

Rosh Hashanah: The Wedding of the Messiah

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The Bible is a marriage covenant. Both the Tanach (Old Testament) and the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) describe how G-d through the Mashiach (Messiah), the Bridegroom, is in the process of marrying His bride, the believers in Him who will ultimately live and dwell with Him forever.

G-d ordained and established marriage and its divine sanctity in the Torah, the very first book of the Bible, Genesis (Bereishit), when He brought Adam and Eve together to become one flesh (GEN 2:21-24). In doing so, we have a vivid foreshadowing of the Messiah being married to those who would believe upon Him. Let's examine this closer.

Adam is a type of the Messiah Yeshua. Adam was made after the likeness of Yeshua (ROM 5:14). Yeshua (Jesus) was made in the likeness of Adam (PHI 2:8). In fact, Yeshua is called the last Adam (1CO 15:45-47). In GEN 2:21, G-d had a deep sleep fall upon Adam. Sleep is synonymous with death (DAN 12:2; JOH 11:11-14; 1CO 15:51-54; EPH 5:14). The deep sleep that G-d caused to fall upon Adam is a picture of the crucifixion and death of Yeshua, as Messiah ben Joseph. G-d brought a deep sleep upon Adam so He could take a rib from the side of his flesh. This required the shedding of blood. This is a picture of Yeshua who was pierced in the side of His flesh, shedding His own blood when He hung on the tree (JOH 19:34).

From the rib of Adam, G-d made Eve. Likewise, by the death of Yeshua and faith in Him, G-d established the assembly of believers known in Hebrew as the kehilat. The believers in the Messiah, His bride, become wedded to Him by faith. This marriage can be seen in the Tanach (Old Testament) as well as in JER 23:5-6, as it is written, "... this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (JER 23:6). In JER 33:15-16, it is written, "...this is the name wherewith she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (JER 33:16). So from these passages in Jeremiah, we can see that a wedding is taking place. Therefore, by accepting, trusting, and believing in the Messiah, the bride of Messiah, His followers, become one with Him. These people would include both Jew and non-Jews who have lived since Adam and would include Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and Solomon as well as the prophets.

G-d gave the wedding customs, service, and ceremonies to the Jewish people (ROM 3:2; 9:4) to teach us about the Messiah Yeshua (COL 2:16-17). With this in mind, let's examine the biblical wedding ceremony that G-d gave to the Jewish people. **The ancient Jewish wedding ceremony G-d gave to the Jewish people to teach us about the wedding of the Messiah consisted of 12 steps.**

1. The selection of the bride

The bride was usually chosen by the father of the bridegroom. The father would send his trusted servant, known as the agent of the father, to search out the bride. An excellent example of this can be seen in Genesis 24. In this chapter, Abraham (a type of G-d the Father) wishes to secure a bride for Isaac (a type of Messiah) and sends his servant Eliezer (a type of the Holy Spirit [Ruach HaKodesh]) to do this task (Genesis [Bereishit 24:2-4; 15:2). It is the role of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) to convict the world of sin and lead them to G-d (John [Yochanan] 16:7-8). Just as the bride was usually chosen by the father of the bridegroom, so the believers in the Messiah are chosen by G-d (John [Yochanan] 15:16). The bridegroom chose the bride and lavished his love upon her and she returned his love. This can be seen in Ephesians 5:25, as it is written, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself of it." In Genesis (Bereishit) 24, Rebekah (Rivkah) consented to marry Isaac (Yitzchak) even before she ever met him. Today, the believers in the Messiah Yeshua consent to become the bride of Messiah even though we have never seen Him. First Peter (Kefa) 1:8 speaks of this, as it is written, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

2. A bride price was established

A price would have to be paid for the bride. The agreed upon price was called a mohar in Hebrew. Yeshua, being our bridegroom, paid a very high price for His bride, the body of believers. The price He paid was His life. Yeshua considered the price He had to pay for His bride before His death as He went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray in Matthew (Mattityahu) 26:39, as it is written, "And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Yeshua was, in essence, saying, "Father, You have chosen this bride and I have agreed to the terms, but do you realize the price that is being asked for her?" Our mohar, our bride price, was His life. First Peter (Kefa) 1:18-19 says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." In First Corinthians 6:20 it is written, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

3. The bride and groom are betrothed to each other

This is the first stage of marriage known as kiddushin. I have spoken at length of betrothal in Chapter 6, concerning Shavuot. Remember, betrothal is the first of two steps in the marriage process. Betrothal in Hebrew is known as erusin or kiddushin. Betrothal legally binds the bride and the groom together in a marriage contract, except they do not physically live together. Historically, G-d betrothed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai (Jeremiah 2:2; Hosea 2:19-20). Whenever you accept the Messiah into your heart and life, you become betrothed to Him while living on the earth.

4. A written document is drawn up, known as a ketubah. This betrothal contract is called, in Hebrew, a shitre erusin

The ketubah is the marriage contract that states the bride price, the promises of the groom, and the rights of the bride. The word ketubah means "that which is written." The groom promised to work for her, to honor, support, and maintain her in truth, to provide food, clothing, and necessities, and to live together with her as husband and wife. The ketubah was the unalienable right of the bride. The ketubah must be executed and signed prior to the wedding ceremony. The Bible is the believer's ketubah. All the promises that G-d provided for the believers in the Messiah are legally ours, as it is written in Second Corinthians 1:20, "For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen...."

5. The bride must give her consent

As we saw in Chapter 6, which dealt with Shavuot (Pentecost), G-d betrothed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai as stated in Jeremiah 2:2. Israel consented to the marriage proposal from G-d and said, "I do," as it is written in Exodus (Shemot) 24:3. Likewise, the personal application (halacha) to those who desire the Messiah to come into their hearts and lives is to accept His invitation to do so by faith (emunah), as it is written in Romans 10:8-10:

What, then, does it say? The Word is near you in your mouth and in your heart: that is the word about trust [emunah] which we proclaim, namely, that if you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Yeshua is Lord and trust in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be delivered. For with the heart one goes on trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgments and thus continues toward deliverance (Romans 10:8-10 Jewish New Testament Version).

So, even today, to become the bride of Messiah you must still say "I do" to Him.

6. Gifts were given to the bride and a cup called the cup of the covenant was shared between the bride and the groom

The rite of betrothal (erusin) is completed when the groom gives something of value to the bride and she accepts it. The gift most often given today is the ring. When the groom places the ring on the bride's finger, the rite of betrothal is completed. This completed rite is known in Hebrew as kiddushin, which means "sanctification."

