

glory that is in store for us. Therefore let us live happily considering our sure and blessed hope.

Waving the sheaf by the priest in all direction points to the preaching of the message of deliverance in the name of Jesus throughout the world. Let us dedicate ourselves to bear witness for the salvation through Jesus Christ by living a holy life.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the relation between the festivals of Passover and first fruits?
2. What are the spiritual lessons that we learn from the feast of the unleavened bread?
3. What does 'leaven' represent in the scriptures?
4. Whom does the sheaf of the first fruit signify?
5. Describe the spiritual meanings of the festival of first fruits.

LESSON - 14

FESTIVAL OF PENTECOST

Reading : Lev. 23:15-22; Acts 2

Memory verses : Acts 2:17-18

Theme : To lead a spirit-filled life after being anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Introduction : What is the name by which churches giving importance to the anointment of the Holy Spirit are known? What is the reason for that? It was on the Israeli festival day of Pentecost that Jesus Christ poured out the Holy Spirit on His disciples after His ascension to heaven (Acts 2:1). Pentecost stands for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. This festival was celebrated on the 6th of the 3rd month of Sivan. It was the 50th day after the festival of the first fruits.

DIFFERENT NAMES OF THE FESTIVAL

The festival of Pentecost comes on the day after counting seven weeks and seven Sabbaths from the festival of the first fruits. Therefore it is also called the festival of the weeks. As it falls on the 50th day after the festival of the first fruits, it came to be known as 'Pentecost' which means '50'. It occurs after the harvest and hence it is also known as the harvest festival (Exo.23:16). "The name day of first fruits" is also given to it as people offer first fruits of trees on this day (Num.28:26)

METHOD OF OBSERVANCE

On this day meal offering from new grain is offered to the Lord. Two loaves made out of fine flour and baked with leaven are offered. In addition, burnt offerings, meal offerings, sin offerings and other voluntary sacrifices are made to the Lord. Holy assembly is held and no normal work is permitted on that day.

FULFILLMENT

Pentecost falls on the 50th day after the festival of the first fruits which signifies the resurrection of Jesus Christ as we have learned in the last lesson. The risen Christ ascended to heaven on the 40th day. After that the disciples waited for ten days in the upper room. On the fiftieth day after resurrection Holy Spirit came upon the disciples with great power. Cloven tongues like fire appeared to them and sat upon them. They were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:3-4). It was the fulfillment of the prophecy that in the last days God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2: 28-29). We read about the pouring out of the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in other tongues in Samaria (Acts 8:14-19), in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48) and in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6). This sign was manifest in the churches, founded by apostles (1Cor. 12:14). Note the phrases: "receive the Spirit" (Gal.3:2), "filled with the spirit" (Eph.5:18) and worship in the spirit (Phil 3:3). The experience of Spirit Himself making intercession with groaning which cannot be uttered (Rom.8:26) shows the spirit-filled lives of believers in the early church. The same experience continues even today for those who desire for it. Many people all around the world are experiencing the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in these last days when the coming of

our Lord is at hand. It is about this experience that Jesus proclaimed: living waters will flow out of the belly of those who believe (John 7: 38-39).

Two loaves made out of fine flour and baked with leaven are offered on Pentecost. No leaven is allowed in sacrifices (Lev. 2:11). Then why leavened loaves are accepted in this case? Both Jews and Gentiles are leavened by sin in the sight of God. But they are freely justified by redemption through Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:9,23-25). The acceptance of both Jews and Gentiles in the presence of God and the pouring out of holy Spirit on both are shown by acceptance of the two leavened loaves in the festival of Pentecost (Acts 10:45-47). The separation between Jews and Gentiles has been removed for ever (Eph.2:14;15) New grain represents newness in life.

Another speciality of this festival is that voluntary offerings are plentifully made. People bring baskets filled with materials and present them gladly before God. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to offer ourselves and our material blessings to God. In return, God will pour out a blessing and there shall not be room enough to receive it (Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-37; 2 Cor 9:10; Mal.3:10).

Let us praise God for the great changes that are brought about by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. We must all be filled with the Holy Spirit and produce fruits and gifts of the spirit in our lives. What is your experience?

QUESTIONS

1. Which is the month and the day on which the festival of Pentecost is celebrated? In what way are the festivals of the first fruits and Pentecost related?
2. What are the other names of this festival? How do they aptly describe this festival?
3. In what name are the Churches giving importance to the anointing of the Holy Spirit generally known as? Why?
4. Prove that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is continuing even after the day of Pentecost.
5. Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? What are the

changes which have come about in you life? If you are not filled, will you earnestly desire for that experience and pray for it?

6. What is the meaning of the command to offer two loaves made out of fine flour of new grain and backed with leaven?

LESSON 15

THREE FESTIVALS OF THE SEVENTH MONTH

Reading : Lev. 23:24-44; Deut. 16:13-16

Memory verses : Heb. 9:27-28

Theme : To learn the prophetic messages contained in the Israeli festivals of the seventh month and to establish our hope.

Introduction: Which are the festivals of the first month? We have learnt that they stand for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the salvation, sanctification and newness of life that we receive through Him. Which is the festival in the third month? It points to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the resultant spiritual blessings. The remaining three festivals stand for the wonderful events that are to take place in future.

1. FESTIVAL OF THE TRUMPETS:

(Lev. 23:23-25; Num.10:1-10)

This festival is celebrated on the first of seventh month. Israel have no celebration for four months between the festivals of Pentecost and Trumpets. This is the harvest season. For the church, too, the most important event to occur after the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is the second coming of Jesus Christ with the call of trumpets. We are now living in the intervening time called PERIOD OF CHURCH OR GRACE. In this harvest season Holy Spirit is gathering the souls who are being saved through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. The trumpet will sound at the end of this age. Those saints who dies in Christ will rise from the dead. Saints who are alive