

SHAVUOT

Messianic Rabbi Eric Carlson

Shalom and Welcome,

Shavuot in Hebrew literally translates “weeks” in English or “Feast of Weeks”. The Greek term for Shavuot is “Pentecost”, which translates to 50, or 50 days. Shavuot is celebrated seven weeks (49 days) and one day after the first Shabbat occurring during Pesach or Passover, hence 50 days! The Shabbat used to calculate the observance of Shavuot is not the normal weekly Shabbat but the Shabbat like day described in **Leviticus 23:6-7** *“Then the day after the Passover celebration, the Festival of Unleavened Bread begins. This festival to the LORD continues for seven days, and during that time all the bread you eat must be made without yeast. On the first day of the festival, all the people must stop their regular work and gather for a sacred assembly.”* (NLT) The second day of Passover is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and is treated like a Shabbat day which is the day used to begin the count to Shavuot. Shavuot is one of the three “Pilgrim” feasts that Torah requires all Jewish males to celebrate at least one of in Jerusalem annually. The other two “Pilgrim” feast days are Pesach (Passover) and Sukkot (Tabernacles).

There are many traditional customs associated with Shavuot. The ancient sages teach us that it was on Shavuot that God met the Children of Israel (50 days after their exodus from Egypt) on Mt. Sinai and gave Moses the Torah (The first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers). Shavuot is also called the “Feast of First Fruits” celebrating the first fruits of the harvest, **Leviticus 23:15-17** *“From the day after the Sabbath, the day the bundle of grain was lifted up as an offering, count off seven weeks. Keep counting until the day after the seventh Sabbath, fifty days later, and bring an offering of new grain to the LORD. From wherever you live, bring two loaves of bread to be lifted up before the LORD as an offering. These loaves must be baked from three quarts of choice flour that contains yeast. They will be an offering to the LORD from the first of your crops* (NLT). On Shavuot the Israelites would gather in their villages with the first fruits of their crops and take them to the Temple in Jerusalem where they would be met by the Levites who were singing and praising the Lord. The traditional Bible reading for Shavuot is the book of Ruth. The events that happen in Ruth take place at the Harvest (Ruth 2:23), Ruth is the Great Grandmother of the greatest human king Israel ever had, King David (Ruth 4:17), and Ruth’s Love, Commitment, and Loyalty to the Jewish people is symbolic of Israel’s Love, Commitment, and Loyalty to the Torah which was given on Shavuot! The traditional Torah reading for Shavuot is Exodus chapters 19 & 20, which details the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai and the Ten Commandments. It is also customary to eat dairy products at home for Shavuot because Torah is considered God’s milk for our spirit man!

In the New Testament it was on Shavuot that the Ruach HaKodesh, Hebrew for Holy Spirit was given **Acts 2:1-18** *“On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Jesus’ resurrection, the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. Godly Jews from many nations were living in Jerusalem at that time. When they heard this sound, they came running to see what it was all about, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.*

They were beside themselves with wonder. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born! Here we are – Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya toward Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabians. And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!" They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other. But others in the crowd were mocking. "They're drunk, that's all!" they said. Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this. Some of you are saying these people are drunk. It isn't true! It's much too early for that. People don't get drunk by nine o'clock in the morning. No, what you see this morning was predicted centuries ago by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God said, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my Spirit upon all my servants, men and women alike, and they will prophesy.'"

