

**Series:** Jewish Feasts and Jesus  
**Title:** Pentecost: The Feast of First Fruits  
**Text:** Genesis; Leviticus; Acts 2

### **Acts 1:6-9**

*<sup>6</sup>So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup>He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup>But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” <sup>9</sup>And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.*

### **Acts 2:1-4**

*<sup>1</sup>When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

This event fell on a very specific celebration on the Jewish calendar – Shavuot, The Feast of First Fruits

As a youth on the property

- spring harvest / early harvest / Last Harvest
- On the ranch – Zimmerman’s
- Last of the corn and wheat before the rain
- We would help the next farm over and we would work till it was done.
- I remember the feasts that would be prepared when harvest was done. Great food and a great sense of fulfillment that the work was finished.

### **Today in the Christian calendar is the Day of Pentecost**

- It celebrates and recalls the day that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church to give them the power to become witnesses.
- Jesus spoke to the followers before he ascended and told them to wait.
- On the following Sunday... on the Jewish day of Shavuot / Pentecost – The Holy Spirit landed on God’s people.

But before the Christians were filled with the Spirit, it was a Jewish holy day.

- Shavuot is the Jewish holiday of first fruits.

- Barley, peas, lentils were early harvest.

## QUESTIONS:

What was the significance of that day when it was a Jewish holy day?

Why is it that the Lord chose this day to pour out his Spirit?

How do these feasts relate to the work of God and our calling?

What am I to do in light of those discoveries?

## WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT DAY WHEN IT WAS A JEWISH HOLY DAY?

### Three Festivals in the Spring

- Passover
- First Fruits
- Feast of Weeks

### Passover – Death

### First fruits – Shavuot – Resurrection Sunday

- Wave the sheafs
- The first of the Harvest
- The first of the resurrection

### Feast of weeks - 50 days later

- Seven weeks plus one
    - Bring firstfruits of harvest
    - Two loaves as a sign of first fruits
- Pentecost (in the New Testament)**
- Bring the first fruits of salvations after the Holy Spirit came
  - 3000 saved

### There are three Feasts in the Fall

- Feast of Trumpets – Begins Rosh Hashanah
- Feast of Tabernacles
- Yom Kippur
  - Rosh Hashanah

- The final bringing of the close of harvest
- We are not in our permanent homes but in these corruptible bodies

As we look at the Three Feasts of the spring, we need to understand to understand what they meant for the people in that day.

## **The Feast of Firstfruits**

### **Leviticus 23:9-14**

*<sup>9</sup> And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>10</sup> “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, <sup>11</sup> and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. <sup>12</sup> And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord. <sup>13</sup> And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the Lord with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin. <sup>14</sup> And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.’”*

- Passover, in early spring, included firstfruits from the first harvest, barley.
- The waving of a sheaf of barley

### **This Feast of First fruits happened three days after Passover**

**After this event 50 later they were to celebrate the feast of weeks**

## **The Feast of Weeks – Shavuot**

### **Leviticus 23:15-22**

*<sup>15</sup> “You shall count seven full weeks from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering. <sup>16</sup> You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath. Then you shall present a grain offering of new grain to the Lord. <sup>17</sup> You shall bring from your dwelling places two loaves of bread to be waved, made of two tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour, and they shall be baked with leaven, as firstfruits to the Lord. <sup>18</sup> And you shall present with the bread seven lambs a year old without blemish, and one bull from the herd and two rams. They shall be a burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord. <sup>19</sup> And you shall offer one male goat for a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings. <sup>20</sup> And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering*

*before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. <sup>21</sup> And you shall make a proclamation on the same day. You shall hold a holy convocation. You shall not do any ordinary work. It is a statute forever in all your dwelling places throughout your generations. <sup>22</sup> “And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.”*

- Harvest would continue until the sound of the Feast of the Trumpets and New Year
- That Feast was called the Feast of ingathering

The holiday of **Shavuot** is a two-day holiday, beginning at sundown following the 5th of Sivan and lasting until nightfall of the 7th of Sivan (**June 4-6, 2022**). In Israel it is a one-day holiday, ending at nightfall of the 6th of Sivan.

