



The Feasts of Israel

7. Feast of Weeks



The Feast of Pentecost is also known as the Feast of Weeks. This feast day plays a significant role in the “Church” this is the day the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in gathered in the upper room. The Feast of Pentecost given in the book of Leviticus and the Holy Spirit coming upon the church is the fulfillment of the shadow of the Law. In the same way Jesus fulfilled the first three feasts, in His death, burial and resurrection (Passover, Unleavened Bread and First Fruits), the Feast of Weeks is fulfilled in the empowering of the Church to bring the harvest of the Gospel.

¹⁵ ‘And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. ¹⁶ Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. ¹⁷ You shall bring from your dwellings 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. ¹⁸ And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. ¹⁹ Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. ²⁰ The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two

lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. ²¹ And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work *on it*. *It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

²² ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleanings from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: *I am* the LORD your God.’ **Leviticus 23:15-22**

The Biblical Observance

The Meaning of Shavuot

Scripture has three different names for the feast, each name emphasizes a different aspect of its observance. Shavuot in Hebrew means “weeks”.

The Hebrew “Feast of Weeks” **Hag Hashavuot** is designated because there were seven weeks counted from the feast of Firstfruits until this feast was celebrated. (Ex. 34:22, Dt. 16:10; 2 Chr. 8:13).

In Numbers the feast is called **Yom Habikkurim** “Day of Firstfruits” (Num. 28:26). This was the time when the first fruits of the summer Wheat harvest were brought to the Temple. In contrast to the feast preceding, it when the Barley harvest crop is celebrated in feast of “First Fruits”.

The third name, **Hag Hakatir** is “The Feast of the Harvest” (Ex. 23:16) meant the start of the official summer harvest season.

The Talmud and Josephus also called this feast **Atzeret** which meant “conclusion”. Since this was the concluding feast of the first four feasts until the fall feasts.

This feast is also known as **Pentecost** in the New Testament since it celebrated on the “fiftieth” day from the feast of Firstfruits (Acts 2:1)

The Time of Shavuot

Today on the modern Hebrew calendar Shavuot (Weeks) falls on the sixth day of the month of Sivan. There is no calendar date in the Bible, this feast is tied to the feast of Firstfruits since it is commanded to count off fifty days (the day after seven weeks had passed) (Lev. 23:15-16, Dt. 16:9-10).

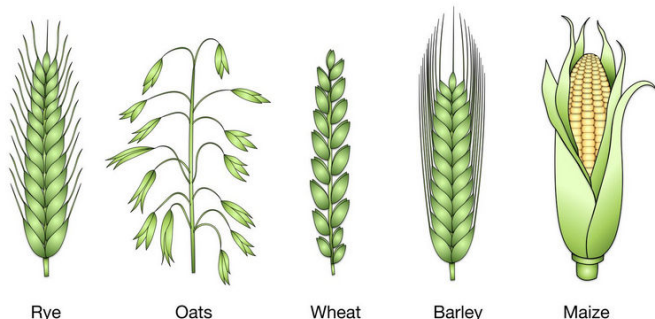
Since Israel is to count fifty days from Firstfruits until Weeks this period is known as Sefirah or “counting”. Firstfruits was known as the *omer* Hebrew for “measure, sheaf” this fifty-day period also became known as “the omer”.

The Record of Shavuot

The portions of the Tanakh (Old Testament) delineate how this feast is to be observed. Leviticus 23:15-21 and Numbers 28:26-31 outline how the Temple portion of the feast is to be observed. The requirements for individual worship were recorded in Deuteronomy 16:9-12.

⁹ “You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from *the time* you begin to *put* the sickle to the grain. ¹⁰ Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. ¹¹ You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who *is* within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. ¹² And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes. Deuteronomy 16:9-12

The Importance of Shavuot



There are seven feasts appointed by the Lord for Israel. Of the seven feasts, Israel is commanded to appear before the Lord for three of the seven. These three feasts were known as solemn feasts, Israelite men were obliged to appear before the Lord at the Temple. Weeks was the second of these three feasts, with Unleavened Bread being the first and Tabernacles being the third. (Ex. 23:14-17; Dt. 16:16; 2 Chr. 8:13; Ex. 34:22-23)

Weeks was a sabbath regardless of whatever day it fell upon. Israel was to do no work on the feast of Weeks (Shavuot) (Lev. 23:21; Num.