The gifts to the bride are symbols of love, commitment, and loyalty. The gift G-d gives to those who accept the Messiah is the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) (John [Yochanan] 14:26; 15:26-27; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22). When Yeshua ascended to Heaven, He gave gifts to men (Ephesians 4:7-8). These gifts included righteousness (Romans 5:17-18), eternal life (Romans 6:23), grace (Romans 5:12,14-15), faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), and other spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1,4). These included wisdom, knowledge, healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, the discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-11), as well as the gifts of helps and administration (1 Corinthians 12:28).

In addition, at this time the cup of the covenant was shared and sealed between the bride and the groom with the drinking of wine. In doing so, the couple drinks from a common cup. The cup is first given to the groom to sip, and then is given to the bride. This cup, known as the cup of the covenant, is spoken of in Jeremiah 31:31-33, as it is written:

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 (Jeremiah [Yermiyahu] 31:31-33).

Yeshua spoke of the cup of the New Covenant (Brit Hadashah) in Luke 22:20.

7. The bride had a mikvah (water immersion), which is a ritual of cleansing

Mikvah is a Hebrew word that means "pool" or "body of water." Mikvah is a ceremonial act of purification by the immersion in water. It indicates a separation from a former way to a new way. In the case of marriage, it indicates leaving an old life for a new life with your spouse (Genesis [Bereishit] 2:23-24; Ephesians 5:31). Immersing in the mikvah is considered spiritual rebirth. The reason is that a mikvah has the power to change a person completely. Concerning the marriage to Israel at Mount Sinai, G-d said in Ezekiel 16:8-9, as it is written, "...I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee... and thou becamest Mine. Then washed I thee with water...." The washing, or immersion, here refers to that of Israel before the people received the Torah when G-d betrothed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai (Exodus [Shemot] 19:14-15). Yeshua spoke to the Pharisee, Nicodemus (Nakdimon), that he must be born anew (immersed) to enter into the Kingdom of G-d (John [Yochanan] 3:1-7). The believers in the Messiah are to be immersed in the name of Yeshua (Acts 19:4). The Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) is the immerser of G-d (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:15-16).

8. The bridegroom departed, going back to his father's house to prepare the bridal chamber

At this point, the bridegroom leaves for his father's house to prepare the bridal chamber for his bride. It was understood to be the man's duty to go away to be with his father, build a house, and prepare for the eventual wedding. Before he goes, though, he will make a statement to the bride. "I go to prepare a place for you; if I go, I will return again unto you." This is the same statement Yeshua made in John (Yochanan) 14:1-3 before He went to His father's house in Heaven, as it is written:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself that where I am, there ye may be also (John [Yochanan] 14:1-3).

9. The bride was consecrated and set apart for a period of time while the bridegroom was away building the house

Before the bridegroom could go and get the bride, the groom's father had to be satisfied that every preparation had been made by the son. Only then could he give permission to the son to go and get the bride. In other words, while the bridegroom was working on the bridal chamber, it was the father who "okayed" the final bridal chamber. The bridegroom did not know when his father would declare the bridal chamber fit and send him to go get his bride. This is exactly what Yeshua was referring to in Mark 13:32-37.

Meanwhile, the bride was to wait eagerly for the return of the bridegroom. In the mind of the bride, the bridegroom could come at any time, even in the middle of the night or at midnight. Therefore, she had to be ready at all times. Yeshua referred to this in Mark 13:32-37 and Matthew 25:1-13. While waiting for her bridegroom to come, the bride had to have thought to herself, "Is he really coming back for me? Is he really going to keep his word?" This was the thought that Peter (Kefa) answered in Second Peter 3:1-13.

10. The bridegroom would return with a shout, "Behold, the bridegroom comes" and the sound of the ram's horn (shofar) would be blown

The time of the return of the bridegroom was usually at midnight. When the bridegroom did come, he came with a shout (Matthew 25:6) and with the blowing of a shofar (trumpet) (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Revelation 4:1). The marriage between the bride and the groom will take place under the chupah or wedding canopy. Since Heaven is a type of chupah, we can see that when Yeshua gives a shout for His bride, accompanied by the blowing of a shofar (trumpet), the marriage between Yeshua and His bride will take place in Heaven.

The marriage ceremony will have a sacred procession. For this reason, the bridegroom (Yeshua) will be led to the chupah first. When the bridegroom approaches the chupah, the cantor chants, "Blessed is he who comes." "Blessed is he who comes" is an idiomatic expression meaning "welcome." Yeshua said that He would not return for His bride until these words were said (Matthew 23:39). The groom is greeted like a king under the chupah. During this time Yeshua, the bridegroom, will be crowned King under the chupah, which is Heaven.

11. He would abduct his bride, usually in the middle of the night, to go to the bridal chamber where the marriage would be consummated. This is the full marriage, known in Hebrew as nesu'in

The bride and groom will go to the wedding chamber, or chadar in Hebrew, where the marriage will be consummated. They will stay in that wedding chamber for seven days, or a week. At the end of the seven days, the bride and groom will come out from the wedding chamber. This can be seen in Joel 2:16.

The word week in Hebrew is shavuah. It means a "seven." It can mean seven days or seven years. An example of the Hebrew word for week (shavuah) meaning seven years can be found in Daniel 9:24, as it is written, "Seventy weeks [shavuah, 490 years] are determined upon thy people..." and in 9:27, "And he [the false Messiah known as the antichrist] shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [shavuah, seven years]...." The week referred to in Daniel 9:27 is known to Bible believers as the tribulation period. The Jewish people understand this time to be the birthpangs of the Messiah known in Hebrew eschatology as the Chevlay shel Mashiach. This is taken from Jeremiah 30:5-7. From this we can see that the believers in the Messiah will be with the Messiah in Heaven for His wedding while the earth will be experiencing the seven-year tribulation period, or the Chevlay shel Mashiach, in Hebrew.

12. Finally, there would be a marriage supper for all the guests invited by the father of the bride

The bride and the groom would be in the wedding chamber for seven days. When the bride and the groom initially went into the wedding chamber, the friend of the bridegroom stood outside the door. All the assembled guests of the wedding gathered outside, waiting for the friend of the bride-groom to announce the consummation of the marriage, which was relayed to him by the groom. John (Yochanan) the Immerser (Baptist) referred to this in John 3:29. At this signal, great rejoicing broke forth (John 3:29). The marriage was consummated on the first night (Genesis [Bereishit] 29:23). The bloodstained linen from this night was preserved. It was proof of the bride's virginity (Deuteronomy [Devarim] 22:13-21).

