

Why Shavuot is Important

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MAIN VERSES

[Deuteronomy 16](#) • [Leviticus 23:15](#) • [Leviticus 23:16](#) • [Leviticus 23:17](#) • [Leviticus 23:18](#) • [Leviticus 23:19](#) • [Leviticus 23:20](#) • [Leviticus 23:21](#) • [Leviticus 23:22](#) • [Acts 2](#) • [Jeremiah 31](#) • [Ezekiel 36](#) • [Joel 2](#) • [Romans 8](#) • [Luke 3](#) • [Luke 4](#) • [Isaiah 61](#) • [Luke 5](#) • [Exodus 3](#) • [Exodus 19:6](#) • [Exodus 19:18](#) • [2 Chronicles 7:1](#) • [Acts 2:37](#) • [Acts 2:38](#) • [Luke 24](#) • [Acts 1](#) • [Exodus 32:28](#) • [Genesis 1](#) • [Isaiah 65](#) • [Isaiah 11](#) • [Acts 2:5](#)

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home.

It's amazing that we get bottlenecked whenever we release the kids. The bottle's not big enough for all the volume that needs to go through. So I love it. I absolutely love the community that I'm so blessed to be a part of here. And thank you guys for being a part of that community and my family and being mentors to my children as well.

So Shabbat Shalom, everyone. Welcome to Founded in Truth Fellowship. And this is a very special service for a very special time. Shavuot, also known as Pentecost. We're celebrating this day as a community today with kind of religious services and then tomorrow with a community blast celebration, which is just going to be awesome. I'm so excited about it.

A Harvest Celebration

And the reason why we're celebrating is because this day is a big deal in the Bible. And we're certainly going to talk about that. But the message behind what the biblical authors tell us about this day is not only important to know concerning its occurrence in the Old Testament, because we see this day pop up in the Torah and it's one of the feast days and we see all the things surrounding it. But as Christian believers specifically, what the New Testament says about this day is even more compelling. And so let's just jump in.

In Deuteronomy chapter 16, there are three specific festivals outlined that Israel was commanded to come to Jerusalem to celebrate. These are known as the pilgrimage feasts. We have Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot. Big ones. And Shavuot is the second of the three pilgrimage feasts. And Israel would come and they would bring their tithe of their grain harvest. And not only that, it was a huge processional coming through the mountains and up into Jerusalem.

The Jewish commentary talks about there being this parade of joy as people bring their offerings to the Lord. And I love that, just the visual of that. Just miles off, you see this line, this train of the people of God coming in for one purpose, and that is to praise God for the absolute blessings that he's poured out in their life, specifically the new harvest that he has graciously given to them.

And so it was a day when we come before God to bring tribute and a blessing of gratitude for all he has given to us. And so we're going to read the section where God commanded Israel to celebrate this day and find some neat things, I think.

The Festival of Weeks

So again, first off, Shavuot comes after Passover and first fruits, which was about a month and a half ago. So you would go to Jerusalem for Passover. You'd eat the Pesach sacrifice. And then you would celebrate this day called first fruits, which is the first day of the barley harvest, if you will. It was waved before the Lord. It was the day of God's blessing. And then you would come back to Jerusalem 50 days later to celebrate this day, Shavuot. And here's what the Bible says about that.

Long section of scripture here. I'm sure we're familiar with it. It's [Leviticus 23](#), verse 15. It says this, speaking about going into Shavuot from first fruits. They are a sacred offering to the Lord for the priest. On that same day, you'll proclaim a sacred assembly. Do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come wherever you live. And we have this last part here, verse 22.

So lots to unpack here, but it was a harvest celebration, which meant that Shavuot was a day put in place to remember the greatness and the blessing of our God. It was literally a mini Sukkot, if you will, a mini feast of tabernacles. And you may know this day by another name, or you may have heard it called another name. It's Pentecost, which is the Greek word for 50, essentially, because it occurs 50 days after first fruits. Shavuot means week. Shavuot means

weeks. So in Hebrew, celebration means the festival of weeks. In Greek, it means the festival of 50 days. I think that's neat.

Now, something incredible that would take place, according to [Leviticus 23:15](#) through 22 that we just read, is Israel is commanded to, wherever they live, bring these two loaves of leavened bread made from the newest batch of the grain harvest of the fields. And the priest would take these two loaves that they had made and wave them along with two lambs before the Lord. Thank you, Joe. He gets it. Must have been pretty.

