

"Think not that I come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Matthew 5:17

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"And When he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" John 10:4

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Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost) - The Giving of God's Commandments and the Giving of God's Ruach ha Kodesh

As we have discovered during our study of the first three Feasts of God (Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits), there is more than one meaning or significance for His Feasts. Shavuot / Pentecost is no different. It is set apart, between the spring Feasts and the fall Feasts. This is a day that all within God's Congregation should know about.

It is unfortunate that in today's "church" more emphasis is placed on the celebrations of christmas and easter then in this Feast of Shavuot...a Feast with enormous significance, not only to Jewish (both believer and non-believer in Messiah) but also to the non-Jewish world within the "church".

The significance of this Feast will become apparent as you continue to read and see how our God is a God of design and planning. We will look at this Feast in the following manner:

- Historical Biblical Account
- Current Celebration
- Prophetic Meaning

Historical Biblical Account

We find the ordinance of Shavuot, given to Moses in Leviticus 23:15 - 22:

"From the day after the day of rest-that is, from the day you bring the sheaf for waving -you are to count seven full weeks, until the day after the seventh week; you are to count fifty days; and then you are to present a new grain offering to ADONAI. You must bring bread from your homes for waving-two loaves made with one gallon of fine flour, baked with leaven-as firstfruits for ADONAI. Along with the bread, present seven lambs without defect one year old, one young bull and two rams; these will be a burnt offering for ADONAI, with their grain and drink offerings, an offering made by fire as a fragrant aroma for ADONAI. Offer one male goat as a sin offering and two male lambs one year old as a sacrifice of peace offerings. The cohen will wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before ADONAI, with the two lambs; these will be holy for ADONAI for the cohen. On the same day, you are to call a holy convocation; do not do any kind of ordinary work; this is a permanent regulation through all your generations, no matter where you live. "When you harvest the ripe crops produced in your land, don't harvest all the way to the corners of your field, and don't gather the ears of grain left by the harvesters; leave them for the poor and the foreigner; I am ADONAI your God."

The ordinance for this Feast is also found in Deuteronomy 16:9 - 12

“You are to count seven weeks; you are to begin counting seven weeks from the time you first put your sickle to the standing grain. You are to observe the festival of Shavu’ot [weeks] for ADONAI your God with a voluntary offering, which you are to give in accordance with the degree to which ADONAI your God has prospered you. You are to rejoice in the presence of ADONAI your God - you, your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, the L’vi’im living in your towns, and the foreigners, orphans and widows living among you - in the place where ADONAI your God will choose to have his name live.”

Our first encounter with this Feast can be found in Exodus 19:1 where the children of Israel are in the wilderness at Sinai -

"In the third month after the people of Isra'el had left the land of Egypt, the same day they came to the Sinai Desert. After setting out from Refidim and arriving at the Sinai Desert, they set up camp in the desert; there in front of the mountain, Isra'el set up camp. Moshe went up to God, and ADONAI called to him from the mountain: "Here is what you are to say to the household of Ya'akov, to tell the people of Isra'el: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart.'These are the words you are to speak to the people of Isra'el." Moshe came, summoned the leaders of the people and presented them with all these words which ADONAI had ordered him to say. All the people answered as one, "Everything ADONAI has said, we will do." Moshe reported the words of the people to ADONAI." Exodus 19:1 - 8

The fourth holy day of Israel is not calendar specific but is based on counting 7 Sabbaths + 1 day from the Feast of First Fruits, during the Passover season, as referenced above in this passage of Leviticus 23:16. The timeframe (Gregorian calendar) in which this Feast occurs is during the months of either May or June, depending on the Jewish calendar.

The term Shavuot is Hebrew meaning weeks.

