

Jesus the Incarnate Word Fulfills the Feast of Pentecost

Exodus 34:22; Lev. 23:15-22, Deut. 16:10; Acts 2

Shavuot, known in the New Testament as “Pentecost” is May 24, 25th 2023. What is the Biblical origin in the Hebrew scriptures and the spiritual significance of the last recorded Shavuot in the New Testament? And why should we care?

Because Jesus came “in the fulness of time, born of a woman made under the Law to redeem them that are under the Law. Jesus fulfilled the Law.” He fulfilled the Law of Moses therefore He kept the festivals therein. Those festivals were types pointing Israel to the Messiah. When you have a long-term relationship witnessing to a Jewish person it is important to be familiar with some Jewish customs of observing the Biblical festivals ordained by God. There are seven festivals in Leviticus plus Purim – the feast of Esther, as well as Hanukkah which Jesus attended in John 10:21, known as the “feast of dedication. These nine annual events provide great opportunities every year to inquire from our Jewish acquaintances as to how they observe them so that we may use those as discussion points that will lead to Jesus. Helping them see the Jewishness of Jesus is a real revelation to them.

All Jewish males 20 years old and up were to make three annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem: 1) Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread, 2) Pentecost and 3) The Feast of Tabernacles. Deut. 16:16; 2 Chron. 8:13

That means that Jesus would have made this trip for Pentecost at least ten times before He began His ministry, plus three more times during His ministry. So over 13 years x 3 = 39 times that Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for these three annual feasts.

Countdown to Pentecost for 50 days. Lev, 23:9-21

The Jews were commanded by God to count seven weeks from Passover and on the 50th day to celebrate “Shavuot,” meaning “weeks,” as it is first called in Exodus 34:22. Pentecost is from the Greek term indicating “50”. For Israel it was literally a thanksgiving celebration for a bountiful harvest which was a blessing from God for their obedience in giving Him the first-fruits, literally the first sprouts of the barley offered 50 days prior to Pentecost. A few weeks before Passover, a farmer started watching the land he sowed. He marked the first small section that sprouts. As soon as it comes to a head he cuts and bundles an “omer” of it for the wave offering for the Feast of First Fruits. An “omer” is a dry measure, containing, (approximately 3 quarts measure of grain/ 2 quarts flour according to the Talmud). It is waved before the Lord by the priests on the first day of counting, imploring His blessing on the harvest to come. The fifty days brings them to the date of Shavuot/Pentecost.

Before any grain product of the new crop may be harvested, a measure of ground barley must be brought to the Temple on the next day after Pesach/Passover as a meal offering, symbolizing that the prosperity of the field...as a gift from God. This happens the second day of Passover which is the Feast of the First Fruits which is another Sabbath day with another lamb offered as a burnt offering. Verse 15 says “you shall count unto you,” Rabbis have interpreted that each individual is responsible to count 49 days following first fruits. The 50th day is Shavuot/Pentecost. Jewish scholars, in their reckoning of the flight from Egypt to Sinai, hold that the offering of the two loaves offered on the 50th day coincide with the giving of the Torah/Law to Moses. Therefore, the annual reading of the Law in synagogues ends and restarts on Shavuot/Pentecost.

However, that date does not line up with scripture. Exodus 19:1,2 states, “In the third month, (not 50th day) when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.” Passover occurred in the first month of Nissan on the 14th day. The lunar month lasts about

28 days. $28 + 28 = 56$. The Feast of Shavuot according to Leviticus 23 would have already occurred on day 50 in route before arriving at Sinai and long before 3×28 days. God added this Feast of Weeks to His commands to be observed once they entered the promised land, not before (Exodus 34:22). The point of mentioning the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost in Exodus was to list it as one of three times a year that males were to make a pilgrimage to appear before God. But appear where? When this is first commanded there is no knowledge of a temple nor for that matter of the future location of the Tabernacle. Although they knew the Passover date as Nissan 14 and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were to follow for seven days consecutively, they were not told the time frame until Leviticus chapter 23, ie: how many weeks from Passover to Shavuot. Even the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned generally as "at the years end" (Ex 34:22).

Old traditions die hard. Rabbinic traditions that God's Law given to Moses on Shavuot may not be accurate calendar-wise but are nevertheless exemplary in celebrating of the giving of the Holy Law of God. "In Exodus 20:18-21, we read that the Israelites were terrified at the presence of JEHOVAH God, so they asked Moses to speak for them. Moses then ascends the mountain, where he remains for "forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 24:18). Afterward Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 9:9-12). So, while JEHOVAH's descent upon Mount Sinai is when He verbally delivered the Law to Moses the Israelites did not get until after that, we see that the Feast of Weeks is NOT an exact date marking the giving of the Law.

1) On the THIRD Hebrew month (Sivan) -- 15th day -- the Israelites arrive at Mount Sinai. (In the third month) That is 7 days after the "seven Sabbaths complete" on the THIRD month, 8th day.

2) For 2 DAYS the Israelites prepare and are presented before JEHOVAH God to receive His covenant on the 3rd day.

3) On the next day, THIRD month -- 18th day -- Moses prepares and goes up onto the mountain to receive the tablets of stone. That's 3 more days. $7 \text{ days} + 3 \text{ days} = 10 \text{ days}$.