On the wedding day, the bridegroom is seen as a king and the bride as a queen. During the consummation of the marriage, the bridegroom (Yeshua) will be crowned King over all the earth and the bride (the believers in Yeshua, the Messiah) will live with Him and rule with Him forever. The crowning of the King and the marriage can be seen in Isaiah 62:3-7. At the end of the week (seven-year tribulation, or birthpangs of the Messiah), the marriage supper will take place. The marriage supper will not take place in Heaven. After the marriage, the bride and Groom will return to earth. The marriage supper will be taking place on earth and only the invited guests of the Father of the Groom (G-d the Father) will be present at the banquet meal. This can be seen in Revelation 19:7-16 and 20:4. Yeshua spoke of the marriage supper and the banquet in Luke 12:35-38 and Matthew 8:11. The wedding supper is a theme of the festival of Sukkot, which will be discussed further in a later chapter. During Sukkot, the people were instructed by G-d to build a temporary shelter. One of the things G-d instructed the people to do is eat there. When they eat, they are to set a plate for seven different people. Among the seven whom a plate is set for are Abraham (Avraham), Isaac (Yitzchak), and Jacob (Ya'akov). This is what Yeshua was referring to in Matthew 8:11.

The unbelievers in the Messiah will attend a separate banquet where the fowls of the air will eat their flesh. This can be seen in Revelation 19:17-18.

The home of the bride was Jerusalem and it was the bridegroom who came to the bride to dwell with her. It is from Jerusalem that the believers in the Messiah during the Messianic age, or Millennium, will reign with the Messiah. This can be seen in Revelation 21:1-3; Ezekiel 43:1-2,7; Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-5; and Zechariah 2:10-12.

In concluding this section on the wedding, whenever anyone hears the message of the basar (gospel), it is a wedding proposal by G-d to accept Him and be a part of His bride. G-d desires that we accept His invitation and give Him our response of "I do." In fact, Revelation 22:20 is a proposal by Yeshua Himself to accept Him and be a part of His bride. His message in this verse is "Come." Will you say, "I do" to the Messiah's proposal to you?

The Festival of Pentecost (Shavuot)

And you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest... (Exodus [Shemot] 34:22 NAS).

You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as the Lord your God blesses you (Deuteronomy [Devarim] 16:9-10 NAS).

The Omer: Countdown to Sinai

The period called "the omer" begins the day following the (weekly) sabbath during Passover (Pesach) and continues until Shavuot (Pentecost). The Torah commanded that seven weeks be counted from the time of the offering of the omer, as it says:

You shall also count for yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day when you brought in the sheaf of the wave offering; there shall be seven complete [temimot] sabbaths. You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to the Lord. You shall bring in from your dwelling places two loaves of bread for a wave offering.... On this same day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work. It is to be a perpetual statute in all your dwelling places throughout your generations (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:15-17,21 NAS).

Because of this ritual of counting, the period between Passover (Pesach) and Pentecost (Shavuot) came to be known as the omer. In fact, Shavuot does not have a fixed calendar date in the Bible, but rather falls on the day after the completion of the omer count -- that is, the fiftieth day after the omer offering is brought.

The Ceremony of Counting the Omer

A sharp controversy existed between the rabbis and a variety of Jewish sects over the interpretation of the words "the day after the sabbath" in the verse commanding the counting of the omer. According to the rabbis, the sabbath refers not to the weekly sabbath, but rather to the first festival day of the Passover (Pesach). [This is Nisan 15, the first day of Unleavened Bread, which (G-d designated to be a high sabbath (shabbaton). Because of this, the counting of the omer traditionally begins from Nisan 15.] Various groups, beginning with the first-century Sadducees and continuing with the Karaites of the early Middle Ages, interpreted the word sabbath to mean the weekly sabbath during the Passover (Pesach) season. The implication of this interpretation is that Shavuot (Pentecost), which falls on the day after the omer count of 49 days, would always occur on a Sunday. [By understanding the resurrection of Yeshua, whom we saw as the First Fruits (Bikkurim) of the barley harvest in the previous chapter, we can see from this instance that the Sadducees' interpretation was correct even though most of their doctrine was not biblical (Acts 23:8).] Before the counting of the omer, this blessing is recited: "Praised are You, L-rd our G-d, Ruler of the Universe who has sanctified us with His commandments, commanding us to count the omer." This is followed by the ruler for the day: "Today is the first day of the omer." Weeks are counted as well. For example: "Today is the seventeenth day of the omer, which equals two weeks and three days of the omer." This counting is done at night, as the new day begins at sundown, (6:00 p.m.). Some people recite Psalm (Tehillim) 67 after the counting, since it consists of seven verses and a total of 49 words in Hebrew.

The Historical Understanding of Pentecost (Shavuot)

In the third month after the Jews left Egypt (Mitzrayim), they arrived in the Sinai desert and camped opposite Mount Sinai. Moses (Moshe) was then told by G-d to gather the Israelites together to receive the Torah (Exodus [Shemot] 19:1-8 NAS). The Israelites answered, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do!" In Hebrew, it is Na'aseh V'Nishmah, which means, "We agree to do even before we have listened."

Moses (Moshe) then gave the Jews two days to cleanse themselves, wash their clothes, and prepare to receive the Torah on the third day. At the same time, Moses (Moshe) told them not to come too near Mount Sinai. From early morning, dense clouds covered the peak of the mountain. Thunder and lightning were frequently seen and heard. The sound of the shofar (ram's horn) came very strong, and the top of the mountain was enveloped in fire and smoke. The Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai stood in great awe (Exodus [Shemot] 19:9-19). Moses (Moshe) then went up alone on the mountain, and as he neared the top, a mighty voice announced the Ten Commandments (Exodus [Shemot] 19:20-25; 20:1-21).

