

The Day of Pentecost

The children of Israel came to Sinai in the 3rd month “the same day” (Exo. 19:1), which means the 3rd day of the 3rd month. Moses “went up” on Mt. Sinai “unto God” the following day, which was the 4th of Sivan (Exo. 19:3). The people were to come back to the Mount 3 days after this (Exo. 19:9–19 where verse 10 speaks of *today* – the 5th day of the 3rd month, and *tomorrow* – the 6th day). Thus, they came back for the oral giving of the Law on the 7th day of the 3rd month (Sivan), 1491 BC. As shall be shown, this day is permanently fixed as a Sunday (Lev. 23:4–22) and also as the “Feasts of Weeks” or Pentecost.

Therefore, the Law was first given on what later came to be observed as the Day of Pentecost. As the Feasts were connected to the various harvests, none were to be observed until the Jews entered the Land of Promise (on Abib 10, 1451 BC, Josh. 4:19) *and* began to till it (in 1444 BC, after a 7 year war – Lev. 23:10: “when ye are come into the land” and “reap the harvest”). As the Amalekite attack was prior to this, Moses was about 80 and Aaron 83 years old at the time (Exo. 7:7).

Leaning on oral tradition, the Pharisees (Mat. 15:1-9) took the phrase “the day after the Sabbath” (Lev. 23:11) as meaning to begin counting the 50 days on Abib 16, the day after the “holy convocation” of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:15-16). The result is that the Jews must adjust their calendar, and so do, such that Pentecost will *always* occur on the sixth of Sivan (their third month; *Seder Olam Rabbah*, 5, see H.W. Guggenheimer, 2005 ed., p. 68).

However, the Sadducees clung to the letter of the biblical text and interpreted the phrase literally so that the numbering would always begin on the first *Sunday* after the Passover (i.e., during the week of Unleavened Bread). Thereby, the 50th day (Pentecost) will *always* fall on a Sunday – the seventh of Sivan.

To avoid such confusion, God wisely worded Leviticus 23 such that “holy convocation” and “Sabbath” are judiciously chosen and placed to make clear the intended understanding of these passages. The word “Sabbath” was deliberately selected by the Holy Spirit at 23:11 in order to separate it from “holy convocation” in verses 7-8. In this way the meaning of “Sabbath” in verse 11 may be clearly delineated by following the storyline, which began at verse 9, down to 15-16.

The context of 23:15 & 16 undeniably demands that the weekly Sabbath is the subject before us. Therefore, Leviticus 23:15-16 requires that Pentecost must always fall on a Sunday. By taking the passages literally rather holding to oral tradition, the Sadducees finally got something right (cp. Acts 23:8).

Since the first day of Unleavened Bread was a “holy convocation” wherein no “servile work could be done; it was a day of rest. John 19:31 adds that it was also called a “high day” and, as a no-work day, understood to be one of the eight extra Sabbaths each year (i.e., beyond the regular 52 yearly Saturdays) given in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus.

Finally, Abib 14 in AD 30 astronomically calculates as Thursday, April 4 (Gregorian), and Pentecost of that year was Sivan 7 (May 26) – which was a Sunday!