

The Lesson Taught by Shavuot

Shavuot is the Festival or Appointed Time that celebrates the ingathering of the harvest, the time when the farmers bring in the grain from the fields. Having brought the barley harvest in during the counting of the omer, Shavuot marks the beginning of the wheat harvest. Yeshua used this metaphor to demonstrate the ultimate “harvest,” i.e., the gathering of the elect to saving faith in Yeshua and the “harvest of souls” to be His for all eternity.

Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’?
Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields,
that they are white for harvest. (Jn 4:35)

Even as Yeshua said that the fields were ripe to be harvested, so Shavuot celebrates the ingathering of the nations to worship the One true God. Israel was given the Torah at Shavuot, teaching us that the Torah [the inspired word of the Scriptures] is the means by which the bringing in of the nations would be realized. The Ruach also came on Shavuot to give the disciples of Yeshua special strength and wisdom to begin the ingathering of the nations by proclaiming the good news of the Messiah Yeshua, that He had secured a way for sins to be forgiven, not just for Israel, but for the elect of the whole world.

What are some of the traditional things we do at Shavuot to celebrate this special day that God has given us? First, we meet together, because this is what God said we should do. Speaking of Shavuot, the Torah says “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.” (Lev 3:17)

It is traditional to eat dairy-type foods, and grains at the Festival meal, because God promised to give us a Land flowing with milk and honey, and we celebrate the good harvest He has given. The synagogue is traditionally decorated with green plants and flowers, to remind us of the greenery around Mt. Sinai. Roses are a favorite because of a play on words in Esther 8:14, “And the decree (תִּדְרָה) was proclaimed in Shushan (שֹׁשַׁן).” Thus, the Decree (=Torah) was given “with a Rose” (Shushan means “Rose”). It is traditional to spend erev Shavuot studying Torah to prepare oneself for its “giving” on the festival day. It is also traditional to read Ruth, which combines the two important parts of the Festival: harvest (Ruth was gleaning) and the ingathering of Gentiles (Ruth was a Moabitess).

As we celebrate Shavuot, we are reminded that it looks forward to the coming of Yeshua when He will gather in the harvest He has sown, that is, the harvest of people who have been granted saving faith, thus those who have believed in Him, having been eternally redeemed for His glory and have therefore been granted eternal life and thus the glorious dwelling with Him for all eternity.