Now let's look at the Messianic Significance or the modern day Biblical celebration of Shavuot. All Feast day celebrations point to and edify Messiah Yeshua, Jesus, the Jewish Messiah. Shavuot or Pentecost is such an exciting Feast and teaches about Yeshua and the Harvest.. The Two loaves of Bread mentioned in Leviticus 23:17 foreshadow the "One New Man" of Ephesians 2:15. I believe the first loaf of bread represents the Jewish People and the second loaf represents the Gentiles or the Nations, the only two people groups God mentions in the Bible. God does not see races, skin colors, or denominations, only Jew and Gentile. The Father's love is so great that he sent His only Son to reconcile the only two people groups God recognizes into the "One New Man". What a Glorious scene we have as our High Priest, Yeshua takes these two loaves of bread that represent us, Jew and Gentile, and waives them before the altar unto our Heavenly Father! As well as the bread offering, a first born yearling lamb was also sacrificed on Shavuot. Today, we too have a First Born Lamb, Yeshua was sacrificed for us and is our First Fruits! The traditional bible reading, the book of Ruth is another foreshadow of the "One New Man". There are only two books in the Bible about women, Ruth and Esther. Esther is a Jew and Ruth is a Gentile and Great Grandmother of the great King David. Esther and Ruth are symbolic of the "One New Man". Ruth's words to Naomi ring true today and model the relationship that should exist between the Church and Israel: ***Ruth 1:16-17 But Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. I will go wherever you go and live wherever you live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. I will die where you die and will be buried there. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!"*** (NLT) Boaz, the Jewish redeemer or messiah who married and saved Ruth the Gentile exemplifies the story of Messiah Yeshua in a supernatural way. Yeshua, the Son of God, came as the redeemer not of one Gentile woman, but of all Gentiles and Jews who come to know and accept Him. Shavuot is also a celebration of the greatest gift given to us after Yeshua, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in Yeshua's words was sent to comfort, teach and give understanding to the Word. ***John 14:25-26 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 16:13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come*** (NLT). The Holy Spirit also gives the gifts of the Spirit: ***1 Corinthians 12:8-11 "To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another he gives the gift of special knowledge. The Spirit gives special faith to another, and to someone else he gives the power to heal the sick. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and to another the***

ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have (NLT).

Now that you have all this information you may be wondering; How do I celebrate Shavuot? Celebrate this wondrous and supernatural Feast Day in the Holy Spirit. Pray, Fast, and ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to do! If you have not been filled with the Holy Spirit, ask The Father in Yeshua's name for an infilling of the Holy Spirit! If you haven't made Yeshua your personal Savior and First Fruits, pray and ask Him to forgive your sins and to enter your heart. Speak and pray in Tongues and preach the word of God! Peter did this 2,000 years ago as it is written in Acts Chapter Two and 3,000 Jews were saved after the great out pouring of the Holy Spirit. Have a house party for Shavuot, serve dairy products for snacks, and invite your saved and unsaved Jewish and Gentile neighbors to your celebration and read aloud from Exodus Chapter 20! Keeping the Biblical feasts always generates conversation and all the feasts point to the main topic of discussion, Yeshua! He is our First Fruits! Celebrate this Biblical Holiday filled with the Holy Spirit and walk in the anointing of the "One New Man". Read the book of Ruth! Take a stand for Israel! Let her people be your people! Pray for Israel, the One New Man, and the return of Jesus! Bless your children. Plant a fruit tree. Reach out to your Jewish friends and neighbors by reciting the traditional blessing for Shavuot with them:

Ba-ruch a-tah A-do-nai E-lo-hei-un Me-lech Ha-O-lam she-he-chi-ya-nu ve-ke-yeh-man-u ve-he-gi-anu lah-zman ha-zeh. Blessed you are O Lord our God, King of the Universe who has let us live and sustained us and brought us to this time.

The focus on this day is to spread the Word and be filled with the Holy Spirit! Don't get wrapped up in traditions but celebrate Shavuot in freedom and joy! The worst thing you could do is nothing! Shavuot is about the harvest. Read what Yeshua said about the harvest: **Matthew 9:37-38** *He said to his disciples, "The harvest is so great, but the workers are so few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send out more workers for his fields."* We encourage you to be a worker and share in the harvest, to Jew and Gentile alike! The harvest is so large and the workers so few! Make a difference today for the Kingdom of God!

Galatians 6:9 *So don't get tired of doing what is good. Don't get discouraged and give up, for we will reap a harvest of blessing at the appropriate time. (NLT)*

Chag Sameach (Happy Holiday)

In His Love,

Messianic Rabbi Eric Carlson