

The following is taken from a lesson given by Don Batchelder on Dec, 27, 1998

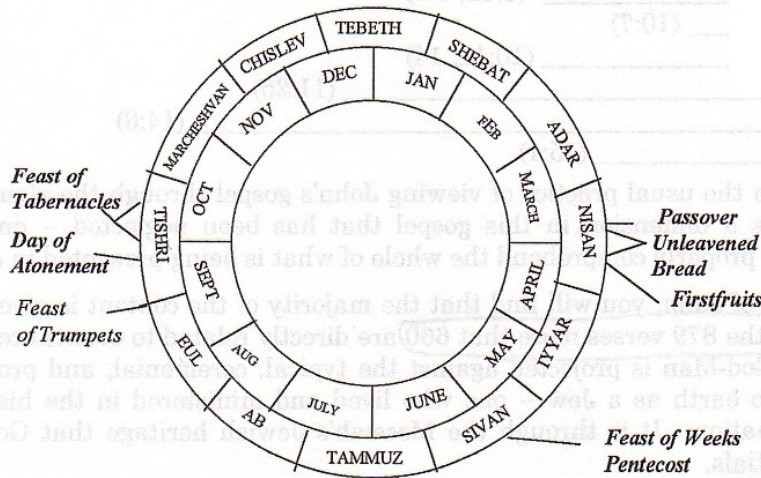
See Endnote for more info on Jewish calendar.<sup>1</sup>

**REVIEW OF THE FEASTS**

1. Attendance at the feasts was commanded by God. (cf. Deut. 16:16-17)
  - All males were to appear before the Lord at least a t Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles
  - They were not to come empty-handed
  - Every man was to bring what he was able to give according to the blessing of God in his life.
2. The feasts were multi-faceted in meaning
  - Historical
  - Agricultural
  - Sacrificial
  - Prophetical
3. Israel was given seven feasts by Biblical decree.

The first three, Passover or *Pesach* celebrates the exodus from Egypt (Lev. 23:5), Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6), and Firstfruits (Lev. 23:10) all fell within days of one another in the month of Nisan (April). Nisan was the first month of the Jewish religious year. The cycle began with Passover, which was observed on the evening of the fourteenth. Unleavened Bread was celebrated on the fifteenth. Firstfruits were offered on the day after the Sabbath that followed the Passover.

Fifty days were counted from Firstfruits to the Feast of Weeks (Pentacost or *Shabuoth* which is identified as the time of the giving of the Torah on Sinai) (Lev. 23:16) fell in the month Sivan (June). Trumpets (Lev. 23:24), the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27), and Tabernacles or *Sukkot* celebrated the wilderness wanderings (Lev. 23:34) and closed out the national religious celebrations in Tishri (October). Sukkot is inaugurated by Rosh Hashanah, the New Year, and concludes with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. From Rosh Hashanah (Trumpets) to the close of Tabernacles spanned a period of twenty-two days.



### **The Great Harvest – the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost).**

*Continued from last lesson...* **Feasts of weeks – Pentecost.** Exodus 23:16; 34:22. 50 days after the observance of the firstfruits but mutually inclusive with the spring feasts. It marked a celebration of the main harvest – of wheat. They were also to offer loaves of bread to show the completeness of the harvest – enough to bake bread. The Feast of Shavuot – the feast of Pentecost. The Great harvest!

Lev 23:15 **And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: [16] Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. [17] Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two tenth deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the firstfruits unto the LORD. (KJV).**

Our discourse on the season of redemption continues. This is the second of wave offerings - the first being the waving of the omer - during the feast of the Unleavened Bread. The time of the Feast of Weeks is clearly defined by verse 16 as seven *complete* weeks or 50 days. If I were inclined to emphasize the *numerology* of this time period, I would emphasize the completeness of the harvest of redemption. I will not, but I will teach that God's redemptive plan includes all that would receive Christ as Savior. I believe that when the last person of the last generation would receive Christ - then and only then will the Father send His Son back to receive the church unto Himself. The important point here is that we should *never* presume to know when that time has come. We are to harvest the lost for Him regardless of the appearance of moral conditions, the state of the church - even if we think we have been mislocated into very center of hell - we are to harvest the lost for that is what these two feasts are about; the season of redemption, where the lost are harvested for Christ!