Other terms associated with this Feast that you will want to be familiar with are:

- **Hag Hashavuot - Feast of weeks**
- **Yom Habikkurim - the day of first fruits: found in Numbers 28:26 ("On the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to ADONAI in your feast of Shavu'ot, you are to have a holy convocation; do not do any kind of ordinary work;.)**
- **Hag Hakatzir - Feast of the harvest: found in Exodus 23:16 (Next, the festival of harvest, the firstfruits of your efforts sowing in the field; and last, the festival of ingathering, at the end of the year, when you gather in from the fields the results of your efforts.)**
- **Sefirah - Hebrew meaning counting.**
- **Omer - Hebrew meaning measure, sheaf**

At the Feast of First Fruits, during the Passover season, (what we know as our Messiah's resurrection) an offering of barley is brought to the Temple. This offering was an omer...a measure of barley. From the time of this offering, 50 days are counted until Shavuot. This period of time is also called the omer.

This Feast is also associated with the summer harvest, specifically the wheat crops and signify the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. Shavuot is a time of thanksgiving for the summer harvest. To show thanksgiving for the summer harvest, a wave offering of two loaves of bread, made with leaven are waved before the Lord. (see above)

At times there would be confusion in that the Feast of Shavuot, would also be known as the Feast of First Fruits, similar to the First Fruits Feast during the Passover season. Please note that even though they may be construed as First Fruits Feasts, the harvest is very different. The harvest during the Passover season was the spring harvest of less hardy crops, such as barley, while the harvest during the summer is for more hardier crops such as wheat. There will be a third harvest Feast that we will look at later called The Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles), that is celebrated during the fall harvest season.

It is at this time in the desert when Moses receives God's Commandments (Torah)...for it is stated that the time is the third month. The first month being when the Passover occurs. Counting forward from First Fruits, seven Sabbaths, we are now in the third month. Even though we do not know the exact day, as we have seen in our study on the Passover, God has a prophetic plan for His Feasts. Shavuot is no different. By faith we believe that God gave His Commandments to Moses on this day. Our God is not a God of chaos or chance...He is a God of purpose.

It is also at this time that the golden calf is being made and worshiped to by the children of Israel. [Exodus 32](#)

The result of this terrible event would result in the death of 3000 for this transgression.

"When Moshe saw that the people had gotten out of control - because Aharon had allowed them to get out of control, to the derision of their enemies - Moshe stood at the entrance to the camp and shouted, "Whoever is for ADONAI, come to me!" All the descendants of Levi rallied around him. He told them, "Here is what ADONAI, the God of Isra'el, says: 'Each of you, put his sword on his side; and go up and down the camp, from gate to gate; and every man is to kill his own kinsman, his own friend and his own neighbor!' The sons of Levi did what Moshe said, and that day three thousand of the people died. Moshe said, "You have consecrated yourselves today to ADONAI, because every one of you has been against his own son and against his own kinsman, in order to bring a blessing on yourselves today." Exodus 32:25 - 29

Please keep in mind that the estimated population of the nation of Israel when they exited Egypt was approximately 2 million people. It is thought that the 3000 mentioned were the leaders who initiated the transgression of the golden calf.

More on this later.

Current Celebration

In order to truly understand the origins of how the current celebration of Shavuot would require an additional article on the history of Israel and what transpired over the centuries. For the purposes of this article, we will include some key historical events in a table format, that will provide the needed perspective in how we got from point A (Historic Biblical account) to point B (current synagogue celebration of this Feast)

