

Acts Chapter 2

Theme of Acts: The Holy Spirit and the Birth of the Church

As you read this study, you can click on any Bible verse or use your Bible. The study is broken into two parts:

Personal Reflection

You can complete this section in one sitting or little by little during the week. Begin with prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit into your time. Spending time in the Bible, studying the original intent, meaning and cultural context helps you to understand how it applies to you now.

Further Study: with your small group or on your own

Complete this with your small group if you are in one; otherwise complete this section on your own to learn more.

Song for the week: Holy Spirit (You are welcome here)

Song links: https://youtu.be/XPPMSfCdUng?si=ZoTBhb41q_Z4Xly

Read Acts 2

Personal Reflection

Reviewing from the book of John - John mentioned many of the Old Testament feast which Jesus participated in. There are seven Old Testament Feasts, half are Spring Feasts and half are Fall Feasts.

“The Feasts of the Lord commemorate His faithfulness and the many miracles of deliverance He performed in setting apart Israel as His own people. They serve to remind God’s people of His holiness, their own impurity and that, in spite of the disparity between them, God wants them to be in fellowship with Him. He wants them to draw near (The Jewish Voice).”

The Feasts look back to remember and also reveal God’s plan of redemption, pointing to Jesus’ first coming (Spring Feasts) and His second coming (Fall Feasts). Below is a brief overview of the first three Feasts and how Jesus fulfilled their meanings.

Passover Feast, Nisan 14*

Passover celebrates the Exodus from slavery. The Israelites sacrificed a spotless lamb and spread its blood over their doorposts. When the angel of death came, it passed over their homes but did not spare the lives of the firstborns in the other homes.

Jesus Fulfilled the Feast

Jesus frees us from slavery to sin and death. He is our spotless lamb whose blood was shed for us. When we believe in Him, death passes over us and we are born into the kingdom of heaven, never having to experience the separation from God.

*Nisan is the first month of the Hebrew calendar.

Optional, read these related verses: Leviticus 23, Exodus 11 - 13:14, Leviticus 23:4-8, 1 Corinthians 5:7, Psalm 51:7, John 2:23, John 6:3-4, John 11:55, John 19:28-30

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15 - 21

As the Israelites left Egypt, there was no time to make bread with leaven. Leaven represents sin in the Bible.

Jesus Fulfilled the Feast

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, Jesus's body was in the grave. He lived a life without sin (unleavened). He is the Bread of Life.

Optional, read these related verses: Exodus 12:13, Exodus 12:39, Exodus 13:6-7, Leviticus 23:6-8, Numbers 33:3-4, John 6:35, 1 Corinthians 5:8

The Feast of First Fruits, Nisan 16

This Feast occurred on the day after the Unleavened Bread Feast started. It was to thank and honor God for all He had provided.

Jesus Fulfilled the Feast

Jesus was resurrected on the "third day" celebration! He was the First Fruit conquering the curse of death, ushering in the new covenant in His blood.

Optional, read these related verses: Deuteronomy 26:1-11, Leviticus 23:10-14, 1 Corinthians 15:20, Luke 22:20

God commanded the Festivals for the Israelites to both remember and to look forward to their Messiah. What do the Old Testament Feasts teach you about Jesus?

Read 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. Paul drew a correlation to the Feasts. What can you learn from the Feast of Unleavened Bread and this verse that applies to you today?

Jesus ascended. His followers were told to wait; they obeyed. On the 10th day, a sound like "blowing of a violent wind" came and filled the house and "what seemed to be tongues of fire" rested on each of them. *Optional, read these related verses: Acts 1:15, Acts 2:1-3, Hebrews 10:24-25*

How might being together have made the waiting easier?

How does being part of a church, being together, help you?

The Feast of Weeks is seven weeks after the Feast of First Fruits; it is also called Pentecost which means "50 days." It was on this day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit.

Feast of Weeks / Pentecost, *Sivan 7

On this day, Israelites were to bring the first harvest of grain to the Lord, including 2 leavened loaves of bread. Today it is also called Shavuot.

The Holy Spirit Fulfilled the Feast

The two loaves of leavened bread point to the harvest of souls - Jews and Gentiles, ushering in the Church Age.

*Sivan is the third month of the Hebrew calendar.

Optional, read these related verses: Acts 2:1-4, Leviticus 23:16-20

The Holy Spirit miraculously used believers in Jesus to speak in languages they did not know. The people said, "we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" *Optional, read these related verses: Acts 2:4-11, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13*

Just as Jesus fulfilled the first three Feasts, the Holy Spirit fulfills the Feast of Weeks. How does the Holy Spirit's miracle of speaking in other languages point to the two loaves and begin the work of the Great Commission?