### **The Inauguration of God's Harvest of the Gentiles**

John 4:35 **Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. (KJV).**

The two feasts have forever been inextricably linked together. The phrase "And the LORD spake unto Moses saying," occurs five times - the first time to introduce the Feast of Passover *and* Unleavened Bread. The second time to introduce the Feast of Firstfruits *and* Weeks, the third time to introduce the Feast of Trumpets, the fourth time to introduce the Day of Atonement and the fifth time to introduce the Feast of Tabernacles (or booths). This method of introduction links the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread and also links the Feast of Firstfruits and of Weeks inextricably together. The way the time was fixed for the Feast of Weeks accomplished this also. The Feast of Weeks is determined by counting 50 days from the Feast of Unleavened Bread as has already been mentioned.

The Firstfruits was the waving of the first barley crop. The Feast of Weeks celebrated the waving of the first wheat crop. This two feasts marked the beginning of the Jewish harvest. All summer long the seven major crops, barley, wheat, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates, would be harvested. Later, we will look at the conclusion of the season - Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles which is also called "the Feast of Ingathering" (Exod 23:16). My reason for referring to the Feast of Tabernacles is to point out the great joy with which it was celebrated; **"So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. [40] On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days."** ( Lev 23:39, 40). This whole season was a time of labor, of going about the busy life of stewardship of the Lord's land. At the end of the summer, after a season of reflection and repentance, the Jews were told to rejoice because the harvest was in, the Lord had blessed them with another year of plenty.

When Jesus made reference to the whitened fields that were ready for harvest He was pointing out to His disciples this harvest of redemption where He could see a multitude ready for Jehovah's harvest of souls. The waving of the Leavened Bread was to take on a new meaning - a new vitality - the harvest of souls was fast approaching for His disciples and they were to be ready for it.

### **Celebration of the Feast of Weeks During Time of Christ**

The Hebrew word for "weeks" is "Shavuot" - thus the term is applied to this celebration. Three biblical terms are used in the scripture describing this feast. First, the most common name is *Hag Hashavuot*, the Feast of Weeks. This refers to the time span between the first harvesting of the barley crop and the first harvesting of the wheat crop (Exod 34:22). Second, the primary meaning of the feast is reflected in the Hebrew name *Yom Habikkurim*, "the Day of Firstfruits" (Num 28:26) - note, this name is different than "the Feast of Firstfruits." It marks the beginning of the main crop of wheat. Third, is the name *Hag Hakatzir*, the "Feast of Harvest" (Exod 23:16) - this marks the official beginning of the summer harvest season. Finally, we must not overlook the Greek term Pentecost which merely means fiftieth since the Feast of Weeks was celebrated on the fiftieth day from the Feast of Firstfruits.

Shavuot was observed in the late spring, usually in late May or early June - around the 6<sup>th</sup> day of Sivan. No wheat products from that year's planting could be eaten - the same rule as applied to the barley crop. Contrary to rabbinical tradition<sup>2</sup>, there was no historical event tied to Shavuot, as was the case with Passover and Tabernacles.

**Today's counting of the Omer.** The weather in the land of Israel is very changeable. "The Omer period has several interesting angles: In the

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<sup>2</sup> Rabbinical tradition connects the Feast of Weeks with the giving of the Law.

agricultural world, it represented a period of tremendous tension for the Judean farmer who was exposed to sudden changes of weather that were typical for the season between the two Jewish holidays of Pesach and Shavuot. Indeed, the Hebrew word for a hot dry wind, *chamsin*, derives its source from the Arabic word for fifty, since this bothersome weather occurred so frequently during this period. The hot dry wind could burn the stalks of the ripening wheat, thus spoiling the produce and threatening the farmer's sustenance."<sup>3</sup>

