

FEAST OF PENTECOST

INTRODUCTION

The sacred assemblies of the Jews in the Old Testament are prophetic: they point to events in days to come. In this paper we explain what the Feast of First Fruits symbolizes. Christians can apply that knowledge to their life and to their interpretation of the Scripture.

This study will incorporate the spiritual meaning of numbers to help identify the meanings of the feasts. By two or three witnesses every fact shall be established. When Scripture makes a clear identification there is no debate. When it does not we will look to other witnesses, such as spiritual numbers.¹

SUMMARY

The Feast of Pentecost is prophetic of the Day of Pentecost.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS OBSERVE JEWISH HOLY DAYS?

Christians are strongly recommended not to observe the Jewish rituals and holy days.

There was a group in New Testament times who wanted to bring believers under obedience to the rituals and ordinances of Moses and the patriarchal rite of circumcision. Even some apostles drifted towards this way of thinking. This approach was condemned in the strongest possible terms by Paul: anathema! (Galatians 1:9) Anathema means 'accursed', devoted to destruction, or eternally damned. Regarding observing feasts and holy days Scripture says:

“But now that you know God – or rather are known by God – how is it you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.” (Galatians 4:9-11)

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

The Bible contains types and shadows. A type is an allegory, a figure of meaning. In Galatians Paul identifies Hagar, the slave woman, as representing the Old Covenant, and Sarah, the free woman, as representing the New Covenant.² In the same passage he connects Isaac with believers in Jesus, since we are born of the free woman. A shadow is a type with a prophetic fulfillment, speaking of things to come:

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come: the reality is found in Christ.” (Colossians 2:16)

¹ For a complete presentation of spiritual numbers please refer to www.biblenumbersforlife.com The spiritual meanings of Bible numbers and the validation of those meanings is presented there.

² Gal. 4:21-31 “these things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants...”

SIMULTANEOUS PROPHETIC FULFILLMENTS FOR CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

A single prophetic event can have implications for both Jews and Christians. For example: when Christ died “**at that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**” (Matt. 27:51) The New Testament began when Christ’s blood was shed on the cross. The Old Testament covenant ceased at the exact same time. Many prophetic fulfillments of the appointed feasts and sacred assemblies apply to Jews in one way and to Christians in another way. Some feasts have no prophetic fulfilment for Jews, but often, prophetic events for Christians and Jews are linked. This is not a contradiction, this is the divine plan.

Scripture. Hallelujah! Christ is risen!

FEAST OF PENTECOST³

The Feast of Pentecost is prophetic of the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit was poured out in the hearts of believers in Jesus.

The Bible says after the resurrection of Christ⁴ he showed himself to the apostles:

“...and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion while he was eating with them, he gave this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.’”(Acts 1:3-5)

“So when they met together they asked him, “Lord are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of Israel? He said to them ‘it is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:7-8)

These passages are critical for understanding the interpretation of the Feast of Pentecost. As we see from the passage above, the apostles were looking for the kingdom to return to Israel. They were thinking of the holy land and the covenants with the patriarchs. But when the blood of Christ was shed and when the new covenant in his blood was initiated, the attention of God switched from the holy land to the Holy One, the Lord Jesus. From the point of the cross forward, prophecies in the feasts pertain to Christ and the body of Christ. We are the body of Christ on earth within which the Holy Spirit dwells. Importantly, only when the Holy Spirit is taken from the earth will the attention of prophecies in the feasts switch back to focussing on the holy land on earth.

We see this new focus on the body of Christ illustrated on the day of Pentecost:

³ See Exodus 23:16b, Leviticus 23:15-22, Deuteronomy 16:9-12

⁴ The Feast of First Fruits is prophetic of the resurrection of Christ. See paper on that feast on this website.