You Shall Wave the Two Lambs

This is the only day of the year. There was a priest in the back that lifted weights and did CrossFit every day. His name was Shlomo. And this was the day that he walked out to make his grand entrance, right? I have a photo here that is from a very neat book based on the writings of the Rambam, but it illustrates what the priest would look like with the two loaves of bread.

So the Mishnah, which was a Jewish document written a few generations after the destruction of the temple, describes the two loaves of bread. They almost look like little altars with little horns coming up. And this is the dimensions taken from Torah. And this is about what they looked like, right? Which is just very interesting. But then the next slide is how it's written that they would wave the lambs.

Who said, oh, that's so cute? Did someone just say that? I am not a farmer. I've had a turtle before. And that's probably about the most exotic animal I've ever had. But I would bet this is not what it looked like. Two little cute lambs just snuggled up while Shlomo makes a lamb sandwich with them with two loaves of bread and begins to sling them around like a ride on Carowinds. This is my favorite, absolute favorite topic to just, you shall wave the two lambs.

Now, there is some debate if the lambs were alive or not, but that's the tradition of what took place. So I think that's neat. So that's your little nerdy moment in the East, wave lambs.

Something Has Become New

Now, the significance of Pentecost comes at its location in the religious calendar of Israel. The thing about the day of firstfruits, which was 50 days ago, the priest would come and it would just be this raw grain that he would hold up and weigh before the Lord. And it's kind of neat. But here at Shavuot, when the grain is brought, it's not brought in its raw state.

See, Shavuot represented a new harvest. And the first of the barley was waved in its natural state. But the second grain here, when it was presented, it wasn't just waved raw. It was crafted into bread before it was waved. And I found that so neat. The bread was given to God as this new offering, this new gift. Something has happened from Passover through firstfruits that has changed everything and has become something new, something in its final form, a new gift symbolized here by the loaves of bread. This was the day the harvest after the freedom from slavery to Egypt was offered to God. And that's just so beautiful and so poetic in a way, I feel.

Party Time for the Community

See, we tend to forget what it was like in the ancient world when you had a festival. We sometimes tend to look at all of the feasts of the Lord through lenses of piety, right? Very ultra-religious and everybody was standing around in mindful prayer and very in a state of worship. And all those things are correct. Absolutely. But these were also festivals for a reason. Because they were festive. At least the majority of them. Festive. Even Yom Kippur, we have writings that talked about how Yom Kippur was a day of joy in the ancient world. People would go out and dance afterwards because of God's absolute unfailing forgiveness and love and atonement. And so, yeah, this was party time for the community.

And we don't have a lot of information about the environment of what Shavuot was like in ancient Israel, but we have historical writings from Pliny the Elder or Josephus from first century and even the Mishnah that tell us it was a crazy party atmosphere for some of these events. Like for Sukkot, the Mishnah tells us that these guys brought in Cirque du Soleil to juggle fire and do gymnastics in and around the temple. It was an absolute blast of joy. It wasn't really Cirque du Soleil, but you get my point. It talks about gymnastics, juggling fire, music, dancing, and I love that. And these events didn't just attract the Judeans, the Jews in the first century. It was a big deal. It was a party for everybody. Gentiles took vacations to travel to Jerusalem for feast days. They had music. They had great food. They had probably arts and crafts, maybe little booths selling stuff. It was a great time of celebration, just as it should have been.

Pliny the Elder makes a comment that Jerusalem was by far the most famous city of the East, not of Judea alone. In other words, Jerusalem was a travel destination. It was a great city, a renowned city across the Roman Empire just because of the atmosphere that was in it. That's so neat to me. Some sources suggest more Judeans traveled and attended Shavuot than Passover. Remember, during the diaspora you have Judeans that are scattered all over the world at this point, right?

A Festival of Joy and Community

It's very rare that the men of Israel out in the diaspora, outside of Judea, made it to maybe one feast day a year. Everybody wanted to be there for Passover at least once in their life. So we get the tradition of "next year in Jerusalem." But some sources suggest that more Judeans actually traveled to Shavuot than Passover due to it being in a better time of travel—it's more festive, summer, so on and so forth. This was a party of joy and basking in the new harvest that God was bringing forth. And not only that, but celebrating the community of God together and what he is doing in it. That's why every year at Shavuot at [our church], we have always attempted to emphasize the religious nature of the day, absolutely, but also made a huge effort to try to foster a fun and joyful atmosphere, especially with the kids. Mini Sukkot, right?

