

SHAVUOT

Dr. Lois E. Olena (presented at Evangel Temple, May 31, 2009)

"the only holiday for which God *commanded* a countdown." (Brickner/Robinson, back cover)

A Holiday God Commanded

	3x/yr	First fruits	Offerings	Count	Sacred Assembly/No Work	Celebrate	Participants
Ex. 23:14-19 (<i>shalosh regalim</i>) ¹ "Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. 15 "You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread [PESACH] ; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. 16 "Also you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits [SHAVUOT] of your labors from what you sow in the field; also the Feast of the Ingathering [SUKKOT] at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field. 17 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD. 18 "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor is the fat of My feast to remain overnight until morning.	x	X	[x]				(all your males)
Ex. 23:19 "You shall bring the <u>choice first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God.</u> "Celebrate the <u>Feast of Harvest (haq ha-Katzir)</u> with the firstfruits of the <u>crops you sow in your field.</u>	X	X				X	(all your men)
Ex. 34:22-24 "Celebrate the <u>Feast of Weeks</u> with the <u>firstfruits</u> of the wheat harvest... <u>Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD, the God of Israel.</u> I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the LORD your God.		X	X	X	X	X	(the sons of Israel)
Lev. 23:9-22 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its <u>harvest</u> , then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 'He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; <u>on the day after the sabbath</u> the priest shall wave it. 12 'Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a <u>male lamb</u> one year old without defect for a <u>burnt offering</u> to the LORD. 13 'Its <u>grain offering</u> shall then be <u>two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour</u> mixed with oil, an offering by fire to the LORD for a soothing aroma, with its <u>drink offering</u> , a fourth of a hin of wine. 14 'Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your God, you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. "From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks . 16 Count off <u>fifty days</u> up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. 17 From wherever you live, bring <u>two loaves</u> made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD. 18 Present with this bread <u>seven male lambs</u> , each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings —an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 19 Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering . 20 The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a <u>wave offering</u> , together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest. 21 On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work . This is to be a <u>lasting ordinance</u> for the generations to come, wherever you live.		X	X	X	X		you
Num. 28:26-31 'Also on the day of the <u>first fruits</u> , when you present a new grain offering to the LORD in your <u>Feast of Weeks</u> , you shall have a <u>holy convocation</u> ; you shall do no laborious work . 27 'You shall offer a <u>burnt offering</u> for a soothing aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs one year old; 28 and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths of an ephah for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, 29 a tenth for each of the seven lambs; 30 also one male goat to make atonement for you. 31 'Besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, you shall present them with their drink offerings. They shall be without defect.				X		X	You, son, daughter, male and female servants, Levite, stranger , orphan, widow
Deut. 16:9-12 "You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to <u>put the sickle to the standing grain</u> . 10 "Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with a <u>tribute of a freewill offering</u> of your hand, which you shall give just as the LORD your God blesses you; 11 and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter and your <u>male and female</u> servants and the <u>Levite</u> who is in your town, and the <u>stranger</u> and the <u>orphan</u> and the <u>widow</u> who are in your midst, in the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name. 12 "You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt , and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.				X		X	

A Holiday Israel Practiced

NEHEMIAH 10:35, 12:44, 13:31 – brought firstfruits to God's house each year, appointed men to be over the storerooms for the firstfruits, made provisions for it, asks God to remember him with favor because of what he's done about it.

A Holiday the Early Jewish Believers Observed

Acts 2:1 When the day of **Pentecost** came, they were all together in one place.

Acts 20:16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of **Pentecost**.

¹The three pilgrimage festivals are all connected with the harvest season and also with the Exodus: Passover w/the upheaval that preceded the leaving of Egypt, Shavuot w/the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, and Sukkot to recall the shelters set up in haste during 40 years of wandering. (Schwartz, lxxi)