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly the sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each one of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the spirit enabled them.” (Acts 2:1-4)

Compare these events to the Feast of Pentecost:

“Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD.” (Lev. 23:16)

“... and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. You shall bring out of your dwellings, two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of first fruits to the LORD.” (Lev. 23:16-17)

“The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the first fruits. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priests.” (Lev. 23:20)

The number 50 means “Purify”. Look back at the number of followers of Jesus in the heyday of his ministry. 5,000 at one time were following him and intently listening to his words over a period of a number of days. On another occasion the Lord had to sit in a boat there were so many who wanted to hear his words. As the teaching became harder the numbers diminished. After the Lord was crucified his followers hid themselves for fear of the Jews. Finally at the day of Pentecost, there were only 120 committed believers left to gather in one place. Had the Spirit not been poured out, would there have been any church as we know it? The Spirit was poured out: another miraculous sign of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Pentecost is the only feast or day or event in the entire Law of Moses where an offering is made to the Lord with yeast. Note carefully that the bread baked with yeast is waved before the LORD: it is not burnt on the altar. Yeast is symbolic of sin, and an offering made by fire must be without sin. The bread baked with yeast is symbolic of born again believers in fellowship. Unlike the Lord Jesus who knew no sin, we were born in sin and until we get new bodies our lives will be an ongoing struggle between our flesh and the Spirit living in us. Likewise church life will be marred and stained by the imperfect believers that make it up. The fact the loaves are waved in the air tells us in spite of our sinfulness, the promise of resurrection will be fulfilled. Christ rose first as the first fruits, we will rise second (hence two loaves) at the harvest at the end of the age.

At Pentecost Peter quoted Joel:

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.” (Acts 2:17-18)

The preceding verses in Joel make the connection to Pentecost more complete:

“He will send you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine.” (Joel 2:23-24)

Pentecost is the harvest feast. About 3,000 were added to their number that day. As a harvest feast it was intended to be a time of great joy to all people connected to the community of Israel. The instructions for the Feast of Pentecost say:

“And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name – you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and your maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you.” (Deut. 16:11)

The Day of Pentecost fulfilled those words. Not only did the Lord add numbers, he added great vitality to the fellowship of believers. At this time the needs of the poor were not forgotten either:

“They devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and to the breaking of bread and prayer. Everyone was filled with awe and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added daily to their numbers those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:42-47)

Visitors who had come to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem from all over the Roman world did not immediately return home, they joined together with the saints as they experienced their new life in Christ. One of God’s designs in instituting the Feast of Pentecost when he revealed it to Moses was so that in a future time when the Spirit was poured out people from many countries and cultures would be present in Jerusalem that day and hear God being praised in their own tongues. Eventually they would return to their origins and spread the word concerning the coming of the Messiah.

Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection were the fulfillment of ancient promises and prophecies. The Day of Pentecost is not outshone in this respect. Shortly after the flood the sons of Noah settled in the plains of Shinar and laid plans to build a mighty nation around a tower to heaven at Babel. The Lord confused their languages and scattered them over the face of the earth (Gen. 11:9). But God had a plan to reverse this curse. He announced to Abram:

“...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (Gen. 12:3)

The Day of Pentecost was the fulfillment of the promise to Abram. On this day the worship of the God of Abraham began to spread throughout the whole world to all peoples. Significantly, the Day of Pentecost began with a plurality of tongues praising God. No longer would Hebrew be the sacred language. God would now be worshipped in all languages, among all cultures, and in all places. At the same time all these diverse people receive the same gift to be able to speak to God through the Holy Spirit.

Paul makes a clear connection between receiving Christ by the Spirit and the promise to Abraham:

“The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you’. So, those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.” (Gal. 3:8-9)

“He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles, through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” (Gal. 3:14)

The Day of Pentecost marks the complete setting aside of the Jewish priesthood. The new way is a living personal anointing of the Holy Spirit. The story of Samuel’s mother Hannah is a parallel. She has been fasting and in the fervency of prayer was moving her lips but not speaking. Eli the priest rebuked her and accused her of drunkenness in the temple. This is the same thing the Spirit filled believers on Pentecost were accused of. In Hannah’s song she sings “Those who were full hire themselves out for food, but those who were hungry hunger no more.” (1 Sam 2:5) Not long afterward Eli falls off a chair and breaks his neck. The child Samuel grows into a great prophet. Similarly, by 70 AD the temple in Jerusalem is destroyed and the Jews scattered. The temple, its legal offerings, and priesthood are gone. The church of Jesus Christ is growing as men and women filled with the Holy Spirit spread the knowledge of God throughout the world.

