



This past week, the Jewish people celebrated Shavout, better known as Pentecost. It took place at sundown on Thursday, May 25th and it ended 6:00pm on Saturday, May 27th. Shavout is the 4th major feast for the Jewish people in their religious calendar. All toll, there are seven main Jewish Feasts during their religious calendar year which begins with Passover.

The seven Jewish Feast days are actually all given to us in Leviticus 23. They are as such:

The Biblical "Feasts of the Lord" as found in Leviticus 23

<i>Biblical/Hebrew Name</i>	<i>English Name</i>	<i>Time of Observance</i>
1) Pesach	Passover	Nisan 14 (March/April)
2) Hag HaMatzah	Feast of Unleavened Bread	Nisan 15-21 (March/April)
3) Bikkurim	Feast of the First Fruits	The day after the Sabbath during Hag HaMatzah
4) Shavuot	Feast of Weeks/Pentecost	50 days from the Feast of First Fruits
5) Rosh HaShanah	Feast of Trumpets	Tishrei 1 (Sept/Oct)
6) Yom Kippur	Day of Atonement	Tishrei 10 (Sept/Oct)
7) Sukkot	Feast of Tabernacles/Booths	Tishrei 15-21 (Oct)

Three of these Biblical Feasts are of major importance to the Jewish people. They are called "Pilgrimage Festivals." Based on Deuteronomy 16:16, three of these annual "feasts" required the attendance of all the Jewish people at the Temple. They were required to come to the "appointed place"- The Temple in Jerusalem. The three feasts that they were all required to attend and come to Jerusalem and meet at the Temple were, *The Feast of Unleavened Bread, Shavuot (Feast of Weeks), and Sukkot (Festival of Booths)*

In Biblical times, Jewish people from all over the ancient world would come to Jerusalem each year to fulfill this mandate from God. However, after the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, prayers have now replaced the animal sacrifices. In Israel, many Jewish people continue to make what is considered a "pilgrimage" to the Western Wall at these times of the year, feeling that they are connecting with their ancestors in Temple times.

We do not hear much of these "feast days" today although they are celebrated by the Jewish people in various ways. Many of the Jewish people do not go to Jerusalem because the Temple

is not there, just the surrounding Temple walls that would have surrounded the Temple. There is, however, not a tremendous urgency for them to go to Jerusalem these days because of the political unrest, not just with the Palestinians but also withing the Jewish factions, as well.

As mentioned previously, Shavuot is the 4th Feast of the Jewish religious calendar. For many believers in Jesus, these Jewish Feasts or I should say, these Feasts of the Lord, feel or think that these Feasts are of no real significance or of no importance to them. This, however, has caused a major breach in the true believer's understanding of Biblical history, as well as what will take place in the very near future for all true believers in Jesus.

We must understand the Bible in its full context to truly be able to grasp all that God has done and will do in the near future concerning Jesus' return. Unfortunately, I think we have all been missing something. I believe one of the main causes for this this is that the Gentile Church, as well as many of the Messianic believers, have misunderstood and have misinterpreted the scriptures. The scriptures are very clear if we read them the way they were intended. If we read them with the understanding that I believe the Holy Spirit truly gives us and not our own natural understanding. Let's see...

In Acts 15 we read of the counsel that was held in Jerusalem. It was a major counsel and an important one because this is where we see that Paul, Barnabas and Peter all were telling the Jewish Believers that now the Gentiles were starting to believe and accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord. The Jewish believers thought that the only way that these Gentile believers could truly be acceptable to God was if they became Jewish through being circumcised. Paul, Barnabas and Peter disagreed with this.

Without going into detail, we know that James, who was the leader of the Church at that time and, by the way, just happened to be the half brother of Jesus, came to the decision that these Gentile believers did not need to become Jewish – they did not need to become circumcised. They just needed to abstain from eating the meat that was offered to idols, as well as to abstain from fornication, not to eat from things strangled and to not drink from the blood of the sacrifices that were offered to false gods. (Acts 15:19-20 and 28-29) These were all parts of the worship that the Gentiles would do in their worship of their false gods. Now, as true believers in Jesus, they were to abstain from these pagan rituals.

Unfortunately, over time, many of the Gentile believers, including many of us today, have taken that to mean that we are no longer look to the Old Testament and its ways of worshipping the One true God. Yes, it is true that we are no longer do any of the animal sacrifices that the Jewish people needed to do in their worship of God as found in the Old Testament. Jesus became the final sacrifice for all of us. However, we are still to look upon the moral aspects of the Law as given in the Old Testament as a guideline to living our lives as true children of the Most High God.