What was that one year we had with those bubbles that you put on your head and run into each other? Bubble soccer! We tried it. I'm not sure if that was a great idea, but we also see this day specifically mentioned in the New Testament.

When Heaven Met Earth

In the New Testament, this day evolves dripping with new meaning and fulfillment. And it happens in Acts chapter 2. The followers of Jesus are where? In Jerusalem. Jerusalem. We'll leave it at that. God, so much debate over that. It's fascinating. They're in Jerusalem during Shavuot because that's where Yeshua told them to be. Stay here, hang out. But that's also what it's supposed to be for the feast days, right? So they're there for Shavuot, but something is different. Instead of the story emphasizing them offering a blessing to God, we see God offering them a blessing from him. He unleashes the power of the Holy Spirit upon all of humanity. This grand gift is now made available.

The book of Acts famously recalls what happens on this day—Pentecost—to the early believers. And it says, Luke is the author of the book of Acts. He has a compelling way of retelling this story so that it truly does emphasize what is happening and why it is so vital to understand. I'm going to read a little bit from the beginning of Acts chapter 2, starting in verse 1, and here's what Luke records:

"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all gathered together in one place, and suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a"—stop here.

What is happening? All of the followers of this rabbi from Nazareth who preached to the coming kingdom of God—when heaven and earth would collide in a way that was only foretold

by the prophets—these followers are celebrating Pentecost, 50 days after Yeshua defeated death, freeing humanity from enslavement to sin and the oppressive powers of the world. And suddenly, a sound like rushing wind comes from heaven. Are you seeing it? Can you imagine? What is happening? Something new is happening here on Shavuot. A new harvest is being brought in. A celebration of God's kingdom is being poured out through the believers. Gifts of speaking in tongues and languages that they didn't natively speak. Fire rushing, wind blowing, fire. But not just any wind. No, a new wind is blowing upon the believers and the followers and those who have pledged their allegiance to King Jesus. This new wind, a new spirit has engulfed the hearts of mankind. And I find that just so amazing.

The Spirit That Transforms

Just like the prophets foretold. [Jeremiah 31](#): something's going to happen with your heart, guys. [Ezekiel 36](#): guys, I'm going to unleash my spirit. And it's going to do something. It's going to fix the problem of your heart. It's going to do heart surgery. The thing that has kept you from living out the kingdom ethic of God this entire time—the thing that has drawn you away from committing your whole heart to living out justice and righteousness, that voice that is constantly trying to sway you—is going to be taken away. And this heart of stone within your chest will be taken out. And I will give you a heart of beating flesh and it will be filled with my spirit. That's [Ezekiel 36](#). I love that prophecy. This is happening. This is happening.

And instead of starting out by jumping into all of the elements—which we'll do here soon about the fire and the rushing wind, as I love doing with the Bible because I think the author is intentionally creating the narrative this way—I want to zoom out from Shavuot. I want us to all get in the helicopter and go up high and just look at the whole story. And I want us to ask the question: Why? Why? We love talking about Pentecost and the Holy Spirit, but why? What's the point?

The point is it was the fulfillment of those prophecies. [Jeremiah 31](#), [Ezekiel 36](#), Joel chapter 2. Joel chapter 2 is specifically quoted in [Acts 2](#) as being fulfilled at this moment. But the thing about Joel chapter 2 is that Joel chapter 2 is about the dreaded day of the Lord—his final victory over the evil in the world. And Luke's saying, yeah, that's being fulfilled right here with Pentecost and the giving of the Holy Spirit. But why? What was the point of this new wind, this new spirit engulfing the hearts of mankind? What is the point and the purpose of God giving us his spirit? What's the point? I mean, that's great. You're going to fix some stuff. That's great. But what's the applicable point?

The Same Spirit

See, Paul says in Romans chapter 8 that this spirit within you is the exact same spirit that resided in Yeshua. It's the same one. It's not just like almost. It's the same one. The same spirit that resided in King Yeshua resides in the believers that call to God and pledge their allegiance. Does that intimidate you all? Can we be honest? So the same spirit that is within the master is within me. Does it look like it?