28:26).

The Service of Shavuot

According to scripture Israel was forbidden to eat the **barley crop** before the feast of Firstfruits. The same principle is applied here toward the **wheat crop**. All the meal offerings and showbread offerings were not to be made from the “new” wheat crop until the Feast of Shavuot.

In the Temple service the celebration of Shavuot is like the celebration of Firstfruits, the main difference being the offering of the two leavened loaves of “Wheat” bread commanded by the Lord. “You shall bring from your dwellings 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 loaves were not to be burned since Israel was commanded to not burn leaven on the altar. “You shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the LORD made by fire” (Lev. 2:11). Israel was to “wave” the offering before the Lord. The priest was later to consume the offering.

²⁰ The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. Leviticus 23:20

The Modern Observation of Weeks



The biblical celebration of Weeks requires the presence of the Temple on the Temple Mount. Today there is no Temple because of the Roman destruction of A.D. 70, therefore the modern celebration differs from the Biblical celebration.

The destruction of the Temple goes back to Jewish rebellion against Roman occupation. The Roman occupation of Jerusalem began when General Pompey conquered Jerusalem in 63 B.C. Since that time Rome was involved in the rule of Israel. This reached boiling point over 100-years later when the Jews of Jerusalem rebelled against Roman rule.

The Roman general Titus (30-81), son of the emperor Vespasian was sent to crush the rebellion. The rebellion began in A.D. 66 and lasted until A.D. 70 when Titus conquered the city of Jerusalem. In the conquest of Jerusalem, the walls of the city were destroyed along with the Temple by the armies of Rome. Part of one of the walls was used to establish a Roman garrison in the city. According to Josephus over 1 million Jews were killed by the Romans.



The Romans celebrated their victory of Jerusalem by minting coins with the inscription of "Judaea Capta" Judea is pictured as a woman weeping under a palm tree, with another captive standing to the side. Titus became emperor and celebrated his victory with the "Arch of Titus" with scenes depicting his victory over Jerusalem.



One scene depicts the removal of the Golden Menorah from the Temple by the Roman soldiers. Jews were scattered throughout the Roman empire and surrounding lands.

In 117 A.D., the Emperor Hadrian came to the throne, at first things seemed like they would be better for the Jews living in the Roman Empire and Palestine. Things turned for the worst when Hadrian in 130 A.D. insisted on imposing Roman and Greek culture on Jerusalem. Construction on Roman Temple at Mount Moriah began, this caused the Jews to rebel again.

In 132 A.D., under the leadership of *Simon Bar Kochba* the Jews were able to liberate Jerusalem from Roman occupation. The most celebrated rabbi of his day and leader of the Sanhedrin, Rabbi Akiba, declared Bar Kochba the Messiah. Kochba minted coins depicting the Temple to be rebuilt, Jerusalem was filled with Messianic fever as events progressed. The Jews of Jerusalem looked forward to the Messianic age. Hadrian would not have it; he came to Jerusalem with his best troops, the legions of Rome, numbering about 35,000 to crush the rebellion.



In 135 A.D., the Jewish rebellion was destroyed, Bar Kochba was killed at his fortress city of Betar. The Romans killed over 580,000 Jews, and thousands were sold into slavery. The city of Jerusalem was again torn down, and the Jews were forbidden entry into the new city. Hadrian seethed with rage, he wanted to erase the name of the city of Jerusalem and the name of Judea. He renamed the land Palestine after the Philistines and Jerusalem was called Aelia Capitolina. He then erected a temple to Jupiter on Mount Moriah to desecrate the site of the Temple. Hadrian issued a coin with a yoke of oxen plowing the new foundations of the Temple.

Giving Torah

As a result of the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, no longer could the Feast of Weeks be performed. Therefore, the Sanhedrin in A.D. 140 met in the village of Usha near modern Haifa, to decide what to do? They determined Shavuot (Weeks) was the day the Torah was given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Shavuot became known as *Zeman Mattan Toranu*, “the Time of the Giving of our Law”.