### **What Shavuot Commemorates**

- The word *Shavuot* (or *Shavuos*) means “weeks.”
- It celebrates the completion of the seven-week Omer counting period between Passover and Shavuot.

#### **In ancient times, two wheat loaves would be offered in the Holy Temple on Shavuot.**

- It was also at this time that people would begin to bring *bikkurim*, their first and choicest fruits, to thank G-d for Israel’s bounty

The Jewish Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, is also known as Harvest, Shavuot,

- This festivity is held as a means of thanksgiving for the bountiful harvest season.
  - It is a harvest celebration commemorating God's provision for and sustenance of His people.
- Pentecost is a joyful festivity which is celebrated 50 days after Passover.
- All Jewish males without disabilities are required to participate in the Pentecost.
- The Pentecost is Israel’s second major feast.
  - The other major feasts of the Jews are the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles.

1. All three holidays involved a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
2. All three holidays involved firstfruits offerings at the Temple.

- Shavuot, in late spring, included firstfruits from the wheat harvest. Among the many offerings given, was a "wave offering" of two loaves of leavened bread. This was the firstfruits offering.

- Sukkot, in the fall, was the final harvest and included firstfruits of olives and grapes.

**Theme: It is celebrated by Jews as the day of the giving of the Torah**

- The Torah was given by G-d to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai on Shavuot more than 3,300 years ago.
- Every year on the holiday of Shavuot we renew our acceptance of G-d's gift, and G-d "re-gives" the Torah.
- The giving of the Torah was a far-reaching spiritual event—one that touched the essence of the Jewish soul for all times. Our sages have compared it to a wedding between G-d and the Jewish people. *Shavuot* also means "oaths," for on this day G-d swore eternal devotion to us, and we in turn pledged everlasting loyalty to Him
- Revelation: God's Word was revealed through the Law.

**Theme: Community - The giving of the Law taught the Jewish people how to relate to one another as well as to God.**

**Customs**

- The Ten Commandments are read to commemorate the giving of the Law.
- Some Jewish people stay up all night studying the Torah (Law) to "re-live" the revelation at Mount Sinai.
- Book of Ruth is read, tying in with the theme of harvest as well as the theme of community. This also ties in with the belief that King David was born on Shavuot, since the last verse of the book shows that Ruth was one of his ancestors.
- A 12th century Aramaic poem, *Akdamut*, which heralds the Messianic future, is read.
- Jewish people traditionally decorate their homes and synagogues with flowers and greens.
- An older tradition prescribes that two loaves of leavened bread be baked; some say they represent all of humanity (one loaf is the Jewish people, the other Gentiles), while others see them as representing the two tablets Moses brought down from Sinai.
- It is traditional to eat milk products because the rabbis say that when our people received the Law they were as newborn babies.

**WHY IS IT THAT THE LORD CHOSE THIS DAY TO POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT?**

**Shavuot in the New Testament (Pentecost)**

**Theme: The giving of the Gospel - It was the first message of the gospel presented**

To the Jews it is the Giving of the Law.

To the events on that Day when the Spirit came down, it was about the Giving of the Gospel

- The giving of the gospel: God's grace revealed through the Living Word
- When the Holy Spirit came to the disciples in tongues of flames and they began speaking other languages, they were preaching the gospel of Jesus to God-fearing Jews who had come to Jerusalem from every nation under heaven to observe Shavuot at the Temple.
- Peter explains what has happened and shares the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and pointed out to the crowd that what they were witnessing was a fulfillment of prophecy from the book of Joel (Joel 2:28).
- 3000 were saved that day and they are the firstfruits of the Spirit's harvest of believers

