

The feasts of the Lord given to Israel are one essential Old Testament feature we need to know if we want to understand the New Testament.

Regrettably, many teach that these feasts are the outline of God's plan for us today, the church which is His Body. This has created much confusion.

There can be no doubt that certain features of the Feasts are universally applicable, namely, that Christ died, that He rose again and that we have also been separated from the bondage of Satan, sin and death being translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, Col.1:12-13. However, until we appreciate that the Feasts are the outline of God's plans for Israel we shall not fully understand the differences between the church of Israel and our church, the church which is his Body. All Scripture is inspired and God breathed and is profitable for us, but not all the New Testament is about us.

Today is a brief revisionary lesson anticipating our longer series on Pentecost yet to be examined.

One of the terms used in the feasts' passage of Leviticus 23 is "firstfruits" and I wondered if we all appreciated what this term meant. Here are the two passages in which the word occurs;

[Lev 23:10](#) Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you have come into the land which I give to you, and shall reap the harvest of it, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

[Lev 23:11](#) And he shall wave the sheaf before Jehovah to be received for you. On the next day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

[Lev 23:16](#) To the next day after the seventh sabbath you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new food offering to Jehovah.

[Lev 23:17](#) You shall bring out of your homes two wave loaves of two-tenth parts. They shall be of fine flour. They shall be baked with leaven, firstfruits to Jehovah.

There were two firstfruits in the feasts given to Israel. The first was waved during the Feasts of Unleavened Bread. This was not offered in Egypt but later, when Israel had entered their land.

The second firstfruit is found in the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost. It consisted of two loaves baked with leaven. (If you would like the previous lesson showing there were no Gentiles at Pentecost, please email).

The firstfruits were the early grain harvests, dedicated to God and a pledge of the rest of the harvest following. These feasts, Unleavened Bread and Pentecost, fall in Israel's spring and they look forward to the summer harvest when all crops were gathered. Notice the harvesting instructions in Lev.23:22 between the spring feasts and the summer ones.

The firstfruit of unleavened bread consisted of a cluster of early ripening barley. The second firstfruit were (fine flour-wheat) loaves baked with leaven and they were both wave offerings, that is, offerings lifted up by the Priests and waved to and fro, horizontally, "before the Lord".

The firstfruit of Unleavened Bread represents Christ, the sinless (unleavened) One in resurrection;

[1Co 15:13](#) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised.

[1Co 15:14](#) And if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is worthless, and your faith is also worthless.

[1Co 15:15](#) And we are also found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified of God that He raised Christ; whom He did not raise if the dead are not raised.

[1Co 15:16](#) For if the dead are not raised, then Christ is not raised.

[1Co 15:17](#) And if Christ is not raised, your faith is foolish; you are yet in your sins.

[1Co 15:18](#) Then also those that fell asleep in Christ were lost.

[1Co 15:19](#) If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

[1Co 15:20](#) But now Christ has risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruit of those who slept.

[1Co 15:21](#) For since death is through man, the resurrection of the dead also is through a Man.

[1Co 15:22](#) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive.

[1Co 15:23](#) But each in his own order: Christ the first-fruit, and afterward they who are Christ's at His coming;

The firstfruit of weeks or Pentecost represents Israel (leavened) and Peter's explanation on the fulfilment of that Feast gives us some understanding;

[Act 2:16](#) But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel:

[Act 2:17](#) "And it shall be in the last days, says 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.

[Act 2:18](#) And in those days I will pour out My Spirit upon My slaves and My slave women, and they shall prophesy.

[Act 2:19](#) And I will give wonders in the heaven above, and miracles on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

Act 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and glorious Day of the Lord.

Act 2:21 And it shall be that everyone who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Peter refers to Joel 2:28-32 which the interested reader will examine. Peter does not say Joel was fulfilled on that day. Peter reminded his Israelite listeners of the promise of God for Israel so far as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is concerned. Notice the geographical signs of the coming of the Lord were included to emphasize the time when these things would be fulfilled. A close reading of Joel 2 will show that the outpouring of the Spirit on Israel was after the Lord returns and reigns in Zion, not before. Notice the word, "afterward" in the KJV of Joel 2:28 and as Peter puts it, "in the last days".

The context both in Joel and Acts 2 is Israel. The church which is his body is not the subject of prophecy, see Eph.3:8-9. In Acts 2, only the disciples who had repented and been baptised received the gifts from the Holy Spirit. Joel, however, speaks of the day when the Lord reigns in Zion and will pour out "of His Spirit" on ALL flesh. Acts 2-28 is a period of anticipation; where firstfruits or foretastes of what God will do for all Israel when all of Joel's prophecies are in place were experienced by the faithful. Please consider this passage from Hebrews (note the title of the book):.

Heb 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

Heb 6:5 and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come,

The firstfruit of Weeks, or Pentecost, was the "powers of the coming age" or "world to come" on the faithful few, not ALL Israel. That "world to come" was the millennium, the reign of Christ on the earth, and when He reigns from Zion, then ALL Israel, the full harvest, will experience those powers. Consider these two passages;

Act 2:29 Men, brothers, it is permitted to say to you with plainness as to the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Act 2:30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne,

Act 2:31 seeing this beforehand, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor would His flesh see corruption,

Act 2:32 God raised up this Jesus, of which we all are witnesses.

Christ's resurrection was to sit on David's throne, the very hope given to his mother at his birth;

Luk 1:31 And behold! You shall conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name JESUS.

Luk 1:32 He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David.

Luk 1:33 And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

During the Acts period the following things were in operation; the gifts of the Spirit (1Cor.12:7-11), the operations or governments of God (1Cor.12:28); the incredible judgments of God (Acts 5:1-11, cp Joshua 7); supernatural transportation (Acts 8:39, cp 1Kings 18:12), and geological events anticipating the second coming of Christ such as shaking of buildings, earthquakes and droughts.

Pentecost was never the birthday of "the church", it was a feast given to Israel in which a firstfruit anticipated what God would do when his Son reigns on the earth which is not the sphere of the Church which is his Body.