoke His Law to the Israelites from Mount Sinai. Therefore it is also known as the Torah Season.

“This annual feast was instituted in remembrance of the giving of the law upon mount Sinai, the fiftieth day after they came out of Egypt. That was the feast which they were told in Egypt must be observed to God in the wilderness, as a memorial of which ever after they kept this feast. But the period and perfection of this feast was the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles on the day of this feast (Acts 2:1), in which the law of faith was given, fifty days after Christ our passover was sacrificed for us. And on that day (as bishop Patrick well expresses it) the apostles, having themselves received the first-fruits of the Spirit, begat three thousand souls, through the word of truth, and presented them, as the first-fruits of the Christian church, to God and the Lamb.”⁴⁵

Two loaves of leavened bread were presented as an offering to the Lord during this feast. This was the only offering where God specified that leaven was to be included.

What might this leaven represent in the plan of salvation?

Matthew 13:33; 24:14

Jesus used the parable of a small amount of leaven being mixed into a large batch of dough until the whole batch was leavened to illustrate how the Gospel being preached by only 12 apostles would spread to the whole world and many millions would receive it and become part of the Kingdom of Heaven. Pentecost, the time of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was the beginning of that time of the Gospel spreading to the whole world.

What promise of a special gift did Jesus give the 12 apostles after His resurrection?

Acts 1:2-5

What happened on that Pentecost 7 weeks after Jesus' resurrection.

Acts 2:1-4

Who predicted this would happen?

Matthew 3:4-6, 11

What did tongues of fire represent?

Revelation 4:5

Each lamp in the Tabernacle had a tongue of fire when lit. They were kept burning at all times. This represented the Holy Spirit even in the Old Testament times.

For what important purpose was the Holy Spirit given at that time?

Acts 2:4-6

At that time Jews and others came to Jerusalem from many parts of the world and spoke many other languages. The Holy Spirit gave the Apostles the special ability to speak those foreign languages so the people could hear the Gospel in their own language and understand it. They were not just babbling nonsense as is common in some modern circles where “speaking in tongues” is considered a sign that a person has received the Holy Spirit. This gift made it easier for everyone, no matter what their native language was, to hear about God's love and His Plan of Salvation. It was also a sign from God that He wanted the Gospel to go to everyone no matter what nationality they were.

When we have the Holy Spirit in our lives, what are we to be?

Matthew 5:14

What does Paul say about this subject?

1 Corinthians 14:5, 9, 27

If someone who speaks a foreign language has something to share in a group that doesn't understand him, it is useless for him to speak unless there is an interpreter who can translate what he says.

One sincere young man was hanging out at a coffee house where others were speaking in tongues as a part of their religious experience. He also received the “gift” and started speaking in a language that no one, including himself, understood. He wondered if this was genuinely from God, so he prayed, “Lord, if this is really from you, let it continue. If not, please take it away.” He instantly lost the ability. He went on to become a pastor but has never had that “gift” again. Satan always has a counterfeit for the real gifts of God.

What other kinds of spirits are described in Scripture, and who do they represent?

Mark 1:23-27

Mark 7:25-30

Acts 19:16

Matthew 12:28

What does the Holy Spirit do for the believer?

John 14:26

John 16:13

Acts 2:17, 18

Acts 16:7

Romans 8:26

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

The Holy Spirit was the Seal of the New Covenant. What would He do in each believer's life?

Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 2:15

The Feast of Weeks, with its ritual of presenting two loaves of leavened bread to God, was figurative of God's harvest. By combining the two aspects of receiving God's Law and receiving His Holy Spirit, we have the formula for the development and “ripening” of His harvest. We need His Law in order to know how He wants us to live, and we need His Spirit to write that Law in our hearts and empower us to actually live it.

The two loaves of bread were the “fruit,” the resulting product, of the harvest. What is the “fruit” of having the Holy Spirit working in our lives?

Galatians 5:22, 23

How can we get this special gift of the Holy Spirit from Jesus?
Luke 11:13

If you have not yet asked God to give you His Holy Spirit, ask Him now. Continue to ask for more of His Spirit each day, especially at Pentecost, that you may become more and more like Jesus, obeying all of His Laws and revealing the fruit—the result—of receiving Him into your heart.