

# Focusing on the Omer During the Count to Shavuot

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It was also day 34 of the count, often referred to as the Counting of the Omer.

That count began on the day after the first High Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

While they call it the Counting of the Omer, we are really counting weeks and days. We count seven sevens, and 50 days between Passover and Shavuot.

Here is what we read from the Septuagint:

*"<sup>15</sup> And ye shall number to yourselves from the day after the sabbath, from the day on which ye shall offer the omer of the heave-offering, seven full weeks: <sup>16</sup> until the morrow after the last week you shall number fifty days, and shall bring a new grain offering to YHWH."*  
Leviticus 23:15-16

They call it the Counting of the Omer, because it begins with an offering made by the priest of one omer of barley. Sometimes the

emphasis on the omer is missed as translators often use the word “sheaf” instead of “omer.”

There is no doubt that the word omer is used in the Hebrew text. It is the first cutting of all the barley harvest. It is the first fruits (resheet) for all the Land. The fact that it is presented by the Priest reveals that it is a singular priestly duty performed by the Priest on behalf of all the people.

The barley stalks were not waved, they were first processed into fine flour and mixed with oil and frankincense before being waved.

After that, the people would start to count while they proceeded to harvest their own crops, and the count culminates with a Feast, known as Shavuot (weeks).

*“<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to YHWH your Elohim with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as YHWH your Elohim blesses you.” Deuteronomy 16:9-10*

So the count culminated with a Feast when everyone would appear before YHWH at His House, built on a threshing floor, and present the first fruits (bikkurim) of their wheat harvest. (see 2 Samuel 24)

As we have discussed before, there is an intimate connection between this count, and the manna. An omer is a dry measure. It is one-tenth of an ephah according to Exodus 16:36.

This fractional one-tenth portion was the amount of manna that was sufficient for every person.

*“<sup>16</sup> This is the thing which YHWH has commanded: Let every man gather it according to each one’s need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent.” Exodus 16:16*

So while we are counting the omer, we cannot help but think about the manna as we proceed to the climax, which is the day after the seventh full week – Day 50.

It is on Day 50 that another offering is made, only this time it is a double portion that includes leaven.

*“<sup>17</sup> 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 first fruits (bikkurim) to YHWH.” Leviticus 23:17*

Did you notice the mention of two-tenths of an ephah? That is actually two omers, but the omer is not mentioned at Shavuot, and that appears to be intentional.

So, it seems that there is a purposeful connection between the manna, and the first barley offering that begins the count. These are the predominant references to the omer in the Scriptures.

As a result, there is an ongoing and ancient debate revolving around when the count begins, and that debate is tied to the manna.

Does the count begin on the day after the weekly Shabbat on a Sunday, or does it begin on the day after the First Shabbat of Unleavened Bread?

That is a discussion that many find difficult to grasp, because the method of counting depends upon translations and definitions. There

is a difference of opinion and they both seem valid, depending upon the translation that you rely upon.

I have addressed the technicalities in an article titled [\*When Do We Celebrate Shavuot?\*](#)

The sects of Yisraelites contended with this issue in the past, just as people continue to do today.

Aside from the linguistics of the relevant texts, the ancient debate distilled down to what the count actually represented, and that is a subject worth looking in to.

After all, why not examine the meaning behind this mysterious counting exercise that occurs during the grain harvest. The act of counting is the milk, while understanding the meaning is the meat.

The argument that the count always begins on a Sunday, is supported by the belief that the manna began to be provided on a Sunday.

The original command was: *“Six days you shall gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.”* Exodus 16:26

Based upon this passage, the assumption was that the manna started on the first day – Sunday.

They considered the manna to be a transition from the bread of affliction (unleavened bread) to the bread of freedom.

On the other hand, those who believed that the count began on the day after the High Sabbath keyed it to the cessation of the manna, after Yisrael crossed the Jordan and entered the Land.

They believe that the bread of freedom was not the manna in the wilderness, but rather the bread that they consumed when they finally entered the Land, as described in Joshua.

*“<sup>10</sup> Now the children of Yisrael camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup> And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day. <sup>12</sup> Then the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Yisrael no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.”* Joshua 5:10-12

It is clear that the manna was not the goal. It was supposed to be temporary provision in the wilderness, but became life support, while one generation waited in the wilderness for the previous to die off.

It was not the ultimate berakah that YHWH had planned for His people. It was a temporary measure – literally.

While the children of Yisrael were redeemed and delivered through the Passover, they were not truly free until they entered into the Land. The wilderness was not the fulfillment of the promises.

So then, it seems that the true bread of freedom was not the manna in the wilderness. Rather, it was the bread that they ate from the Land that YHWH planted them in. (see Jeremiah 42:10)

Immediately upon entering the Land they circumcised the males and celebrated Passover. That means they were not observing the Appointed Times in the wilderness. They were not free to celebrate while they were uncircumcised.

When the manna stopped, they transitioned back to Unleavened Bread until the conclusion of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

We then read an interesting account of the conquest of Jericho, that contains a counting involving seven times seven, followed by a long blast of the shofar, but it was not just any normal shofar blast.

Here the text from a common English translation of the instructions given to Joshua.

*"<sup>2</sup> . . . See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. <sup>3</sup> You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. <sup>4</sup> And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns (Yovelim shofarot) before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. <sup>5</sup> It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram's horn (Yovel horn), and when you hear the sound of the trumpet (shofar), that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him." Joshua 6:1-5*

I included Hebrew words that do not translate through into the English. Specifically, the fact that the shofar blast is called a Yovel shofar.