Gematria Study:

This section looks at the gematria of verses in the Torah relating to regulations pertaining to the Feast of Pentecost. Verses that make general statements such as “The Lord said to Moses” are excluded. Only verses with information specific to observing the Feast are included.

There are three passages of 18 verses in the Torah relating to the regulations for this Feast:

	Passage	Gematria	Factors
(1)	Leviticus 23:15-22	41,074	2 x 11 x 1867 [285 th prime [285 = 3 x 5 x 19]]
(2)	Numbers 28:26-31	19,333	2,191 st prime [2191 = 7 x 313 [65 th prime]]
(3)	Deut. 16:9-12	<u>20,853</u>	9 x 7 x 331 [67 th prime]
	Total:	<u>81,260</u>	20 x 17 x 239 [52 nd prime]

The spiritual interpretation of the gematria of the three passages:

- (1) The meaning of 22 (2 x 11) is “Spiritual Light”, the meaning of 95 is “Voice of God”, and the meaning of 3 is “Truth” or “Authority”. The number 95 is the central number in the 8th number theme “Church Renewal”⁵. Psalm 95 says “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (v.7-8) and “Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our God our Maker” (v.6) The sense of the Voice of God is it is the still small voice: the witness of the Holy Spirit. This is what the saints were praying to receive prior to the outpouring of the Spirit.

⁵ <http://biblenumbers.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/spiritual-numbers-78-to-114.pdf>

It is not the written word of the Bible that is in view here, it is the prophetic living word shedding light abroad in our hearts. The church renewal number theme can be divided into three truths: the first is the sifting the church, the second is breaking bondages of sin and unbelief by revelation of the personal prophetic word of truth and harkening to it, and the third is the gift of faith and the formation of a new holy fellowship. It is nothing short of extraordinary that the number 95 would be a prime factor of the passage in Leviticus pertaining to the Feast of Pentecost since the Day of Pentecost is the ultimate example of church renewal. That God, as he dictated to Moses the words of Scripture, could encode in spiritual numbers the sense of what would happen concerning events that would unfold over two thousand years later is awe inspiring. Putting all the spiritual numbers of this passage together the meaning of the gematria of the passage of Leviticus 23:15-22 is "Spiritual Light! The Voice of God (in our hearts) has Authority";

- (2) The meaning of 7 is "Fullness" or "The End", and the meaning of 65 is "Apostasy". Apostasy means to renounce the faith in a public way. It does not mean to hold doubts and live a double life. It means to completely abandon what God has given. When the Jews crucified Christ the fullness of their apostasy from God was plainly evident. They were not interested at all in spiritual things or the truth or the kingdom of God: they were only interested in preserving their traditions and their social position. At the same juncture of history we see in the Day of Pentecost the end of this apostasy through the birth of the church of Jesus Christ. The Jews were given the ultimate sign from God, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and a space of 49 days within which to repent, but they did not. On the 50th day, the day of purification, the uncleanness of the Jews unbelief was swept away and the kingdom of God was given to others;
- (3) The number 63 (9 x 7) means "God's Wrath" and the number 67 means "Gentiles Praise God". Again the fortunes of the Jews and the Christians are in contrast. By rejecting Christ, the Jews brought upon themselves the terrifying wrath of God. In 70 AD Jerusalem was laid waste by the same Romans the Jews had urged to kill Jesus. During the siege the citizens were so hungry mothers ate their children. Horrible as it is to recall after the city was taken the Romans dragged thousands of Jews outside the town and crucified them en masse. In contrast, by accepting Christ, the believers received the gift of the Holy Spirit and the promise of eternal life. At Pentecost God was praised in many languages. In a few short years the ministry of Paul began and Gentiles in great numbers received forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ;
- (4) The total number of the gematria of the three passages contains the factors: 20, 17, and 52. The number 20 means "Redemption", the number 17 means "Victory", and the number 52 means "Gospel Work" or "Gospel Worker". We see on the Day of Pentecost the preaching of the gospel of faith in Jesus Christ and the harvest or redemption of 3,000 souls in one day. It was a day of rejoicing, a day of victory.