We're going to follow some clues that Luke gives us in both the Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles—or I should say the acts of Yeshua through the apostles. And Luke was a literary genius. It's incredible with his writings. He's very intentional about the things he wrote. And so I want to show you a trajectory that Luke puts in place in the gospel, in the book of Luke, and how Luke comes back in the book of Acts and revisits the same clues that he set up in the Gospel according to Luke.

So in Luke chapters 3 to 4, John promised that the coming one would baptize in spirit and fire. And then we see the Spirit came at Yeshua's baptism. And then we have Yeshua's mission program from [Isaiah 61](#) being announced in the synagogue. But then in Acts chapter 2, we have these fulfillments. We have Yeshua coming baptizing in the Spirit and tongues of fire. We have the Spirit coming and his promise to believers at their baptism. And then we have a church mission program from [Joel 2](#). Luke is preparing to tell a story of the trajectory of the gospel and how it is spreading, and not by itself, but through those who are allegiant to Yeshua. Luke writes in the book of Acts how the kingdom is carried out by those who follow Yeshua.

Signs and Wonders Multiplied

For example, in the book of Luke, Yeshua's ministry begins with a series of miraculous events. Luke chapter 5: he heals a leper, and then he heals a lame man whose awesome friends lower him down from a roof, right? Well, in Acts, the ministry of the apostles begins how? Through miraculous signs. In fact, the day after Pentecost, Peter's walking around and he heals a lame man.

In the book of Luke, Yeshua's ministry comes in constant conflict with the religious leaders and authorities. In the book of Acts, the apostles' ministry is opposed by the very same establishment.

In Luke, Yeshua is going on to appoint 12 apostles and then 71 later disciples. In Acts, the apostles begin to appoint not only a successor for Judas, but seven deacons. They begin

duplicating things. Immediately he's condemned to death. Stephen is arrested. He's made to stand before the council. He's falsely accused by false witnesses. He's questioned by the high priest and he is executed. And at the climax of Stephen's trial, the moment that he proclaims, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and I see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God"—after this, he's put to death. Do you see what Luke is doing? You see what he's doing? We sometimes forget that he wrote both accounts. It would be likely then that he would try to connect things between them.

Witnesses and Reversals

Another neat example: In Luke, it's the women who are the first witnesses to the resurrection, the first evangelists. Instructed by the angels, and then they go and they tell the disciples, all these guys, "Jesus has been raised from the dead." And they say, "You're crazy, we don't believe you."

In Acts, Peter is delivered from prison, having been arrested after the martyrdom of James and Ezekiel. It seems clear he's about to be executed. Peter is then delivered by an angel in a certain sense, and he is delivered from death as well. The first witness to his deliverance is a woman. And she goes and tells the rest of the disciples, and they tell her she's crazy. "No, you're not. You're wrong. Us guys need to get it together."

You guys ever use those old projectors? I'm not talking about the ones that only had a VGA cable. I'm talking about like the old, old projectors with the light—the overhead projector. And it was great because in school, you'd have little things. And then if you were part of the church, you're the AV team for the church, that was your job.

Layering the Story

Pull the paper, put another one up. And it'd all be like sideways and you'd have to fix it in the middle of worship. And it was humble times going through technology. But you had transparency paper. And you could put like a character. If you told stories in school, you could put like, you could tell a story through pictures with transparency paper. And you could have like one paper that's a background. And then you could put something else on top of it. And because it was transparent, only the characters would show. So you could have like a man on top and he's walking with the background. You could layer the papers up. And I like to think that this is exactly what Luke is doing here with this transparency paper. He's telling a story. And the way that he's writing Acts and Luke, he could have written it however he wanted to. He

could have put details in there, kept details from you. What is written was intentional. Sometimes we just get down and we write just because we write. We don't think, we're not taught to always think about the stories that we write. We just write our thoughts down, get on Facebook. Luke did not do that. He was very intentional about the details and where he put the details.

This is what Luke is doing between Luke and Acts. He's showing that Yeshua is duplicating himself through his believers. The same things that Yeshua was doing are now the things his disciples are doing. The same things that Yeshua went through, now the same things his disciples are going through. Same things he was accused of, now what they're accused of. The same way that he's violently put to death is now the same things his disciples are going through. The spirit within him has now been given to you so that you can be the reflection of Yeshua to the world.

