

Acts 2:1-12; Lev. 23:15-21; Pentecost Comes I. The Feast Celebrated II. The Signs of Fulfillment III. The Consequences of His Arrival

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what does it mean that we have the Holy Spirit living within us?

Over the last few weeks, we have considered how as God's people we are called temples of God- He Has made us His dwelling place here on earth- we are now His building- spiritual stones of His abode. But how does the presence of the Holy Spirit affect us? Does the fact that He is within us really change anything?

Today we come to Pentecost Sunday and we consider the benefit and blessings we receive because the Holy Spirit has been poured out on the church. We consider this theme: Jesus Christ pours out His Spirit on the church for the empowering of His people. Dt. 16 ranks Pentecost- or the Feast of Weeks- as one of the top three feasts in the OT Year- these are "the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths." It was these 3 events that every Israelite male needed to celebrate in Jerusalem. So what would make Pentecost as important as Passover- or the Feast of Weeks as the Feast of Unleavened Bread?

I. The Feast Celebrated

In our first point, we consider briefly the OT Feast of Pentecost and what it came to signify in the land of Israel. We begin by considering how the day of Pentecost had taken shape- and its historical significance. Our passage opens in v. 1 by stating that the Day of Pentecost arrived- literally the day was brought to completion or fulfilled. Now Pentecost as a feast day had been celebrated for generations. As we read back in Lev. 23, the Day of Pentecost started off as a Feast of Weeks. The word Pentecost simply refers to the timing when this feast would come. By counting 50 days after the Passover feast, Israel would celebrate the full harvest that was soon to begin. Pentecost- or the Feast of Weeks- was a harvest feast- to celebrate the beginning of the barley gathering- thanking God for sustaining His people with daily bread. As an interesting fact, in Ruth 1 we find that Naomi and Ruth returned to the promised land at the beginning of Barley Harvest- they returned to Israel on Pentecost! Pentecost was one of the most highly

celebrated feasts of the OT ceremonies- along with Passover and the Feast of Booths. It would be similar to our Thanksgiving celebration. Children, what do you enjoy about Thanksgiving Day? You normally have a service at church- celebrating the spiritual and physical gifts that you have received. And you have celebration at home- with your extended family as you have fun and eat delicious food. So the Feast of Weeks was kind of like our Thanksgiving. It was a feast that marked the end of a harvest cycle. The date for this feast- or the counting started back at the Feast of First Fruits. Now remember children, the Feast of First Fruits took place at the end of Passover! So when Passover was finished- the people would start counting- 7 weeks plus 1 day- until the Feast of Weeks. What began at the Feast of First Fruits- was the initial gathering of a harvest- would find its fulfillment in the fulness of Pentecost or Weeks! So for the church, Passover finds its fulfillment in the work of Christ made evident at Pentecost. What began as the First Fruit now comes to full Harvest- Pentecost! It is good to thank God for food- for daily provision. But we must not forget that it is Jesus who also gives us spiritual food- who feeds us with Himself by way of the Holy Spirit! And this spiritual food has been distributed to all nations!

II. The Signs of Fulfillment

At Passover, we celebrate the death of the Passover lamb- the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Now- 50 days after the death and resurrection of Jesus- the first fruits are leading to the full harvest! Children- how many sides does a Pentagon have? 5- right? Well, Pentacost means 50. Jesus' resurrection and ascension was the first fruit- the initial gathering of glorified humanity- the church now enjoys the full harvest at Pentecost- 50 days later. At Pentecost- God truly provides for the needs of His people- by sending His Spirit! So the time of completion- or when Jesus would fulfill the OT shadow- was upon them. The church was gathered in Jerusalem- a few hundred believes in one location. As Jesus had instructed, the disciples stayed in the holy city. They were waiting for the promised gift- power from the Father- to be received. But how and when that promised gift would be given- they did not know. They remained together- praying and praising God and waiting- with expectation. Remember- that those who

