



The Zion Letter

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SHAVUOT / PENTECOST

The Giving of the Law of the Spirit

The Rabbis today and the sages of old (What Christians would call "the Pharisees") teach that Shavuot is about the giving of the Torah/Law, not just the ten commandments, but God's laws, statutes and ordinances on numerous subjects which can be read from Exodus 20 to Exodus 32. The Rabbis focus on the joy of receiving the Torah; however not the sin of failing to keep the Torah and the curses that accompanied my people's promise to keep all of God's Torah and subsequent failure to do so (see Lev 26:3-27:34, Dt 28). I don't want to dwell on failure, but the very first thing the children of Israel did was to convince Aaron to build the golden Calf (see Exodus 32). They were impatient because Moses had been up on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights, three thousand people were put to death for their sin the day Moses came down the Mountain (see Exodus 32:23-28). This coincides with the New Testament verse "**The Letter Kills, but the Spirit gives life**" **2 Cor 3:6**. You see on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2, 3000 souls were added to the Book of Life or Saved (See Acts 2:41). First of all, Pentecost didn't start out a "Christian" holiday. All those Jews, Parthians, Medes, Elamites (Persians), Judeans, Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Cyrenians, Libyans; Jews, Gentile proselytes (converts) to Judaism, Arabs and many more peoples were not in Jerusalem in Acts chapter two for Yeshua/Jesus. They were there to



celebrate an ancient Feast of Moses called Shavuot, or the Feast of Weeks, or what Christians call Pentecost. Pentecost went on to become known as the time of the birth of the Church and time of the giving of the Spirit for most Christian theologians. Still many Christians do not know that Pentecost is really a Jewish holiday dating back to Moses! I will reveal how close the Rabbis and the Bishops were in their interpretation of the Holiday's meaning as we continue!

Were the Rabbis wrong in their interpretation of Shavuot being about the Giving of the Torah/Law?

Well, if you read only the Taanach (Old Testament), as traditional Jews do, then that is what it is about. Exodus 19 says in the Third Month after Passover, after the sons of Israel had departed Egypt on the Lord's Passover, they camped at the base of Mt. Sinai as Moses prepared to climb the Mountain to receive God's commandments. The only holiday that occurs in the third month on the Biblical/Jewish calendar

is Shavuot/Pentecost. We know this because Leviticus 23:5 tells us that Passover begins each year on the 14th day of the first month, known as Nisan today. Then we are told to count seven Sabbaths "**from the morrow after the Shabbat, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count 50 days (Pente-coste, meaning 50th in Greek) to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord.**" Lev 23:15-16. The grain

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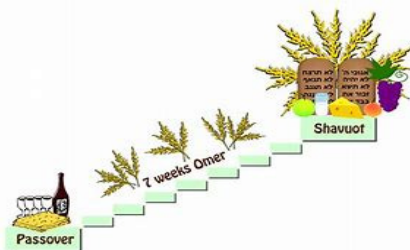
offering on the Sunday (first day of the week) of Passover is called "First Fruits". **First Fruits is a little known holiday on God's calendar, that takes place during Passover, but its importance is great.** You see, Passover takes place in the spring during the barley harvest. So the grain offering on the Sabbath of Passover is called "**The First Fruits Offering**". It was a flat, unleavened cake of barley bread made from the first cutting of grain during the barley harvest which was waved before the Lord in the Temple by the High Priest. In the Bible, leaven is equated with sin, so the First Fruit wave offering at Passover represents Messiah who is sinless (unleavened). It was likely pierced like a piece of Matzah. The unleavened bread of Passover is pierced with holes (as Isaiah tells us for our transgressions, *Isaiah 53:5*) and bruised with burn marks as *Messiah was bruised for our iniquities*. Lastly it was likely striped, as matzo is, for the Scripture says: "**By His stripes we are healed,**" *Isaiah 53:5*. Thus it would appear that the Wave Offering or the First Fruits grain offering of Passover was intended to be a picture or a shadow of the Resurrected Messiah our First Fruits. The Apostle Paul wrote: "**But now Messiah is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the Resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Messiah all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming,**" *1Cor 15:20-23*. If the Church called Resurrection Sunday the

Feast of First Fruits, perhaps more Jews would have understood what Yeshua/Jesus did for them and how He is our First Fruits who rose from the dead, but the Roman Emperor Constantine hated the Jews and changed Passover to Easter at the Council of Nicea. Jews don't understand Easter Sunday; they know it has pagan origins and has nothing to do with Israel or anything Jewish.