**Theme: The Church - An experience of revelation and community**

- A mighty revelation occurred that day as 3,000 Jewish people understood the truth of Peter's words and became followers of Jesus.
- The church began that day

**Acts 2:40, 41**

*<sup>40</sup> And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." <sup>41</sup> So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

**The Law Given**

**The Gospel Given**

**The creation of the community of God's People**

**The Creation of the Church**

**HOW DO THESE FEASTS RELATE TO THE WORK OF GOD AND OUR CALLING?**

**Seven Feasts**

- Sabbath – We live in God's Seventh Day
  - Each week a day was to be given to God and we are to honor it.

**The Spring Feasts**

- Passover (*Pesach*)

- The lamb that was slain when the angel of death went across Egypt.
- The blood on the sides and top of the door frame.
- The Angel would “Pass Over” your house and you would be spared.
- Unleavened bread (*Chag Hamotzi*) Nisan 15-22
- First fruits ( *Yom Habikkurim*) Nisan 16-17
  
- Pentecost (*Shavuot*) /Weeks Sivan 6-7

### **The Fall Feasts**

- Trumpets (*Yom Teru’ah*) Tishri 1- call to repentance
- Atonement (*Yom Kippur*)
- Booths / tabernacles (*sukkot*) – end of harvest

### **Exodus 34:22 ESV**

*You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end.*

### **FEAST OF INGATHERING**

- The Bible refers to *ḥag ha-asif* (“Feast of the Ingathering,” Exodus 23:16),
- when grains and fruits were gathered at the harvest's end, and to *ḥag ha-sukkot*
- (“Feast of Booths,” Leviticus 23:34), recalling the days when the Israelites lived in huts (*sukkot*) during their years of wandering in the wilderness
- What was the ingathering Feast?

*SHAVUOT* marked the end of the grain harvest.

The Feast of Ingathering marked the end of the fruit harvest and the last day of harvest

**So here is the picture I want to draw for you today**

Seven feasts

### **Spring Feasts**

- Sabbath – We live in God’s Seventh Day
  - From the days of Creation we are living in the time of God’s Sabbath
- Passover (*Pesach*) Nisan 14-15
  - Jesus was crucified of Passover
- First fruits (*Yom Habikkurim*) Nisan 16-17
  - Jesus rose from the dead as the first fruit of resurrection
- Pentecost (*Shavuot*) /Weeks Sivan 6-7

- The Spirit was given so we would be witnesses and the harvest would take place

### **1 Corinthians 15:20**

*But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

### **We are living in that season of harvest**

There will be a day when the last harvest will take place: The Feast of the ingathering. When the trumpet blows

#### **THE FALL FEASTS**

- Trumpets (*Yom Teru'ah*) Tishri 1- call to repentance
  - The trump will sound and we will be taken up to be with the Lord.
- Booths / tabernacles (*sukkot*) – end of harvest
  - The last Harvest
  - The feast of ingathering
- Atonement (*Yom Kippur*)
  - In the presence of the Lord and either covered by the Lamb or not.

The final feast of the final harvest is coming

So, we are living in the time between *Shavuot* (Pentecost) The Harvest and the *Succot*: the Feast of trumpets and tabernacles

- The law was given
- The gospel was given
- The People of God was created
- The Church was created

Each feast has a correlation with the Work of God through history.

We are living in the time of harvest.

The Spirit of God empowers us to be witnesses. The generations from that day until the last day a harvest of souls is **ALL ABOUT INCREASING THE HARVEST.**

### **Matthew 9:37, 38**

*<sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup> therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

## **WHAT AM I TO DO IN LIGHT OF THOSE DISCOVERIES?**

1. We are to give our lives to Jesus and share in His death, burial, and resurrection.
2. We are walk in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to be witnesses of the Gospel.
3. We are to look forward to that Great day of the Last Harvest.
4. We are to pray for more workers to join the harvest.