waited were the 12. At the end of ch. 1, Matthias was chosen by the church to take the place of Judas who had betrayed them all. Now the number of the 12 was complete again- the OT tribes signified in the 12 disciples- one group representing the entire OT church- ready for the next stage in the history of the church. And they were filled with expectation- as they knew that Jesus would send the Spirit. Jesus had, as we read in John, promised that the Spirit- the comforter from the Father- would come after Jesus had departed into heaven. Now that Jesus was in heaven- they were waiting for Him to keep His promise! The coming of the Spirit was an event of great expectation- as the OT prophecies foretold. And then it happens- while they were together – suddenly the Spirit came upon them in power- v. 2! The moment that they had been waiting for arrived- and the comforter, teacher and healer came into their midst. The Kingdom of Christ had come- they were filled with power- and the direction of the church changed forever! Like the falling of healing rain-renewing the face of the earth- the Spirit renewed and revived the hearts of men. The signs that accompanied His arrival- signs in the heaven- were the sound of wind and the appearance of fire. As you remember from last week, Passover marked the deliverance of God's people. And as God led them out of bondage, He brought them to the Holy Mountain in the wilderness. In fact, it was 50 days after the Exodus that Israel gathered around the base of Mt. Sinai. The signs and wonders at Sinai were wind and fire. Now, reminding us of God's purity and power- we are brought back to the reception of the Law at Sinai. A violent wind and burning flame- v. 2-3 - accompanied the presence of God and marked His children as holy. As the sound of Wind is heard, we are reminded of the Spirit's invisible power. You cannot see the wind- nor can you constrain it. Wind blows where it wills as John 3:8 says- you do not see it- but you know that it is there. So although the Spirit is not visible, His presence is known by the Work He performs. And tongues of fire- or flames of fire are a sign of God's purifying power. Fire is a sign of holiness- to sanctify and cleanse. Fire signifies the presence of God. As Moses heard in Ex. 3 in the presence of a burning bush- you are standing on holy ground! And the disciples were filled with this blessed person of the Trinity- and their tongues were loosed to praise God's name! The

Spirit rested on them- anointed them. And the Spirit filled them- took up residence within! And they began to speak in other tongues- as v. 4 says. They were enabled to preach the good news in the language of all who gathered there. The curse of Babel was beat back- as the tongues of men were used to tell the world- one and all- about the Greatness of our God! The languages of the world would be united in praising Jesus Christ for the great salvation that He had won! All the tongues and languages of man had been redeemed- every language is now fit to be used to bring glory to God!

III. The Consequences of His Arrival

Pentecost was a one-time event- the Spirit has been poured out on the church. But there are also lasting consequences- both corporately and individually. The coming of the Spirit began a lasting movement- that is still evident today! As Joel prophesied, God's people would be filled with the Holy Spirit- all of them! The Spirit would be poured out on all flesh. And we see this truth today- where male and female- young and old- Every Christian is filled with the Spirit of the Most High. We can be born again- made alive from the grave- because the Spirit has been given. It matters not what color your skin is- where your parents or grandparents were from. There are not closed borders- no restrictions- no lockdown on immigration within the church! All are welcomed- people from every nation have a place! The comforter, teacher and down payment has been received! The promise and the power that came upon the church- is now ours- because the Spirit dwells in us. Jesus promised that the Spirit would enable the disciples to be His witness in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and even to the end of the world. This sending of the Spirit is a gift- promised by Jesus in Acts 1:4- and fulfilled in this chapter. The Spirit cannot be purchased- but He has been graciously sent and poured upon us! It is by the Spirit that we can enter the next stage of redemptive history- as the church moves from one nation to all nations- from drawing people in to going out to all people! The hope of what we sang earlier from Psalm 67 has been realized- all the peoples praise you and the nations sing for joy! It is Pentecost that makes Acts 2:21 possible- everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Jew and Gentile! It is by this Spirit that we can

go out and make disciples of all nations- as Jesus told his disciples to do! Baptizing and teaching them all to obey all the Jesus had commanded. So the first consequence of the Spirit being poured out is that the church becomes multi-ethnic. A world wide gathering of God's people- from every tribe, tongue and language! And that includes you today! The first fruit was Israel- now the whole world is being gathered in! We could say that the Gospel was poured out on the world as the Spirit was poured out upon the disciples.

Another consequence is that we have power! There are many benefits that we could identify that belong to us because we have the Spirit within. Benefits like prayer and assurance which we considered last week. But today I want to consider the power that belongs to us. What does it mean to have power- as Jesus said in Acts 1:8- you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Power to do what- to be what? Well, we have power to be a witness- and we have power to obey His words. Power to be something- and to become something! Being filled with the Spirit mean that we share Christ's anointing- to be prophets, priests and kings. As prophets we carry the good news to the world through our witness to the truth- and as priest we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice of praise! So the power we receive is to be salt and light in this world- and to be made holy- to live a decent and chaste life now! Whereas the Law was written on tablets of stone at Sinai- at Pentecost the Law was written on our hearts by the Spirit. It is this Spirit that produces the fruit of the Spirit within us! We have the power of God- resurrection power- the power to conquer the grave and overcome sin- because the Spirit lives within us!

To conclude, understanding the connection between Passover and Pentecost- the First Fruits with the Feast of Weeks- helps us grasp the beautiful fulfillment that Jesus brings! The Spirit has been poured out- and now the church is being gathered and sanctified! As our theme states, Jesus Christ pours out His Spirit on the church for the empowering of His people. So as we celebrate the sending of the Holy Spirit, let us be thankful for His presence and fruitful in His abiding within.