Why does this matter? It matters because only the Jewish people possessed a concept of a Messiah; neither the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Romans nor anyone else was expecting someone called Messiah to come; it was and is completely a Jewish concept. Here is some of what Emperor Constantine wrote in his letter to the Nicene Council regarding the establishment of Easter: "**Constantine August, to the Churches, "When the question arose of the most holy day of Easter, it was decreed by common consent to be ex-**

pedient that this festival should be celebrated on the same day by all, in every place. For what can be more beautiful, what more venerable and becoming, than that this festival, from which we receive the hope of immortality, should be suitably observed by all in one and the same, order, and by a certain rule. And truly in the first place, it seemed to everyone a most unworthy thing that we should follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this most holy solemnity, who polluted wretches. Having stained their hands with a nefarious crime, are justly blinded in their minds." "It is fit therefore, that, rejecting the practice of this people we should perpetuate to all future ages the celebration of this rite, in a more legitimate order, which we have kept from the first day of our Lord's passion even to the present times. Let us then have nothing to do with the most hostile rabble of the Jews. We have received another method from the Savior. A more lawful and proper course is open to our most holy religion. In pursuing this course with a unanimous consent, let us withdraw ourselves, my much honored brethren, from that most odious fellowship." (Taken from Constantine's letter on Easter, written to the Nicene Council.)

Not only is he a big Anti-Semite, but he lies several times throughout the document: 1) He says that Easter was kept from the first day of the Lord's Passion. Big Pinocchio here folks. Neither Jesus, nor the Apostles ever celebrated Easter before or after His death, burial, and resurrection. 2) He calls Easter "a more legitimate order and a more proper course for Christians to follow". Here he is changing the Bible and God's prescribed holidays that Jesus Himself celebrated in the New Testament. Jesus celebrated Passover; that's good enough for me or do we have to make up holidays? 3) With one stroke of a pen, Constantine excommunicated the Jewish believers on the false premise that the Jews killed the Messiah. Of course nobody could argue with Constantine on penalty of death. He was just too powerful.



Passover, Pentecost and the Rabbis

Perhaps some of you are wondering why I brought up Passover since we are speaking of Shavuot/Pentecost. It is because we count from the weekly Sabbath on Passover, seven Sabbaths to the day after the 7th Sabbath, also known as Pentecost Sunday (see Mt 28:1). The Jewish Sages also teach that Shavuot/Pentecost is the end of Passover. Since the counting of the days to Pentecost begins on Passover in Judaism, there is a connection between the two holidays. That's why the

Rabbis teach that Pentecost is the end of Passover. This makes sense if you consider that Yeshua/Jesus was crucified, buried and rose from the dead during Passover, then ascended to heaven ten days before Shavuot/Pentecost! But were the Rabbis right about Shavuot/Pentecost being about the giving of the Law? The answer might surprise you. According to Romans 8:2 it says, ***“For the Law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua made me free from the Law of Sin and Death”***. Yes, you read that right, **The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ**. God actually added a new law called the Law of the Spirit of Life in Messiah Yeshua, and like every law (as I learned in law school) this law has elements, conditions or requirements. For example, one must repent of their sins and believe that Yeshua is the Son of God, that He was crucified for our sins, buried for three days and three nights and then rose from the dead on the third day! Then we must walk by the Spirit of God and not by the flesh, for Romans 8:1 says, ***“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Messiah Yeshua, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*** (KJV)

