

## Pentecost or Shavuot Overview

There are many names for the Feast of Weeks. It is identified in the Old Testament as the Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34:22) and the Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23:16). As explained in the previous chapter, this feast is referred to as Latter Firstfruits. The Hebrew name is Shavuot (pronounced sha-voo-ote). The Greek name Pentecost is only found in the New Testament (Acts 2:1).

Pentecost is a major festival and has a dual significance: historical and agricultural, just as Passover and Tabernacles. Unlike Passover and Tabernacles, it is observed for only two days (only one in the Reform Movement). Pentecost marks the end of the barley harvest and beginning of the wheat harvest. Counting the days from the second day of Passover to Pentecost is called the “Counting of the Omer” (see previous chapter). The cutting of the omer of the new barley marked the beginning of the counting period; on the fiftieth day, Pentecost is observed. Pentecost is a Greek word meaning fiftieth.

First Pentecost	Pentecost After Christ
The Commandments Given	The Holy Spirit Given
Fifty days from the crossing of the Red Sea	Fifty days from the resurrection of Christ
Law of Yahweh written in Stone	Law of Yahweh written on our hearts
Three thousand slain	Three thousand receive salvation
The letter of the Law	The Spirit of the Law

Pentecost is considered the closing festival of the Passover season (Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:15; Deut. 16:9-10). This day is further referred to as “latter firstfruits” of the spring harvest. The “early firstfruits” (barley) were waved before the Lord during the Feast of Firstfruits (see Passover chapter) and the “latter firstfruits” (wheat) were offered unto the Lord during the Feast of Weeks. It is also referred to as the Day of the Congregation (Deuteronomy 18:16). Another name is Atserret, meaning stop or cease or conclusion of seven weeks of counting. Pentecost is the only festival for which no specific date is given in the Bible. Rather, the people were instructed to count seven weeks “...from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf [omer] of the wave offering (Lev. 23:15). This holiday occurs in the months of May or June on the American calendar. It is the successful conclusion of the first wheat-growing season and the anniversary celebration of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

It is a celebration to reawaken and strengthen personal relationships with God by rededication to the observance and study of the Torah — the most precious heritage. When Yahweh revealed Himself on Mount Sinai, His people heard His

voice proclaiming the Ten Commandments. Then the Israelites pledged their allegiance to Yahweh by saying, "...All that the Lord has hath said will we do and be obedient" (Exod. 24:7).

Passover freed God's people physically from bondage, but the giving of the Torah on Shavuot redeemed us spiritually from our bondage to idolatry and immorality. The Torah contains the Five Book of Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings.