



May 31, 2024

What's Bread have to do with Pentecost?

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We're just a couple weeks out from Pentecost on Sunday June 16th. In light of that, here is a question I think you will find interesting.

What does bread have to do with the Sabbath and with Pentecost?

As a side note, I've always been fond of bread. Sourdough being my favorite. Traveling the world and eating various breads reflective of the culture and local cuisine of the area has always been high on my list of "let's try this type of bread!"

First, two special loaves or cakes were offered as wave offerings on the fiftieth day of a special count. Notice this instruction in Leviticus 23 (NKJV): "*To the next day after the seventh Sabbath you shall number fifty days. And you shall offer a new food offering to the LORD. You shall bring out of your homes two wave loaves of two-tenth parts. They shall be of fine flour. They shall be baked with yeast, firstfruits to the LORD.*" (Vv.16-17) Interestingly, the feast on the fiftieth day is not specifically named here, except for the numbering fifty days. Acts 2:1 continues the count from 40 days (Acts 1:3) during which Christ was seen following His resurrection to the 50th day. (Acts 21:1) Pentecost is translated from the Greek word *pentekoste* which means fiftieth. This festival is also called "Feast of Weeks." (Exodus 34:22; Numbers 28:26; Deuteronomy 16:9-10, 16; 2 Chronicles 8:13). That is logical since 7 weeks were counted off to arrive at the day after the seventh Sabbath. Another modifier is added several times, "*Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field*" (Exodus 23:16) "*Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest*" (Exodus 34:22) and "*the day of the*

firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your Feast of Weeks" (Numbers 28:26)

We've also read previously in Leviticus 23:17 that the two loaves were termed "*firstfruits to the LORD.*" These are wave offerings and the priest waved the loaves aloft before the Lord towards the four different points of the compass. These loaves were made of fine flour from the recently harvested wheat crop and symbolized the firstfruits of that harvest.

So, why were there two loaves?

I've heard various explanations have been offered over the years. Some have said that that one loaf represents those called before the church began on Pentecost and the other loaf those called after that (or in others words one loaf represents those called during the OT and the other loaf represent those called during the NT). Others have said they represent the Israelites on one hand and the Gentiles on the other. Another view presents that both of the two loaves represent Israel similar to the onyx stones attached to each shoulder of the ephod. The names of the tribes of Israel were engraved on them, evidently with 6 names on one stone and 6 names on the other of the two stones.

Interestingly, we humans sure have a way of looking at what God reveals in His word according to what we think it might be. That's why scripture says His thoughts are not our thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9). "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.*" 9 *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

The wavesheaf of the first barley harvest was a wave offering. It was the first of the firstfruits of the yearly harvest. I see the apostle Paul referring to this wavesheaf offering in 1 Corinthians 15:20, "*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*" Paul then refers to others who will be brought back to life. "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ*

all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming." (v.v.22-23) Those who are resurrected or transformed at Christ's coming are also termed firstfruits. James refers to those called to be part of the church. *"Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."* (James 1:18) He addresses those of the twelve tribes in verse 1.

The apostle Paul also refers to the converted Gentiles as "Jews" when he stated *"but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit . . ."* (Romans 2:29) Paul declared that those led by God's Spirit are sons of God (Romans 8:14) and are *"heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"* (v.17) He went on to state *"we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit"* (v.23).

God sent His Holy Spirit in a very special way on the Day of Pentecost to bring to maturity those who were called and assembled that day. How blessed we too are to be called as part of that small group that continues down through the ages, who have the Holy Spirit, and are being prepared for entrance into God's family!

We must trust God to be with us and to work out good in the end. *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."* (Romans 8:28-29) God had planned long ago that He would call a select few to be made ready for that event at the end of the age when the sons of God will be revealed in glory. *"Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."* (1 John 3:2).

Anyway, some thoughts to share with you while Pentecost is still fresh in our minds. We'll get to the rest of the answer to my initial question next time...

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



Scott Hoefker,

Senior Pastor, CGM

Church of God Ministries (CGM)

(Ministerios de la Iglesia de Dios)

tshoefker@cogministries.org / www.cogministries.org

P.O. Box 983, Daphne, AL, 36526-0983 / 251-930-1797 Office