Year	Event
	Judea under Roman control
AD66	Judea rebellion against Roman control. Jerusalem was freed from Roman rule for a three year limited independence
AD70	<p>After their defeat, Rome was intent on making an example of Judea, resulting in the destruction of the Temple and expulsion of all Jewish people from their own land. It would become illegal under Roman occupation for a person of Jewish birth to step foot back into Judea, including Jerusalem.</p> <p>Rome made this event a landmark - minting coins with the picture of a woman under a palm tree weeping, and the caption reading "Judea Capta". A monument known as the Arch of Titus was erected near the entrance of the Roman Forum. Romans soldiers carried away all Temple artifacts to Rome.</p> <p>Jerusalem was destroyed. An example for all within the Roman empire to see.</p>
AD 117 - 138	<p>Tension under Roman occupation grew continued until Hadrian became emperor. He had promised to restore Jerusalem and the Temple.</p> <p>Influenced by Greek culture (known as hellenism) led to a change in Hadrian's support for the Jewish people, becoming more anti-Semitic. Followed the actions of Antiochus Epiphanes outlawing circumcision, the Sabbath and synagogue prayers.</p>
AD 132	<p>During the reign of Hadrian, the second Jewish revolt occurred under the leadership of Simon Bar Kochba. Jerusalem was liberated.</p> <p>The Sanhedrin declared Simon Bar Kochba to be the Messiah. A renewed passion flourished under the leadership of Bar Kochba with the belief that the new golden age of Israel would begin. It was thought that he would lead them into the messianic kingdom, rebuilding the Temple.</p>
AD 133 - 135	<p>All was for naught. The Roman Legion counter attacked with over 35,000 foot soldiers. The battle would last for three years.</p> <p>The Jewish uprising was defeated. Bar Kochba was killed at Betar.</p> <p>Rome forbid the burring of the dead Jewish bodies...ultimately desecrating them.</p> <p>In the end...the Jewish death toll was over 500,000; 50 fortresses and nearly 1000 villages were destroyed.</p>
AD 140	The remnant of Israel that remained was without a home. The Sanhedrin assembled in the village of Usha, today knows as Haifa (the third largest city in Northern Israel (on Mount Carmel))

The results of this meeting were to take focus away from the harvest aspects of this Feast and focus on historical events, in order to keep the Feast alive and relevant. It was at this time that emphasis was placed on the giving of Torah to Moses. As stated previously, even though the days are not recorded, the month is the same as found in Exodus 19:1.

As stated previously, the Feast of Shavuot was not given a specific date, as the other Feasts were, but was calculated from the Feast of First Fruits during the Passover season. Today, Shavuot is celebrated on the 6th day of Sivan. Today, the counting begins the day after Passover or what is known as the second day of Passover.

Traditional foods eaten during this Feast are dairy. It is said that the Rabbi's had suggested that Torah is the equivalent to milk and honey for the soul. Some of the dishes include cheese blintzes (cheese rolled in pancakes and fried), kreplach (dough pockets stuffed with cheese).

In keeping with the biblical references found in Leviticus 23, it is also tradition to bake two loaves of hallah (bread).

During this Feast, it is customary within the synagogue to stay up the entire night and study the opening and closing verses of each Sabbath reading, opening and closing passages for each book of the Tenach, and the entire book of Ruth.

In Israel, many will go to the Western Wall where the Temple once stood and recite the Amidah prayer (standing prayer) with its 19 blessings:

Number	Blessing
1	Known as <i>Avot</i> ("Ancestors") this prayer offers praise of God as the God of the Biblical patriarchs, "God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob."
2	Known as <i>Gevurot</i> ("powers"), this offers praise of God for His power and might. This prayer includes a mention of God's healing of the sick and resurrection of the dead. It is called also <i>Tehiyyat ha-Metim</i> = "the resurrection of the dead." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rain is considered as great a manifestation of power as the resurrection of the dead; hence in winter a line recognizing God's bestowal of rain is inserted in this benediction. Except for many Ashkenazim, most communities also insert a line recognizing dew in the summer.
3	Known as <i>Kedushat ha-Shem</i> ("the sanctification of the Name") this offers praise of God's holiness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the chazzan's repetition, a longer version of the blessing called Kedusha is chanted responsively. The Kedusha is further expanded on Shabbat and Festivals.
4	Known as <i>Binah</i> ("understanding") this is a petition to God to grant wisdom and understanding.
5	Known as <i>Teshuvah</i> ("return", "repentance") this prayer asks God to help Jews to return to a life based on the Torah, and praises God as a God of repentance.
6	Known as <i>Selichah</i> , this asks for forgiveness for all sins, and praises God as being a God of forgiveness.
7	Known as <i>Geulah</i> ("redemption") this praises God as a rescuer of the people Israel.
8	Known as <i>Refuah</i> ("healing") this is a prayer to heal the sick.
9	Known as <i>Birkat HaShanim</i> ("blessing for years [of good]"), this prayer asks God to bless the

