

Pentecost

Sunday May 19th, 2024

Pentecost, pen-tay-kos-tay'= 50. The fiftieth day after the Passover celebration, the second of the three great Jewish feasts, celebrated at Jerusalem yearly, the seventh week after the Passover, in grateful recognition of the completed harvest.¹ The major category of Jewish holidays is the pilgrimage festival. Described in the Hebrew Bible as celebrating both agricultural festivals and historical events in the history of the Jewish people, these three holidays were set aside in biblical times for people to travel to the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. These three holidays are Passover (festival of Pesah), Shavuot, (festival of weeks) 49 days after the Passover, which is Pentecost, and Sukkot, (Festival of Booths).²

“They shall not appear empty-handed. Each shall bring his own gift, appropriate to the blessing which the Lord your God has given you” Deuteronomy 16:16. As we read this verse I believe it renders the greater offense to what the money changers in the Temple were committing in their greed and power. We see the gifts the people bring were to be a gift of their own, something that was meant to be of a sacrifice, difficult to give up, or more meaningful than just anything off the shelf.

“Not only were the moneychangers robbing the people, but history records that excessive prices were being charged by those who were selling animals used in Temple sacrifice.”³ It was the custom according to Leviticus chapter 12, that a woman who had given birth was considered unclean, for a male child, this period of purification would be seven days, Leviticus 12:2, and for a female child two weeks, Leviticus 12:5. They would make a sacrifice gift **Verse 12:6; ‘When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.** So we find there was a very important issue regarding the type of sacrifice... the sacrifice was to demonstrate the heart behind the offering, we see this in Cain and Able.

What is the (Festival of Booths) Sukkot, it is the celebration commemorating the forty years of wandering in the desert, during which time they had to depend upon God for all their needs. “This also celebrates the last harvest festival before the onset of the winter rains in the land of Israel. It falls five days after Yom Kippur, usually in mid-autumn.” So what would the need for each of these holidays be? Let’s look at Passover first because

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4005/kjv/tr/0-1/>

² <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/pilgrimage-festivals/>

³ <https://www.biblehistory.net/newsletter/annas.htm>

it is the first of the festivals that put Israel in remembrance of the early Passover when the Lord passed over all of the Jewish houses in Egypt and saved all the firstborn of the obedient by placing the blood of the sacrifice on the door post and the Lintel of their houses. **Exodus 12:12; “For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.”** This is a huge statement of faith we can easily miss thinking and focusing on the persecuted and not on the blessing. The blessing is that God is our savior and that while there must be punishment for disobedience God looks for the heart of the believer through actions that demonstrate faith. Today we must look to ourselves and ask, where are my works of faith? If asked of God what have I done with His gift of faith what shall I answer?

Galatians 6:3-5; “1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.” We shall learn to walk in humility first as our Christ Jesus has exhibited for us. Are there works of faith in my life? Am I producing any fruit? The day of Pentecost is now at hand and we are witnessing a new dispensation, **“(that dispensation (or arrangement) by which the grace of God was granted me, Ephesians 3:2; ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου, the dispensation by which he carried out his secret purpose, Ephesians 3:9”⁴** **Jesus ushers in a new dispensation,** God the Father had waited for this time to unfold His plan. There are several reasons why Grace and salvation were kept secret until God was ready. It all was leading up to the first advent, the birth of our Christ Jesus. Although the Advent season begins on the fourth day of December or the first Sunday of December each year and concludes on December 24, it is the season or period in which God brings light to the world through the birth of this tiny baby boy, our Christ Jesus. **The definition of Advent is the (coming or arrival), God’s plan is now the focus which has been hidden since before the world was created, the atoning sacrifice of His Son’s death for our sins.**

Now we look to Pentecost, it is difficult to say which festival is the most important, the time that God spared His faithful in Egypt or the announcing and beginning of the Christian Church. We have read that Pentecost means fifty, actually forty-nine days but remember there is a difference in time with ancient Israel. This would be the day that the world would meet Jesus in their faith, all the festivals are set by season and there is a spiritual implication for this, it is a new time and a new teaching, and the church’s growth begins here as fruit does on the vine. Centered around Israel’s seasons and time frame we can better understand God’s reasoning. This is an amazing time, We

⁴ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3622/nkjv/tr/0-1/>

now get to see the full power of the Holy Spirit in Action for all who will listen to Peter's first sermon. So as there is a period of planting there also are periods of growth and a time to harvest. **Matthew 9:37**; "Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few." How many of us today are sharing the glory and plan of salvation with others? Paul said it best when he said, in **Romans 1:16**; "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

Thinking the men were drunk, as mockers who failed to understand what was taking place, others realized the disciples were talking in languages that met the understanding of all who were present. They were not drunk but instead were filled with the Holy Spirit. What would this mean for people throughout the generations to come, what does it mean for us this day? The sermon addresses this answer. Taken from Joel 2:8-32; Peter recites,

Peter's Sermon.

5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." 12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

Peter's Sermon

(Joel 2:28–32)

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,

That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Your young men shall see visions,

Your old men shall dream dreams.

18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants

I will pour out My Spirit in those days;

And they shall prophesy.

19 I will show wonders in heaven above

And signs in the earth beneath:

Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood,

Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

21 And it shall come to pass

That whoever calls on the name of the LORD

Shall be saved.'

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken^[fn] by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25 For David says concerning Him:

'I foresaw the LORD always before my face,

For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;

Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades,

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

28 You have made known to me the ways of life;

You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

29 “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

34 “For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

‘The LORD said to my Lord,

“Sit at My right hand,

35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”’

36 “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

The Mystery of Hidden Message

This mystery had from the beginning of the ages been hidden in God. The plan was itself in the mind of God eternally, but here the thought is that He kept it

a secret throughout the ages of human history. Once again we notice the care the Holy Spirit takes to impress us with the fact that the assembly, or church universal, is something new, unique, unprecedented. It was not known before to anyone but God. The secret was hidden in God who created all things. He created the material universe, He created the ages, and He created the church—but in His wisdom He decided to withhold any knowledge of this new creation until the First Advent of Christ. 3:10 One of God’s present purposes in connection with the mystery is to reveal His manifold wisdom to the angelic hosts of heaven. Paul again uses the metaphor of a school. God is the Teacher. The universe is the classroom. Angelic dignitaries are the students. The lesson is on “The multi-faceted wisdom of God.” The church is the object lesson. From heaven the angels are compelled to admire His unsearchable judgments and marvel at His ways past finding out. They see how God has triumphed over sin to His own glory. They

see how He has sent heaven's Best for earth's worst. They see how He has redeemed His enemies at enormous cost, conquered them by love, and prepared them as a Bride for His Son. They see how He has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. And they see that through the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross, more glory has come to God and more blessing has come to believing Jews and Gentiles than if sin had never been allowed to enter. God has been vindicated; Christ has been exalted; Satan has been defeated; and the church has been enthroned in Christ to share His glory.