

FEAST OF SHAVUOT

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Date in Hebrew Calendar: 6th-7th of Sivan (May-June)

Scriptural references: Leviticus 23:16; Exodus 23:15-21; Acts Chapter 2.

This feast was to take place exactly seven weeks and one day (the Hebrew word "Shavuot" means "weeks"), or fifty days (the Greek word "Pentecost" means "fifty") after Firstfruits. It was also a harvest festival, when the Israelites were to present an offering of new grain in the temple.

In Israelite tradition it came to be believed that Moses received the Law of Mount Sinai exactly fifty days after Firstfruits or, in other words, on Pentecost (based on Exodus 19:1). Hence, the receiving of the law is also celebrated on that day.

An extremely well known event occurred in New Testament times on the Day of Pentecost-the Holy Spirit fell on the first disciples with tongues of fire and other languages. It took place 50 days after the resurrection of Yeshua (Jesus), and was the birth of the church, or body of Messiah.

Today in Israel the Feast of Shavuot is celebrated by decorations with a harvest theme, and the reading of the account of the giving of the Law (Exodus 19:20). The Book of Ruth is also read, as it is a book of harvest and redemption, ending with the genealogy of King David who-according to tradition-was born and died on Shavuot.

For Christians, Pentecost is the "firstfruits" of the New Testament covenant; the first believers in the church of Jesus Christ. It also celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to be the law written-not on tablets of stone-but on our hearts.