As mentioned, one of the ways that have been lost because of our misunderstanding of what was told us concerning the Old Testament was the understanding of the seven “Biblical Feasts of the Lord” as found in Leviticus 23. We must understand that these feasts written in Leviticus are not called the “Feasts of the Israeli/Jewish people.” No, they are literally called the “Feasts of the Lord.” They are feast days that we need to remember because they are God’s feasts that He has given for us to look at and see what God has done and will do. They are actually prophetic. They are feasts that point to our God. They point to Jesus. They point to our ultimate redemption and spiritual life in our God – both in this life and when we are with Him for eternity.

I mentioned that we just celebrated the Feast of Shavuot. We know it as Pentecost. Pentecost is the Greek rendering of this Feast Day. It literally means “fiftieth.” It was and is to be celebrated “after the 49th day of the omer,” on the fiftieth day after the “first fruits” were offered to the Lord on Bikkurim. The term “omer” is used as a tool for measuring or counting. In Biblical times it was a unit of dry measure or a unit of volume for grains and dry commodities. The word “omer” is sometimes translated as “sheaf.”

This “first fruit” would have been the barley harvest that was about to be harvested at the time of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It would actually be offered on the Feast of Bikkurim. It was to be held on the “first day of the week” after the first regular Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This just happened to be the same day that Jesus rose from the grave – that first Resurrection Day. Hmmm.....

“Shavuot” is celebrated fifty days after Bikkurim. It coincides with the grain harvest of early summer and is, as mentioned, one of three main pilgrimage festivals mentioned in the Torah. The other two are the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Sukkot. This grain harvest, Shavuot, as mentioned previously, was one of the three pilgrimage festivals of ancient Israel. The Israelite

men were commanded to appear before God in Jerusalem, bringing offerings of the first fruits of their harvest.

We must remember that the first Feast of First Fruits (Bikkurim), was literally a part of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. These three feasts are literally combined and today they are all simply referred to as "Passover." Passover was first on the 14th day of the first month of the Jewish religious calendar, then The Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the 15th (the next day), and then on the first day of the week after the Feast of Unleavened Bread was Bikkurim.

Bikkurim was the only Feast day that was given a specific day of the week in which it was to be celebrated. It was to be celebrated the first day of the week (Sunday) after the regular Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This happened to be the day that Jesus rose again from the grave. We see this in all the Gospel accounts – it was the first day of the week (our Sunday).

We see that on that Resurrection Sunday, Jesus came to Mary but told her not to touch Him because "*He had not gone to the Father yet.*" He then went and presented Himself to the Father before coming back and spending 40 days with His disciples. Jesus was the "First Fruit." What the Jewish people would do was to offer to God the first fruit of the first harvest of the year – barley, on that day. According to Leviticus 23:17, The High Priest would also offer up the offering of fresh grain presented in the form of two loaves of baked, leavened bread. Jesus went and presented Himself to the Father as this perfect gift offering.

Shavuot (Pentecost) was also known as the Feast of Weeks. The Jewish people were to come back to Jerusalem and to the Temple, 49 days (seven weeks) later. On the 50th day (Pentecost) they would come and offer another offering of "first fruits." This offering was to be from the wheat harvest that grew this time of year, as well as other first fruits of that second harvest. In doing this the Jewish people were reminded of how God had set them free from the bondage of Egypt. Therefore, the main purpose for this Feast was to remember that God had set them free (the Passover) and how, while in the wilderness they were given the Ten Commandments which told the children of Israel how to live their lives as children of the Most High God.

Pentecost/Shavuot celebrates the "new revelation" and greater understanding of God and who He is. This Feast celebrates the literal day that God revealed Himself to the people of Israel as

they stood at the base of Mount Sinai. His glory was on Mount Sinai. This was definitely what took place on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given to the Body of Christ. God revealed Himself through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we know, on that Feast Day known as Shavuot/ Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out to all the true believers in Jesus in that Upper Room. They then went out into the streets and spoke with the tongues (languages) of others who were in Jerusalem but were from other countries.

These “Holy Spirit filled disciples” spoke about all the wonderful works and blessings of God, but they spoke it in the native tongues of the people who came from all over the world to come to the Temple to worship their God (Acts2:5-11). The main purpose was so that these disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, would tell others about the Good News and salvation that was now available through Jesus.