What is the first harvest of the Holy Spirit's Pentecost?

The Feast of Weeks is the only Feast with leavened bread (leaven often representing sin in the Bible). Christians and the Church are not sinless, they are saved from the consequences of sin. Only Jesus was without sin. How does this help you give grace, not judge and forgive the Church, others and yourself?

Peter denied knowing Jesus during His trial. But then Peter spent days with the risen Jesus who breathed the Holy Spirit into him. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon him. Peter changed, boldly proclaiming the gospel. He used what people knew (the Old Testament) and the gospel together. *Optional, read these related verses: John 18:15-27, John 20:20-22, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 2:14-41*

As a believer in Jesus, you also have the Holy Spirit who can guide you and give you courage as you witness to people. You can ask Him to direct your words when you talk with others. What can you use that people already know along with the gospel to teach people?

Remember all apostles are disciples but not all disciples are apostles. A disciple is someone who believes in Jesus and follows His teachings. An apostle is "one who is sent." The eleven apostles were sent by Jesus. Just as Jesus performed signs to prove Who He is, so too could the apostles perform signs to prove the truth of a risen Jesus as the Messiah. *Optional, read these related verses: Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 2:43, Hebrews 3:1, Mark 3:13-19, Acts 26:14-18*

Read Acts 2:42-47. What were the believers / disciples doing?

What were the apostles doing?

Putting it into practice: Read Romans 8:20-23. Just as Jesus was the First Fruit for our redemption, Paul said that believers have the first fruit of the Holy Spirit. Spend time in prayer thanking Jesus and the Holy Spirit for fulfilling the Feasts for you personally.

Read Leviticus 23:22 and Luke 14:12-14. The Feast of Weeks included care for the poor and strangers. Jesus asks us to do the same thing. How can you participate this week?

Further Study - with your small group or on your own

There is a time of quiet between the Spring Feasts and the Fall Feasts. The latter are yet to be fulfilled by God. Jesus and the Holy Spirit literally fulfilled the prophetic meanings of the first four Feasts, therefore we can anticipate that God will also literally fulfill the last three on actual Feast days, though we do not know how or the timing. *Optional verses to read: Matthew 24:36, Matthew 25:1-13*

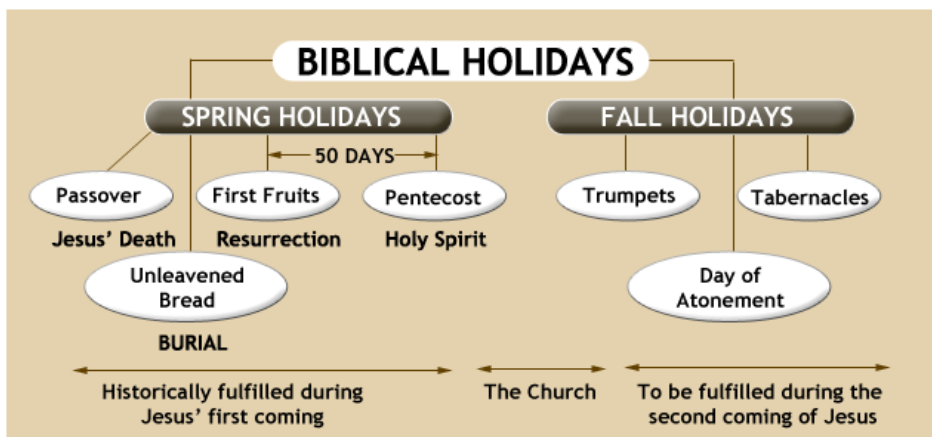
The interval between the Spring Feasts and Fall Feasts is the birth and growth of the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Read John 1:29-34 and Acts 1:8. Jesus was baptized with water and the Holy Spirit descended on Him before His public ministry began. How did the public life of the Church start similar to the start of Jesus' ministry?

Read Matthew 24:14. Since we live in the age of the Church, what is our part? What happens after the end of the age of the Church?

Read Acts 2:42. "In fellowship we engage in common activities of worship, study, prayer, celebration and service (Dallas Willard)." Some people think they do not need to be part of the community / the Church. How is that thinking contrary to what you just read?

Watch the 2 minute video 7 Feasts of Our Lord together. Below is a chart of the Biblical Feasts.



Discuss:

What do you enjoy doing? Where do you enjoy going? What are some practical ways you can be a witness to those you encounter each day in these spaces?

Read Acts 2:42-47 together. As a believer in Jesus, you are His disciples and you are part of the Church. What things were the earlier believers doing that you can also participate in?

How would these actions grow your relationship with God, increase your connection with other believers and be a testimony to those who do not yet believe?

Is there anything from this week's personal reflection time which you would like to discuss more with your small group?