People tend to forget the last part of this verse. What is the

difference between those who walk in the flesh and those who walk in the Spirit? The question really is, what does the Law have to do with the Spirit? Galatians 5:19 says, ***“Now the deeds of the flesh are clear: sexual immorality, impurity, indecency, idolatry, witch-***

craft, hostility, strife, jealousy, rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you that those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.”

and 1 Cor 6:9-11 adds ***“...neither fornicators, nor idolaters, adulterers, those who practice homosexuality, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, slanderers, swindlers, - none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. That is what some of you were.”*** Now re-read Romans 8:1:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Messiah Yeshua, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” As I said, most believers miss that little tag at the end of the verse ***“who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”*** Those who walk after the flesh and do not repent will be condemned and will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Not my words friends, but God Himself tells us that those who walk in the flesh, will not enter the Kingdom of God without real repentance. In Exodus 32:33, God says He will blot those who do not obey His commandments out of His Book of Life. There really is no distinction between what God says there and what Paul/God teaches in Galatians 5 and 1 Corinthians 6. If people, even believers walk in the

flesh committing the deeds of the flesh, such as sexual immorality, adultery, fornication, gluttony, liars, effeminate, sodomy, lying together unnaturally such as woman with woman, thieves, murderers, etc., will not inherit the Kingdom of God. So there really is only one difference between the Shavuot of Moses and the Shavuot of Peter and the Apostles. The difference is that the Law of the Spirit has now been added. The Spirit is not a guarantee that people won't sin, but it does give us the power not to sin; and if we do sin, the Spirit gives us the power to turn from our sins which my ancestors in Moses' day did not have. Hebrews says we have a “better covenant”. We surely do have a better covenant; nevertheless, we shall be judged more harshly if we do not obey God's commandments now that we have the Spirit of Life in Messiah.



Can believers really lose their salvation?

Read Romans 11:17-22. Paul indicates that just as Jews were cut off, Gentiles can be cut off, too. He seems to affirm this when we read the verses we just read about not inheriting the Kingdom of God for grievous sins. About those grievous

sins, I like what my dear friend Pastor Jesse Stines used to preach: “A Christian who tells a lie is not a liar if he/she repents and stop lying. A Christian who steals is not a thief if he/she repents and stops stealing, and so on. It is those who continue in their sin without repentance who should fear being cut out of the Olive Tree or cut out of the Kingdom of God, the Book of Life.

Conclusion

Many believe that Pentecost is a Christian holiday, but it is actually an ancient feast of the Lord, begun during the time of Moses, some 1400 years before Messiah Yeshua walked the earth. What were all those Phrygians, Pamphillians, Romans, Elamites, Capadocians, Cyrenians, Proselytes, Arabs, Jews and Gentiles together from all over the Asia, Africa, Europe and Israel doing in Jerusalem ten days after Yeshua ascended to heaven? They were not there to worship Him, but to celebrate a Feast of Moses. If they had been believers, then 3000 would not have been added that day and Peter would not have preached such a Gospel Message. I have been teaching on walking in the power of

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the Holy Spirit and doing the works of the Apostles, healing the sick, casting out evil spirits, praying for one another, expecting miracles! You can receive power from on high. You can receive anointing and power through a man or woman of God. You can receive power and healing, but in the Great Commission God said to make disciples or followers of all nations. In other words, once we receive power, healing etc. from the man of God, we are meant to watch what he/she does and then do what they do; we are to imitate them. I promise you that if you receive power and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and you pray for people, in time you will see healings and miracles too if you do not give up. Furthermore, if you share the Gospel as somebody shared it with you, you will eventually lead somebody to Yeshua, but you must not give up. God did not give you power that you should park it on a shelf like a trophy. He gave it to you so that you would use it, not hop into every prayer line like a victim, but pray for others as someone who is bold as a lion. So let us remember that Shavuot is about the giving of the Torah/Law as the Rabbis have long taught. Furthermore, it is about God's added law of the giving of the Spirit and the beginning of the times of the Gentiles.

We hope that our teachings are a blessing to you. If so, please feel free to share them and make copies and encourage people to sign up to receive Rabbi Joe's teachings.

In Yeshua's Love,
Rabbi Joe and Dawn Bell

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