The Feast of Shavuot/Pentecost was also about the Ten Commandments given to the children of Israel. So how does that line up with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples? We get a good understanding of what this was because of what Peter spoke to the crowd. Peter’s main message is found in Acts 2:21-24, as it states all that the Father and Jesus had done.

Peter then completes His message by stating in Acts 2:38-39, “... *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.* ³⁹ *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.*” This would soon include the Gentiles, as well as the Jewish people.

The people needed to repent, believe in Jesus and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. This was all new to the people but it was also very new to the disciples. They were learning as they were going. God was doing a wonderful work and He was doing it, again, on a day, Shavuot/ Pentecost, that God had determined. He had Moses write it down in Leviticus thousands of years earlier. All the Jewish people were to be in Jerusalem to see the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon anyone of God’s people that would receive Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord.

The Feast of Pentecost also implies and points to a "Marriage Betrothal Contract" between God and His people. In the Jewish tradition, God established a "role model" for marriage. It basically consisted of two stages: the betrothal contract and then the consummation of the Marriage. Shavuot, or Pentecost, represented the "Betrothal Contract." The groom would state that the bride was His and He would return when he was ready to take His bride home with him and consummate the marriage. That is what Jesus is waiting to do for us.

We have been given the Holy Spirit as the gift of the Bridegroom to help us prepare for the day when the Bridegroom (Jesus) will come. The Holy Spirit will present us to Jesus. Jesus will come and actually take us away with Him as His Bride. He will consummate the "Marriage" on the day of His second coming and take His Bride, the Body of Christ, to be with Him forever and ever.

For us today, we are experiencing this wonderful aspect of God's Feast Days being fulfilled. Jesus already has fulfilled the Passover, The Feast of Unleavened Bread and Bikkurim. We, through our belief in Jesus and all that He did, are now able to celebrate and experience the Feast of Pentecost/Shavuot. We receive the Holy Spirit who will lead, guide and prepare us through this journey of our life while here on this earth, until Jesus returns for us-His Bride.

In Exodus, God gave His "instructions and teachings" to Moses written on tablets of stone. Through Jesus and the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of His Word is now written upon our hearts. (See Jeremiah 31:33; Romans 2:15; 2Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 10:16) The "betrothal" aspect of Pentecost is very obvious to us. Jesus is the Bridegroom. The believers in Christ are His Bride, the "betrothed," waiting for Him to come again and takes us away with Him.

The "betrothal" covenant promise of the Holy Spirit has been given. Jesus went to "prepare a place" for us (John 15:1). Upon Jesus' return we will celebrate the consummation of the Marriage between the Bride (Body of Christ) and the Lamb/the Bridegroom/Jesus. This is told to us in Revelation 19:7-9. Celebrating the Feast of Pentecost, being betrothed to Jesus, is to be a statute to be observed forever. (Leviticus 23:21) we are "betrothed" to Jesus, forever and then we will be "married" to Him, forever.

This may seem as if it is something that you may already know and it probably is. The main reason that I am writing about this is that, yes, Shavuot is a day that we as believers should be

aware of and recognize what God has done through the fulfillment of the first four feast days of the Jewish calendar. However, the most important thing that I would like each of us to grasp, is that there are 3 more feast days that need to be accomplished in God's plan of total redemption for all those who believe in Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

Those are still to come. According to the Jewish religious calendar they will be taking place at the end of September through the end of October. They are the feast days of Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur and Tabernacles. We must realize that God has fulfilled the first four feasts through Jesus' first coming and the pouring out of His Holy Spirit upon all those who believe. However, as mentioned there are still three feast days that God will bring forth in His perfect timing and fulfill them here on this earth at His "appointed time." That will be the consummation of the Marriage between Jesus and His Bride, the Body of Christ.

Until that time, we must never forget what God has done for us. We must never forget that there is more that we, as His betrothed Bride, can look forward to. We are looking for that time when our beloved will come and consummate the marriage with His Bride – the Body of Christ.

Our God is so, so good. He has given us new life in and through Jesus. He has given us the Holy Spirit to now dwell in us, work in us and prepare us for that day when we will meet with our Beloved Bridegroom – face to face. Oh, what a day that will be. I can hardly wait!!!

"And the spirit and the bride say, Come."

(Revelation 22:17)