	produce of the earth.
10	Known as <i>Galuyot</i> ("diasporas"), this prayer asks God to allow the ingathering of the Jewish exiles back to the land of Israel.
11	Known as <i>Birkat HaDin</i> ("Justice") this asks God to restore righteous judges as in the days of old.
12	Known as <i>Birkat HaMinim</i> ("the sectarians, heretics") this asks God to destroy those in heretical sects, who slander Jews and who act as informers against Jews. (**Not part of the original 18 prayers of the Amidah, but added later...a story in itself.**)
13	Known as <i>Tzadikim</i> ("righteous") this asks God to have mercy on all who trust in Him, and asks for support for the righteous.
14	Known as <i>Bo'ne Yerushalayim</i> ("Builder of Jerusalem") asks God to rebuild Jerusalem and to restore the Kingdom of David.
15	Known as <i>Birkat David</i> ("Blessing of David") Asks God to bring the descendant of King David, who will be the messiah
16	Known as <i>Tefillah</i> ("prayer") this asks God to accept our prayers, to have mercy and be compassionate.
17	Known as <i>Avodah</i> ("service") this asks God to restore the Temple services and sacrificial services.
18	Known as <i>Hoda'ah</i> ("thanksgiving") this is a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for our lives, for our souls, and for God's miracles that are with us every day. The text can be found in the next section. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the chazzan reaches this blessing during the repetition, the congregation recites a prayer called <i>Modim deRabbanan</i> ("the thanksgiving of the Rabbis").
19	Known as <i>Shalom</i> ("peace"); the last prayer is the one for peace, goodness, blessings, kindness and compassion. Ashkenazim generally say a shorter version of this blessing at Minchah and Maariv.

Prophetic Meaning

Pentecost is the Greek term for Shavuot and is also known as the "Feast of Weeks" in that it is seven weeks (plus one day) after First Fruits, that Shavuot is celebrated. Along with Passover and Sukkot, it is one of the pilgrimage Feasts that were celebrated in Jerusalem, when the Temple was still standing and are ordained by God as Feasts that are to be kept forever.

Within the New Testament writings, the Feast of Weeks is known as Pentecost. The term Pentecost is of Greek origin and simply means 50th. As we have seen throughout this article, the calculation of Shavuot is seven Sabbaths (49 days) plus 1 day after the last Sabbath, thus equaling 50 days.

The animal sacrifices that were required during the Feast of Pentecost are no longer required in that our Messiah offered Himself a sacrifice, once for the remission of all sin. There is also no sacrifice today in that the Temple is no longer standing. No longer are animal sacrifices required in that our Messiah has brought forth the New Covenant as proclaimed by Jeremiah.

"Here, the days are coming," says ADONAI, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Y'hudah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them," says ADONAI. "For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days," says ADONAI: "I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, 'Know ADONAI'; for all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickednesses and remember their sins no more." Jeremias 31:31 - 34

and by Ezekiel 36:26 - 38...