The Spirit Within You

Seems a little bit more intimidating now to have the spirit of Yeshua within you because you're responsible for it. You're responsible to do love that. The day of Pentecost invites us as those who have faith in Yeshua to reciprocate the acts of Yeshua to the world. And we're invited into this mission to change the world using the spirit of Yeshua within us. And that's so appropriate. Because even in the Torah, we see that there was an expectation of Shavuot having something to do with justice and righteousness being laid down as a standard. In [Leviticus 23](#).

So [Leviticus 23](#) is divided up into eight sections in your Bible. It's kind of neat. And one for the Sabbath and the seven festivals or feast days that God gives to Israel. And there's one section that is for Shavuot that we read earlier. Do you remember how it ends? The very last verse or last section, it's in verse 22. And it ends, the whole section of Shavuot ends with this verse right here. I don't know if I've slid for it, but at the very bottom there. It's like, here's how to do everything and here's the sacrifices and here's all that stuff that we really can't relate to a lot today and killing this and waving the lamb sandwich before the Lord. And he says all that, right? And come together.

A Lasting Ordinance

Don't do any regular work because this day is supposed to be dedicated to this atmosphere. And come together as a congregation. And yeah, whatever you do, here's how he's going to end. This shall be a lasting ordinance of all of your generations forever. Oh, and when you reap the

harvest of your land, you need to remember what your job is. This is an opportunity. Do not forget this about the people that are struggling around you. Do not forget of the opportunities and the potential to show my righteousness and my justice to the people in this world that don't always get to feel it as easily as we do. Put justice and mercy first. You are called to be an ambassador of God's justice to the world.

And at Pentecost in the New Testament, that didn't change. It actually gave you the tools to do it. And it also took away the excuse that you would have as a believer to not to. What are the areas in your life today that you know God is pulling you to walk out? You know God is calling you to step into the arena or make the decision or make that commitment to be or help others, to stand in that gap. God has given you his spirit to do what he wants you to do. You don't have any excuses. You ever think about that? We don't have any excuses today for being the image bearers of God to the world if we truly believe that we have his spirit within us?

No More Excuses

What are the excuses that we bring up that could possibly block or overshadow the spirit of the living God that's residing within us? We all find them sometimes though, don't we? Maybe you're facing a battle in your life right now that seems so uphill, so hard, so hopeless, so stressful. And I'm here to tell you today with full confidence that if that's you, it's going to be okay. It's going to be okay. And I don't know what you're facing. It could be something really hard. But I'm here to tell you it's going to be okay. And why would I say that? How do I know it's going to be okay? Because if you're here today and you've pledged your allegiance to the King of Kings, then the scripture says that you've been given the spirit to walk through this. Embrace it. Embrace it.

Pentecost's Signs

Acts chapter 2, verse 5 says, That would have been kind of neat slash weird, kind of scary. What are you talking about language? Galileans? So think Italy, all the way from Rome. We hear them talking in our own tongues the mighty works of God. Again, that probably was an occurrence at the festivals. I'm just saying. Don't condone that. So we have the thematic elements of the story. The sound of rushing wind, fire descending down, and languages. So fire. Where is an instance? So God here is speaking through these tongues of fire. Where is an instance where God speaks through fire?

[Exodus 3](#). The burning bush, right? Moses goes up to the mountain of God and there is a bush talking to him. And God speaks to Moses and he gives him the mandate to bring his people out of Egypt and bring them back to the mountain, Mount Sinai. And then what happens on Mount Sinai? God gives his people the law, the Torah he gives down. For what purpose? to be a kingdom of priests and a light to all nations. [Exodus 19](#), 6 says, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

A Kingdom of Priests

You will be the people that take the justice and the reign and the righteousness and the mercy and the love of my kingdom to the world. Exactly what the mandate of [Genesis 1](#) was to all of humanity. Humanity failed in that specifically because of violence. And then God started anew with Abraham to try to bring humanity back to him. You will be this people. Verse 18 here in [Exodus 19](#). God. Then the Ten Commandments were given. And the people of God accept their vocation to go into the world and be the kingdom of priests like God wanted. And Israel goes out to all the world and they show the world the graciousness of this God that frees slaves and everybody lived happily ever after and the whole world came to the knowledge of God and it went great, right? Right after the Ten Commandments were given. We'll come back to that.

