

From the West Meadow
Pastor Wes Higgins

The day of Pentecost is the acknowledged birthday of the Christian church. Acts chapter 2 starts out, “When the day of Pentecost had fully come...” Interesting wording, but when you understand that the word “Pentecost” means to “count fifty”, you realize that Pentecost is not just a one-day event but a fifty-day season. Then the question arises: what are you counting from?

Many Christians believe Pentecost is counted from Easter, which is acknowledged by many Christians to be the day of Jesus Christ’s resurrection. But the actual instructions for counting found in Leviticus 23 give us a different perspective. “And you shall count...from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering” (Leviticus 23:15). This was the beginning of the spring harvest season. The wave sheaf was the symbolic offering of the “first fruits of your harvest” waved “before the Lord to be accepted on your behalf.” (v.10-11) The people were instructed to not harvest the grain or use it until the first fruits offering was made.

The apostle Paul tells us that the Holy Festivals, including this one, (“the substance is of Christ” Colossians 2:17) picture the salvational acts of Jesus Christ. We see that it is Jesus Christ who is the “firstborn over all creation”, the “firstborn from the dead”, and the “firstborn among many brethren.” (Colossians 1:15, 18; Romans 8:29). Jesus is also called the firstfruits in whom all are made alive (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

John records Jesus as He symbolized the wave sheaf being brought on our behalf. Jesus told Mary, “Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father...I am ascending to My Father and your Father...to My God and your God.” (John 20:17) Addressing the 12 tribes, James said that they are a “kind of firstfruits of His creation.” (James 1:18) In Romans 8:23, we “who have the firstfruits of the Spirit...” eagerly wait for redemption.

This is the harvest Jesus Christ was talking to His disciples about while at the well where He also spoke with the Samaritan woman. “Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’?...lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!” (John 4:35) This implies there are two harvests: “those who are Christ’s at His coming”, and those who will receive salvation during Christ’s millennial reign.

Put simply, the season of Pentecost represents the season of God’s harvest of His firstfruits church—as it’s called in Hebrews, the “church of the firstborn registered in heaven” (Hebrews 12:23). The New Testament church began at Pentecost. Prophetically, it also ends at Pentecost—when Jesus Christ returns and claims His own.

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