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit inside you and cause you to live by my laws, respect my rulings and obey them. You will live in the land I gave to your ancestors. You will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will summon the grain and increase it, and not send famine against you. I will multiply the yield of fruit from the trees and increase production in the fields, so that you never again suffer the reproach of famine among the nations. Then you will remember your evil ways and your actions that were not good; as you look at yourselves, you will loathe yourselves for your guilt and disgusting practices. Understand,' says Adonai ELOHIM, 'that I am not doing this for your sake. Instead, be ashamed and dismayed for your ways, house of Isra'el.' "Adonai ELOHIM says, 'When the day comes for me to cleanse you from all your guilt, I will cause the cities to be inhabited and the ruins to be rebuilt. The land that was desolate will be tilled, whereas formerly it lay desolate for all passing by to see. Then they will say, "The land that used to be desolate has become like Gan-'Eden, and the cities formerly ruined, abandoned and wasted have been fortified and are inhabited!" Then the nations around you that remain will know that I, ADONAI, have rebuilt the ruins and replanted what was abandoned. I, ADONAI, have spoken; and I will do it.' "Adonai ELOHIM says, 'In addition, I will let the house of Isra'el pray to me to do this for them: to increase their numbers like sheep - like flocks of sheep for sacrifices, like the flocks of sheep in Yerushalayim at its designated times, in this degree will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am ADONAI.'"

Imagine what the scene during the time of our Messiah, after His resurrection. He spends forty days with His disciples, teaching them of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God:

"After his death he showed himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. During a period of forty days they saw him, and he spoke with them about the Kingdom of God. At one of these gatherings, he instructed them not to leave Yerushalayim but to wait for "what the Father promised, which you heard about from me. For Yochanan used to immerse people in water; but in a few days, you will be immersed in the Ruach HaKodesh!" Acts 1:3 - 5

What a Bible Study that must have been.

Our Messiah was raised on First Fruits and taught his disciples for forty days. His disciples remained in Jerusalem as commanded, waiting on the promise that Yeshua spoke of...Ruach Ha Kodesh (The Holy Spirit).

Further, imagine the anticipation leading up to Shavuot...another Feast is to come, what will happen next?

You have seen Messiah after His death; He brought God's Word alive, teaching of the mysteries that were hidden, regarding the Kingdom of Heaven, and then ascends into the clouds. The buzz, the excitement that must have been going through the Apostles and followers of our Messiah. He specifically instructed them to wait for the promise.

The fulfillment of that promise is recounted in Acts 2:

"The festival of Shavu'ot arrived, and the believers all gathered together in one place. Suddenly there came a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on each one of them. They were all filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and began to talk in different languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak. Now there were staying in Yerushalayim religious Jews from every nation under heaven." Acts 2:1 - 5

It is at this time, during Shavuot, that we identify the birth of the ""church"". Unlike the "church" as we know it today, the first congregation was comprised primarily of Jewish believers. There may have been a few gentiles in attendance, such as the Centurion at the crucifixion, but what is identified as the first "church" was very Jewish. It wasn't until we read about Cornelius in [Acts chapter 10](#) that salvation is truly received by gentiles, some 15 years after this powerful day had occurred.

What many miss regarding the time of this Feast, as it is written above, is that it was a very Jewish beginning to what has been labeled the "church". A movement within the Jewish community would lead to the expansion of the commonwealth of Israel that would include non-Jewish believers in a Jewish Messiah.

The Schofield Study Bible offers an interesting commentary regarding the Feast of Pentecost and the birth of the "church".

"The foreshadowing of the Feast of Pentecost is the descent of the Holy Spirit to form the "church". For this reason, leaven is present, because there is evil in the "church". Observe, it is loaves and not a sheaf of separate growths loosely bound together, but a real union of particles making one homogeneous body. The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost united the separate disciples into one organism. Pentecost took place fifty days after the offering of first fruits, coming at about the beginning of summer. This is the precise period between the resurrection of Christ and the formation of the "church" during Pentecost, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

Therefore, unlike the Passover sacrifice and a sheaf offering that is waved before God, being without leaven (sin), (as our Messiah presented Himself before God), the offering of loaves on Pentecost are not without leaven or sin.

Therefore, there was (and is) no sin or evil in our Messiah, but from its birth, sin and evil are present in the "church", and remain there to this day.

One homogeneous body!!!

This is what the congregation of God is supposed to be.

Even though this body is to be united, there still remains a Jewish identity and a non-Jewish identity of believers in Messiah. In other articles we will be exploring this distinction and thus elaborating on what is meant by the commonwealth of Israel.