1Cor. 16:8 But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost,

So just WHAT IS "Pentecost?" What did it mean to the people of Israel, to early Jewish believers—especially ON the "Day of Pentecost" in Acts 2, to Jews throughout history, and how is it significant to to believers today?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	←*	9-40	41-49	50
Names/ Meaning Of the Words		*										
	<p>"Pesach" (Passover)</p> <p>"Hag HaMatzot" (Feast of Unleavened Bread)</p>			<p>"Yom HaOmer" (The Day of the Omer) <i>Omer</i> is Hebrew for sheaves of a harvested crop.</p> <p>Festival of the First Fruits בכוריסדהת חג Hag ha-Bikkurim</p> <p><i>(Both Pesach and Shavuot have a "firstfruits"—the barley harvest, and the wheat harvest)</i></p> <p>First day of the grain harvest in the Spring—BARLEY</p> <p>Yom Ha Omer was on the second day of Passover. The counting to Shavuot began on this day (see original controversy over <i>when</i> this day fell, on next pg.)</p>					<p>Festival of Weeks השבועות חג, Hag ha-Shavuot (Ex. 34:22-24) <i>"Celebrate the Feast of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest..."</i></p> <p>Festival of Reaping/Ingathering/Harvest הקציר חג, Hag ha-Katsir (Ex. 23:16) <i>"Celebrate the Feast of Harvest (hag ha-Katzir) with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field."</i></p> <p>Originally Shavuot "marked the transition between the barley harvest and the start of the wheat-ripening season." (Banks, Gutin, 33).</p> <p>Concluding day of the grain harvest in the Spring— WHEAT</p> <p>Beginning with the Targum (Aramaic translation of the Bible, 2nd cent. CE), it was referred to as Atzeret ("solemn assembly"). "remain with me another day" (as in Num. 29:35, <i>Shemini Atzeret</i> the 8th day of the festival of Sukkot)</p> <p>'Mishnah [<i>Bikkurim</i> 3] and Talmud [<i>Megillah</i> 32a] refer to Shavuot as <i>Atzeret</i> (Hebrew: עצרת, a solemn assembly), (or, as in <i>Pesachim</i> 42b, <i>Atzeret Shel Pesach</i>) as it provides closure for the festival activities during and following the holiday of Passover'</p> <p>The Festival of the Giving of our Torah (<i>Hag Matan Torateinu</i>) This tradition developed after the destruction of the Temple, and is based on Exodus 19:1, that Israel was at Sinai "in the third month" (Sivan), which is the same time period that Shavuot takes place.</p> <p>Pentecost ("Fiftieth Day")</p>			

<p>When it Fell²</p>	<p>15th day of Nissan (March/April)</p>	<p>Lev. 23:11 "on the morrow after the Shabbat" 'The Talmudic Sages determined "Shabbat" here means simply a day of rest and refers to the first day of Passover. Thus, traditional counting of the Omer begins on the <u>second day of Passover</u> and continues for the next 49 days or seven complete weeks, ending on the day before Shavuot.' On the <u>first day after the first Sabbath</u> of Pesach (i.e., would have fallen on the Sunday after Jesus was crucified!)</p>			<p>6th day of Sivan (late May/early June)</p> <p>"This festival ... is the only one without a prescribed date affixed in Scripture. ... Moses had merely insisted that Shavuoth be celebrated fifty days after the offering of the first sheaf of the barley harvest which was to be offered on 'the morrow after the Sabbath'." (RG, 108)</p> <p>The Sadducees and Pharisees argued about this. The Sadducees said it should begin on the first <u>Sunday</u> of Passover (i.e., after the first Shabbat of Passover). The Pharisees saw the first day of Passover as a day of rest, and so the day after that "Shabbat" was the first day to begin counting. Ultimately the Pharisaic tradition won out as the standard, with the beginning of the omer starting on the second day of Passover.</p>
<p>How long It lasts</p>	<p>8 days</p>	<p>1 day (within the Passover celebration)</p>			<p>Lev. 23:15-16 one day Erev Shavuot (evening before), then for 1 day in Israel; 2 days in the Diaspora due to uncertainty of the calendar. Tradition in the Talmud (<i>Shabbat</i> 86b) that Shavuot was always a two-day festival, since Rabbi Yosei maintained it was on Sivan the 7th!</p>
<p>Biblical Observance</p> <p>'Shavuot is the only major festival mandated in the Torah solely on an agricultural</p>	<p>Passover seder meal</p>	<p>Portion (first sheaf) of freshly-cut <u>barley</u> (an Omer, about 5 pints) marked as a wave offering to the Lord. Households set aside <u>firstfruits</u>³ to bring to the Temple as an offering (<i>Deut. 26:3-10</i>) <i>Lev. 2:12-14; 23:17-20</i></p> <p><u>Counting</u> to Shavuot (Lev. 23:15) begins from here (S'firat</p>			<p><i>Firstfruits (Wheat); Offerings;</i> Lev. 23 – bringing <u>two loaves of leavened bread</u> baked from the new crop of barley.</p> <p><i>Sacred Assembly/Do no work;</i></p> <p><i>A blessing to those who provide for the priests</i> <i>Num. 18:12 "I give you [God saying to Aaron and his sons] all the finest olive oil and all the finest new wine and grain they give the LORD as the <u>firstfruits</u> of their harvest. 13 All the land's firstfruits that they bring to</i></p>

