

**ENTERING INTO THE FEAST SHAVUOT**  
**The Feast of Weeks – Pentecost**  
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Perhaps one of the most fascinating Biblical studies is the historic and prophetic significance of the special Feast Days of the Lord. The seven “Feasts of the Lord” are arranged in **Leviticus 23** in two groups. The first four came at the beginning of the Biblical Jewish year, while the last three came toward the end of the year. That seems to be God’s method in revealing future things. (**Luke 1:31-33**) Between these two groups there was a period of several months, when there were no feasts or holy convocations.

The feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread point to Christ’s death and burial; First fruits to His resurrection, and Pentecost (fifty days later) to His Church. Then there is a space of time representing the long period in which Israel is out of the Land of Promise and out of the place of blessing which coincides with the Church Age.

Shavuot was believed by rabbinic scholars to be the day that God gave Moses the Torah on Mount Sinai after their exodus from Egypt. On that day God Himself came down in a cloud on Mount Sinai in fire and smoke and a blast of God’s trumpet (which is the shofar), to establish His covenant with His people. Shavuot is therefore commemorated as the Biblical birth date of the nation of Israel and every year on the holiday of Shavuot the people of God renew their acceptance of God’s gift—the Torah (His Word).

The giving of the Torah was a far-reaching spiritual event-one that touched the essence of the Jewish soul for all times. It has been compared to a wedding between God and His people. Shavuot also means 'oaths', for on this day God swore eternal devotion to the Israelites, and they in turn pledged everlasting loyalty to Him. In ancient times, two wheat loaves would be offered in Holy Temple. It was also at this time that people would begin to bring their first and choicest fruits to thank God for Israel's bounty.

Shavuot is a happy Festival and falls on Sivan 6 & 7 in the Jewish calendar, which corresponds to May or early June on our calendar. This festival is also known as the Feast of Weeks ([Exodus 34:22](#)) as Shavuot means 'weeks'.

It is believed that Mount Sinai suddenly bloomed with greenery and flowers in happiness of the giving of the Torah. To commemorate this event the Jews decorate their homes and synagogues with flowers and branches. It is also customary at Shavuot to decorate the synagogue with greenery, flowers and fruit. There are two explanations for doing this at Shavuot.

1. It symbolizes the harvest aspect of Shavuot and keeps with the Biblical theme of the feast.
2. There is also a rabbinical tradition that even though Mount Sinai was situated in the desert, in honor of the giving of the Torah, the desert bloomed and sprouted flowers.

Most of the customs and tradition related to Shavuot celebration arose from legends and stories of the Israelites at Mount Sinai. According to one legend the people of Israel overslept on the day of the giving of the

Torah and Moses himself had to wake them up as God was waiting for them at the mountain. In order to rectify this, on the eve of Shavuot, Jews do not sleep the whole night—from dusk to dawn and keep themselves busy by reading and studying the Torah and Talmud.

On the eve of Shavuot women and girls light candles to indicate that Shavuot has begun. After the holiday evening prayers families will enjoy a festive holiday meal and, as stated, stay up all night reading and studying the Torah.

The Ten Commandments are read publicly at the morning service of the first day of the festival and the priest proclaims the priestly blessing over the congregation; followed by a holiday meal.

According to tradition, on the day of the 'Giving' of the Torah the Israelites did not have any meat prepared according to the rules of ritual slaughtering. Nor could they slaughter another animal on the day as it was Sabbath, the day when slaughtering was forbidden. So the people were forced to eat simple dairy products for the rest of the day. During the Shavuot festival the Jews follow this tradition by eating dairy products.

The second day of the festival [Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17](#) is read aloud in the congregation along with [Numbers 28:26-31](#) and [Habakkuk 2:20-3:19](#) and an offering is received for the Lord. It must be the choicest and best that you have. For it represents your gratitude to the Lord for all the blessings He has given you. The priestly blessing is spoken over the congregation and a holiday meal is enjoyed. The festival ends at sundown.

It was also known as the Feast of Pentecost, because it falls fifty days after First-fruits, and the word 'Pentecost' means 'fifty' or 'fifty days'. God specifically told the Israelites that they were to count seven Sabbaths (seven complete weeks), from First-fruits (**Leviticus 23:15; Deuteronomy 16:9**) which adds up to 49 days.

