

JESUS, OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST; THE HOLY SPIRIT, OUR COMFORTER
Week 16/JROC – Counting the Days UNTIL the Promise of Power is Received
May 12, 2024

Moses communed with God for 40 days on Mt. Sinai before returning with the stone tablets.
Jesus tarried 40 days with His disciples teaching them about the kingdom.

Seven weeks following the resurrection of Jesus/on the 50th day following His rising from the dead, the roads UP to Jerusalem were crowded with Jewish pilgrims. They were “going UP to Jerusalem.” Jerusalem stands on hills at an elevation of approx. 2600 ft. above sea level. The Jewish people were going UP to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Weeks! God was preparing the Jewish people for the Messiah.

John 16:7 - *It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*

Until the Holy Spirit was given, the Great Commission could not begin. It was only when Jesus ascended and was exalted at the right hand of God that Jesus could pour out the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). Therefore, Jesus told the apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received POWER!

During the 40 days of Jesus’ final instructions...

Acts 1:4-8 tells us that Jesus was *assembled together with them...He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father,...and you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*

Acts 1 coincides with Lev. 23:15-17!

Lev. 23:15-16 – God told Moses, 1530 years BEFORE Jesus’ resurrection, to tell the Jewish people, ...*you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath...* (begin counting on a Sunday). In Jesus’ day, counting began on the Feast of First Fruits which is when Jesus was resurrected. And the people COUNTED *seven Sabbaths* (49 days). ¹⁶ *Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then (on the 50th day) you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD.* This new grain offering was to be in the form of two loaves that they would wave before the LORD. These loaves were to be baked with leaven which is yeast which causes bread to puff up.

Israel was to count 50 days FROM Passover so that in order to celebrate the Feast of Weeks, they would never forget Passover. It was at PASSOVER that God redeemed the children of Israel from bondage through the blood of the Passover Lamb.

God had chosen the children of Israel to serve Him as His witnesses (Isa. 43:10)... And upon receiving the promise of God's power through the Holy Spirit, the apostles were going to fulfill God's initial plan for them! And, Jesus told the apostles to wait??!!

In our understanding the BIG PICTURE of the Bible, let's revisit the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai. In Ex. 32 we read that while Moses communed with God on the mountain top and received His law, the children were unrestrained and worshipped a golden calf! When Moses came down to the people and witnessed this perversion, he said in Ex. 32: 26, "Whoever is on the Lord's side, come to me." The sons of Levi moved toward Moses. Moses told them,

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'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor' (Ex. 32:27). At the giving of the law, Moses instructed the Levites to kill their fellow Israelites!!! The law which reflects the holiness of God. God came against sin when the people worshipped an idol – the golden calf. Ex. 32:28 – And about three thousand men of the people fell that day!

The apostles were waiting in Jerusalem...

Acts 2:1-4 - *When the fiftieth day (in Gk 50 is Pentecost) had fully come they (the apostles) were all with one accord in one place (in the upper room [Acts 1:13]). ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, (the Jewish people knew of wind from Ezekiel 37 as the breath of life from God) and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them (the disciples) divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 2:5- *And – while the pouring out of God's Spirit was occurring in the Upper Room - there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. God told ALL*

Jewish men to appear before Him three times each year – at Passover, at the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot), and at Tabernacles (Sukkot) (Dt. 16:16).

Acts 2:6 - ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude – of Jewish people in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks - came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them (the apostles) speak in his own language.

The Feast of Weeks celebrated the giving of the law. Might this multitude of Jews and their proselytes (Gentiles who worshipped the God of Israel) have remembered being told of how God descended upon Mt. Sinai in fire at the giving of the law – and they were told of the thunderings and the LOUD trumpet sound. And, on that 50th day after Jesus ascended into heaven, everyone in the multitude heard the disciples speak in his own language.

Acts 2:7-12 - ⁷ Then they (the multitude) 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? There were... 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?

CONSIDER: this multitude had also gathered in Jerusalem at the last feast – at PASSOVER - when Jesus was crucified. Had they REMEMBERED? Were they there at Golgotha? At Calvary? What a loving God we have Who always makes Himself known.

The apostles were waiting for His promise, the Holy Spirit. And on that Feast of Weeks, on the day that we know as Pentecost, came a sound from heaven – like a rushing mighty wind – and it filled all the house. Wind is frequently used in Scripture as a picture of the Spirit of God (the breath of God - Eze. 37:9-10). Jesus told Nicodemus (John 3:8) – the wind blows where it wills

and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell from where it comes and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit. The sound from heaven is the sound of the Holy Spirit – the life-giving Spirit of God - being poured out on the disciples.

Acts 2:3-4 - *Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them (each disciple). ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* In Acts 1:8 that Jesus had told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would come upon them – and they would be witnesses – they would SPEAK of Him – of JESUS!

And the fire? Fire in Scripture often speaks of God's presence. The **glory of God** Who appeared to the children of Israel in the wilderness in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush – a bush that wasn't consumed. Fire in the Hebrew Scriptures, also speaks of purification – of purging. Read about God's refining fire in Malachi 3. At Pentecost – the birth of the Church – on the Jewish Feast of Weeks - God sent fire from heaven to display His power, His presence and His purifying work of salvation. The Holy Spirit "fire" that God sent descended upon LIVING sacrifices (Rom. 12:1). The Holy Spirit descended upon and permanently indwelt individuals who had placed their trust in Jesus for their eternal salvation!

Acts 2:37-38 – When the multitude heard Peter speak of Jesus, *they were cut to the heart* (conviction of the Holy Spirit), *and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'* (Conviction, realizing Who God is results in ACTION! "What shall we do?")
³⁸ *Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, (change – your mind re: God, re: Jesus. Jesus had been crucified by those who had thought of Him as deserving of crucifixion. Since hearing Peter's words they realized that this crucified one is the Messiah and that He is worthy!!!), and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; (because of the remission of sins) and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

At Pentecost, God opened the way of communication – of understanding language. The Jews from every nation said, "We hear them speaking in our own tongues – the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11). At Pentecost we see the door opened wider. . .to the nations so that they could hear this powerful message of forgiveness of sin.

On the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost – 50 days following the resurrection of Jesus – 10 days following Jesus' ascension to heaven - what does Acts 2:40-42 tell us? *And with many other*

*words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.'*⁴¹ *Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.*⁴² *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. "About 3,000" people were given eternal life – on the Jewish Feast of Weeks because of God's promise! At Mt. Sinai in Moses' day at the giving of the law, when the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf, about 3,000 men were killed that day (Ex. 32:28). Upon believing in Jesus on the day of Pentecost, "about 3,000" people were given eternal life!*

In Leviticus 23:16 God instructed the children of Israel to offer a “new grain” offering to the Lord on the Feast of Weeks in the form of two loaves baked with leaven. Consider: Jew and Gentile coming before the Lord, *one new man* (Eph. 2:15), placed in the body of Christ, the Church which was birthed on this Feast of Weeks. And the leaven? Leaven puffs

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up...representing sin. The two loaves, I am strongly suggesting, represent Jew and Gentile – sinners saved by God's grace!

In synagogues on the Feast of Weeks, the book of Ruth is read which tells of God's plan of redemption for both Jew and Gentile!

The new believers in Jesus on that day of Pentecost responded with immediate actions. How do we respond today – each day – each moment – as believers?

Pentecost speaks to God's presence and power in our lives as believers in Jesus. Is it difficult to live for God? It's impossible! Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can we abide in Him... can we live for Him.

When we endure, when we stand firm against difficult circumstances, we know that our faith is real. May our lives be a testimony to others of God's gift of faith and His ever abiding presence with believers.