Synagogue

To celebrate Shavuot today, beautiful floral arrangements are hung in synagogues. Embroidered green curtains are hung over ark where the Torah scroll is stored. These are meant to be reminders that Mt. Sinai was once covered with green trees and grass.

Ancient scripture readings are read which reflect on the glorious presence of the Lord (Ezekiel 1:1-28, 3:12; Hab. 2:20-3:19). These readings go back to the time of the Temple.

⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ...²⁴ When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings. ²⁵ A voice came from above the firmament that was over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings.

²⁶ And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance of a man high above it. ²⁷ Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. **Ezekiel 1:4,24-28**

³ God came from Teman,
The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah

His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of His praise.

⁴ His brightness was like the light;
He had rays *flashing* from His hand,
And there His power was hidden.

⁵ Before Him went pestilence,
And fever followed at His feet. **Habakkuk 3:3-5**

The story of Ruth is also read in the synagogue during this time, because Ruth was Moabite who embraced the law of Moses. Also, the book of Ruth took place at the time of the Barley harvest and Weeks is a celebration of the Wheat Harvest which comes after the Barley harvest.



Food

Dairy products are part of the celebration of Weeks, since scripture is depicted as the Milk and Honey of the soul. It is also customary to bake two Challah loaves of Bread on Shavuot to represent the two loaves offered in the Temple and the two tablets of the Law given to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

Staying up all night

Observant Jews will also stay up the entire night discussing and studying Torah. During the night there are breaks for coffee and cheesecake. Discussion revolves around the opening and closing scriptures of each Sabbath reading, the opening and closing verses of each book of the Bible and the entire book of Ruth.

In the morning, thousands of Jews wind their way toward the site of the Temple and pour onto the Western Wall plaza, there they read the **Amidah**¹ “the Standing”

The Fulfillment



Jesus was our Passover Lamb for the redemption of humanity. His blood allowed death to Passover our sins, since he took our sins upon. Jesus was in the grave, but he did not decay, fulfilling the picture of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Then Jesus rose on the Feast of Firstfruits, Himself being the Firstfruit of the resurrection. Jesus instructed His followers to remain in Jerusalem until they receive the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with ^a water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. ⁶So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹After he said this, he was taken up before their

very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." **Acts 1:1-10**



On the fiftieth day, the Feast of Weeks the Holy Spirit descended upon the followers of Christ who had gathered in the Upper room to celebrate the feast. The church is the harvest of Messiah's redemption in this age. We are the bread of the harvest. Those who had gathered in the upper room were the first fruits of the "Wheat Harvest". They were both Jews and Gentiles, the two loaves, with their sins before the Lord, they had "Leaven" in their midst.

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^a as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

¹ The Amidah or “standing” is the 19 Blessings that dates back 2000-years, it is the central prayer of all prayer services.



¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! ¹²Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." **Acts 2:1-13**

At the *Feast of Shavuot*, the first fruit of the Wheat Harvest is celebrated, the harvest of Wheat has begun. This harvest will continue until the Fall when the Fall Harvest is celebrated. Today, we the believers are part of the "Wheat" Harvest until the Seventh Month, when the End Times will begin. Jesus alludes to this in the Gospel of John, when he refers to the souls from Sychar as the souls of the harvest to be reaped between the 4th and 7th Month of the year.