²Why do "Passover" and "Shavuot" dates differ from "Easter" and "Pentecost" dates? Originally, the Early Church, made up primarily of Jewish believers, would have observed Passover (and Christ's death and resurrection) according to the Jewish calendar. As well, they would have observed Shavuot according to the Jewish calendar. But with the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity, the First Council of Nicaea (325) established the date of Easter as the first Sunday after the full moon (the Paschal Full Moon) following the vernal equinox.[3] Ecclesiastically, the equinox is reckoned to be on 21 March. The date of Easter therefore varies between 22 March and 25 April. Eastern Christianity bases its calculations on the Julian Calendar whose 21 March corresponds, during the twenty-first century, to 3 April in the Gregorian Calendar, in which calendar their celebration of Easter therefore varies between 4 April and 8 May. See <http://www.jewfaq.org/calendar.htm> for info on the Jewish calendar and the difference of days between the Gregorian calendar and the Jewish calendar.

³Seven Species for which the Land of Israel is praised: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates (*Deut. 8:8*).

<p><i>basis, despite the keystone importance of the giving of the Law.'</i> (Robinson)</p>		<p>HaOmer). Counting was 'understood to express anticipation and desire for the Giving of the Torah'</p>		<p><i>the LORD will be yours. Everyone in your household who is ceremonially clean may eat it. Ezek. 44:30 "The first [i.e., best] of all the first fruits of every kind and every contribution of every kind, from all your contributions, shall be for the <u>priests</u>; you shall also give to the priest the first of your dough <u>to cause a blessing to rest on your house.</u></i> <i>Harvest; Celebrate/Rejoice; Remember</i></p>
<p>Customs (Heb., <i>Minhagim</i>) <i>Special prayer services, Special holiday meals</i> A mnemonic for these customs is the letters of the Hebrew word <i>acharit</i> (אחרית, "last"). Since the Torah is called reishit (ראשית, "first"), the customs of Shavuot highlight the importance of custom for the continuation and preservation of Jewish religious observance.⁴</p> <p>אקדמות – Akdamot, the reading of a liturgical poem during Shavuot morning synagogue services; written in Aramaic, <i>akdamut milin</i> means "first words" and the opening words of the poem plead for God's approval to speak, among other things, of His love for Israel and Israel's faithfulness to the Torah. The poem was composed in the eleventh century by Meir ben Isaac Nehora'I of Orleans, France.' (Kolatch, 484) (It "heralds the Messianic future" –Robinson)</p> <p>חלב – Chalav (milk), the consumption of dairy products like milk and cheese (traditionally the first Shavuot dinner is a dairy meal and no meat is served)- a reminder of God's promise to deliver the Isr into a land flowing with milk and honey; another explanation—when they received the Torah the Isr did not yet have separate milk and meat dishes and their utensils were not kosher, so they just ate dairy; another—because at Sinai Isr were as innocent as newborn babes whose only food is milk; another—because they were too tired to cook after the experience of being at Mt. Sinai! Another—Redemption is so universal that it includes even the animals. Another – it's a warm time of year, perhaps people preferred a lighter meal!</p> <p>Two cheese blintzes, a popular Shavuot meal, represent the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. (Some say the two loaves represent the two tablets; others say the loaves represent all the nations: Jew and Gentile).</p> <p>Honey is also a food associated with Shavuot, since the word (Torah) of God is as "sweet as honey." It was once a custom in Eastern Europe to 'introduce children three to five years of age to Hebrew school studies on Shavuot. The children were then treated to cakes, honey, and sweets "so the Torah might be sweet on their lips".' (Kolatch, 484) <i>Also now the Reform movement confirms children on this day.</i></p> <p>רות – Ruth, the reading of the Book of Ruth at morning services; because Ruth voluntarily accepted Torah and Judaism as the Israelites did at the foot of Mt. Sinai (she also accepted the Jewish People); because she is the great-grandmother of King David, who in turn is the forefather of the Messiah. And also because the story of Ruth takes place during the harvest season. AJC recording: "The underlying meaning of the book is conversion to Judaism..." What Ruth does parallels what the Jews at Sinai do. They become a "people of Torah." "The covenant is open to all who choose to join it."</p> <p>ירק – Yerek, the decoration of homes and synagogues with greenery; reasons-it's a harvest holiday, also reminiscent of foliage at Mt. Sinai; reminder of Pharaoh's daughter finding Moses among reeds in the Nile; also idea that Shavuot is a "judgment day for trees" (Kolatch, 483).</p> <p>תורה – Torah, engaging in all-night Torah study (<i>tikkun leil Shavuot</i>); this began in 16th c. Safed when Kabbalism was flourishing. '...designed to prepare Jews for 'receiving' the Torah again on Shavuot' (Robinson, 128) There is also a tradition of the skies opening up during this night for a brief instant and at that moment God will favorably answer any prayer (Strassfeld, 74). This tradition is also connected w/the <u>wedding</u> w/God idea, of a bride adorning herself in preparation.</p>				