4) Moses spends 40 days up on Mount Sinai with JEHOVAH God, receiving the written law. That's $10 \text{ days} + 40 \text{ days}$. These 50 days fall after the 50-day count of the "omer." Moses came down with the law after the Egypt Passover and after the date of the yet future Shavuot.

And what did Aaron say on the day BEFORE Moses descended the mountain? "So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a *proclamation* and said, 'Tomorrow is a FEAST to the LORD.' Then they rose early on the next day, offered **burnt offerings**, and brought **peace offerings**; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (Exodus 32:5-6)."ⁱ

Acts 2 happened on Shavuot/Pentecost. Many expositors claim that the giving of the Law -- when JEHOVAH God descended upon Mount Sinai -- is paralleled by the giving of the Holy Spirit and the founding of the New Testament Church in Acts 2:1-4 and verse 6. And JEHOVAH assuredly didn't send His Holy Spirit on the day of Shavuot when the Israelites were desecrating His holy day by worshipping the golden calf! So is there any event at that time which might parallel the pouring out of JEHOVAH's Spirit in Acts 2. While the events of the Israelites' time at Mount Sinai do not seem to offer any linkage to the dynamic events recorded in Acts 2 -- which transpired on Pentecost (Shavuot) in 31 A.D. -- there is an interesting parallel in Numbers 11 to the Acts account. Notice!

16 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. 17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which *is* upon thee, and will put *it* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear *it* not thyself alone."

25 "And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that *was* upon him, and gave *it* unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, *that*, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.
 26 But there remained two *of the* men in the camp, the name of the one *was* Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they *were* of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp."

The similarity to Acts 2:1-4 is obvious: "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were **all with one accord in one place**. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them cloven tongues, as of fire, and it **sat upon each of them**. "And they were all filled with **the Holy Ghost** and began to **speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

There is much more similarity between Acts 2 and Numbers 11 than Acts 2 and Exodus 32. In Numbers 11, the Spirit of God upon Moses was given to the 70. In Acts 2 the Spirit of Jesus was given to the 120.

"In Exodus 32:28 we read that the 'children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day **about three thousand men**.'" In Acts 2 we read: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* **about three thousand souls**." (verse 41).

John 1:17 says "For the law was given by Moses, soon after Shavuot *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." 3000 souls died soon after the law was given, indicating the law identified sin that brought death. Jesus brought grace and truth and paid for it on Passover and gave 3000 Jewish believers His Spirit on Shavuot 10 days after He was crucified.

"Another interesting parallel can be found in Exodus 24:12 and Exodus 32:15-16:

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them."

"And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other *were* they written. And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables."

When JEHOVAH's Feast of Shavuot or Weeks had fully come -- Moses returned from the mountain with the tablets of STONE -- and with the intention of teaching the words thereon to the people of Israel (Exodus 24:12, last part). "And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." (Exodus 32:19).

While here at the mountain of JEHOVAH God, His law was written on "tablets of STONE," in Acts 2 we find of the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Jeremiah 31:31-33 -- notice! (a partial fulfillment to be completely fulfilled when all of surviving Israel is saved at the end of the Tribulation- Romans 11, Zech. 12)

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant **with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah**: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

This is referred to by the apostle Paul in Hebrews 10:16. At Sinai the law was written in stone due to the stiff-necked and rebellious people of Israel; but at Jerusalem in 31 A.D. the law was written "on their hearts" due to the 3,000 obedient Israelites who received JEHOVAH's Spirit on that day."ⁱⁱ

"On Shavuot God's people were instructed to offer two wave loaves baked with leaven, a picture of sin. What a wonderful truth! In the Church, God has brought two groups (two wave loaves) of people together to worship Him, both Jewish and Gentile (I Corinthians 12:13), neither of whom are without sin.

Eph 2:13 - 16 "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself **of twain one new man**, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"

On Shavuot the book of Ruth is read in the synagogue ... since the circumstances it relates took place at the time of the harvest and Shavuot. What a wonderful truth! Ruth, the Gentile woman from Moab, came to be not only a child of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but an ancestress of King David and his greater Son, Jesus the Messiah! (Matthew 1:1-16). Again, this is a picture of the time when Jewish people and Gentiles will worship God together through the Messiah, the Kinsman Redeemer. This is typified by Boaz, the kinsman redeemer and the husband of Ruth, his Gentile bride."ⁱⁱⁱ

Interesting parallels of Shavuot

- Happens 50 days after Passover
- 2 Tablets of Law written in stone given to Moses
- Jesus died on Passover
- Spirit's outpouring 50 days after the sacrifice of the Lamb of God
- Church born on Shavuot and the Law was written in hearts of Jewish believers
- 2 wave loaves; Church is comprised of Jew and Gentile in Jesus
- Ruth is read showing at Barley harvest a Gentile had faith in the God of the Jews
- Their descendant, David, was the ancestor of Jesus
- Jesus is the Bread of Life for all who believe both Jew and Gentile

John 6:32-51 "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

ⁱ <https://www.hope-of-israel.org/sinailaw>

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ A. Berg Israel Messenger Magazine Jewish Awareness Ministries 2013