²⁷Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

²⁸Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

³¹Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

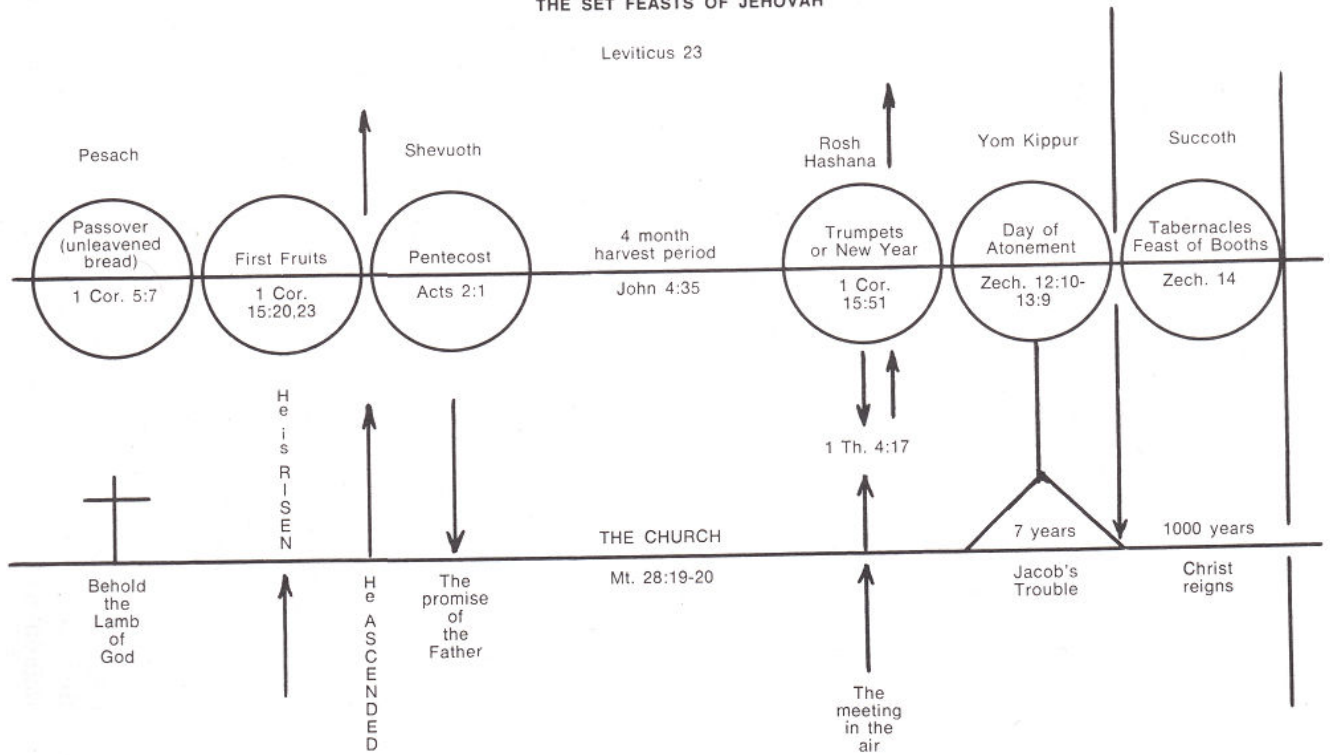
³²But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

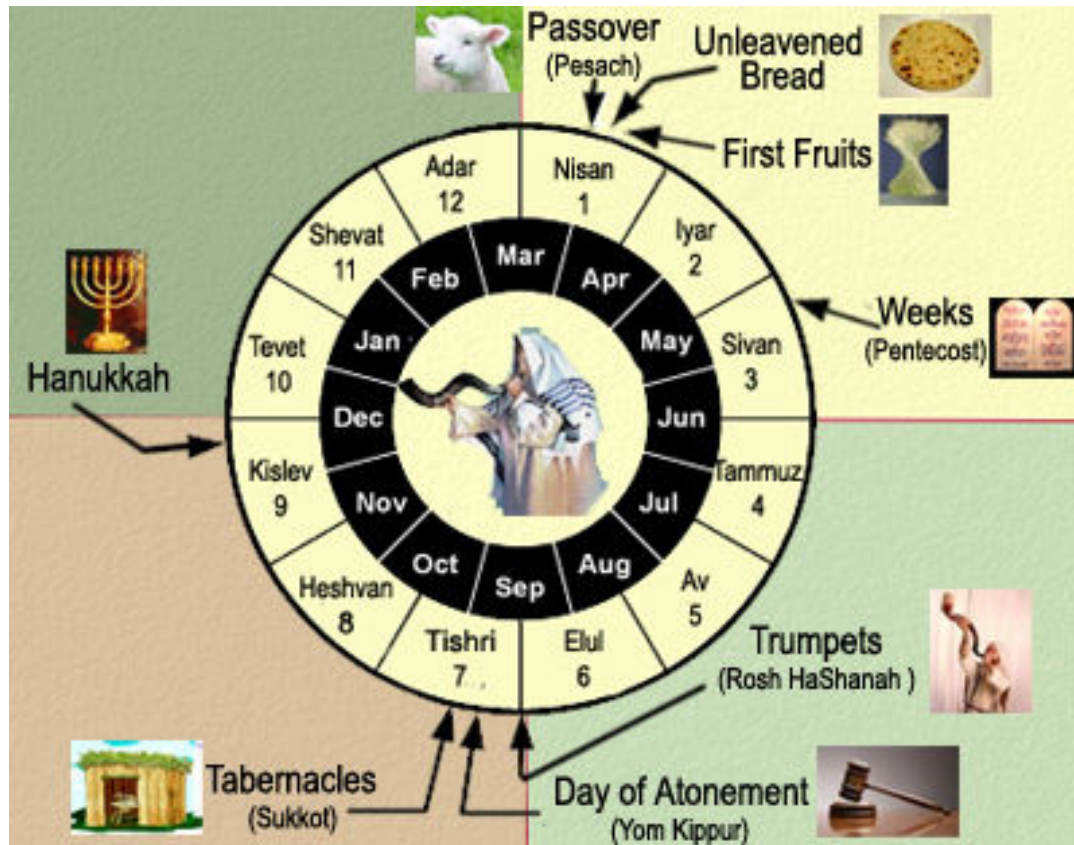
³³Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

