

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION TO COUNTING THE OMER AND THE FEAST OF SHAVUOT

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COUNTING THE OMER

"You shall count for yourselves -- from the day after the Shabbat, from the day when you bring the Omer of the waving - seven Shabbats, they shall be complete. Until the day after the seventh Sabbath you shall count, fifty days"

Leviticus 23:15-16

"You shall count for yourselves seven weeks, from when the sickle is first put to the standing crop shall you begin counting seven weeks. Then you will observe the Festival of Shavu'ot for the LORD, your God." Deuteronomy 16:9-10

According to the Torah (Lev. 23:15), we are told to count the days from Passover to Shavuot. This period is known as the Counting of the Omer. An Omer is a dry unit of measure that is about 2.2 metric liters or 2 quarts. On the second day of Passover, in the days of the Temple, an Omer of barley was cut down and brought to the Temple as an offering. This grain offering was referred to as the Omer.

Every night, from the second night of Passover to the night before Shavuot, a blessing and statement of the current count of the Omer in both weeks and days was made. For example on the 16th day it would be said like this in the temple. *"Today is sixteen days, which is two weeks and two days of the Omer."*

The counting is intended to remind us of the link between Passover, which commemorates the Exodus, and Shavuot, which commemorates the giving of the Torah (law) at Mt. Sinai. It reminds us that the sanctification from slavery cannot be completed without receiving the Torah (laws) written onto our hearts by the impartation of the Holy Spirit!

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8 KJV

"That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph

5:26-27 KJV

THE FEAST OF SHAVUOT

Date in Hebrew Calendar: 5th-7th of Sivan (May-June) Scriptural references: Leviticus 23:16; Exodus 23:15-21; Acts Chapter 2.

This feast was to take place exactly seven weeks and one day (the Hebrew word "Shavuot" means "weeks"), or fifty days (the Greek word "Pentecost" means "fifty") after Firstfruits. It was also a harvest festival, when the Israelites were to present an offering of new grain in the temple.

In Israelite tradition it came to be believed that Moses received the Law of Mount Sinai exactly fifty days after Firstfruits or, in other words, on Pentecost (based on Exodus 19:1). Hence, the receiving of the law is also celebrated on that day.

An extremely well known event occurred in the Book of Acts on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit fell on the first disciples with tongues of fire and other languages. It took place 50 days after the resurrection of Yeshua (Jesus), and was the birth of the church, or body of Messiah.

Today in Israel the Feast of Shavuot is celebrated by decorations with a harvest theme, and the reading of the account of the giving of the Law (Exodus 19:20). The Book of Ruth is also read, as it is a book of harvest and redemption, ending with the genealogy of King David who-according to tradition-was born and died on Shavuot.

For believers, Pentecost is celebrated as the birth of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ and the infilling of the Holy Spirit as He writes the laws of God upon our hearts and imparts to us the power to be His witnesses. In part two we will discuss in detail the prophetic beauty of Shavuot.



Blessings Pastor Bob Hill

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