Where else do we see fire descending? Down from heaven. But also, oh, we got Elijah here. We also see it in the tabernacle and when Solomon built the temple. When Solomon built the temple, [2 Chronicles 7.1](#) says, Whenever heaven and earth collide in the Old Testament, these elements tend to present themselves. Again, here's the language that Luke tells us in [Acts 2](#), verse 1. And it's not the temple.

Heaven and Earth Collide

We're starting to see why Luke is emphasizing these details in Acts chapter 2. He wants you to understand that this is a theophany of God's power happening right now, just like and as big of a deal as the burning bush and Mount Sinai and the tabernacle and the temple. And here, his presence feels and engulfs not the tabernacle, not the temple. Here, his presence makes his dwelling among humans in this fullness, encapsulating way. Here, heaven and earth are colliding, not with explosions on a mountain or on an altar. Here, heaven and earth are colliding in the human beings that follow Yeshua.

And this is good news, right? This is great news, but are we walking it out? And now we have people from every nation, a mixed multitude. Luke stops his story in telling you what's

happening and he lists out 15 different nations. Don't take that for granted. Everything is intentional. 15 different nations. Who of you would write out 15 different nations? Everybody came. Done. I think I have a map that was great. So here we go. Meditate on that. Here are these nations and different people that are coming in from all over and they're in Jerusalem. For the word of the Lord will go out from... It's like Luke is trying to show us that people from all over the known world were witnesses to this.

Peter's Sermon

Peter then proceeds to give a sermon explaining that what these men and women are witnessing is the fulfillment of prophecy, that God has done and is doing what he promised to do. And here it is through the person of Yeshua. Here's what he says in [Acts 2](#), verse 37. He says, And they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, brothers, what shall we do? And Peter said to them, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. I love that verse. What does that mean?

Guys, the reality that you have outside these doors is one that you're likely stuck in, you've been brainwashed to think is the only way, you've become slaves to, the reality outside into the world is keeping you hostage from actually fulfilling your mandate, save yourselves from it.

The New Reality of God's Kingdom

Be baptized, repent, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Do not live in that reality anymore because there's a new reality now, and the new reality is called the kingdom of God. And it is here, but not yet, and we live it out fully. 3,000 came to know and pledge allegiance to King Yeshua. 3,000 are raised to life in the kingdom of God.

And how Luke ends his gospel narrative, [Luke 24](#), it ends with Yeshua ascending to heaven. Kind of like how Moses ascended up to the mountain for how many days? 40 days. And how does Luke start Acts chapter one? Talking about how Yeshua came to his disciples over the course of 40 days, telling them about the kingdom of God.

If the author here is tracking with the Sinai story, what happens when Moses came down from the mountain in the Exodus story, right? He's going up in the Ten Commandments and Israel's down below doing their thing, worshiping God, like not doing anything with idols at all. Nope. Moses comes down from the mountain, and everyone's having a party. And Aaron's like, listen,

Moses, listen. See, here's the thing. It just popped out of the fire. Like this golden calf, it made that sound when it popped out of the fire. I don't know. They began worshiping a golden calf. It was a major trend right after coming into this covenant relationship with God.

Then what happens? Because of the sin of the golden calf, God's wrath is poured out through the Levites. [Exodus 32](#), 28, it says, "and on that day, about 3,000 of the people died." So powerful. And these men—they're not from one locality, right? They're all over the map. So where are they going back to after the festival? Back to all nations.

Called to Renovate Creation

Do you guys realize you're called to renovate creation? I say it every single sermon because I think it's the point of the trajectory of the gospel. We're not called to escape this world, guys. God put us here, mankind in creation. He charged us to be his image bearers and he charged the image bearers to be fruitful and multiply and have dominion over creation. We have dominion over the world around us. Renovate it. Don't escape earth to go to heaven. Bring heaven to earth. That was the message of the gospel. And the tool to do that was given on this day.

The story of the Bible starts with creation, a place where God creates to pursue and dwell among humans. He calls them to be his image bearers, to be filled with his justice and righteousness. And [Genesis 1](#) starts out like this: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Can you see that? Can you envision that? Just waiting there. The Spirit, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit hovering over the waters, waiting for the command from God, waiting to participate in the creation account, waiting.