³⁴"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ³⁵Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. ³⁶Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. ³⁷Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. ³⁸I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

³⁹Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹And because of his words many more became believers. **John 4:27-39**

THE MEANING OF THE JEWISH HOLY DAYS THE SET FEASTS OF JEHOVAH





The Prayer in English THE AMIDAH [\[1\]](#)

1. THE GOD OF HISTORY:

Blessed are you, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the great, mighty and revered God, the Most High God who bestows lovingkindnesses, the creator of all things, who remembers the good deeds of the patriarchs and in love will bring a redeemer to their children's children for his name's sake. O king, helper, savior and shield. Blessed are you, O Lord, the shield of Abraham.

2. THE GOD OF NATURE:

You, O Lord, are mighty forever, you revive the dead, you have the power to save. [From the end of Sukkot until the eve of Passover, insert: You cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall.] You sustain the living with lovingkindness, you revive the dead with great mercy, you support the falling, heal the sick, set free the bound and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like you, O doer of mighty acts? Who resembles you, a king who puts to death and restores to life, and causes salvation to flourish? And you are certain to revive the dead. Blessed are you, O Lord, who revives the dead.

3. SANCTIFICATION OF GOD:

[Reader] We will sanctify your name in this world just as it is sanctified in the highest heavens, as it is written by your prophet: "And they call out to one another and say: [Cong.] 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" [Isa. 6:3] [Reader] Those facing them praise God saying: [Cong.] "Blessed be the Presence of the LORD in his place." [Ezek. 3:12] [Reader] And in your Holy Words it is written, saying, [Cong.] "The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah." [Ps. 146:10] [Reader] Throughout all generations

we will declare your greatness, and to all eternity we will proclaim your holiness. Your praise, O our God, shall never depart from our mouth, for you are a great and holy God and King. Blessed are you, O Lord, the holy God. You are holy, and your name is holy, and holy beings praise you daily. (Selah.) Blessed are you, O Lord, the holy God.

4. PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING:

You favor men with knowledge, and teach mortals understanding. O favor us with the knowledge, the understanding and the insight that come from you. Blessed are you, O Lord, the gracious giver of knowledge.

5. FOR REPENTANCE:

Bring us back, O our father, to your Instruction; draw us near, O our King, to your service; and cause us to return to you in perfect repentance. Blessed are you, O Lord, who delights in repentance.

6. FOR FORGIVENESS:

Forgive us, O our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed; for you pardon and forgive. Blessed are you, O Lord, who is merciful and always ready to forgive.

7. FOR DELIVERANCE FROM AFFLICTION:

Look upon our affliction and plead our cause, and redeem us speedily for your name's sake, for you are a mighty redeemer. Blessed are you, O Lord, the redeemer of Israel.