Later Development of the Holiday

Pentecost (Shavuot) traditionally has been seen in different ways. One is to see it as the concluding piece of the Passover (Pesach) season. The other is to see it as an independent festival. Because Pentecost (Shavuot) celebrates the revelation of G-d at

Mount Sinai, Pentecost (Shavuot) would seem to be of a clearly independent nature. It is, after all, counted as one of the three pilgrimage festivals (Deuteronomy [Devarim] 16:16). Yet, beginning with the Targum (the Aramaic translation of the Scriptures from the second century of the Christian Era or Common Era (C.E.), known more commonly as A.D.), Pentecost (Shavuot) is referred to in the rabbinic tradition as Atzeret. The word atzeret in Hebrew means "conclusion." The word atzeret is used in the Bible with the festival Shemini Atzeret (Numbers [Bamidbar] 29:35) and seems to mean "remain with Me [G-d] another day." There is a sense, therefore, that atzeret is the final part or completion of a festival. Therefore, Shavuot (Pentecost) is seen as the conclusion to the Passover (Pesach) season. One strong connection between Passover (Pesach) and Shavuot (Pentecost) is the counting of the omer serving as a chain that links the two festivals.

Spiritual Application (Halacha). Because Shavuot (Pentecost) culminates with the counting of the omer for 50 days (which should be done the day following the weekly sabbath during Passover [Pesach]), Shavuot (Pentecost) is called the Atzeret or conclusion to Passover (Pesach). Spiritually speaking (halacha), the believers in the Messiah Yeshua are on a journey out of Egypt (a type of the world's system and its evil ways) in the wilderness (of life), awaiting our time to meet G-d face to face on Mount Sinai (Exodus [Shemot] 3:12). There at Mount Sinai (spiritually), G-d will forever reveal Himself to us in a new and greater way. For all believers in the Messiah Yeshua, the Torah that was given at Mount Sinai represents the Word of G-d, the entire Bible. The believer in Yeshua spiritually experiences Shavuot (Pentecost) when the Holy Spirit of G-d (Ruach HaKodesh) reveals the Word of G-d to him in a deeper and more powerful way, and his understanding and desire for the Bible increases accordingly.

Themes of Shavuot (Pentecost)

New Revelation

One theme of Shavuot (Pentecost) is a new revelation of G-d's will (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:15-16,21). Two notable historical events happened on this day.

1.The giving of the Ten Commandments or the Torah.

It should be noted here that the Hebrew word Torah, commonly translated as "law" in English, does not mean "law," but "instruction or teaching" in the Hebrew language. By understanding the meaning of the Hebrew word Torah, we can see that the Torah was never intended, nor should it ever be understood by non-Jewish people, to mean a code of do's and don'ts. Rather, it should be seen as G-d's instruction and teaching to us so we can understand Him better.

Israel came to Mount Sinai on the third day of the third month (Exodus [Shemot] 19:1). The L-rd visited the people three days later (Exodus [Shemot] 19:10-17). Therefore, the Torah was given by G-d in the third month of the biblical religious calendar, which is the month of Sivan, on the sixth day of this month. This day is exactly 50 days from the crossing of the Red Sea.

Shavuot (Pentecost) is called the season of the giving of the Torah (Z'man Matan Toraseinu) in Hebrew because this is the literal day that G-d revealed Himself to the people of Israel as they stood at the base of Mount Sinai.

2.The giving of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) by G-d.

Yeshua was resurrected on the Feast of First Fruits (Bikkurim), as was seen in the previous chapter. Fifty days after the resurrection of Yeshua, the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) came to dwell in the hearts and lives of all the believers in Yeshua (Acts 1:8; 2:1-18; Luke 24:49; Joel 2:28-29; Exodus [Shemot] 19:16; Isaiah [Yeshayahu] 44:3; Deuteronomy [Devarim] 16:5-6,16; 2 Kings 21:4).

At this point, let's make a comparison.

Shavuot in the Tanach (Ex 19)	Shavuot in the Brit Hadashah (Jer 31:31-33)
- The fiftieth day	- The fiftieth day
- Commandments of G-d written on tablets of stone (Exodus 24:12)	- Commandments of G-d written on our hearts (Jer 31:33; Psalm 40:8; 37:31; Is 51:7; Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:22-27; 2 Cor 3:3; Hebrews 8:10)
- Written by the finger of G-d (Exodus 31:18)	- Written by the Spirit of G-d (2 Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 8:10)
- 3,000 slain (Exodus 32:1-8,26-28)	- 3,000 live (Acts 2:38-41)
- The letter of the Torah	- The Spirit of the Torah (Romans 2:29; 7:6; 2 Cor 3:6)

- Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:11)

- Mount Zion (Romans 11:26;
Hebrews 12:22; 1 Peter 2:6)

Shavuot as a Marriage: A Betrothal Contract

One of the most beautiful images of Shavuot (Pentecost) is that of the marriage between G-d (the groom) and Israel (the bride).

In the biblical wedding service that G-d gave (Romans 9:4; Hebrews 9:1; 1 Chronicles 28:11-12), marriage consisted of two stages. The first stage is betrothal, called erusin in Hebrew. You enter this first stage of marriage as soon as a betrothal contract (a shitre erusin) is made between the two parties. The written contract is called a ketubah. During betrothal, you are legally married, but do not physically dwell with your mate. Betrothal is so legally binding that you cannot get out of it without a divorce, called a get in Hebrew.

In fact, by understanding the Hebrew language, we can see how betrothal is legally binding. To G-d, Hebrew is the pure language (Zephaniah 3:9), and Hebrew will allow us to understand deeper spiritual truths in the Bible that would be more difficult to understand otherwise. The word for betrothal in Hebrew, erusin, comes from the Hebrew verb aras. Aras is related to the Hebrew word asar, which means "to bind." By this, we can see that the Hebrew language communicates to us that betrothal is legally binding.

Messianic Fulfillment. In the New Testament (Brit Hadashah), we can see that Joseph (Yosef) was betrothed to Mary (Miryam) when the angel Gabriel announced to Mary (Miryam) that she would have a son named Yeshua (Jesus), by the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) of G-d, who would be the Messiah (Luke 1:26-35). When Joseph (Yosef) discovered that his betrothed (espoused) wife Mary (Miryam) was pregnant, he decided to get a divorce (get) until the angel of the L-rd changed his mind by appearing to him in a dream (Matthew [Mattityahu] 1:18-20).

Betrothal is mentioned in the Torah in Exodus (Shemot) 21:8; Leviticus (Vayikra) 19:20; Deuteronomy (Devarim) 20:7; 22:23. The second stage of marriage is the fullness or consummation of the marriage. This stage of marriage is called nesu'in.