The fact that the Jubilee is connected with Joshua (Yahushua) is no coincidence. Joshua is a pattern for Messiah Yahushua. That is why they bear the same name.

And don't forget it was Moses who changed his name from Hosea to Yahushua, right before he led the recon mission into the Land. (Numbers 13:3-16) The first time he entered the Land, it was as a

servant. The second time he entered as a Commander of the Tribes of Yisrael.

This is highly significant, and we expect this pattern to be fulfilled through Yahushua the Messiah.

Of course the Commandment concerning the Yovel is all about being restored to the Land of your inheritance.

*“<sup>8</sup> And you shall number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. <sup>9</sup> Then you shall cause the shofar blast to pass over on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall you make the shofar sound throughout all your land. <sup>10</sup> And ye shall set apart the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the Land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a Jubilee (yovel) unto you; and you shall return every man unto his possession, and you shall return every man unto his family. <sup>11</sup> A Jubilee (yovel) shall that fiftieth year be unto you: you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of your vine undressed. <sup>12</sup> For it is the Jubilee; it shall be set apart unto you: you shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. <sup>13</sup> In the year of this Jubilee (yovel) you shall return every man unto his possession.”* Leviticus 25:8-13

So there is a clear connection with the omer count, and the Jubilee. I hope you can see that the counting of the omer we are in the midst of has real purpose.

We are actually reminded of the Jubilee every year as we rehearse this annual moad. We are supposed to be considering the future during this rehearsal that occurs in the midst of the grain harvest.

Just as we are counting seven weeks that span from the resheet barley to the bikkurim wheat, YHWH has been counting weeks from the very beginning – b’resheet.

From the first Hebrew word in the Scriptures – b’resheet – we can discern the hidden message of a house (beit) for a son (bar), through a Covenant (brit) of fire (esh).

It is all contained in the Hebrew word b’resheet, and it will be fulfilled with a bride through a marriage Covenant, that can dwell with the Son, in His House, in His Land.

So during this time of harvest, we should be longing to be in the Land that YHWH provides, as a bride, eating the bread of freedom.

I always encourage people to read the Book of Ruth during this time, because it reveals the pattern for Joseph’s return to the Land. Take for instance the fact that Ruth gleaned an ephah of barley – 10 omers. (see Ruth 2:17) We are waiting for the ten tribes to be revealed, and gleaned from the earth during the grain harvest, so that they can enter into the marriage Covenant renewed by the Messiah.

The bread of freedom is not the unleavened bread eaten during a journey, but the bread that has time to rise when we dwell peacefully in the Land.

Those who recognize Yahushua as the Messiah and are covered by His blood share this hope, and long for the Yovel, when we can be restored to the Land. That hope should be the focus of our counting.

Ultimately, the ancient debate concerning the start of the count was settled by Yahushua and the Set Apart Spirit long ago.

During the time of Yahushua, we know that the majority of Yisraelites began the count from the day after the first High Sabbath of Unleavened Bread.

Acts 2:1 described a time *“when the Day of Shavuot had fully come.”* In other words, the counting of weeks and days had completed.

The text continues: *“. . . they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Set Apart Spirit and began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance. <sup>5</sup> And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Yahudim, devout men, from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.”* Acts 2:1-6

Remember that these tongues were understandable languages. The gift of “languages” was given so that the Good News of Yahushua could be preached to the Nations.

I have previously discussed the Shavuot connection between the Tower of Babel, Mount Sinai and Jerusalem in Acts 2. This is all part of the “big picture” that YHWH has planned to restore His Creation.

That is why it is important to be “in one accord and in one place.” The Spirit sealed the debate for good, and the Spirit confirmed the Count through the events described in Acts 2.

Those who follow Yahushua and are filled with the Spirit need to move beyond the debate about when to count, and turn our focus on why we count.

I count weeks and days, because I want to leave Egypt, come out of the wilderness and sound of the Yovel Shofar. I want to eat the bread of freedom at the Marriage Supper with my Commander and King Yahushua.

I want to dwell in the Land where YHWH provides the soil, the seed, the water and the sun. While the harvest requires work during the count, there is provision beyond the counting.

That is why the Appointed Times do not end at Shavuot. There are better promises ahead. They await us in the Garden where the fruit is located, but only for those in the Covenant.

As you continue to count, don't forget that there is much more significance in the omer. It is often veiled as "a tenth part of an ephah."

For instance, the sin offering for the poorest for certain trespasses is one-tenth of an ephah (a omer). Leviticus 5:11

The daily grain offering offered by the High Priest at the morning and evening is one-tenth of an ephah (a omer). Leviticus 6:20

The offering of jealousy for a suspected unfaithful wife is one-tenth of an ephah (a omer). Numbers 5:15

This is just a sampling of the instances where a omer is present, but not obvious.

As a result, I encourage you to use this time to continue to stay focused on the omer. I know that it will become much more than a simple task of counting, as you discover the omer in the plan of Elohim.

So count with purpose as you follow Yahushua back to the Promised Land. Thanks to the Spirit, we not only know when to count, but we know why we count.

So keep counting to Shavuot!

Berakhot

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Shema Yisrael (Hear O Yisrael) are the words that Yahushua spoke when asked what was the First Command.

*“The first of all the Commandments is: ‘Hear, O Yisrael, YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is one.’”*

*Mark 12:29*

*“He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”*

*Matthew 11:15*