Since there is no temple, Shavuot is not observed in the Levitical sense. Rather this is a period of reflection, of partial morning. For 32 days<sup>4</sup> there are no weddings, no music can be enjoyed, and no hair can be cut. The Jew was very much aware of Jehovah's role in the ripening of the wheat crop and hence the other crops that was to follow. As the days progressed the farmer was encouraged to say, for example on the 12<sup>th</sup> day, "Today is the 12<sup>th</sup> day, making one week and five days of the Omer." The point I wish to bring out is that this was a very important time for the Jew - all surrounding the Lord's sovereignty over the climate of the land. The tragedy is that they are so focused on the keeping of the Law that they are missing the point of the true meaning of Shavuot - as God plays a direct role in the harvest of crops of Israel, so He plays a direct role in the harvest of souls in His redemptive crop.

**The Day of Shavuot.** The first of the wheat had been harvested. A season of celebration and enjoyment infused the day of Shavuot. Multitudes from all over Israel had come to Jerusalem to bring the Firstfruits of their wheat crop. From reading Act 2 it is apparent that Jews from other countries favored this feast to honor their Lord.

At midnight of the 50<sup>th</sup> day the Temple doors were opened - animal intended for sacrificed had to be inspected - this was a very busy time at the Temple. Sacrifices had to be made in accordance with Numbers 28:26-30. Ceremony had to be observed.

Then came the unique **waving of the loaves**. A mixture of flour, and *leaven* was used in the making of the two loaves. Because the loaves contained leaven they were waved before the altar but not burned in it (Lev 2:11). The priest would approach east side of the altar and would perform a backward and forward and then an upward and downward motion. Afterward, the loaves would be given to the priests for their consumption.

The day of Shavuot was a Sabbath so no work was to be done (Lev 23:21). It was to be a day of rejoicing by all. They were to remember that Israel was a slave in Egypt but now were a redeemed people.

Wheat was not the only firstfruit that was celebrated. The Jews celebrate seven fruits

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<sup>3</sup> From Virtual Jerusalem at <http://www.virtualjerusalem.com/jeisholidays/lagbaomer/omer.htm>

<sup>4</sup> See The Feasts of Israel, by Scott, Pg 63 for details on the counting.



(species): wheat, barley, grapes, the fig, the pomegranate, the olive, and the date (also used to make honey). For more info on this see

[http://www.virtualjerusalem.com/jewish\\_holidays/shavuot/sevenspe.htm](http://www.virtualjerusalem.com/jewish_holidays/shavuot/sevenspe.htm),

### **The Birth of the Church.**

**Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.**

The time between the death of Jesus, His resurrection and the birth of the church was during the counting of the weeks until Shavuot would come. Jesus told His disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to remain in the city. There was no historical connection with the celebration of Shavuot as there was with Passover and Tabernacles - that was because history was about to be made - the Shavuot was to be fulfilled. Later after the destruction of the Temple, the Rabbis connected Shavuot with the giving of the law. However, such a historical application is not in keeping with biblical application.

**Jeremiah 2:3 Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,' " declares the LORD. (NIV).**

The application is this: as the Israelites were not to eat the fruit of the land because she was holy unto Jehovah. Only after the observance of Shavuot could the crops of the land be eaten. Since the gentile was never in any position to be the devourer of God's Firstfruits if they devoured Israel - they would be overtaken by disaster. Believers in the church age, both individually and collectively are called first fruits (1 Cor 16:15; Jas 1:18). God is very jealous about His Firstfruits - it will be harvested!

The fact is that the prophets placed great importance on the harvest concept of the feast as did the apostles. Jesus Himself in our lead passage applied the harvest of souls to the upcoming Pentecostal fulfillment. The first part of the feast, the Feast of Unleavened bread has been applied to the resurrection of Jesus Christ by apostle Paul - so must the second of the feasts - Shavuot be applied, not to Him as the bread was leavened, a type of sin. No, the waving of the two loaves of bread on the day of Shavuot represents the two bodies - Jews and Gentiles becoming one - in Christ.