The Bible tells us in Jeremiah (Yermiyahu) 2:2 that at Mount Sinai, G-d betrothed Himself to Israel, as it is written:

Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of His increase... (Jeremiah [Yermiyahu] 2:2-3)

In Exodus 19, when G-d by the leading of Moses (Moshe) brought the children of Israel to Mount Sinai, G-d betrothed Himself to Israel. On Mount Sinai, G-d gave the Torah to Israel (Exodus [Shemot] 20:1-21). At this time, G-d was making a betrothal contract, a ketubah, with Israel. The ketubah (or written betrothal contract, which is understood to be the Torah) represents "The book of the covenant" (marriage is a covenant) that Moses (Moshe) wrote prior to the revelation at Mount Sinai (Exodus [Shemot] 24:4,7). The Book of the Covenant spelled out mutual obligations of G-d and Israel just as the ketubah spelled out the obligations between husband and wife. So, G-d made a marriage contract with Israel in Exodus (Shemot) 19:3-7.

In Exodus (Shemot) 19:8, Israel accepts G-d's marriage proposal. Israel answered in Exodus (Shemot) 19:8, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do" (Na'aseh V'Nishmah -- we agree to do even before we have listened).

In Exodus (Shemot) 19:2, Israel camped before the L-rd. The word camp in Hebrew is chanah and in this case is singular, while Israel is plural. By this we can see that at that time all Israel had become one. This is also a necessary requirement for marriage (Genesis [Bereishit] 2:24; Ephesians 5:31).

The biblical wedding ceremony that G-d gave requires that the marriage be consummated under a wedding canopy known as a chupah. In Exodus (Shemot) 19:17, Moses (Moshe) brought forth the people out of the camp to meet G-d and they stood at the nether part of the mount. The word nether in Hebrew actually implies that the people stood underneath the mountain. This imagery gives the understanding that the mountain had become a chupah and Israel was standing underneath the mountain or under the chupah, the place where the wedding takes place.

Every wedding will have two witnesses. They are called the friends of the bridegroom. One is assigned to the groom and one is assigned to the bride. In Exodus (Shemot) 19:17, Moses (Moshe) is seen as one of the two witnesses whose job is to escort the bride to meet the groom under the chupah (Mount Sinai). In order for the ketubah, the written contract between the husband and the wife, to be legal in consummating the marriage, it must be signed by the two witnesses, the friends of the bridegroom. Since we can see that Moses (Moshe) was one of the two witnesses, he had to sign the Ketubah (Torah) in order for the full marriage between G-d and Israel to be consummated.

However, when Moses (Moshe) returned from being with G-d on Mount Sinai, he did not sign the Ketubah (Torah). Instead he broke the two tablets (ketubah), which were in his right hand (Exodus [Shemot] 32:19), thus not signing the ketubah which G-d had made with Israel. Therefore, he did not allow Israel to enter into the full marriage. Moses (Moshe) broke the two tablets (ketubah) when he saw that Israel was worshiping the golden calf and thus were being unfaithful in their marriage.

Spiritual Understanding (Halacha). What does the wedding mean in terms of the Messiah Yeshua, and what is the personal application (halacha) to us? Messiah Yeshua is the groom and the believers in the Messiah are the bride. When Yeshua came to the earth almost 2,000 years ago, He came so that whosoever would put their trust and confidence (emunah) in Him would be wedded to Him forever. This would include both Jews and non-Jews (John [Yochanan] 3:16). Because Yeshua came as the suffering Messiah, Messiah ben Joseph, during His first coming, He ascended to Heaven to be with G-d the Father until He returns during His second coming to be the King Messiah, Messiah ben David. Today, Yeshua does not physically dwell with those who trust in Him. Therefore, the believers in the Messiah Yeshua are currently spiritually betrothed to Him. We will enter the full marriage and

physically dwell with Him during the Messianic age known as the Millennium. However, before we can physically dwell with the Messiah during the Messianic age on earth, the wedding ceremony when the believers in the Messiah Yeshua will be wedded to Him must take place. This will take place at the beginning of the tribulation period known in Hebrew as the Chevlay shel Mashiach the birth-pangs of the Messiah.

In the biblical wedding service that G-d gave, after you are married, you have a honeymoon. The honeymoon lasts a week and is known as the seven days of the chupah. Seven days equals a week. In Hebrew, a week means a seven. It can mean seven days or seven years (Daniel 9:24-27; Genesis [Bereishit] 29:27). In Joel (Yoel) 2:16, we see the marriage of the bride (the believers in Yeshua) and the bridegroom (Yeshua) where the bridegroom is going forth from the chamber and the bride out of her closet. The word closet is the Hebrew word chupah, and the chupah here refers to Heaven where the previously raptured (natzal) believers in the Messiah have been enjoying a seven-year honeymoon with Him while the earth was experiencing the tribulation. After the seven-year honeymoon, Yeshua will be returning with His bride to attend the marriage supper (Revelation 19:7-14). Then we will rule and reign with Him physically during the Messianic age known as the Millennium (Revelation 20:4).

The Pouring Out of G-d's Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh)

In Exodus (Shemot) 19:19, a trumpet (shofar) was sounded. The trumpet (shofar) that was sounded grew louder and louder. Exodus (Shemot) 19:19 says, "...and God answered him with thunder [by a voice, KJV]." Exodus (Shemot) 20:18 says, "And all the people perceived the thunder [saw the thunderings, KJV] ..."

In the Midrash, which is a rabbinical commentary on the Scriptures, in Exodus Rabbah 5:9, it says:

When G-d gave the Torah on Sinai He displayed untold marvels to Israel with His voice. What happened? G-d spoke and the voice reverberated throughout the whole world... It says, And all the people witnessed the thunderings [Exodus (Shemot) 20:18].

Note that it does not say "the thunder" but "the thunderings"; wherefore, R. Johanan said that G-d's voice, as it was uttered split up into seventy voices, in seventy languages, so that all the nations should understand...

In Deuteronomy [Devarim] 32:8 it is written, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." In Exodus (Shemot) 1:1-5, we can see that the number of the children of Israel who came to Egypt was 70. Therefore, the 70 voices as interpreted by R. Johanan represented all the nations of the world, based upon Deuteronomy (Devarim) 32:8 and Exodus (Shemot) 1:1-5. So, it was seen that G-d's voice split up into the languages of all the people on the earth to be a witness to them.

In the book *The Midrash Says*, by Rabbi Moshe Weissman, the author wrote:

In the occasion of Matan Torah [the giving of the Torah], the Bnai Yisrael [children of Israel] not only heard Hashem's [the L-rd's] Voice but actually saw the sound waves as they emerged from Hashem's [the L-rd's] mouth. They visualized them as a fiery substance. Each commandment that left Hashem's [the L-rd's] mouth traveled around the entire Camp and then to each Jew individually, asking him, "Do you accept upon yourself this Commandment with all the halochot [Jewish law] pertaining to it?" Every Jew answered "Yes" after each commandment. Finally, the fiery substance which they saw engraved itself on the luchot [tablets].

