

How Christians Stole Pentecost

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Pentecost for Christian churches is observed May 19, 2024. Pentecost for Israel is June 11-12, 2024. This study is going to look at the very different meanings for Pentecost for each of these 2 groups. You will see that Pentecost was given to Israel by God. There is nothing in Paul Epistles that should lead us to think that Pentecost is for the Church, the Body of Christ.

There are 7 feasts in the Law that God gave Israel. The feasts are all prophetic of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the feasts, the Feast of Firstfruits (which begins the grain harvest in Israel,) is always on the Sunday after Passover (the first feast in the calendar year.) Firstfruits was prophetic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as the firstfruits, of the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:20-21

But now is Christ risen from the dead, **and become the firstfruits of them that slept.** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

The Feast of Weeks, 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits, is the feast to celebrate **the end of the**

grain harvest in Israel. The Feast of Weeks was prophetic of Jesus Christ sending the Holy Ghost to the nation Israel, to baptize, or “harvest,” the souls who believed that Jesus was Israel’s redeemer and king.

When John the Baptist was baptizing with water in the Jordan, he explained Jesus’ bringing the Holy Ghost to Israel like a harvest.

Matthew 3:11-12

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but **he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:** Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, **and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**

The Feast of Weeks is 7 Sabbaths and 1 day (total 50 days) after the Feast of Firstfruits, and always on a Sunday. This marked the end of the grain harvest. God called it the Feast of Weeks because of the 7 week count. It was also known as “Pentecost,” “pente” because of the 50 day count. The Feast of Firstfruits and the Feast of

Weeks are like bookends for Israel's grain harvest—a 50 day period.

Leviticus 23:15-16

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: **Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days;** and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD.

Israel was required to bake 2 wave loaves (for the priest to wave at the alter) of bread using fine flour made from the harvested grain, and leaven. This is very different than the Feast of Firstfruits, 50 days earlier, when leaven was forbidden even to be in the house for the 7 day Passover feast.

The leavened bread was an offering to the Lord, along with 7 lambs, 1 bullock, and 2 rams. They were also required to sacrifice one kid and 2 first-year lambs

Leviticus 23:17-19

Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: **they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven;** they are the firstfruits unto the LORD. And **ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be for a burnt offering unto the LORD,** with their meat offering, and their drink offerings, even an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD. **Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace offerings.**

All of these things would be given to the priest who would wave the bread and make the different animal offerings to the Lord.

The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) is a statute for Israel with God forever.

Leviticus 23:20-21

And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And ye shall proclaim on

the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: **it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.**

There are also provisions in the feast instructions that those who are harvesting the grain leave the corners and the remnants in the field for the poor and the stranger to gather and eat.

Leviticus 23:22

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God.

The Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost,) and the Feast of Tabernacles (also a harvest, but of grapes,) are the three feasts that are perpetual in God's covenant with Israel.

Deuteronomy 16:16

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; **in the feast of unleavened bread,**

and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

Before He ascended, Jesus had told His disciples that they were to stay in Jerusalem, and promised that they were going to receive the Holy Ghost soon.

Acts 1:4-8

And, being assembled together with them, **commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father,** which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but **ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:** and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The crowds of people already in Jerusalem for the first Pentecost after the crucifixion were there to observe the Feast of Weeks, as required by Law. It can be confusing when, in Acts 2, there is no mention of the Feast of Weeks. It starts right away calling the feast “Pentecost.”

Jesus’ followers, all 120 mentioned in Acts 1, were together in a house during the Feast of Weeks. When the Holy Ghost came upon them, they were close enough to where all the faithful Jews were making the sacrifices required by Law for the Feast, that word spread quickly and everyone came to see what was going on. The real miracle was that everyone heard about the Lord Jesus Christ in his own language.

Acts 2:1-8

And when **the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.** And suddenly **there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled

with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. **Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.** And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? **And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?**

Many believed, and were baptized, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the baptism of belief which then allows a person to receive the Holy Ghost—exactly what John the Baptist had been prophesying in the wilderness, and what Jesus Christ had promised His followers before He ascended.

Mark 1:7-8

And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and

unloose. **I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.**

There were 3000 souls for the feast of Pentecost that day, who believed the word they heard about the Lord Jesus Christ, and were baptized (by belief and not water) in the name of the Jesus Christ. Interestingly, since they were faithful Jews, many, if not all, had probably been water baptized by John the Baptist. All 3000 received the Holy Ghost that day. These people were added to the Church of the Kingdom, as believers in Jesus as their redeemer and king. There was no new church started that day.