This bringing together of Jew and Gentile is pictured in Ephesians by the Temple. Temple walls separated them - on the north side and the south side, the Gentiles had to stay outside while the Jews could enter the Temple. Inside the Temple further separation was made between the priests, the men and the women. All these walls were torn down by the fulfillment of Shavuot - Pentecost at the birth of the church. In Galatians Paul refers to the progeny of the patriarch Abraham as being one family (Gal 3:26-29). He goes on to say that **"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** (Galatians 3:28).

### The Fulfillment of Shavuot.

Acts 2:1-4 And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3] And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. (NAS).

Was this mighty wind the hot dry wind, *chamsin* that the farmer feared? Was this the crop destroyer? No, it was the power of the Holy Spirit uniting the believers that day into the church of Christ. There was a lot of confusion trying to explain the rushing wind, the tongues of fire and the unexplained extolling the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11). Peter stood up with the other 11 disciples and began to speak, explaining what had happened. He quoted Joel 2:28 as fulfillment of Shavuot;

Joel 2:23 **Be glad, O people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains in righteousness. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.** (NIV).

Look at this passage - the prophet is referring to this season of harvest. The autumn rains were important to the harvest of the barley the spring rains were important for the wheat. God is sovereign over these rains as He is over Israel. The wonderful fulfillment goes on to God's Harvest of Souls;

**You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. [27] Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed.[28] "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.**  
(Joel 2:26-28, NIV)

Will the Law be honored because of Shavuot as the Rabbis said? Yes, but not in the way they had described. Centuries ago the prophet Jeremiah predicted that the Law would be written in the hearts of all believers.

**"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. [34] No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their**

wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Jeremiah 31:33-34 (NIV).

The time of Shavuot - the time of the waving of the two Leavened Loaves before the altar of the Lord had come. Both Jew and Gentile had become one that day - one in the church of Christ, united in Him forever. Before His altar, the Cross.

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1. Endnote follows:

The following list of the Jewish calendar is based on the *Festive cycle* as established in Exod 12:2; 13:4.

I.-- NISAN (knee-sawn)

Spring Equinox, end of march or beginning of April

Days

- 1 New Moon.
- 14 Exod 12:2; 13:4; Deut 16:1, 2. The preparation for the Passover and the Paschal Sacrifice.
- 15 First day of the Feast of Unleavened bread.
- 16 Lev 23:10, 11. Waving of the first ripe Omer (Firstfruits).
- 21 Close of Passover.

II.-- IYAR (ee-arrh)

Days

- 1 New Moon.
- 15 'Second' or 'Little' Passover.
- 18 Lag-le-Omer, or the 33<sup>rd</sup> day in Omer, *i.e.* from the presentation of the first ripe sheaf offered on the second day of the Passover, or 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.

III. --- SIVAN (sieve-an)

Days

- 1. New Moon.
- 6 Lev 16:15, 16. Deut 16:3, 4; Exod 16:9-12. Feast of Pentecost, or of Weeks -- 7 weeks, or 50 days after the beginning of the Passover, when the two loaves of the first ripe wheat were 'waved.'

IV. --- TAMMUZ (taa-mooz)

Days

- 1. New Moon.

V. --- AV (aahhv)

Days

- 1. New Moon

VI. --- ELUL (el-ool)

Days

1. New Moon

VII. --- TISHRI (tishr're)

Beginning of Civil Year

Days

- 1 Lev 23:24; Num 29:1. New Year's Feast. Day one = The Feast of Trumpets, the only feast that is observed on the first day of the month.
- 2 Continuation of New Year's Feast.
- 10 Lev 23:26-32. Day of Atonement; Great Fast.
- 15 Lev 23:33-43. Commencement of Feast of Tabernacles.
- 21 Conclusion of Feast of Tabernacles.