Messianic Fulfillment. This same experience we just discussed that happened at Mount Sinai also occurred 50 days after the resurrection of Yeshua on the day of Shavuot (Pentecost) almost 2,000 years ago. This experience is also described in Acts 2:1-11 and Hebrews 12:18-19. In describing what happened in Exodus (Shemot) 20:18, Hebrews 12:18-19 says, "And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words...." The word words in Hebrews 12:19 is the Greek word rhema, which means "an individual word." In this passage in Hebrews, we can see the same thing that Rabbi Moshe Weissman understood happened at Mount Sinai in the first Shavuot (Pentecost) in his commentary is exactly what did happen as seen in Hebrews 12:19. It is also what happened during the first Shavuot (Pentecost) following the resurrection of Yeshua. At this Shavuot (Pentecost), the people also were as one (Acts 2:1-2; Exodus [Shemot] 19:2). When G-d poured out His Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) at this time, once again people began to speak in the different languages of the world (Acts 2:1-11). Therefore, we can see that the Shavuot (Pentecost) at Mount Sinai was a rehearsal (miqra) of the Shavuot (Pentecost) that would occur immediately after the resurrection of Yeshua.

The First Trump (Shofar) of G-d

Once again in Exodus 19:19, a trumpet (shofar) was sounded. This trumpet (shofar) grew louder and louder. The Jewish writings understand this to be the first trump (shofar) of G-d. The trumpet blown by G-d at Mount Sinai was understood to be the first of the two ram's horns that were present on Mount Moriah during Abraham's (Avraham) sacrifice of Isaac (Yitzchak) in Genesis 22.

The Jewish people understood that there are three primary trumpets (shofarim) that mark major events in the redemptive plan of G-d. These three trumpets are known as the first trump, the last trump, and the great trumpet. Genesis (Bereishit) 22 is one of the most important Torah readings to the Jewish people. In some Jewish circles, it is read every day of the week except for the sabbath. It is also the primary Torah reading for Rosh HaShanah. The theme of the chapter includes the binding of Isaac on the altar, known in Hebrew as the Akeidah, in addition to the phrase "to be seen." The key verse concerning the phrase "to be seen" is Genesis (Bereishit) 22:14, as it is written, "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh [the L-rd will see or provide]:

as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." Genesis (Bereishit) 22:4 says, "Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off."

Messianic Fulfillment. Yeshua referred to this event which happened to Abraham (Avraham), in John (Yochanan) 8:56, as it is written, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad." What did Abraham (Avraham) see? What took place on Mount Moriah? Abraham (Avraham) was instructed by G-d to take Isaac (Yitzchak) to Mount Moriah and sacrifice him there (Genesis [Bereishit] 22:2). The first and second temples (Beit HaMikdash) were built in Jerusalem (Yerushalayim) on Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1). It was in Jerusalem (Yerushalayim) on Mount Moriah where Yeshua was crucified on the tree. Calvary (Golgotha) was located on Mount Moriah. Abraham (Avraham) in Genesis (Bereishit) 22:4 was looking into the future and seeing that G-d was going to offer up the Messiah to be slain on Mount Moriah at a future time.

G-d called Abraham (Avraham) to sacrifice Isaac (Yitzchak) and offer him as a burnt offering, known in Hebrew as an olah. This is mentioned in Genesis (Bereishit) 22:2-3,6,8,13. A burnt offering (olah) is an offering that is totally consumed. It is freely given and done freely, willingly, and joyfully by both parties involved. The Bible tells us that G-d freely offered up Yeshua joyfully and Yeshua was willing and obedient to His death on the tree (Philippians 2:8). In Isaiah (Yeshayahu) 53:10, it says that it pleased G-d to offer up Yeshua.

When Abraham (Avraham) offered up Isaac (Yitzchak), Abraham believed that G-d would raise Isaac (Yitzchak) from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19). Abraham (Avraham) went willingly, joyfully, and obediently because he believed G-d would raise Isaac (Yitzchak) from the dead. This can be seen in Genesis (Bereishit) 22:5. In this, we can see that Abraham (Avraham) was a type and picture of G-d the Father, and Isaac (Yitzchak) was a type and picture of Yeshua the Messiah. In Genesis (Bereishit) 22:8, Abraham (Avraham) said to Isaac (Yitzchak) that G-d would provide a lamb; Yeshua was the lamb that G-d offered to us (John [Yochanan] 1:29).

This story is an example of the Hebrew expression, "Here now, but not yet." Abraham (Avraham) offered up his only son (Genesis [Bereishit] 22:16; Hebrews 11:17), and G-d offered up His only Son, Yeshua (John [Yochanan] 3:16). Instead of Isaac (Yitzchak), Abraham (Avraham) offered up a ram as the ram was found caught in the thicket (Genesis [Bereishit] 22:13). In the Hebrew writings, the ram represents the Messiah and the thicket stands for the sins of the people. In Genesis (Bereishit) 22:13 where it says "behind him," the Hebrew word is achar, which means afterward or in the future. Therefore, the imagery presented here is that Abraham (Avraham) saw this ram being sacrificed in the future. This is what Yeshua was referring to in John (Yochanan) 8:56.

Once again, relating to the story in Genesis 22, the left horn of the ram that was caught in the thicket (Genesis [Bereishit] 22:13) is called the first trump (shofar) and the right horn of the ram is called the last trump (shofar).

The Three Trumpets (Shofarim) of G-d

The three great trumpets (shofarim) that mark major events in the redemptive plan of G-d are associated with days in the biblical calendar. The first trump is associated with and was blown by G-d on the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost) when G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai (Exodus [Shemot] 19:19).

The last trump is associated with and is blown on Rosh HaShanah. (Rosh HaShanah will be discussed in the next chapter.) The biblical name for Rosh HaShanah is Yom Teruah, which in Hebrew means "the day of the awakening blast." This trump (shofar) is mentioned by the apostle Paul (Rav Sha'ul) in First Corinthians 15:51-53. Because the last trump is only blown on Rosh HaShanah and because the apostle Paul (Rav Sha'ul) specifically mentions that the rapture (natzal) of the believers in Yeshua the Messiah will take place at the last trump, the apostle Paul (Rav Sha'ul) was giving a clear understanding that the rapture of the believers in Messiah will happen on a Rosh HaShanah.