⁴(See "Shavuot," Wikipedia; other notes have been added in to the original text taken from Wik.)

A Holiday on which God Chose to Pour out His Spirit

Acts 1:4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait [i.e., the 50 days to Pentecost] for **the gift my Father promised**, which you have heard me speak about.

Sinai (Exodus 19)

Thunder

Lightning flashes

Thick cloud

Very loud trumpet sound

Smoke

Mountain quaked violently

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were **all together in one place [THE TEMPLE]**. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a **violent wind came from heaven** and filled the **whole house** where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be **tongues of fire** that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were **filled with the Holy Spirit** and **began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them**.

Acts 2:5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans

and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Acts 2:13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Acts 2:14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “**Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem**, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 “In the last days, God says, I will pour out **my Spirit** on all people. Your **sons and daughters [see Deut 16:9]** will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, **both men and women**, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19 **I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and**

fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

David & Shavuot

There is a tradition that King David was both born and died on Shavuot. Because of this some read the Book of Psalms on Shavuot. (The Psalms rep the mystical side of the Sinai experience and represent the human experience of the Divine.)

Peter in his sermon is comparing the dead King David (who was honored on his day) with the resurrected King Jesus!

Acts 2:22 “**Men of Israel**, listen to this: **Jesus of Nazareth** was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But **God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death**, because it was **impossible for death to keep its hold on him**. 25 **David** said about him: “I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; **my body also will live in hope**, 27 because **you will not abandon me to the grave**, nor will **you let your Holy One see decay**. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

Acts 2:29 “**Brothers**, I can tell you confidently that **the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day**. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31

The idea at Sinai is that the Torah was given to ALL Israel—that every Jew, past, present, and future, was present at Sinai and freely takes upon him or herself its privileges and responsibilities (like Ruth did)!

“...Shavuot calls upon us to remember the event and reaffirm our commitment to Torah and its study. It also urges us until the very last moment to prepare ourselves as though Sinai will occur again this very Shavuot” (Strassfeld, 77).

← “You and your children and all who are afar off” is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 16!

Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." "

Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Acts 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." [see Deut. 16:9 – inclusion of aliens]

Acts 2:40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Significance of Shavuot

- **Counting/Anticipation/Waiting/Expectation**

Originally the time after the Exodus, seven weeks where the Israelites prepared themselves to receive Torah.

Jesus was with His disciples for 40 days, then told them to WAIT. (As Jews, they would have all been in Jerusalem—for this one of the *shalosh regalim* (three pilgrimage festivals)—and in the midst of the counting process during this time anyhow!!!) The time between Pesach and Shavuot is supposed to be a time of "solemnity, study, and meditation." (Bank and Gutin, 33).

Acts 1:4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me;

(Brickner/Robinson, back cover: "Shavuot will lead believers in Jesus into greater understanding of the significance of the omer, the waiting period, which foreshadows our watching for His return and gives further meaning to our work of building His Kingdom."

- waiting period. 50 days: Seven complete Sabbaths (50 days) from Pesach to Shavuot also would show the connection between Jesus the Pesach offering and Jesus the risen firstfruits;

- **Harvest/New Life/Resurrection**. *Season of the grain harvest in Israel. It was a time of consecration—giving God the first, the best; and celebration. (Lasted seven weeks and was a 'season of gladness')* Deut. 26:1-10 reminds Israel of exile-Exodus-provision/fruits-guidance. Israel is the "firstfruit of God's increase" (Jer. 2:2-3)

Jesus was found to be raised on this day (first Sunday after Passover). He is the Firstfruits of the Harvest of all humankind. *1Cor. 15:20-23 But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming...*

"...believers can be assured of being resurrected or 'harvested' at the end of time since Christ has already been resurrected. His resurrection serves as the evidence that we shall also be resurrected." (RG, 121).

In addition, see pp. 5-6 (above) about the contrast between the RISEN Y'shua in Peter's sermon and the allusion to [the now dead] King David (Acts 2:25-34), who according to tradition was born and died on Shavuot. Peter even used David's own words about resurrection (Acts 2:31).

As well, what happened on Shavuot brought about a harvest of souls for the Early Church.

Because of Pesach (i.e., Jesus' sacrifice), we can have Shavuot (a harvest of believers who will have God's Torah written on their hearts and be able to obey Him and be HOLY!)...but ONLY because Jesus RAISED from the dead! The life and rest that is ours through the HOLY Spirit is because Jesus was raised!

Rom. 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because **through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.** 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Rom. 11:16 If the **part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy**, then the **whole batch is holy**; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

Aspect of the "Downpayment" (That life we have now is only a GLIMMER of what is to come, just like the redemption of Israel!)

James 1:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Rom. 8:23 Not only so, but **we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit**, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

1Cor. 15:23 But each in his own turn: Christ [was made alive first], the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him [will be made alive].

(The 144,000): Rev. 14:4 These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They **follow the Lamb wherever he goes [ability to obey and be HOLY]**. They were purchased from among men [by the Paschal Lamb!] and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.

No matter WHAT we are going through, we can know that God loves us enough to:

- *send Jesus as a sacrifice (our Passover Lamb)*
- *raise that sacrifice from the dead*
- *pour out the Holy Spirit (on Shavuot) so we can:*
 - *live obediently in this life, and*
 - *have a future day of total redemption to look forward to!*

RG: "God chose the Jews because He loved the Gentiles." (Jesus went to the Jews to "get the missionaries saved" and Paul went "to the Jew first" so they would be transformed into the missionaries God wanted them to be to the Gentiles!)

• **The Giving of Torah.** Later Tradition (after the Temple was destroyed): Shavuot marked the **anniversary of the giving of the Torah on Sinai**; **Accepting those commandments helped make Israel into a community, into a nation.** "Sinai is more than the receiving of the Torah—it is the experiencing of the Divine" (Strassfeld, 69). There is a midrash (commentary on the Scr.) that Israel at Sinai fainted, and God revived them with fragrant spices. Another tradition is that as each commandment came forth, the world was filled with fragrant spices. (Hence tradition of roses at Shavuot)

The HS coming on Shavuot would also show the **connection between the Torah given at Sinai and the law written on believer's hearts** (Jer. 31:31-33) through the coming of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Acts 2); the coming of HS would bring a HARVEST of souls!

There is also a Midrash as to **why the Israelites were chosen** to receive the Torah. It says it's because God asked the [seventy] nations of the world first [in their own languages] if they would accept the Torah, but they all refused. But Israel said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and obey" (Exod. 24:7). And even though the commandments were given with one voice, it says, "All the people perceived the voices" (Exod. 20:18), which according to *Midrash Tanhuma* 26c meant that **"When the voice went forth it was divided into seven voices and then went into seventy tongues, and every people received the law in their own language."** Therefore, "Just as every nation at Mount Sinai heard the Law in their own language, so Jews from every nation heard the disciples of Y'shua in their own tongue on that Shavuot" (Robinson, *Weak on the Feast of Weeks*, 6).

AJC: In this covenant/treaty, God gave Israel the Torah and the promise of the land. Israel must undertake three obligations: They commit to maintain their distinctiveness (Torah is emblematic of what distinguishes the Jews), they enjoin to form a model community (one that others would seek to emulate), and they commit to work as a people toward the overall redemption of the world.

As well, there is a comparison between the **powerful physical elements** both at Sinai and in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (see above).

• **Freed to Serve.** "...Shavuot as the commemoration of the experience of Sinai is a necessary completion of the experience of Passover. If Passover is a liberation, the question remains, a liberation toward what? Freedom does not lie in anarchy; rather it is found at Sinai. **There, we enter into the service of God**, the one Master who offers freedom as the underlying basis for choosing the Covenant. ... the forty-nine days ... is the period in which we ready ourselves to freely choose the Covenant by saying yes to Sinai and its revelations." (Strassfeld, 79).

