



June 2011

Erev Shavuot

Tuesday, June 7



Dear Jewish Jewels Mishpochah,

Shavuot—Feast of the Harvest

In biblical times there were three harvest festivals in the Land of Israel. The first was the Omer festival during Passover, when the offering of barley flour was brought to the Temple. Seven weeks later came Shavuot (Pentecost), the festival of the firstfruits ("bikkurim," pronounced bee-ku-REEM), when the wheat ripened. Finally, there was Sukkot (Tabernacles), the feast of the ingathering with the grape and olive harvests, which concluded the agricultural year.

In God's redemptive plan, two of these three harvest festivals have been fulfilled. Both Passover and Shavuot have to do with grain. During the Passover harvest festival Yeshua was raised from the dead, precisely on "Firstfruits" during the Feast of Unleavened Bread as *"...the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep"* (1 Cor. 15:20). Yeshua was the first of a great harvest of those who will be resurrected from the dead (1 Cor. 15:21-23).

The harvest festival of Shavuot was fulfilled with a great harvest of souls when Yeshua sent the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit, to indwell His followers in an Upper Room in Jerusalem. While 3,000 souls perished 1,500 years earlier at the giving of the Law (Ex. 32:28), 3,000 were saved at the giving of the Spirit (Acts 2:41). These new Messianic Jewish believers were the "firstfruits" harvest of the "Bread of Life" (Yeshua) whom the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob brought forth from the earth.

Shavuot is called the Feast of Harvest (Hag HaKatzir) in Ex. 23:16. Along with Passover and Sukkot, it was one of the three times in the year when the men of Israel were commanded to appear before the Lord—in gratitude, with offerings: *"...none shall appear before Me empty"* (Ex. 23:15).

While both the Feast of Firstfruits and the Feast of Shavuot were celebrated with firstfruit offerings, the offering for Shavuot was unique. The new grain offering to the Lord was to be two loaves of leavened wheat bread: *"You shall bring from your habitations two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah. They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the firstfruits to the Lord"* (Lev. 23:17). These two leavened loaves presented to the Lord at the Feast of Harvest foreshadowed the two groups of people, both sinners by nature, whom the Lord would one day sanctify by sending His Spirit to indwell them. Both loaves (Jew and non-Jew) would be as one in the hands of the priest (Yeshua).

Shavuot marks the official end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the summer (wheat) harvest season. In recent years it has also been referred to as "Atzeret," meaning conclusion. This is due to the fact that Shavuot is considered as the conclusion of the Passover season, and of the seven-week spring harvest. Just as the Israelites were not truly free until they received the Law at Shavuot, showing them how to live, believers are not truly free until they embrace not only redemption through the blood of God's Lamb, but His Word as their standard of living.

Theodor Gaster, in **Festivals of the Jewish Year**, sees Shavuot as a celebration of the end of a spiritual harvest, which began with the deliverance from Egypt and reached its climax with the conclusion of the Covenant. "And just as the ingathering of the crops is the necessary condition of life and prosperity during the ensuing year, so the event at Sinai is the necessary condition of Israel's continuing existence and fortune."

Shavuot is celebrated this year on June 8 & 9, which is fifty days from the Feast of Firstfruits at Passover time. Neil turns 75 on June 10 this year. Since it is a Friday, we will be sponsoring an oneg in his honor after the Shabbat service at Temple Aron HaKodesh. If you are in the area, please come and celebrate God's faithfulness with us.

Since Shavuot is a time of harvest in Israel, the Book of Ruth is traditionally read due to its harvest theme. Wheat and barley (both mentioned in Ruth 2:23) are closely associated in Jewish thought, since they are two of the four species with greatest importance in the land of Israel: wheat, barley, grapes, and olives. As Nogah Hareuveni points out in her book, **Nature in Our Biblical Heritage**, "These four are mentioned throughout the Bible by the names grain (wheat and barley), wine (from grapes), and oil (from olives)." These harvest related foods were included in the words which the Israelites were commanded to write on the doorposts of their houses and upon their gates: "*And it shall be that if you diligently obey My commandments which I command you today...then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil*" (Deut. 11:13-14).

Grain, wine, and oil. God has given us all of them through the Messiah Yeshua. Grain: He is the Bread sent down from Heaven. Wine: His blood on the altar has atoned for our sin. Oil: He has given us His Spirit to enable us to live for Him. We have reaped a harvest of blessing through repenting of our sin, putting our faith in the sacrificial death of the Messiah, and exchanging our sin for His righteousness. "...*unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain [fruit]*" (John 12:24).

The Final Harvest

The harvest of grapes and olives does not occur until Sukkot, at the Feast of Tabernacles. This is the final harvest of the year—the final ingathering which falls during the autumn season, beginning on the 15th day of Tishrei. This harvest feast has yet to be fulfilled by our Messiah. But, be sure of this: Since Yeshua fulfilled the spring and summer harvest feasts as outlined in Leviticus 23, He will also fulfill the final harvest feast. As fall approaches each year, we always think of the somber harvest verse found in Jer. 8:20, "*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!*"

The Bible speaks of a final harvest of souls that has yet to occur. This harvest includes a final judgment. Yeshua told a parable concerning this final harvest called The Parable of the (Wheat and the) Tares. "*The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.*" (Matt. 13:24-25) As you can imagine, both the grain and the tares sprouted and grew. Yeshua advised his concerned followers in this manner: "*Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn'*" (Matt. 13:30).

Who does the wheat represent? The tares? Yeshua gave an explanation: "*He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the*

furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:37-43)!