The great trump (shofar HaGadol) is associated with and is blown on Yom Kippur. Yeshua said that He would return at His second coming at the sound of the great trump (Matthew [Mattityahu] 24:30-31). Because the great trump (shofar HaGadol) is only blown on Yom Kippur and because Yeshua said that He would return with the sound of a great trump, Yeshua was stating very clearly that He would return on a Yom Kippur. (This will be discussed in more detail in the chapter concerning Yom Kippur.) Thus, the first and last trump will relate to the ram's horn in Genesis (Bereishit) 22. Again, the first trump (shofar) will be the left horn of the ram and the last trump (shofar) will be the right horn of the ram. In Exodus (Shemot) 19:19, the trumpet (shofar) that was blown by G-d will be the first trump.

The Spiritual Understanding of Shavuot (Pentecost)

Spiritual Application (Halacha). The giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai involved the Aaronic priesthood, the sacrificial system, the tabernacle, the sabbath days, the festivals, the civil and ceremonial laws, and the Ten Commandments (Exodus [Shemot] 19:17,20; 20:1,21-22; 21:1-2,12; 22:1,16; 23:10-11,14; 24:1-8,12,18; 25:1,8-9,40; 28:1; 31:12-18; 32:1; 34:27-28; Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:1-12,15,18-24; 10:1,10; 13:20). These things were given by G-d as a shadow of things to come (Hebrews 10:1) to teach us (Galatians 3:24) about the Messiah Yeshua and the redemptive work of G-d (Colossians 2:16-17). Shavuot (Pentecost) was the birth of the congregation (kehilat) in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). The things given at Mount Sinai were divine and from G-d, but shown in a physical way (Hebrews 9:1) to enable us to understand the spiritual truths that G-d wanted to communicate to us (1 Peter 2:5-9). So G-d gave Israel the covenant, the Torah, the services, the oracles of G-d, and the promises (Romans 9:4-5; 3:2), which were divine (Hebrews 9:1), at Mount Sinai to teach us about the Messiah (Psalm [Tehillim] 40:7). With this in mind, let's look at the spiritual understandings that G-d was communicating to us at Shavuot.

The Two Leavened Wave Loaves (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:15-17)

This was to be a new meal offering to the L-rd (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:16; Numbers [Bamidbar] 28:26). There were to be two wave loaves baked with leaven (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:17). At Passover (Pesach), leaven was absolutely forbidden (Exodus [Shemot] 12:15,19-20) and in the regular meal offering, no leaven was permitted (Leviticus [Vayikra] 2:1,4-5, 11). We saw earlier that leaven represents sin (1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Galatians 5:9). Passover (Pesach) and Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah) spoke of the death and burial of Yeshua who was without sin. Yet on Shavuot (Pentecost), G-d commanded just the opposite. Why?

Shavuot (Pentecost) speaks of the birth of Israel as a nation, as well as the birth of the congregation (kehillat) of believers in Yeshua through the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh). The two loaves speak of Israel and the congregation of believers in the Messiah. Even though both Israel and the congregation (kehillat) of believers in the Messiah Yeshua are chosen by G-d and are holy to Him, sin is still found in Israel and sin still exists in the congregation of believers. Passover (Pesach) and Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah) speak primarily of Yeshua who is without sin, but Shavuot (Pentecost) speaks of Israel and the congregation (kehillat) of believers where sin still exists.

We have just stated that the two wave loaves speak of Israel and the congregation (kehillat) of believers in the Messiah. The number two in the Bible is the number of witness and testimony. For example, two witnesses in the Bible establishes a truth (Matthew [Mattityahu] 18:19-20; Deuteronomy [Devarim] 19:15; John 5:30-33,36-37; Luke 24:44; 1 John 5:8; Revelation 12:11; 11:3). The Ten Commandments were written on two stones (Exodus [Shemot] 31:18). Also, the Ten Commandments are fulfilled by obeying two commandments (Matthew [Mattityahu] 22:34-40). Messiah and His congregation (kehillat) of believers testify of the love, grace, and plan of G-d for the whole world.

The meal offering was to be an offering burned by fire upon the altar. A work of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) is an immersion (baptism) of fire (Luke 3:16). Fire is what G-d uses to burn sin out of the lives of a believer in the Messiah (1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 1 Peter 1:7). The followers of Yeshua are supposed to live a righteous (tzaddik) life before G-d (Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:1-13; Colossians 3:1-13; Romans 8:1-4).

Two-tenths Ephod of Fine Flour (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:17)

The grinding and crushing of wheat produces fine flour. The fine flour speaks of the refining process that our faith goes through as we are conformed to the image of Messiah Yeshua and enter into His trials, testings, temptations, and sufferings (Zechariah 13:9; Romans 5:3-5; 8:29,35-39; 2 Corinthians 1:3-11; 1 Peter 1:7; 4:12-19; Revelation 3:18).

Messianic Fulfillment. Yeshua was the wheat that was planted into the ground (John [Yochanan] 12:24; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38,42-44). As wheat is beaten and refined to become fine flour, so the Messiah was beaten and bruised as He became that fine flour (Isaiah [Yeshayahu] 28:28; 52:14; 53:1-6; Psalm [Tehillim] 81:16; 147:14).

Holy to the L-rd for the Priest (Leviticus [Vayikra] 23:20)

Even though the two wave loaves were leavened, the L-rd counted them holy unto Himself for the priest. As mentioned earlier, the two wave loaves that the priest waved represented both Israel and the congregation (kehillat) of believers in Yeshua. Both the Jewish believers in Yeshua, represented by Israel, and the non-Jewish believers, represented by the congregation (kehillat), consist of individuals who are leaven. We still sin before G-d despite being believers in the Messiah. In spite of this sin, because we are believers in Yeshua and seek to serve and love Him with all our hearts, we are considered holy before G-d (Deuteronomy [Devarim] 7:6-8; 14:2; Luke 1:68,72-75; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; Colossians 1:22-24; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 1:15-16).

A Statute Forever (Leviticus 23:21)

The Holy Spirit came to dwell with the believer in Yeshua forever (John [Yochanan] 14:16-17). Therefore, the followers of Yeshua should have a continual Shavuot (Pentecost) experience; one on a daily basis.