Is it that way today?

Far from it. We have a multitude of denominations offering various doctrines. Many are supported by God's Word, while many are not. The "church"es that offer supported doctrine, do not always offer the full scope of God's Word, but rather, pick and choose, what ""church" leaders" deem acceptable.

The birth of the "church" was of unity...for it is written in Acts 2:1 "...they were all with one accord..." There was no division, but, a unity of believers in our Messiah.

How are we able to witness to unbelievers when our house is not in order? (we are trying to remove a speck from our neighbor's eye, while the "church" has a log in its own eye) In talking with many unbelievers, they bring up the many devastating events, that make up "church" history, and ask why? Events such as the holocaust, the plague, the inquisition and the crusades remain a major stumbling block for the "church". Then, you bring in the many denominations and doctrines, and you have an unbeliever who is confused and considers the current "church" structure to be a vast contradiction.

God can and does prepare the way for our path to unbelievers, but why do we still hinder our own progress, by offering contradiction of God's very Word?

Shavuot, like Passover is a Feast of God that is ordained FOR EVER. It did not pass away when our Messiah fulfilled the requirements for the remission of our sin. If anything, Shavuot, like Passover is even more relevant today, in that it is the day in which God fulfilled His promise of sending the empowerment of His Spirit. Therefore, as the body of Messiah, we should be continuing to celebrate this Feast as it is commanded by God...if not for the harvest, but simply it is a commandment that lead to the outpouring of His Spirit, birthing His congregation of believers in Messiah. The fulfillment of His promise was sending His Ruach ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit) identified as the great comforter.

As we have seen with both the giving of God's commandments and the giving of His Ruach ha Kodesh, in neither are we made perfect by either. It is not by Torah or being a congregation member that redeems us.

"Or is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, he is indeed the God of the Gentiles; because, as you will admit, God is one. Therefore, he will consider righteous the circumcised on the ground of trusting and the uncircumcised through that same trusting. Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah." Romans 3:29 - 31

Before our Messiah came and died, the children of Israel were living by faith, looking forward to the coming of Messiah. Today we are living through faith in that what our Messiah did is sufficient for our redemption. In living

through faith, Paul states that we establish God's law...we don't do away with it.

Another Feast of God that is ordained for ever - "a permanent regulation through all your generations, no matter where you live."

Again, a Feast of the Lord has been used for two extremely significant events, that were part of God's plan from the beginning of time. The giving of His commandments as found in Torah and the giving of His Ruach Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit). A truly generous and gracious God is He...

His Word to live by, and the power (through His Spirit) to do so!!!

Conclusion

We have journeyed through God's Word and have seen the relevance of Shavuot, not only to the Jewish people, but also to the "church".

A Feast that unfortunately, the "church" knows very little about, and at times seems to be apathetic towards it.

The significance of this Feast to the "church" is enormous. In essence it is the birth of God's congregation in Messiah "church" under the new covenant described in Jeremiah 31:31, yet they don't seem to care very much about it.

The Pentecostal "churches" of today center on the verses found in Acts 2, yet do little to recognize this Feast as a yearly celebration...unfortunate.

God's Word is very clear about this Feast...it is to be celebrated for ever.

Many in the "church" will say that it is for Israel only. This just isn't true. The fulfillment of this Feast, doesn't mean that it is no longer relevant or meaningful or that you should be do away with it, but rather you should continue to recognize what our God has done by giving us His Holy Spirit.

You have been grafted into the vine, in which the original branches are Israel and therefore have received all the promises associated with the covenants given to Israel. Why not honor God as He has commanded?

It is never too late to start honoring God through His Feasts.

Sources of Reference for this Article
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Scofield Study Bible - King James Version
The Feasts of The Lord - Kevin Howard & Marvin Rosenthal
Wikipedia

Color Type	Indication
Blue	Bible Text
Red	Bible Text referencing Jesus speaking
Black	General Text

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