8. FOR HEALING:

Heal us, O Lord, and we will be healed; save us and we will be saved, for you are our praise. O grant a perfect healing to all our ailments, for you, almighty King, are a faithful and merciful healer. Blessed are you, O Lord, the healer of the sick of his people Israel.

9. FOR DELIVERANCE FROM WANT:

Bless this year for us, O Lord our God, together with all the varieties of its produce, for our welfare. Bestow ([from the 15th of Nissan insert:] dew and rain for) a blessing upon the face of the earth. O satisfy us with your goodness, and bless our year like the best of years. Blessed are you, O Lord, who blesses the years.

10. FOR GATHERING OF EXILES:

Sound the great shofar for our freedom, raise the ensign to gather our exiles, and gather us from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are you, O Lord, who gathers the dispersed of his people Israel.

11. FOR THE RIGHTEOUS REIGN OF GOD:

Restore our judges as in former times, and our counselors as at the beginning; and remove from us sorrow and sighing. Reign over us, you alone, O Lord, with lovingkindness and compassion, and clear us in judgment. Blessed are you, O Lord, the King who loves righteousness and justice.

12. FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF APOSTATES AND THE ENEMIES OF GOD:

Let there be no hope for slanderers, and let all wickedness perish in an instant. May all your enemies quickly be cut down, and may you soon in our day uproot, crush, cast down and humble the dominion of arrogance. Blessed are you, O Lord, who smashes enemies and humbles the arrogant.

13. FOR THE RIGHTEOUS AND PROSELYTES:

May your compassion be stirred, O Lord our God, towards the righteous, the pious, the elders of your people the house of Israel, the remnant of their scholars, towards proselytes, and towards us also. Grant a good reward to all who truly trust in your name. Set our lot with them forever so that we may never be put to shame, for we have put our trust in you. Blessed are you, O Lord, the support and stay of the righteous.

14. FOR THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM:

Return in mercy to Jerusalem your city, and dwell in it as you have promised. Rebuild it soon in our day as an eternal structure, and quickly set up in it the throne of David. Blessed are you, O Lord, who rebuilds Jerusalem.

15. FOR THE MESSIANIC KING:

Speedily cause the offspring of your servant David to flourish, and let him be exalted by your saving power, for we wait all day long for your salvation. Blessed are you, O Lord, who causes salvation to flourish.

16. FOR THE ANSWERING OF PRAYER:

Hear our voice, O Lord our God; spare us and have pity on us. Accept our prayer in mercy and with favor, for you are a God who hears prayers and supplications. O our King, do not turn us away from your presence empty-handed, for you hear the prayers of your people Israel with compassion. Blessed are you, O Lord, who hears prayer.

17. FOR RESTORATION OF TEMPLE SERVICE:

Be pleased, O Lord our God, with your people Israel and with their prayers. Restore the service to the inner sanctuary of your Temple, and receive in love and with favor both the fire-offerings of Israel and their prayers. May the worship of your people Israel always be acceptable to you. And let our eyes behold your return in mercy to Zion. Blessed are you, O Lord, who restores his divine presence to Zion.

18. THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S UNFAILING MERCIES:

We give thanks to you that you are the Lord our God and the God of our fathers forever and ever. Through every generation you have been the rock of our lives, the shield of our salvation. We will give you thanks and declare your praise for our lives that are committed into your hands, for our souls that are entrusted to you, for your miracles that are daily with us, and for your wonders and your benefits that are with us at all times, evening, morning and noon. O beneficent one, your mercies never fail; O merciful one, your lovingkindnesses never cease. We have always put our hope in you. For all these acts may your name be blessed and exalted continually, O our King, forever and ever. Let every living thing give thanks to you and praise your name in truth, O God, our salvation and our help. (Selah.) Blessed are you, O Lord, whose Name is the Beneficent One, and to whom it is fitting to give thanks.

19. FOR PEACE:

Grant peace, welfare, blessing, grace, lovingkindness and mercy to us and to all Israel your people. Bless us, O our Father, one and all, with the light of your countenance; for by the light of your countenance you have given us, O Lord our God, a Torah of life, lovingkindness and salvation, blessing, mercy, life and peace. May it please you to bless your people Israel at all times and in every hour with your peace. Blessed are you, O Lord, who blesses his people Israel with peace.