The world is ripe for judgment. The olive and the grape harvests are yet to be fulfilled. Rev. 14:8 equates wine with wrath in an interesting way, *"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."* This reminded Jamie of a dream she had over twenty years ago. The two of us were on a street corner in New York City. We were dressed in black graduation caps and gowns. A magician was on the corner performing miracle "tricks." A pre-believing Jewish couple, friends of ours from our early days of marriage, were trying to interest us in these "miracles." We smiled at them and said, "We're not interested. We're on our way to graduation." (Jamie understood that Yeshua was about to come for us. We had shared Him with this couple, who showed no interest.) Wheat and tares. The time may be closer than we think. Jamie had not thought about that dream for years. As we attended our son Jesse's graduation from the University of Florida last month, the Lord reminded her of the dream. (Coincidentally, Jesse had just been hired for a job in New York City!?) Will we be in N.Y.C. visiting him right before the return of the Messiah?

Two more verses, from the Tanach, and from the Brit Hadasha, connect judgment and harvest in an unmistakable way: *"Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:12-14).*

"And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe'." (Rev. 14:14-15)

White Harvest Fields

There is GOOD news! We still have time before the final harvest to work in the Lord's harvest fields. We have **TODAY**. It is still wheat harvest time, but the grape and olive harvests are not far off. These are the Days of Elijah, as the song says: "The fields are all white in Your world. And we are the laborers in Your vineyard, declaring the Word of the Lord."

Yeshua commented on the harvest: *"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together" (Jn. 4:35-36).*

We rejoiced recently as we spoke at a church in Gainesville, Florida where a young college girl heard the Gospel for the second time—this time in the context of Passover. When we mentioned that God gave His people a brand new calendar at the Exodus, she realized that God wanted to give her one as well. She received the Lord shortly thereafter, and has begun a brand new life in Yeshua. We rejoice, along with the angels in Heaven and Pastor Mike in Gainesville.

We have mentioned before that in South Florida, the harvest field is especially "white," with so many white-haired senior citizens. Each Friday from 10-11AM we oversee a Shabbat service at a local Independent Living Facility. Our Jewish "congregation" averages over 80 years of age. Pray for us—to have wisdom, anointing, and favor as we gently lead these precious souls to a knowledge of God first, then Yeshua. Most of them have no concept of a God who is living and active today. We are trusting the Holy Spirit to give them supernatural revelation.

Yeshua—Lord of the Harvest

When Yeshua saw the multitudes, like sheep scattered having no shepherd, he was moved with compassion and said, *"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest"* (Matt. 9:37-38). In the Book of Ruth, Boaz is a type of Yeshua, the Lord of the Harvest. He welcomes Ruth, a foreigner, a non-Jew, not only into his harvest field, but into his heart. He provides abundantly for her as she labors in the harvest field. He even provides for her family (Naomi) as she works for him. The heart of Boaz is touched by Ruth's faithfulness and her love for the God of Israel. The heart of Yeshua, our Boaz, is likewise moved. Boaz redeemed Ruth. Yeshua redeemed us. Ruth went from the harvest field to the huppah. So will we!—as the Bride of the Lord of the Harvest.

No Seeds = No Harvest

If a farmer does not plant seeds, there will be no harvest. In like manner, if we as believers do not plant spiritual seeds, there will not be a spiritual harvest. The Bible tells us that the "seed" is the "word of God" (Luke 8:11). Our job as workers in the end-time harvest field is to plant, or water the seed of the Gospel. At times we also have the privilege of reaping where someone else has planted or watered.

While we deeply appreciate your co-laboring with us as we plant, water, and reap in the End-Time Jewish Harvest Field, we also desire to equip you to labor where you live, in your local harvest field. Please take advantage of our offer this month: Gospel tracts designed especially to touch the hearts of Jewish people, from Messianic Literature Outreach. Keep them in your purse, car, office, etc., and be prepared to give them out as the Holy Spirit leads. Gospel tracts are a good way to plant seeds. Sow the seed, then pray. Expect a harvest! *"Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."* (Ps. 126:5-6)

"Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God." (2 Cor. 9:10-11)

Love, in the Lord of the Harvest!

Neil & Jamie

P.S. Please take advantage of this month's offers which have been selected to help you be EFFECTIVE HARVEST WORKERS!

Jewish Jewels Television Airtime Schedule - June 2011

LOCAL TV STATIONS

AIRTIME:	STATE:	CITY:	STATIONS:
TUE 6:00 PM	AK	North Pole	KJNP TV 4
SUN 2:30 PM	FL	Tampa/St. Pete.	WCLF TV 22
THU 11:30 AM	FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45
SUN 1:30 PM	FL	Tallahassee	WVUP TV 45
SAT 10:30 PM	FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61
SUN 2:30 PM	GA	Columbus	WYBU TV 16
SUN 1:30 PM	IA	Dubuque	KFXB TV 40
SUN 1:30 PM	MO	New Bloomfield	KNLJ TV 25
SUN 4:00 PM	NJ/NY	NYC/New Jersey	WMBC TV 63
SUN 2:30 PM	OH	Columbus	GTN TV 23
SUN 12:00 PM	OR	Portland	K26GJ TV 26
SUN 12:00 PM	OR	Salem	K21GX TV 21

SATELLITE NETWORKS (EST)

DirecTV

SUN 3:00 PM Ch. 367 - WHT (World Harvest TV)
SUN 4:00 PM Ch. 93 or 900 - WMBC
SUN 2:30 PM Ch. 376 - CTN (Christian Television Network)
SAT 10:30 PM Ch. 376 - CTN (Christian Television Network)

Dish Network

SUN 2:30 PM Ch. 267 & 9399 - CTN (Christian Television Network)
SAT 10:30 PM Ch. 267 & 9399 - CTN (Christian Television Network)

AT&T Cable

SUN 2:30 PM Ch. 578 - WHT (World Harvest TV)

GTN - Insight Digital Cable

SUN 2:30 PM Ch. 283



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