The Feast of Harvest of First Fruits

(Exodus [Shemot] 23:16; 34:22; Numbers [Bamidbar] 28:26)

Shavuot (Pentecost) is called the Feast of Weeks, the Feast of Harvest, or the Feast of the First Fruits. Passover (Pesach) was the barley harvest and Shavuot (Pentecost) was the wheat harvest (Exodus [Shemot] 34:22; Ruth 1:22; 2:23; Joel 1:11).

Israel was called a land of barley and wheat (Deuteronomy [Devarim] 8:7-8; 2 Chronicles 2:15; Jeremiah [Yermiyahu] 41:8). The spring wheat and barley harvest preceded the major harvest in the fall, the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus [Shemot] 23:16; 34:22). Both the spring and the fall harvests were dependent upon the rains coming at the right time. The fall rains are called the early rain. The spring rains are called the latter rain. The early rain is spoken of in Deuteronomy (Devarim) 11:10-15; 28:12; Leviticus (Vayikra) 26:4; Joel 2:23,28-29; and Zechariah 10:1. The rain is prophetic of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) upon people's lives individually as they accept Yeshua into their lives and allow the Holy Spirit to teach and instruct them concerning the ways of G-d. The early rain and the latter rain also teach us about the pouring out of G-d's Holy Spirit in a corporate way upon all flesh. The early rain refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) during Yeshua's first coming and the latter rain refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) during Yeshua's second coming.

As we are seeing, the harvest speaks of the salvation of people. The spring harvest was the beginning of the harvest of people who would come to receive Yeshua as Messiah with the greatest harvest being at the end of this age (Matthew [Mattityahu] 13:39; 9:37-38; Mark 4:29). The fall harvest or the harvest at the end of this present age (Olam Haze) is in the seventh month on the biblical religious calendar. Shavuot (Pentecost) is in the third month. From Shavuot (Pentecost), there are four months until the final harvest in the fall (John [Yochanan] 4:34-35). The fall harvest is the fruit harvest.

Messianic Fulfillment. G-d said that the coming of Yeshua would be like the former and latter rain on the earth (Hosea 6:1-3; Joel 2:23). James (Ya'akov) ties the coming of the L-rd to the early and latter rain (James [Ya'akov] 5:7). Yeshua's death, burial, and resurrection was in the spring of the year; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the resurrection of Yeshua was in the spring of the year; and all those who believed were first fruits of the entire harvest and were a part of the spring harvest. Yeshua's second coming will be in the fall of the year and the greatest number of believers will believe at this time. Yeshua spoke about this great harvest at the end of this present age (Olam Haze) in Matthew (Mattityahu) 13:39; 24:13-14; and Revelation 14:6,15-16.

A Harvest of Freewill Offerings and Rejoicing (Deuteronomy [Devarim] 16:9-11,16-17)

As believers in Yeshua, when we come before G-d we are to give of ourselves, including our time, talents, and money, and present them before Him with a joyful heart (Acts 4:32-37; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9).

The Conclusion of the Spring Festivals

This concludes the study of the spring festivals. We have seen how the spring festivals are applicable in three dimensions. They are historic to the nation of Israel; they are fulfilled in the Messiah Yeshua; and they describe how the individual believer is to walk (halacha) and live his life before G-d. In other words, we can see that G-d has a plan for every individual to willingly come to Him. So the spring festivals were not only historic, but they were also our type and example (1 Corinthians 10:1-2,6,11).

To natural Israel, Passover (Pesach) was their freedom from the bondage of Egypt (Mitzrayim) (Exodus [Shemot] 12). Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah) was the separation from the land of Egypt into the immersion (baptism) into the Red Sea and the Cloud in the wilderness (1 Corinthians 10:1-2). Finally, G-d led the people to Mount Sinai (Exodus [Shemot] 19:1) where they experienced Shavuot (Pentecost) and G-d revealed Himself to the people in a deeper and greater way than He ever did previously.

Messianic Fulfillment. The spring festivals were fulfilled by Yeshua, Messiah, who was our Passover Lamb, died on the day of Passover (Pesach). He was without sin and is the Bread of Life. Yeshua was in the sepulcher on the day of Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah) and He was the kernel of wheat that was buried in the earth. Yeshua arose as First Fruits of the barley harvest, He Himself being the first of those to rise from the dead and receive a resurrected body. Finally, the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) was poured out upon all flesh during the feast of Shavuot (Pentecost) to gather all believers in the Messiah to be G-d's spring harvest in the earth. As these four feasts describe in detail the significant events during the first coming of Messiah when He came as the suffering Messiah, Messiah ben Joseph, to redeem both man and the earth back to G-d following the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, we will find that the fall festivals give us tremendous insight and understanding concerning the events of Yeshua's second coming. Then He will return as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and come back to earth as the kingly Messiah, Messiah ben David, to rule and reign on earth during the Messianic age or the Millennium.

Spiritual Application (Halacha). Every time a person receives Yeshua the Messiah as his own Savior, he spiritually experiences Passover (Pesach). He is to flee Egypt (the world's evil system and ways) and trust (emunah) in the Messiah, the Lamb of God, and allow Yeshua to be the doorpost of his heart. As believers, we are then to seek to live holy lives before G-d and experience Unleavened Bread (Hag HaMatzah). Just as Yeshua arose from the dead, we are to consider our former ways dead to us and experience the newness of life in the Messiah. Once we do this, we can be immersed (baptized) in the Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) and have the power of G-d (the anointing) in our lives. At that time, G-d will begin to take us on a spiritual journey through the wilderness of life.

In the process of experiencing life's bitter disappointments and struggles, if we keep our eyes upon G-d, He will take us from Passover (Pesach) to Shavuot (Pentecost) where He will reveal His ways and His Word, the Bible, in a deeper and progressive way. By keeping our eyes on the Messiah through life's struggles, G-d will not only reveal His Word, the Bible, to us in a greater way, but He also will refine our faith like fine flour just as was done to the wheat. Meanwhile, if we put our entire trust (emunah) in Yeshua through our spiritual journey in the wilderness of life as G-d refines our faith and reveals Himself to us in a greater way, our spiritual journey will not end in the wilderness of life. Instead G-d will take us forward to spiritually experience the fall festivals and our spiritual promised land. It is when we spiritually experience the fall festivals, especially the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), and enter into our spiritual promised land that G-d will anoint our lives for Him in an awesome way as we live and serve Him. We will then experience the greatest joy in our entire lives. Joy unspeakable! This is what the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) is all about. It is called "the season of our joy" and this joy is what we have to look forward to as we read about the fall festivals in the following chapters.