God had ordained for Israel a sacred calendar of three major festivals to be observed as 'a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.' (**Leviticus 23:14, 21, 41; Deuteronomy 16:16, 17**).

This is important: the three MAJOR feasts are:

1. Passover-the Feast of the Unleavened Bread
2. Shavuot-Feast of Weeks-also called Pentecost, which is a Greek translation of the Hebrew words meaning 'fiftieth day' when the Festival was to be celebrated
3. The Feast of Tabernacles

Passover marked the first spring harvest. The first fruits of a sheaf or 'omer' of barley was required by the Torah to be presented before the Lord in the House of God, as a thanksgiving 'wave offering'. From the next day, seven weeks or forty-nine days were counted to wheat harvest. (**Leviticus 23:10-11**)

Then on the day after the seventh Sabbath which was the fiftieth day, they were to bring to the temple 'two loaves of bread', specifically commanded to be made with fine flour and baked with leaven (**Leviticus 23:17**). These two loaves of bread were to be used as a 'wave offering' for the people.

What was the significance of the two loaves of bread? Part of the wheat offering was baked into two loaves of leavened bread—a striking

contrasts to the matzo (unleavened bread) a few weeks before! The two leaven loaves became symbolic of sinful mankind-both Jew and Gentile-as the Holy Scriptures state. (Psalm 14:2-3; Romans 3:9-10, 23) Why should Christians observe the Feast of Shavuot or Pentecost...? Because of a major event in Jewish history which became a universal blessing for all mankind that took place in the Jerusalem Temple during that harvest festival of Shavuot also called Pentecost.

It was on the first day of the week, Sunday, in the Roman Julian calendar, May 24<sup>th</sup>, in the year A.D. 30. This was also the year 3790 in the Hebrew calendar. Christian scholars mark that historic Pentecost in Jerusalem as the 'spiritual birthday of the Church'.

On the 'fiftieth day'-Pentecost-or Shavuot-another harvest thanksgiving service was observed in the House of God. This time, from the first-fruit of wheat harvest, two loaves of bread baked with leaven were waved before the Lord, in the act of thanksgiving.

When the day of Pentecost came, one hundred and twenty disciples were all together in one place...Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from Heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues or languages, as the Spirit enabled them.

Luke further describes the many lands from which the pilgrims came up to the House of God, the Temple, in Jerusalem. They were Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism.

As recorded by Cornelius Tacitus, the Roman historian, the Holy City with a population of about six hundred thousand at that time, exploded with between two and three million, because of the pilgrims. The

pilgrims slept on the flat roofs of the houses, camped outside the walls of Jerusalem, were given hospitality by friends and families, all within a 'Sabbath day's journey' to reach the House of God. Their presence in the Holy City on the three major festivals was in obedience to the Torah as God commanded Moses. 'Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose...?' (Deuteronomy 16:16).

It was the holy zeal of believing Jews and Gentile converts to be in the Holy City and to enter God's House and observe the impressive priestly duties of these Festivals.

The disciples, who were meeting secretly in the upper room from the time of Yeshua (Jesus) last Seder Supper until the day of Pentecost, were fortunate to be early in the 'house' of God and to be 'all together in one place'. (Acts 2:1-2)

This feast of Shavuot was also a prophecy of the day of Pentecost and the coming of the New Covenant. The disciples were commanded to tarry at Jerusalem 'for the promise of the Father' (Acts 1:4) which they did.

The coming of the Holy Spirit occurred on the next Jewish holiday when Jews from different countries came to be in Jerusalem to celebrate the completion of the harvest season. This annual feast was none other than Shavuot or Pentecost—and once more God descended on those first-century believers with a mighty rushing wind, tongues of fire and other demonstrations of the Holy Spirit, once more establishing a covenant with His people.

Shavuot points to Christ the Head of the Church that came into existence on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit united the believers in the body and, since then, all true believers in Yeshua (Jesus), whether Jewish or Gentile, are not only indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but are baptized into the same body.

The basic theme of Shavuot is 'the harvest' and thanksgiving to God...and Pentecost is the thanksgiving for the 'Holy Spirit and Church'...but what then is really the spiritual significance? We mentioned an early harvest of first fruits and the feast of weeks—how are they tied together? We read in [1 Corinthians 15:20](#) that Messiah (Christ) Himself is the fulfillment of the Feast of First Fruits. But where is the Feast of Weeks? Where is the fulfillment of that feast of the Lord? For that answer we need to look at [Acts 2:1-4](#).