We know the story well. Mankind eats the tree of the knowledge of knowing good and evil, defining it for themselves instead of relying on God's reign and listening to his voice. Quickly, these humans become violent in nature, taking for themselves whatever means they want, living at the expense of others, rejecting God's justice in the world for their own warped sense of reality.

And the story continues until we reach the prophets who foretell that God is going to do something. Let that sink in and compare that to the message of Yeshua. The reason God flooded the earth? Why? People started to enact violence. Violence broke out.

A New Heaven and New Earth

The prophets tell about a time when the orphans and the lonely find families and feel God's love through security and protection given to them. Isaiah speaks of a time when the wolf would lie down with the lamb, where the lion will eat grass. Even the lions are going to go vegan, right? It's kind of strange. Why would the lions need to eat grass? This climax of God's kingdom overtaking the world is a time when no living creature will live at the expense of another. I believe that's what's being said here in the vision. Maybe the lion will have a new digestive system. I don't know, but I think that's the bigger message. Not even the lion will be violent.

How will this happen? Well, God says he's going to bring forth a new creation, a creation so different, so radical in contrast to what we see in the world, so subversive to the world that it can only be described as a new heaven and a new earth according to [Isaiah 65](#) and [Isaiah 11](#). This was the promise given to Israel in the book of Isaiah—about how God would act. God will deal with the things that drive this world to become darker.

And the New Testament authors understood this. They had witnessed the power of Yeshua. And when they went to retell the story of what God had done through him, each one did it in a very unique way in the gospel writings.

And then we come to [Acts 2](#), where there is this Holy Spirit again that pops up. The same Holy Spirit that is on the pages of [Genesis 1](#), waiting to move, waiting to partake in creation, waiting to cultivate God's word manifest. Pentecost is when this same spirit came once again to empower a new creation. Let's start renovating. And it starts with you.

Ambassadors of the Kingdom

And I say all that to say that you're called to be an ambassador of the King of Christ, as Paul says, a follower of Yeshua, an imitator of Jesus. You are the representatives that Yeshua left here on earth to do what he taught us to do—be his hands and feet. Show the world what the kingdom of God looks and feels like. Show the world what it looks like when heaven collides with earth, despite how radical that would look.

The spirit has been given to you to cultivate new creation, and it starts here. How does the book of Acts end? Luke takes us through this trajectory and expands it outward. But in the very last verse of the book of Acts, speaking about Paul, it says, "The gospel went from Judea and Samaria to the uttermost parts of the world." Acts begins with Yeshua telling his disciples that this would happen—Judea, Samaria, then all over the world. This is what it looks like when someone allows the Spirit of God to fill them. Paul, this is it.

The Holy Spirit has been portrayed again and again as a display of power that causes healing and miracles to happen in church services and conviction. And that is absolutely accurate. But this is what it's always meant to lead to—proclaiming the kingdom of God. If this is not proclaiming the kingdom of God, then it's not truly the work of the Holy Spirit.

When a believer—someone who has pledged their life to Yeshua—begins to walk out their life driven by the Holy Spirit, it isn't the same life. It is a life that produces fruit that can only be felt as God's. When a believer sees a circumstance where mercy is needed, guess what a believer does? They run to it. When a believer sees a place in the world that needs the light of God's kingdom, guess what? They pack up. When a believer sees oppression, they speak against it boldly, no matter how unpopular it is. When a believer acts, things happen. That is the book of Acts. It is the acts of Yeshua and his spirit manifest in his followers. This is what it looks like when believers believe and God's kingdom gets expanded.

Are you a believer that believes? Because it should show. The spirit of God grants you the fuel and the tools to proclaim through your words and actions that his kingdom is here and it can be experienced now and forever.

Walking in the Spirit

So what do we see happen in Acts? We see God making his abode on earth, not in a building, but within the humans that have pledged their commitment to him. And what do we see them doing? We see them take it upon themselves to sell everything to help the poor and the needy. They became the place where God's generosity was seen, like little mobile temples, dwelling places of God.

The story of the acts of Yeshua and his spirit is about God calling you—all believers—to step up. Acknowledge your sin, repent, and stand in the new creation. Receive the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead and allow it to raise you to life. Not only that, but to impact the world and show forth God's power.