Acts 2:38-41

Then Peter said unto them, **Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.** For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. **Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same**

day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

This baptism by the Holy Ghost during the Feast of Weeks, Pentecost, had been prophesied in the Old Testament, hundreds of years before it occurred. The Church, the Body of Christ, was never in prophecy, so it Pentecost was never about the start of a new church. It was the fulfilling of prophecy for the Church of the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth, for Israel.

The prophecy in Joel spans thousands of years. The first section prophesied the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

Joel 2:28:29

And it shall come to pass afterward, **that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;** and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: **And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.**

The second part of the prophecy was describing the Tribulation. This is also an indication that this was totally about the nation Israel. The Church, the Body of Christ will be raptured before the Tribulation.

Joel 2:30-32

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. **The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.** And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.**

Peter recalled Joel's prophecy for Israel.

Acts 2:16-21

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; **And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith 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: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. What Peter did not know is that the entire prophecy would not be fulfilled in his lifetime. Israel would still have been able to have her Kingdom if she would repent and call upon the name of the Lord. But, 5 chapters later, in Acts 7, Israel blasphemed the Holy Ghost when she stoned Stephen, and postponed the Kingdom for at least 2000 years.

Most Christian churches believe that the Church, the Body of Christ began at Pentecost, although, as you can see, that is not the case.

So when did the Church, the Body of Christ begin, if not at Pentecost? That is a matter for some debate. Some dispensational churches say the

Church began in Acts 9. That was when Saul, later named Paul, who was a Pharisee, was called by Jesus Christ to be the apostle to the Gentiles.

The story of Paul's salvation and conversion is in Acts 9.

Acts 9:1-6

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. **And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?** And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? **And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.**

Ananias was sent to explain everything to Saul/Paul.

Acts 9:11-16

And **the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**

There is no “one event” that we can point to that would show the exact moment that the Church, the Body of Christ began. Paul is the first member of the Church, the Body of Christ, so perhaps Paul’s receiving the Holy Ghost from

Ananias, without first being baptized by water, would qualify as the start of the Church, the Body of Christ.

Acts 9:17

And **Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him** said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest **receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.** And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, **and arose, and was baptized.**

This unique baptism is definitely the first in a chain of events that would define the differences between the teachings of Peter and the twelve, who were the apostles to the Jews, and Paul, who was the apostle to the Gentiles.

Peter had his own experience with Gentiles being baptized, not with water, but by believing in the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then

receiving the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost told Peter to go to the house of a centurian (Gentile) named Cornelius.

Acts 11:11-14

And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. **And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:** And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; **Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.**

Here is what Peter was telling Cornelius, and all his house, when the Holy Ghost fell on them.

Acts 10:36-43

The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was

published throughout all Judaea, and **began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.**

When the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and his house, Peter was surprised and confused. Things were happening “out of order.” Remember, Peter was part of the Church of the Kingdom, where you repented first, then baptized with

water, and then someone laid hands on you for you to receive the Holy Ghost.

Peter did the only thing he could think of. He quickly baptized Cornelius and his house with water.

Acts 10:45-48

And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, **Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.** Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

When the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and all his house, without water baptism, Peter remembered what John the Baptist said.

Acts 11:15-16

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. **Then**

remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

When Peter recounts these events in Acts 11, he asks “What was I, that I could withstand God?” He understood that God was doing something different with the Gentiles, he wasn’t going to resist Him.

Acts 11:17-18

Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, **Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**

Some dispensational churches say that the Church, the Body of Christ began in Acts 13. When Paul was prepared, the Holy Ghost separated out Paul and Barnabas for their work with the Gentiles.

Acts 13:1-2

Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. **As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.**

There is a later passage in Acts 13 where Paul and Barnabas tell the Jews that since they had put the word of God from themselves, it would now be taken to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:46-49

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, **It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.** For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. **And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life**

believed. And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

There are other viewpoints about when the Church, the Body of Christ actually started, but the important part is that you understand that it was not at Pentecost. Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks, was part of the program for the Church of the Kingdom, God's earthly people, the Jews.

There was a change in God's program. Paul was called out to take God's message of salvation straight to the Gentiles, just like He had saved Israel, through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul explains how his separate apostleship was to the Gentiles, while Peter and the others would continue to work with Israel.

Galatians 2:7-9

But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was

mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, **they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.**