Have you ever asked what all those people were doing in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost? They were 'devout men'-meaning careful to observe all that God commanded—they were there because God commanded them to go up to Jerusalem to observe the feast. As mentioned there were three times each year appointed by God for His people to come up to Jerusalem to celebrate with Him in His feasts. Why did God pour out His spirit on them? To fulfill the symbol of this harvest of ingathering and to fulfill His prophetic word!

The rabbis tied the Feast of Shavuot of the 'giving' of the Torah—but here too, are some other interesting parallels; when God gave the Torah to His people—all Israel acknowledged they would follow it—[Exodus 19:8](#). It wasn't long after that, that Israel forgot and disobeyed bringing down God's judgment (Exodus 32:28). 3000 of God's people were destroyed! Is it just coincidence that years later on the

anniversary of the giving of the Torah that God would, as first fruits, have 3000 born to newness of life? ([Acts 2:41](#)) It also points to the fulfillment of [Ezekiel 36:27](#) where by His spirit on the Feast day of Shavuot—He would write His Torah on the hearts of His people. We mentioned earlier the two leavened loaves and how they represented the people of Israel, in whom there is leaven (sin)...but, we ask, why two loaves and not twelve loaves if it speaks of Israel? They prophetically point to the two leavened people of God—Israel and the Church—who together make up the body of Messiah. The two loaves of leavened bread have, since that Feast of Shavuot some 2000 years ago, become joined together to become one people of God. Jews and Gentiles, one in Messiah, who are called upon to observe—to be devout about and to keep all things that He has commanded us ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)). This symbolic message of Shavuot must have been in Paul's mind when he wrote [Ephesians 2:11-13, 18-22](#).

The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is a God of wonders! Indeed He is more wonderful than most realize. The word 'wonderful' in Hebrew means 'SURPRISE!' and that is what Pentecost has been for Israel as a nation and for her people individually.

On Pentecost the God of Israel comes down to His people. God comes down to visit His people, first nationally-in the Old Covenant-and individually and personally-in the New Covenant. He reveals Himself to His covenant people in power and great glory. Pentecost unfolds in the Old Covenant as Yahweh God is betrothed to a nation...and, as Pentecost unfolds in the New Covenant, as Yahweh God is betrothed to individuals personally inside their hearts!

Does the Western Church acknowledge her roots in Israel through the Seed of Abraham, Israel's Messiah? No, she does not; this willing ignorance is the cause of the continuing partial blindness of the Church to her identity in Israel. This partial blindness will end, but quite late (Zechariah 12). The lights will go on in the Church to their identity in Israel at the very same time as the partial blindness of the other house—the Jewish House of Judah ends and they finally recognize their Messiah Yeshua (Jesus).

Every genuine work of God must involve planting the seed...waiting for gestation, and then, in travail and labor, the birthing of the new creation. As we consider the appearance of the Church of the Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) upon the Earth following His resurrection, we must recognize that this church did not drop from Heaven, nor was it created in a vacuum. The church, the company of the redeemed who were washed by the blood and sanctified by the Spirit was BORN! The Church was born on the day of Pentecost! The divine Seed had to fall into the ground and die in order to bear fruit...and the womb out of which the Church came forth...was none else but the nation of Israel. While many acknowledge Israel's physical exile of the last nineteen hundred years, only a few recognize that the nation also experienced a spiritual exile as well. As in any birth, the intensifying pains, the trauma and the laying down of one's life took their toll. Israel, now an exhausted bloody womb, collapsed and was taken out of the way. The young church, vibrant and anointed spread God's Word and His ways across the heathen nations, bringing the life of Heaven in her wings; but what about the old womb? It was not to be forsaken

forever... **Romans 11:1** - God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be.

No, one day very soon, all Israel will be saved. They will recognize their Messiah and we will all be united together in Christ (Messiah)!

Although the fiftieth day has already come and gone, we will celebrate the Feast of Pentecost tonight—rejoicing that the Word of God has come down from Heaven and is written on our hearts and His Presence lives in us through the power and Person of the Holy Spirit!