So as we reflect on Shavuot and what took place in Acts chapter 2, there's really one question to ask. And I ask it to you because I ask it to myself. Does the book of Acts describe you as a follower of Yeshua? And yes, that's going to look different no matter where you go and what circumstances you face.

The book of Acts is modeled and structured to show how the disciples came, obeyed Yeshua, and were given his spirit. In that moment, they begin walking forward. And it wasn't about going out and looking for opportunities to show the love of God. Peter's just walking along.

There's some guy, hey! The opportunities will come if you're walking out in the spirit. Will you be prepared to act on them when the opportunities arrive?

We have become life givers. The Spirit gives us life so that we can give it to others. It's like an infection, a pandemic. And it started in Jerusalem and it went all over the known world, slowly forcing it to evolve to reflect a world that God has manifested.

Do you guys know the Christians were the ones who started hospitals, public hospitals? So the Romans in Rome had hospitals, but they were only for the soldiers, right? To patch them up. Everyone else? Good luck. It was the Christians that said, you know what?

The Spirit of Healing

We need a place that the sick can come, that we can treat, that we can provide some form of healing or comfort. It's the Christians. The medical system we have today is not perfect, but it is ever evolving. I believe—and this may be too audacious—I had to take my wife to urgent care a couple days ago. I believe the reason why I could take her to a place such as that is because of Jesus and the spirit that he gave to his disciples and followers and what they actually did in the world. Insulin pump, pharmacy. Jesus gave me this insulin pump. If it wasn't for Jesus and his spirit, it never would have inspired the followers to go out and pursue a way to provide some form of healing to the communities. I believe that led to the development of insulin.

Now, Matt, how do you know the doctors? They're not even believers. They can still be used by God. Slaves to God's will. I mean, praise God.

The Christians were the ones who went to Ephesus and outside the temple of Diana. That's where, in Rome, abortion was illegal. So what they would do is, if they didn't want their kids—little girls specifically—or if the kid didn't look so great, they'd just walk out into the field, hot sun, animals out in the woods, and they'd just leave the baby there. So it's illegal. Abortion's illegal. Can't do that. Just leave them there. Animals will get them. Maybe a slave trader will pick it up and raise it and it will just die to the elements.

Leaving No Room for Excuses

It was the Christians that went to the fields every day and became—they were the ones who picked up the deceased or what was left of them. They were the ones who picked up the ones that were still alive and took them into their homes and adopted them. That spirit within you doesn't leave you with any excuses—you must act as if Yeshua was there in that moment.

Worship team, you guys can come up as we conclude services today.

Are You Being Called Today?

Acts 2:38: "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord will call.'"

Are you being called today? Is the Holy Spirit speaking to you? The Spirit within you, calling you forward, calling you to step out in this new level of faith today—a new life, one without that sin in your life, one without those thoughts, one without that unforgiveness, one without that thing that just feels so unbearable and heavy on your heart today?

How appropriate today would it be to take the next level of faith into the grace of what Shavuot represents for believers, guys? If you please, stand as we conclude worship.

We have a prayer team off to each side. If you need prayer for anything in your life today, let's take advantage of these prayer warriors that will go before the Father alongside of you. Maybe there's something you're going through right now, and you just need that encouragement. You need to go before the Father. Take advantage of that. Maybe there's something that you feel you need to leave here today and not take with you—you can do that during this time as well.

A Prayer of Gratitude

Alvina Malcano, our Father, our King Father, we thank you for this time. We thank you for this time that you have given to us to remind us about the new harvest that is coming forth, the new blessings that are coming forth, to remind us that you're not done yet, and give us the spirit, Father, to give us the strength to walk out that, to be the renovators of creation. We thank you, Father, for this time of Shavuot, as we have only one meditation, and that is your Son, Yeshua, that you would continue to call us forth to image Him to the world. In the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen.

I'm Matthew Vander Els, and I hope you enjoyed this message. Found in Truth exists to build a community that bears the image of God and lives the redeemed life only Yeshua gives. If this message impacted you or if this ministry has been a blessing to you, we invite you to take part in making sure the message of Yeshua and the truth of God's word continues to reach others. To make sure this happens, you can donate through our online giving portal at foundedintruth.com/give or by texting any amount to 704-275-0752. Don't forget to like and

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