Pesach→Shavuot
Egypt→Sinai
Liberation→Revelation

See Steven Bayme AJC. recording; talks about the "portability of Torah," (given at Sinai, but taken to the Promised Land).

• **Wedding.** Rabbinic tradition of Shavuot as a **wedding between Israel and God, with Israel as the Bride.** (See Schwartz, 305) Based on Hos. 2:21-22, "I will espouse you with righteousness and justice, and with goodness and mercy, and I will espouse you with faithfulness; then you shall be devoted to the Lord" and Jer. 31:31, "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel." ('Sephardic congregations read a special *ketubah/marriage contract*, in recognition of the 'marriage' of God and the Jewish people that receives its consummation with the giving of the Torah' (Robinson, 128). There is even the idea that Mt. Sinai, towering over Israel, is like the *chuppah*, and Moses breaking the tablets because he saw they would have already been considered an unfaithful spouse.

Some see Pentecost (Acts 2) as the "birth of the Church," and the Church is the Bride of Christ. (Rev. 21:9, "Come I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."

The holy convocation (no laborious work)/Shabbat aspect of Shavuot also speaks of **rest** from enemies (idea of Israel's national redemption; the firstfruits of this came with Messiah; we are looking forward to future ultimate fulfillment—the marriage supper of the Lamb!)

• **Covenant Theme and the Universal Nature of Shavuot—God makes a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the House of Judah (Jer 31) that the Gentiles “who are afar off” (Eph. 2) can now participate in.**

Book of Jubilees describes celebration in pre-Mosaic times; uses the post-Shabbat interpretation for the date and thus it would start on the 15th of Sivan. Traces origin of the holiday to appearance of the first rainbow (with Noah). Jubilees is also ‘the first mentioned connection of the giving of the Torah and...Shavuoth’ (RG, 105). **Covenant renewal:** (Noah, Abr, Moses). [AJC: The original covenant (Noahide) or “natural law” acqd. to Bayme, was made with all humanity; the Abrahamic was made w/an individual; the Sinaitic covenant was to the Jews as a people (a binding covenant of law). Idea of Jews past, present, and future all being present at Sinai (joke about the two Chasidim who meet one another and one says, “Don’t I know you?” “Yeah, you saw me at Sinai.” “Oh, yeah, fire, smoke, etc. Big crowd. Who can remember?”)]

Jews would go out from Jerusalem throughout the Mediterr. world to be a light to the nation, a holy nation, a holy priesthood – communicating the message of the One True God and His Messiah to the nations (see below):

Deut. 16:11 and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name.

Acts 2:17 ‘AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,’ God says, ‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; 18 EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

Even the “two loaves” baked with leaven can be seen as symbolic of Jew and Gentile, both tainted with sin, now offered to God as “one new man” (Eph 2); just as the two loaves were lifted up and waved before the Lord, so Jesus has lifted Jewish and Gentile believers up before the Lord into His presence and seated them in heavenly places with Him (RG, 123). (Eph. 1:3, 2:6, Heb. 12:22)

“What a mighty God we serve, who is able to turn all things for good! Think about it: how did people come to have such a diversity of languages in the first place? It was the result of sin and pride. Thousands of years before, at a place called Babel, the Lord prevented the human race from uniting to do evil. He cursed humanity by confusing their language and scattering them into many different nations and tongues.

How like our gracious God to **reverse the curse of Babel on this great Pentecost after Christ’s resurrection**. Languages that once confused and alienated people were now employed to proclaim the good news that God’s salvation had come to the nations. People once divided through sin would now be united in the Savior. Out of chaos and cacophony God created a beautiful diversity and harmony, that people of all languages might come together as a choir of praise to the glory of God.” – David Brickner

Acts 2:38-39 is really a fulfillment of Deuteronomy 16:9-12!

38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 “For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.”	Deut. 16:9 ... you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite who is in your town, and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your midst, in the place where the LORD your God chooses to establish His name...
Forgiveness of sins	Offerings of Shavuot
Gift of the HS	Giving of Torah on Sinai; Torah written on our hearts (Jer 31) through the Spirit
For you and your children	men/women; Levites
All who are far off	menservants/maidservants, aliens, fatherless, widows
All whom the Lord will call	“Count off Seven Weeks...” (He calls us to a place of a harvest of souls, which we CAN see because of the OFFERING of the MESSIAH, and His RESURRECTION

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