

God's Appointed Times
Shavuot – Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)

Feast of Weeks/Latter First Fruits – Leviticus 23:15-22, Deuteronomy 16:9-12, Acts 2:1-5

Purpose

Shavuot means “weeks”, and refers to the celebration of the later spring harvest of wheat, which occurs seven weeks/Sabbaths after the Sabbath that preceded the Feast of First Fruits (*Sfirat HaOmer*). The purpose was to give the people an opportunity to bring the first fruits of the second (latter) wheat harvest as an offering of thanks to God. And even though this harvest was technically a late spring harvest, it was also considered the early harvest of wheat in hope of the greater fall harvest (*Sukkot*).

Practice (Old and New Testament)

As we observed previously, the Feast of First Fruits was to be celebrated on *the day after the Sabbath* (v. 11) immediately following the Passover. Then seven additional Sabbaths were to pass and on the day after the seventh Sabbath (7 x 7 days + 1 = 50 days), the Feast of Weeks was to be celebrated. The Greek word for *fifty* is *pentecost* and is where the more common name of this day is derived.

Observation involved bringing the first fruits of the wheat harvest to the Temple/tabernacle in the form of two baked *leavened loaves* of bread and waved before the Lord. This is a striking contrast to the *unleavened matzah* that was so prominent a few weeks before. Another critical part of the observation was the incredible volume of animal sacrifices (burnt offerings) offered as atonements for sin – lambs, bulls and rams – as well as the drink offering. The combination of celebrating God's provision, acknowledging the need for atonement and cleansing, and the hope and confidence of a greater harvest to come – seem to signify or point to *renewal* and *revival*!

In the New Testament therefore, it was no accident or coincidence that the apostles were gathered together on the Feast of Weeks (aka Day of Pentecost) when the Holy Spirit visited them (*Acts 2:1-5*). Just like the presence of the Lord was displayed in the book of Ezekiel (1:4), the Holy Spirit came upon them as a *rushing, mighty wind* and with *tongues of fire*. Indeed, it was only fitting that on the day set aside to celebrate renewal and the hope of a greater harvest, that God should send His Spirit to begin a new revival with the hope and confidence of an even greater harvest (of souls) to come!

Prophetic Fulfillment by Christ (Holy Spirit)

In *James 1:18*, James tells his fellow Jewish believers that God, by His will and through the *word of truth* (Christ), had brought them forth as a kind of *first fruits*. If Christ was the first fruits of the resurrection, then James' readers, the early church (and for that matter, all believers) are the first fruits of an even greater harvest to come – the gathering of believers and Israel unto Himself when He returns! (*Ezekiel 36:27-28*)

Practical Applications, Observations and Challenges

With the close of Shavuot, we come to the ending of the springtime holy day season (see Timeline). It starts with the redemption of *Pesach* (Passover), followed by the resurrection of *Sfirat HaOmer* (First Fruits) and culminates with the revival of *Shavuot* (Weeks/Latter First Fruits). Historically, these three holy days have been fulfilled according to God's calendar of prophetic events. Accordingly, there is now a gap of time during the long, hot summer in which there are no biblical holy days to be fulfilled. The “crops” will grow during the summer months until the arrival of the fall holy days that speak of events just prior to the second coming of Christ.

We are presently in that spiritual and prophetic long, hot summer in which God is growing what will be harvested. Many signs indicate that the summer is quickly drawing to a close and the fulfillment of the fall holidays is about to begin. Are we ready for the return of *Messiah* (Jesus Christ)? And are we working to help bring in the harvest of the latter days? - *Barry Kasdan, God's Appointed Times, p. 62*